NEBULA

Content

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Ho'Olohe'Ole: Not Heeding, Unreceptive, Disobedient.[1]

By Kai Ana Makanoe Kaikaulaokaweilaha Kaululaau

83 Native Hawaiian artifacts extracted from the U.S. Military in 2002

Abstract

"If there is anything Native Hawaiians will come to know it's eviction. They evict us when we're alive, they evict us when we're dead. We are never safe. Our responsibility is to protect our sense of place."

- Punahele Lerma

As the U.S Military continues to excavate Native Hawaiian ancestral remains and incarcerate protestors, anger, division and resentment intensify toward the state and federal government as the "digging up and showcasing" of Native Hawaiian *iwi* (bones) only remind us of the blatant and wanton disregard of Kanaka Maoli[2]'s past. For what is sacred to an indigenous people has now become a commodity, a vain

trinket of power – false control. How much more must be wrongfully dug up? Only to be made a show, mis-catalogued, stolen and sold to the highest bidder. The goal of this essay is to accurately portray the indispensable duty of civil disobedience regarding the safeguarding of Kanaka Maoli's ancestral remains, wrongfully excavated by the U.S military.

Introduction

In the past 200 years, with the surge of colonialism and military occupation, Hawaii has undergone tremendous and drastic changes in its land development. While such increased expansion continues at present day, numerous unmarked burial sites are being discovered; as an effect, many of these sites are being robbed, nonconsensually excavated, or, in some cases, completely built over. Despite the fact that Native Hawaiians strongly believe that caring for *iwi* (bones) ensures the continuity of both spiritual and family life as well as the preservation of culture – such beliefs and values continue to fall on deaf ears. The objective of this discourse is to asses the justification of Ho'olohe'ole – of civil disobedience regarding the conservation of Kanaka Maoli's ancestral remains iniquitously unearthed by the U.S military. This writing will be 1) a preliminary of the Hawaii State Supreme Court case Hui Malama I Na Kapuna O Hawai'I Nei (Hui Malama) v. John Dalton (secretary for the U.S Navy) and Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum (Civil No. 94-00445 DAE) that will provide a detail of the various issues within the excavation process that escalated in tension and division amongst the U.S Military and various Native Hawaiian groups. 2) Examine the actions taken by the Native Hawaiian group Hui Malama and their stated justification of non-compliance toward the State of Hawaii's Supreme Court, the U.S Navy and the Bishop Museum, in order to assess non-violent civil disobedience and its corrective use in the management of both state and federal policy.

Preliminary of Hui Malama I Na Kapuna O Hawai'I Nei v. John Dalton (secretary for the U.S Navy) and Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum (Civil No. 94-00445 DAE)[3]

In 1940, under Federal Executive Order and a Declaration of Taking[4], the U.S. Navy seized 464 acres of Mokapu beach on the big island of Hawaii: publicly stating the "general objective" of the acquisition was to build a naval base. Years later in 1992, *iwi* (bones), wooden statues and other cultural remains were discovered - as an effect, the U.S Navy restated the "new general objective" of the land in possession was to excavate and provide an accurate inventory of the human remains and funerary objects (which were now to become property of the U.S federal government). In turn, the U.S Navy contracted the Bishop Museum in a "joint effort" of the excavation and store; however, during the unearthing process, many discrepancies relating to age, sex, physical attributes became visible; skeletal parts were erroneously commingled with other remains[5]; the skull of a Native Hawaiian woman was stolen and sold on eBay for $12,500[6]; various Native Hawaiian burial objects once owned by the Bishop Museum were being trafficked and sold on the black market to various antique shops[7]. On June 14, 1994, the group Hui Malama I Na Kupuna O Hawaii

Nei (Hui Malama) filed suit against John Dalton, Secretary of the Department of the U.S Navy, asserting that all information and research related to the examination be destroyed and placed under seal in order to mollify the "shame and anguish felt by these ancestors for being exposed in such an offensive manner[8]." The suit was filed for declaratory and injunctive relief under the Native American Graves Protection Act[9] (NAGPRA), Hui Malama contended that 1) In accordance to Native Hawaiian custom, human remains posses "mana," a life force that encompass the traits of a living person; therefore, mishandling of the remains has induced suffered injury. 2) Under Hawaiian law, the government is obligated to protect all rights that are "customary and traditionally exercised" by Native Hawaiians that entails a spiritual guardianship of cultural items and ancestral remains.

On July 25, 1995, David Alan Ezra, United States District Judge for the District of Hawaii, concluded that 1) Under the Native American Graves Protection Act, human remains are classified as "cultural items;" under the classification of "cultural items," human remains are objects or entities without attributes of life; therefore, such objects are not afforded legally protected interest. 2) Statutory language does not indicate a trust responsibility between the federal government and Native Hawaiians. 3) While certain actions such theft, trafficking and illegal selling of remains has occurred by certain individuals – their behavior does not represent the U.S Navy hence, the U.S Navy is not responsible for their actions. Judge Ezra maintained that the U.S Navy's publicly stated intent was to collect and gather accurate inventory of the cultural items and skeletal remains that entails the "need to learn for the future from the past[10]…" Moreover, in various past congressional hearings, Native American witnesses did not object to the scientific studies conducted (as long as studies had specific purpose and timelines), the U.S Navy has not given any "indication" of such indefinites, nor have any legitimate grievances been sufficiently proven. The court ruled in favor for U.S Navy and determined that the examination of remains was properly conducted and subject to disclosure.

5 years later on February 26, 2000, as the digging, cataloguing and inventory of our remains continued - Hui Malama's leader Eddie Ayau went to the Bishop Museum, signed out the 83 artifacts "on loan," and secretly reburied them in various locations. Seven days later on April 5, 2000, Judge Ezra demanded that Eddie Ayau and Hui Malama provide a "the precise location of each item loaned as well as the names and addresses of each person who know the exact location of the items[11]." Eddie Ayau and Hui Malama were given 15 days to meet the imposed demands - the defiant leader refused. Judge Ezra lashed out against the group's behavior as a "sabotage [of] the repatriation process… by hijacking the remains." Additionally, the judge also criticized the Department of Hawaiian Homelands[12], alleging that certain employees within that department knew where the artifacts are buried. A reprimand made by Judge Ezra to Eddie Ayau who stated, "What you did was not *pono* (good)... I want to do [this] in a sacred way, but one way or the other - these objects will come back to the Bishop Museum." Ayau simply answered "There is nothing sacred about taking from the dead…" and was jailed indefinitely[13]. Nevertheless, the U.S Navy made two attempts to recover the "hijacked items" on April 27, 2000 and September 26, 2000: nothing was found.

Throughout history, as various societies and cultures around the world have honored their dead in their own particular way - for Native Hawaiians, the death of family members was profoundly entrenched into our everyday life. Honoring and burying our dead reflects expressions of love and respect, as well as

expressions of sorrow and deep sense of loss. The bones of our ancestors are the very veins sealed into a land we fight to preserve because it links us to what was lost: a legacy, a wisdom passed. The ancient remains of our ancestors are the Mana (energy) that comfort us in our grief, direct us when we are lost, calm us in our moments of chaos or confusion. They guide us in our present, and are bonded to our future thus reflecting the common threads we hold not only in our sense of place, but throughout humanity as well. In this and through this - joint efforts between Native Hawaiian groups, various Native American tribes and U.S Congress worked to mutually write, mutually support and mutually establish The Native American Graves Protection Act to ensure that such values were to be protected, preserved and kept sacred; such federal policy also established a commitment that illegal digging and outright grave robbing will no longer occur as it did in the past.

While the initial Declaration of Taking of 1940, was to build a naval base to secure homeland protection. Out of complete and utter self-interest, the Declaration of Taking was restated to "excavate and compile an accurate inventory of the human remains and funerary objects…" without any type of justification whatso-ever. Despite the fact that Congress enacted the Native American Graves Protection Act on November 16, 1990 - the process of excavation at Mokapu Beach still continued. As an effect, the mindful and judicious effort in constructing such shields of protection, has become an inverted, loose and convoluted justification that entails the digging of ancestral remains "to learn for the future from the past…" The nonconsensual digging, tagging, stealing and selling of ancestral remains *was* and *is* a defilement, a vile and gross act carried out without slightest consideration, or further question of how the descendents of these remains - the Native Hawaiians of present day have to say. Eddie Ayau and the Hui Malama group saw this, (along with many others) took the necessary steps, rose to the responsibility of their actions and followed trough with the consequences of such "hijackings." But the heart of the matter lies in this, while incarceration was carried out: what Judge David Alan Ezra considered a hijacking, a disobedient act, violation of law or not-heeding is essentially a response to values continually ignored, the response to repeated insult, the response to wrongful imposition of vain power and vain will, the response to a blatant disregard to policies mutually established – *Ho'olohe'ole*.

Dynamics of Civil Disobedience and the Actions of Hui Malama I Na Kupuna O Hawaii Nei

While "The State" may minimize some exploitation, the rise of economic or military self-interest often gives rise to institutional corruption, the bending of values, or even suppression of laws established that wrongfully call certain "facts" or realities into question. As an effect, policies that stem from the certain facts or realities "in question," often become insufficient, prioritized or reinterpreted thus converting into a suppression of history - a conspiracy of silence. This conspiracy of silence becomes a concealment of truth and history of injustices because it deprives citizens of corrective acknowledgement, resolution or more importantly – the internal self-healing needed for pragmatic resolve. Moreover, the dynamics behind such concealment, blatantly and wantonly ignore the values of a particular culture; it deteriorates the very ethos behind the mutual meetings of others and respect for each other's differences which lies at the heart of

corrective and fruitful societal (as well as cultural) progress. Additionally, those who continue to negotiate and comply in and through such terms of institutional corruption or selfinterest ultimately contribute to the perpetuation of the corruption and self-interest by ignoring or betraying the particular values of concern. Fundamentally, such systems of enactment are created and maintained in order to implant and instill fear: fear of losing one's recognition, fear of the military's "superseding" coercive action; fear of losing more then what has already been lost: the spirit and identity of one's culture and way of life. Subsequently, this mistranslates individuals of the state into a class of "subordinates" or "infidels" by coercively rendering them incapable of resisting "State Power" thus making such procedures of demoralizing subordination unworthy and undeserving of citizen allegiance. Accordingly, civil disobedience becomes a sacred duty when the state has become prioritized by economic or military self-interest, a conspiracy of silence, particular histories or values suppressed. It becomes pragmatically indispensable to the ethical action of recognition and deliverance regarding injustices committed in the past because it enacts a stand against chronic self-interest.

While some may contend that civil disobedience is a breach of law and policy, where an individual is either *"for or against the state…,"* or *"loyal or disloyal to the state, institutions or communities it entails…;"* Conversely, it must be further elaborated that when the body of politic or its laws and interpretations thereof, become unreliable or inadequate to the fidelity of purpose - they essentially do not represent the will of the people, they represent the self-interests of "the few and elite." To illustrate, why wasn't the U.S Navy's "restated objective" not collaborated more thoroughly with state or local entities or statutes such as State Statute, Chapter 6E[14], the Burial Sites Program or Act 306 that provides a process to protect the resting places of Hawaii's dead? While the federal government (or its institutions such as the U.S Navy) may have a superseding authority over state or local entities, does this validate the ignoring of laws that reflect the local values of our islands? Or was all of this overshadowed by the *monetary value* of such priceless artifacts? If such interests entail the justification of accumulated revenue through the *breaching*, bending and twisting of both law and interpretation, then such interests fundamentally reflect the *extent* of unscrupulous actions the ruling few are willing to carry out in order to further their yield. Moreover, initial civil compliers of law such as Hui Malama actively participated in various joint efforts to establish and act in accordance with federal and state laws such as National Museum of the American Indian Act[15] (NMAIA) and the Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA)[16] - the court wrongfully ignored or refused to consider this factor. By demonstration, while Hui Malama's actions reflect a primary adherence to civil obedience and willing conformity to laws set, their justified civil disobedience also becomes the assertion of a right in which law is (or should be) extended, yet unfairly denied.

But crucially, in the light of civil disobedience, even Gandhi strongly asserted: *"violence breeds violence... Pure goals can never justify impure or violent action..."[17]* that ruminate as: while the means may loosely be construed as "just means," such means are, for all intents and purposes - everything. While violence enacted even in the most ethical of causes may bring some success in the short run, such actions fundamentally betray a confidence that peaceful reform is possible. Such actions reinstate the thought that recognition or reform is (or may be) possible if and only if we enact violent measures: such measures entail the physical beating or possible killing of individuals, verbal attacks, non-consensual enforcement,

manipulation, to threaten, to violate, to damage, brute force or *"any and all actions that cause pain and suffering to the person I impose it upon in order for me obtain that which I ask for or a cause in which I wish to further…."* such actions of violence also give rise to skepticism not only to the "act of disobedience" itself, but the character and ethos of the civil resister as well. Essentially, the "strength to fight" lies in the demonstration of both civility and humility as the integral means of showing respect toward others while maintaining the sole purpose of non-compliance to the unjust law in and of itself. Upon this, non-violent civil disobedience internally as well as externally challenges both the civil resister's honesty of purpose and their capacity in translating the ethical issue at hand into a principle of compelling enactment. Therefore, his strength indispensably lies upon the correctness of his position that can never be put down or questioned regardless of the hardships that lie before him.

For disobedience to be civil and ethical, it is a movement that is open and cautious - it implies discipline, mindfulness and care. When such acts are carried out in mindfulness and care, they are in turn evolved into a courage of conviction, a brave trust and belief in the corrective reform that *is not* and *cannot* be fabricated or manufactured by "superseding rule" or coercion. Thus, in the case of non-violent civil disobedience, while one may surrender the will to react in a violent manner, one must *not cooperate* with the rule of injustice; but most importantly, if the civil resister has any *"property in their possession as a trustee, they will relentlessly refuse to surrender it."*[18] Moreover, while the civil resister may suffer to some degree because of their non-compliance, they are more then willing to accept the consequences for their actions because they act upon the valor of principle to stand against such injustices systematically imposed and push for nothing less then ethical responsibility, ethical accountability and ethical resolve. In turn, the civil resister becomes answerable and conscientious thus giving rise to adherence, reform and transformation of transcendence to truthful solutions regarding the matter at hand.

Such transformations of accurate, honest resolution lie in the edification of both culture and values that are consistent and impeccable demonstrations of protest *against* what is one-sided thus in turn *leading* others by unswerving, firm *example*. Such transformations become revolutions of proper reform because they reflect the coherent and harmonious elements of the society in order to bring about ethical change. Such transformations derive their strength from within and should never lose hope, so long as there is the slightest ground left for perseverance - in itself and for itself. In the case of edification, those who are our present: Native Hawaiians today both young and old, are of the very *line* and reflection – they are the eyes of our ancestral past looking into the present and toward our future. Their stories are the narratives of past; their actions of defense regarding our land, culture and iwi (bones) is a protection, a preservation of knowledges long ago. They are guided by the sealment of our ancestral remains - the remains that nurture, cultivate and support our land, our identity our very way of life. Through this lineage, they are the very descendents of those of the past that echo hope, reform and change in our policies – but most importantly, they reflect our infinite and inherited consciousness. Mahalo.

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Notes

[1] *Ho'olohe'ole* in the Native Hawaiian language means: not heeding, unreceptive, to disobey - a defensive action in the face of injustice. But most importantly, *Ho'olohe'ole* is about getting to the root and understanding of why such disobedience, such noncompliance, such nonreceptiveness becomes paramount because it enacts a stand against injustices which remain ignored. This essay is dedicated to those who continue the struggle regarding Native Hawaiian rights, armed with the sincerity, humbleness and integrity to do what is right and not heeding what has been systematically imposed upon an indigenous people. Aloha.

[2] Kanaka Maoli in Hawaiian means "people of the land." The term has grown increasingly preferential to Native Hawaiians with aboriginal blood quantum as those with no aboriginal blood quantum have begun to identify themselves as Hawaiian or even Native Hawaiian as such "Native Hawaiians" were born on the islands.

[3] Ibid

[4] § 3114. Declaration of Taking. 40. U.S.C State Statute 3116 (Eminent Domain)

[5] Hui Malama I Na Kapuna O Hawai'I Nei v. John Dalton (secretary for the U.S Navy) and Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum (Civil No. 94-00445 DAE)

[6] Pang, Gordon Y. K (2005)- Honolulu Advertiser. November 4, 2005. "Skull Offered on eBay" http://www.thehonoluluadvertiser.com/article/2005/nov.04/in/fp511040364.html/?print=on

[7] http://www.mooleo.com/huimalama-shocked.html

[8] Hui Malama I Na Kapuna O Hawai'I Nei v. John Dalton (secretary for the U.S Navy) and Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum (Civil No. 94-00445 DAE)

[9] Native American Graves Protection Act – 104 Stat. 3048 Public Law 101-601 – November 16, 1990.

[10] Hui Malama I Na Kapuna O Hawai'I Nei v. John Dalton (secretary for the U.S Navy) and Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum (Civil No. 94-00445 DAE)

[11] Ibid

[12] A state department created to preserve and distribute homestead land to Native Hawaiians.

[13] Pang, Gordon Y. K (2005)- December 21, 2005: "Hawaiian Group Defies Judge's Order About Artifacts"

& September 2, 2005: "Judge Orders Hawaiian Artifacts Returned"

[14] http://www.hawaiiparalegal.org/histypreserv1.htm ; www.hawaii.edu/ohelo/statutes/HRS006E/HRS006E.html

- The law provides penalties of up to $10,000 per burial for unauthorized alteration, excavation or destruction of unmarked burial sites. Equipment used in any violation may be confiscated by the State of Hawaii.

- The amendments to Chapter 6E established procedures to be followed whenever human skeletal remains are encountered inadvertently, usually through development activities or through natural erosion.

- When remains are encountered, all work in the immediate area is stopped and the police are notified as well as the Department of Land and Natural Resources. A qualified archaeologist then examines the burial context to assist in determining jurisdiction.

- If the remains appear to be over fifty years in age since death and interment, a likely unmarked burial site, the DLNR, in consultation with the affected landowner, the island burial council and any identified descendants, determines whether the burial can safely remain in place where discovered or whether relocation may be needed.

[15] P.L. 101-185, (Nov. 1989)

Chinese Palace Eunuchs: Shadows of the Emperor.

By Christine Doran

Palace eunuchs have become one of the popular icons of Old China, along with the Great Wall, the terra-cotta warriors and the blood-thirsty dowager empress, Cixi. Most people have heard of the eunuch admiral Zheng He (1373-1433), whose achievements in exploration, leading seven naval expeditions of mammoth wooden ships, have recently become well-known because of the notoriety of Gavin Menzies' *1421: The Year China Discovered the World* and its similarly titled American edition (Menzies 2002; Menzies 2003). Perhaps some also know of Sima Qian (c.145-86 BCE), the so-called father of Chinese historiography, who was castrated by order of the emperor Han Wudi as punishment for disagreeing with him, but who went on to complete his famous and innovative *Records of the Grand Historian*. In spite of these well-known examples of outstanding achievement by Chinese eunuchs, in general assessments of the eunuch system, by both Western and Asian commentators, have been uniformly critical.

Western perceptions of Chinese eunuchs have long been intertwined with the concept of "Oriental Despotism," the idea that Eastern political systems were characteristically dictatorial, oppressive and corrupt. In this view, palace eunuchs were regarded as a sign of brutality and degeneracy. As Loshitzky and Meyuhas have commented, "eunuchs are perceived by the modern Western audience as grotesque rarities of the past that are associated with the 'otherness' of exotic cultures" (1992: 31). They are most often regarded as a "barbaric, archaic, and uncivilized phenomenon and therefore as an anachronism" (*ibid*: 34).

Despite evidence of the employment of eunuchs in China over a period of more than 3,000 years, during more than twenty-five dynasties, their reputation in Chinese history and literature has been no more positive. Throughout Chinese history the mythology surrounding eunuchs has been highly uncomplimentary. They have been seen as objects of pity and scorn, guilty of being greedy, temperamental and cowardly and, like women, incapable of discipline or self-restraint (Louie 1991: 176). Chinese historians have attributed to their baneful influence the decline and fall of dynasties, as well as innumerable examples of excess, decadence and corruption at court. In Chinese thinking on the subject, eunuchs have never been regarded as more than a necessary evil.

Perhaps surprisingly, the literature available in English on Chinese eunuchs is not well-developed, with the exception of a number of detailed specialist studies dealing with particular periods or issues (for example, Tsai 1996; Robinson 2001). The aim of this article is to provide a broad overview of the eunuch system as

it developed in China from ancient times. It covers the different types of eunuchs; some notable customs relating to them; the genealogy of the eunuch system; their numbers in various dynasties; and the diverse roles they performed. For these sections, a noteworthy source is the work of a first-hand observer, George Carter Stent, an English customs officer who worked in China. Stent's sometimes colourful account of the operation of the eunuch system in the 1860s and 1870s has been mined by many subsequent historians.

Whereas most recent publications on Chinese eunuchs have approached the subject from the perspective of gender, this article focuses instead on an analysis of the eunuch system in terms of its role and significance in the Chinese political system. It is argued that the negative representation of eunuchs throughout Chinese historiography is attributable to the influence of Confucian state ideology, which elevated the emperor to the role of the Son of Heaven. By attributing dynastic degeneration and failure to eunuchs, it was possible for Chinese historians, most of whom were in official employ, to preserve intact the divine status of the emperor.

Typology

Basically there were two types of Chinese eunuchs: (1) those who had been subjected to forced castration; and (2) those who had chosen voluntary castration. It is impossible to say what proportion of eunuchs fell into each of these categories, but it is clear that the second type became more common later in Chinese history.

As far as anyone can know, the earliest examples of the creation of eunuchs arose out of warfare. Defeated enemies were castrated as punishment or for revenge, or as a result of the belief that castration made men more easily controllable. To castrate one's captives was a potent symbol of military supremacy and an enhancement of the prestige of the conqueror. There were occasions when the mass castration of a conquered tribe was tantamount to a policy of genocide (Mitamura 1970: 54). Other examples of castration occurred within Chinese society out of a desire to inflict punishment, revenge or humiliation on servants or less powerful rivals. A comparable form of punishment was also inflicted on women, who endured the removal of part of their internal organs or a sharp blow to the abdomen intended to damage their reproductive capacity (*ibid*: 56).

There was a long-held belief that castration should not be inflicted upon members of one's own ethnic group; it was seen as appropriate only for "outsiders." However, this precept appears to have been honoured more in the breach than in the observance. Or, perhaps one might say instead that the meaning of "outsiders" was flexibly defined. As the boundaries of the Chinese empire waxed and waned over time, some regions outside of the central heartland became established as catchment areas of eunuch supply. Prominent examples included Tibet, Korea, Manchuria, Yunnan, Fujian, Guangdong and Guangxi. The last three southern provinces of China supplied large numbers of eunuchs during the Tang and Ming dynasties. One reason for this was the extreme poverty of these regions. Another was the belief that

employing eunuchs from outlying regions minimised the possibility of treacherous alliances developing between palace servants and the surrounding populace. Zheng He was a good example of the eunuch as outsider: he came from the Yunnan region and as well as that was a member of the Muslim minority.

The second basic category of eunuchs chose castration voluntarily. Sima Qian, the distinguished eunuch historian, who himself had suffered forced castration for political reasons, stated in his major work, the *Shiji*, that the practice of voluntary castration was of ancient origin. However, this type of eunuch became more common after the institution had already been firmly established on the military basis outlined above. Many saw it as a path to gainful employment, and perhaps even political influence and the excitement and luxury of court life. Some chose castration as a way of avoiding the distractions occasioned by sexual desire. For some of these it was a step on a religious path. However, the last two reasons appear to have been rare in China. Most often it was a career choice, sometimes a desperate choice conditioned by extreme poverty and the grim lack of other prospects. During the Ming period self-castration was legally prohibited, punishable by death. Nevertheless, the evidence suggests that it was often resorted to; ironically, indeed, this period witnessed the high point of the eunuch system and the creation of voluntary eunuchs. When eunuchs presented themselves at the palace seeking employment, excuses were accepted, such as a riding accident or childhood disease. Within the category of self-castration, there was a further distinction between those who willingly chose castration but left it to others to carry out the operation, and those who literally castrated themselves.

There was also a distinction between those who were made eunuchs as boys, and those who became eunuchs after sexual maturity. Some sources suggest that all eunuchs had highpitched feminine voices, but in fact men castrated after reaching maturity retained the lower bass voice. According to Stent, all eunuchs were considered pure, but boys who were castrated when under ten years of age were regarded as especially pure and were highly prized, being employed by the palace ladies to perform intimate duties, on the nature of which Stent did not elaborate (Stent 1877: 173).

Totem and Taboo

Several interesting customs surrounded the practice of voluntary castration, especially when it became more organised and institutionalised during the Ming and Qing dynasties. The operations took place in a small shed just outside one of the palace gates in Beijing. When the operation had been completed, the newly-made eunuch was entitled to retain the severed body parts. In early Chinese history these had generally consisted of the penis, scrotum and testicles. However, because of the high rate of mortality associated with this radical form of the operation, the trend over time was for castration to be reduced in severity, so that in later centuries only the testicles were sometimes removed. Nevertheless, in the majority of cases all of the external genitalia were amputated using a knife with a curved blade.

The detached body parts were known as the *pao*, or "treasure." This treasure was kept in a sealed container

with alcohol as a preservative fluid. This was usually retained by the eunuch; but if he did not want to have it or forgot to collect it, the specialist who performed the operation, known as the "knifer," would keep it. Whoever retained the *pao*, it was stored in a special way, always placed on a high shelf (Stent 1877: 26). This was believed to symbolise the high position that would be attained by the original owner, in part as a result of the operation itself. This custom underscored the connection in Chinese thinking between voluntary castration and worldly advancement. The name given to the severed parts, *pao* or treasure, also emphasised this association.

There were two reasons why the *pao* was carefully preserved. First, in order to obtain employment and promotion, eunuchs had to produce their *pao* for inspection by the chief eunuch. Secondly, the *pao* was considered necessary for burial with the eunuch's body after his death. The Chinese believed that in the next world bodily integrity would be restored, provided that all the parts were available; it was for this reason that Chinese facing execution preferred strangulation to beheading, fearing that the head might be lost. Eunuchs often went to great lengths to retain possession of their severed organs so that their bodies could be restored to wholeness in death (Brownell & Wasserstrom 2002: 27).

For both these reasons, a lively trade developed in the *pao*. The surgeons who performed the operation always held a number of *pao* that had not been collected by their owners. These were made available for sale or rent. There were cases when a eunuch either lost his *pao* or had it stolen; in addition, there always seem to have been a proportion of "eunuchs" at court who had never actually been castrated. For purposes of advancement through the ranks, it was necessary in these cases to buy or rent *pao* for examination by the head eunuch. Also, for burial purposes after the death of a eunuch, it was believed that a stranger's *pao* would do just as well. Again, the grieving relatives were often willing to pay a high price to buy someone else's *pao* to place in the grave.

Despite the wealth and influence often associated with the careers of eunuchs, the removal of the sexual organs was generally regarded as a serious loss and a personal deficiency. For this reason it was customary to avoid in everyday conversation any reference to the operation or the eunuch's condition. Stent related the fact that in the presence of a eunuch Chinese avoided all reference to broken objects, such as a teapot with a broken spout. They even tried to avoid using the word for "cut," since it would be a reminder of the ordeal that the eunuch had endured (Stent 1877: 33). To have made reference to such matters would have been considered an insult to the eunuch. The other side of the coin was that much latitude was customarily given to eunuchs in their everyday conduct:

> A great freedom of speech and manner is allowed to eunuchs, on account of their deprivation; language and conduct that would not be tolerated in others being over looked in them with the remark, "he is only a eunuch" (*ibid*).

Sima Qian, who was castrated after he disagreed with the emperor by defending a defeated military commander, has left us a harrowing account of his experience of emasculation and life as a eunuch in his letter to Ren An in 93 BCE. He writes that there is

no defilement so great as castration. One who has undergone that punishment nowhere counts as a man. This is not just a modern attitude; it has always been so…Even an ordinary fellow never fails to be offended when he has business with a eunuch – how much the more a gentleman of spirit…Even after a hundred generations my shame will but be the more. This is what makes my bowels burn within me nine times a day, so that at home I sit in a daze and lost, abroad I know not where I am going. Whenever I think of this shame the sweat drenches the clothes on my back. I am fit only to be a slave guarding the women's apartments: better that I should hide away in the farthest depth of the mountains (Birch 1965:95-102).

Genealogy

The origins of the use of eunuchs in Chinese court life are not known for certain, the beginnings of the institution shrouded in the mists of Chinese prehistory. The practice has been traced back to at least the Zhou dynasty (1050-221 BCE). Eunuchs are mentioned in the *Zhouli*, an ancient text on law and manners dating from the beginning of the dynasty. In the eighth century BCE attacks by western nomads forced the Zhou rulers, who themselves had originated in north-west China, to shift their capital to the east, from Xian to Luoyang, thus beginning what is known as the Eastern Zhou period. During this period there are records of the employment of eunuchs by local warlords. The eunuchs of this time engaged in politics and there were cases of eunuchs who either killed or were responsible for the deaths of their rulers and employers.

There have been some reports of evidence of even earlier adoption of the practice (for example, Mitamura 1970: 28; Anderson 1990: 21). During the era of the Shang dynasty, about 1,200 years BCE, pictographs were etched onto bones, asking the ancestral gods whether it would appropriate to castrate an enemy captive. The victorious petitioner was Wu Ding, the ruler of Shang, and the vanquished was one of the Qiang people, ancestors of the present-day Tibetans. The Shang dynasty (c.1500-1050 BCE) was a theocracy in which the kings played the role of agents of the gods, whose revelations were sought by means of oracle bones. The oracle bone inscriptions of the Shang dynasty are the oldest available written evidence of Chinese history and use of the Chinese script. It appears that the answer the gods gave by means of the oracle bones was positive. Some of the Qiang captives were made eunuchs to serve at the court of the king, and some became sacrificial victims in a ceremony offering prisoners of war to the gods in thanks for martial victory. The oracle bones were unearthed among the ruins of Wu Ding's capital at Yinxu. This important archaeological discovery suggests that castration was used as a form of punishment of defeated enemies as long ago as 3,200 years BP (Before the Present).

Putting the Chinese institution of eunuchism into a broader historical context, historians have traced the practice back to ancient Assyria, and in particular to the queen, Semiramis, who ruled in the ninth century BCE and was the founder of Babylon. Herodotus, the Greek historian writing in the fifth century BCE, identified the use of eunuchs as a Persian (Iranian) custom, explaining that the Persians prized

their loyalty and subservience. The Greeks themselves took an active part in an international market in eunuchs, performing the operation and then selling the eunuchs on, at a great profit, in established market places in Ephesus and Sardis in present-day Turkey. By the beginning of the Roman empire, the practice of employing and having sexual relations with eunuchs was widespread among the wealthy ruling classes of the Mediterranean.

