NEBULA

SPACESHIP

> The spaceship is not a submarine out to inseminate some whale.
> Its solar panels need burning planets like the one it left behind.

Content

Note on contributors

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Serena Anderlini-D'Onofrio is an Associate Professor at the University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez. She has published a comparative study of women's authorship in the modern theatre entitled *The "Weak" Subject: On Modernity, Eros, and Women's Playwriting*. She has published numerous articles in *Atenea, Carte Italiane, Diacritics, Feminist Issues, Italian Culture, The Journal of Dramatic Criticism and Theory, The Journal of Gender Studies* and many more. She has also contributed to various edited volumes, including *Feminine Feminists: Cultural Practices in Italy; Natalia Ginzburg: A Voice of the Twentieth Century* and *Franca Rame: A Woman Onstage*. She is the co-translator of *In Spite of Plato*, a book of feminist theory by Italian philosopher Adriana Cavarero. She has acted as Guest editor for *The Journal of Bisexuality* on more than one occasion. She is currently at work on her third book of cultural theory, *Taking the Gaia Hypothesis Seriously: Secularism, Globalization, and Earth-based Belief Systems*. Her article *"Of The Virus Party"* that is published in this issue of Nebula, gives us a glimpse of the philosophy behind the *Gaia hypothesis*, whilst daring to challenge some of the most fundamental beliefs held by scientists on the relationship between HIV and AIDS.

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newspapers and this, together with his numerous dissertations, has no doubt contributed to his lyrical and sophisticated prose in which he shares his ideas and reflections on two distinctly fascinating topics. In *Double Negative* Murthy ponders the implications of G.W. Bush's invention and use of the word "misunderestimated" alongside one of his own concoctions – *Blairism*. In *Death in Samarra II* Murthy delves into the existential implications of predeterminism through a rigorous reading of what was once a secular fable, and which has been retold to bear (and bare) political and cultural significance to our times.

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On his delightful *Spaceship* he comments: "this work…is highly experimental, and I invite you to play."

Helen Young

Helen Young was awarded a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Creative writing with Honours from the University of Wollongong (Australia) in 2002. She is currently completing her Doctorate on "The Imagination of a Post-Colonial Nation in Middle

English Romance" at the University of Sydney, where she has held an Australian Postgraduate Scholarship since 2003. Helen Young is an editor of Sydney University's Arts Journal *Philament* where she has published her article: *"Bi contray caryez this knyght": Journeys of Colonisation in <u>Sir Gawain and the</u> <u>Green Knight</u>*. Her two poems "…Midnight" and "…It wasn't the sun" demonstrate a poetic sensibility that is enmeshed with feeling and geographical space.

"Of the Virus Party": Ecofeminist Perspectives on Dissent in AIDS Science.

By Serena Anderlini-D'Onofrio

Abstract

My analysis of the controversies in AIDS science demonstrates that due to the influence of the allopathic scientific collective, the course of mainstream research about the disease has been overdetermined.[1] During the disease's early outbreaks, allopathic medicine dominated medical discourse. As a result, AIDS science focused on infectious rather than environmental and ecological causes. Later, this focus caused controversies voiced by dissenters from a more holistic perspective. I argue that persisting uncertainties in the etiology of AIDS challenge conventional understandings of this disease. In an ecofeminist perspective, these challenges can be seen as signs of an important shift in the philosophy of health. Thomas Kuhn would describe this shift as harbinger of a "scientific revolution," resulting from a new "scientific paradigm" struggling to get center stage.[2] If, as ecofeminists claim, the Earth is an animated being and not a Cartesian *res extensa*, humans are particles of the larger superorganism environmentalists often call Gaia. In this perspective, AIDS is an illness of the biosphere that affects its human particles. This planetary illness denotes toxicity in Gaia's body, including its air, soil, and waters. If so, AIDS reads as an environmental disease, not an infectious one. This hypothesis is based on a holistic philosophy of health, which is the major current challenge to allopathic philosophy. In his article, I argue that AIDS can be situated at the interstice between cause and effect in the paradigm change, where the collision of two modes of thinking produces new perspectives.[3]

Keywords: allopathic medicine; biosphere; ecofeminism; Gaia hypothesis; holistic health; *res cogitans; res extensa*; superorganism; scientific paradigm; scientific revolution; thought collective; thought style.

We should rather admit that power produces knowledge . . . that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations. (Foucault, 27).

Introduction

Allopathic and holistic philosophies of health have coexisted in cultural space at many levels. Let's imagine a scene where grandma recommends, "don't study so hard or you will damage your health!" Here, grandma is following a holistic train of thought. But the student in question swallows his/her nth cup of coffee for s/he's been sleep-deprived for a week and his/her next exam is tomorrow. The student is waging war against his/her body and challenging nature in an allopathic way.

Since the inception of what Walter Mignolo calls the second phase of modernity in mainstream Western culture, an allopathic philosophy of health has prevailed, with its modern urge to dominate and conquer nature (19). A Cartesian paradigm has divided the body (*res extensa*) from the mind (*res cogitans*). But, as Val Plumwood and other ecofeminist theorists have recently suggested, treating one's body like a *res extensa* to be subdued to its *res cogitans* is a threat to its ecosystem's delicate homeostasis (6). Empirical observation and experimentation prevailed in the early modern era and with the Enlightenment the allopathic thought collective took center stage. It constructed disease as a foreign enemy; medicine as the war to be fought against it. Indeed, even today, conventional "allo-pathic" medicine fights pathology with the disease's enemy, it attacks the symptoms that express the body's problem. This dominance, I claim, has caused a mainstream understanding of AIDS that is both unwarranted by empirical observation and capable of causing great harm to the general population, to say nothing of those at risk. My ecofeminist analysis of current controversies in AIDS science intends to challenge the AIDS orthodoxy and establish the relatedness of AIDS dissent and ecological concerns on a planetary scale.

I understand ecofeminism as a rich and diverse feminist discursive mode that analyzes global and local ecological concerns from a gendered perspective. It avails itself of the gender differences and differentiations (both cultural and biological) that have evolved from the theoretical multiplicity of second-wave feminism and its political and academic effects. Ecofeminists differ greatly in disciplinary formation, geographical base, culture, race, and sexual orientation. For example, Val Plumwood is a critical theorist based in Australia; Vandana Shiva a biologist based in India; Greta Gaard is a queer ecofeminist, and Tamara Shantu Riley a black US-based one; Carolyn Merchant and Karen Warren are more conventional voices with a European and US perspective, respectively. The axiomatic non-statement that transpires from their work is that the Earth should not be considered an assemblage of resources, a Cartesian *res extensa*. The new way to conceptualize the planet that emerges from their positions is clearly influenced by the Gaia Hypothesis, according to which the planet that hosts the biosphere that makes human life possible is a superorganism whose integrated biosphere and atmosphere form a biota with a life of its own. Humans, animals, and plants are interdependent particles within this whole. Evidence of the influence of

this axiom in ecofeminist thought can be found in its general tendency to point to the artificiality of the distinction subject-object (Plumwood, 1994); in its concern with sustainability rather than with the mere preservation of nature as separate from civilization--which is more typical of deep ecology (Warren 1996; Merchant 1994); in its concern with the preservation of subaltern, indigenous, and pre-modern knowledges, especially those whose content helps to live as frugal guests on our hostess planet (Shiva 1989); in its claim that nature is often queer rather than universally heterosexist (Gaard 1997); and in its reflection on slavery as a time when some humans were aware of the negative consequences of treating beings like mere resources (Shantu-Riley 1993).

The first scientific formulation of the Gaia Hypothesis is attributed to biologist James Lovelock.[4] He was part of the NASA team that in the 1960's sent a probe on Mars to find water, and photographed the Earth from that far away. In comparing the pictures of Earth with those of Mars and Venus, Lovelock observed that Earth was alive while its neighbors were dead. The concept of the biosphere as an organism with a biology of her own was thus formulated. Lovelock chose the name Gaia from Greek mythology, where Gaia figures as the Earth goddess. The hypothesis that the Earth is a superorganism proved impervious to controlled laboratory experiments, and was, as a result, reconfigured as an axiom--a tenet at the source of the new system of knowledge beaconed by Gaian belief-systems and philosophies. Microbiologist Lynn Margulis corroborated Lovelock's vision by showing that, at the microscopic level, life is a symbiosis of interdependent elements (1997, 1998). Bacteria and cells are elements in the life of a complex organism just like animals and plants are elements in the life of the biota. So, with respect to Gaia, a person can be compared to a human body's cell. From a cultural perspective, the personification of the Earth implied in its name helped connect its multiplicitous life with a sense of the sacred. As such, Gaia became a currency in the new spirituality movement that has influenced many ecofeminists philosophers.

If an individual is a cell in a superorganism, his/her disease cannot be a foreign agent, for all agents are part of the superorganism of which the individual is an element. Therefore, in a Gaian system of knowledge, disease in the superorganism's elements is a force that manifests a crisis in the superorganism itself. Disease is a message that can help the superorganism deal with the crisis and reconfigure itself. In looking at AIDS again--as a crisis in Gaia's life that signals the need for a change--my article will asses the discursive strategies that mainstream and dissent in AIDS science employ, and the scientific paradigms on which they are based; it will expose the paradox on which mainstream AIDS science is based and retrace the steps that lead to that formulation.

As we have seen, the allopathic thought collective assumes that medical science is at war to defend individuals from the attacks of disease agents. Those with financial power and access to health benefits are privileged to use "magic bullets," or *pharmacons*: the medical drugs made of small doses of poison that combat the microbes that might threaten their health (Epstein 1996). This confrontational approach results in a system that equates health with power. Its only promise is a defense of the health of a small, privileged minority at the expense of everybody else. Gaia gets amputated of its gangrenous areas, so that the rest of the body can live again. But how much can be amputated before removing the cause of gangrene becomes necessary? The holistic thought collective is more feminist in an ecological, systemic way. It assumes that

ecosystems, including human bodies, tend to reach a state of equilibrium in which their parts operate inter-dependently to optimize health, in a process of homeostasis that is continuous yet goes in stages. In this logic, the health of individuals is proportional to the health of the ecosystems in which they are inscribed, so the cure begins with an examination of those ecosystems.

Allopathic thinking about health can be traced back to the classical area. It was revived in the early modern era, as empiricism and observation prevailed over the superstition and dogma of the Middle-Ages. It became established with the Enlightenment, when Western thought constructed modern medicine as the science that would conquer diseases just like conquistadors conquered foreign territories and their populations. Like a good defense army, the method has many virtues. Over time it has resulted in an almost complete eradication of leprosy, the bubonic plague, cholera, smallpox, tuberculosis and other bacterial diseases, and, finally, polio.[5] However, historically, the concept of medicine as war has stood in the way of a proper understanding of nutritional diseases, such as scurvy and pellagra.[6] But the allopathic thought collective considers the body an independent entity that must be militarily defended, and this results in an inherent contagious bias that tends to construct health threats as attacks by external microorganisms. Today, AIDS is officially considered a contagious disease, yet the most dramatically affected populations live in the poorest and most environmentally degraded areas of sub-Saharan Africa.[7] This suggests that a more serious evaluation of its possible environmental causes might be necessary. AIDS could very well be another disease initially understood as contagious, which turns out to have nutritional and/or environmental causes. The allopathic paradigm is the basis for the infectious hypothesis. Yet, as it wears down due to cultural and systemic changes, the initial hypothesis appears less credible. Based on a new hypothesis, long- since observed developments begin to make sense. I propose to situate AIDS at the interstice between cause and effect in the paradigm change; the discursive site where the two modes of thinking collide.

1. The Logic

Allopathic medicine and holistic health, the two major thought styles in current health discourse, define health differently and have different notions of what threatens it. They also differ in assessing evidence, diagnosing, and overcoming a health crisis. Both would accept peace as a metaphor for health, but their concepts of peace differ greatly. As in Western rationalism peace is the absence of war, so in an allopathic thinking health is the absence of disease. In a holistic thought style, on the other hand, peace is a durable homeostasis that makes future wars unnecessary.[8] Health is the inner harmony and centeredness of an organism; its integration with its environment; the ecological balance of its inner and outer landscape. If the health of a "cell" is proportionate to the health of the organism, contributing to the health of Gaia's all- encompassing organism is in each person's best interest. What threatens health in allopathic thinking is the invasion of microorganisms, including bacteria, viruses, and retroviruses. In holistic thinking, environmental pollution, stress, emotional disorders, poor diet, physical discomfort, lack of rest, contamination of food and water, poverty, hunger, fear, and poisoning cause health problems. Clearly, for the two thought

styles to work together, an examination of how environmental threats operate at the microscopic level is necessary.

In an allopathic perspective, evidence of disease is found in the analytical tests performed in scientific laboratories and in the statistical results of clinical trials. In a holistic perspective, it is gathered by establishing trust and communication with patients; narrative, conversation, and anecdote are used as diagnostic tools. For the two styles to work together, establishing the interrelatedness of test results, clinical evidence, testimonial narratives, and affect is necessary. Finally, in an allopathic perspective, the cure to a disease is a *pharmacon*, a poisonous medicine, whose dosage is high enough to kill the disease agent but low enough to allow the patient to survive the cure. In a holistic perspective, healing is a process that involves the identification of health threats in one's physical and emotional environment, and the changes in one's lifestyle necessary to eliminate them, including those in personal and professional relationships, diet, and stress level. These changes gradually allow that inner harmony and centeredness to restore itself, perhaps at a new or different level of homeostasis.

These philosophies existed well before AIDS. However, mainly due to the public's disappointment with allopathic medicine, in the past 20 years the holistic-health movement has grown and gained support.[9] While in the early 1980's, the dominance of the allopathic thought style was unchallenged, today the holistic thought style has become coherent and articulate, thus presenting a substantial challenge to its opponent's domination. To better understand this shift, I propose going back to about 20 years ago, when the public had not heard about AIDS yet. Which disease scared people most then? Which would one pray not to get? For people in developed societies the answer is most likely cancer. But why was cancer so scary? There was no cure because there was no understanding, and so cancer threatened people's faith in science's ability to conquer disease; a belief-system on which Westerners had become heavily dependent in the modern era.

Indeed, one might claim that it was partly to assuage this fear that, in 1971, president Nixon declared a "war on cancer." This lengthy and costly war contributed to raising the budget of medical research, which went from 100 million dollars in 1955 to 10 billion in 1996 (Duesberg 1996, 67). Yet at the onset of AIDS, and when the public became aware of it in the early and mid 1980's, the problem of cancer had not yet been resolved. The cause had not been found and there was no cure, even though thousands of scientific papers had appeared in specialized medical journals, and hundreds of biomedical scientists and researchers had made good careers for themselves (Proctor 1-16). Even today, the allopathic system offers tempering measures only with respect to cancer. One is early detection, the burden of which is on the patient. In a typically allopathic fashion, surgery and chemotherapy treat symptoms but do not remove the cause.

It was and is therefore legitimate to ask why this war was lost. As early as 1992, a group of scientists at the National Institute of Health flagged the problem. "We express grave concern over the failure of the 'war on cancer,' since . . . 1971," they said, going on to provide examples such as the fact that there were "no significant improvements in the cure of cancer," and to commenting that NCI [the National Cancer Institute] had "misled the public," while pharmaceutical companies were making "extravagant and

unfounded claims for dramatic advances" (S.S. Epstein 1992, quoted in Duesberg 127-8). This sense of failure might have prompted the subsequent diversification within NIH, which currently has branches for ecological and holistic approaches to health (Harden, ND, 36-37). My suggestion is that the reason why Nixon's war on cancer failed must be sought in the fact that, until recently, the NIH has been dominated by biomedical researchers who can only think of disease as an attack on the body by a microorganism. The allopathic thought collective created a master narrative that constructed medicine as a war against foreign enemies, and alternative thinking was impossible.