Numbers and Roles

Estimates of the extent of eunuch employment at the Chinese royal courts indicate that the numbers ranged between 3,000 and 70,000 at various times during China's long dynastic history. The system reached a peak during the later Ming dynasty (1368-1644), when there were an estimated 70,000 eunuchs working at the capital in Beijing and a total of about 100,000 including the provinces (Hucker 1961: 56). This was the era of such notoriously powerful eunuchs as Wang Zhen in the 1440s, Wang Zhi in the 1470s, Liu Jin in the early 1500s and Wei Zhongxian in the 1620s (Tsai 1996: 7). One in particular, Liu Jin, accumulated a vast fortune with masses of gold, silver, precious gems and jewellery. The rise of eunuch power during the Ming dynasty fostered serious political instability. In his in-depth study of the widespread rebellion in 1510, Robinson shows how political rivalry among palace eunuchs in the capital created the conditions leading to a massive revolt (Robinson 2001: 20).

During the Qing dynasty (1644-1911), China's last dynasty, the number of eunuchs declined considerably from its high point under the Ming. During the reign of the emperor Kangxi (r.1661-1772) there were 400-500 eunuchs. However, the numbers grew again under subsequent Qing emperors. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, during the Tongzhi (r.1862-1874) and Guangxu (r.1875-1908) eras, for example, there were approximately 2,000 eunuchs employed at court (Stent 1877: 165).

The *coup de grace* of the eunuch system came in November 1924. Following the fall of the Qing dynasty as a result of the revolution in 1912, the last emperor, Xuantong (r.1908-1911), was allowed to continue in residence at the Zijin palace in the Forbidden City, along with a staff of eunuchs. In 1924 there was a military coup led by the warlord General Feng Yuxiang and the deposed emperor was forced to leave the palace. The remaining staff of eunuchs who vacated the palace on that historic day numbered 470. The last Chinese eunuch, Sun Yaoting, died in 1996 at the age of 93; he had been castrated in 1911, at the age of 8, just months before the collapse of the Qing dynasty (*New York Times*, 20 December 1996).

One unusual feature of the system of eunuchs in China, compared to other countries where the practice was widely adopted, was that in China, at least during the Qing dynasty, the right to employ eunuchs was strictly limited to the imperial family and the families of certain highranking hereditary princes whose predecessors had assisted in the establishment of the dynasty. As Stent put it, "eunuchs, to all intents and purposes, are, in China, an appanage of royalty only" (1877: 148). There were rules laying down how many eunuchs members of the royal family were entitled to keep. The emperor was permitted to have

3,000 eunuchs; his sons and daughters could have 30 each; his grandsons could employ ten; and so on. The hereditary princes were entitled to have 20. This was in the nature of a sumptuary law, which indicated both the prestige and the relative social standing of the holders of eunuchs. Those entitled to employ eunuchs were also compelled to do so, or they were liable to be reported to the emperor and to lose rank for failing to maintain the dignity of their station.

The duties undertaken by the eunuchs in the palace were wide-ranging. Outdoor employments included those of water-carriers, watchmen, chair-bearers and gardeners. Their indoor work could include that of cooks and chamber, parlour and scullery maids. Some acted as priests ministering to the court ladies, and some were responsible for offering theatrical performances and court entertainment. As Stent commented, "in short, they do everything in the palace" (1877: 26). During the Qing dynasty the work of the eunuch labour force was divided into forty-eight official departments, covering the gardens, courtyards, kitchens, armoury, furniture, and so on (*ibid*: 172). The most prestigious of the eunuch agencies was the Directorate of Ceremonial, whose director was the chief superintendent of the palace staff. At times in Chinese history eunuchs also played significant military roles. During the Jin dynasty (1115-1234), for instance, a eunuch, Tong Guan, had command of 800,000 troops of the Chinese army. During the Ming dynasty, only eunuchs were permitted to produce firearms (Mitamura 1970: 108).

Apart from all of these relatively menial tasks, undoubtedly the most well-known duties of the eunuchs were guarding the royal harem and attending upon the emperor's many wives and concubines, who could number in the hundreds or even thousands depending on the reigning emperor. Eunuchs suited the needs of a polygamous society in which a powerful male ruler required safe and reliable protectors for both his women and himself. The ambiguous gender category that the eunuchs occupied made it possible for them to cross freely between the worlds of men and women. There is considerable evidence of sexual relations between eunuchs and members of the harem or other court ladies. From the point of view of the women, eunuch attendants could offer sexual gratification without the threat of pregnancy, an important consideration in an era lacking reliable contraception. It has even been suggested that in some cases ruling emperors and other court authorities were well aware that such sexual relationships developed. Their first priority was to ensure that any offspring were unquestionably of the emperor's line of descent, rather than to control any sexual dalliance that might occur within the seraglio (Tougher 2002). Perhaps surprisingly, David Hester has argued forcefully that "eunuchs were universally characterized by the frequency, ease of and adeptness with which they performed sex acts with both men and women" (Hester 2005: 18). As well as engaging in sex in the seraglio, some Chinese eunuchs married, adopted children and themselves kept concubines (Jay 1993: 459-478).

Significance in the Chinese Political System

In China the monarch, known as the emperor, was believed to have a close relationship with divinity, or with heaven (*tian*). To the Chinese *tian* was neither a place nor the equivalent of a god as creator of the

universe; instead *tian* referred to moral forces which determine how the universe operates. Rulers were expected to act in harmony with these universal forces; if they failed to do so, it would be their downfall. Followers of Confucianism, the official state ideology, called the emperor the Son of Heaven, emphasising his special relationship to the powers of the universe. The emperor was seen as the special agent of heaven on earth, entrusted with the responsibility of carrying out certain rites and ceremonies to harmonise earthly matters with those of heaven, as well as ruling justly. As mediator between heaven and earth, the role of the emperor was to maintain the harmony, the cosmic balance, that was considered essential to ensure the well-being of humankind. From the earliest times Confucianism had stressed that good rulers would prosper while evil ones would be punished. These ideas were summed up in the concept of the Mandate of Heaven. Sima Qian's influential histories, with their moral vision of historical processes, contributed a great deal to the entrenchment of this doctrine. As the founder of an historiographical tradition – comparable to the role of Herodotus in Western historiography – his influence continued for centuries.

Because of the close link between the emperor and divinity in his role as the agent of heaven on earth, a wide gulf separated the emperor from his subjects. As Hegel memorably put it, in China only the one, the emperor, was a free subject; everyone else was under his command and "all are equal before the emperor – that is, all are alike degraded" (Hegel 1952: 216). The gulf between emperor and subject, the Chinese believed, was as wide as that between heaven and humankind. As a being linked to the divine, it was accepted that the emperor could never reveal his true self, his personality as an ordinary human being, to those he ruled. In the eyes of the people, an aura of great mystery always surrounded the being of the emperor. In one of his short stories, Franz Kafka eloquently highlighted this mysterious aspect of the authority of the emperor in the Chinese political system. The people revered the emperor, or rather the position of the emperor, despite – or perhaps because of – not knowing anything about the human individual who currently occupied the Dragon Throne:

> we think only about the Emperor. But not about the present one; or rather we would think about the present one if we knew who he was or knew anything definite about him. True – and it is the sole curiosity that fills us – we are always trying to get information on this subject, but, strange as it may sound, it is almost impossible to discover anything…One hears a great many things, true, but can gather nothing definite (Kafka 1946: 163-164).

The Greek historian Herodotus pointed out how the institution of eunuchs could help to preserve the required distance between ruler and ruled, and thus to maintain an aura of sanctity around the figure of the monarch (Mitamura 1970: 49).

Consequently, in order to preserve the mystery of absolutism, the human side of the emperor was shown only behind closed doors. It would have been difficult to allow ordinary common people into the inner sanctum of the emperor's domestic life. To have shared his private life with a commoner, even as a servant, would have entailed for the emperor a loss of mystery, prestige and thus control. So instead eunuchs were employed in domestic roles. Drawn from remote regions and cut off from ordinary family life, eunuchs were permitted to share the private life of the emperor. They provided him with human contact, and kept

his private affairs confidential. They were able to define and defend a sacred space around the emperor. Eunuchs also served to provide a connection between the emperor's exalted space and the outside everyday world, a conduit for information about his subjects.

Notwithstanding the Confucian state ideology centred on the Son of Heaven and Mandate of Heaven, and *pace* Hegel, the reality of the structure of Chinese imperial government was that it was composite rather than monolithic. In addition to the emperor himself, the main centres of power in the inner court included, but were not limited to: the emperor's favourite consort and members of her family; members of the clan of the emperor's mother, the empress dowager; the emperor's designated heir and his supporters; military leaders; scholar officials who were close advisors of the emperor; and the palace eunuchs, who were often divided into several factions in alliance with other contenders. The relative power of these competing groups varied in different periods of China's history. The real power of the emperor, whether he ruled or merely reigned, depended on many factors, including his own personal weaknesses or incompetence. Nevertheless, whatever the actual control exerted by a particular emperor, the position of emperor remained, in Confucian theory, the source of all authority and prestige. This was one of the main reasons why Chinese historians have tended to put the blame for dynastic decline and fall not upon emperors but on other political players, notably, in many cases, the palace eunuchs. Castigating eunuchs became a useful way of absolving emperors.

There was a strong current running through virtually all of Chinese historiography of condemnation of the role of eunuchs at court. Many of the most eminent Chinese historians, excluding Sima Qian for obvious reasons, were intensely critical of eunuchs. Just to cite a few outstanding examples, there was Cai Yong (132-192) of the Eastern Han dynasty; Quyang Xiu (1007-1072) of the Song dynasty; and Wang Shizhen, Gu Yanwu and Huang Zongxi during the Ming dynasty. Indeed such scholar officials directly attributed the fall of the Qin, Han, Tang and Ming dynasties to the excesses of eunuchs. Virtually never did they make the point that if eunuchs sometimes acquired excessive power, it was the emperor who allowed this to happen, since eunuchs, like everyone else, were dependent upon his favour. The official histories, composed mainly by historians appointed as state functionaries, represented eunuchs as irredeemably contemptible and corrupt. "Everyone has known for thousands of years that eunuchs are like poison and wild beasts," wrote Huang Zongxi.

Within palace politics, eunuchs were often at loggerheads with the Confucian literati, who in turn despised them and resented their influence. One notable example of this was court politics during the reign of Zhu Di, the emperor who initiated the remarkable voyages of Zheng He. The Confucian scholar officials at court did not support Zhu Di's outwardlooking, expansionist policies, whereas the eunuchs as a faction backed the emperor's approach. When a young new emperor, Yingzong, came to the Dragon Throne after Zhu Di's death, these policies were overturned and many of the records of the voyages destroyed by court officials. But later when Yingzong also developed expansionist ambitions in Mongolia, the scholar officials again opposed him and blamed his subsequent disastrous military defeats on the pernicious influence of eunuchs, in particular the eunuch commander, Wang Zhen (Mote 1974). The literati officials were generally able to take advantage of their position as record-keepers and chroniclers to have the last word in

such palace conflicts.

This is not to deny that there were times when eunuchs were able to amass significant power in court politics. But the centuries-long refrain of Chinese historians concerning the iniquity of palace eunuchs went well beyond this. For the scholar-official writers of the traditional histories, eunuchs were convenient scapegoats who could be blamed for the problems of Chinese government. In this way they could explain political instability without jeopardising the divine aura surrounding the position of emperor, or offending the current incumbent. Ironically, it was the relative political weakness of eunuchs as a group that left them vulnerable to defamation in the traditional historiography. Often of humble origins, frequently brought to the capital from marginalised regions, working their way up from dire poverty, and usually without offspring to protest against the slanders of historians, even those eunuchs who rose to power through the ranks were relatively easy targets for the official historians. To the injury of castration, state-sponsored historiography added insult, shielding the brilliance of the emperor and the imperial system by casting the palace eunuchs always as their abject shadows.
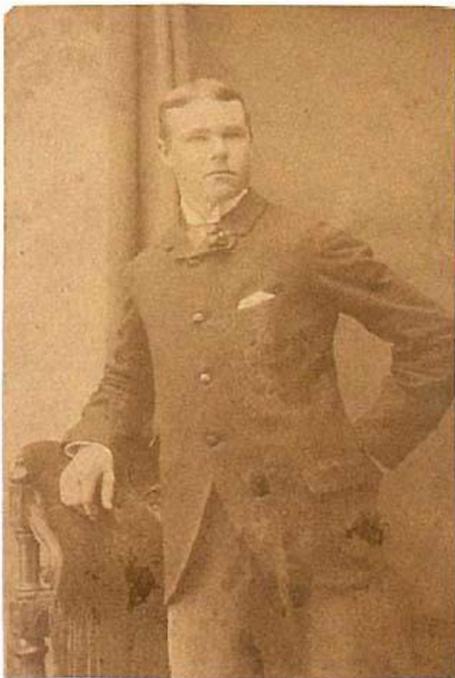
Illustrations

Left: **George Carter Stent**
Right: **A Chinese Eunuch**

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Fields and Frames in Historical Fiction about the Salem Witchcraft Trials: An Analysis of *Salem Witchcraft; or the Adventures of Parson Handy, from Punkapog Pond* (1827).

By Marta María Gutiérrez

Historical fiction has been defined as a hybrid genre, in the sense that it both contains a historical reality and an imagined reality. This hybridization or mixture of ontological spheres has sometimes been used to criticise this genre, due to the fact that it is neither history nor fiction and, thus, it violates some of the conventions established for each of them (Rigney 2001: 16-17). On the one hand, historians argue that historical novels do not reproduce the past as it actually happened. On the other hand, literary critics establish a lack of unity in this kind of works, because if the historical and the fictional components can be set apart, there is no unity of content.

However, every work of historical fiction needs to include these two components because it is what distinguishes it from other fictional genres (ibid: 20). That is, the interplay between invented story elements and historical ones is the distinctive feature of the genre of historical fiction. Nevertheless, this lack of agreement among critics has led to a study of this genre in terms of truth telling and fictionality, without trying to analyse how these elements mix together (ibid: 17). However, it is important to be aware that historical novels are fiction, and thus, they cannot be valued only on the basis of their faithfulness to history but also because of their literary value (Henderson 1974: xiv; Rigney 2001: 20).

There are different criteria on which the distinction between a historical novel from a novel is based. Avron Fleishman (1971:4) talks about fictional characters living in the same world than historical people as the

main difference between them. Moreover, he talks about a 40- or 60-year separation between the life of the author and the time of the novel (ibid: 3). For Amado Alonso (1984: 80), a historical novel is the one that tries to rebuild a past way of life. Finally, Harry B. Henderson (1974: xiv) establishes the time prior to the life of the author as the defining criterion for them.

The area in which most of the debate about historical fiction has been held is the one about the uses of history in fiction, in which three restrictions have been established (McHale 1987[2000]: 87-88). The first one is that the official record should not be contradicted. This limits the freedom of the artist to the so called "dark areas" of history, i.e., the elements of which we have no information or in which the official history is not interested. The second restriction is that the cultural system of a specific era should also be maintained unchanged so that characters should not behave in a way improper for the time in which they lived. Thus, this is related to anachronism. Finally, logical and physical laws should also be compatible with the ones of reality. Otherwise, the text would contradict the rules of classical historical fiction.

As regards the actual integration of the historical materials in a fictional work, Ann Rigney (2001: 22-23) talks about three strategies: selection – some elements of the historical reality are used whereas other are omitted -, transformation – in the sense of adaptation and revision of existing historical contents - , and finally, addiction – that is, the actual invention of events and characters. Obviously, these restrictions are not always respected, and postmodernism is a good example of a violation of all of them. In any case, every historical element introduced in the literary work experiences a transformation, because it stops being independent and belongs to a new system of relations and meanings. This transformation has been called "analogous configuration" by Barbara Foley (1986: 68, 84) and the result is that all elements in a work of historical fiction have the same status and thus, the criticism of lack of unity we mentioned before disappears because all the elements enjoy equal status.

As we have mentioned before, and as the examples of basic requirements for a historical novel to be considered as such and the restrictions on the uses of history in fiction show, the studies of historical fiction were and are still based on the historical component of the works under study or on the prevalence of one over the other. This emphasis can be more clearly seen in Table 1 below, in which we have summarized the different typologies of historical fiction that had been made in the last years paying attention to the different terminology used and the element(s) chosen as the criteria for classification.[1]

TYPOLOGIES OF HISTORICAL FICTION			
AUTHOR	**TERM**	**CLASSIFICATORY ELEMENT**	**TYPOLOGY**
John Williams (1973)	Historical novel	Characters and events	Novel of invented characters and events
			Novel with some historical characters, events and setting

Author	Main type	Criterion	Subtype	Sub-subtype
Joseph Turner (1979)	Historical novel	Characters and events	Documented historical novel	
			Disguised historical novel	
			Invented historical novel	
Barbara Foley (1986)	Documentary novel	Contract between author and reader	Pseudofactual novel	
			Historical novel	
			Modernist documentary novel	Fictional autobiography
				Metahistorical novel
Brian McHale (1987)	Historical novel	Realeme introduction	Classic historical fiction	
			Modernist historical novel	
			Postmodernist revisionist historical novel	Apochryphal or alternative history
				Creative anachronism
				Historical fantasy
Naomi Jacobs (1990)	Non-fiction novels	Historical characters	Fictional biography	
			Fictional history	
			Recombinant fiction	
Marie-Laure Ryan (1991a, b)		Accessibility among worlds	True fiction	Romantic lifes
				Dramatized history
				Non-fiction novels
			Historical and realist fiction	
			Historical fabulation	
			Realistic ahistorical fiction	
Lubomir Dolezel (1997)		Relation between historical and fictional world	Historical fiction	
			Counterfactual historical fiction	
			Factual narration or "faction"	
Jorgen Johansen (2002)		Relation between historical and fictional world	Co-factual narration	
			Counterfactual narration	

Table 1. Typologies of Historical Fiction.

After the analysis of all these typologies and of the studies that have been done in the field of analysing historical fiction, it is clear that there are two main fields of study: the introduction of historical components in literary works, and the elaboration of typologies.

Our proposal in the present paper belongs to the first one and its main contribution, as we will see now, is the attention received by the fictional component, something that has been almost forgotten because of the enormous importance given to the historical component.

Thus, our analysis is a step further in the study of historical fiction because, not only historical manipulations are going to be analysed but also the elements created in the mind of the artist and how both of them join together to result in an alternative version of what happened in reality.

The system of analysis of historical fiction that we propose is divided in three stages and it shows some similarities with Benjamin Hrushovski's (1981; 1982: 83-87; 1988: 64546) three dimension-model for the analysis of literary works. He proposes the following dimensions: the dimension of Speech and Position, in which the placement of the speaker is analysed; the dimension of Meaning and Reference, in which the focus of attention is placed on the meaning of words depending on the frame of reference in which they appeared, the combination of such frames in bigger units called Fields of Reference, and some regulatory principles, such as irony and point of view; finally, the dimension of the Organized Text, pays attention to the formal aspects of the literary work, in which different segments such as chapters and paragraphs appear.

However, neither the order nor the content of these dimensions agree with our proposal, as it can be seen in Figure 1 below.

BENJAMIN HRUSHOVSKI	PROPOSAL
Dimension of Speech and Position	First Stage: Fields and Frames of Reference
Dimension of Meaning and Reference	Second Stage: the organization of the narrative world • Interaction among elements of the previous stage
Dimension of the Organized Text • Chapters, scenes, paragraphs, segments…	Third Stage: Narrators and Point of View
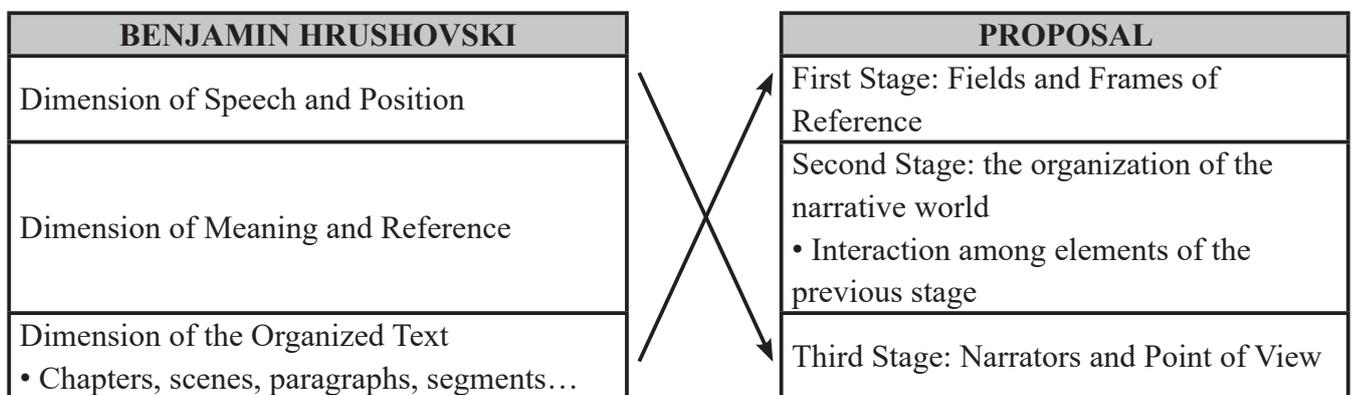
Figure 1. Differences between Hrushovski's dimensions and our proposal of analysis.

The starting points of our analysis are the concepts of field and frame of reference. A frame of reference is defined by Hrushovski as "any semantic continuum, to which signs may refer" (Hrushovski 1981: 20). Thus, it is what a text is about, and it can be an object, a scene, a person, a situation, a mental state, a story, an ideology, etc. (Harshaw 1984: 12). Thus, it determines the meaning of words, in the sense that the same term can have different meanings depending on the frame of reference in which it appears (Harshav 2007: 5). Frames of reference are made up of referents, which can be defined as "anything we can refer to or talk

about, may it be a real object, and event, and idea or a fictional non-existent object" (ibid). In our proposal of analysis we have limited the number of referents to four types: events, characters, time, and place.

Frames of reference grouped together form fields of reference, which are defined as "a large universe containing a multitude of crisscrossing and interrelated *frs* of various kinds" (Harshaw 1984: 231). Thus, a field of reference is simply a group of frames of reference, and "the world of a novel is a highly complex multi-directional Field of Reference" (Hrushovski 1981: 20).

In Figure 2 below, we have represented graphically the relation between these three terms. The result is that we have a field of reference; inside it we can find different frames of reference and, finally, within each frame of reference we can find a number of referents.
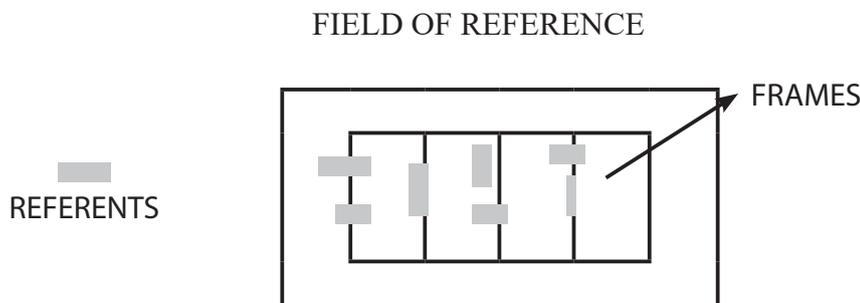
FIELD OF REFERENCE

Figure 2. Relations among Fields, Frames and Referents.

However, if we only distinguish a field of reference inside a work of literary fiction, our objectives are not fulfilled. Thus, we have to distinguish between two types of fields: the External Field of Reference (EFR for short) and the Internal Field of Reference (IFR for short) (Hrushovski 1981: 20-22; Harshaw 1984: 229; Hrushovski 1984: 15). The first one is made up of all the references to the real world, while the second is the actual creation of the author and thus, we can refer to it as the fictional world. This distinction is very important because it provides a solution for the presence of extratextual elements in literary texts.

Both fields are an absolute requirement, not only in a work of historical fiction, but in any literary work. In the case of the EFR, as there is no pure fiction (Ricoeur 1983[1984]: 69; Harshaw 1984: 243; Fokkema 1991: 47; Berkhofer 1995[1997]: 67), as authors always introduce elements from the world in which they live, there is always going to be some elements of this type. Thus, the EFR is what can be accessed to outside the text, i.e., the real world, a philosophy, ideologies, conceptions of human nature, other texts, etc. (Hrushovski 1981: 21; Harshaw 1984: 243). In the case of the IFR, it is what gives its uniqueness to a literary work; it is what distinguishes it from other types of texts (Hrushovski 1981: 20-21). In both cases, we are talking about intertextuality (Martínez Fernández 2001: 79), that its, the relation among different texts, as it can be found in all types of texts, even in historical ones, as they are constantly using primary sources and previous works (Rigney 2001: 94-95).

If we look at Figure 3 below, we have a literary work divided in two: an EFR and an IFR. Then, each field is divided in different frames, and inside each frame we can find different referents. The arrows joining both fields mean that the moment a historical element is included in a literary work and it is modified, it moves to the IFR; on the other hand, although an element belongs to the IFR, with the passing of time, it can become true, as in the case of some of the works by Jules Verne, that were absolute fiction when they were written but some years later some of the technological elements became true.
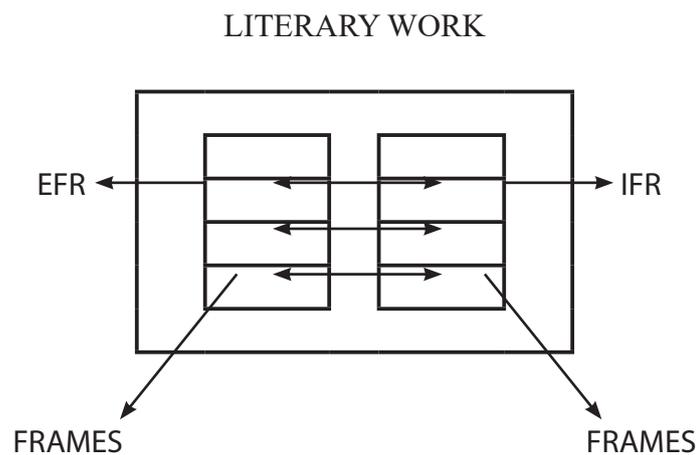
LITERARY WORK

Figure 3. Fields of Reference within the literary work[2].

However, we need to go a step further and introduce a further distinction, in this case as regards the frames of reference. The reason is that if we have distinguished between an EFR and an IFR, the frames included within each of them cannot be similar.

This is the reason why we are going to use two different types of intertextuality studied by two authors. On the one hand, Michael Rifaterre, in the year 1978 established that intertextuality comes from two different sources: particular texts and what he called the "universal cultural stock" or "sociolect" (Riffaterre 1978: 1-22). This last term refers to "the repository of society's myths" (Riffaterre 1984: 164). A few years later, Jonathan Culler (1981: 103-4) introduced the distinction between the presence of a text in another text (which matches Rifaterre's first category), and "anonymous intertextuality", which is the equivalent to Rifaterre's "sociolect".

However, although the distinction is established by these two authors, they did not use a clear terminology to distinguish among these two types of frames. That is the reason why we have used Umberto Eco's terms "intertextual frames" and "common frames" (Eco 1979[1984]: 20-1). The first ones are what can be found in other texts, while common frames are in culture. Besides, intertextual frames are already existing narrative situations, while common frames are the storage of knowledge and rules for practical life (Eco

1979[1984]:

32, 217). As an example, we can say that "war" would be considered a common frame, while the America Civil War is clearly an intertextual frame. If we go back to Figure 3 and we add this last distinction between common and intertextual frames, we get the final configuration of a work of fiction in terms of Fields and frames of reference (see Figure 4 below).
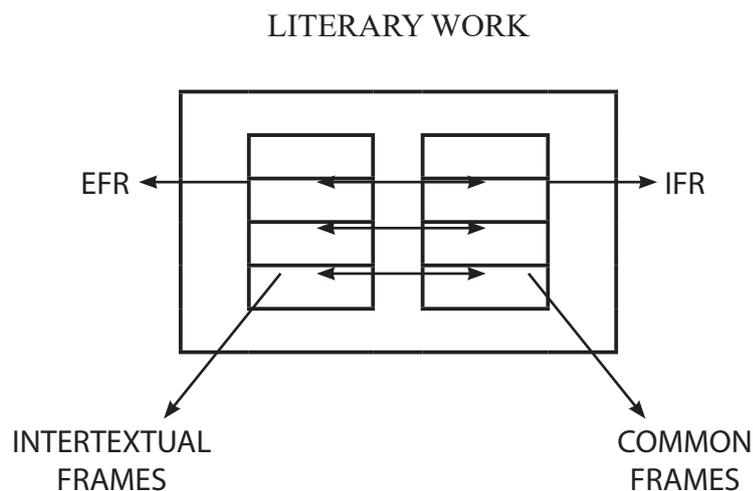
LITERARY WORK

Figure 4. Fields and Frames of Reference within the Literary Work.

In order to see how this way of analyzing historical fiction works, we are going to apply it to the first work of fiction written about the Salem Witchcraft Trials, the most famous witch hunt that happened in North America. Very briefly, what happened was that in the year 1692, 19 people were hanged as witches in Salem Village, more than 150 were in jail, 4 died in prison and one old man was pressed to death. All this was originated by a group of girls which showed symptoms of being possessed[3]. Puritans thought that the fight against the Devil was one of the most important things they should do, and thus, they could not allow servants of Satan to live next door.

From that year by the end of the 17th century, many theories have arisen, many people has been blamed for what happened and still today there is no agreement on what really happened. At the beginning of the 19th century, when the American people were searching for national themes in order to develop their own literature, the Salem Witchcraft Trials were perfect for their interests. This historical event meant one of the key moments in the colonial history of New England as they were a turning point as regards the power of religion in all aspects of daily life and they involved the end of Puritanism and a move towards a more democratic government: "The Salem outbreak of 1692 stands as the most turbulent and shocking episode in seventeenth-century New England, an episode which departed dramatically from all that preceded and followed it in Massachusetts" (Cohen 1998: 1). Besides, George Dekker (1987: 63-64) thinks that "at first

sight the subject might seem a splendid one for historical romance since nothing could be easier than to present the victims as apostles of progress and their judges as reactionary powers of darkness".

However, little attention has been paid to the literary aspect of this historical event: "The Salem Witchcraft Theme, in spite of the attention it has received from historians, has been singularly unproductive of scholarly articles or full-length books dealing with its treatment in the imaginative literature of America" (Willett 1958: 2). The reason is that only four works have specifically dealt with the literary representation of what happened in 1692: two articles, "New England Witchcraft in Fiction" (1930) by Harrison Orians and "Essay Review: Salem Witchcraft in Recent Fiction and Drama" (1950) by David Levin, and two unpublished dissertations, *Salem Witchcraft in American Literature* (1958) by Maurita Willett, and *The Tradition of Salem Witchcraft in American Literature* (1970) by James W. Clark Jr. However, from the second half of the 20th century, historians have begun to refer to literary works in their own books (Leisy 1950; Hansen 1969, 1974; Boyer and Nissenbaum 1974; Thomas 1977; Karlsen 1987; Robinson 1992; Rosenthal 1993; Gould 1995; Adams 2008; DeRosa 2009[4]) so the interest on the representation of this historical event in the literary field is on the increase.

From the analysis of all these works – both the specific and the historical ones dealing with it – we have come to three conclusions. The first one is that historians – and authors of fiction – have paid more attention to these events and their literary aspect than literary critics. Second, when these works are studied, nearly all the emphasis is placed on the historical component, thus only paying attention to the accuracy of the events presented. Finally, this emphasis on the historical component has led to confusion among two very different groups of literary works: the one dealing with witchcraft in New England, and the one which specifically deals with what happened in Salem. There were witchcraft accusations in many places during the 17th century. Even the first accusation and hanging of the new world did not happen in Salem but in Charlestown in the year 1648 (Hall 1991[1999]: 3-4). Thus, it is important to distinguish specific cases from what happened in New England as regards witchcraft cases. We consider that this problem can be solved using the distinction between common and intertextual frames we have just proposed. The reason is that in order to construct a corpus of literary works on the Salem Witchcraft Trials it is essential to find an intertextual frame of reference on this historical event in every single work to be included in it. For all these reasons there is a clear need for new studies that deal with the works that actually use the events of Salem, and with the fictional element that all works of historical fiction include.

Once we have seen the proposal of analysis, we are going to develop the analysis of the first work of historical fiction that deals with the Salem Witchcraft Trials[5]: *Salem Witchcraft; or the Adventures of Parson Handy, from Punkapog Pond* (1827).[6] The analysis of this specific work is very important, as it means the starting point of the literary configurations of this historical event. In the 19th century, 22 works of fiction on this topic were published, but more than 100 have been written since the 20th century. This great number of works and the time spam in which they have been published makes it necessary to carry out a diachronic study. Thus, it is essential to study what happened in the first works, in order to see the elements that still exist, the ones that are more frequently repeated, as well as those that were only used at a certain moment or within a specific literary trend.

Very simply, the argument of this work is the following: Faithful Handy arrives to Salem Village, to live with the Hobbes – mother and daughter. But soon, he feels attracted to Patience Peabody. Beautiful Hobbes is jealous of Patience and she accuses her of being a witch. However, Faithful discovers the plot against Patience and puts an end to it. After analyzing this work in terms of its fields and frames of reference, we have identified four intertextual and three common frames. In the case of the intertextual ones we have the general beliefs in witchcraft, the Puritans, the Indians, and the Salem Witchcraft Trials. In the case of the common frames, we have found the love triangle, religion and the lost manuscript.

For each of the frames we have a number of referents. In the case of the general beliefs in witchcraft, we can find the things witches can do against their neighbors (Anonymous 1827: 22-23), the different types of demons (45-46), the laws against witches and witchcraft (46-47) and the 19 recommendations to relieve the symptoms of the victims (38-39). Besides, the names of several authorities on the topic of witchcraft such as Cotton Mather (22, 24, 49, 50), Glavill (24), and Burton (45), and their works, are also mentioned. In the intertextual frame on the Puritans, the only referent is Hugh Peters, a former minister of Salem Village (Adams 1892: 375). In the case of the Indians, the only information we find is the name of one of the tribes, "the Netops" (30). Finally, the most complex of the three intertextual frames is the one dealing with the Salem Witchcraft Trials, in which we can see dates, names of places, and names of people, all of them having something to do with the actual reality of the witchcraft proceedings.

The same happens with the common frames. In the case of the love triangle, we can talk about jealousy and revenge as the consequence of complex love stories, but in this case the plot is discovered and we can see a happy ending. In the case of religion, it belongs to the cultural knowledge of the time that only through prayers Satan could be destroyed. Finally the use of the lost manuscript allows to put distance with the telling of the events and thus, to introduce a different vision of the events. In this particular case, the story told is in a manuscript found in a church in Connecticut: "The foregoing particulars were found recorded in an old manuscript under the seat of a pulpit lately pulled down in Connecticut. The Editor of the Courant politely loaned it to the Editor of the Magazine alluded to in the advertisement, who had them modernized and dramatized by an eminent writer of the newspapers" (Anonymous 1827: 70).

Once we have identified all the elements, it is important to establish the modifications that the intertextual frames have experienced. In the case of the general beliefs in witchcraft, the novel mentions that the work by Glanvill is *History of Witchcraft,* while the title of his most famous work is *Sadduscismus Triumphatus* (Kors and Peters 2001: 370-79). Another aspect that has been modified is the introduction of 19 things a doctor can do to relieve the symptoms of possession. This cannot be found in any of the most important manuals on witchcraft at that time. The nearest thing to this is what can be found in one of the most important works on witchcraft, the *Malleus Maleficarum* or *The Hammer of the Witches* in which several methods of detecting witchcraft and preventing being possessed can be found (Summers 1971: 164-93).

In the case of the Puritans, the main character of the literary work, Parson Handy, arrives to Salem Village to be the new minister with a letter of recommendation from Hugh Peters, a famous "Puritan fanatic and preacher" (Adams 1892: 374). He was minister of Salem Village, but he died 32 years before the events

of Salem, on 16th October, 1660 (376). Thus, he could not have written a letter of recommendation to Parson Handy.

Finally, in the case of the intertextual frame on Salem Witchcraft, only one accusation happened, while in the historical reality more than 150 people were condemned. However, the biggest difference is that the person accused was not hanged, while in Salem everybody who was accused lost his/her life – except the ones who confessed –, until the authorities put a stop to the hangings. In this literary work, the falsehood of the accusation is revealed and that explains that the accused young woman was set free. In the historical reality, this never happened, as everything the accusing girls said against their neighbors was considered as proof of their pact with Satan. This presentation of only one accusation can be seen in later works of the 19th century, and thus, it has to be considered when doing a diachronic analysis of the literary representation of this historical event.

Once we have seen the modifications, the next step is the analysis of the relation or influence among the different frames of reference, because this is what establishes the narrative configuration of the historical event within the literary work. The relation established among the general beliefs in witchcraft and what happened in Salem – two intertextual frames – is to show the influence of history in fiction; in the case of the puritans, it gives the social background necessary to justify the accusations of witchcraft.

In the case of the relation among common and intertextual frames, the love triangle shows the influence of literature in the configuration of the historical reality, because at the time when this novel was written, the seduction plots and the sentimental novels (Fiedler 1960[1984]: 89; Boyer 2001: 454; Reid 2004: 22) where one of the most important genres of fiction. In this literary work, the love triangle has replaced the fights among neighbors and the inexplicable calamities – i.e., the loss of cattle or the ruin of crops – as the cause of the accusation. Thus, what this novel shows is that love problems are what triggered such accusations, which were used as a way of taking revenge. Then, this common frame of reference has fully changed the historical reality, adapting it to the literary field and it should be taking into account in further analysis of the literary representation of the Salem Witchcraft Trials in order to see if this modification can be found again.[7]

In the case of religion, it serves to emphasize the importance of the ministers in the fight against Satan. Finally, the lost manuscript, as we have said before, gives temporal distance to the telling of the events and this helps to criticize what happened during the witchcraft persecutions. Besides, it is one of the distinctive features of gothic literature (Willett 1958; 62) and it was very frequently used at the beginning of a national literature in the United States, because the writers of novels were not very well considered and this strategy protected them. In addition to this, the most conservative sector of 19th century society thought that "fiction was simply an elaborated form of lying" (Ruland and Bradbury 1991[1992]: 28). Thus, many writers used the lost manuscript as a way of establishing the truth of what they were telling in their works.

After all we have seen, we can establish certain conclusions as regards our proposal of analysis of historical

fiction based on the distinction between and IFR and an EFR. It has allowed us to establish the first work of fiction to be included in a corpus of literary works on the Salem Witchcraft Trials because the presence of an intertextual frame dealing with them is compulsory. Thus, we have rejected the consideration of *The Sorceress* as the first fictional work on this historical event. Moreover, it allows us to list and analyze the intertextual and common frames that are added to a specific historical event, as well as to study the referents that are included inside each of them.

In addition to this, it seems very useful to make synchronic and diachronic studies of the introduction of a specific historical event in different literary works, at the same time that it is possible to make individual and group studies of the representation of a given historical reality.

The analysis of the intertextual frames establishes the accuracy of the extratextual information included in the literary work, at the same time that the complexity or amount of information included in a work of fiction can be established – that is, there can be more or less complex intertextual frames dealing with a given historical event. Moreover, it has been proved that it is necessary to study the common frames, i.e., the fictional elements, included in works of historical fiction, as they influence the literary configuration of the historical reality and, according to the results obtained in the work analyzed, they show many of the characteristics of the literary trend within which they were written. If this type of analysis is performed in works of fiction written at different times, it could be possible to see how different fictional genres and ways of writing have influenced the literary representation of a historical event. Thus, the study of tendencies, recurrences, similarities and differences among works and time eras can be done.

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Notes

[1] We have tried to present the most widely known classifications, bearing in mind that it is impossible to use every single classification that has been done.

[2] Each field has been represented with a different number of frames in order to show that they do not need to contain the same number of elements. In fact, depending on the size or the number of frames and referents each field contains, the work of historical fiction can be considered more or less faithful to the reality it intends to represent.

[3] Due to the enormous amount of historical works on this topic and the existence of many interpretations of what happened in Salem, we have used the commonly accepted explanation.

[4] There are more than 30 authors that deal with the literary representation of the Salem Witchcraft Trials so we have only included those that we consider more relevant.

[5] It is traditionally held that the first literary representation of this historical event is a narrative poem entitled *The Sorceress, or Salem Delivered* written by Jonathan Scott in the year 1817 (Orians 1930: 55; Willet 1958: 60; Clark 1970: 90; Vetere 2003: 141). However, the reference on the title has nothing to do with the historical events and it has to be included within the group of works of fiction that deal with the general topic of witchcraft in New England.

[6] This anonymous work was originally published seven years before as "Salem Witchcraft: An Eastern Tale" in *The New York Literary Journal and Belles-Lettres Repository* 3 (1820): 329-35, 417-20, 4 (1820): 17-27. Due to the difficulties in finding the original work, we have decided to use the 1827 edition.

[7] In fact, I have carried out this analysis and in 17 of the 22 works of fiction written in the 19th century, the common frame of the love relationships is the leading motif of the action.

Economy of Babel: The Problem of Minimalist Translation in the Intellectual Discourse of Noam Chomsky and Jacques Derrida.

By Manuel Yang

Abstract

In 1995 Noam Chomsky's *The Minimalist Program* proposed a radical overhaul of certain theoretical developments in his theory of generative grammar, advancing the "economy of representation" and the "economy of derivation" as two of the most potentially fruitful areas of future research. Ten years earlier Jacques Derrida, whose *Of Grammatology* Chomsky has characterized as an "appalling" "pathetic misreading," wrote an essay on translation entitled "Des Tours de Babel," which indicated the perennial problem of "translation" inherent in every act of writing in light of his rereading of the Genesis story of the Tower of Babel. A practicing translator, who is often torn between conflicting impulses to be faithful to the literal meaning of the original text and to "naturalize" the original into the translated language by way of paraphrase, recognizes that both Chomsky and Derrida's approaches offer something of value metaphorically – if not pragmatically – for the act of translation, the necessity to make semantic, even historical and philosophical, connections where there are none to be found apparently. After the two thinkers, we may call this theoretical orientation the "economy of Babel."

Now you can say that I've grown bitter but of this you may be sure
The rich have got their channels in the bedrooms of the poor
And there's a mighty judgment coming, but I may be wrong…

Yeah my friends are gone and my hair is grey
I ache in the places where I used to play

And I'm crazy for love but I'm not coming on

I'm just paying my rent every day

Oh in the tower of song

--Leonard Cohen, "Tower of Song"

As a working bilingual translator (to and from English and Japanese), I constantly confront the perennial dilemma every translator must face in trying to recapture the meaning of the original text in a different language: the degree to which one errs on the side of literalist loyalty or on the side of necessarily paraphrased, "natural" language-use. The novelist Haruki Murakami, who has made various translations of modern American fiction, once spoke on this contrary polarity of translation in terms of his two major American translators and his own attitude as a translator:

> …speaking for myself as a translator, I tend to be a literal translator, close to Mr. Rubin. I think Birnbaum's translation is interesting, but I don't think I'd do it that way. My method is to do it verbatim. Otherwise there is no reason for me to translate. If I wanted to create something on my own, I'd write something on my own from the outset. Of course, this is why selecting a text that you can respect firmly is indispensable (*Hon-yaku yawa* 20).

Partly the reason for tending toward the literalist or the paraphrasing approach is decidedly personal, reflecting in many ways the personal literary and linguistic sensibility of the translator as much as the author he or she is translating.

My field of translation is largely scholarly and intellectual – although this is applicable to my translation of poetry as well – and initially I was so rigidly "literalist" in my translation, including even the very order of words, that my English rendition was often as incomprehensible, that is, literally "Babelian," as the original Japanese would have been for English readers. However, I was weaned quickly out of this habit, with not a little help from the first reader of my manuscript (translation of Japanese thinker Takaaki Yoshimoto's *Karl Marx*), the social historian Peter Linebaugh. He circled gently in red ink passage after passage whose meanings entirely eluded him. Through my second, third, multiple revisions that followed, I was forced to strike a dialectical balance – as much as my limited ability allowed – between literalism and paraphrase, even though to this day I still have not completely shaken off an adulterous, secret loyalty to the "literal truth" of the original language.

Readers familiar with the work of Jacques Derrida may guess correctly where I am going with all this. One of the major targets of Derrida's deconstruction was language, to endlessly problematize (as opposed to "deny," as his critics falsely accused) the "presence" of irreducible, permanent truth in it, arguing among other things in *Of Grammatology* that the traditionally assumed priority of speech over writing is greatly misconstrued on a metaphysical assumption of "presence" shot through from Plato to Rousseau. Furthermore, Derrida cautioned against all kinds of closures – semantic, linguistic, philosophical, political

– which would have us believe that we have come to the end of building the last theoretical system (i.e., the completion of "Babel"), or even entertain such a possibility, which, in my case, means the achievement of a definitive translation that, in Leonard Cohen's words, "time will not decay" and be a perfect-pitched mirror-image of the original. Put another way, this was a caution against Western modernity's too ready faith in progress and its hubris about having transcended the materiality of collective or social "original sin" (e.g., of primary accumulation) – issued very self-consciously as an immanent critique from within the discursive tradition of Western philosophy itself (whatever we may think of Derrida's work, his deconstruction was built paradoxically on the language and concepts of the tradition which it critiqued fundamentally and to which it belonged securely at the same time – a gesture that, in a nutshell, captures the spirit of deconstruction as much as such "capture" is possible). It should be no surprise then that Derrida was attracted to the Biblical narrative of the Tower of Babel, which he used in 1985 to discuss the very act of translation.

We may very well characterize 1985 as the year of the political Babel, whose confused tongues in the ideological idioms of the Second Cold War translated in various forms of terrorism, from the CIA-funded attempted assassination of the Shi'a Muslim cleric Muhammad Husayn Fadl-Allah which took the form of a car bomb that killed more than eighty-one people in Lebanon, Israeli air force attack on PLO head-quarter in Tunis, and rightwing Christian Identity follower David Lewis Rice's murderous mutilation of the Seattle civil rights lawyer Charles Goldmark and his family, which was motivated by Rice's delusion that Goldmark was a Communist and a Jew who represented "Soviet atheism" that must be defeated for the sake of "American Christianity." Ironically, it was also the year in which Mikhail Gorbachev took effective control of the Soviet Communist Party as its General Secretary and proceeded to pursue reform policies that, without resort to such methods of Babelian terror, contributed most crucially to the eventual dissolution of the Soviet state. This was the historical context in which Derrida was writing, Derrida who was a thinker particularly alert to and critical of state and individual terrorism in part because of his experience as a secular Algerian Jew growing up under the Vichy regime and who would dedicate his meditation on the various spirits of Karl Marx eight years later to the memory of South African political leader Chris Hani, "popular hero of the resistance against Apartheid" and "**a communist** as such, a **communist** as **communist**, whom a Polish emigrant and his accomplices…put to death" (*Specters* xvi).

At such a historical moment, when the Babelian vocabulary of the Second Cold War and its application in the United States and the Middle East – where the Babel narrative originated – translated into the violence of state and individual terrorism, Derrida said of the Genesis story in "Des Tours de Babel": "This story recounts, among other things, the origin of the confusion of tongues, the irreducible multiplicity of idioms, the necessary and impossible task of translation, its necessity *as* impossibility" ("Des Tours" 250). Part of this impossibility derives from the desire to control multiple meanings and ambiguities *necessarily* inherent in language, to say nothing of various ideologies and communities, under the monolithic tower of singular meaning. We see how foolish and confused such an assumption is, given that even the latest translation of Homer, Dante, or Dostoyevsky that is named "definitive" becomes soon dated, if not obsolete, in need of a new translation, another Babelian linguistic reconstruction, more in tune with the historically changing language into which the original text is transferred in necessarily imperfect fashion.

What Derrida notes as "necessity *as* impossibility" points, therefore, to the historical contingency of the "irreducible multiplicity of idioms" that it is the task of translation to parse and recapture in as definitive a fashion as possible in a different tongue, with the full awareness that this is impossible. More broadly speaking, his insight also applies to the socioeconomic, cultural systems that comprise such idioms, even as they define these systems variously.

I hope the reader will not misread my point here to mean that language somehow holds a hegemonic status in determining social systems of culture and economy, that I am endorsing the epistemological priority of linguistics and semiotics over sociology, economics, and cultural studies. My point is that the assignment of such priorities to any particular human activity or discipline is confused from the outset, a Babelian project doomed to failure. Karl Marx understood this point far more lucidly than latter-day Marxists who reduced virtually every cultural phenomenon to the workings of the economic base:

> From the start the "spirit" is afflicted with the curse of being "burdened" with matter, which here makes its appearance in the form of agitated layers of air, sounds, in short, of language. Language is as old as consciousness, language is practical consciousness that exists also for other men, and for that reason alone it really exists for me personally as well; language, like consciousness, only arises from the need, the necessity, of intercourse with other men. Where there exists a relationship, it exists for me: the animal does not enter into "relations" with anything, it does not enter into any relation at all. For the animal, its relation to others does not exist as a relation. Consciousness is, therefore, from the very beginning a social product, and remains so as long as men exist at all (*German Ideology* 49).

Significantly, Marx here treats language not as an activity belonging to the realm of "spirit" ("superstructure" in his later, temporary formulation) but to that of "matter" ("base"), given that there is nothing more material than "agitated layers of air, sounds" that constitute language. Moreover, he conceives language as a "burden" – or a Babelian curse if you will – that afflicts "spirit" or consciousness, a notion that calls immediately to mind the very real material limitation Marx saw in the "translation" of a revolutionary idea into actual practice when he experienced this "impossibility as necessity" at first hand a year earlier in the defeat of the 1844 Revolution, out of whose political fallout he derived the famous lesson in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon*: "Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past." Takaaki Yoshimoto pointed out that Marx's formulation of "basesuperstructure" (whose vulgar Marxist interpretation Yoshimoto criticized radically in his theories of the state and literary language) was a product of the aging Marx, whose increasing physical infirmities contributed "materially" to his assigning a greater role in historical determination to the imperviously fixed base than to the more rapidly changing but unstable superstructure. No doubt, Marx's experiences of defeat and deracination, from the 1844 Revolution to his family's impoverished exiled life in Soho and the premature death of his children, had also "burdened" and "afflicted" his own consciousness in forcing him to acquire a realistic sense of history's "impossibility as necessity."

Despite the delineation of language as a material affliction, there is no question Marx means to argue that language is a unique property found among human beings, that it is a primary characteristic distinguishing human beings from animals. Noam Chomsky's acknowledged list of intellectual antecedents for his theory of generative grammar, from Descartes and the Port Royale School to Wilhelm von Humboldt and Pāṇini, does not include Marx. But his running premise of language-use – as opposed to "communication" in the general sense, which is found of course throughout the animal kingdom – as an exclusive human attribute is not that far removed from Marx's contention in *The German Ideology*, though Marx's stress is on the social, historical dimension of this linguistic attribute, not as a component of human cognitive structure as is in Chomsky's case.

Ten years after Derrida's "Des Tours de Babel," Chomsky published a significant restructuring of his linguistic theory in *The Minimalist Program*, which argued for streamlining generative grammar by trimming some of its major theoretical branches – such as the longcanonical distinctions between surface and deep structures (S- and D-structures), with their respectively corresponding logical form (LF) and phonetic form (PF) – that seemed to have accrued some unwieldy, Babelian baggage:

> I think we can also perceive at least the outlines of certain still more general principles, which we might think of as "guidelines," in the sense that they are too vaguely formulated to merit the term "principles of UG [Universal Grammar]." Some of these guidelines have a kind of "least effort" flavor to them, in the sense that they legislate against "superfluous elements" in representations and derivations. Thus, the notion of "Full Interpretation" (FI) requires that representations be minimal in a certain sense (*Minimalist Program* 130).

In observing this historical context of 1995, as compared to 1985, we cannot help but notice the impact the fall of the Soviet Babel had on the selectively liberalized global economy, which has in turn affected grievously the state of political "representation" and ideological "derivation" among a huge swath of the global population – imposed, we should note, with none of the "minimalist" tentativeness and modesty that characterize Chomsky's "program" concerning language. For this was the year that saw the United States under the Clinton administration provide the bailout of Mexico's peso crisis (in many ways a foreshadowing of what was to boomerang almost fifteen years later in the United States, with the collapse of the financial, real estate markets and auto industry, followed rapidly by governmental bailouts), the founding of the World Trade Organization (WTO) to supplant the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the dramatic dissolution of Britain's venerable Barings Bank on account of a single trader Nick Leeson's illegal speculation on the floor of the Singapore International Monetary Exchange, and the expansion of the European Union – all essential components in the building of a new economic Babel that has been given the name of an oxymoronic "neoliberalism." For there was nothing "new" in market liberalization in economic history, and the political values of classical liberalism stood critically against dogmatic application of the free market; as Adam Smith, the classical political economist who is the purported "founding father" of neoliberalism, wrote of capitalist engineering of law – whose contemporary manifestations are GATT and WTO – and the morally deleterious effect of admiring wealth: "The proposal of any new law or regulation of commerce which comes from this order [capitalists] ought always be

listened to with great precaution, and ought never to be adopted till after having been long and carefully examined, not only with the most scrupulous, but with the most suspicious attention. It comes from an order of men, whose interest is never exactly the same with that of the public, who have generally an interest to deceive and even to oppress the public, and who accordingly have upon many occasions, both deceived and oppressed" (*Wealth of Nations* 278; book I, chap. XI); the "disposition to admire, and almost to worship, the rich and powerful, and to despise, or, at least neglect persons of poor and mean conditions, though necessary both to establish and to maintain the distinction of ranks and the order of society, is, at the same time, the great and most universal cause of the corruption of our moral sentiments" (*Theory of Moral Sentiments* 52; part I, chap. III).

On the post-Cold-War international political front, the U.S.-led NATO bombing of Serbia in the Balkan, whose nationalist and ethnic fragmentation may have been that decade's most potent and tragic symbol of Babelian confusion, alongside of the Rwandan genocide, indicated that this neoliberal dispensation was going to be ruled monolithically under uncontested U.S. military power. Chomsky himself has written some of the most incisively critical analysis of these political and economic trends in books he had published during this decade, from *Deterring Democracy* (1992), *Year 501* (1993), and *World Order, Old and New* (1994) – arguably three of the most far-reaching and significant texts in his entire career as an American dissident – to *The New Military Humanism: Lessons from Kosovo* (1999) and *Profits over People: Neoliberalism and Global Order* (1999). This was the moment at which Chomsky was calling effectively for disposing the S- and D-structures in generative grammar in *The Minimalist Program*.

Analogously speaking, Chomsky's S-structure is comparable to Marx's superstructure while D-structure parallels the base, for the apparent S-structure in syntax is a direct product of the linguistic transformations undergone in the D-structure just as the ideological and cultural expressions are supposed to be a direct product of economic transformations undergone at the base. Furthermore, this minimalist reworking involves two domains of "economy," namely that of representation and of derivation. As Neil Smith noted, "Chomsky's economy principles are unambiguously matters of competence, in that they pertain to representations and derivations internal to the language faculty and exclude relations beyond the interfaces…With the demise of [D-structure and S-structure], they now pertain to the stages in the construction of representations at LF and PF, and crucially do not go beyond these two systems of interpretation or production" (Smith 117-118). Similarly, in the last hundred and fifty years since Marx scribbled the provisional formulation of the "base-superstructure" in his preface to the *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* in 1859 a radical overhauling of both superstructure and base as a heuristic model of analyzing historical determination has occurred in the more undogmatic, open Marxist tradition, including the libertarian one that exerted a direct influence on Chomsky's political ideas (e.g., the council communist tradition as represented by Karl Korsch, Anton Pannakoek, and Paul Mattick, including the journal *Living Marxism* which Chomsky read avidly in his youth). This latter tradition would include Antonio Gramsci's recasting of the question of hegemonic and countervailing ideology in strategic terms of war of position and maneuver, Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer's pessimistically hued analysis of the "culture industry," C.L.R. James' unfinished treatise on American civilization, Guy Debord's elegantly compressed theses on the media-driven consumer capitalist spectacle, various cultural and historical

interrogations of the b-s model administered by British Marxists (Terry Eagleton's *Marxism and Literary Criticism*, Raymond Williams' *Marxism and Culture*, and E.P. Thompson's *The Poverty of Theory*), and Harry Cleaver's autonomist Marxist reconceptualization of Marx's labor theory of value as a politically strategic theory of class struggle.

Not least of all, taking the term "minimalism" beyond its disciplinary enclosure of linguistics into the commons of broader intellectual discourse, we may find similar minimalist aspirations in both Marx and Chomsky. When Chomsky states that the "minimalist program" is defined by "two related questions: (1) what are the general conditions that the human language faculty should be expected to satisfy? and (2) to what extent is the language faculty determined by these conditions, without special structure that lies beyond them?" (*Minimalist Program* 2), this is something, with slightly modified phrasing, which can also sum up Marx's own research project, namely "what are the general conditions that historical capitalism should be expected to satisfy (that is, distinguish it from all other economic systems)?" and "to what extent is historical capitalism determined by these conditions, without special structure that lies beyond them?" The latter question involves Marx's attempt to understand capitalism immanently on its own terms and explicit refusal (as opposed to many "Marxists") to build a theoretical "Babel" – be it a utopian socialist program, one-dimensionally celebratory or condemning analysis of Victorian capitalism, or attempts to reify and graft his insights beyond the limited province of economic analysis (in contrast to Engels, who coined the term "historical materialism" and had no hesitation in loosely, and often erroneously, adapting Marx's ideas to the various natural sciences of his day).

Of course, such analogies have their limits, for Marx's b-s model was intended originally for analyzing the universal structure of historical capitalism while Chomsky's B/S-structures were established for the purpose of analyzing the universal structure of human language. And when Chomsky speaks of "economy" in *The Minimalist Program*, he is obviously not talking about "economy" in the same sense that Marx is. We may remark, however, that this may be precisely the crux of the problem as concerns the Babel of meaning. For, by almost intuitive contextual understanding, how are we able to hold this semantic aporia of the word "Babel" in our mind, distinguish the meaning of "economy" in Chomsky and Marx's respective uses, and shift from one sense of "minimalism" to another, in truncating the overgrowth of "B/Sstructures" from the specifically universal grammar of linguistics to undoing the economically reductive implications found in the "b-s model" of capitalism? In other words, how do we find the means of linking persuasively and theoretically – that is, "translate," understood broadly – the conditions of linguistic competence and the conditions of socioeconomic structure in relation to a coherent notion of human nature or, as Marx put it, in the context of "natural history"?

After Voltaire, Derrida comments that "Babel" denotes not only a common noun meaning "confusion" in the double sense of "confusion of tongues" and "state of confusion in which the architects find themselves with the structure interrupted" but also a proper name for a city of God, "name of God as name of father."

> The city would bear the name of God the father and of the father that is called confusion.
> God, the God, would have marked with his patronym a communal space, that city where

understanding is no longer possible. And understanding is no longer possible when there are only proper names, and understanding is no longer possible when there are no longer proper names…This is also the origin of tongues, of the multiplicity of idioms, of what in other words are usually called mother tongues. For this entire history deploys filiations, generations and genealogies: all Semitic. Before the deconstruction of Babel, the great Semitic family was establishing its empire, which it wanted to be universal, and its tongue, which it also attempts to impose on the universe. The moment of this project immediately precedes the deconstruction of the tower ("Des Tours" 245-246).

In a sense "minimalism" constitutes a form of "deconstruction of Babel" as well, for the "moment of this project [of universal grammar] precedes the deconstruction of the tower." In other words, all theoretical towers, be it of Chomskyan linguistics or Marxism, which – despite the founder's resistance against giving it a patrimonial proper name – bears the name of its respective fathers, must sooner or later undergo minimalist reconstruction whose more expansive term is "deconstruction."

Nowhere is this demonstrated more explicitly than in the field of translation. S-structure and D-structure are translated in Japanese as respectively *hyōsō-kōzō* and *shinsō-kōzō* while base and superstructure are rendered as *kabu-kōzō* and *jōbu-kōzō*. *Kōzō* means "structure," as in *kōzōshugi* ("structuralism"), and, if we translate the Japanese "base" and "superstructure" back into English, they become "lower-part structure" and "upper-part structure." Although "base" has been sometimes rendered as *kitei* or *kibu*, which is more proximate to the English meaning of base, "superstructure" has consistently remained *jōbu-kōzō* (I shall leave aside here the question of how both English and Japanese translations have altered in their own way something of the original German sense of *Basis* and Überbau). Were we to give a literalist translation of "superstructure," we would have to invent a new term, *chō-kōzō* (*chō* meaning "super" as in "super-man" [*chōjin*] and "trans-cendence" [*chōetsu*]), which would most likely invite the reader's confusion into thinking that it means something like "transcendental structure." Similar issues revolve around *hyōsō-kōzō* and *shinsō-kōzō*, for *hyōsō* does not mean "surface" (that would be *hyōmen*) but "surface-layer" and *shinsō* not simply "deep" (*fukai*) but "deep-layer." The term *sō* ("layer") has very much a geological connotation, referring to the different chronological layers beneath the earth (which, in the Western intellectual context, became the historical basis for the later rigidified notion of historical stages, assumed for example by such thinkers of the Scottish Enlightenment as Adam Ferguson and Adam Smith). In addition, *shinsō* is also a term used for "deep" in "deep seawater" and "depth" in "depth psychology."

In reply to his Japanese colleague regarding the question of how to translate the word "deconstruction," Derrida answered:

> Among other things I wished to translate and adapt to my own ends the Heidggerian word Destruktion or Abbau. Each signified in this context an operation bearing on the structure or traditional architecture of the fundamental concepts of ontology or of Western metaphysics. But in French "destruction" too obviously implied an annihilation or a negative reduction much closer perhaps to Nietzschean "demolition" than to the Heideggerian interpretation or

to the type of reading that I proposed ("Letter to a Japanese Friend" 1).