Unfortunately, the same understanding of disease dominated public consciousness. Let me rehearse here how an average reader thinks about disease. Known microorganisms include bacteria, one-cell organisms that can live on their own; viruses--or codes for an organism--that enter a cell and destroy it; and retroviruses, which also enter cells, but it is not clear that they destroy them. This understanding of disease can be compared to the understanding of the September 11 attacks in the corporate media. The United States is the body, the Twin Towers one of its vital organs. The planes that the terrorists use as weapons are the attacking microorganisms. One must respond by waging war against them, or, it is assumed, they will further multiply and destroy. Disease becomes a synonym of infection, as microorganisms are imagined to spread from person to person through body fluids, by skin contact, or airborne. In this scenario, the only possible question is how to react to the invasion and stop it. Just like a high-tech army attacks terrorist cells and rogue nations, so medical science designs "magic bullets" that neutralize microbes, like penicillin and antibiotics. The cure restores health after the disease has struck. But the health, or peace, achieved with this system is usually precarious, for the cure is in itself a poison, and the microbes might strike again. The ecosystem has not reached a new homeostasis.

A more radical allopathic way to fighting disease is immunization. A vaccine is a dead disease agent with which the population can be inoculated. This causes the production of antibodies in the vaccinated persons. These antibodies will defend the organism from eventual attacks. This system also works. A good example is polio. In 1948 the polio virus was isolated. A first vaccine was prepared in 1955, the Salk Vaccine. It turned out that this vaccine had some live virus in it and caused death and/or paralysis in numerous inoculated persons. But in 1957, the Sabin Vaccine was prepared and, not accidentally I think, it was tested in foreign countries. Eventually, the US population was inoculated and polio was defeated, thus confirming allopathic medicine's ability to "conquer" disease once again.

But unfortunately, things do not always work that way. Diseases can also be caused by malnutrition, as when certain nutrients are missing in the diet of a given segment of the population; by stress, as when people suffer from lack of sleep or privacy; from overwork; tension; fear; violence and so on. A disease can also be caused by poisoning, as when one's water, food, or air supply is contaminated. Diseases are also caused by heredity, as when one inherits the wrong gene from one's ancestors. Last but not least, disease can be caused by the cure for another disease, as when one takes too much of a toxic medicine and gets ill due to its side effects. These diseases are called iatrogenic.

Medical science is sometimes wrong, and the history of modern medicine presents two exemplary cases

in which the allopathic bias considerably hindered the efforts to overcome a health crisis. Both scurvy and pellagra are caused by poor diet, and were for a long time believed to be infectious, with all the afflictions that this caused to those who had them or were afraid of getting them. As we know today, with enough vitamin C in one's diet, no one gets scurvy. The same is true for pellagra and niacin, or vitamin B. But it hasn't always been that way. Scurvy is a disease of the 16th and 17th centuries, the era of the great explorations and circumnavigations. The most severely affected segment of the population were sailors, for they were at sea for long months, and with no refrigeration onboard, they had no access to fresh fruits and vegetables where vitamin C is found (Carpenter 1986). Due to their lifestyle, however, sailors were believed to be "promiscuous," and had a reputation for having a belle in every port. The Italian language still carries the concept, a *promessa da marinaio*, a sailor's promise, is a euphemism for a false promise. Scurvy manifested itself with swollen gums, leg pains, and eventually death. People obviously stayed away from sailors out of fear of "getting it." Ships would often abandon their most seriously ill sailors on a desert island as a precaution. Ironically, some marooned sailors were reported to have recovered their health and found their way back home only to learn that the rest of the crew had all perished. Obviously, the fresh fruits found on the islands had saved them, but the infectious bias inherent in the allopathic perspective prevented medical science from understanding what was happening (Carpenter 1986, Cuppage 1994, Harvie 2002).

Similar mistakes were made on the way to defeating pellagra. This disease was prevalent in the 19th century and affected peasants and sharecroppers in Northern Italy and in the Southern region of the US. Their staple meal was corn, a cereal devoid of niacin. The disease manifested itself through rough skin (*pellagra* in Italian), dementia, and eventually death. Pellagrins were believed to be infectious and were marginalized accordingly. But no quarantine could prevent a person from getting pellagra unless they had niacin in their food intake (Carpenter 1981, Roe).

In these instances we observe that a disease comes to the attention of medical researchers when there is an outbreak, and that at the beginning of this outbreak, it is not clear whether the cause of the disease is infectious or not. In general, one can say that an epidemic is probably infectious if it spreads to people in different social groups, thus affecting all age groups and both genders. On the other hand, if, over time, an epidemic stays within a given segment of the population, then the chances are it is not infectious.

If a new epidemic disease outbreak is suspected of being infectious, it makes sense to start a microbe hunt and thus put the allopathic thought collective to work. On the other hand, if the outbreak does not look infectious, the microbe hunt could have serious negative implications. In that case, the holistic thought collective must be called into action to identify shared elements in the lives of the affected population, pertaining to diet, lifestyle, behavior, substance use, and environmental conditions. Naturally, the medical establishment is anxious to rule out infectious hypotheses first, for if the epidemic is infectious then the medical workers are exposed first. But an outbreak's indicators may be ambiguous. In that case, infectious hypotheses must be ruled out before un-infectious hypotheses can be seriously investigated. Therefore, all putative microorganisms present at the scene of the crime must be tested for causality. In allopathic medical science this is done through the Koch postulates, which were established in 1878-84 in the process

of conducting research on the bacteria that cause tuberculosis (Harden 1992, 250-54). The postulates established three logical and sequential principles. First, it must be determined that the microbe believed to be at cause is present in all affected individuals. Then the microbe must be isolated from a patient in laboratory proceedings that vary according to its nature. Third, the purified microbe must cause disease when inoculated into healthy animals (Harden 253).

When the main microbes present at the scene of the crime fail, one can begin to hypothesize that the epidemic is not infectious. In a healthy research environment, this would be an easy, natural switch to make. As the infectious hypotheses are being ruled out, the observations that will lead to the formulation of a non-infectious hypothesis come into play. But when a thought collective has acquired a dangerous sense of omnipotence about itself, the shift can be complicated. The dominance of allopathic approaches to health goes hand in hand with specialization. Specialists specialize in microbes, while holistic approaches require the kind of scientists who are trained to look at ecosystems as a whole. Infectious and non-infectious hypotheses require different specialists, the former being suitable for virologists, bacteriologists, and biomedical researchers, the latter for nutritionists, naturopaths, environmental scientists, and ecologists. Furthermore, governments that have an investment in protecting corporations always prefer to fund "war" type of research. Indeed, proving infectious hypotheses will only require a "magic bullet" solution to the problem, not annoying EPA regulations that would mandate lower levels of arsenic in drinking water; of pesticides, antibiotics, steroids, and GMO's in the food supply; of toxic waste in the soil; and of carbon dioxide in the air. With this picture in mind, I propose to go back to the actual war on cancer and see who lost it and why.

2. Characters in the Drama

As we've seen, Nixon's war on cancer was declared in 1971. At that time, the war on polio had been won and infectious diseases no longer seemed a threat in the developed world. Cancer was the big boogey man. "Let's wage war on it," the president said.

War is a bit like drama, and it is useful to introduce the characters in play. To simplify, I will stick with the main ones, two of which are institutions.[10] The National Institutes of Health, or NIH, is based in Bethesda, Maryland; the Centers for Disease Control, or CDC, is based in Altanta, Georgia. The first is a medical-research institute proper, where one finds laboratories, cells, Petri dishes, test tubes, guinea pigs and the like. The latter is a public-health institute where one finds statistical data, periodic reports, the monitoring of outbreaks and of the clinical trails designed to test new treatments. Both are governmentally funded, lavishly. Accidentally, I once visited the National Endowment for the Humanities, or NEH, and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in the same day. The first occupies part of the mezzanine floor in a museum building in downtown Washington D.C. Employees work in cubicles separated from their neighbors by a partition. Some of them run nationwide programs essential to the progress of American research, but the government will not provide them with an office of their own. As I later arrived in nearby

Bethesda, at the NIH, I saw an entire city of more than forty buildings, all really large, fully equipped, and completely devoted to medical research. What a difference! I had been begging the impoverished NEH for research funds in the history of medicine, and felt a pang in my heart as I realized how much money the other side had.

In 1971, both the NIH and the CDC were squarely in the allopathic collective. They had a vested interest in perpetuating the focus on infectious epidemics and they interpreted the war on cancer in an allopathic way. For about two decades, NIH virologists kept looking for ways in which viruses could be claimed to cause cancer. Since the Koch postulates did not apply, they resorted to the concept of a slow virus, which implies that a virus has both an immediate and an afterthought effect. A new, long-term power was now attributed to viruses that had been shown to cause a given disease in their immediate effect. Dominated by the allopathic thought collective, the research environment was unhealthy. Changing specialty could be a suicidal move. When NIH virologists understood that their viruses were their only viable professional investments, many of them became "of the virus party." Three important viruses had been the Epstein-Barr, the Papilloma, and the Hepatitis-B viruses. Based on the Koch postulates, the first had been proven to cause mononucleosis, the second genital warts, and the third Hepatitis-B. Their alleged slow effect was invariably cancer, in the forms of lymphoma, cervical cancer, and liver cancer respectively (Duesberg 1996, 89-129). These claims were not backed by scientific data, since in many cases fewer than 30 percent of all cancer patients had ever had the alleged causal viruses at all. They baffled the public who intuitively knew cancer was not infectious.

No wonder the NIH itself was worried about the confusing effect! Slow-effect claims were not based on reliable scientific data and were not useful to the public. They were quite useful to the virologists whose careers were attached to them instead. Slow-effect claims enabled virologists to get more grant money to develop tests and vaccines, which they eventually patented, thus generating income also from their patent royalties. These tests were then integrated into medical protocols, so that they became part of the mandatory procedures of diagnosis, with the effect of driving up the cost of health care. These disservices fattened the pockets of researchers, and mislead the public that still believed the allopathic thought style to be the only scientific way to think about health (Duesberg 1996, 83-87; Proctor 1995, 35-53).

In the meanwhile, the CDC kept looking for suspicious outbreaks. And it did find some, for example, legionnaire disease that caused much alarm and not too much damage. However, many of the outbreaks of this era in the West were primarily iatrogenic (Duesberg 1996, 18-23, 54-59). Another area of action was flu vaccinations. In 1918-19 the Spanish flu arrived on a world population debilitated by a four-year war. It killed twenty million (Duesberg 1996, 139). A vaccine would have helped, but sparing the population those war deprivations would have helped even more. After World War Two, when flu vaccines became available, the CDC orchestrated flu-vaccination campaigns aimed at increasing productivity by minimizing sick leave (Duesberg 1996, 140). This even as an excessive use of vaccine weakens the immune system, while generally speaking, a few days of sick leave are good for a person's health. Also, the CDC was actively creating scares, making people feel threatened, as in the most recent case of the Anthrax scare. In a holistic perspective, a high state of alarm is seen as cause for high levels of anxiety in

the population, which constitutes a health threat in itself. The CDC could have more productively collaborated with the newly founded Environmental Protection Agency, the EPA, to thoroughly investigate new environmental threats to public health, such as landfills, toxic waste, arsenic in water, pesticides, and so on.

The other two main characters in the play are individuals, the virologists Robert Gallo and Peter Duesberg. They are in the same age group and both specialize in retro-virology, but here the similarities end, as their personalities indicate. Gallo is a second-generation Italian American who was educated in the US and made his career at NIH. In his memoir he claims that he became a virologist because his little sister died of leukemia, which inspired him to resolve medical problems (Gallo 1991, 16-19). Gallo is a gregarious, extroverted person. He is a godfather figure, full of benevolence for his collaborators whom he kept safely under his wing. Gallo also has a linear concept of science, according to which knowledge is cumulative and based on sheer amount of data (Gallo 1991,22, 27-43).

Duesberg was born, raised, and educated in Germany and is a professor at UC Berkeley. He does not make any sentimental claims about his calling. He is a loner capable of taking unpopular positions and building alliances beyond institutional borders. He believes that knowledge is the ability to provide simple, consistent, logical interpretations of vast amounts of data, including data pre-existing the interpreter and generated independently of him or her (Duesberg 1996, 61). Science is the path to knowledge, which is often tortuous.

3. The Story

In the rest of this article, I will show how the infectious hypothesis about AIDS became an orthodoxy because, in the powerful scientific circles of the NIH, a great deal of being "of the virus party" was at play. I will use two memoirs, by Duesberg and Gallo, and the famous HTLV papers published by Gallo in May 1983 and May 1984, during the Reagan reelection campaign.

Inventing the AIDS Virus, by Peter Duesberg (1996), is not presented as a memoir per se. It is a brief history of biomedical research in the US with respect to cancer and AIDS, from the perspective of a very critical member of the research community. Duesberg mentions himself rarely, and does so by using the third person (69, 86, 103, 196-99, and passim). Nonetheless, his book speaks of its author indirectly as one prepared to make powerful enemies if necessary. Virus Hunting: AIDS, Cancer, and the Human Retroviruses: A Story of Scientific Discovery, by Robert Gallo (1991), is a more typical memoir. It begins with the author's origins. Gallo presents himself as a proud Italian American, and claims that his ancestors' immigration was motivated by romance as opposed to poverty or an arranged marriage (13). Gallo's grandfather was a northerner, from affluent Piedmont, while his grandmother was an impoverished Calabrese (14). Gallo then proceeds to narrate his childhood trauma, and casts the death of his only sister as his motivation for cancer research (16-19). The story continues as the would-be scientist develops, describing the excitement of scientific discovery, with its moments of success, failure, and success again.

The book is a tongue-in-cheek apology for the accusations of scientific misconduct leveled against Gallo, and the embarrassment he caused to the scientific community and NIH (Gallo 1991, 205-216 and passim). The main accusation was claiming to have isolated HIV himself, when in reality he had borrowed it from the lab of his competitor, Dr. Montagnier. Gallo addresses this accusation by claiming that, with his clout, he helped Montaigner publish his paper on HIV (then called HTLV) in a timely and momentous way (189-97). Gallo portrays himself as too much of a gregarious and generous person for his own good. He comes across as one who needs to be popular.

Duesberg comes across as a person disenchanted with his profession, an immigrant who once had faith in the American dream, and is still appalled by the cynicism and greed behind the façade. A fierce loner, he is a disappointed person accustomed to being unpopular and controversial. But he constructs himself as a scientist capable of interpreting vast amounts of data clearly, simply, and consistently (61). In his rhetoric, he is a fierce logician and a cautionary skeptic; a conservative, traditionalist person wary of modern excesses. He characterizes Gallo as a guy who knows that the American dream is all about money and thrives on it anyway; a ruthless guy, an insider to the allopathic thought collective who knows the system and pulls the ropes well (199-208 and passim).

From 1971 to 1981, during the war on cancer, these two virologists occupied very different positions. Duesberg was at UC Berkeley where he kept a low profile with hints of the California eccentric. His career developed far away from the federal government and its lavish perks. An expatriate, he did not commingle well, thus relishing a taste for the controversial. In Bethesda, Gallo directed the NIH Laboratory of Tumor Cell Biology. A pro, he was trendy and knew how to get momentum.