The Japanese translator thus came up with a neologism *datsu-kōchiku* for "deconstruction." *Kōchiku* means "construction" – very much in keeping with the architectural sense in Derrida's original word – while *datsu* is a suffix that means "out of" as in *dasshutsu* ("escape") or *datsusara* (leave a corporate job to set up business on one's own). Perhaps the closest English equivalent of *datsu* is the suffix "ex" in "ex"-odus or "ex"-planation. Needless to say, *datsukōchiku* is hardly an equivalent of "deconstruction" but an approximation that, in the long run, may help deconstruct the original word in its original spirit as it becomes, against Derrida's intent, canonized into the vocabulary of Western philosophy or, as it has already happened, assimilated into popular idiom.

Of course, discussion of "original sense" becomes always problematic when talking about "deconstruction," which like Zen – in Derrida's words – is "neither an analysis nor a critique," "not a method," "not even act or an operation" but "deconstructs itself." For even "deconstruction" is not "original" to Derrida but, as he states above, an attempt "to translate and adapt to my own ends the Heidggerian word Destruktion or Abbau." Hence "Babel" is a stand-in for "deconstruction" as well, or, to put it another way, within the "act/non-action" (*wei*/*wu-wei* in the self-deconstructing Taoist dialectic) of translation resides the seed of its destruction as well as regeneration.

Now I am quite aware that such comments as these, shifting and turning as they do around a slender leaf of a Biblical trope used by a particular French thinker in the mid-1980s against the backdrop of a theoretical program endorsed by an American linguist in the mid-1990s, will have to endure the latter's passing comment on the former:

> So take Derrida, one of the grand old men. I thought I ought to at least be able to understand his *Grammatology,* so tried to read it. I could make out some of it, for example, the critical analysis of classical texts that I knew very well and had written about years before. I found the scholarship appalling, based on pathetic misreading; and the argument, such as it was, failed to come close to the kinds of standards I've been familiar with since virtually childhood. Well, maybe I missed something: could be, but suspicions remain, as noted. Again, sorry to make unsupported comments, but I was asked, and therefore am answering ("Chomsky on Postmodernism").

What Chomsky has missed is the "truism" – to use one of his favorite terms of dismissal – that almost all philosophies and literatures (and Derrida's work straddles both, as we can see in works like *Glas* and *Postcards*) are based on some kind of "misreading," albeit imaginative, rigorous in its own terms, and sometimes in violation of the procedures of Cartesian rationalism to which he adheres. In fact, as, for instance, Silvia Federici's *Caliban and the Witch* and Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* have shown, Cartesian rationalism and Enlightenment also contain a destructive and genocidal logic whose historical consequences include witchhunting, European extermination of indigenous populations, and fascism; of course, to point out such elementary facts does not mean we dismiss countervailing

values that, in their better moments, these intellectual expressions have represented, being nothing more than a particular culture's articulation of what people practice every day without having to resort to them or knowing anything about them (in short, "truisms"). Perhaps what is "missing" in Chomsky's passing reading of Derrida is that he is applying an inappropriate set of standards in interpreting the man's work, which induces this "Babelian" incomprehension or dismissal. Just as Chomsky finds Beethoven's Late Quartet and modern classical music of Berg and Schoenberg aesthetically pleasurable, one can find similar pleasure in perusing Derrida's text (for example, his *Specters of Marx* has always struck me as being, among other things, one of the most elegiac prose-poems about a radical intellectual tradition in the post-Communist neoliberal world).

As an undergraduate at the University of Texas at Austin, I had the occasion to attend a public talk given by John Searle, who had criticized Derrida's work against which Derrida gave his own set of responses in *Limited, Inc.* Searle was introduced as a great linguistic philosopher who was willing to spend, if needs be, "all night" with us in discussing philosophy (we of course did not take this "literally" but as a reflection of his intellectual generosity). To be honest, I found his exposition on how linguistic meaning is determined by the speaker's intention rather simplistic, if not trite. Chomsky himself has pointed out effectively the fallacy of this position:

> Despite Searle's qualms, all of this [Chomsky's point that "meaningful use of language 'need not involve communication or even the attempt to communicate'"] seems to me commonplace and obvious. I can be using language in the strictest sense with no intention of communicating…Take some concrete examples. As a graduate student, I spent two years writing a lengthy manuscript, assuming through that it would never be published or read by anyone…Once a year, along with many others, I write a letter to the Bureau of Internal Revenue explaining, with as much eloquence as I can muster, why I am not paying part of my income tax. I mean what I say in explaining this. I do not, however, have the intention of communicating to the reader, or getting him to believe or do something, for the simple reason that I know perfectly well that the "reader" (probably some computer) couldn't care less. What my statements in the letter mean, what I mean – in one sense – in making these statements, is not explicable in terms of what I mean, what I intend, in writing the letter, namely to express support for people undertaking resistance to the criminal violence of the state in more meaningful ways. Once, I had the curious experience of making a speech against the Vietnam war to a group of soldiers who were advancing in full combat gear, rifles in hand, to clear the area where I was speaking. I meant what I said – my statements had their strict and literal meaning – but this had little to do with my intentions at that moment. (*Reflections* 61-62)

Thus Chomsky concludes that "Searle's revision [of H. Paul Grise's intention theory of meaning]" "fails to capture the intended notion of meaning; as a factual claim, it is false," extending this conclusion to "all other attempts that I know of to explain 'meaning' in terms of 'speaker's intention in communicating'" (64). Searle managed to validate this very point in person when he opened the floor hastily for the Q & A discussion, at which point I could not help but ask him politely, having read the exchange between him

and Derrida, if he had any further reflection on the French philosopher's work. What I received from Searle was an exasperated shaking of the head and a condescendingly curt reply (as the rest of the audience seemed to murmur in disbelief that my question was entirely inappropriate, a verbal equivalent of mooning the great, celebrated professor in public): "I can't believe you asked that. Read my article on this, which my publisher thinks is valuable and wants to put it into a collection…" If we follow Searle's assumption about the innate congruence between intentionality and meaning, then what he was "communicating" – regardless of his intention – was contempt of the subject and selfsatisfaction at what he had written, to say nothing of the inability to understand my question or, rather, to listen properly (I had stated that I read his article and was asking for a further reflection), disproving his argument at a single stroke: much of everyday communications consist of precisely such "miscommunications", i.e., Babelian slippages, and any linguistic theory of meaning that does not take into account this dimension of meaning – namely that "intention" cannot be defined in any objectively meaningful sense given for example the central role of affect in communication, that "consequence" in communication determines meaning as much as, if not more than, intention, etc. – acquires immediately the mantle of idealist falsehood. As Louis Mackey noted in his letter to *The New York Review of Books* over Searle's review of Jonathan Culler's *On Deconstruction*: "Searle's inability (or unwillingness) to read fairly is only one of his bad habits."

One adequate resolution to this problem may be not so much a "resolution" in the intellectual but in a cautionary, moral sense: to not treat one's interlocutor with condescension or contempt, whether he or she be a celebrated philosopher or a formally uneducated ditch digger. The impossibly consistent adherence to this "truism" that we fail to practice in our weaker moments is perhaps the only means that could "resolve" one of the central dilemmas at the heart of the Babelian economy. Thus, just as I readily concur with Chomsky's general evaluation of postmodernism, I must also say that about his own – in my estimation, far more valuable – works in linguistics or, for that matter, Einstein's theory of relativity or Shakespeare's plays; none of these products of human imagination and intellectual activity does anything on their own to alleviate the sufferings of our multitudinous fellow human beings, who have as much right to life and pursuit of creative self-realization as the rest of the us in the privileged sectors of the capitalist world. But we still read and think about language, wrestle with the metaphor of Babel, or make perhaps inane, perhaps intriguing analogies about our intellectual traditions, for the same reason that so many who have died unnecessarily, unjustly, and continue to do so, despite their hardships and short-lived frail existences, still show innate curiosity about the world, scientifically, poetically, philosophically, historically, or otherwise – a point Chomsky understands readily in his account of translators in North Vietnam during his visit in 1970, published originally in *The New York Review of Books*:

> The students generally read English, but having little familiarity with the spoken language, were not able to follow a technical lecture. The translators, though excellent in general discussion, had considerable difficulty as the material became more technical and complex. One tried for about an hour, and then, apologetically, asked to be relieved. A second translator also made a noble effort, but the problems were severe. When they floundered, an older man in the audience intervened, and corrected mistakes or explained obscure points. It was obvious that he had followed everything very well and understood the material I was trying to present.

> Finally he took over completely, and translated for several hours without a break…He was the Minister of Higher education of North Vietnam, Ta Quang Buu, a mathematician of note who had, in fact, sent me a reprint of mathematical linguistics several years ago that I could not read, since it was in Vietnamese, but that astonished me by its familiarity – in the midst of the air war – with current technical material…I think there are few countries where the Minister of Higher Education could have taken over the task of translating an advanced technical lecture of this sort, or would have been willing to do so; and I was also impressed by the easy familiarity of relations within the group, the quality of the debate and discussion, as we proceeded (*At War* 219-220).

Even the Babelian effect of an imperialist war is shown here unable to destroy the possibility of translation when the conditions of empathetic exchange were present (while the corollary also stands: without such conditions, even an exchange between those who speak and understand the same language results in miscommunication and, worse, physical conflict or fatalities, as even the most cursory history of sectarianism, tribalism, and domestic violence attests). Hence, although we may disagree over the particular value of Chomsky, Derrida, and Marx's respective work, it would be nothing short of hubris to assume that a singular notion (be it "Cartesian rationalism," "dialectic," or "deconstruction" standing as the metaphorical *Des Tours de Babel*) is the only standard with which we should measure works of philosophy or intellectual activity, that "theory" is a word to be used solely in scientific or economic or literary explanation, and that those of us who happen to enjoy reading Chomsky, Marx, or Derrida must be suffering ipso facto from dogmatism, obscurantism, or academic "cult of personality."

For in my own work of translation – no less than in the works of activist commitment that so many selflessly pursue, often out of moral necessity, and to which Chomsky himself has dedicated indefatigably a substantial portion of his time and analytical intelligence – I must confess that I find both Chomsky's linguistic work and Derrida's disquisition on translation of no practical value whatsoever. However, in reflecting on Derrida's treatment of the Babel narrative as a tacit allegory for both translation and deconstruction (which, as noted, is in fact a form of translation) in relation to Chomsky's minimalist program as an analogy for intellectual transformation undergone in the Marxist conception of base-superstructure, I do gain a metaphorical vantage point in reexamining my own assumptions about what goes on in the process of translation, highlighting for example the irresolvable but necessary tension between literalism and paraphrase. Again, I should stress that there is no practical or useful function to such a reexamination and I cannot justify it on any other ground that I find it inherently interesting. After Yoshimoto's aesthetic theory of literary value, I would argue that this is perhaps because, unlike the domain of "economy" whether in Marx or Chomsky's sense, the value of art or philosophy lies precisely in its absence of value, that is, its uselessness, or, to put it another way, its irreducibility to the "practical" value of helping accumulate capital, endorse a particular political ideology, or further scientific understanding.

This anti-economic value, in short, may very well be what defines the "economy of Babel." After all, one of the most rationally plausible interpretations of the original Biblical passage about Babel – "They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. Then they said, 'Come, let us build ourselves a city, with

a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth'" (*The New International Bible*, Genesis 11.3-4) – is to read it as an ancient Israelite critique of imperial economic "progress." In short, the technological development and the class division of labor arising from such a development ("They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar"), in establishing a new, homogenously defined urban empire ("let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves") are doomed to falter and fail eventually. Given the shore of ecological and nuclear catastrophe to which our modern-day Babel of blind industrial developments and unchecked state powers continue to bring us, the "economy of Babel" thus does not then involve simply the question of linguistic translation but the material, ideological "translation" of humanity as a whole.

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Discourse in Institutional Administration of Public Universities in Ghana: A Shift towards a Market Paradigm?

By Dora Francisca Edu-Buandoh

Abstract

Language as an ideological tool is used in discourse by institutions, sometimes to change their discourse in order to buy into existing economic as well as social powers. In recent years, Ghanaian public universities have changed the discourse used in defining their aims and objectives. This paper uses Fairclough's model for Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to analyse documents that lay out the strategic plan that redefine the visions, aims, and objectives of four public universities in Ghana. The analysis shows that there is a shift from the traditional academic discourse to a *marketisation* discourse. The changes are evident in the linguistic features as well as the orders of discourse that shape the universities as corporate bodies in a business marketplace. The paper also discusses the relationship between this discourse shift and the positioning of public universities in Ghana.

Key words

Discourse Analysis | Discourse Shift | Universities | Institutional Discourse

Introduction

The emergence of corporate strategies for universities in Ghana has come as an answer to the demand for clearly spelt out visions that position institutions of higher learning in the global marketplace to contest with other institutions of higher learning on equal footing. Furthermore, the government of Ghana has charged the universities to come out with strategies that would make the universities generate their own

funds to supplement what the government offers for running the universities, and also place the universities on par with businesses on the world market. As a result, all public funded universities came out with individual documents entitled "*Corporate Strategic Plan"* (CSP).

Until recently, there were three public funded universities in Ghana: University of Ghana (UG), Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), and the University of Cape Coast (UCC). These three universities were set up with different mandates to foster higher education not only in Ghana, but also in the West Africa Sub region. Because the universities were established either just before independence or just after it, they were shaped to follow the British university system. They were all fashioned on the University of London structure. Degrees were awarded from British universities until the Ghanaian universities became independent and autonomous. Even after they became autonomous, they were still run like British universities, focusing mainly on liberal courses and a few technical and professional courses.

In recent years, three additional public-funded universities have been established. The University of Education, Winneba (UEW), which was a university college of the University of Cape Coast and was then upgraded into a full university. The University of Mines and Technology (UMaT) which was a school in Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology and was also upgraded into a university, and the University of Development Studies (UDS) which was set up to cater for the northern sector of the country. This paper studies the CSPs from only the first three public-funded universities and also from the University of Education, Winneba. The CSP from the University of Mines at Tarkwa and the University for Development Studies are not studied for this paper because they were relatively new and had not been autonomous under the tertiary education system in Ghana for long. It is also assumed that UEW's CSP would be representative of the other two new public-funded universities.

As institutions of higher learning, the universities had their own nomenclature, which bordered on education, and was similar to what pertained in most British universities. However, with the coming of globalisation and the quest to fit into the world marketplace, there have been some changes in the general discourse in use in the administration of these institutions. This paper sets out to examine the discourse in documents that have become the acceptable documents used to show the vision and mission of four public funded universities in Ghana. The aim is to show how institutional discourse of the universities has changed over time and also to identify the new institutional identities that change brings into positioning the universities. I use Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1983) to show that the discourse that pertained in the administration of public funded universities in Ghana in past years has changed from academic discourse to a discourse which is steeped in business. This perspective is developed from the viewpoint that institutional discourses are linked to the organisation, situated conventions and practices that identify a social organisation as belonging to a particular situated setting (Agar, 1985). The new discourse in use in the CSPs of the universities studied has the tendency of eroding existing discursive systems in academic institutions and replacing them with *marketisation* nomenclature and expectations. The paper seeks first to situate discourse as a tool for use by institutions, then it analyses the data using Fairclough's CDA model. Finally, the paper discusses the positioning of the universities based on the CSPs and the analysis done earlier. The implications for research and institutional change are discussed in the

conclusion.

Of Institutions, Institutional Discourse and Discursive Practices

The concept of institution brings into mind many different definitions. There are those definitions that situate institution as a physical setting and those that see it as a social organisation in specific settings such as schools, prisons, church among others (Mayr, 2008). Institutions are also linked to power and may serve the interest of particular groups (Agar, 1985; Mayr, 2008)); Institutional power is usually expressed through language. As Mumby (1987) argues, language is a principal means by which institutions create a coherent social reality that frames their sense of who they are. In effect, language becomes a tool for mediating power relations and also identity construction. The language that is used by institutions for crafting their social realities forms part of the discourse that becomes shared in the institution as a community of practice.

The discourse of an institution such as a university is always embedded in the authority and power vested in the institution either by government or by the social structure of the community. As a socially constructed institution, the university, traditionally, uses discourse that is conventionally prescribed by the society as recognised discourse for education administration. The discourse that is conventionally recognised in the administration of Universities in Ghana tilts towards general administration and education- oriented discourse. It is only in recent years that this academic administration discourse has changed leading to a change in the discursive practices. I discuss the changes in subsequent sections of this paper and draw attention to the attendant changes in discursive practices of the universities studied.

Discourse refers basically to spoken or written language use. It can also be described as "language in use" (Whetherell et al., 2001) and language can be used to mark or deny power, although Wodak (2001) says language on its own has no power, but gains power by the way powerful people use it. Discourse can also be identified as a tool that is used to construct social life but it also becomes an entity that is controlled by society (see Gee, 1999; Fairclough, 1992; Rogers, 2003). Every social organization or institution has its peculiar use of language in discourse patterns and discursive practices. When institutions change their discourse and discursive patterns, the power domains that the ordinary members are brought into symbolise the policing of the institution.

Power is described by many philosophers as one's ability to control the environment around him but the description does not focus only on humans because an entity which is non-human, which is non human, can also wield power over the environment. This notion is evident in Foucault's prison research where he describes the panoptical nature of prison as an institution. The issue of power and the exercise of control is a sociological phenomenon because peoples' lives are determined and influenced by the processes of change that affect the discursive practices of the institutions that they are affiliated to. Fairclough (1995) explains these power relations further by hinting that "technologization of discourse" in state institutions

has led to changes in the discursive patterns of institutions, thus leading to restructuring of discourse to bring out hegemony and power domains in policies and institutional culture.

According to Fairclough (1995) and Gee (1999), discursive practices show that social realities are linguistically constructed and since discourse is context-related discourse can be appreciated as a social action that should be understood not only in the meanings of the text , but also in the negotiated interaction that is related to the utterances. Discursive practices therefore embodies the linguistic meanings available in social realties as expunged in texts, action, and also what is left unsaid in the discourse. Analysis of any discourse, according to Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999), must thus examine the discourse text in relation to the discursive practices of the society or the institution.

The Corporate Strategic Plan (CSP)

The document for study in this paper is the *Corporate Strategic Plan*. Each University in Ghana is expected by the National Council for Tertiary Education to have a Corporate Strategic Plan that spells out the visions, and mission of the University as well as the plans the University intends to use to realise its visions. The term "Corporate Strategic Plan" has been used in business circles to refer to "the overarching strategy of the diversified firm"; "strategic planning or management decisions that effect the direction or performance of company"; and the "direction an organization takes with the objective of achieving business success in the long term" among many others. Irrespective of the definition, the purpose of "Corporate Strategic Plan" is to reorganize and restructure a company in order for it to be able to compete successfully with its competitors, and also to achieve the company's objectives. It could be deduced that the focus of Corporate Strategic Plan is towards the business world, and not the education sector. Recent developments in the world of education, however, hint an adaptation of different discourses to project the sector.

In this paper, I use Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1983) to show that the discourse that pertained in the administration of public funded universities in Ghana in past years has changed from academic discourse to a discourse which is steeped in business. The new discourse has the tendency of eroding existing systems in the institutions and replacing them with *marketisation* nomenclature and expectations. The perspective is developed by considering how institutional discourses and settings are reflexively linked, institutions are organized as situated conventions, and institutional discourses involve talk and interpretation and are dispersed within and across settings.

Using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) Methodology

CDA is a method of studying language use by analysing how power relations influence the content of a

text. These dimensions are the links between the text, the characteristics of the discourse practice and the sociocultural practice in which the text is situated. For this paper, the text, which comprises the four the Corporate Strategic Plan documents, has features embedded in institutional discourse which in itself is found in the socio-cultural practice of university administration. CDA has been used in as a methodology in studying organisational discourse. Different discourse analysts propose different methods for doing CDA (cf. van Dijk, 1993; Fairclough 1989, 1995; Kress and Van Leeuwen ,2002; Wodak and Chilton 2005).

This paper uses Fairclough's CDA as a model for analysis. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), as propounded by Fairclough (1995), employs a three-tiered tool of description, interpretation and explanation for analysing texts. These are used to bring the power relationships that exist within the text and the sociocultural environment to bear on the analysis. The three tools used in Fairclough's model of CDA are appropriate for this analysis because the documents may have hidden discourses that are embedded in the general discourse. Using Fairclough's model, CDA "foregrounds links between social practice and language, and the systemic investigation of connections between the nature of social processes and properties of language texts" (Fairclough 1995: 96). In a way, language use can thus be seen as a social process through which individuals, organisations, communities and institutions negotiate discourses practices. Fairclough's model also offers an engaging social science research method for researching into links between language and social processes.

Description as a tool for CDA studies the vocabulary, grammar, and textual structures that are found in the text for analysis. Interpretation in CDA brings to the fore the meaning of the text as well as the meaning that the interpreter, relying on his or her member resources (MR) brings to bear on the text. CDA is not done in abstraction, but rather, the interpreter brings his previous knowledge and understanding of how the social processes work with regards to the discourse pattern to the interpretation. The Explanation stage shows how the discourse fits into the social practice of the institution or the society, and how the processes contribute to change the structures of the institutions or to sustain the structures. In the subsequent sections, the analysis of documents is modelled after Fairclough's study of the marketisation of public Universities in Britain (Fairclough, 1995).

The Universities Studied

The four institutions whose documents are studied are all public Universities in Ghana. Although each university is autonomous and has its own mandate, all four universities have put together the description and explanation of their vision and mission in *Corporate Strategic Plan* documents. These documents are the analysed texts discussed in this paper. Texts are said to draw from orders of discourse and systems of language. Orders of discourse include the configuration of genres that are linked to specific social domains; that is the "ways of interacting, ways of representing, and ways of being" (Rogers, 2003:9) The orders of discourse of universities as a genre of education, should clearly be shown in the discursive practices, which

should include the language use as well as the documents generated by the central authoritative body/bodies. In the setting for this paper, the document, the *Corporate Strategic Plan* is a document generated by the central administration of the universities under study as an order of discourse for the institutions.

The University of Ghana

The University of Ghana was the first University to be established in Ghana (then Gold Coast). It was established as the University College of the Gold Coast in 1948 as an affiliate to the University of London which played an advisory role and awarded the degrees. The purpose for founding the university was to promote university education, learning and research. It became a full autonomous University (University of Ghana) that awarded its own degrees in 1961. Its curricular focus has mainly been on the Humanities, Social Sciences, basic Science and Medicine. In recent years, it has expanded its focus to include programmes in business, adult education and other market driven courses. The university caters for both undergraduate and graduate students. Majority of the students are Ghanaians, but in addition to the 30000 Ghanaian student population, there are also 1142 international students enrolled in undergraduate as well as graduate programmes. (www.ug.gh.edu).

The Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology

The Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology was the second University to be established in Ghana. Originally named the University of Science and Technology, it was established in 1951 as a replacement for the Kumasi College of Technology. Its first students were teacher trainees who were transferred from another college (Achimota) to start the university. In 1961, the college became a full university and was named Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. The name was changed again to University of Science and Technology in 1966 after a military takeover in Ghana. However, in 1998, after the Fourth Republic of Ghana was promulgated, the University's was renamed Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. The constant naming and renaming of the institution provides an interesting cue to the power embedded in naming. The university offers courses in mainly science and technology to both undergraduate and graduate students.

The University of Cape Coast

The University of Cape Coast was established in 1962 as a University College of the University of Ghana to train graduate teachers for the second cycle institutions, teacher training colleges and technical institutions not only for Ghana, but also for the West Africa Sub Region. In 1971, the university

became autonomous and started awarding its own degrees, diplomas and certificates. In recent years, the University has repositioned itself to train manpower for other areas in the economy, apart from the field of education. The university awards degrees at all levels, and diplomas and certificates in various fields of study. It has a Ghanaian student population of 19, 000 regular students, about 200 international students, and 20, 000 distance learners.

The University of Education, Winneba

The University of Education, Winneba was formerly established in 1992 as a University College of the University of Cape Coast. The college was put together by bringing seven already existing diploma awarding institutions together. These colleges were all awarding diplomas in education with different foci from the University of Cape Coast before they were brought together to form the University College of Education, Winneba. It presently trains mainly graduate teachers at the undergraduate, post graduate and diploma levels. It has a student population of 18,323.

The Corporate Strategic Plan (CSP)

The Corporate Strategic Plan for the four public Universities mentioned above were all put together between 2003 and 2005. The need for putting the plans together as documents came from collaboration of efforts among the development partners of the National Council on Tertiary Education, Donors and the Universities. The purpose was to develop a plan that will help with the administration of the universities in order to ensure proper focus and effective administration of the resources of the institutions. The development partners which includes the World Bank, recommended the use of the Corporate Strategic Plan in order for the institutions to fit into the global milieu. With the coming of the millennium and the attached globalisation of new knowledge and technology, the introduction of the Corporate Strategic Plan that will position Ghanaian universities on the world stage of the market industry was a welcome action for the Universities involved, the Government of Ghana and other stakeholders.

The Corporate Strategic Plans for the four universities under discussion are all structured in the same fashion. Although the documents are designed to show the unique background of each university, the following major sections are common to all:

a) Overview of the University

b) The Strategic Plan

c) Time Frame of the Plan

d) The Vision

e) The Mission Statement

f) Strategic Thrusts

g) Responsibility and Action Plans

These sections are either stated under the same heading or equivalents. All four documents use SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats) Analysis to project the strategic plans. SWOT is a tool that is generally used in the corporate world to assess the capacity of a company and also to organize and make the company respond to the marketing needs of its clients and customers. In addition, the University of Ghana document explained how the University arrived by the SWOT analysis it used. The document indicates that the university used the Hax Methodology (cf. Hax & Nicolas, 1991, 1996 cited in the UG Corporate Strategic Plan) in the planning process to arrive at the model used in the strategy. Because of the similarities in the documents, all four strategic plans are discussed together as one text in this paper. Using Fairclough's model, I describe the discourse in the documents, interpret it critically, and finally explain the processes that are going on in the discursive patterns of the four institutions.

Description of Common Threads

There were some common threads in the CSPs of the universities studied. In describing the discourse used in the documents, I look at the vocabulary, the grammar and the texture of the document. The vocabulary in the four documents is captured extensively from the business domain. The term *corporate* in the title of the document is itself a vocabulary borrowed from the field of business. The Universities in Ghana had never seen themselves as business enterprises until this document was developed. With the use of vocabulary such as *products, facilities, entrepreneurship, accountability, stakeholders, industry, resources, capacity, matrix, business, operational, budgetary*, *goals, divestiture, cost*, *value, 'sold*''', among others, the universities have repositioned themselves to fit into the market or the business paradigm. The vocabulary is not limited to only one document, but persists in all four documents.

A careful description of the grammatical structures in the documents yields many stock phrases that are commonly found in the business or corporate world. For example these phrases were identified in the University of Ghana's CSP: *strategic plan*, *valueadding initiatives, realities of both the internal and external parameters that impact the business, corporate goals, to achieve corporate vision, the business scope and unique competencies that determine why the university will be successful, our consumers (*referring to students*), harmonize synergies between disciplines to achieve operational excellence, delivery of value to our customers, reward and recognition system that is performance driven, value chain analysis, poor marketing of the university, robust financial management, cost recovery from users, campus with large*

real estate holdings, among others.

The following phrases were present in the CSP for the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology: *industrial and socio-economic development, revenue sources, corporate objectives, rate of growth, ownership of processes and outcomes, accountability and responsibility, professional ethics, potential areas of divestiture, market value, generate income, bilateral and multilateral collaboration, income generating potentials, wages/salaries, mobilization and management, cost estimates, operational contexts, stakeholders fora, formulation and outputs, fund mobilization, monitoring and evaluation, etc.*

The University of Cape Coast CSP had the following stock phrases*: strategic plan , operational context, sustainable basis, landed property, consumer-driven market, paucity of resources, under-funding, increasing operational costs, market needs, raw material, tangible and intangible resources, competitive advantage, strategic thinking, education enterprise, changing needs, cost leadership or differentiation, in-depth assessment, value-chain analysis, strategic priorities, development drive, functional strategy, strategic thrusts operational, budgetary estimate, performance metric, target value performance measures, numerical targets, strategic goals, etc.*

In the CSP of the University of Education Winneba, there were not many stock business phrases. However, these phrases can be found: *management structures, demanddriven courses, strategic planning process, ensuring financial self-sufficiency, high staff turn-over,*

Apart from the vocabulary and phrases, the syntax used in the discourse was complex and high sounding leading to a hard texture for the text. There were many complex sentences. A few examples are:

a. *We will build deeper awareness of the needs of our consumers, especially students, the private and public sectors, governments, and the world community and re-orient our teaching, research and extension activities and harmonize synergies between the disciplines to achieve operational excellence. (UG, 2003:11)*

b. *To meet the national aspirations and expectations, the university has adopted 15 operational objectives under five strategic objectives that have been grouped into five themes for the plan period (2005-2014) – (KNUST 2005:14)*

c. *As part of the consultative and participatory process, draft reports should be presented and discussed at a College forum, attended by the academic and nonacademic staff, student representatives from various faculties and departments of the Colleges and other stakeholders. (KNUST 2005: 37)*

d. *This strategic document sets out an agenda for the University to face a number of challenges, notable among which is the need to move away from the tendency of universities in developing countries to cater for only the intellectual elite. (UEW, 2003:2).*

e. Adapting to the needs of the consumer-driven market, these private institutions view the student as a customer, target specific functions (based on market needs) and offer programs in a format convenient for the students. (UCC, 2003: 3).

f. An analysis of exogenous factors, which impact (negatively or positively) or are impacted upon by the university's corporate actions, is critical to the determination of strategic priorities. (UCC, 2003: 8).

g. Each department's strategy must respond to the demands arising out of the corporate and presbytery strategies and the requirements arising out of its own environmental and internal analysis. (UCC, 2003: 23).

A closer look at the above excerpts from the CSPs points to a discourse which is verbose and hard in texture. Though the texts are not in small prints, the texture of the text clouds the meanings embedded in the discourse. The texture makes the texts sound like the proverbial "small print" that consumers find on products and contract documents. The discourse used in the documents can be described as market-oriented because of the choice of vocabulary as well as the aims and objectives for which these choices were made.

There is also local coherence in the texts because the phrases hang together to shows connections in meaning between utterances and these meanings are found mainly in the market economy or the corporate world. An expression such as *performance measures* cannot be taken only as a phrase. Rather, looking at it, one can deduce that the two parts are connected for the meaning to be truly business-like. If one separates *performance* from *measures*, the two words in themselves do not have any business connotations. We can apply this local coherence to all the phrases and expressions that we have identified earlier and it would be seen that they are connected only for special effects, which in this case is to present a business-like document.

The choice of the type of vocabulary mentioned earlier projects a competitive front among the universities. Traditionally, the four Universities do not have to compete for students because there are more students qualified for university education than all the universities in Ghana can accommodate. Neither do they have to compete for government subvention because each university has a unique mandate, and depending on the priority of the government of the day, and the number of students enrolled, a university can get a higher or lower percentage of the total monies marked for higher education in Ghana. However, the choice of language, specifically the vocabulary and phrases point to a competition that is fuelled by the quest to behave like a corporate business competing with its rivals. Phrases such as the University of Choice (UCC), the premier University (UG) sound very much like an advertisement for clients than a description for an educational institution. An advertisement for consumers thrives mainly on appeals to pathos rather than logos and considering that universities are institutions of higher learning, one would have expected that they would be showcased as such and not as production companies.

In addition to local coherence, one can also identify global coherence in the text. Global coherence, according to Fairclough (1989) is "how the text hangs together" to bring out the text structure and the

"point" of the text. The *Corporate Strategic Plan* as a document has many parts. First there is the introduction and the mission and vision followed by the SWOT analysis. Then there is logical framework or action plan which is a table that is divided into columns with headings and entries such as the following:

An Excerpt from the UCC CSP

KEY ACTION	Establish systems for tracking internal & external impact of new image
PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY	Vice Chancellor
SECONDARY IMPLEMENTERS	Deans of faculty Heads of Department Academic Board AQAU (Academic Quality Assurance Unit)
MEASURE	Tracking systems designed and established
TARGET	100% completed
TIME FRAME	1 year

(UCC, 2003: 13).

The excerpt above is only one block of the tables in the University of Cape Coast document. The headings indicate a corporate strategy for a business enterprise. Reference can be made back to the vocabulary and how the text in the various sections hangs together for local as well as global coherence. Though the tables in the documents for KNUST, UEW, and UG had different headings, as shown below, the import could still be seen to have business colourings.

An Excerpt from the KNUST CSP

OBJECTIVES	To increase the level of the University's contribution to its recurrent budget from 20% to 50% through internally generated funds.
STRATEGIES	Reappraise existing income generating units Identify new sustainable sources of income Etc.

PROJECTS		Deans of faculty
		Evaluation of income generating units
		Identification and appraisal of new sources of income.
		Etc.
INDICATORS AND OUTPUTS		Availability of evaluation report.
		New sustainable income sources identified.
		Etc.
TIME FRAME	**S¹**	⬇
	M¹	
	L¹	⬇
INPUTS/ COSTS ESTIMATES		
RESPONSIBILITY		Finance Officer, Vice Chancellor, Provosts
		Etc.

(KNUST, 2005:22).

Fairclough (1995) argues that the relationship between discourse and other social structures points to qualitative difference in what pertains in contemporary social structures and what could be described as the discourse of such institutions in the past. The order of discourse for the Universities has changed over time, but one can still identify a standard movement from institutional discourse to a market-driven discourse.

Interpretation

Fairclough maintains that in interpreting the discourse, the analyst draws from what is in the text as well as what the interpreter brings, the member resources, to the text. In looking at the CSPs, one can identify the context as higher education. The discursive practice here is that the focus will be on education, development of curricula to improve higher education, policies leading strong academic achievements, and issues related to education. For a university in a developing world, it is possible to find documents drawing from the orders of discourse related to development and infrastructure building. This second part might

have been attended to in the documents as one finds words related to infrastructure building. But these are minimal indicating that the focus is not so much on development as it is on presenting the universities are companies ready to make profit.

The layout of the texts itself points to a business document. What is in bold and what is small print give prominence to the frame. The text in the early part hangs together as what the goal of the institutions is. The second part, which is the table, sets out the roles and responsibilities of members of the institution. These roles do not show educational institutions trying to meet their goal of training the manpower for the society. For example, The documents package university education as a market-oriented product in contrast to what Fairclough (1995) says, that universities "are unlike real business". The table also shows expectations of the institutions from these members. A closer look shows some expectations that a corporate enterprise would expect from its employees, not what an educational institution expects from its administration, because business enterprises strategise to make profits whereas educational institutions do not focus on monetary gains.

The CSPs further assume that members of the universities are ready to engage the market discourse in order to generate funds internally for the running of the universities. This assumption could be ideological because it stems from the fact that institutions are assuming a "know all" position of its members and their priorities. Most academics do not really care about how the university makes money to run the wheels; they rather care about teaching and research.

Explanation

The third tier of Fairclough's model is to explain the discourse in the text. He maintains that the discourse analyst looks at the sociocognitive aspects of text production and interpretation rather than only an analysis of social practices. In explaining the discourse of the corporate strategic plans of the universities studied, the text described and interpreted are analysed in relation to the framework of critical language use and discourse analysis. As mentioned earlier, the explanation stage would indicate how the discourse fits into the social practice of the institution and how the discourse processes, in this situation, the CSPs contribute to change the structures of the institution or to sustain the structures.

A university, according to *Merriam Webster Dictionary*, is "an institution of higher learning providing facilities for teaching and research and authorized to grant academic degrees; *specifically*: one made up of an undergraduate division which confers bachelor's degrees and a graduate division which comprises a graduate school and professional schools each of which may confer master's degrees and doctorates". The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* defines a university as an institution of higher education and research that awards academic degrees in a variety of subjects. An expansion of both definitions will portray that the structures designated for the university as a social institution are totally different from a commercial or corporate organisation. Both the denotation and connotation of the institution called "university" are

related to academic degrees and higher learning. The discourse expected in such an environment is therefore supposed to be neutral and linked to the concept of "knowledge as power".

Considering that universities are social institutions, there are bound to be financial obligations and engagements in their running and development. However, never in the history of universities, had the discourse skewed so extremely to marketisation and coporatization as is found in the orders of discourse of contemporary universities. Universities worldwide had run on grants and government subventions. The practice had not been any different in Ghanaian public universities until the global market drew into its fold higher education and placed it on the same footing as business enterprises. Brenton (2003) observes that the discursive practices of universities have changed from the known academic discourse to a reliance on pragmatics thereby displacing the existing knowledge of the structures expected in a university. The change that has come into the discourse of the universities in Ghana could be seen in the four CSPs described and interpreted earlier in this paper.

The overtone of business discourse and the recurring vocabulary of market discourse may point to intertextuality. However, the question arises as to how much shift from an existing order of discourse to another can actually be described as intertextuality. Fairclough (1995) describes the situation as an example of "technologization of discourse". He explains that technologization involves:

1. Research into the discursive practices of social institutions and organisation

2. Redesign of those practices in accordance with particular strategies and objectives usually those of managers or bureaucrats, and

3. Training of institutional personnel in these redesigned practices.

The four CSPs described earlier can easily fit into Fairclough's description of the technologized discourse. All the four Universities studied set up committees to research into the existing policy structures of their administration, and out of the findings of the committees, the discursive practices were modified. It is the modification that gave birth to the CSPs and subsequent shift of focus from education to business discourse. Looking at the way the administration strategies of these universities are couched in language, the universities seem to be competing with other businesses to produce marketable products like "real businesses". It is worth noting that although the documents come from different universities that have different mandates, the documents themselves do not show much difference in their missions and vision, nor the strategies for achieving them. This format is very typical of capitalist fordism, and the urge for everyone to be the same.

Implications and Conclusions

The issue of changing the discourse of universities and other public institutions have implications for these institutions as well as the society. Social change is possible in any society because society is supposed to be dynamic. However, a shift such as the one experienced in the social change affecting universities in contemporary times must be studied very well. The universities in Ghana may not be the only ones that have been influenced so much by the marketisation discourse leading to change in the structures that originally would describe public institutions. There are other studies (Fairclough, e.g. 1993) that have shown the change in the identity of institutions of higher learning and academics. Fairclough (1995) argues that "technologization of discourse" in state institutions has led to changes in the discursive patterns of institutions, thus leading to restructuring of discourse to bring out hegemony and power domains in policies and institutional. Such studies should not be dismissed as peripheral influences of globalisation because they permeate the institutionalised system and derail the focus of education. It is important for universities in Ghana as well as those in other countries to foreground the traditional mandate based on the classical definition of university as a place of higher learning, than to fray into the corporate world where universities do not actually belong. A high focus on gaining monetary profits from running the universities, as could be seen to be the focus in the strategic plans described in the paper, would lead to a change in the curriculum and research interest of universities. Such a change, I argue, will not help develop the manpower and think tank that Universities are supposed to provide for their societies.

Strategic plans in themselves connote competition to win over a supposed opponent. In the business world, this interpretation leads most organisations to concentrate their strategic efforts on constantly improving the goods and services they offer, (Johnson and Scholes, 2002). Universities do not produce goods but rather train human resource. Granting that the training of human resource is a service to the society, universities are not competing with opponents, but rather collaborating to provide this service. It is therefore important that the discourse of strategising to overcome an opponent be taken out of the order of discourse of universities, especially public-funded universities in Ghana. Future research can be done to find out the hegemony and power domains that come from these discourse shifts in university documents.

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How to Domesticate a Vampire: Gender, Blood Relations and Sexuality in Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight*.

By Pramod Nayar

Abstract

My paper argues that Stephenie Meyer's now cult work, *Twilight*, suggests a domestication of the vampire. This process of domesticating the undead, it argues, is worked out through the themes of masculinity, the family and sexuality. In my first section, 'vampiric masculinity', I examine the portrayal of Edward, arguing that he represents a supernatural masculinity in drag. In section II, on vampire families and their blood relations, I explore the domestic relations and arrangements of vampires, to propose that the family becomes a key mode of, and moment in, the domesticationso-cialization of the vampire. I then turn to sexuality in the novel, arguing that *Twilight* appropriates two positions, of the threatened teen from conventional Gothic fiction and the teen as threat from contemporary Gothic, with touches of SM and necrophilic fantasies, and where the channeling of sexuality is a mode of domestication. In my conclusion I speculate on the cultural imaginary and anxieties of race and gender, blood lines and kinship, and racial mixing that *Twilight* seems to encode.

> Who are my kin in this odd world of promising monsters, vampires, surrogates, living tools, and aliens? How are natural kinds identified in the realms of technoscience? What kinds of crossings and offspring count as legitimate and illegitimate, to whom and at what cost? Who are my familiars, my siblings, and what kind of livable world are we trying to build?
>
> - Donna Haraway (1997: 52)

The cult status acquired by Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* saga (2005-2010), described as a 'romance … with a paranormal twist' (Backstein 2009: 39), has been offset by criticism that savages its stereotyping, sexism, limited vocabulary, pathetic storyline, and several other aspects. Meyer may be, in my opinion, rightly accused of all these, yet she has managed to persuade customers to queue up all night waiting for

bookstores to open so they can get their hands on the new volume. Meyer represents, with all her flaws, a significant moment in teen romances, and merits study just for the popularity the saga has accrued.

I assume here that popular culture is the site of struggle over meanings. Cultural Studies which deals with popular texts examines the practices, institutions and modes of representation through which norms and values are circulated and instilled in populations. Attention must therefore be paid to works like *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Twilight*, the popular fiction of Brett Easton Ellis (seen as heralding a new Gothic with *American Psycho*, 1991) and horror writer Stephen King to see what kinds of meanings and values are generated in their work – meanings that constitute, through a slow but steady osmotic absorption, the *cultural imaginaire* and frames of reference in public culture, offering us a repertoire of images and ideas from which we draw and which we use to interpret the world. We therefore need to examine *popular* modes such as television, fiction and film through which culturally accepted social relations or sexual norms are made available. Thus Rebecca Feasey's 2008 study of masculinities on popular television looks at teen programming, reality TV, crime and police drama, sports, lifestyle, situation comedy on TV in order to examine the 'norms' and 'models' of masculinity that are being suggested to us viewers. The present essay is one such preliminary exercise, an anterior moment in what could be studies of masculinity, gender relations, the familial and sexual politics of popular vampire tales.

Terry Spaise (2005) in an innovative reading of the cult TV series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* makes a persuasive argument for the 'domestication of the vampire' in modern horror/Gothic (I use the terms interchangeably though clearly there are major differences in the two forms). Spaise proposes that there has been a radical shift in modern representations of the vampire. We see the emergence of the suave form of the vampire in the 20th century, as opposed to the 19th century versions, where the vampire is a sex object, and a monster *who looks like us*. This modern vampire disturbs the distinction between humans and vampires, Spaise suggests, and marks 'domestication of the vampire'.

This domestication of the vampire, my paper argues, is worked out through the themes of masculinity, the family and sexuality with a concluding speculation on new forms of kinship in Stephenie Meyer's vampire tale. In my first section, 'vampiric masculinity' I examine the hegemonic masculinity of the protector male, who is also a fashion icon and a superbly fit one, and marks a *supernatural masculinity in drag*. In section II, on vampire families and their blood relations I explore the domestic relations and arrangements of vampires, arguing that the family becomes a key mode of, and moment in, the domestication-socialization of the vampire. I then turn to sexuality in the novel, arguing that *Twilight* appropriates two positions, of the threatened teen from conventional Gothic fiction and the teen as threat from contemporary Gothic, with touches of SM and necrophilic fantasies and where the channeling of sexuality is a mode of domestication. In my conclusion I speculate on the cultural imaginary and anxieties of race and gender, blood lines and racial mixing that *Twilight* seems to encode.

Vampiric Masculinity

The vampire tale's gender politics have been discussed far too often to bear repetition here (see Moers 1978, Hoeveler 1998, Heiland 2004, Spooner 2006). Gender identity is at the root of the horror film genre itself, where the horror hunts down the women – often eliminating male 'protectors' in their pursuit of the women. The oversexualized vampire story, from Bram Stoker's classic *Dracula* (1897) to films like *Underworld* (2003-09) and *Blade* (1998) has portrayed the woman as victim of the male vampire in a coded representation of sexual intercourse as bloodsucking.

The 'hegemonic masculinity' (a term popularized by RW Connell to refer to the specific *kinds* of masculinity that gain dominance over other kinds in specific cultural, historical and political contexts, see Carrigan et al 1985) of the *Twilight* 'men' folds fashion into fitness, corporeal perfection into sartorial elegance. The vampires have to dress *like us*, merge and blend in *with us*, even when they wear expensive clothing. Excess strength, heightened senses and rare speed mark out Edward. Edward represents a condition that I term *supernatural masculinity in drag*. His superior speed, strength and senses, all attributes of being a *vampire*, enable him to perform the 'traditional' functions of the *human* male. Thus Edward's supernatural masculinity works, ironically, within frames of a human and hegemonic masculinity: commodities, fashion, looks, protectionism. He mimics the human male with his clothing, protector role, self-control and rationality despite being a vampire with heightened abilities. He is a vampire in human clothing, a supernatural macho-man in drag.

One is struck by the sheer physicality of Edward Cullen's appeal to not only the protagonist, Isabella, but to everyone else in the school and town (appropriately termed 'Forks'). The words 'perfect' and 'beautiful' are used frequently to describe his looks. The hegemonic masculinity of *Twilight* is the stereotype of the physically strong protector male, but one who is also iconic of the 'well dressed male'. Edward is the 'dark, brooding, romantic hero; tormented by his past and so protective of the woman he loves that he willingly pushes her away for her own good' (Backstein 2009: 39). True masculinity, as the leading theorist of masculinity, RW Connell has argued (1995), is thought to proceed from their bodies. This implies both *appearance* and *health*. The former in Meyer's saga is coded as fashionable and appealing *social appearance* and the latter as a *biological condition*. What Isabella notes first about the entire Cullen clan is the extreme physical beauty. It is important, however, that it is not just Isabella to whom Edward Cullen is physically attractive. Jessica tells her:

> That's Edward. He's gorgeous, of course, but don't waste your time. He doesn't date. Apparently none of the girls here are good-looking enough for him. (22)

The clan's 'devastatingly, inhumanly beautiful' appearance, writes Meyer, 'were faces you never expected to see except perhaps on the airbrushed pages of a   fashion magazine. Or painted by an old master as the face of an angel' (19). What I want to draw attention to here is the emphasis on a certain socially *acceptable*   appearance. Not for Meyer's masculinity the foul-smelling, creepy looking vampire. This vampire's masculinity, unlike Dracula's, is that of an Armani model (Backstein 2009).

The material-corporeal dimension of vampire masculinity draws upon not the traditional Gothic or horror-fiction vampire but on the 'airbrushed' masculinity of lifestyle magazines. Edward Cullen draws attention throughout the tale not as a vampire – his biological condition, if you will – but due to his looks. Meyer shifts focus away from the character of the vampire to the appearance of him. The references to fashion magazines and painting both suggest a certain air of cosmetically modified masculinity. I have elsewhere argued (2008), in a reading of men's magazines, that masculinity is also constructed through a process where sex, women and consumer objects are all seamlessly woven into a circuit of desire and consumption. It is notable that Isabella's first 'introduction' to Edward and the vampire family is through their unique family car, the silver Volvo in the school parking lot (14). We are also frequently given information about how particular clothes, styles and colours suit Edward, with the descriptions appearing as though from a fashion catalogue. Later, on their first official date together, Edward comes to fetch her in a 'monster jeep', with metal guards, spotlights and a shiny red hardtop (359). Edward has to lift Bella into the vehicle and help her strap the seatbelts. The entire description situates the mutual sexual attraction of the human, the male vampire and the object within a circuit of desire. The monster jeep seems to partake of the monster (vampire) with both contributing to each other's hypermasculinity.

However, the hegemonic masculinity of Meyer's text also constructs the male body as a superb specimen of strength and fitness. (Recent research shows how image, style, and appearance are crucial markers of identity for contemporary men', as one essay on men's lifestyle magazine puts it. Ricciardelli et al 2010: 76.) Lifestyles magazines frequently present an ageless male body, and suggest steps to achieve this. Meyer seems to put all the advice from *Men's Health*, *Maxima* and other lifestyle magazines for men to good use in her construction of the sculpted body of Edward. We are given pen portraits of the men of the Cullen 'family': one is 'muscled like a serious weight lifter', another 'was taller, leaner, but still muscular' and the last is 'more boyish' (18). These do not require food or sleep – but of course they are *vampires*. *Twilight's* hegemonic masculinity – problematized by the fact of their being vampires – is thus a clever mix of product biographies and life stories.

Fred Botting points out that things are never what they seem in the traditional Gothic, but in the postmodern versions, 'things are not only what they seem: what they seem is what they are (1996: 170-1). In *Twilight*, this seems to be an apposite description of the 'vegetarian' vampires (as Edward Cullen describes their kind: they drink animal blood and feed on animals, but not on humans, in vampire terminology this is the equivalent of vegetarianism): they seem like harmless college kids and professionals and that is exactly what they are. There is a persistent attempt, I believe, to demystify the vampire, to convert it into one more component of everyday life in the school or small town. The folding of the vampire into a 'regular' school kid (of course with some extraordinary powers and conditions) dressed fashionably and the object of female attention (Meyer steers clear of a possible homosexual attraction that Edward might engender in school mates) is part of what I shall later argue is a process of the domestication of the vampire. For now, I want to turn to the Gothic uncertainty of Edward's story.

What strikes the very ordinary-looking Isabella is the beauty of these boys and girls. Yet it is this material beauty that has a fantastic history. There is a materiality of the undead in all vampire fiction, and Meyer is

no exception. Alison Milbank in a reading of nineteenth century vampire stories and *Wuthering Heights* proposes that 'the materiality of the undead who drains the lifeblood of the living is an ultimate figure of a negative natural supernatural' before going on to argue that the vampire is a 'feudal relic, battening financially and politically on the social body' (2002: 163). Milbank's argument gestures at the *social* sources and settings of the vampire. Edward informs Isabella: 'But the younger we pretend to be, the longer we can stay in any given place' (289). Human qualities, he says, are carried over into the next life and are 'intensified' (307). The fantastic here is the routine amplified. Meyer thus refrains from constructing parallel worlds. Instead what she does is to construct a vampire ethos that *extends* human concerns, aptitudes and attitudes in the Cullen family. This suggests a thinning of the boundaries between the human and the non-human (undead) worlds.

At one point Edward accuses Isabella of 'taking everything so coolly' and declares, 'it's unnatural' (198) which, coming from a vampire, is ironic, surely. But that is the point: the vampire has been socialized in the ways of the humans.

Vampiric masculinity, one could argue, is supernatural masculinity in drag: abandoning their 'natural' looks and sartorial tastes, they have taken to imitating human masculinity through dressing down, in jeans, sneakers and tee-shirts! Kathy Gentile notes, via Judith Butler, that drag is the construction of hyperbolic gender (2009: 17). Judith Butler has argued that 'drag is subversive to the extent that it reflects on the imitative structure by which hegemonic gender is itself produced and disputes heterosexuality's claim on naturalness and originality' (1991: 125). In effect, supernatural masculinity in drag in Meyer's work reinforces human masculinity – which is the hegemonic gender of the humans. While this might seem an over-reading, I would like to propose that vampires' opting for human dress codes suggest a drag culture, but one which can be said to reflect on the dominant gender role: masculinity. Supernatural masculinity in drag also facilitates the domestication of the vampire because it blends them into not only human culture but also into hegemonic masculinity.

Familial Blood Relations

The family is the space of horror in too many films (*The Exorcist*, *The Brood*, *The Omen*, among others) to require elaboration now. The dysfunctional family becomes the site of horror – and the fact that Isabella's parents are separated seems to suggest a continuation of this theme.

In what is a shift from the horror of the solitary vampire preying on innocent girls we now see families of vampires (though there is a suggestion in Stoker's text that the women vampires now constitute a 'family' along with Dracula as patriarch-husband). The vampire creates families through non-traditional means, of course, where the mixing of blood marks the making of blood-relations (literally so). Candace Benefiel (2004) points out the slightly incestuous nature of vampire families, where daughters and brides are interchangeable (263). There is just a hint about the unconventional relationships within the Cullen family.

After Isabella has just noticed the Cullen teens in the cafeteria Jessica says:

> They're all *together* though – Emmett and Rosalie, and Jasper and Alice, I   mean. And they *live* together.

> And Isabella thinks, 'I had to admit that even in Phoenix, it would cause gossip' (20-1, emphasis in original).

With Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* (1976), as Benefiel argues, the nuclear family of vampires becomes a commonplace theme. This vampire family becomes in some sense a mirror image of the 'standard' human family as well, despite their other predilections. The Cullens are a family. It was founded by Carlisle, who 'chose' and 'transformed' (the Meyer term for the process of 'becoming-vampire') Esme. So Carlisle and Esme are the 'parents', Rosalie and Emmett, says Edward, 'sometimes live separately from us, as a married couple' (289). Rosalie, Edward says, was 'never more than a sister', though Carlisle had hoped the two would have a different relation. Even werewolves hang out as family units. In *New Moon*, for instance, Jacob and his fellow wolves are referred to as 'brothers'.

Once again contributing to the process of domestication, the theme of vampire family shows the sociability and socialization of vampires. We are told that other vampires who do not locate themselves in a family structure, or 'belong', such as James the tracker in *Twilight*, are seen as aberrations. Edward explains:

> Most won't settle in any one place. Only those like us, who've given up hunting you people [humans] … can live together with humans for any length of time… (290)

In her review of *Twilight*, the film critic Karen Backstein argued that the 'bad vampire' (James) 'throws the hero's chivalrousness into relief' (38). But Edward's character also suggests a human/non-human linkage here, a model of mutual racial coexistence but one based on a denial of the vampire's true nature. Kathleen Rout has argued in a perceptive essay (2003) that much of Anne Rice's recent work focuses on love rather than killing, and her vampires are keen on *not* being monsters. We see Edward repentant at hurting Isabella, seeking to win her over and a vampire family built on love rather than anything else. Carlisle, despite being a vampire, works in the life-saving profession of medicine. The Cullens, to adopt Rout's terminology, have developed a 'moral code' that allows them to coexist with human beings. This is the domestication of the vampire who, having given up his thirst for human blood, can live with humans. And when a vampire forms a family then, these contemporary vampire chronicles from Meyer and Rice suggest, there is little to fear – a theme that foregrounds the centrality of the family to the development of the individual, even when that individual is a vampire.

We are told that in his first 'version', Carlisle, having become a vampire, 'strayed as far away as he could from the human populace … wandered by night, sought the loneliest places, loathing himself' (337). (I would like to draw attention to the echo of Frankenstein's monster here in Meyer's description.) Later, having discovered that he could prey on animals instead of humans, he realizes that 'he could exist without

being a demon' (337). 'He found himself again', writes Meyer (337). But what exactly is this

'himself'? I want to propose that the vampiric masculinity and solitariness of the monster are erased in favour of a return to the identity of a harmless human. The route to this humanization of the vampire, in Carlisle's case but also in the case of Rosalie, Emmett, Alice, Jasper, Esme and of course Edward, is the family.

The domesticated vampire family, as we can think of the Cullens, is like any human family. First, Edward informs Isabella, that they are not like the 'other' vampires who are nomadic. The Cullens put down roots, on occasions, for long periods of time. Meyer takes great pains to show how the vampires are a regular American family. Carlisle works as a physician (and, despite being a vampire, is not aroused by blood), and they all play baseball. When Isabella asks: 'vampires like baseball?' Edward responds with 'it's the American pastime' (347). They live in a palatial house and, Edward emphasizes:

No coffins, no piled skulls in corners; I don't even think [sic] we have cobwebs…(329)

There is even a gigantic cross in the house (330), much to Isabella's surprise. The domesticated vampire family is also distinguished by their clothing, looks and manners. Take the following description of the 'regular' vampires who arrive when the Cullens are playing baseball:

As they approached, I could see how different they were from the Cullens. Their walk was catlike, a gait that seemed constantly on the edge of shifting into a crouch. They dressed in the ordinary gear of backpackers: jeans and casual button-down shirts in heavy, weatherproof fabrics. The clothes were frayed, though, with wear, and they were barefoot. Both men had cropped hair, but the woman's brilliant orange hair was filled with leaves and debris from the woods ... Her [Victoria's] posture was distinctly feline ... [Laurent's] eyes moved apprecia-tively over Carlisle's refined appearance … (376-8)

Several things stand out in this account. Meyer aligns the new vampires with animals – their catlike gait, and their propensity to shift to a crouch, which suggests animal rather than human posture and locomo-tion. The Cullens, in contrast, are described as possessing, in the paragraph immediately following this description, 'the more polished and urbane stance' (330). The newcomers are badly dressed. They are, like animals, barefoot. The woman's hair has debris from the woods. All these contribute to the animal-esque nature of the new vampires, as opposed to the suave urbanity and fashionable clothing of the Cullens. The newcomers are surprised when Carlisle informs them that they have a 'permanent residence' in the town (377). James goes into a crouch in order to attack whereas Edward, writes Meyer, 'bared his teeth, crouching in defence' (378). Here Edward, Meyer suggests, doing what all humans would do: defend his family. The contrast with the predatorial James is underscored for us in the account of the domesticated Cullen family's reactions.

The family stands by its own, in Meyer's account, even a vampire family. As the first volume drifts to a

close, we see how every single member of the Cullen family exerts himself or herself to protect Isabella who, despite being a human, has been coopted into the vampire family. In a symbolic moment, Esme the vampire mother and Isabella exchange clothes (402), suggesting a sharing of materials, memories and, as Meyer puts it, smells. With this one act Isabella is incorporated into the Cullen house. Renée, her mother, notes Edward's over-protectionism in *Eclipse* when she says: 'the way he watches over you – it's so … protective. Like he's about to throw himself in front of a bullet to save you or something' (2009 [2007]: 60). Jacob, likewise, calls Edward 'overprotective' and declares: 'you're [Bella] not allowed to have fun, are you?' (*Eclipse* 73).

Sexuality and its Discontents

Vampire stories are highly erotic and have serious sexual overtones as numerous studies have shown (Craft 1984, Twitchell 1985). *Twilight* is a tale of adolescent love and sexuality, set in the high school (the location of innumerable horror films from Hollywood). Sexuality and the body constitute two of the perpetual themes in both, the traditional Gothic and contemporary horror cinema. David Punter has argued that contemporary horror with morphing, damaged, broken and mutilated bodies on screen hold an attraction for the adolescent because it 'provides duplicate images for the adolescent's disgust with the changes in his or her own body' (Punter 1996, 2: 150). Catherine Spooner has argued that the contemporary Gothic marks a shift from the threatened teen of the traditional Gothic to the *teen as threat* (2006: 107). Spooner's argument is borne out by the numerous films of dormitory, college, school horror (including spoofs like *Scream*).

In the traditional Gothic the virgin was always under threat. It is important (but may be strictly coincidental) that the heroine of Meyer's saga is named Isabella – the name of the heroine in what is often taken to be the first true Gothic novel, Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764). While the earlier Isabella is constantly besieged, the Meyer version presents a different kind of sexuality.

Isabella's evident, emphatic desire for Edward is thwarted sexuality. Edward whose constant refrain is that he might hurt her, is always on the verge of making love – they have progressed to a kiss – but refuses to make love. In what is an interesting shift within the horror/Gothic genre, Meyer's saga refrains from anything more than foreplay until Edward and Isabella are married. Several possible readings emerge here: that Meyer is proposing a conservatism around teen sex is the most popular. But I want to focus on something else here (and I am following Terry Spaise in this).

Technically, Edward is the undead vampire, and Isabella is in love with an animated corpse. It is a Gothic romance where sexuality has elements of necrophilia in addition to SM. Edward warns her that there will be pain when she is transformed (through sexual intercourse), thus suggesting SM. His frequent vice-like grip on her, encircling her wrists on more than one occasion, has echoes of bondage games. It must also be noted that Isabella is on show – as some kind of hero/ine – for her classmates *after* her association with EC

begins. She seems to take pleasure in the threat he holds. In SM there is an unequal power relation, and a consensuality (Gary and Ussher in Spaise): Isabella consents to pain, but the power relations between the 'partners' are unequal. Gary and Ussher note that SM is an alternative reality to fill a lack (cited in Spaise 744-5). Isabella's lack of grace, her inability to dance or do sports mark her out as socially inept within the college (there is no explanation why, having been a disaster at her earlier school she suddenly turns into this fascinating creature in Forks). Her fascination for the perfect Edward, despite the threat of pain, is therefore, an alternative reality. Her relation with Edward helps her escape the reality of her gauche, two-left feet kind of personality. For a person with no control over herself, the teen Isabella manages to exert considerable power/control over Edward. Is it that teens who do not fit the prototype must find alternative mechanisms to seek/assert control?

Within the theme of sexuality I have one more point to propose. Meyer, I argue, works with both themes: the threatened teen of the traditional Gothic to the *teen as threat* in contemporary horror.

Meyer revives the theme of the threatened teen in the persona of Isabella. First, Isabella is under the threat of pain (actual physical pain) due to her relationship with Edward. 'it's just that you are so soft, so fragile … I could kill you quite easily … I can never, never afford to lose any kind of control when I'm with you' (310). She is here the teen of the traditional Gothic, her sexuality drives the male insane with lust and she is in serious danger of being 'hurt'. Edward, we are told, spies on her, comes to secretly watch her while she is asleep, all suggesting the stalker theme of the traditional Gothic where the heroine is chased through labyrinths and lonely rooms. But – and this is important in the gendered reading of the tale – Isabella *consents* to the pain and the threat, thus making the relationship smack of SM. Unlike the heroine of the traditional Gothic with little agency of her own, Isabella volunteers herself to Edward's supposed brute masculinity.