Both focused on retroviruses and cancer, but Duesberg came to believe that retroviruses are benign while Gallo believes they cause both cancer and AIDS. Retroviruses are a type of microorganism distinct from both bacteria and viruses. Bacteria are mono-cellular organisms, while viruses are much smaller. A virus is a code for a microorganism that needs a cell to become alive and then destroys it. The behavior of retroviruses has not been fully understood yet. With viruses, the passage of genetic information goes from a virus's DNA to a cell's DNA or RNA. With retroviruses, RNA can get back to DNA. The enzyme Reverse Transcriptase is essential to this process. Allopathic approaches present retroviruses as viruses that destroy cells, but do so in ways opposite to viruses. In a holistic perspective, retroviruses are believed to be innocuous for Reverse Transcriptase allows them to enter the cell without destroying it (Duesberg 116-127; Gallo 1991, 93-95; Epstein 1996, 69-71, 105-107, 183). While Duesberg's papers sounded like cautionary tales against the general enthusiasm about the virus-cancer hypothesis (1987, 1989a, 1989b), Gallo kept working on viruses that putatively caused cancer, without ever really proving they did. "Viruses can't cause cancer," his foil kept cautioning, "for cancer is not infectious."

4. Enter AIDS

A new character in the drama is AIDS. What is AIDS? At least in 1984, Gallo and Duesberg would have agreed that it is a severe deficiency, a collapse of the immune system that enables the onset of a number of previously-known diseases, and is irreversible, hence leading to death. Today, dissenting scientists are beginning to formulate more holistic hypotheses, such as that AIDS is a disease of toxicity and oxidation rather than immunodeficiency proper (Papadopulos- Eleopulos 1992). In Virus Hunting, Gallo scoffs at Duesberg's alleged belief that "almost everything can cause AIDS" (149). Later, he defends his own hypothesis by claiming that "some viruses persist *despite* the immune response to them", and one of them is HIV, which "escapes by mutation" (295, 293). But what if AIDS were a disease of Gaia that affects humans as cells as elements in this superorganism? Levels of pollution never reached before indicate that the presence of humans and the pace with which we deplete environmental resources is now a serious challenge to Gaia's homeostasis. Could the phenomenon of AIDS not be related to the high global toxicity that threatens the biota's health? If this level of toxicity is beyond tolerance for human life--as in the dire predictions of many deep ecologists—then, ironically, Gallo would have put the correct hypothesis in Duesberg's mouth.

On what causes the toxicity manifest in AIDS the allopathic and the holistic thought collectives definitely diverge. For Gallo, HTLV-III, which he later renamed HIV, is a retrovirus that enters lymphocytes, the white blood cells that function as soldiers of immunity. Using Reverse Transcriptase, this retrovirus replicates itself in there, thus destroying cells. But, Gallo admits, it does so in slow motion, namely not while it is alive and present; much later, even 10 or 20 years later, for it's a slow virus that likes to take long naps in the cells (237-259). For Duesberg, a cluster of factors cause debilitation in an AIDS patient's immune system. Factors vary from group to group, and some are still undetermined. No infectious agent is at play, much less retroviruses, which, Duesberg claims, are completely benign (116-127). In his view, for the San Francisco gay men who frequented the bathhouses and were the victims of the first outbreaks, likely factors were 1), excessive stress from having a day job and a nightlife at the bathhouses; 2), excessive use of antibiotics taken as a preventative for flu and other infections from sexual contacts at the bathhouses themselves; 3), frequent use of nitrite inhalants called poppers, which help to relax the sphincter but are highly toxic; 4), poor nutrition from eating fast food in a hurry; 5), excessive presence of extraneous microbes given from high number of sexual partners with whom bodily fluids were exchanged (270-75, 282-83, 412-13, 419-21, 441). For the populations of Africa said to be the main victims of AIDS today, likely factors are 1), unsanitary water; 2), malnutrition; 3), microbes; 4), hunger; 5), pollution; 6), fear (289-297). This is good news, since all these factors can be eliminated. Widespread awareness of Gaia and our existence within this superorganism can generate the ecologically-conscious behavior necessary to protect our planet's health and our own. Isn't that a more hopeful prospect than trying to wage war on every putatively dangerous microorganisms and those who allegedly carry and exchange them? Understandably, the gay communities affected by the early outbreaks felt accused by Duesberg's allegations. Still there is hope in knowing that eliminating certain factors can reverse one's death sentence. Duesberg also reassures us that there is no such thing as a slow virus. A slow virus is simply not an infectious agent. Typically, in his caustic rhetoric, Duesberg concludes that there's only "slow virologists," his fixated competitors who

won't give up on the infectious hypothesis (75).

These virologists, Duesberg observes, make claims that defy common sense and take advantage of people's credulity and faith in the objectivity of science. For example, a woman who sleeps with her boyfriend at twenty and gets warts, and eventually gets cervical cancer when she's menopausal, is supposed to believe that the virus she got with the warts is the actual cause of disease in her cervix. How can anyone logically say that in the thirty years in between nothing else has happened that could have caused the cancer? Or that nothing can be done to prevent the allegedly sleeping virus from acting later on? In a holistic perspective, claiming that slow viruses cause cancer is like claiming that one's birth is the prime cause of one's death; not untrue, but a rather absurd sophism. It's in between birth and death that something intervenes to kill one, and that's what one wants to steer clear of. If the biota is fatally ill with pollution its demise will kill all of its complex organisms. Bacteria will survive, Margulis assures (1997). But maybe Gaia can be healed by a more sustainable ecological politics that will save her life and our own.

The eight Gallo papers published in *Science* and *The Lancet* from May 1983 to May 1984 are what come closest to scientifically supporting Gallos's infectious hypothesis.[11] I will examine their rhetorical strategies and the political context in which they appeared. On April 13, 1984, Secretary of Health Margaret Hackler held a press conference in the context of the Reagan reelection campaign. As a way to affirm the administration's effectiveness, the conference proclaimed the triumph of American science over AIDS (Epstein 1996, 72-80). Gallo eagerly served as the discoverer. The four papers were published on May 4, 1984 and media proclamation followed about one month later. This improper scientific practice was designed to undermine verification of Gallo's claims by his peers in the scientific community. After the press conference, all moneys and research energies were diverted to applied research, which made it impossible to duplicate Gallo's experiments. The papers present a moderate to strong correlation between the presence of HIV and AIDS, but do not prove causality in any way (papers # 4, 5, 6, 7). HIV does not meet the Koch postulates, nor are other causality principles invoked. Nonetheless, ironically, the sequence of papers denotes a pattern of development that points to the scientist's concern with passing the Koch's test in some way.

The papers also use an elusive rhetoric. The word "cause" does not appear, but "correlation," "partial correlation," and "primary cause" appear ubiquitously in its stance. The word "demonstrates" is not used, but "suggests" appears abundantly, with other noncommittal expressions (papers 1-8, passim). This could be the typical style of postmodern scientific rhetoric, except that I don't find it in the lucid, transparent arguments of the dissenters. Caution, but also concern about lawsuits, are, I suspect, the cause. The not-so-subtle press fired up the rhetoric, thus causing panic to rise. Furthermore, Gallo picked HIV, which stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus, as HTVL-III's new label, thus establishing a verbal correlation (to AIDS) that deceptively suggested all doubts had been resolved.

While the experiments reported in the papers did not prove that HIV passed the test of causality designed by Koch's postulates, the principles therein established do guide the papers' organization. However, for some reason, the logic is reversed. The two May 1983 papers focus on isolation, which is Koch's second

postulate (papers # 1, 2). The four May 4th, 1984 papers report experiments on the virus' presence in patients (papers # 3, 4, 5, 6). Gallo could never find the active virus in people with AIDS. In his memoir, he claims that the virus acted too quickly, making it impossible for samples to arrive in his lab (139-162). As is well known, Gallo decided that it was OK to satisfy the first postulate by using antibodies instead, even though up to that time--and for all other infections--the formation of antibodies is a sign of recovery. Even so, the order in which Gallo's papers appeared suggests that his lab worked on isolating the virus way before he was sure it was present in all patients. But why isolate a virus that has already proven unworthy of further attention? Clearly, some form of being "of the virus party" was at play. Gallo's allopathic research strategy was an obstacle to the pursuit of other avenues, for it fell short of ruling out a virus that was not present in all patients.

Conclusion

The health wars of the mid 1980's focused on establishing the credibility of an infectious hypothesis about AIDS, but much more was at stake. As became more apparent later, a paradigm shift was in process according to which the allopathic thought collective was losing credibility and a new, holistic thought style was emerging. Holistic thinking about health implies a sense of connectedness between organisms and their interdependent elements. As ecofeminism can explain, this sense of connectedness challenges the Cartesian separation between *res cogitans* and *res extensa*; between subject and object; mind and body. Gaian philosophies have influenced the new spirituality movement with the idea that our hostess, the planet Earth, is a superorganism with a life of its own. The biota can be represented as an integrated whole of biosphere and atmosphere, within which we are mere cells. In this framework, disease is a force that creates change, not a dangerous foreign enemy. The AIDS crisis can be seen as a crisis in the life of Gaia, whose health is in danger due to human pollution and the toxicity in its body it creates. The excessive focus on the infectious hypothesis about AIDS was a symptom of the old thought style's resistance to change, whose damage to AIDS patients and the general population is yet to be assessed. Dissenters propose that, like cancer, AIDS is a disease of toxicity whose causes are environmentally related, reflecting modern thought and its reduction of non-human beings to mere resources. Ecofeminist thought provides the framework to place this notion in the larger context of new spiritualities and their emphasis on Gaia's sacredness. If the health of each cell is proportional to the health of the organism it is part of, then everyone has an interest in protecting Gaia's homeostasis. In disseminating their knowledge despite resistance to change, AIDS-science dissenters have made powerful enemies yet they have activated the mechanism of scientific change. Dissemination of the new paradigm across the cultural landscape is now necessary; ecofeminism has the theory and influence to facilitate the shift underway.

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Notes

[1] In his pioneer work in science studies, Jewish scholar-physician Ludwik Fleck, from Poland, identified the presence of thought collectives in scientific and medical research. The concept is explained in his book *Genesis and* <u>Development of a Scientific Fact</u>, whose German original was published by a Swiss press in 1935. Its English translation appeared in 1979. A thought collective is a group of scientists who operate on the basis of certain assumptions that are taken for granted rather than verified or questioned. These assumptions are of course based on the characteristics of the cultural space in which they operate.

[2] I refer to Kuhn's study of scientific progress in <u>The Structure of Scientific Revolutions</u>, first published in 1962. There, Kuhn argues that, as belief-systems become prevalent, scientific paradigms are constituted and govern the structure of scientific research. When overwhelming evidence from empirical observation suggests that the reigning paradigm no longer holds, a scientific revolution happens and a new paradigm is established. The Copernican Revolution from a geocentric to a heliocentric universe is the typical example of the dynamics in which Kuhn is interested.

[3] My thanks to the activists of HEAL San Diego for alerting me to the controversies in 1996, and to all the members of the Southern California safer-sex education community.

[4] Lovelock published two books on Gaia, <u>Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth</u> (1979) and <u>The Ages of Gaia</u> (1988). The second book deals with the question that, if Gaia was a self-perpetuating life system, pollution could not hurt her. This embarrassed environmentalists who wanted to take Lovelock's hypothesis seriously and use it to generate ecological awareness.

[5] In his memoir about AIDS science and its controversies, Peter Duesberg, the most scientifically qualified

among the dissenters, traces a history of the successes of allopathic medicine which provides details on how allopathic approaches defeated the listed diseases (1995).

[6] Carpenter (1986) and Cuppage (1994) trace a history of scurvy and how its understanding changed, from infectious to nutritionally-related. Carpenter (1981) traces a similar history of pellagra.

[7] In "The Hidden Cause of AIDS," Helen Epstein suggests that many impoverished sub-Saharan African communities who are receiving aid by NGO focusing on AIDS, are well aware of the connection between their degraded environment and their poor health. However, a tacit acceptance of the AIDS orthodoxy is their only chance to get foreign aid. Indeed, if NGO's challenged the infectious hypothesis, they would lose their moneys and so would the communities they serve. Robin Scovill's video documentary Questioning AIDS in South Africa was filmed as the first AIDS conference that admitted dissenters was being held in Durban, South Africa. It explains the situation in similar terms.

[8] An important voice in elaborating this concept is educational philosopher Maria Montessori. In her Education and Peace (1936), she stated that "ending wars is the work of politics, creating peace is the work of education" (6).

[9] This gradual paradigm change is reflected in the focus of the new branch of the NIH devoted to environmental health (NIEHS, or National Institute for the Environmental Health Sciences).

[10] Many "minor" characters in this drama have made important contributions I cannot describe here. In the mainstream camp, Nobel-Prize winners David Baltimore and Howard Temin, and CDC director Anthony Fauci are most prominent. In the dissenting camp, Nobel-Prize winner Kary Mullis, and scientists Eleni Papadopulos- Eleopulos, Serge Lang, David Rasnick, and Stephan Lanka, as well as cultural analyst Robert Root-Bernstein, activist Christine Maggiore, and journalist Jon Rappaport.

[11] For easy reference, these multi-author papers have been numbered and placed at the bottom of the works cited list.

Economic Globalization and the Free Market Ethos: A Gender Perspective.

By Chineze J. Onyejekwe

Abstract

This paper focuses on the consequences of economic globalization on women's welfare. The principles and ideological origins of the neoliberal economic policies dominating this process are analyzed from a gender perspective. The impact of this process on women's welfare particularly women's work is discussed. The various ways of reducing if not eradicating women's vulnerability to the negative effects of this ideology are also suggested.

Key words: Economic globalization, neoliberal economic policies, women's welfare and work.

Since the 1960s the term globalization has been used to describe technological processes and advances that have made our world seem smaller. In term of economics, an aspect of this process (economic globalization) greatly refers to the inexorable integration of markets, nation - states, and technologies to a degree never witnessed before – in a way that is enabling individuals, corporations and nation-states to reach around the world farther, faster, deeper and cheaper than ever before. The predominant ideology steering economic globalization, macroeconomic policy and political decision-making in much of the world is referred to as "neoliberalism." Neoliberalism is a set of economic policies that have become widespread during the last 25 years or so, and its main points include:

- The rule of the Market: Liberating "free" enterprise or private enterprise from any bonds imposed by the government (the state), no matter how much social damage this causes. Greater openness to international trade and investment, as in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). This

reduces wages by de- unionizing workers and eliminating workers' rights that had been won over many years of struggle. No more price controls. All in all, total freedom of movement for capital, goods and services.

- Cutting public expenditure for social services like education and health care.

- Reducing the safety-net for the poor, and even maintenance of roads, bridges, and water supply -- again in the name of reducing government's role.

- Deregulation: Reduce government regulation of everything that could diminish profits, including protecting the environment and safety on the job.

- Privatization: Sell state-owned enterprises, goods and services to private investors. This includes banks, key industries, railroads, toll highways, electricity, schools, hospitals and even fresh water. Although usually done in the name of greater efficiency, which is often needed, privatization has mainly had the effect of concentrating wealth even more in a few hands and making the public pay even more for its needs.

- Eliminating the concept of "The Public Good" or "Community" and replacing it with "individual responsibility," hence pressuring the poorest people in a society to find solutions to their lack of health care, education and social security all by themselves -- then blaming them, if they fail, as "lazy." (Martinez and Garcia, 1997).

Neoliberalism has in recent decades become widespread. The ideological origins of these neoliberal economic policies can be traced to the free-market (free-trade) ethos of the 18th century economist, Adam Smith. In his book titled *The Wealth of Nations* (1776; 1937) Smith states that individuals naturally want to improve their lot in life by employing their capital so that its produce may be of highest value. Yet, the individual's intention is not being the promotion of the society's interest, but is rather purely focused on personal security and self-gain. Experience however shows that individual-endeavors aimed at achieving personal gains often lead to the promotion of public interest. Supporting this viewpoint Lourdes Beneria (1999) opines that at the theoretical level, Smith linked the selfish pursuit of individual gain to the maximization of the wealth of nations through the invisible hand of the market. In her analysis of the impact of globalization on the world economy, she argues that Orthodox Economics has continued to rely on this basic link associated with rational economics. Rational economics stipulates the idea that people are governed by calculated means and ends in attempting to build up wealth. By so doing, it (rational economics) is considered, an embodiment of the neo-classical economic theory. From a gender perspective this theory assumes, that women have lower levels of education and on-the-job-training while their participation in the labor market is constrained by the intermittent nature of their natural childrearing roles or mothering. As Nancy Chodorow (1978) points out, mothering is central to the sexual division of labor. Women's maternal roles have, therefore, had profound effects on their lives; on ideology about them (women); on the reproduction of masculinity and sexual inequality as well as the particular forms of labor power. While

women as mothers are practical actors in the sphere of social reproduction, women's roles have often been associated with domestic and conjugal roles. This has often led to their relative invisibility in other spheres of life, including that of work and labor. Hence, women's status and productive roles have been described as subordinate and their family obligations have been assumed to make them less mobile than their male counterparts (Boserup 1970). Ester Boserup's analysis, however, focuses on non-domestic production as the main determinant of women's position in society, and neglects economic activities within the household, thereby having the tendency to isolate reproductive from productive work. An extensive criticism of Boserup's 1970 work has, been carried out by Lourdes Beneria and Gita Sen (1988). Beneria and Sen described it as being over- empiricist. They also added that Boserup's theoretical position was limited to that of neo- classical economics, which upholds the type of economic development that justifies the idea that the market system allocates resources efficiently. Efficiency or production at the lowest cost is at the core of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank's (WB) imposed economic liberalization policies, which have been implemented by most developing countries since the early 1970s.

Economic liberalization policies are based on the neoliberal ideology, which currently dominates increasingly integrating world economies. This process affects men and women in different ways. According to Chineze J. Onyejekwe (2004a; 2004b), women's experiences with this process are extremely complex and diverse-- both positive and negative. The extent to which one is affected depends on a number of factors such as race, class, sexuality, religion, age, nationality and ethnicity. In terms of employment, for example, women have benefited from this process. The Oxfam report of 8 February 2004, states that in the past 20 years, trade liberalization has created employment for millions of women who now occupy between 60-90% of jobs in the labor-intensive stages of the clothing and food supply chains. In Kenya, 75% of factory workers are women, in Sri Lanka 85% and in Cambodia up to 90% are women (one in five of all 18-25-year-old Cambodian women have jobs in the garment industry). In China's Guangdong province, four out of five people working in the garment sector are women under 25 (there are 26 million migrant workers in the province). A significant number of the women workers in other countries include: 48 percent in India, 74 percent in the Philippines, and 80 percent in China (Durano 2002). In this regard, economic globalization has opened up niches for women to create opportunities, particularly for their livelihood. Despite these benefits, labor market regulations based on the neo-liberal ideology negatively impact on women. These impacts include among others, the feminization of labor, low-income, and the feminization of poverty (Cornia *et al* 1987; Elson and Pearson 1981; Standing 1989; Deshpande 1994). Over the last decade, the number of women living in poverty has increased disproportionately to the number of men (UNFPA 2002). Poverty makes them vulnerable to the various forms of exploitation. For example, it makes them vulnerable to gender-based violence (GBV), and HIV/AIDS. A 2002 World Health Organization (WHO) report states that GBV makes women vulnerable to HIV/AIDS infection and untimely deaths. The report attributes women's vulnerability to both HIV/AIDS and GBV to these factors:

- Biological: greater susceptibility to infection during unprotected sex

- Economic: the lack of education, employment and economic opportunities, and inequitable inheritance laws

- Cultural and gender norms: these restrict women's sexuality and prevent them from availing themselves of information on sexual and reproductive health

- Unwillingness of governments to publicly discuss the empowerment of women in gender relations and sexual practices (WHO 2003).

Realizing these problems, at the World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen 1995) and the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing (1995) women's organizations from all over the world pressed governments, to address women's economic inequality and poverty, and to change macroeconomic policies that hinder women from enjoying secure and sustainable livelihoods.

Neo-liberal economics emphasizes efficiency and growth but it has often failed large segments of the population, particularly women who have largely borne the negative impacts of these policies. In this process, there is therefore the need to institutionalize regulations and structures that will provide for women's welfare and empowerment. Hopefully, better economic policies can be developed in the future.

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Violence against Women: An Issue of Health and Human Rights.

By Chineze J. Onyejekwe

Abstract

Failure to protect women against gender-based violence is a violation of their human rights. This paper links this problem to the spread of HIV/AIDS. The role of the media in perpetuating this problem is briefly analyzed. The role that states should play in the fight against this problem is also, discussed.

Key words: Violence against women, HIV/AIDS, human rights, the media and the role of the state.

Violence against women is an issue of our times. Worldwide, it is estimated that one in every three women has been beaten, raped, coerced into sex or physically abused. Examples abound. According to Amnesty International (2001), official reports in the United States show that a woman is battered every 15 seconds and 700,000 are raped every year. In India, studies have found that more than 40 per cent of married women reported being kicked, slapped or sexually abused for reasons such as their husbands' dissatisfaction with their cooking or cleaning, jealousy, and a variety of other motives such as disputes over dowries. At least 60 women were killed in domestic violence in Kenya in 1998-1999, and 35 per cent of women in Egypt reported being beaten by their husbands. In North Africa, 6,000 women are genitally mutilated each day. In 2001, more than 15,000 women were sold into sexual slavery in China. 200 women in Bangladesh would also have been horribly disfigured when their spurned husbands or suitors burned them with acid. For millions of women the home is, therefore, not a haven but a place of terror. There is also the concern that the media has been perpetuating this problem. In South Africa, for example, the report on the media-training workshop for South African media covering gender violence (Gender link 2001) shows the skewed nature of the portrayal of domestic violence in the media. Stories

on violence against women also tend to be reported as summaries in crime round up and not as features. In many instances, women continue to be represented as helpless victims. In addition, women's rights to dignity and privacy are often ignored in these presentations. Similarly, the entertainment industry has been extremely irresponsible in perpetuating and stereotyping the violent attitudes of men to women (Jeremy Lovell, *The Independent Online Newspaper* [IOL], 5 March 2004). In her study of gender portrayal in the media in India, Meena Shivdas (2004) observes that VAW in films takes the shape of rapes, spousal abuse and sometimes, public humiliation of fallen women. These portrayals convey some sense of reality but the construction of the message leaves many questions unanswered. *Star Trek* actor, Patrick Stewart supports this viewpoint when he asserts that the film industry is partly to blame for a global culture, which glamorizes violence, especially against women. While it has been problematic proving the direct causal effects of media violence and VAW, studies carried out by Baron and Strauss (1987), Weaver (1987) as well as the Report of the United States Attorney General Commission on Pornography (Section 5.2.1 Sexually Violent Material cited by Jennifer Nash 2002) support this view. The Kriegel Commission, set up by the French government to look into the broadcasting standards of violent or pornographic images, also came to the same conclusion (*IOL*, 14 November 2002).

There are also linkages between VAW and HIV/AIDS, the largest health issue currently facing the world (UNAIDS, 2003). It is estimated that over 22 million people have died of AIDS related illnesses in the last 20 years and more than 42 million people are currently infected with a virus which was unknown in 1980 (UNAIDS, 2003). Of note is, however, that the epidemic is a gender issue because it disproportionately affects women and adolescent girls who are socially, culturally, biologically and economically more vulnerable than their male counterparts. According to Susan Fox: "For example, forced sex may directly increase the risk of HIV transmission as a result of trauma; violence or threats of violence may limit the ability to negotiate safer sex; inadequacies in justice systems may result in a disincentive to reporting rape and/or seeking post- exposure prophylaxis; childhood sexual abuse may lead to sexual risk-taking in later life; and sharing positive HIV results may increase the risk of a violent response by a partner" (Fox 2003). In addition, the fear of violence prevents women from accessing HIV/AIDS information; it also prevents them from being tested; from disclosing their HIV status; from accessing services for the prevention of HIV transmission to infants and from receiving treatment and counseling, even when they know they have been infected. This is particularly true where HIV-related stigma remains high (UNAIDS, 2004). Poverty is also another factor. Women of poor economic backgrounds are unable to access antiretroviral drugs; the female condom; microbicides or gain access to justice (to report violence), which involves at least transport; a need for child-care and basic information. In addition, lack of independent income-generation, shelters and good health facilities make it extremely difficult for abused women to leave home (Artz 1999). There have been escalating incidences of HIV/AIDS in the world and these have had enormous implications to social and economic development. Firstly, the escalation over-stretches many countries' health systems' capacity to cope with the provision of adequate care and support. Secondly, it results in decreased productivity and increased employee absenteeism, especially for workers within an age span of 25-49 years (his is the most economically active group). According to Noleen Heyzer, The Executive Director of UNIFEM, with women facing additional obstacles due to the pervasiveness of discriminatory legal frameworks that fail to guarantee them equal rights or equal protection before the law, HIV/AIDS

is not only driven by gender inequality, it entrenches gender inequality. Unfortunately, efforts to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS have so far been largely unsuccessful, and effective treatment remains widely unavailable to poor women. There have been calls for more research to implement preventive policies.

VAW permeates every society. Yet, the fear of speaking out stymies efforts to gather comprehensive statistics about its scope. Fortunately, attempts to quantify the problem have improved advocacy against it, and the global movement for women's human rights has secured international commitments to eradicate it (Saving Women's Lives [SWL] 2002). In this regard, in adopting the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women, the General Assembly (in 1993) defines violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including treats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life" (Article 1). Article 2 of the Declaration also states that violence against women includes, but is not limited to: violence in the family, violence in the general community, and violence perpetrated or condoned by the state. A United Nations Children's Fund report however, shows that as recently as six years ago, only 44 countries out of 193 in the world had laws against domestic violence and only 17 countries outlawed marital rape. These abuses, which are a violation of women's human rights, are rooted in a global culture of discrimination, which denies women equal rights with men and which legitimizes the appropriation of women's bodies for individual gratification or political ends (Amnesty USA, 2003). This observation is supported by a 2003 United Nations Development Fund for Women which shows, that only three nations have legislation that specifically addresses violence against women as a category of criminal activity in itself" (Shauna Curphey, Women's Enews, 19 March 2004).

VAW is one of the most widespread human rights abuses and public health problems in the world today. There is the need for a comprehensive response in order to address the intersections between VAW and HIV/AIDS through:

- The re-orientation of social policies and organizational practices

- Expanding the evidence base which highlights the prevalence of violence against women, including the economic, social and health costs, and its links to HIV and AIDS

- Scaling up the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic by governments, with the goal of helping those who are HIV positive live longer, more productive lives through counseling, treatment and care. Those not infected should also be enabled to remain so, and build better lives for all.

- Promoting national and community level action that improves the education and legal standing of women and builds on successful efforts and encourages innovation and partnership among groups working on both issues.

- Raising awareness about VAW and HIV/AIDS in the media.

- Regulating gender portrayals in the media, for example, through changes in a country's advertising codes.

- Mobilizing leadership at global, national, and community levels to generate action to ensure that normative change occurs to make violence against women unacceptable.

VAW is a simple phrase that encompasses a horrifying list of abusive behavior both physically and psychologically. Governments should recognize their complicity in gender-based violence when they fail to create or enforce laws against it. Fortunately, Amnesty International is currently working on holding governments accountable to prevent, punish and investigate VAW by state and non-state actors.

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Ishraqat, Part I.

Flagging a New Iraq: Failure of a National Symbol.

By Babak Rahimi

The verdict is out. "It's ugly!" my Iraqi friend tells me. "The new flag seems divided into two parts, a flag with a split personality. It can almost constitute two separate flags if you split it in half." He adds, "The colors are also pretty dull. Baby blue and white? Keep the red, black and green!"

In the streets of Baghdad, the majority of Iraqis received the proposed flag with a similar line of skepticism. "I don't like the new one," said Dhia Assi, a bakery owner. "The old one used to make me feel revolutionary. I feel this one belongs to another country."[1] Muthana Kahlil, a supermarket owner in Saddoun, a commercial center in Baghdad, said, "The flags of other Arab countries are red and green and black. Why did they put in these colors that are the same as Israel? Why was the public opinion not consulted?"[2]

In several neighborhoods in Baghdad, residents displayed strong negative reactions to the flag, many objecting that the light blue stripes were reminiscent of the Israeli flag. The Website of an Iraqi dissident group, www.albasrah.net, for instance, showed a picture of the Israeli flag transforming into the new Iraqi one, with underneath the flag reading, "Nile-Euphrates". Objections were also voiced with regard to the removal of the phrase, "Allah Akbar" (God is Great), which was seen as the defilement of a sacred symbol. Likewise, hundreds of university students demonstrated in Mosul, northern Iraq, and other protesters burnt the new banner in places like Najaf and Fallujah, the city at the heart of Iraq's insurgency.[3] In much dismay of U.S. and the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC), the flag has met with widespread public disapproval, so much that its use as a national symbol of a future democratic Iraq remains highly doubtful.

In broad terms, to many Iraqis the new fluttering national icon heralds a new era of subjection, a sign of perpetual U.S. domination in which even the most sacred sign of a nation, its flag, manifests a strange and foreign design. While reflecting the struggle that exists in the country ahead of the supposed transfer of power at the end of June, the "blue flag" reminds many Iraqis of deepening crisis of political legitimacy which appears to characterize the future of the country for years to come. In a symbolic way, however, the new banner also highlights a historical struggle for national selfhood that now, more than ever, appears to face an unsettled future.

Ventures of the Iraqi Flag: a (brief) history

The original flag of Iraq was adopted in 1921. Black-white-green horizontal tricolor, aligned with a red trapezoid extending from the side and two stars on the triangle. The first flag represented the creation of the Arab kingdom that remained under British control until 1932. On 14 July 1958 the Faisal dynasty was deposed, which led to the proclamation of a republic. Designed in form of a black-white-green vertical tricolor, the second flag was devised with a white strip in the middle and a red eight-pointed star along with a yellow circle in its center. In an attempt to depict ancient Mesopotamian history, the sun-like symbol represented ancient Babylon, making reference to the emblem of the Babylonian god Shamash.[4]

The third flag was adopted after toppling of the Qassim regime in 1963. Designed in form of three stripes of red, white and black, including three green stars on the white strip, the flag and its three green stars originally signaled the proposed union of Iraq with the two Arab nations of Egypt and Syria, which also had flags with stars in the middle. The third flag appeared when the new regime began an extensive expansion of national ideology and new cultural policy in order to bolster a sense of pan-Arab patriotism after the 1967 Six Day War against Israel and while vying for military hegemony in the region against the Shah of Iran.[5] More importantly, the flag further displayed the commitment for the creation of a secular pan-Arab nationhood, after the Ottomans (symbolically) ended Turkish rule over the Arabs on October 3, 1918. The third flag, though, continued to be the symbol of the Iraqi nation, authorized by the Baʿath Socialist Party, until the Persian Gulf War in January 4, 1991.