Second, Edward repeatedly tells her that he is unable to control himself, or stop himself due to her sheer physical presence. Edward offers a long speech on the threat she poses:

> It was like you were some kind of demon, summoned straight from own personal hell to ruin me. The fragrance coming off your skin … I thought it would make me deranged that first day … But I resisted … [In Alaska] it was hard to believe you were so irresistible … I'd dealt with temptation before, not of this magnitude, not even close, but I was strong … I took pre-cautions... (269-272)

She 'driv[es] him crazy' (300). She makes him feel human emotions like jealousy (302). Her smell, he says, 'is mouthwatering' (306). At one point he even says: 'you will be the death of me' (363). This makes Isabella the teen-as-threat of contemporary horror. Her sheer physical attraction, Edward claims, makes it impossible for him to stop his 'natural craving'. She acknowledges the kind o threat she poses: 'I'll have to be on my guard, you see, so I better start learning what I shouldn't do' (274).

It is Edward's masculinity that holds back (itself, perhaps, a supernatural effort!), and once again returns

us to the theme of the domestication of the vampire. As Stephenie Meyer put it in an interview, she had hoped to capture the 'sense of this innocent and unselfish love that is going on, but with the undercurrent of his natural desire to bite and kill her' (2006: 632). It is the subjugation of the instinct that leads to domestication, suggests Meyer in her portrait of Edward Cullen. Yet at one point he confesses to human urges: 'I may not be human, but I am a man' (311). He of course has the voice of an archangel (311) that somehow does not quite go with his vampiric status, or his quasihuman one. But Meyer erodes his vampiric masculinity by offering such urges, talents, and traits to demonstrate a domestication of the vampire.

Conclusion: The Vampire as Cultural Anxiety

I want to conclude this meditation on the domestication of the vampire with what might be seen as a hyperbolic reading of popular literature. However, keeping in mind that popular literature and culture, more than anything else, carries cultural anxieties, repressions and dreams, we could profitably locate these social imaginaries within texts such as Meyer's.

Vampires blur family lines, mix races (Winnubst 2003). Studies of *Dracula*, for example, have noted the 'foreigner' angle to the tale (he has Jewish characteristics), thus converting the story into one about interracial relations. In Meyer's saga this 'mixing' becomes a code, I propose, for interracial coexistence. The vampire can co-exist, as we have seen, with humans. The Edward-Isabella 'connection' initiates a new 'line' as well. The 'family' now includes, as has been said of superheroes, individuals from different racial and ethnic backgrounds. If Kal-El can 'fit' into the human race, and if superheroes can co-exist with the humans, then vampires, Rice and Meyer's work proposes, can also contribute to the society/race as professionals (Carlisle as the eminent doctor), and even miscegenate with humans. In Anne Rice's *Merrick* (2000) we have witches and vampires with African American antecedents. Merrick mourns how the later generation tried hard to disown this genealogy: 'they wanted to get their hands on anything that said they were colored and tear it up' (27).

If Superman represents the ideal immigrant who Americanizes himself and takes on the burden of caring for his human relatives then the vampire, some time in the future, can also do so, if s/he abandons the strange cuisine and eating habits. The vampire, as I see it emerging in Meyer – and earlier in Anne Rice – both 'promises and threatens racial and sexual mixing' (as Donna Haraway put it, 1997: 214). Contemporary vampire fiction, therefore, in this reading, makes moves towards multiracial origins, multiracial families and questions, in some very literal themes, the origins of blood- and family lines.

Isabella's fantasies of life with Edward can be read as a coded fantasy of multiracial relations, and thus subverts the very idea of racial purity. (Indeed Karen Backstein argues that much modern vampire fiction caters exclusively to teen girl readers).

The point to be noted is that in contemporary contexts when masculinity is being constantly redefined,

Meyer seeks to retreat into safer 'moulds' and stereotypes, almost in a reactionary masculinity where men are big and strong, play protector roles and are always in control. If *American Psycho* gave us a Gothic with consumerism inextricably linked to masculinity then *Twilight* is a nostalgia-inducing visit to older forms of the masculine. That it is a vampire who has 'intensified' his human characteristics (as Meyer herself puts it in the book) suggests a deeper politics: it is a particular set of masculine characteristics that even the undead embrace. David H.J. Morgan (2001) has proposed that in post-modern concepts of family there is an acceptance of fluidity and diversity in the familial structure. What Meyer's text offers is a structure with very little fluidity. By showing how even vampire families seek stability and a 'closed' unit, she is suggesting, perhaps, a return to old-style family. Edward Cullen is of course a control-freak, he wishes to know everything about Bella, and is not above voyeuristically stalking her. His 'protectionism', which Bella approves of and admires, is a return to old-world masculinity – and this has attracted considerable criticism from feminist readers (McClimans and Wisnewski 2009). When he holds open a door for her she responds with 'very human' and he agrees, 'it's definitely resurfacing' (292).

However, by showing how the vampire humanizes with 'vegetarianism', lifestyle choices and family-belonging, Meyer casts the vampire as a member of a different race whose difference need not be feared: they can be educated and reformed. In some sense, therefore, Isabella's so-called fragility that makes Edward so nervous functions as an indexical sign of what he must abandon – his cultural and biological predilections, for example – if he seeks a life with this other-racial woman. 'Domestication of the vampire' here involves, on the other side of racial barrier, the reproduction of immortality for humans where Isabella becomes the symbolic marker for the *intentional* mixing of blood (as opposed to the forced mixing of 19th century vampire fiction). Mimicking narratives of motherhood as well as cosmopolitan interracial relations, *Twilight* generates a new cultural imaginary of mixed race lives, communities and cultures. Donna Haraway's meditation, used as the epigraph to this paper, suggests, kinship, sibling relations, the legitimacy of offspring are all now open-ended, and in a state of delicious uncertainty in the age of technoscience, cloning and genetic engineering. The feminist, lesbian psychoanalytic critic Judith Butler famously asked whether kinship is only heterosexual (2002). Vampire fiction in the work of Anne Rice, Stephenie Meyer and Jewelle Gomez, suggests that it needn't be.

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Recipe for Failure: The Impotence of the Oslo Accords.

By Yashar Taheri-Keramati

Introduction

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of the longest running, active, violent conflicts within our global community. Historically, it has been marred with diverse and entrenched facets which often seem to lead to further heightening of tensions. As such, it comes without any surprise that there has been a wealth of academic discourse concentrated on this conflict, as well as bringing an end to it. Furthermore, there exist a myriad of theories within this discourse which offer a vast array of explanations as to why the conflict persists. This discourse has taken many angles and perspectives, ranging from explanations which high-light religion as the major factor behind the conflict, to others which draw attention to acts of terror which create ever escalating levels of violent behaviour that is difficult to break through mediation.

Much has been written on how the policies of groups such as Hamas, or Fatah, as well those of the Israeli government, have aggravated the other side, laying the ground work for a perpetual cycle of violence. Similarly, volumes have been written blaming one side or the other, polarizing the issue even further, entrenching animosities. Claims to the land, supported by a host of explanations, are matched in number by more contemporary "justifications" of one side reacting violently to the violent acts of the other, cementing a political deadlock. Indeed, both sides have been blamed for the same atrocities, while both claim victimhood, making a viable peace seem out of sight. However, as protracted as this conflict has been, in 1993, and against all odds, third party mediations were established by the United States to once and for all establish peace in a land holy to many. This took shape in the Oslo Accords which were designed as a long term peace process. Indeed, it lasted until the year 2000. From the beginning there was much fanfare around the mediations, and understandably so with the Declaration of Principles passion-ately pronouncing that all sides

> ...agree that it is time to put an end to decades of confrontation and conflict, recognise their mutual legitimate and political rights, and strive to live in peaceful coexistence and mutual dignity and security and achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement and his-toric reconciliation through the agreed political process

The following paper will analyze the success of the U.S mediated Oslo Accords by measuring key empirical

facets of it against various theories offered by a host of scholars within the field of mediation, conflict resolution, and peace studies. However, to truly grasp this conflict, the perusing U.S lead mediation, its aims, and how successful it was, a brief background of the conflict leading to the mediations is needed.

Background and Aims of the Mediation

It is difficult to pinpoint exactly when, where, why, or how the Israeli/Palestinian conflict began. Some may argue that the conflict dates back many centuries or even thousands of years, while others may attribute tensions to the 20th century. However, as vague and contested as the roots of this conflict may be, what is easy to see is that as of 1948, with the creation of Israel, the dynamics in the region took a sharp turn. The creation of Israel saw the expulsion of at least 750,000 Palestinians from the newly created state of Israel, creating a massive refugee crisis which plagues the conflict to this day (Allan 48). In the decades which followed both Israelis and Palestinians saw tensions rise. Israelis saw themselves as victims of sporadic acts of terror which threatened their day to day security, while as of 1967 Palestinians found themselves living under a repressive military occupation that quickly manifested itself in the form of massive, fortified Jewish settlements being built within the post 1948 Palestinian boarders, alongside military check points, Jewish-only roads, the construction of a wall which expropriated Palestinian land while separating Palestinian communities from each other, and a massive influx of settlers, often armed with automatic machine guns, roaming Palestinian streets.

After decades of tensions, which often surfaced through violence in the form of sporadic attacks, military incursions, or even a mass uprising in the form of the first Intifada in 1987, the Oslo Accords, piloted by the U.S, professed that it aimed to create a new environment free of the issues which had formerly made both Israelis and Palestinians feel victimized and under threat. This mediation, lead by U.S President Clinton, had an ultimate goal of creating a Palestinian nation, free of Israeli occupation, while assuring Israeli security amongst many other issues. Article I of the Declaration, titled "Aims of Negotiations" read:

> "The aim of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations within the current Middle East peace process is, among other things, to establish a Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority, the elected Council (the "Council"), for the Palestinian people in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, for a transitional period not exceeding five years, leading to a permanent settlement based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

> It is understood that the interim arrangements are an integral part of the whole peace process and that the negotiations on the permanent status will lead to the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973)."

The ambitious declaration was awaited by complications brewing ahead.

Inter-non-compatibility

In the world of sports, an athlete will derive maximum effectiveness in a match if she or he is competing in their respective sport. A polo player on horseback will not farewell against water polo player, nor in the game of water polo in general. Similarly, the Palestinians, as a non-sovereign group, were mismatched in the Oslo Accords next to the Israeli state in an interstate mediation framed as being between two states. Rather, mediations between Israel and the Palestinian were ones that took place between a state and a non-sovereign, fractured group. Dean Pruit and Peter Carnevale highlight how problematic such a mismatch can be in a third party mediations (45-47). Pruit and Carnevale explain that when parties within a mediation differ in their structure or capabilities it become extremely difficult to establish a solid basis for a mutually agreed upon settlement. The Oslo Accords, however, completely overlooked this fundamental and crucial fact, making the mediations highly ineffective. Oren Barak, from the Department of Political Science and International Relations at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem accurately observes that a problem is created "when concepts and tools used to address interstate conflicts are employed in the realm of intergroup conflicts, creating a certain bias that impinges on the way these conflicts are understood and treated" (721). The U.S failed to frame the mediation appropriately, bringing together the correct types of groups which can work within it. This disparity in the composition of the groups is of utmost importance, for its existence devalues the mediations greatly as one side of the mediation is not just unfit for an interstate mediation, but even if the mediations go forward, the resolutions and agreements which are agreed upon will be problematic as they were mediated from a place of great asymmetry.

The Oslo Accords created a mediation framework bound to be flimsy during the proceeding, and difficult, if not impossible, to implement once the mediations were complete. Framing mediations to match the true nature and composition of the parties involved, as prescribed by the likes of Pruit and Carnevale, is paramount to laying a solid foundation for both discussion of the issues, and alleviating them in the aftermath of the mediations. Thus, the third party mediation fundamentally failed on both these crucial yet basic levels. Barak explains that

> "Unlike conflicts between states, intergroup conflicts involve non-uniform actors that are neither sovereign nor territorially defined. This has two major implications: first, group leaders have neither a monopoly over the use of force nor sufficient guarantees that their constituencies would go along" (720).

The Palestinian side, which in regards to Oslo namely refers to Yasir Arafat and the PLO, who unilaterally represented the Palestinians at the Accords, by no means embodied an all encompassing, legitimate representation of the Palestinians. Conversely, the land and people Israel occupies is fractured into many different groups, each with unique circumstances, alliances, grievances, and dispositions. Prominent groups such as Hamas were completely barred from the Accords. Gaza was inaccurately and unilaterally represented in the mediation process by PLO representatives who were disconnected from the region

personally and politically. Richard Jackson, in his article titled *Successful Negotiation in International Violent Conflict,* drives this point home, explaining that successful resolutions are most likely to occur if representatives of groups are high ranking and hold significant power and control over those who they represent (335). The U.S, as the mediator, did not bring these people to the table. Even though Yasir Arafat was the most prominent Palestinian political figure, he alone monopolized neither power nor the will of all Palestinians, bringing into question the very structure of the mediation's faulty framing. One ought to ponder the probability of successful mediations if one of the parties within the proceedings does not accurately represent their side, nor has the power to implement decisions made during the proceedings. Basic logic would deem such a scenario to result in a fiasco, and history has proven this logic to be true.

Blurring of Boundaries

The Oslo Accords were fraud with more than just an irrational structure described in the preceding section; the Accords were also marred with yet another pivotal flaw: neglecting the root causes of the conflict. Linda N. Putnam, an authority on conflict resolution, states that optimization of mediations occurs through transformations which accurately address the root causes of the conflict, acknowledging "the real problems" which those within the proceedings face (276). If this point seems basic, it is because it is; however, it is also of fundamental importance and value to any successful outcome and thus cannot be overlooked. In the case of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, it is most striking that the same key issues which brought about the hostilities, and the subsequent U.S lead Oslo mediations, were blatantly pushed under the metaphorical carpet of the proceedings, swept aside and forgotten. The U.S did not make a push to get the two sides to address these issues head on. In regards to the lack of attention given to fundamental issues in the proceedings, Kathleen Cavanaugh, from the London School of Economics, explains how addressing the root causes was circumvented:

> "Language is left deliberately vague or even contradictory. For example, Article 1 of the DOP (Declaration of Principles) indicates that 'negotiations on the permanent status will lead to the implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.' This would ostensibly comply with customary international law prohibiting the acquisition of territory by war and calling for the withdrawal of forces from occupied territories. However, subsection 3 of Article 1 defers consideration of most of the key sticking points of negotiations - the status of Jerusalem, settlements, refugees, borders and security - to the final negotiations." (p12)

Such blatant disregard for these key issues is especially troubling in the light of the fact that the conflict was based around them. Mediations will fail to be successful if the underpinnings of the conflict being mediated are not addressed, raising the question "what is the point of mediating anyway?" What is even more troubling is that when a certain document within the Accords did mention the key issues, other wording within the Accords, as well as the structure of the mediation itself, made working on the issues seemingly impossible. This is due to the fact that the texts which surfaced out of the mediations were not

only vague, but vague in a way which allowed Israel to shift the agreements in the direction which was conducive to its own interests as opposed to being conducive to peace. Israel seems to have an obvious advantage throughout the proceedings. Cavanaugh highlights an example of this imbalanced paradigm:

> "'Under Article XXXI.7 of the Interim Agreement, '[n] either side shall initiate or take any step that will change the status of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip pending the outcome of the permanent status negotiations.' This suggests that the construction of Israeli settlements and the confiscation of land for by-pass roads in the Occupied Territories is not permissible. This provision, however, conflicts with another positing that settlement construction and administration of settlements are beyond the remit of the Accords. Hence, Israel can claim: In fact, neither of the agreements in force between Israel and the PLO - the Declaration of Principles and the Interim Agreement - contain any provision prohibiting or restricting the establishment or expansion of Israeli settlements. Similarly, none of the other agreements between the two sides, now superseded by the Interim Agreement, contained such a provision. At various stages during the negotiations over these agreements, requests were made by the Palestinian side to include such a provision. Israel, however, opposed the inclusion of such a provision, pointing out that Israeli policy in this regard had already been established in a number of decisions by the Israeli Government, and explaining that it was not prepared to undertake any commitment beyond these unilateral Government decisions."

Similarly, Emma Murphy from the Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies drives home the notion that Israel maintained the upper hand throughout the proceedings, dictating the terms of a mediation which were supposed to be mutually agreed upon, by pointing out that "...Israel was in a position virtually to dictate the terms of the agreement. As Shimon Peres put it, "In some ways we are negotiating with ourselves" (37). Here, two fundamental problems surface. Firstly, the gross power disparity which benefited the Israeli side created an environment where Palestinians were hard pressed to find equity, creating grievances, and subsequently taking legitimacy away from the proceedings and thus making success more difficult to achieve (Jackson, 335). Secondly, as pointed out by Richard Jackson

> "On the occasions that talks become bogged down or deadlocked, senior officials can sometimes play an important role in restarting the negotiations... When the central negotiating figures are primary decision makers, such as heads of state or rebel movement leaders, negotiation success rates are as high as 61%. Comparatively, when the negotiators are both low-level officials, success falls to 39%, which is well below the average success rate. International negotiation, therefore, is often facilitated by the presence of high-level officials who possess significant decision-making power" (336337)

The U.S's failure to equip the mediation with Israeli leaders ranking high enough to overcome the bogging down of the mediation in the light of issues which needed the blessings of the Israeli government adds to dampening the possibility of a successful mediation.

Oasis of Aid

Aid is often used as an incentive to bring parties to the mediation table, offering them incentives for compliance with certain agreements. Upon face value, this can be seen as a potentially useful tool in the quest for a mediated peace. However, aid is a powerful tool which derives its value from both the structures in which it is applied, as well as how it is applied. It naturally follows that when aid is applied in an unsuitable setting it can have a null or negative effect; both of these unsatisfactory effects were present in the aid dynamics of the Accords. First and foremost, the aid given to the Palestinian side was null in that the state of the occupied lands, which were at the heart of the mediation, made aid futile. This reality was overlooked, making the aid given largely useless. Murphy insightfully explains that "The international community has made the fundamental error of separating aid from the wider context of the deal. No amount of international aid will sustain the Palestinian economy if Palestinian workers are denied employment in Israel in the short- term. No amount of support for agriculture will help if the best land is being expropriated."(36) Given that these were the realities that existed on the ground, the aid was not only ineffective, but it can also be argued that aid had a damaging effect on the peace process. In such a scenario, the damage is rooted in the fact such aid may give the false impression that measures are being taken to persuade the recipient party while the same party does not change their policies after receiving the aid. Indeed, camps within Israel who were against the peace talks were quick to pounce on the Palestinians lack of observable improvements in the face of the generous aid given, accusing the recipients of not being committed to the peace process, causing friction, animosity, and framing the ineffectiveness of the aid in a way which laid blame on the Palestinians who were structurally gridlocked and unable to properly utilize the aid given. Thus, aid is not valuable in itself, but rather it is valuable within the correct framework which the Palestinians did not possess. This idea is supported by Donald Rothchild who, in reference to outside incentives, explains that weak parties lacking autonomy in third party mediation may fail to benefit from outside incentives such as aid, making the aid ineffectual, and thus not benefiting the mediation process (14). Rothchild also points out the damaging affect the aid can have, paving the way for an antagonistic reaction from the Israeli side, as put forth earlier (15). Thus, given such a problematic scenario, it can be argued that aid would have perhaps been best left off the mediation table by the U.S.

Constructing an Adversary

Successful mediations bring to the table conflicting side which are willing to embrace each other in a manner which creates goodwill, trust, and mutual understanding. The role of the mediator is to facilitate the establishment of this relationship. According to Hietial Maill, the United States has the ability, and thus responsibility as a mediator with the interest of all concerned in mind, and "power to induce cooperation, to legitimize, to inspire" (10). Certain outcomes of the Oslo Accords, however, exemplified the exact opposite. The U.S, as a third party facilitator, failed to bring about trust building measures to empower the

Accords, but more disturbingly, brought upon policies that went as far as damage the little trust, cooperation, and legitimacy that did exist. One of the agreements which the U.S brokered with such an effect was the Wye Memorandum of 1998. Born out of the Oslo Accords, the Wye Memorandum, covering security aspects of the mediation, displays the U.S's lack of attention to building trust and respect between Israel and the Palestinians. The key principle of the Memorandum was reciprocity based around security. Surely reciprocal measures taken by both sides have the capacity to build a certain amount of trust and mutual respect for it shows the common commitment to peace and more importantly, the willingness to work towards it. That being said, one would expect such a measure to in fact coincide with Maill's advocacy for the mediator's role to be one of a facilitator of building goodwill between the parties. However, the Wye Memorandum manifested itself as a one-sided obligation. Naseer Aruri, an expert on these proceedings, points out of the inequalities within the Memorandum:

> "The long list of Palestinian "security actions" that is at the heart of the agreement has no Israeli counterpart. The Palestinian side must make known its policy of 'zero tolerance for terror,' must embark on the systematic and effective combat of terrorist organizations, apprehend individuals suspected of acts of violence and terror, and so on; no comparable actions are required of the Israelis with regard to settler violence and terror." (23)

Another example Aruri shines light on regards the use of weapons:

> "The Palestinian side must 'vigorously and continuously implement a systematic program for the collection and appropriate handling' of weapons, while Israeli 'civilian' settlers don automatic weapons issued to them by the government and use them against unarmed Palestinians with virtual impunity, as has been amply documented by all the major international human rights organizations, including the Israeli group B'Tselem"

Surely such divergent policies sponsored by the mediator fail to create trust between the parties at hand, destabilizing the mediation and the prospect for peace as a whole. However, it gets more problematic than that. Not only was Wye inequitable, but it also skewed the mediation process in a way which would allow the Israeli camp to further chip away at the Palestinian side, accusing them of not following agreements which Israel itself did not even have to abide by. The goal posts were positioned in a way to leave the Palestinian under constant attack, further degrading the strong relationship needed between both sides for an optimal mediation result as prescribed by Maill. By having one-sided obligations, Palestinians could be, and indeed were, constantly attacked of not carrying out their obligations. The Wye Memorandum acted as a vehicle to demonize the Palestinian camp and thus gave Israel an opportunity to fabricate that they had a vicious, unwilling, unreasonable, and dishonest partner in peace. Aruri explains that "The clear implication that the earlier agreements have not been implemented because of PA (Palestinian Authority) unwillingness or inability to honor its security commitments is one of the most humiliating aspects of the Wye agreement." (23) Surely, pushing the Palestinians into such an unfair arrangement, coupled with the subsequent scrutiny and finger pointing which followed, indicates the mediator's ineffectiveness in establishing in a non-hostile, non-adversarial framework for the two sides to work in.

Dishonest Broker

Asymmetrical conflicts can be extremely difficult to unravel, with the powerful party typically having the upper hand, allowing it to enforce its will on the less powerful party, making a viable peace seemingly unfeasible. Hietial Maill unloads this idea in a logical way, and explains how a mediator can aid in overcoming this obstacle:

> "In asymmetric conflicts the structure is such that the top dog always wins, the underdog always loses. The only way to resolve the conflict is to change the structure, but this can never be in the interests of the top dog. So there are no win-win outcomes and the third party has to join forces with the underdog to bring about a resolution"(12)

To optimize a mediations chance of success, mediation must be embodied by a fair and equal handed mediator who is free of personal bias and interest. This may be true of a conflict free of a significant power disparity; however, as rationalized above, even more is needed from the mediator in a conflict where there is such great asymmetry. Therefore, the U.S, as the outside third party, ought put pressure on Israel as to not allow Israel to maintain the upper hand and capture the strategic hilltops of the peace process, giving it substantial power over the Accords, and thus defecting from coming to a mutually agreed upon settlement. Unfortunately, both a quick and lengthy analysis of the Oslo Accords or the Israeli/Palestinian conflict as whole will reveal that not only did the U.S fail to side with the "underdog" as to overcome the pitfall of the crippling and vulgar power asymmetry which existed, but it even failed to act as a fair and balanced mediator. Though volumes can be written about the United State's well documented and publicized unwavering support of Israel, one needs to only look at the U.S's financial support of Israel, the pattern of the U.S's record number of veto votes to bail Israel out of United Nation's Security Council resolutions, or even American Presidents' consistent and constant rhetorical backing of Israel to see that the mediator at hand is not even handed. Contrast the U.S's unprecedented relationship with Israel with the U.S's relationship with the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and the clear evidence of strong bias is disturbing. The PLO, who represented the Palestinian side at Oslo, has in the recent past been branded a terrorist organization by the U.S and viciously categorized as an enemy of both the U.S and Israel before Oslo. To expect the U.S to be an honest broker given the history, context, and characters involved in the mediation would be foolish. It so logically follows that it would be even more foolish to expect a sustainable peace agreement to be birthed from a type of mediation where the mediator embodies such profound favouritism and prejudice. Even if the actions of the United States pre-Oslo were to be disregarded, the U.S structuring of Oslo itself, the lopsided documents and policies it formulated as the mediator, the policies it pushed, and adversarial stance it took with the Palestinian side is clear evidence of a truth that is difficult to ignore: that the U.S was not an honest broker in this third party mediation.

Conclusion

Though the Oslo Accords were supposed to only last until 1998, they went on until the year 2000. However, peace was not achieved in the year 2000, nor a mutually agreed upon settlement. Instead, the year 2000 ushered in the Second Intifada with dissatisfaction and grievances taking over what was supposed to result in peace two years earlier. Frustrations had indeed boiled over, not the least helped by the damaging effect of the Oslo Accords. Since then, settlements have expanded, the number of settlers has steadily risen, more Jewish only roads have been paved, the infamous wall has been expanded expropriating more land and separating more communities, and the death toll has increased on both sides. The lack of peace manifests itself in the form of increasing suffering. Most recently Gaza saw over 1300 of its people killed while Israel suffered 13 losses in the war it waged in Gaza in 2008. These historical snippets are only the tip of the iceberg when reflecting back on the years post Oslo. Thus, grievances have been further entrenched, the sides further polarized, and the suffering exaggerated, and peace have been moved further out of sight.

Reflecting back on the Oslo Accords, one has to wonder how the third party mediations could have been plagued with so many fundamental flaws. From the structure, to the policies which came from it, Oslo failed to be conducive to a sustainable peace. With the downfalls being so obvious, and the inequality so blatant, one is left pondering why the mediations took place in the first place. Was Oslo intentionally set up for disaster as to buy time, or perhaps was it to give the facade of working towards peace? Did there exist a desire to further weaken and fragment the Palestinians, or did this happen by coincidence? One has to formulate their own conclusions on this matter, taking into account both the realities of the Accords as well as logic.

It is disheartening that each time moves towards peace fail, it makes it more difficult to establish the foundation of trust needed for subsequent successful peace talks. It is equally difficult to convince either side of working towards peace again given the track record of painful and demoralizing failures. Looking back at Oslo, it would be dishonest to call the third party mediations anything close to resembling a success. However, the Oslo Accords do not have to be useless. Rather, the Accords should act as a lesson for future mediations. Hopefully future groups who mediate the next peace process (optimistically assuming there is one) will have learnt from the mistakes of the U.S as a third party mediator in Oslo. It would be foolish to repeat the mistakes of Oslo, such false framings, inappropriate aid, demonization, and uneven handedness. There is much to avoid from the Oslo model and indeed there is much to learn from its failures. However, there is also a real opportunity to improve on its downfalls in an effort to mediate a true peace process. Looking forward, if or when parties step to mediation table again, certain aspects of Oslo will serve as a guideline for a road to wander down again.

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Lessons from an Idiosyncratic Greek Eco-Feminist Experiment.

By Maria Kyriakidou

Abstract

It is often argued that the renewal of democracy presupposes female emancipation and the essential participation of women in decision making centers. This is associated with different ways of defining gender identities in contemporary social and political establishments. In this line, the research on the encounter between new social movements and state institutions is invaluable. In Greece from 1989 until 1993, a Green political party endorsed alternative politics and corresponding social changes through its proclamations for direct democracy, many referenda and decision making based on broad consensus. Their delegates and representatives could be recalled for failing to carry out the decisions made at the grassroot level and all officials with delegated powers were rotated frequently (every year) to avoid professionalisation of politics. 'Ecologists-Alternatives' and their parliamentary representatives supported the principles of direct, grassroot democracy but their political discourse and practices quite often exhibited theoretical breaches and ideological disparities. The failure of their enterprise to have a lasting effect on the contemporary Greek political system is worth studying since it sheds light on the weaknesses of this approach and the links between the development of social movements in Greece after the mid-1970s and the democratic processes. It is suggested that whenever social movements which advocate direct democracy develop into established political parties and participate in electoral processes of the representative democracy they end up been absorbed by the state mechanism and they eventually loose their dynamic and their radical democratic worldview.

Lessons from an idiosyncratic Greek eco-feminist experiment

From 1989 to 1993 (after two consecutive elections in November 1989 and April 1990) a small Greek

political party, the *Ecologists-Alternatives* (EA)-*Federation of Ecological and Alternative Organisations*, which was promoted as the coalition of ecologists and feminists, favoured by a short interval of a nearly proportional electoral system and boosted by its motto: 'New politics is a woman', won a parliamentary seat and was represented in the Greek parliament exclusively by women MPs based on an annual rotation scheme. The party during its electoral campaigns had declared its origins in the new social movements and had advocated alternative politics and support for social transformations in favour of gender equality and a renewed place for women in politics. Through their declarations for more direct forms of democracy via numerous referenda the EA sought to engulf the principles of radical democracy[1] which were largely the concern of many feminists. The case is distinct in the Greek political scene and it is worth studying since it sheds light on certain issues related to the history of social movements in Greece in the postdictatorship era (after 1974).

Attempts for the creation of an alternative, ecological political entity in Greece started in the early 1980s with great discord since various ecologists displayed an 'allergy' to structured political entities due to their anarchist past. But after the accident at the nuclear plant of Chernobyl and increased citizens' concern about environmental crises, major ecological organisations in the country, felt obliged to respond. This led to the creation of a loose FEAO (*Federation of Ecological and Alternative Organisations*) in 1988, the first electoral test for which came at the 1989 elections for the European parliament in which a faction of the Federation under the name EA (*Ecologists-Alternatives*) earned 1.12% of the popular vote and 1 MEP. The euphoria that followed this success led eventually to the creation of a political party, the EA-FEAO on October 1, 1989[2], just a month before the national elections of November, initially by 46 groups. Its founding meeting dealt with organizational and administrative concerns, its aims and targets as well as with the forthcoming elections. The majority of the present members of the Federation voted in favour of the party's participation in the elections[3]. In fact, given the timing of its constitution one can argue that it was chiefly founded in order to participate in the November 1989 national elections.

The attraction that EA members felt for 'the charm of the ballot' is regarded as the result of encouraging messages that the electoral victories of the 'Green' parties had sent throughout western Europe. The representatives of the Federation suggested that their party was not (and would never become) personality-based, that they wished to introduce new elements to the Greek political scene (such as the annual rotation of their delegates), that they are only based on their members' financial support and that they value the principles of the grass-root ecology groups that were formed in Greece after the fall of the military junta in 1974. They claimed that their voters had diverse political affiliations but prioritized ecological concerns. Above and beyond all, they emphasized that they were not and never intended to be 'professional politicians'[4].

It is equally true that together with the prominence of ecology, the Federation from its very onset made quite clear that it also aimed to represent a wide range of new social movements accentuating the feminist one. A telling example is the most popular electoral poster of the EA which featured the well known painting 'The Birth of Aphrodite' by Boticelli and the electoral campaign's mottos included: 'New politics is born' and 'New politics is a woman'[5]. When and wherever possible, women were 50% of all candidates in

the ballots. Due to the nearly proportional electoral system of those years, the party that in November 1989 won 0,59% of popular vote (translated in 39.130 votes), gained a seat in the National Greek parliament that was reserved for the delegate who earned the largest number of votes in the first periphery of Athens (where the party obtained its largest percentage nationwide). This delegate was Marina Dizi-Patsourea. The candidates that followed in the number of votes were three more women and one man[6]. This accomplishment was accompanied by the success of women candidates in every electoral periphery they run. Postelection polls showed in fact that the number of women who voted for this party was double to that of men, possibly inspired by the party's campaign for gender equality[7].

The newly elected MP Marina Dizi, a wage earner with a leftist political past was a member of the *Citizens' Movement for Ecology*, one of the initial 46 groups that founded the Federation and this electoral victory was coupled by the party's gain of one seat also in the elections that followed five months later. In these elections (of April 1990) the party increased its electoral percentage to 0.77% (and 50.868 votes). At that time the largest percentage of votes for the party was recorded in the periphery of Piraeus and there a woman was again first in people's choices, Anastasia Andreadaki. Second was still another woman, Kaiti Iatropoulou and she was followed by two men, Vangelis Doumenis and Polymeris Voglis[8]. According to the principle of annual rotation, these four people would alternate in representation in the four-year parliamentary period to come (1999-1993). The rotation worked for the first year but it stopped at the second delegate. The third elected person could not rotate in parliament since his original candidacy was against the rules of the Federation and to bypass him was considered a potential source of legal and political trouble for the party. So Iatropoulou was asked to remain until 1993 and she conceded. This turned the EA the only Greek party with parliamentary representation exclusively by women (Dizi, Andreadaki and Iatropoulou), a Greek novelty.

The first delegate, Marina Dizi, stated that the country needed a renewed practice of politics that would value the 'female discourse' and give women more chances to participate in decision-making centers while at the same time, she condemned the mass absence of women from the traditional, 'patriarchal' in her own words, political parties[9]. What deserves special attention here is the reference to a women's 'political discourse', a view that can potentially entrap women politicians in bipolar schemes (male-female political discourse) that are considered a priori antithetical and could eventually lead to gender hierarchies. But one can also wonder about the nature and consistency of this 'female discourse'. For Marina Dizi it was apparently portrayed by a sensitivity in ecological concerns and a favourable attitude towards alternative social and political transformations which in the case of EA remained rather vague and undefined. The EA members promoted a political ecology agenda that comprised plans for further social change including gender equality but they had no common or clear platform as to how they hoped to implement such change.

All three women party delegates used a gender-related outlook and approach to politics that appears consistent to their professed aims. Marina Dizi entered the parliament for the first time holding her little daughter on the one hand and offered flowers to women MPs from other parties. Anastasia Andreadaki had initially refused to serve as an MP because her daughter was at the time at a critical stage of her studies

and she was afraid that her mother's publicity would disrupt her study norms. She finally accepted the position after the pressure put on her by the Federation since the next one in votes, Kaiti Iatropoulou, had also initially refused the post because she was pregnant[10]. These women had placed an emphasis on their caring responsibilities for their families and on gender-specific roles (both biological and social) as women (pregnancy and care for their children). Such an attitude was along the lines of an ecofeminist approach, that particularly flourished within the ranks of the international Green parties, at least in the late 1980s, on the organisational principles and declarations of which the Greek EA were based and deserves our attention.

Ecofeminism is a distinct discourse, an amalgam of feminism and environmentalism constructed at different times and places in different ways[11]. Among its main premises is the connection of women with 'nature' at large[12]. The notion of the 'oikos', (the etymological root of ecology which actually means 'home') and a mother's so perceived as 'natural' functions (e.g. care for children) were often associated with the model of 'Mother Nature'. Historically, the oppression and exploitation that women suffered from men was associated with the mishandling and exploitation of nature by patriarchal societies[13]. In this line, Western dualistic thought, which has traditionally separated 'man' from nature, has reinforced oppositional unequal categories of dominance, thereby resulting in a devaluing of nature and all that is associated with it (e.g., women)[14]. According to these views, the common struggles of feminists and ecologists could destroy the present hierarchical social structures and relations of domination at all levels and this destruction is considered 'a natural process'[15].

Many theories developed under the label of 'ecofeminism' reflect critically upon the women–nature connection as related to the links between body, spirituality, fertility and motherhood[16] and to the ties between women and the Mother-Earth. Roughly speaking, the trend that is broadly defined as 'spiritual (or cultural[17]) ecofeminism' maintain that inverting the male/female, culture/nature dualisms and valorizing the feminine side, allows for the creation of the category 'woman', the celebration of all that is associated with being a woman, and the creation of a strong alliance in opposition to patriarchy. However, critics had reasonably argued that the valorization of the subordinate 'woman' serves to reverse a problematic essentialized dichotomy and perpetuate such gendered stereotypes of women as life givers and eventually reinforce patriarchal hierarchies[18]. In fact, there is an inherent danger in equating women with nature, and this is related to the assumption that men are away from, unrelated to nature[19].

In our case, the ecofeminist approach of women delegates of the EA was closer to this early, essentialist ecofeminism that dominated the relevant discussion until the late 1980s when Greek ecofeminism was in its formative stage. The essentialist argument that underpinned some of the western (mainly North American and Australian) analyses proposed that women had a particular relationship with nature by virtue of their biology (predominantly as actual or potential child bearers) and that this proximity to nature qualified them to speak more eloquently on nature's behalf[20]. Different authors have drawn on this position to different degrees and much of the critique of ecofeminism[21] over the past 20 years has focused on the problems associated with essentialism.[22] Nowadays another trend, social ecofeminism, supports a separation of women and nature on the basis that the categories 'woman'/'man'/'nature'/'culture' have

been socially constructed in ways that devalue both women and nature even though they idealize them.[23]

It is possible that the thoughts and practices of the Greek EA MPs echoed analogous perceptions regarding the equation of women and nature. Hence, and although they sought the eradication of the traditional patriarchal political system through their political rhetoric, in practice they perpetuated conventional views regarding the dichotomy between genders featuring men and women as components of abstract clusters with predetermined roles and attributes. This stance could not lead to the reversal of traditional socio-political edifices since a non-hierarchical social structure could emerge from the acceptance of the multiplicity and fluidity of identities; inversely, references to collective (seemingly inherent) features based on gender, can reproduce dichotomies and eventually new hierarchies.

In practice, the male members of the EA party often disregarded their female delegates. The women MPs were not allowed to express their personal views due to the alleged danger of becoming professional politicians and at press conferences and interviews, messages and notes with the suitable answer were passed to them by the leaders of the main factions who were all men. So the former, unwillingly, became the ideological carriers of the often conflicting views in the Federation. However, and even though these women were often accused of ignorance as well as of lack of political experience, they were quite popular, played their part in intra-parliament activity and often kept checks and balances among the different factions who tried to control them[24].

The Federation was eventually led to a major split and disappearance. After a change in its initial Statute in 1992, many left and the definite split came after June 1992 when the last MP Kaiti Iatropoulou accepted the parliament's offer for a tax-free car (an option available to Greek MPs) and employed her husband as her assistant. These moves led to increasing intra-party disgruntlement and accusations for the 'betrayal of people's trust' and she eventually decided to became an independent MP. The FEAO neither recovered from these crises nor did it participate in elections or call meetings after that.

The reasons for the failure of such an alternative democratic experiment were multiple. At first, many of their members had admitted a major weakness of the party, namely a split between words and deeds. Individuals and subgroups that participated in the Federation exercised severe criticism to its administrative authority for it was allegedly 'entrapped in ultra-leftist schemes that alienated many centrists, conservative voters who cared for ecology but did not share leftist political convictions'[25] while the inability of the EA to offer a true alternative solution to the traditional bipolarism between left and right was spotted quite early[26].

Other researchers presented different suggestions for the EA's failure and dissolution, such as the competition from leftist political parties with similar concerns as well as intraparty factionalism which seems the most plausible explanation. There were three main factions within the EA: the 'environmentalists' (with a rather technocratic approach), the so called 'alternatives' whose perception of ecology was closer to the holistic views of Deep ecology and the 'Leftists' (a multifaceted faction with a leftist core). Concomitant to their dissolution was their loose organisational formula since most groups especially those outside the

two main Greek cities of Athens and Thessaloniki were mostly groups of friends rather than structured bodies and the organisation as a whole had an atypical function and vague targets (at the centre of their ideological search was their wish to 'change the world'). Such change was viewed as radical and alternative and not as managerial and they pursued it mostly by personal agency and individual practices. After the electoral successes, the differences among the different factions surfaced and the factions were further stabilised in powerful cores[27].

Among the most important reasons for the fast decline of the Federation was quoted the lack of an independent autonomous movement which would counteract the absence of a solid party structure[28], the development of which should have been first achieved through social processes before their electoral adventure[29]. The reason for the Federation's decision to participate in the elections was quoted as 'the need to bring about a massive ecological movement in Greece[30]'. But already in 1990, critics of the Federation mentioned that it had abandoned 'any attempt for action towards a movement and is transformed in a group of 3040 agents who limit their discussions to organisational and administrative issues with no solid political basis[31]'.

The non-existence of a massive environmental movement within the Greek society was combined with the lack of a solid structure, a fact that was not the case for other successful Green parties in the western world. The absence of a clear democratic framework for the internal operation of the Federation was thought to lead to eco-populism and the necessity of its political redefinition was deemed urgent[32]. Despite their relative success and the earning of a parliamentary seat, the EA felt prey to their often hasty and haphazard attitude[33] while their declarations for direct democracy and their criticism to the notion of representation contrasted with their ignorance regarding procedures and rules of dialogue and respect for counter-discourse that should be among the main constituents of direct democracy in the framework of the Federation and of society as a whole[34]. One of them stated that direct democracy 'does not mean to ask people about their opinion on issues that are unintelligible to them. As Cornelius Castoriades argued it is meaningless to ask people to give opinions [in a poll like manner] if they cannot do it with knowledge after considerable deliberation[35]'.

Panhellenic conferences were held just to prove the level of disagreement regarding issues of immediate concern, for instance whether the party will have a direct or indirect organisational structure and at the end the General assembly of the member groups emerged as omnipotent while the party's secretariat had the limited responsibility to execute the assembly's decisions. This formula proved impossible to function since the members of the secretariat were renewed every 15 days. In short, there were numerous political, personal and ideological differences[36]. For many Federation members, a comprehensive programme and direct democracy contradicted each other. They wished to practice politics and change society, but, at the same time, they avoided a broad course of action[37] that should eventually move beyond the ecology sphere.

The failure of their enterprise is further associated with a weakness in finding satisfactory means of exercising alternative politics within a western representative parliamentary system of government. A hitherto dominant tendency in movements theory draws dividing lines between them and the state and

view them as separate entities that operate based on exclusive terms of conflict. So the supporters of this view believe that it is impossible to place the movement within the state since the movement by definition challenges the established political order. A contrasting view had shown that since both the states and the social movements consist of acting subjects, individual or collective, there are many ways in which the two ends of the, so far considered, conflict, meet[38] since quite often, the same subjects can participate both in state institutions and in the social movements. The social movements have group and individual members within the state which in various historical eras displayed different degrees of participation and the encounter of the state and movements influences the strategies, the process and the outcomes of the latter[39]. The state becomes the point of reference for the creation of interest groups and for the mobilization of citizens[40].

As Nicos Poulantzas had claimed, all social movements (including the environmentalist and the feminist) to the degree that they are political, are placed at the strategic field of the state due to political necessity. They do have political results and influences on the state. The new social movements reflect class conflicts but they are not limited to this. Many overcome the institutions of representative democracy and they promote the perspective of self-management. But when the movements which support direct democracy fell into the net of the state they are incorporated, weakened and dissolved as they identify with its administrative structure because of the particular material nature of state mechanism[41].

During the 1970s and 1980s the main social movements which were activated away from the places of production were by nature multi- and inter-class. Indeed, Alain Touraine called the feminist and the environmentalist movements 'cultural' since they were based on cultural claims[42]. The EA sought to influence the state structures working through a traditional and established institutional and political formation and simultaneously to inspire the emergence of a massive alternative movement. However, political parties confronted the movements was not only based on inclusion but also on the latter's strangulation. The movements which were transformed into parties, on the other hand, risked to lose their particularity since there was always the risk of dissolution within the party[43] as they failed to uphold radical action that would provide guidance for the future[44]. Generally speaking, a movement can inspire with its example, provide answers to certain questions and give birth to new inquiries regarding society and politics but the electoral adventure of the nascent Greek ecological movement in a fragmentary and disorganized manner could only be accounted as a sort of assimilation and absorption by the dominant elites and as practically, albeit unwillingly, assisting the continuous operation of the status quo[45].

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Endnotes

1 Schizas, 1989: 12. Radical democratic politics as defined by Chantal Mouffe comprise a common political identity of persons who are bound together by "their common recognition of a set of ethico-political values. In this case citizenship… is an articulating principle that affects the different subject positions of the social agent while allowing for a plurality of specific allegiances and for the respect of individual liberty… It should lead to a common recognition among different groups struggling for an extension and radicalization of democracy that they have a common concern and that in choosing their actions they should subscribe to certain rules of conduct" (Mouffe, 1992: 235-236). This notion of citizenship is quite appropriate to the development of social movements.

2 Botetsagias, 2003: 85-87.

3 Modinos, 1989: 6.

4   Newspaper *Eleftherotypia*, 7/11/1989: 17.

5   *Eleftherotypia*, 7/11/1989: 13.

6   *Eleftherotypia*, 7/11/1989: 17.

7   *Eleftherotypia*, 27/03/1990: 20-21.

8   *Eleftherotypia*, 10/4/1990: 6.

9   *Eleftherotypia*, 24/11/1989: 15.

10   Newspaper *Ta Nea*, 10/04/1990: 16.

11   Buckingham, 2004: 146.

12   Plant, 1998: 123.

13   Collard and Contrucci, 1998: 127-128.

14   McDowell, 1991 as reported in Wilson 2005: 346.

15   Plant, 1998: 125.

16   See Biehl, 1991 and Shiva, 1988.

17   Buckingham, 2004: 147.

18   Rose, 1993 and Dodd, 1997.

19   Wilson, 2005: 351.

20   See, for example, Spretnak, 1989 and Daly, 1978.

21   Well articulated in Biehl, 1991.

22   Buckingham, 2004: 147.

23   Wilson, 2005: 333-338.

24   Botetsagias, 2003.

25   Chatzibiros, 1989: 9.

26   Modinos, 1991: 6.

27   Botetsagias, 2003: 79 These cores promoted two kinds of agendas: The peripheral groups were mono-thematic in their concern only for the environment and rather apolitical, wishing to use the FEAO as an umbrella organisation to represent them in a dialogue with the state and other political parties while the groups from the major cities were more politicised, ibid. [28] Paraskevopoulos, 1991: 54. The absence of a massive Greek ecological grass-root movement that would constitute the necessary ground for the corresponding political action was deemed as problematic from the very onset of the establishment of the Federation and its subsequent development.

28   Chatzibiros, 1989: 8-9.

29   Louloudis-Modinos interview, 1989: 23.

30   Diakos, 1990: 60.

31   Modinos, 1991: 6-7.

32   *Eleftherotypia*, 19/04/1990: 9.

33   Schizas, 1989: 12-13. The conferences of the Federation were termed as contests of the 'loudest voice' and full of factionalism by many of those who participated in them, *Politis*, 1989: 10.

34   Quoted in Schizas, 1989: 13.

35   Stevis, 1993.

36   Athanasopoulos-Kalomalos, 1990: 56.

37   Banaszak, 2002.

38 Banaszak, 2002: 2.

39 Connell, 1990 : 523-531.

40 Althousser et al.: 61-66.

41 Touraine, 2002 : 91-92.

42 Althousser et al. : 61-76. 44 Buckingham, 2004: 153.

43 Louloudis-Modinos interview, 1989: 23-25.

What, Then, is Consciousness?

By Fasiku Gbenga

Introduction

Consciousness is one of the ubiquitous phenomena which when subjected to any kind of systematic study and analysis becomes elusive to comprehend, describe and explain. It is in this respect that the kind of puzzlement and difficulty encountered in understanding and defining consciousness is compared with that which is encountered in understanding and defining time. It is said, for example that "in thinking about consciousness, the puzzlement one finds oneself in is rather like St. Augustine's riddle in his contemplations about the nature of time: When no one asked him, he knew what it is; being asked, however, he no longer did."[1] As David Chalmers notes, "consciousness is a fascinating but elusive phenomenon: it is impossible to specify what it is, what it does, or why it evolved."[2] One may, however, wonder why consciousness, something so familiar and commonly close to us, brews problems. Contemporary literature is replete with rigorous attempts inquire what makes consciousness, and what sort of problems it creates. However, these efforts have not yielded the desired result because the object of inquiry is itself opaque. 'What is 'consciousness'?' is a question whose answer is not obvious. Hence, attempts to resolve it result in searching for an unknown object by groping in the dark. The focus of this paper is to elucidate the problem of identifying the object of enquiry in consciousness studies. It identifies and critically discusses the different conceptions of consciousness and draws out the sense in which defining consciousness is really a problem of consciousness.

The general problems of consciousness

What could be regarded as the general problems of consciousness are multifaceted. I would like to categorize some of these problems into two. The first, concerns the epistemological issues on the concept of consciousness. Parts of the problems are to answer the questions: What are the various conceptions of consciousness? How does one distinguish among these conceptions? How does one know that she is conscious? How does one relate this knowledge to others? The second category, concerns the ontological issues about the phenomenon referred to as 'consciousness'. What kinds or forms of phenomena does the concept 'consciousness' refer to? What are the differences among these kinds of phenomena? There is the further problem which is that given some properties of consciousness, consciousness is supposedly a distinct kind of phenomenon, different from matter. Given this supposition, the question is, 'how are we to understand the causal relationships between consciousness and matter and, in particular, the causal relationship between consciousness and the brain?' What are the properties of consciousness? Do these

properties exist? Why does their existence create problems?

Max Velmans identified three fundamental issues that are often regarded as parts of the problems of consciousness. These are: 'what is the function of consciousness? How, for example, does it relate to human information processing?'; 'what forms of matter are associated with consciousness – in particular, what are the neural substrates of consciousness in the human brain?' and; 'what are the appropriate ways to examine consciousness, to discover its nature? Which features can we examine with first-person methods, which features require third-person methods, and how do first-and third-person findings relate to each other?'[3] The issues raised in by Velmans can be grouped into two categories. The first category of issues are about what consciousness does; the functions of consciousness. The second category bothers on the ontology of consciousness; the nature of the phenomenon called 'consciousness'. These issues are embedded in the questions earlier highlighted as the problems of consciousness, and which David Chalmers[4] summed up as the 'easy' and 'hard' problems of consciousness. However, while these issues about the nature of consciousness and what consciousness does are worthy of consideration on their own, it is important that we are clear about what 'consciousness' is. This quest to answer the question – 'What is 'consciousness'?' is at the base of the problems of consciousness. Let us elucidate what this problem entails.

What is 'consciousness'?

'Consciousness', like many other terms, "does not admit of a definition in terms of genus and differentia or necessary and sufficient conditions."[5] The question 'what is 'consciousness'?' is at the base of what are identified as the problems of consciousness in philosophy. There is no generally agreed definition or a set of definitions of 'consciousness' in philosophy and within the diverse fields concerned with consciousness. This is because it is not possible to state the definition of 'consciousness' in terms of 'An X is a Y', where 'X' is the definiendum (genus), and 'Y' is the definiens (differentia, a property). As Max Velmans and others have pointed out, the definition of consciousness is hard to come by, partly due to the fact that consciousness is a global term, but it is contextually defined.[6] This is odd because given that we have "psychological data" about what it is like to be conscious or to have consciousness to serve as the basis for an agreed definition,[7] one expects that definitions of 'consciousness', which include, at least, all examples of the psychological data – properties, features and characteristics – associated with consciousness, would suffice as the definitions of the term. However, until now, the prospects for reaching any single, agreed-upon, theory-independent definition of consciousness appear remote.[8]

Moreover, there is no agreed meaning of 'consciousness'. The concept, 'consciousness', R.J Gennaro observes, is notoriously ambiguous[9] because there are diverse meanings attributed to it. As a result, 'the term means many different things to many different people, and no universally agreed 'core meaning exists;' and, 'it is not even clear whether everyone means the same thing by the term consciousness, even within the bounds of a single discipline'[10]. For instance, Ram Vimal lists and discusses forty diverse meanings attributed to the term[11]; while some of these meanings are only subtly different from one another,

others are mutually incompatible. The forty meanings are grouped into two based on what each of them attributes to consciousness.[12] One group consists of meanings of consciousness that attributed various functions to consciousness. In this case, consciousness is not an entity or a property in the world, but some functions of entities or phenomena that already exist, and to explain it does not involve an expansion of a physical ontology. Consciousness is, thus, defined as a process that emerges from interactions of the brain, the body and the environment; as a result, a report or an outcome of some complex neuro-biological processes.[13] Consciousness is the ability to discriminate stimuli, to report information, to monitor internal states or to control behaviour[14]. The second group consists of definitions of consciousness as an irreducible fundamental mental entity or phenomenon. Consciousness as an entity or a phenomenon, to explain it, requires an expansion or a re-conception of a physical ontology in order to accommodate the new entrant. Hence, 'Consciousness' is defined as 'experience'; as 'something that it is like to be something'[15]; as 'phenomenal experience'[16]; as 'self (subjective or first person experience of subject) or self-awareness denoted by 'I''[17] and; as 'awareness of awareness'[18]. There are fundamental ontological and epistemological issues that ensue in the distinctions among the various meanings attributed to 'consciousness', we shall return to these shortly.

It is important to point out that none of the definitions and or meanings is offered as *the definition* of 'consciousness', rather, the meanings are said to be attributed to the term. To attribute a meaning to a term is to ascribe the meaning to the term, and this is based on assumptions and contexts of the person making the attribution or ascription. This implies that none of the meanings or definitions attributed to 'consciousness' is the meaning or definition of 'consciousness'. This suggests that the quest for the definition of the term, different from what is attributed to the term, is yet to be addressed. As earlier asserted, the consensus view is that everyone knows what it is, but there is no agreement on its definition, and this undefinability of 'consciousness' is taken as one of the problems of consciousness.

However, I think the quest for the definition of 'consciousness' is based on an erroneous view that there must be a generally acceptable definition of 'consciousness'. I do not think that the undefinability of the term 'consciousness' should create an insurmountable problem of consciousness. I accept that one sense of offering a definition of a term is to give its meaning[19]. This may suggest that there is the core meaning of a term which definitions attempt to uncover. But, given the diversity in the definitions of the term 'consciousness', and the fact that there is no agreement about its core meaning, the following are the possible inferences to arrive at: first, that there is no core meaning to seek for; 'the term 'consciousness' means different things to different people'; what passes as a definition of 'consciousness' is dependent on who, when, where and how it is defined. One possible implication of this is that when giving meaning or definition of 'consciousness', we are open to what Robinson calls the "danger of circumscribing nature within the bounds of our own nature"[20], which ultimately confines or cloaks possible discourses of consciousness to the narrow sphere of the definer. This is the point being made in "Consciousness Across Cultures"[21], that different kinds of questions arise when 'consciousness' is defined across cultures. The second inference is that there is the objective meaning of 'consciousness'. In other words, the claim that there is no definition of 'consciousness' is just the fact that we are yet to arrive at a definition that can give an adequate representation of this objective core meaning or, what Vimal calls, optimal definition[22]. The former is not

philosophically enterprising because of its implied contextual relativism, which may not help in proffering solution to the problem at hand. The latter inference assumes the ontology of the objective or the core meaning of 'consciousness', existing out there as parts of the furniture of the universe or as some sort of entities in the Platonic world of forms. This assumption needs to be proven.

An attempt towards providing this proof was offered by Vimal in his attempt at providing a general definition of consciousness which includes most views and the context in which the term 'consciousness' is used results in defining 'consciousness' as "a mental aspect of an entity (system or process), which is a conscious experience, a conscious function, or both, depending on the context."[23] Vimal argues that this definition accommodates most views on consciousness, because any investigator's finding related to consciousness has to be conscious function, conscious experience or both depending on the context of investigation. For example, "if the dominating view is materialist or functionalist, then consciousness is likely to be considered as conscious function. If the dominating view is dualist or idealist, consciousness is more likely to be considered in terms of conscious experience. If the dominating view is dual-aspect, panpsychist, panprotopsychist, panexperimentalist or panprotoexperimentalist, consciousness is likely to be considered as both conscious experience and conscious function."[24] The problem with Vimal's general definition is that what we seek is the definition of 'consciousness', what he presents us with is how the word is used in different contexts. Note that in a particular context, a word could be used to mean or refer to, what is, within that context, taken to be its meaning or referent. This does not imply that the contextual meaning is the core meaning or general definition of the word. Also, if Vimal's definition is further explicated, it would show that it is less general than it claims. For instance, if each context expatiate its conviction of what 'consciousness' should refer to or how the word is to be used, each context would take consciousness to be distinct kinds; then 'upon what common ground is the general definition general?' What general phenomenon is defined, and in what general way has it been defined? So, Vimal's supposed general definition of 'consciousness' fails as core definition of 'consciousness', it is just a collated different senses of 'consciousness' that are derived from the different contexts, and this does not amount to a core definition.

One may, however, wonder whether there is indeed a core meaning of consciousness. One way of justifying the ontology of the core meaning of 'consciousness' is to argue that the objective or core meaning of 'consciousness' is that which everyone knows about the term, but unable to express. This, however, begs the question; it is the ontology of the core meaning that needs to be ascertained. Another possible argument to justify that there is a core meaning of consciousness is that the core meaning of 'consciousness' is a phenomenon that is beyond human comprehension. As a result, definitions of 'consciousness' offered by human beings cannot represent it. This argument merely qualifies the 'core meaning', it does not answer the ontological question about what is the core meaning of 'consciousness' and, whether there is such a phenomenon as parts of the objective fabrics of the world. Without explaining this ontology, the claim that the core meaning is beyond human comprehension still begs the question.

The claim that there is the core meaning of 'consciousness' could be supported with the argument that challenged the assertion that 'consciousness' is ambiguous. As Michael Antony argues, there is a general sense

of 'consciousness' that enjoys widespread use.[25] This is premised on the fact that titles of journals, books, articles, etc, containing the word 'consciousness' in diverse fields suggests that there is a general sense of 'consciousness' that applies to all or most of the titles covered by the term. Moreover, in the diverse titles containing 'consciousness', even if there are different senses of the word, it is not the case that the word simultaneously expresses its varieties of senses or definitions. Thus, Antony agrees with the view that an ambiguous expression 'resists as it were, the simultaneous activation of more than one of its senses.' He further asserts that "occurrences of 'consciousness' within such works typically have the same meaning as in the works' titles. The general sense of 'consciousness' thus begins to appear pervasive indeed."[26] Antony, therefore, concludes that 'consciousness' is not in any sense ambiguous. It is, however, *non sequitor* that because titles in diverse fields containing 'consciousness' have a general sense of consciousness, then there is a general sense of consciousness involved in the different occurrences of 'consciousness'. In fact, it is just because the several occurrences of 'consciousness' in diverse titles across different fields has diverse senses or meanings that make the quest for the universally acceptable definition of 'consciousness' really a problem. Moreover, the different distinctions made even within a particular field also points to the fact that several appearances of 'consciousness' within a field have different senses or meanings. What are distinguished as different kinds of consciousness, are not the meanings or definitions of 'consciousness', but various forms of consciousness. For instance, it is the differences in the various varieties or kinds of consciousness, such as creature consciousness, state consciousness, access consciousness and phenomenal consciousness, transitive consciousness, minimal consciousness, perceptual consciousness, etc, that are distinguished, and it does not follow that because each of the distinct kind of consciousness bear the word 'consciousness' that all the occurrences of the word in the distinctions mean the same thing.

From the above, two possible positions are derivable. The first position is that 'consciousness' has no definition; it could be defined according to the context of its use. Every use of the word 'consciousness' would be correct. But this raises the question about the ontological status of what is being defined: does consciousness exist as an objective phenomenon or consciousness is a subjective phenomenon? Two responses have been offered. On the one hand, the view that consciousness is an objective phenomenon supports the position that there is the core meaning or the real definition of 'consciousness'. This is the position prominently defended by most physicalists who argue that consciousness is just one kind of thing accessed, assessed and described differently. It is also inconformity with the view that consciousness is a spectrum, with different levels, and at each level, different senses or uses of the term 'consciousness' are formed. So, as K. Wilber notes,

each investigator would be correct when speaking about his or her own level and thus all other investigators – plugged in at different levels – would appear to be completely wrong. The controversy would not be cleared up by having all investigators agree with each other, but rather by realizing that all were talking about one spectrum seen from different levels… And of course, they would both be right, because each was working with a different band of the spectrum, and when they realized that, the argument would cease, and the phenomenon…would be understood through a synthesis of all the information gained on each level.[27]

On the other hand, the view that consciousness is not an objective phenomenon is reflected in the dualist definition of 'consciousness' as a distinct property; and that consciousness is known differently from the way other property in the world is known. These two responses summarized the two positions in Philosophy of Mind in response to, first, the ontological question: 'does consciousness exist as a distinct substance or properties of the world or consciousness is nothing more than a substance or a property of the physical world?' and, second, the epistemological questions: 'are the properties of consciousness knowable?' 'By which method or means are the properties of consciousness studied or known?' In acknowledging this problem, Max Velmans posits that

it should come as no surprise that such diverse assumptions about the nature of consciousness and how we can study it have created divisions between research communities that can be difficult to cross. There can, for example, be no point of convergence and certainly no consensus between researchers who take the existence of conscious phenomenology to be both self-evident and ontologically primary, with those who give no credence to that phenomenology at all. Given this diversity, some consciousness researchers have doubted that a systematic study of "consciousness" as such, is even possible.[28]

The quest to determine which of these two positions is correct is also a problem of consciousness.