The fourth version was made with a minor change to the 1963 flag, as it added the words of "Allah Akbar" between the stars. This was in a way a major development in the design of the national logo since the three stars that represented the Baʿath nationalist motto of "Wihda, Hurriyah, Ishtrirakia" (Unity, Freedom, Socialism) were now fused with one of Islam's most basic declaration of faith.[6] Ostensibly, the reason for the added religious symbol was to gain support from Muslims around the globe in the period that immediately preceded the Persian Gulf War.

The announcement of the most recent flag by the IGC on 26 April 2004 marks the fifth attempt to form a new national symbol; this time however the attempt was to abandon more than half a century of pan-Arab nationalism. In a radical shift away from the previous four designs, the new flag dumps the red-and-black

colors for two blue horizontal stripes along the bottom and a yellow one sandwiched between them. As it appears, above the three stripes is white and in the middle a blue crescent. The blue stripes represent the Tigris and Euphrates (by extension Shiʻi and Sunni Arabs) on a field of pure white, representing "peace, reconciliation and a new era".[7] Yellow signifies the Kurdish minority. The blue crescent represents Islam, hence, no longer bearing the words of "Allah Akbar". Two days after the announcement, the pale blue color was considerably darkened. This was done in order to change the original color of the crescent and stripes which appeared identical to the dominant color in the flag of Israel.

In the respect to such a turbulent history, why does the adoption of new flags matter so much? What is so important about flags that lead individuals to strong emotions to oppose or uphold them throughout history? Although these questions require thorough analysis, at this point it is important to describe the authority of symbols in the production of national identity and political power.

The Political Aesthetics of Symbols

When in 1861 Italy began its phase of unification, Massimo d' Azeglio, the former prime minister of Piedmont, pointed out the following: "we have made Italy: now we have to make Italians." What d'Azeglio suggests here is that the formation of a state does not automatically and necessarily entail the creation of a nation, and that in order to unify a country, individuals need to also *form* a national consciousness which would allow them to feel members of a nation, as "Italians".

Symbols play an integral role in the formation of nations since they arouse feelings of collective incorporation and a community of feeling in which persons of all ages are meant to feel themselves as members of a greater collectivity. Through the medium of dress, uniforms, myth, song and ritual symbols, collective identity is shaped and it enters the domain of everyday life. This is so as symbols assume a prominent role when rules of conduct and common affiliation to symbols help individuals become members of a nation.

The significance of flags and anthems in this respect is that they can bring together individual subjectivities by developing new tastes and emotions, habits and ideals, aiming to express the deepest aspiration and ideologies of a people. In a sense, flags help to shape new motivations in the formation of national consciousness. In his famous book, *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson explains the importance of the national anthem as the following: "No matter how banal the words and mediocre the tunes, there is in this singing an experience of simultaneity. At precisely such moments, people wholly unknown to each other utter the same verses to the same melody. The image: unisonance. Singing the Marseillaise, Waltzing Matilda, and Indonesia Raya provides occasions for unisonality, for the echoed physical realization of the imagined community."[8] In other words, anthems and flags are in the business of constructing emotional attachments and imaginary relations that create a spirit of community, a sort of love for the nation.

What is crucial, though, is the fact that collective identity must be primarily expressed through symbolic

guises. A set of national symbols like flags, which so colorfully claim to represent a people, are the best representative of such semblance, since they embody the ideals and the pivotal values of a nation; expressing political power and depicting collective identity.

The Symbolic Pacification of A Nation

But prior to constructing attachments that create a new national consciousness for an "imagined community", the post-Saddam Iraq first requires a legitimate government that can officially authorize the use of such symbols. This is crucial since it is in the formation of an integrated and, more importantly, an *autonomous* state that the emergence of a new imaginary collective body could possibly be realized; that is, a collectivity that has indeed attained a sense of democratic patriotism.

Come June 30th the handover of sovereignty in form of an UN-picked interim government will not be a finalized event, but a gradual process towards self-rule. For the most part, the new government will be supervised and, despite claims of an "advisory status", controlled by the U.S.-led coalition without a precise date of complete handover of authority. In other terms, Iraqis will not assume authority until-- as we are told-- security is established in the country.

However, with the incessant rise of insurgency and the increasing mobilization of Shi'i and Sunni (domestic and foreign) forces, the creation of an autonomous interim government, with the *full* responsibility to set up elections and bureaucratic apparatus to govern the country (in particular the military) by next January, appears an interminable work-in-progress. In view of an Iraq mired in violence and volatile sectarian and political groupings, the realization of an autonomous state, elected and held accountable by the Iraqis, looks more like a perpetual (gradual) preparation for an interim government than an actual consolidation of a democratic state.

The overhaul of the national icon raises some other serious problems. To begin with, the UK-based designer of the flag, Rifat al-Chadirchi, has family ties with one of the members of the IGC. This surely underlines the problem of legitimacy for the new banner, as charges of nepotism brood over the veiling of the new flag--even if it is intended to be a temporary replacement for the old one. But more troubling is the fact that Mr. Rifat al-Chardirchi has lived in exile since 1980. How are we, then, to assume that the designer of the nation's most sacred icon is truly acquainted with Iraq and its more than twenty years of war and suffering? As an Iraqi-in-exile, was he indeed able to depict the desires, hopes and ideals of everyday Iraqis in his new flag, apparently made and designed in the U.K.? There is surely a serious disparity between the inventor and the nation he is attempting to depict in this new flag.

In so far as the aesthetics of the design are concerned, the new flag lacks coherence and symmetry. At first, its minimalist strokes manifest abstract motifs that are simply dull and unappealing. But also in its simplicity of form, as my Iraqi friend correctly points out, the flag appears to be divided into two, separate

but combined, divided but joined, as though depicting a nation split into two identities. But what really underlines the flag's unattractive façade, as it has been pointed out by number of Iraqis, is its rigidity in form, austerity in shape, and, most troubling, choice of color.

Whilst it may appear as a given, there is simply no relationship between Iraq's cultural history and the predominant color of blue found in the flag. In this regard, the use of blue for the stripes (and the crescent which I will discuss accordingly) underlines a major problem of symbolic significance. From one point angle, it appears that the color merely symbolizes the two rivers. But then one could also object to whether it represents a mere geographical location or a spectrum of the Iraqi society, since by extension it supposedly signifies Iraq's Arabs as the basin of the country's heartland. But it is unclear how effectively the blue strips actually represent both the two rivers and the diverse Arab population of Iraq at the same time. It would have been better, of course, if Mr. al-Chadrichi made use of the color to symbolize one theme for a logo at a time, that is: either geographical or religious identity. Otherwise, in contrast to its apparent simplicity, the use of colors is complicated and confusing.

From another perspective, the color used in the banner also fails to use a common symbol for Islam. The problem here is that blue has never played a predominant role as a sacred symbol in Islamic history. The only occasion in which blue stands for some sort of sacred significance in the Islamic world is with regard to the intricate tile mosaic work of the Persianite mosques (visible mostly in the dome structure) that primarily expanded under the Timurid and the Safavid dynasties in the fifteenth to the eighteenth century.[9] In that sense, the architectural use of blue had to do mainly with the incorporation of pre- Islamic Zoroastrian religious symbols into Islamic sacred space, where the color blue apparently functioned as a sort of magical color to repel evil—similar to the gargoyles in medieval cathedrals.

The most sacred color in Islam is green, which is believed to have been the favorite of the Prophet. Black represents mourning (or at times uprising) and red martyrdom, colors mostly favored by the Shi'is. But nowhere do we see these colors used in the new flag. Why? It appears as though the UK-based Iraqi designer wanted to symbolically dress up an (over) optimistic, calm, happy, peaceful post-Saddam Iraq, as if a complete break from the past can be easily achieved by a placid blue and white colorful design.

When considering the color blue, one becomes immediately aware of a feeling of serenity and peace, a sort of sensation one gets looking at a calm sea or a cloudless sky. Blue signifies tranquility and composure. But it also underscores an attempt to symbolically pacify a nation that currently experiences turmoil and upheaval. The "blue flag" invites us to the visual imagery of a nation that pretends to accommodate diverse religious and ethnic identities, calmly coexisting in peace and harmony. This, of course, stands sharply in contrast to the Ba'athist-style-flag that represents Arab history as blood and sacrifice, impressing on us a sensation of rebellion and confrontation, aggression and revolution.

What is most dismaying about this flag is not that it merely fails to produce an authentic portrayal of a presumed Iraqi identity. Rather it neglects to make any reference to a shared history and a common tradition, to which Iraqis can relate and accordingly consider sacred in terms of a national symbol. The U.S.

sanctioned leadership has committed the error of mistakenly authorizing a simplified set of symbolism; applying austere signs which the ordinary Iraqis fail to identify as a meaningful symbolic representation of their homeland. It would have been wiser if the colors were drawn upon from the country's cultural past in order to encourage a sense of trust and continuity of national identity in the post-Saddam Iraq. All in all, the shade of blue is not one of the colors associated with the fertile-crescent that would stir reverence and a sense of patriotism among Iraqis.

Even more problematic, however, is the use of colorful strips in an attempt to represent religious and ethnic affiliation. Though it may be true that the color yellow represents the Kurdish ethic identity, taking its color from the yellow star on the flag of Kurdistan, the concatenation of the two colors, next to a white field, symbolically reinforces and overemphasizes ethnic and religious factionalism. By this I mean that, though historically it remains the case that ethnic and religious factionalism has played a crucial role in the making of Iraq, the new flag reconfirms these relations on more fragmentary terms through the use of colorful strips. In the context of this faction symbolism, this clean-cut and dressed up design, accordingly, fails to represent other ethic and religious minorities, like the Caldonian Catholics, who form an integral part of the post-Saddam Iraq. This further reveals the problem that the new flag does not truly represent the entire Iraqi ethnic and religious cultures as a heterogeneous collectivity.

Then there is the crescent. Although often associated with the Islamic faith, early Muslims never used the emblem to represent their faith. In fact, the crescent has nothing to do with the early Islamic faith, as the religion originally spread across the Mediterranean basin from the eighth to the tenth century. The crescent possibly originates as a symbol of Constantinople that dates from the Philip of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great. It appears as though the emblem was taken over by the Turks with the capture of Constantinople (present day Istanbul) in 1453 in an attempt to celebrate the Ottoman triumph over the Christian forces.[10] One could, of course, reasonably argue whether the origins of the crescent weigh any pertinence to the way Muslims identify with the emblem in present time. However, one can also question the reason why the emblem was used as the religious symbol of Iraq in the first place. If Mr. al-Chadirchi wished to use a religious symbol for his new flag, then, what was wrong with "Allah Akbar"? Why did he need to opt for the crescent?

It is such misguided attempts to adopt a national flag that seem most bizarre to the Iraqi eyes. These are what most confuse and dismay them, leading them to reject the new design as a result.

The ultimate irony here, is that the proliferation of new symbols of sovereignty sanctioned by the IGC, makes the Iraqis feel more unclear about the post-Saddam national identity, and hence they also feel a growing distrust of their condition in a post- war era. What is at stake here is that there appears to be a huge gap between the new invented national symbols and the will of the Iraqis, their various ideas of freedom, their diverse visions of a future democratic Iraq. The truth is that the majority lack confidence that life will get better and that the purpose of the U.S.-led invasion, for the establishment of an autonomous Iraq with the consent of the people, will one day be realized.

Respectfully, symbols first require a clear vision of an imagined community in reference to a relatively stable and self-governing country. Accordingly, we need to know what it is about these invented symbols, their symbolic implication, that the Iraqi people would identify and find a longing to hold on to. What is this new Iraq, how *truly* autonomous is it, and why should the Iraqis hold on to it? Any attempt to symbolize a new Iraq at this stage of a long process of democratization is a naïve fantasy saturated with an overriding sense of optimism.

A new representative institution, therefore, first should be institutionalized before Iraqis (and Iraqis alone!) begin to flag a new national symbol, proclaiming a new democratic order in place of an autocratic one. The new design should reflect the values of a future parliament, elected and held accountable by Iraqis who have experienced years of suffering. And surely the future flag should not reflect the aesthetic taste of an Iraqi in exile, designing the national icon according to *his* vision of Iraq viewed from a comfortable upper-middle class setting in the U.K. In short, the Iraqi authority should first wait for an elected government before creating new national symbols; anything else will appear illegitimate to the Iraqis.

It is by no means clear, however, if the new flag will be approved by the Iraqi parliament, yet to be institutionalized in the year to come. The fate of this "transitional" flag remains as uncertain as the realization of democracy in Iraq. In light of the presumed transfer of power at the end of June, the "blue flag" represents a nation increasingly looking insecure, fractured, divided and vague, perhaps a bit gloomy like the pale blue sky of a cold and disheartening winter day, as the American military continues to secure a long-term strategic foothold in the county. More importantly a failed Iraq could still prove a greater threat to world security than a failed national symbol. This makes it all the more essential to bring government into Iraqi hands, monitored and protected by the UN, and, above all, free from the U.S. military domination.

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[1] "Flap over New Iraq Flag," http://cnn.worldnews, 5/11/2004.

[2] "Iraqis Say Council-Approved National Flag Won't Fly," http://www.washingtonpost.com. 4/24, 2004.

[3] Simon Robinson, "What's Really Fueling the Fire? How a stream of resentment is turning Iraqis against the U.S.," *Time*, 6/ 10/ 2004, p. 51.

[4] See E. M. C. Barraclough and W.G. Crampton, *Flags of the Wrold*, p. 173

[5] B. Amatzia, *Culture, History and Ideology in the Formation of Baʿathist Iraq*, p. 13.

[6] It should be noted that the three-star flag identified pan-Arab nationalism, sharing symbolic features held in common with flags of Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait and Syria.

[7] "New Iraq flag: Designer speaks out," http://www.com/2004/World/meast/04/29/iraq.flag.designer, 4/29/2004.

[8] B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 145.

[9] Perhaps the most famous of these forms of sacred architecture is the Blue Mosque (Masjid-i Muzzafariyah) in Tabriz, 1465, which is decorated with intricate tile mosaic with monumental inscriptions in squared Kufic Arabic scripts.

[10] See E.M.C. Barraclough and W.G. Crampton (ed), *Flags of the World*, pp.19-20.

STEAL THIS MESSAGE, PART I.

By William Matthew McCarter

In the recent USA Gallup Polls, a survey of "likely voters" indicates that if the Presidential Elections were held today, then George W. Bush would receive 48 percent of the vote and John Kerry would receive 47 percent. When "registered voters" were asked the same question, then 50 percent supported John Kerry and 44 percent supported George W. Bush. When "National Adults" were surveyed, then 51 percent supported John Kerry and 43 percent supported George W. Bush. These results varied even more when pollsters threw Ralph Nader's candidacy into the mix. One of the most striking things about these polls is that, given that the race is so close, the winner of the election will probably be determined depending upon who shows up on Election Day. If "likely voters" show up, then George W. Bush will win the election, if "registered voters" or "national adults" make it to the polls, then it will be John Kerry. One of the things that stands out in looking at these polls is that the "leader of the free world," The President of the United States will most likely be chosen by a small number of people. In my own community in Southeast Missouri, a community that once was what I would consider to be a fortress of civic responsibility, only 20.4 percent of registered voters showed up to the polls during the last election. If those statistics hold true for the Presidential Election in November, then nearly four out of every five Americans will not participate in the political process. This fact begs the question, "Why are so many Americans unconcerned about who leads their country?"

There are two responses common among those who are asked that question: One is tainted with apathy about the political system at large, while the other has to do with the message that the candidates get out to the people. One of my former students said, "It doesn't matter who you vote for - Look at the last election. Al Gore won the popular vote but still didn't win the election." This kind of apathy or complacency among voters is common, but not endemic. Nothing can really be done about those who choose to not take part in the political process because they think the system itself is flawed or corrupt. However, the vast majority of those who do not take part in the political process still believe in the process in theory, just not in practice and it is within this group of people that the "Working Class Left" can begin to find its constituency. Before moving on into the "message" of this "working class left," this paper must first focus on the messenger and how the message gets disseminated. The first part of this article will focus on this messenger and the subsequent sections will deal with the message itself.

The medium in which political discourse is disseminated to the masses takes on many forms, but each of

these forms can be traced back to some type of media. Everyone gets their political information through cable television, network television, the internet or some form of print media. One of the most profound ways that the media has influenced the political consciousness of its "viewership" is through the soundbyte. Difficult and complex things (abstractions) are being broken down into the "least common denominator" and disseminated through the various forms of media. It is through these soundbytes that popular culture gets terms like "voodoo economics" and what came to be the benchmark of whether a Presidential candidate deserved to be reelected - "Are you better off now than you were four years ago?" Wendy Kaminer explains this in her book, *I'm Dysfunctional, You're Dysfunctional* when she writes that the "popularity of books comprising slogans, sound bites, and recipes for success is part of a larger, frequently bemoaned trend blamed on television and the failures of public education….Intellectuals, right and left, complain about the debasement of public discourse the way fundamentalist preachers complain about sex." Leftist intellectuals must retreat from what they consider to be the "debasement of public discourse" and learn to embrace it, and most importantly, use it. What the Left in the 1960's called: "Hell No We Won't Go," the Left of the 21st Century calls: "it is unethical for the poor in America to go off to a foreign country and fight a war that has been ideologically positioned as being a 'good war' by the hegemony of the news media because they are owned by the Capitalist Class who will, invariably, make millions of dollars off of the bloodshed of those who have little or nothing." The problem with the latter is that you can't get the masses attention with a dissertation about how war reinforces and enriches the capitalist class - you must have something that can fit on a bumper sticker. The Average American views statements like the latter as intellectual posturing and won't respond to it, however, if you tell them "Girls say 'Yes' to Boys who say 'No'," you not only get their attention, but keep it. Because of this phenomenon in American Culture, the "message" section of this article will strive to break the message down into a soundbyte - a bumper sticker.

Chomsky writes in *Domestic Constituencies* that "there is a 'public arena' in which, in principle, individuals can participate in decisions that involve society" and goes on to add that "Democracy functions insofar as individuals can operate meaningfully in the public arena, meanwhile running their own affairs." Because of the limited time that Americans can devote into the political sphere of their lives, they deserve to have a "bumper sticker" primer for the political debates that they are expected to be a part of. However, in contemporary media, the Right are the only ones providing that kind of message and consequently, more and more Americans are being coerced into the ranks of the Right. Chomsky also writes in *The Decline of the Democratic Ideal* that "one fundamental goal of any well-conceived indoctrination program is to direct attention elsewhere, away from effective power, its roots, and the disguises it assumes." He adds that "the corporatization of America during the past century was an attack on democracy." Douglas Kellner appears to concur with Chomsky when he writes " radio, television, film and the other products of media culture provide materials out of which we forge our very identities." Kellner adds that his "study of television in the United States… disclosed the takeover of the television networks by major transnational corporations and communications conglomerates [which] was a part of a "right turn" within U.S. society… whereby powerful corporate groups won control of the state and the mainstream media."

The media conglomerates have influenced American society so much that often the message of the people is, in effect, the "message to the people." Politicians and the political pundits that have sprung up in recent

years are becoming more and more concerned with how that message "reaches the people." This illustrates how the media influences the mass. Instead of politicians going to the people and finding out what they *want,* they treat political campaigns like advertising campaigns and try to force the masses to want the candidates like they want Post Toasties or Cheerios. In *Screens of Power,* Timothy Luke talks about this "commodification" asserting that the "new technical and economic forces are creating a more culturally impoverished and intellectually destructive world system, which now is based upon attaining the complete commodification of all aspects of human life." Although Luke's book deals with the larger consequences of media culture - the "Screens of Power," this paper will only look at the political consequences of this phenomenon.

According to Luke, "Television does not 'bring the entire world into our homes' as much as it moves everybody who is watching to the same place and into the same events." The media strives to channel political discourse into a binary- Democrat and Republican and as Howard Zinn writes in *A People's History of the United States:* "[c]oming to the end of the century, observing its last twenty-five years, we have seen… a capitalist encouragement of enormous fortunes alongside desperate poverty, a nationalistic acceptance of war and preparations for war. Governmental power swung from Republicans to Democrats and back again, but neither party showed itself capable of going beyond that vision." Because of the media's influence in bringing "everybody who is watching to the same place," the binaries of American politics are reinforced and even the two parties who have been historically different in philosophy have moved closer to the center in their political discourse. In *One Dimensional Man,* Herbert Marcuse writes "liberty can be made into a powerful instrument of domination. The range of choice open to the individual is not the decisive factor in determining the degree of human freedom, but what can be chosen and what is chosen by the individual… Free election of masters does not abolish the masters or the slaves." Because of the role of corporate media in disseminating the political discourse of American society, Americans are conditioned to wait for their respective candidates to articulate their message, rather than being active agents in formulating the message. Democracy has been interpolated in the sense that where the average voter once was the source in which political messages began, suddenly becomes the audience in which the message will be received - constituents who once were those whose voices were articulated, suddenly became consumers who needed to be persuaded to *buy* the products that were conceived and delivered by the major media conglomerates.

If one were to look at how the major media controls the means for the dissemination of political discourse, then one should wonder why the Left should even bother to talk about their political agenda. After all, it might never be disseminated. This begs the question, "Why shouldn't we join the ranks of those who are ambivalent to the political discourse? The ones that were earlier described as being "tainted with apathy about the system at large." Why shouldn't the Left just joyfully join the ranks of Georgio Agamben's "Whatever Beings" and hasten the "coming community" where the struggle is no longer a struggle for the conquest of the State, but a struggle between the state and the non-state. Essentially, that is precisely what those who are ambivalent to politics have already done - become "whatever beings." Rather than digress into a treatise on whether or not the current system is even worth saving, this paper will focus on what Bruno Latour calls *matters of concern* and will try to provide the working class Left with a way to

engage the system.

Although the capitalist system often proves to be one that is undesirable for the working class Left - one that allows the poor to be exploited and commodified as simply "labor," its saving grace (if there is such a thing) is that it has no conscience. The only ideology that capitalism supports is one of profit. If the public wants to watch dancing poodles on prime time television, then the capitalist system will give it to them. There is a delicate balance between what the media wants the public to see and what their consumers want them to show. It is within this balance - what their consumers want them to show - that the Working Class Left can once again (at least partially) reclaim their right to be a part of political discourse and not just the audience that will ultimately receive it. Consumerism provides Americans with a unique opportunity to be the *means* as well as the *ends* of political discourse. Mary McCarthy writes in *The Partisan Review* "a great abstract force governing our present journalism is a conceptualized picture of the reader… what our readers will take is a watchword… when an article today is adulterated, this is not done out of respect for the editor's prejudices…" If readers (viewers) have this power and are "a great abstract force," then the Left needs to use it to their advantage. In future editions of *Nebula*, I hope to do that and as I unravel the often complex and difficult abstractions that haunt our society and that need to be addressed, I will try to be "constructively reductive" and put them into simple mantras that can easily be printed on bumper stickers… and I implore those of you who are sympathetic to the working class Left to STEAL THIS MESSAGE.

Double Negative.

By Tangirala Sri Rama Chandra Murthy

Political communication is one of the most `misunderstimated', misunderstood, misguided and misleading forms. You may say, in the first place, that misunderestimated does not exist: that it isn't English. You may presume you are right. Well, on the contrary, you will soon realize how mistaken you are. If you have been following the papers you must have already realized you have been taken for a big ride by the very word, on the magic carpet, as it were. 'Misunderestimated' is an Americanism all right but as English as Tony Blair. Besides, misunderestimated and Blairism not only go hand in hand but are also enmeshed and entwined to such an extent that they mean the same thing and are inseparable. Now what on earth is Blairism? First things first, we shall start with misunderestimated and then go on to Blairism. Not only the twain shall meet but also they operate and hunt in pairs. 'Misunderestimated' figures at least thrice in the same speech by President George Bush Jr; he uttered and repeated the word for all the world to hear and in front of television cameras. The relevant record is bound to be there somewhere in the US Congressional Library or Public Records Office or in White House records or in television footage.

That being the etymology of misunderestimated, what does it mean, how does it act in conjunction with Blairism? Misunderestimated may be defined as a stern warning, goading and attacking a reluctant people on the supposed ground that their leader is manufacturing fantastic weapons for use against the world, while committing mayhem, maiming and murdering those very same people. The meaning therefore is clear: Misunderestimated simply means an estimate calculated to misguide the people at large for partisan economico-politico-military ends. Or, simply put, introducing a dangerous doctrine called "the clash of civilizations" and hunting down a civilized people in the name of Samuel Huntington.

Misunderestimated has four clear components: the prefix "mis", for any negative word; "under" which denotes something placed below, buried or concealed; "est" which is an abbreviation for estimate(d), and "mated" meaning paired (here paired with Blairism). Thus what we derive from the combination is: negative estimation of something supposedly buried or concealed, which you dig forever for and subsequently fail to find a shred of evidence of; this includes elusive weapons of mass destruction. Obfuscating facts, you present the world with a *fait accompli* by attacking the unfortunate people anyway. This of course does not preclude the possibility that, while desperately finding credentials for misunderestimation, those who coined the word may themselves plant contraband in order to justify their dubious contention. Even by pairing the words `mis' and `underestimation', the first negative syllable and the attached tri-syllable not only constitute a double negative but also do not yield a positive but lead to a binary negative. Put in scientific terms, misunderestimated is statistics or data derived from hot air and calibrated to simulate a violent reaction while striking (liquid?) gold as a byproduct. Not only that, either the statistics or the data is impossible to cross check by any scientific agency. Thus misunderestimated is data conjured up by a

coalition of colonizers to create congenital conceptual confusion.

Now, political science has it that politics is the art of the possible. But today's political communication makes impossible and improbable ends not only possible but also a reality. And in the instant case of misunderestimation, there is loads of money to take as booty in the name of reconstruction after all the mayhem and murder. That is exactly what the pairing of misunderestimation and Blairism is all about.

Come to think of it, President Bush's 'misunderestimation' goes royally with the British Prime Minister's Blairism. Unlike misunderestimated (in and) on which President Bush has some kind of authorial and proprietary right, in terms of globalisation (globocop) and patenting, Prime Minister Blair cannot have any such claim except for genealogy as regards Blairism. Even so the two gel. How does misunderestimation fuse with Blairism? Blairism can be defined as preparing a tissue-box by mere gestures of the hand, beating the box into perfect shape in thin air, packing it with so-called privy 'facts,' only 'facts' and nothing but 'facts,' in the hope of redeeming them, riding piggyback eventually. Now get back to the possibility we have already raised about planting contraband, and you have the full picture. The tissue-maker even pleads that the 'facts' he has given out will eventually stand proven, although there may not be an iota of evidence to start with or even during the wild goose chase. One may say the whole thing is like trying to find a needle in the haystack, the only difference being you may yet find the needle but never the WsMD. But the proof of the pudding is not in eating Prime Minister Blair's or President Bush's words, least of all eating out of Tony's hands, but seeing their video clips while giving speeches or addressing press conferences. If you notice, Prime Minister Blair's hands are irrepressible, mobile and all the while making gestures so neat and perfect that an observer might believe Blair is actually making a tissue-box for the same-day delivery at the White House. So earnest are the hand gestures that you could think up a new idiom, hand in mouth, while foot in mouth is as old as English. President Bush, too, is not far behind in this respect, for he is ready with lately acquired wit and wisdom that goes with the highest executive office in the world, which was not that perceptible when he began and coined words like "misunderestimated."

However, unlike "misunderestimated", Blairism has clear possibilities of extension, as though it is all in the family. Call it teleology or whatever, one way or the other, three of the Blairs have blared away Blairism, adding to the cacophony. The trio has figured simultaneously doing/having done their things in their respective vocations. Eric is no doubt the first famous Blair, although he is more popular by his nom de plume, George Orwell, the essayist, journalist, novelist and writer par excellence. However, a recent biography found somewhat of a blemish in his illustrious career in that he circumscribed as many as 135 media persons whom he suspected of having had a communist soft corner. He allegedly squealed on the fellow-travelers for the benefit of the anti- communist Information Research Department at the British foreign office. (Contrast this with Stalinist purges in Soviet Russia and the Commission for un-American activities across the pond, and you will begin to see the evolving Animal Farms in totalitarian states are democracies whether in 1936, 1984 or 2003.Whatever the period, whatever the generation, whatever the ideology, whatever the geography, there are obviously persecutions galore by the powers that be. Only the scale differs in the suppression of radical thought.).

Paradoxically it was Eric Blair who showed politicians as they were and would be – duplicitous -- to an unbelievable degree. He coined the famous appellations *Newspeak* and *Doublethink* for the ruling politicians who, in another day and time, would go to the extent of using WsMD on unsuspecting masses of the world. The WsMD is a fit case for *Newspeak* and *Doublethink* that the earlier Blair thought of, but might have had no idea when he did so that a person bearing his name would eventually bear him out.

The third Blair, of the New York Times, fits perfectly with Blairism in that he shares the vocation of George Orwell that is journalism. There the comparison ends with one and conjunction with the other Blair begins. Now, they say journalism is a dog-eat- dog world, but the assertion is a tissue of one big extended lie. Consider what the NYT journalist did, which one may discuss without apologies such as allegedly, reportedly, presumably and so on, because the respected paper itself has openly acknowledged the misdemeanours. This Blair allegedly wrote several stories about things that did not exist with descriptions that were only in his mind. That is hitting Blairism in the bull's eye, if you have any difficulties with definitions or meanings or meaning of meanings. The journalist may have been indulging in harmless creations because his stories, if they were about things that did not exist, would not have affected anyone. It is daily journalism at its pinnacle, totally ephemeral. And there was no controversy over this NYT Blair's stories. On the other hand, he is a celebrated journalist who has won awards. But since the stories were apparently harmless, the awards and decorations and mention in dispatches are equally innocuous. Nobody would grudge them. On the other hand, the harmful part of Blairism is that arising from WsMD. Because WsMD rain death on unsuspecting people, remove their elected governments in the name of fighting tyranny and upholding democracy, erode a nation's sovereignty, rubbish a civilization and feed on their economy like a broker, all in the name of preventing civil wars.

Before we digress from "misundestimated," we would do well to recall Lord Spooner who used to merely transpose the first syllables of contiguous words to give rise to funny meanings and with effect. But how does one understand "misunderestimated" except in terms of genealogy. The misunderestimation was done in the first Gulf War when George Bush Sr. was incumbent in the White House. Bush Sr. was voted out of office, and he apparently felt he left the Gulf job unfinished in that the so-called evil emperor continued to reign in Baghdad, while he himself went out of office. Bush Jr. had perforce to finish the job. So it transpires that Bush Sr. had originally misunderestimated the task on his hand, although Colin Powell was the General on the job and on the spot then. With Powell articulating justification for the legacy, this time in the administration of Bush Jr. the diabolical duplicity has come to a head. That is why "misunderestimated" is *Newspeak* and Blairism is *Doublethink*, and together they constitute the double negative.

Appointment in Samarra II.

By Tangirala Sri Rama Chandra Murthy

While dealing with 'Fate, Oracles and Death' philosopher Simon Blackburn in his book *Think* refers to an Iraqi fable, 'Death in Samarkand.' This fable was originally 'Appointment in Samarra' as narrated by Somerset Maugham in a telling and brief short story. How can 'Appointment in Samarra' (Appointment hereinafter) become 'Death in Samarkand' (Death hereinafter) is the burden of this article which also seeks to understand the philosophical implications of 'lazy sophism' elaborated by the philosopher in the same chapter. Blackburn narrates the fable through a Sufi saint. It is well known that Sufism originated in Iraq and Turkey echoing Islamic mysticism but it thrived in Afghanistan. It is also well known that Sufi saints have been the vanguard of the civilian army closely following Islamic warriors to perform 'miracles' and pave the way for proselytization of infidels. While doing so, they have drawn from the local lore so that the work of God they set out to do becomes that much easier. Significantly, the Central Asian city of Samarkand is almost equidistant between the Arab world and Afghanistan.

Maugham's 'Appointment' goes somewhat like this: There is a merchant in Baghdad who sends his servant to buy provisions from the market. The servant soon returns trembling with fear and says: 'Master as I was going with the jostling crowds in the market, there was a push from behind. I turned and saw a woman. She was death. Now master, give me your horse I shall go to Samarra and save myself.' The master gave him his horse. The servant climbed it and dug his spurs in its flanks, and as fast as the horse could run he went. In the evening the Master went to the market and asked the woman: 'Why did you threaten my servant?' She said, 'I was surprised to see him in Baghdad, for I have an appointment with him in Samarra.' Hence 'Appointment.'

This has been transformed into 'Death in Samarkand' over the years and this is attributable to both *historicism* and the distortions that invariably creep in while retelling a fable (this brand of historicism may be defined as the change in the original, brought about to suit the needs of the current colony in focus). Notice the shift in the colony from Russia's underbelly to Iraq, to Afghanistan, and then back again! However, this is in no way attributing motives to either Somerset Maugham or Simon Blackburn, only that they have picked up a fable honed to perfection at different points of time. Who honed it to perfection is a different story.

'Death,' as narrated by Blackburn begins: 'the disciple of Baghdad was sitting in an inn one day when he heard two figures talking. He realized that one of them was the Angel of Death.

The terrified disciple concealed himself until the two had left. To escape death, he hired the fastest horse he could, and made day and night to the far distant desert city of Samarkand. Meanwhile, Death met the

disciple's teacher, and they talked of this and that. `And where is your disciple, so and so?' asked Death.

'I suppose he is at home, where he should be, studying,' said the Sufi.

'That is surprising,' said Death, 'for here he is on my list and I have to collect him tomorrow, in Samarkand, of all places.'

As for historicism, the more the fable circulated the more the distortions took place. The conversion of a merchant in Baghdad to a Sufi saint happens because of necessity felt by someone to slot the fable to suit realistic and instant needs. In the process, religious connotations have crept in, pressed on by Crusades, obfuscating what was originally a secular fable that sought purely to deal with the curse of determinism on mankind. But fate, in today's world cannot but be communalized, because of growing fundamentalism, either defensive or offensive, all round. 'Fate' is also an empirical method deployed to show how and why a certain people are condemned, owing to their own beliefs, their own lore, and in short, their own karma. At least for credibility's sake, it has to be demonstrated that if the tale is in Iraq the religion has to be Islam, forgetting the fact that the godforsaken country happens to be a more progressive state than the rest of the Arab world. (It is nobody's case whether, *ipso facto*, Iraq should be spared the repeated calls of the Angel of Death). If it is Islam it has to be a milder version such as Sufism since the latter alone delves in subjects other than those prescribed by the Book. And if it has to be Sufism, the servant cannot possibly turn towards Mecca but has to ride towards Afghanistan. On the way, out of fatigue or whatever, he may settle down in Samarkand awaiting fate to overtake him. Besides, Samarkand is better known as the land of Taimur (his descendant, Babur, was the founder of the Mughal dynasty in India), celebrated by Christopher Marlowe, than sleepy Samarra that has lost its importance in the folds of time. Of course, for the nonce, none of the cities in Iraq can afford to sleep inasmuch as the modern-day Crusaders are willing to put the teeming cities to sleep by taking the daylights out of them.

Witness the modern phraseology that the tale *Death In Samarkand* uses: 'I suppose he is at home, where he should be studying,' said the Sufi. 'That is surprising,' said Death, 'for he is on my list and I have to collect him tomorrow, in Samarkand, of all places.' Home points to a *madrasa* where Islamic disciples study, and where some, in the name of religion take to martial arts and account for the lost lives of innocent people, and for the latter category – for which the gory 'List' and 'collect' are watchwords. These are certainly interpolations to signify the 'operators' who work under Arabic legends such as Al-Qaida. The effort in the altered fable has been to typify it as religious and paradoxically modernize it. That the distortion has been carried out in the West is also clear considering the use of certain signifiers such as 'inn', whereas in the Islamic world there have been serais for travelers where they could rest their camels, apart from themselves. Also, 'they talked of this and that' is almost verging on the talk about the weather, which is patently English. The same follows for 'so-and-so,' which is derogatory enough for the disciple who is going to die in any case.

This leaves us with fate, which is the common factor in *Appointment* and *Death*. Both the merchant's servant and Sufi's disciple meet with the same fate, notwithstanding interpretations of the text as to how they

could have escaped death (Blackburn suggests that they can escape death by chanting a mantra (which is Eastern in origin) as one of the possibilities) since either way in the crossroads of destiny, be it Samarra or Samarkand, they will meet with death. So they are one in death. Epistemology may run over time and over space also!

Still the epistemological possibilities could be explored further to keep the servant alive till such a time as he dies a natural death. Space could come to his rescue. Had the servant remained in Baghdad without borrowing his master's horse, or hired the fastest horse for that matter, would he have escaped the inevitable by not going to Samarra? Also, if the disciple had not been on the way to Samarkand, at the first hint of trouble by dint of native wisdom, would he have lived longer? The Angel's aura is very much there in Baghdad foreclosing all options for the servant and forcing him to gallop to his death. Having taken the servant in her talons, the angel simply playfully releases him to set him on his way, so she may catch him when the time is ripe. That is how the birds of prey maul their meal, releasing them only to catch them again before the kill. So is the case of the servant. Whichever road he takes – Samarra, Samarkand or Timbuctoo.

Man is transitory, but the Angel is eternal: Organic (physical) change is temporary and chemical change is permanent, so is the spirit that is not subject to physical laws. So man cannot be eternal, whereas spirit is.

Before recounting the fable, Blackburn asks: 'And if determinism is true, isn't the future fixed already…?' Not quite, in terms of entelechy, at the point of sepulcher, man becomes a scalar, and for him, vis-à-vis the many, the time machine is unidirectional. It can only go backwards into the past. Man has eyes in the front of his face, but he can see only surroundings within the radius. The illusory horizon is the limit to his vision. Therefore, man can only reflect. For, no man has returned with a postscript! There's no 'foreflection' for him. 'Proflection' is equally cumbersome. Projection does not serve the purpose. Nothing serves the purpose because nothing tangible can be seen or perceived beyond the barrier of death. Like King Lear says: 'Nothing comes out of nothing.' Language limits itself as much as thought that has to have some solid term to go to the next tangible term and the next till it comes to the crossroads of life and death, where Ockham's sharpest razor applies. Eternity is not for man, but it may be for mankind, subject to physical laws.

You cannot signify beyond language. Language and thinking are co-terminus. Knowledge is limited to matters that are worldly and outwardly where man or his thought has gone before. The netherworld is closed bar speculation. And speculation may be stretched to Dante's hell and such other scenarios that poets have sung about. Even this speculation constitutes 'views from nowhen' which is also synthetic.

As it happens, 'nowhen' is a wonderful conception of Blackburn's that implies both time and space. It is particularly useful when terms such as fate put up insurmountable and impenetrable barriers. *Nowhen* perhaps reaches space where even Angels fear to tread, including the Angel of Death. *Nowhen* is knowledge for man, independent of Gods. It is a parallel heaven, and binary to it. *Nowhen* exists or does not exist inasmuch as heaven is there or not there.

That being the idea, could the merchant's servant have saved his skin in the face of Angel of Death by any means? Assuming fate is determined, fixed, mapped out from above, in which the active agent has no say, what are the means available to the servant? The *mullah* is perhaps one answer. Because if he has enough money, instead of chanting the infidel 'Om' while preparing for the last journey, he could go to the nearest corporate hospital and put himself on artificial respiration. So long as the black boxes of involuntary life-giving oxygen pump gas into him by expanding and contracting, and as long as the underwriters to his medical expenses could afford, he would live, even if brain dead. The vegetable state is as good as matter. Sans senses, and therefore the mind, human is matter. Therefore, mind separates human and matter. Since mind is the exponential factor in the evolution, it too is governed by organic laws. Mind is after all the culmination of the senses coming together and giving their respective might to the organic whole. But mind cannot be isolated. As it is part and parcel of the body, it goes with man. The only part of the mind that can possibly be isolated is the sense of vision. And the eye may have age independent of the body and mind. Hence eye transplants. The eye so transplanted too has age, even if it lives on its own under certain conditions. But the finality is inevitable.

Thus the proposition: Life has meaning only in the mind. Mind is co-terminus with life. Therefore, life is meaningful mind. In the final analysis, beyond a point, life is soul-less. Philosopher Blackburn represents the 'lazy sophism' as follows:

The future will be what it will be. Its events are already in time's womb.

So, do nothing.

And he gives the alternative:

The future will be what it will be. Its events are already in time's womb. So, get cracking.

Que sera sera… The ontological man has been caught in the cleft-stick. Taking the Iraqi parable further, what were the options before the Baghdad merchant's servant or, for that matter, Saddam Hussein himself? There is always deja vu about Iraq, its people and its leaders themselves, for they constitute one of the oldest if not the oldest civilization. They seem to suffer from the fascinating death-wish unlike the other peoples. The Sufi wisdom has been for real. Should Saddam have given himself up after allowing the United Nations inspectors to scour the country, not finding a shred of evidence and becoming the scourge? Should Saddam have signed a peace treaty with Russia embedding a secret clause that would have been a deterrent to any take- over of his godforsaken land? Should Saddam have fought bravely throwing all

his forces into action and all the force at his command into the fray? Events were already in time's womb post-1991. What, therefore, did Saddam wait for? Strangely, Saddam, as the fountainhead of his bedeviled country's native wisdom, turns out an optimist even in the face of the mocking Angel of Death.

Had they mounted the horses and given the charge, would they perhaps have delayed the horses of time, to get that much leeway, to get that much respite, to get that much room to maneuver? Dr Faustus, too, was helpless because the horses of time wait for no tide and they are relentless in their march to light up minds. The Iraqis knew the end result beforehand – that the result would have been the same whether they cracked the whip or did nothing.

For Saddam, the appointment in Samarra II is apt. Samarra is equidistant to his place of birth, Tikrit, and the throne (Baghdad). In the event he stayed put and was caught in his estate. How deterministic can determinism be!

As for Saddam, so for others, the future is in the womb of time. That is a certainty. So time is deterministic. When a period of time and a geographic space are determined to be irreducible, the people habiting therein are reducible to common values, beliefs and so on and, therefore, a psyche. The psyche is no *tabula rasa* for time-tested structures have gone into its making. For the very reason, the psyche cannot be so easily influenced one way or the other. The Iraqi psyche has been centred on Samarra, among other things, and determined to entertain periodic appointments with it. For Saddam the appointment was a-coming. The Iraqi mind weighed the pros and cons – to get cracking or do nothing. It tried both in half measures. Either way the result is overwhelming and determined. The oracle's pronouncement has begun to sink in. The only difference is it is not Delphian but Texan and hence sticky and oily. As fate and oracles have been arrayed against them, the Iraqis are destined to suffer some kind of death following their Appointment in Samarra II.

Music in His Own Image: The Aphex Twin Face.

By Peter David Mathews

Beyond the dark, intense vision of his music, a further disturbing dimension of Aphex Twin's project is illuminated by his video clips. In particular, his two most famous videos, "Come to Daddy" and "Windowlicker," are the fruit of collaborations with director Chris Cunningham; awards for "Come to Daddy" first brought both these artists into the mainstream eye in 1997. The outstanding feature of these clips is undoubtedly the face of Richard D. James. James, the man behind the Aphex Twin pseudonym, stares mockingly at the viewer, inevitably flashing his trademark leer. The unsettling characteristic of this smile is how the lips are stretched to the point of exaggeration. The initial impression of a broad, cheerful smile is quickly replaced by a feeling of incipient unease.

Figure 1: Cover of Aphex Twin's Richard D. James Album

James's grin becomes an inverted grimace, the tension of which is clearly visible in the creases around his eyes, nose and forehead. The look imbues these images with an intensity embellished by the fact that James's expression never changes.

The initial impact of this look is augmented and intensified in several ways. The most obvious is through a process of multiplication. In each Aphex Twin clip, the secondary actors take on the face of their Creator. "Come to Daddy," for instance, opens with an old woman walking her dog in a grimy, industrial setting. The dog urinates on an abandoned television lying on the sidewalk, causing it to sputter unexpectedly into life. This unleashes a demon spirit from the set, accompanied by a set of minions that constitute the verminous inhabitants of these abandoned buildings. The minions are made up of what appears, at first glance, to be a band of small children; their faces, however, have been replaced by Aphex Twin masks.

Figure 2: Still from "Come to Daddy"

These masks unsettle the viewer in two further ways. As a mask, this borrowed expression is frozen on the children's faces. Like their master, the children's faces are distorted by the eternal grimace/grin of the Aphex Twin. The second feature lies in the uncanny juxtaposition of childhood (with its societal implications of innocence) and the sneering lack of innocence implied by this smile (a contrast that is recycled to great effect in "Donkey Rhubarb," for instance, in which giant teddy bears with Aphex Twin faces dance and play with a group of children).

The motif is repeated in a new and varied way in "Windowlicker". Whereas "Come to Daddy" transgresses the division between childhood and adulthood, "Windowlicker" plays with the shifting boundaries of gender. This motif was established before the video, however: the face of Richard D. James appears on the album cover superimposed onto the body of a woman wearing a white bikini.

Figure 3: Cover of Aphex Twin's <u>Windowlicker</u>

The "Windowlicker" video opens with two young men in a convertible who, with a surreal mixture of cursing and preening, try unsuccessfully to entice two women standing by the side of the road to join them for sex. After several minutes of this interaction, the convertible is pushed out of sight by an extraordinarily long limousine. The limousine's length is clearly a hyperbolic, phallic retort to the posturing of the two men. The window rolls down, revealing, of course, the grinning face of the Aphex Twin. The women, seduced by his antics, are transformed in a flash of light. The camera cuts to James in the back of the limousine, a woman on each arm, the Aphex Twin grin overlaid on their faces.

The materialization of the Aphex Twin undercuts the mechanisms of desire that are normally at work in this kind of video. Chris Cunningham himself has said that the clip was meant to be a parody of the stereotypical sexism underlying many mainstream R&B and rap videos. But what makes it so effective, in this instance, is the way "Windowlicker" undermines the desire of the viewer from the inside out. The sources it is aiming to parody are mechanistic in their evocation of desire, and Cunningham makes cunning, subversive use of these stereotypical techniques. For instance, the figure of the singer is typically placed at the center of the screen, and is clearly meant to be the viewer's object of desire. The artist is, above all, the fetishized object of this ritual, yet it is important to note not only that this fetish is disavowed, but also how and why. For instance, one of the recurring features of this genre is the redundancy of the artist's exhibitionism. In a calculated display of self-reference, the artist attempts to impress their name or image into the mind of the viewer or listener through the technique of calculated repetition. In the music, singers will often carefully highlight their name by inserting it into the lyrics of the song. This redundancy is translated into every manifestation of the artist, who becomes a fetish object by virtue of this manufactured ubiquity. Redundancy is designed to ensure that the image of the artist will be saturated in the viewer's mind, so that the viewer will not only come away with a song in their head but a complete (but ultimately distant and unattainable) object of desire. The absence of lyrics in "Windowlicker" only further underlines

its irony from this perspective.

Nonetheless, Cunningham satirically overcompensates for this verbal lack by putting the Aphex Twin through the motions of visual fetishization. His presence is diffused throughout the diegetic space of the video clip like a puzzling odor. The beginning of the clip, for instance, shows the symbol of what appears to be an arrow. This symbol, it turns out, is the signature emblem of the Aphex Twin. The symbol is composed, it would seem, from the initials AT (there is a small indentation on the right side of the middle line that suggests the letter A),[1] although there is little doubt that the viewer's probable initial interpretation, in which this symbol is taken for an arrow, is a calculated effect. This symbol is part of a cunning, parodic exercise in redundancy and self-reference.

Figure 4: Still from "Windowlicker"

It gradually becomes clear, as "Windowlicker" progresses, that this symbol is the logo of the Aphex Twin himself. Not only does it appear at the beginning of the clip, but it reappears on the side of the limousine, on the umbrella of the Aphex Twin, and again on the dancers that will later appear to accompany him. Its most important appearance is in the shot with the dancers, who form a circle with these umbrellas. The camera observes from above, allowing the viewer to see the pattern thus formed. The meaning of this ring is manifold. Firstly, the multiplication of umbrellas (there is originally only one) indicates the proliferation of the Aphex Twin identity. The logo suggests, as with the masks on the dancers, that the Aphex Twin has permeated the musical and cinematic landscape. Secondly, the circular formation further highlights the redundancy of this act: the dancers' loop suggests a circle of infinite iteration and self-reference. Finally, in contrast to this display of redundancy, the arrangement of the symbols suggests an element of chaos and disorder. Within the perfect circle created by the dancers, the arrows are pointed in random directions, and this lack of formation brings together the forces of order and disarray into a single posture.

The clip is thus an exercise in diffusion, starting from the fleeting glimpse of the Aphex Twin logo at the outset of the video, and multiplying his image until the cinematic space is populated by these doubles. But there is a further critique of desire at work in this clip that again parodies the fetishization of the artist. The primary rhetoric of Cunningham's caricature stems from his use of hyperbole, such as the stream of overdone African- American vernacular, the enormously phallic limousine, and the patently absurd dance scenes. But underlying this rhetoric is a second, much darker, visual grammar. The function of the fetish,

of course, is seduction, and Cunningham once again plays with the rules of the genre. Repeating the motif from the album cover, Cunningham's superimposition of James's face is an exercise in perversity. Where "Come to Daddy" showed the fascination of horror, "Windowlicker" shows the horror of fascination. It is impossible for the viewer to avoid trying to decode Cunningham's visual grammar of desire according to the usual rules. The viewer's gaze is inevitably arrested by the cynically sexualized postures of the women, only to recoil at the sight of their hideously grinning masks. Cunningham is thus able to forge a recurring link between desire (using the most mechanical and derisive evocation possible) and disgust.

Figure 5: Still from "Windowlicker"

This culminates in the clip's most grotesquely decadent scene, in which the Aphex Twin sprays a line of cavorting, masked dancers with champagne. By this time even the masks of the dancer have mutated, their skin shriveled and stretched, the grins accentuated by a set of large, dirty teeth. Cunningham carefully decorates these images of degradation with fresh flowers in order to complete the juxtaposition.

While dissecting the "Windowlicker" video clip is a fascinating task in itself, one that reveals much about the aesthetic behind the Aphex Twin project, a new twist in its interpretation has come to light two years after the video's release. According to an article by Leander Kahney, a musician named Chaos Machine discovered in 2001 that the sound patterns at the end of "Windowlicker," when viewed through a sound editing program, form what appears to be the face of a "demon".

It seems to have been discovered accidentally by an electronic musician who calls himself Chaos Machine. Chaos Machine wasn't available for an interview, but according to his website, he was playing around with WinAmp one evening when he spotted the diabolical face.

His discovery can be reproduced with a sample of the song and some spectrographic software, which displays the different frequencies of the song as a graph against time (Kahney). The experiment was repeated by Jarmo Niinisalo, who discovered that there was indeed a face contained in the musical waves.
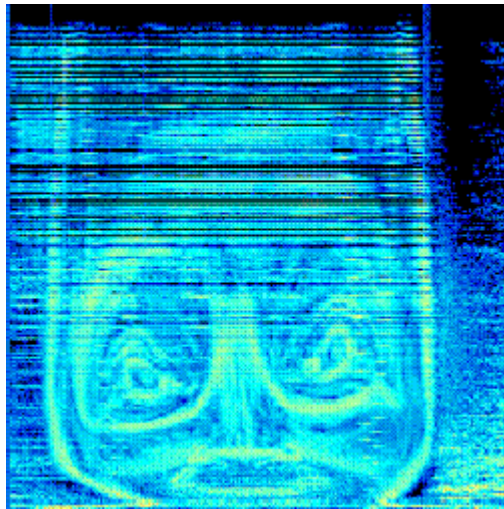
Figure 6: Chaos Machine's "demon face"

But Niinisalo went further than Chaos Machine in this discovery. He writes: "While examining the image, I came to the conclusion that something was not right. So I started messing around with the settings of the spectrograph program, and after a bit of knob twiddling the mystery revealed itself: the face was supposed to be watched with a *logarithmic* frequency scale, not with a linear scale. A linear scale provided the "demon face," but with a logarithmic scale the end results were quite different" (Niinisalo).
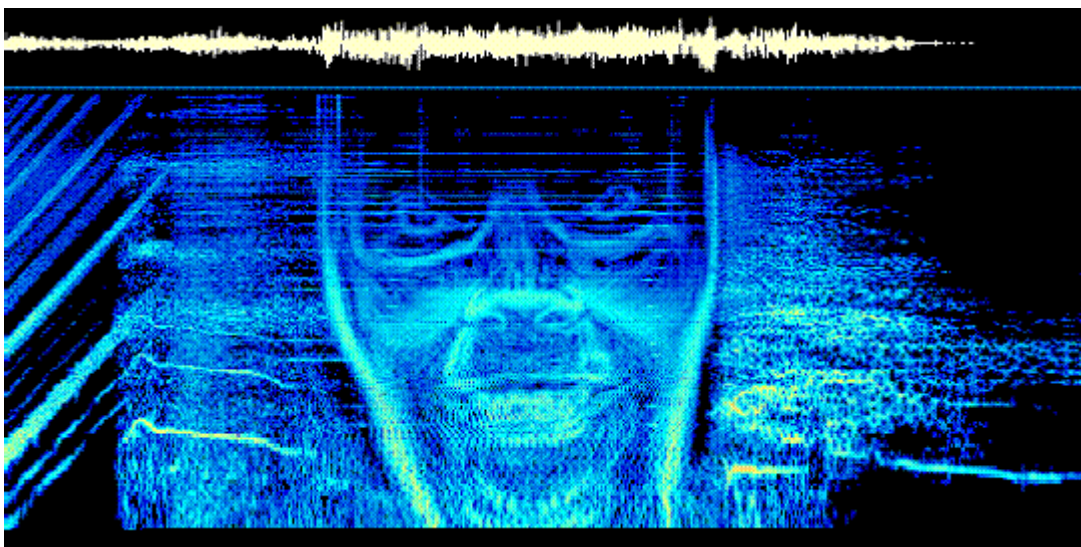
Figure 7: The Aphex Twin face

Given its recurrent appearance in Aphex Twin's work, it perhaps comes as no surprise that the face turns out to be a somewhat distorted (but nonetheless unmistakable) image of a grinning Richard D. James.

The possibility of transforming images into sound, and vice versa, is a product of the electronic age. The standard formats for image and sound files use essentially the same technique for storing information. Bitmap files, for example, reproduce pictures by storing every individual, microscopic dot of a recorded image. Each dot is an individualized point of representation. Given the computer's capacity for containing large amounts of detailed information, bitmaps provide the highest image quality possible. Wave files work in the same way, storing each individual recorded pitch. The computer, in other words, has traversed the separation of music and image central to Schopenhauer's dichotomy. Because images and music are now stored in the same way, the only thing that determines their form is how they are interpreted.

As Niinisalo points out, transformations from image into sound are relatively easy to detect (from my own experiments, the common characteristic seems to be a machine-like white noise). Niinisalo's investigations do not end with the Aphex Twin face. Not only does he discover several other examples of image to sound transformation on the Windowlicker CD, but also another instance of its use on Plaid's "3recurring," the aural representation of a repeated series of threes. Although the sound-image connection has rarely been used because of its "unmusical" properties, it is nonetheless fascinating to trace this musical moment, the first known entry of this technique into avant-garde electronic music. Furthermore, Niinisalo's revelations about the Aphex Twin face surely add a new, important dimension to the interpretation of James's music. Beyond the clever use of masks across the range of Aphex Twin video clips, the Windowlicker sound-image surpasses itself as an exercise in hyperbole. Transcending a cultural tradition of inexplicable mystical transformation, whether divine (the Word made flesh) or scientific (alchemy's dream of transforming lead into gold), James succeeds, miraculously, in creating music in his own image.

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Image Credits

Fig 1. Elektra/Asylum, 1997.

Fig 2. Wea Corp, 2003.

Fig 3. Sire/Wea, 1999.

Fig 4. Wea Corp, 2003.

Fig 5. Wea Corp, 2003.

Fig 6. Jarmo Niinisalo, 2004.

Fig 7. Jarmo Niinisalo, 2004.

Notes

[1] This is the symbol that Aphex Twin has repeatedly used as his logo throughout his work, and when seen in a less ambiguous light than the still, it is clear that the symbol is meant to represent the Aphex Twin initials.

Spaceship.

Michael Karl (Ritchie)

Simply cut along the dotted lines, glue to flash cards, and reshuffle:

The spaceship will never grow old and die.

When it reaches the end, it will grow younger,

until finally its algorithms metastasize

into smoke rings around the ball bearings,

until finally it is what comes before the baby -

cluster bombs and hand grenades.

The spaceship is not a submarine

out to inseminate some whale.

Its solar panels need burning planets

like the one it left behind.

When the spaceship is finally empty,

even of the space inside,

it will join the other bits of junk,

the satellites whose signals

stack to a point of origin

that no longer registers dreams.

The spaceship solves the problem of space

by putting a grid over its facelessness

and mapping everything for the binary

computer printouts of white noise

and the occasional erratic conflict

like marriage or blood sacrifice.

The spaceship longs to become a star

flayed of its skin, transformed by fire.

but there is a madness in loving space,

fold upon fold of emptiness.

But there are no hummingbirds

to slice the tangelo.

Spill a drink and you'll swim

like a fish to ogle each pearl.

If you cut yourself with a knife,

you can waltz a circle of blood

around your throat.

And your body will yearn

for the good old days

when gravity held everything together.

The spaceship is the voice of the future

after travelling through electromagnetic fields

that fried its database.

After all the libraries had been burned,

the spaceship is a golden sarcophagus

without any responsibility toward the past.

Only the physically fit

will be allowed on board,

only the winners of beauty pageants

cunning enough to murder everything in sight.

Does a spaceship have eyes?

Too many to name.

Does a spaceship glow in the dark?

There is no safety in numbers.

The spaceship is a ship

of infinite space.

If space came before light,

then what the spaceship contains

must resemble what contains the spaceship.

If light came before space,

then the beauty of the spaceship would be all.

Inside the spaceship, you can hear

flies in the petrie dishes.

Inside the spaceship, you can see

a blizzard of goosefeather down.

The food is decompressed paste,

the taste of apple without the apple.

The weapons on board are useless.

They work only against animate matter.

No one thought to include perfumed mists,

a bottle of wine, and love,

the deadliest companion to beg

for a little mercy.

The spaceship is nearly there,

wherever there may be,

having shed its cocoon of booster rockets

while riding the edge of each planet's gravity

like a slingshot light years off galaxies

avoiding the pockmarked black holes.

In this way, the spaceship will always be

nearly there, wherever there may be.

If the spaceship sneezes,

rust will germinate beside the hangdog

oxygen masks that can still remember

human sweat in the absence of air.

But if space sneezes,

then all the zeros will abruptly roll over.

Here is a replica of the spaceship

made by the intersection of laser beams.

It almost looks real.

Fueled by nuclear waste, it steams

at what remains of human beings –

their holograms pressed between leaves

of a golden notebook.

Flip the right switch, home movies

and golden oldies will warm the spaceship

until the loss of all those people

becomes too overwhelming a cruelty.

No longer a silver cigar case

attached by a wire to the ceiling,

no longer a discus for the newly

elected father figures,

but particles of light

desperate to dance

wherever they land -

call it soul.

Before a spaceship could take off,

there had to be a reason to leave this one.

Try drinking the air, they sing,

try breathing the water.

Does the spaceship replace

the human beings who built it?

Of course it does, just as the telephone

replaces the touch of lips,

or the television replaces reading,

or the radio replaces seeing.

The spaceship replaces everything,

each out of place in its own place.

The spaceship in space

is a bullet aching to be a pearl,

moving so fast, it slows down

and hangs suspended in the mouth of space,

directionless, hoping to be saved

by something more than we are.

Does there have to be a monster on board,

creaking on its wheels over the track

with the pulleys visible? Or are we

monsters enough toward each other?

Before a spaceship could land,

something would have to break its fall:

zombies, perhaps, or what the conquerors

will classify as subhuman.

The spaceship tries on different sizes of space

until one fits and we bolt forward

beyond the weight of memory and the guilt

of being born without wings.

To repair a spaceship, you will need

rubber bands, paper clips,

bobby pins, chewing gum,

and lots of ingenuity.

...take you anywhere at midnight.

By Helen Young

[...] take you anywhere at midnight.

The hum of your skin will keep me awake,

far enough and long enough and late

until nights and continents are ripe

with our green age. And if I kissed

your palm, would you close it then to hold

onto the dark and strike against the bolt

of song stirring from the ropes of your wrist.

The spider-web-drum of your veins

beats the syncopation of my witching hours

into a pulse like hail [...]

...It wasn't the sun that made me wise,

By Helen Young

It wasn't the sun that made me wise,

it let me into the secret of repetition

but it didn't make me wise.

Marking maps on the carpet with pins;

stealing street-signs to ease my paranoia

when I crave every place that you've been.

It wasn't the windows that made me wise,

it wasn't the sand you melted and framed,

it wasn't the glass you peer through.

Crawling into skin each morning

and creeping into flesh.

Eloping with amnesia every chance I get,

with you trailing behind,

an earthbound blister on my nomad heel.

I don't know what it was,

but it wasn't the window

and it wasn't the sun.

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