The second position is that the quest for the core meaning or real definition of 'consciousness' as the response to 'what is 'consciousness'?' may be unwarranted. This is because, on the one hand, it is difficult to justify the assumption that there is the core meaning or real definition of 'consciousness' to be sought for. This explains the reason that the quest for definition or meaning of 'consciousness' continues despite sustained and burgeoning efforts to arrive at one. Also, many of the definitions and meanings of 'consciousness' are derived from the several theories developed in response to various problems of consciousness. Since these theories are quite different, it is expected that there would be varieties of definitions and meanings attributed to 'consciousness'.[29] Therefore, the elusiveness of the core meaning or real definition is either because there is no such thing as consciousness or it exists but there can be no agreement on what it is. On the other hand, it could be argued that the undefinability of 'consciousness' does not create any barrier for the continued and sustained research or discourses on consciousness. This is premised on the view that "definitions need not be final for research to begin; It is enough that definitions be sufficiently similar for different investigators to be able to agree that they are investigating the same thing"[30]. If this argument can be sustained, then it could be argued that agreement or otherwise on the real definition or core meaning of 'consciousness' is not as important as the phenomena which the different uses of the word designate. Are investigators of consciousness convinced that they are investigating the same thing? I share Sloman's doubt on this. He argues that "people who discuss consciousness delude themselves in thinking that they know what they are talking about...it is not just one thing but many things muddled together—rather like our multifarious uses of 'energy' (intellectual energy, music with energy, high energy explosion, etc.)."[31] Anders Sogaard and Stine Osterskov Sogaard reiterated the point differently. To them, consciousness studies include a variety of different topics that may not be easy to reconcile, so, seeking a definitive definition that will encompass all the topics may be difficult to earn. Also, the Sogaards argue that the claim that there is no definition of consciousness is based on the erroneous assumption that there is

only one kind of consciousness, which 'consciousness' designates. This assumption is erroneous because 'people use the word 'consciousness' to refer to different concept all the time'; hence, 'there is no reason to agree on just one definition' of 'consciousness'[32]. The nature of consciousness being investigated is quite varied along distinct perspectives, orientations, theories, positions, schools of thoughts, disciplines, etc.

What derives from the two positions is that what is necessary in addressing the question: 'what is 'consciousness'?' is that there is an agreement on the object of discourse. In this respect, the question 'what is 'consciousness'?' would not be understood as asking for a strict or a definitive definition of 'consciousness', but for an account of the phenomena that the term is used to designate. It is on this basis that research and inquiries about consciousness can go on from diverse levels, contexts and perspectives without further problem. It may then be argued that the ambiguity of 'consciousness' is not about its meaning or the sense attributed to it, because there is no agreed phenomenon which the term designates given the level, context or perspective it is being used, but about its referent. This, however, would not be a problem peculiar to the word 'consciousness'. Referential ambiguity is a problem clearly articulated by Gottlob Frege.

Frege, in "On Sense and Reference",[33] asserts that a sign, (a word) has both sense and reference. The sense of a word contains the mode of presentation of that which is designated by the word. A referent is that which is designated.[34] For Frege, a word has a sense which is a conceptual content of the word. There is a definite reference or object that corresponds to the sense. Whereas the sense of a word picks out a particular thing in the world, this same thing can also be picked out by several other words. Corresponding to each of these words are distinct senses. Since a thousand different words that have distinct senses can refer to a particular object, it means that there is no direct relation between words and the referents they pick out in the world. This implies that the relation between words and their referents is mediated by the senses of the words. Hence, for Frege, sense provides some kind of connecting link between a word and its referent. In fact, it must be noted that for Frege, there are situations in which a word has a sense and there is no corresponding referent.[35] This shows that for Frege, first, the relation between a word or a name and its referent is not a necessary relation. Second, words are not essential properties of an object. Again, since several words with distinct senses can refer to a particular object or to no object at all, then it means that no object has its word rigidly fixed nor is the reference of a word rigidly fixed. What derives from this is that 'consciousness' needs not have a definitive sense and referent, and the fact that there is no such sense is demonstrated by the distinct in exhaustive meanings (senses) attributed to the word; also, the fact that there is no rigid referent of 'consciousness' is demonstrated by different kinds of phenomena the word is used to referred to.[36] There is the possibility of conflating the meaning of 'consciousness' with the phenomena it is used to refer to. This error is evident when Antony mistakenly points at different phenomena, which writers like Ned Block[37], David Rosenthal[38], David Armstrong[39], and others, use the term to designate as what the writers use the word to mean.[40] As seen in Frege, the sense (meaning) of a word is one thing, the reference (the object of reference) of the word is another.

Conclusion

What would contribute to a clear definition of the problem of consciousness in philosophy is not to interpret the question 'what is 'consciousness'?' as a quest to engage in semantics of 'consciousness' but to identify the phenomena that the word is used to designate. In other words, I join Antony in dissenting Quine's call for semantic ascent[41], i.e., focusing on expressions used to refer to philosophically perplexing phenomena instead of the phenomena themselves. Although, as an objection to this conclusion, the classical position defended by James William could be raised. The position is that 'consciousness' is the name of a nonentity, refers to or stands for nothing concrete, but a function and should be discarded. William's conviction is that 'Consciousness' "is the name of a nonentity, and has no right to a place among first principles. Those who still cling to it are clinging to a mere echo, the faint rumor left behind by the disappearing 'soul' upon the air of philosophy."[42]

However, against this position is the common assumption in the consciousness study that the term 'consciousness' has a referent, either concrete or function; but the problem is that there is no agreed or one and only referent of the term. It is on the ground of this disagreement that the divergent positions raise on the ontological and epistemological questions about 'consciousness', such as 'What is consciousness?' 'Does consciousness exist?' 'What are the essential properties of consciousness?' 'Is consciousness knowable and by what means?' become philosophically interesting.

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1   Guzeldere G. (1997) "Introduction: The Many Faces of Consciousness: A Field Guide." In Ned Block, Owen Flanagan and Guven Guzeldere. (eds.) *The Nature of Consciousness* Cambridge, Mass.: MIT

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2   Chalmers David, *The Conscious Mind: In search of a Fundamental Theory.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 3

3   Max Velmans, "How to Separate Conceptual Issues from Empirical One in the Study of Consciousness." *Progress in Brain Research,* (Armsterdam: Elsevier, Vol. 168, 2008), pp.1-2

4   David Chalmers, *The Conscious Mind.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. Chalmers popularized the distinction between the easy and hard problems of consciousness.

5   John Searle. "The Problem of Consciousness". In Antti Revonsuo and Matti Kamppinen (eds.) *Consciousness in Philosophy and Cognitive Neuroscience,* (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc. 1994), p.93. More important, the problem of defining 'consciousness' has been, and is still, a subject of philosophic controversy. See, for example, Hartley Buur Alexander, "The Concept of Consciousness", *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods*, Vol. 1, No. 5 (March 3, 1904), pp. 119-124; B.H Bode, "Realistic Conceptions of Consciousness", *The Philosophical Review,* Vol. 20, No. 3, (May 1911), pp. 265-279, and for a more recent discussion on defining 'consciousness', see, *Journal of Consciousness Studies,* Vol. 16, No. 5, 2009.

6   See Max Velmans, "How to Separate Conceptual Issues from Empirical One in the Study of Consciousness." *Progress in Brain Research,* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, Vol. 168, 2008), p. 4, and Alfredo Pereira and Hans Ricke, "What is Consciousness? Towards a Preliminary Definition" *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 5, 2009, pp. 28-45 for arguments that definitions are inherently contextual and some examples of definitions of 'consciousness' across disciplines, epochs and regions of the world. No lists of definitions can be exhaustive; therefore, I shall not attempt to provide catalogues of definitions of 'consciousness'.

7   Max Velmans, "How to Define Consciousness – and How not to Define Consciousness", *Journal of Consciousness Studies.* Vol. 16, No. 5, 2009, p.139, italics mine.

8   Rimal, "On the Quest of Defining Consciousness", *Mind and Matter,* Vol.8, No.1, 2010, p. 93

9   R.J. Gennaro. "Consciousness and Concepts". *Journal of Consciousness Studies* Vol. 14, No 9-10, 2007, p. 2. The view that 'consciousness' is ambiguous is eminently represented in the literature. See David Chalmers, "Facing Up to the Problem of Consciousness", *Journal of Consciousness Studies* Vol.2, No.3, p. 201 Hartley Buur Alexander, "The Concept of Consciousness", *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods.* Vol. 1. No. 5, March 1904, p. 118; On the other hand, a contrary view that 'consciousness' is not ambiguous has also been expressed. See A.V. Antony, "Is 'Consciousness' Ambiguous?". *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 2, 2001, pp.19-44.

10 Max Velmans, "How to Define Consciousness – and How not to Define Consciousness", *Journal of Consciousness Studies.* Vol. 16, No. 5, 2009, p.139 and; Guven Guzeldere. "The Many Faces of Consciousness: A Field Guide." In Ned Block, Owen Flanagan and Guven Guzeldere. (eds.) *The Nature of Consciousness* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997), p. 2. Crick and C. Koch, "Consciousness and Neuroscience", *Cerebral Cortex,* Vol. 8, No. 2, 1998, pp.97-107

11 Ram Vimal, "Meanings Attributed to the term Consciousness: An Overview", *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 5, 2009, pp.9-27. In fact, a whole edition, volume 16, of the *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, addresses the problem of definition of consciousness. The consensus among contributors to the edition is that there is no *the* definition of consciousness which is generally acceptable to everyone.

Chris Nunn, the editor of the edition, suggests a default meaning of 'consciousness', which would serve a pragmatic purpose of at least making a distinction between conscious and unconscious. I, however, doubt any pragmatic success will be recorded if two people that use 'consciousness' have different conceptions of the word.

12 This classification reflects, according to Vimal, the six classes which Chalmers categorized the most important views on the metaphysics of consciousness. Vimal divided the six classes into two groups using the criteria of function and experience. Details of the implications of Chalmers classification in this dissertation shall be shown soon.

13 These, according to Vimal, summarized the definitions offered by himself and others such as B.J. Baars, G.M. Edelman, William James, and John R. Searle.

14 David Chalmers, "Consciousness and its Place in Nature". In S. Stich and F. Warfield (eds.) *Blackwell Guide to Philosophy of Mind*. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2003).

15 Thomas Nagel, "What it is Like to be a Bat?" In *Mortal Questions.*(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), pp. 165-180

16 Ned Block, "Two Neural Correlates of Consciousness", *Trends in Cognitive* Sciences, 9, (2), 2005, pp.47-52

17 Bruzzo, A. A., and Vimal, R. L. P. "Self: An adaptive pressure arising from self-organization, chaotic dynamics, and neural Darwinism." *Journal of Integrative Neuroscience*, Vol. 6, No. 4, 2007, pp. 541-566; Globus, G. G. "Self, Cognition, Qualia and World in Quantum Brain Dynamics." *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 1998, pp. 34-52; and MacGregor, R. J., and Vimal, R. L. P. "Consciousness and the Structure of Matter." *Journal of Integrative Neuroscience*, Vol.7, No. 1, pp. 75-116.

18 K.R. Rao, "Two Faces of Consciousness: A Look at Eastern and Western Perspectives", *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 5 (3), 1998, pp.309-327

19 Richard Robinson, *Definition*, Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1972, p. 12

20 Richard Robinson, *Definition*, Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1972, p. 6

21 This is the theme of the journal *Mind and Matter*, Volume 6, Issue 2, 2008, pp. 143-259. The point clearly deducible from the different essays in the edition of the journal is that there is no core definition or meaning of 'consciousness', it is a word that has meanings across cultures. The same point was obvious in Max Velmans's attempt at cataloguing the different meanings of 'consciousness' across epochs and cultures. See Max Velmans, "How to Define Consciousness – and How not to Define Consciousness", *Journal of Consciousness Studies.* Vol. 16, No. 5, 2009, p.139

22 See Vimal RLP. "On the Quest of Defining Consciousness." *Mind and Matter,* Vol. 8, No. 1, 2010, p. 93-122. Vimal, in this essay, notes "that the term "optimal" implies that a set of alternatives have been considered and one of them is chosen as the best according to a given set of parameters", p. 99

23 Ram Vimal, "On the Quest of Defining Consciousness", *Mind and Matter,* Vol. 8, No. 1, 2010, pp. 93-122.

24 Ram Vimal, "On the Quest of Defining Consciousness", *Mind and Matter,* Vol. 8, No. 1, 2010, p. 103.

25 Michael V. Antony, "Is 'Consciousness' Ambiguous?", *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, Volume 8, Number 2, 2001, pp.19-44

26 Michael V. Antony, "Is 'Consciousness' Ambiguous?", *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, Volume 8,

Number 2, 2001, p.22

27 K. Wilber, *The Spectrum of Consciousness*, Wheaton, Ill: Theosophical Publishing House, 1977, p.17

28 Max Velmans, "How to Define Consciousness – How not to Define Consciousness", *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 5, 2009, p. 141

29 See Max Velmans, "How to Define Consciousness – How not to Define Consciousness", *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 5, 2009, pp. 139-156, for a catalogue of the global theories about consciousness, and how this inflate or aggravate the problem of defining 'consciousness'.

30 Patrice Terrier, "What is Consciousness?", *Psyche*, Vol. 5, No. 19, 1999, p.2 This view is also re-echoed in Max Velmans, "How to Define Consciousness – How not to Define Consciousness", *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 5, 2009, p. 143

31 A. Sloman, "Developing Concepts of Consciousness", *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*. Vol. 14, No.4, 1991, pp. 694-695.

32 Anders Sogaard and Stine Osterskov Sogaard, "On Definitions of Consciousness", *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 5, pp. 46-53

33 Frege, Gottlob, "On Sense and Reference" in Peter Geach and Max Black, eds. *Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege,* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1970), pp. 56-78

34 Frege, "On Sense and Reference", p.57

35 Frege, Gottlob, "On Sense and Reference" in Peter Geach and Max Black, eds. *Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege,* p.58

36 The fact that there is no single sense of 'consciousness' is obvious from the heterogeneity of senses attributed to the word. See Ram Vimal, "Meanings Attributed to the term Consciousness: An Overview", *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 5, 2009, pp.9-27. David Armstrong's assertion that "it is not even clear that the word "consciousness" stands for just one sort of entity, quality, process, or whatever", indicates that there is no referent of 'consciousness'. See David Armstrong, "What is Consciousness". In Ned Block, Owen Flanagan and Guven Guzeldere, eds., *The Nature of Consciousness* Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press,1997, p. 722

37 Ned Block's use of 'consciousness' to refer to phenomenal consciousness, access consciousness, monitoring consciousness, reflective consciousness, self consciousness is found in several of his writings such as Ned Block, "Evidence Against Epiphenomenalism". *Behavioural and Brain Sciences,* Vol. 14, 1991, pp.670-672; Ned Block, "Review of Dennett: Consciousness Explained". *Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 4, 1993, pp.181-93; Ned Block, "Consiousness". In S. Guttenplan (Ed.), *A Companion to Philosophy of Mind*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1994,

38 David Rosenthal distinguished among different kind of consciousness that 'consciousness' is used to designate. Some of these are state consciousness, creature consciousness, transitive consciousness, introspective consciousness, etc. See David Rosenthal, "Concepts and Definitions of Consciousness". In William P. Banks (ed.) *Encyclopedia of Consciousness*. Amsterdam: Elservier Science Limited, 2009, pp.159-169; David Rosenthal, "A Theory of Consciousness". In N. Block, O. Flanagan, and G. Guzeldere (Eds.), *The Nature of Consciousness*. Cambridge, M.A: MIT Press, 1997, pp.729-753

39 D. Armstrong, "What is Consciousness?" In N. Block, O. Flanagan, and G. Guzeldere (Eds.), *The Nature of Consciousness*. Cambridge, M.A: MIT Press, 1997, pp.721-728

40 Michael V. Antony, "Is 'Consciousness' Ambiguous?", *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, Volume 8,

Number 2, 2001, p.19

41 See W.V.O. Quine, *Word and Object.* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1960), p. 56

42 James William, "Does 'Consciousness' Exist?" *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology, and Scientific Methods*, Vol. 1, p.447.

We Have Already Happened.

by Malreddy Pavan Kumar and Niven Kumar

The afternoon we were told that it happened, N. and I bundled into the York Lanes aimlessly. But the incident, a cosmic world apart from the commonplacency of our waking lives, withheld from us the flesh of the story. "The TV is mocking me", said N. in a trembling tone with the abjection of coming face to face with one's own uncanny double. I looked at the television set, its silence, blank stare, its huge eye mocking us with the images of two columns sinking into the bowels of the earth so noiselessly and effortlessly, images which were sequestered, hidden from us in the box of infinite symbols, like an Aleph. Its big fanged screen which seemed to disperse into molecules, millions of tiny circular fiber-optic molecules, each with an assigned color and shade all forming an image, like an impressionist painter's palette, millions and millions of deft touches, dots, skillfully positioned, a seemingly haphazard collage of colors.

Technological impressionism.

And they beamed these images across the world into every home, shop window, every distant attic, every street corner, wherever there was a television set. These images played and replayed themselves till, long after we saw them, they lingered in our minds, like the spirits of the days gone by which hover and watch over what we breathe and see and do and think with the envy of scorned lovers, their almost ruthless repetition in our minds compelled us to believe in its real-ness, as real as if we had been there when the incident happened. The event: an abstracted, image-based, fiber-optic construction of an incident. Are we to believe that the images that had been fed through our television sets actually did happen? Of course, like Descartes, we can only believe in their validity because we cannot disprove them.

The camera gave shots of the event from different angles. There were overhead shots of the falling columns, from a helicopter, perhaps, or even from the top of another building. Behind each shot was a need to get to the every essence of the event. Unrelentingly we were being fed a constant stream of perspectives. There were close-up shots of the firemen, the City Mayor, live spectators of the event, some of whom carried their children over their shoulders, in their arms, some others had tears in their eyes, their faces contorted in sheer anger which, one suspected, could, at any second, turn into anguished incomprehension. Such shots, alternated, first overhead, then close-up, then over head again, all in an attempt to provide the spectator with a real-life picture of the event, to make it as real for the viewer as it was for the participant of the fiery drama. People swarmed all over. The noise was deafening, it seemed, for the masquerading journalist strained to give voice to the image at that moment. Only the atthat-moment had been abstracted from time and space. It was ephemeral, existing, happening at every place and in every time-zone all

at once. In that one moment, the bellboy in hotel Crown Plaza and the black street kind in Harlem and the Dalailama were one, conjoined by that at-that-moment, a shared humanity made palpable through the "live" coverage of the tumbling icons of the free world. Both N. and I were forged into a voyage of anti-history. In a sense, that one word, live, defied all our notions of time. It defied time as a continuum, in effect, mocked and put an end to it. For in that one moment, everything we ever were, everything we ever had been, everything we ever wanted to be, were rendered meaningless, mere indulgences.

Close-ups of some of the onlookers showed them crying and we, sitting on the other side of the spectacle cried along with them. Our tears, however, were of a different nature. Indeed one sees differently in different realms, and the meanings and realities we perceive also differ. Their tears were the tears shed from the sudden realizations we have when we are at the brink of history. Our tears were shed from the realization that we were nothing in the greater scheme of things, that, like the images we saw, we were meaningless, cut off from the living. Yet, for N. and I, these televised images had special significance. We were being carried through a passage of time-space-wrap sorts, pushed into another realm, to see the world through the eyes of strangers. It struck us, then, that we were all caught within a prism. Only this time, instead of diffracted light, there were diffracted images and meanings. In a sense, we were all prisoners of a way of seeing. The images being projected belonged to a brand of morality which was just another way of seeing. Could we have seen the images of two falling towers, smoke bellowing from its flanks and its roots, could we have seen the buffeting specks of those who jumped out of the windows, could we have seen the ashen faces of those on the ground, their faces turned skywards, smokewards, could we have seen these images through the eyes of a cold bystander? What was evident from the moment N. and I saw the first scripted images – for they reeked of an immense staging, a Nabokovian re-enactment of a beheading, a Pirandellian unmasking of a pretender to the German throne, or a cataclysmic dreamscape of a nation being obliterated on independence day – was not the immediacy of the event, that is was happening now, just then, at-that-moment. What was evident to us was the birth of a new form of justice. No longer was it the era of dialogue and greater humanity which believed in itself and the powers of Reason. The Age of Reason, so pompously and grandiloquently achieved because of the mad genius of Adolf Hitler had now given way to an uncompromising revolt of perception. What we were witnessing was the birth of the age of redemption. With hands to their mouths, tears streaming down their cheeks, everyone watching the unfolding magic trick, the disappearing act, a David Copperfield extravaganza, was mouthing the self-same questions – What do we do now? What is going to happen? What is to be done? Nikolai Chernyshevsky's immortalized question, which precipitated a whole national revolution in 1917 was again unleashing the terror of righteousness. The images were no longer mere images. They were now stimuli, spurs cutting into the flanks of a hurtling steed, steered by an headless horseman into the depths of a dark, dense forest. We were caught in a morality that required a dignified reply to the catastrophe. We could not turn away from this, avert our eyes, go back to our coffees, our books, our next holiday, our pet charities, our Sunday arts bazaars, in short our little palliative doses of simple everydayness. That was denied us Now as we both sat there glued to the horrific spectacle, the smoke, the as-we-were-watching urgency like a noose around our necks, we felt implicated in this human cataclysm, guilty by association. For, where now are we to place our allegiances – on those who will have died in vain, or for those who will have fought to save the honour of those who died in vain? Could we forget these images? Would we be allowed to? Suddenly, the crime

that had been perpetrated was now ours too. The television screen was like a chain, heavy and unwieldy, that tethered us to a similar fate of redemption. These images would long remain with us as badges of our humanity, as marks of our membership to that family of civilized beings, for weren't we human because we remembered? Were we not civilized because we erected monuments to mark the passing of our heroes and comrades? Were we not sane because we were all guilty of the same mistakes, perpetuated over a lifetime of erroneous ways of seeing? And now another crime, another mark, another notch in the bark, another turn of the screw. The history books were already being written. I could already hear the scratch of the scribe's pen on parchment, like Kafka's harrow upon the back of the voiceless. The more we stared at the screen, the more resoundingly did we feel the guilt, the denser the silence between us, the more profound the proximity between ourselves and the event. A strange feeling of vertigo gripped us. For as we were now condemned to remember for all eternity, always running at the heels of this bi-pillared image, which was always already receding, the abyss gaping like a Vesuvius, almost as if the event has already happened. Every look N. gave me was an indictment, a needle scratching on a parchment of guilty skin.

N. began to cry, her tears streaming down in torrents across her brown cheeks. I turned to look at her and saw she had become pale, ghastly pale. But I could say or do nothing to allay her moment. I began to cry. But even as I cried, I could not understand my tears. I saw then in these televised images, a sort of capitulation, a suicide which, for Camus, was nothing but a collaboration of the forces that oppressed every sense of our reality.

N. and I walked through the York Lanes. *Good morning*, some faces smiled to us; *have a nice day*, still others exclaimed after us; *Beautiful day, isn't it?* came the earnest cry from all sides. Quietly, we walked, side by side, and yet, so irrevocably estranged. The gardens radiated their many faces, the sidewalks were remarkable signatures of humankind's common bonds. On we continued to walk, a police patrol car pulled up alongside us, slowly, prowling, like a shark, its terrifying fin slicing the taut surface of the water. We glared at the two burly men in the car. They glared back at us from behind their dark eyes. *You folks ok?* one of them asked. We nodded our heads silently. *Can't be too careful these days*, he said, a trace of a smile emerging from the corners of his mouth, and then slowly, the car moved off, the eagle eyes of the two policemen taking every detail in. Every movement was recorded. A man was showing his neighbour his gun collection while from the depths of his fortified basement came the gleeful shrieks of their children shooting bad people on the playstation. Somewhere else, a woman was hoisting the Flag of Stars high up on its shiny pole in the front lawn, its fluttering shadow shading the little girl who was cloyingly hugging her little pet dog. Then came the war! Everyone was fighting the war, children, fathers, like a witness to our one-ness, our common humanity, for there too, in the Land of Torpid Creatures, the soldiers, dressed in their latest desert wear, fought for the glory of their fallen god, their twin-headed totem, their fallen Quetzlcoatl.

We walked, and walked, until we were regaled by the deathly sounds of heavy traffic. There it was, at last, the mundane, the routine ebb and flow of sounds, smog, blaring horns, the daily struggle for peace, the constant movement in order to stand still or any other state this confusion we call life. This was the physicality we were looking for, a total refusal, a denial of the Borgesian Kingdom of Mirrors.

As we watch, a man battled against the oncoming traffic in order to cross the busy road, his body coiled, ready to spring to life at the first sign of a lull. A woman, waiting for the lights to turn green had to hold down her skirt lest she be exposed by the sudden gust of wind. Another woman, also at the lights, was anxiously glancing at a man who seemed intent on her. Such was the physical reality of the living. This was a realm divorced from the rubric of the image-event.

Was I being carried aloft by my idealism? Was I indulging in the physicality of this un-eventful realm? Perhaps, the mocking blank stare of the screen still hovered over me. Throughout our walk into the city, N. had been extremely quiet. Now, in dismay, I watched as N. scrambled her way towards a television set. I was compelled to follow her. We needed life, needed to feel the palpable essence of our bodies, our connectedness with the world and its many forms. People, noise, smells, the burning tumult of heaving bodies.

By now, the outer limits of our bodies seemed to disappear, and we were beginning to lose substance, to dissolve, become one with the insistent sublimity of a reflected truth. Deep within myself, I could sense the slow burning of meaning, and within those depths, like Meursault's dark wind, I felt a rising fear for my own life. I understood then, that the possibility of my own unreality was a real one, that somewhere, somehow, my own complicity with this world – I walked, paid my taxes, watched the news on television, went to the cinema, in short, lived a life of modern conveniences – had made me, made N. an Everyman. We were Everyman, and no-man. The images that constituted our human-ness were everywhere around us – the image of a woman reading a book over a cup of coffee in a Café, the car that will take us to work, the bowl of cereal we consumed every morning, our ideas of right and wrong, our unanimous indignation of the occasional madman at the marketplace. *People*, *noises*, *smells*, *the burning tumult of heaving bodies*. Now, more than ever, we craved for a glimpse of these.

Then the war, the soldiers, and their manoeuvres, the glazed looks of Bearded Men, their naïve mouths articulating silence. We moved away and walked as fast and as far away from the shop window as possible. Suddenly, we began to find television sets all along that one street alone. In shop windows, in the convenience store in the corner, in the banks as you queued for your turn, in the barbershop. There was no escape. People, who a second ago were rushing past the window, stopped to look at the images on the screens, spellbound for a few minutes, listening, looking, at times laughing, or shaking their heads, or else, staring blankly, then, just as suddenly as they had stopped, moved on again. All seemed to be driven by an insidious motion, like the planets compelled to keep to their orbital tracks. A man in a dark suit stopped in mid-stride to study what had always seemed to me to be nonsensical figures, a jumble of numbers, sequences, trends, projections, like some secret code, an algorithm of prosperity. He called someone on his mobile, barked into it some curt instructions, took one more look at the screen and then moved on into the sea of moving backs.

N. laughingly said, "a pit-stop of meaning." I moved along, exasperated by her untimely witticism, pulling her with me. My eyes scoured the street for more signs of the palpable. The old street urchin rummaging through the rubbish bins, the averted eyes of passers-by, the man behind the counter at the news-stand scrutinizing the teenage boy who hovered around the coca-cola bottles – these things made me happy,

made me feel whole, sane, entrenched in a community of sensuous bodies.

As I moved along, I was beginning to feel that all this corporeal immediacy was a lie, a mirage, or a hologram, an empty kernel from which issued mere images. The proliferation of TV sets in one street alone was disconcerting, for it meant the slow and steady demise of difference. Image and experience were being slowly driven together. The union of this unholy alliance gave rise to the Event, the Spectacle, the Grand Parade of Apparitions. I had to believe in the sanctity of the Real, because I could feel myself being sucked into the vortex of desert landscapes and burning totems and shadowy figures in Khaki, into a realm of the Mirror, the eternal kingdom of refracted meaning. If nothing existed outside the unreality that surrounded us, if everything we did – all our corporeal existences, the sinking towers, Bearded Men, and the nameless other events that would come after us – had already happened, then, our physical existences were no more significant than the homes of nameless.

The great David Copperfield act was complete. Our new existence lay not in acts of kindness or in the daily physical grind of living, but in the redemptive morality of the event. Looking at the TV images, I knew that N., I, and the event never really happened, that we had always already happened.

Hollywood Ain't No Place for the Radical Kind: Observations on the Academy Awards, 2010.

By Robert Goff

Slumdogs and Englishmen: An Introduction

…I come from a country and a civilization that given (sic) the universal word. That word is preceded by silence, followed by more silence. That word is "Om." So I dedicate this award to my country. Thank you, Academy, this is not just a sound award, this is history being handed over to me… **Resul Pookutty, accepting the Award for Achievement in Sound Mixing (for *Slumdog Millionaire*).[1]**

Slumdog Millionaire won as Best Motion Picture and scooped up several other awards at the televised Academy Awards ceremony in 2009. Danny Boyle's film was significant in terms of Hollywood recognition of a Bollywood-style film without stars and also largely without Caucasian actors. The film drew attention to the "new" hi-tech India of computer programmers and westernized popular culture, while still acknowledging that country's continuing poverty. On that evening, along with the millions of TV viewers, I watched as the vast stage of the Shrine auditorium was suddenly filled by throngs of cute "slumdog" kids, along with dark-skinned and colorfully dressed adults, crowding out the usual legion of anonymous Caucasian producers in Armani suits. The visually chaotic sight of multicultural and unrehearsed rejoicing was unusual for American television—and quite extraordinary for the annual Oscar ceremony—making it very difficult to find fault with the film's success.[2]

I didn't think, however, that the film's success was historic or signaled any great change in the American film industry's hegemony over the rest of the world nor did it usher in any aesthetic or stylistic break-through. Like previous big winners, such as *Out of Africa* and *The English Patient*, *Slumdog Millionaire* with its exotic locale and romantic undertones had audience appeal at the time but has since created no lasting interest in Indian culture. I actually found this much-feted film dull and conventional and I could not muster the enthusiasm to write my annual commentary analyzing the televised ceremony.[3] I would have been more energized if I could have taken a very critical stance against the film and to voice some misgivings at the idea of bringing Hollywood and Bollywood together. While I could have easily

commented on the controversy over the post-film treatment of the Indian kids, and elaborated on my view of fellow Englishman, Danny Boyle, as a slick and opportunist director, I realized that it would have been churlish to do so in the face of the Academy's unmistakable endorsement and the evident worldwide popularity of *Slumdog Millionaire*. Also, Barack Obama had recently taken office and as a permanent resident in the United States since 1981 I was enthusiastic that the political climate was at last shifting in a progressive direction. It also seemed like a new era of global harmony could be beginning. Who would want to mess with that? I eventually dropped the idea of writing anything at all.

Things change in a year. The war in Afghanistan had expanded and American cultural hegemony returned with James Cameron re-crowned as "King of the World" with the new technological attraction of 3-D. Well, not quite! Although *Avatar* has outdone *Titanic* at the box office by far, *The Hurt Locker* actually won for Best Picture and this year's ceremony, unlike last year's monolithic triumph of a single film, aroused some of my slumbering critical faculties while confounding my prophetic intuitions. I had mistakenly expected *Avatar* to sweep up most of the awards. In fact, I only guessed thirteen out of twenty-three of the twenty-four categories (I abstained from voting in one category). This is not a very good average. But I'm less interested in the success of my predictions than in interpreting what happens on the broadcast from a political/cultural studies perspective and this year's show gave me more opportunity to be openly critical than 2009. Predicting winners is nevertheless part of trying to understand the cultural politics behind the awards.

Part I: Dramas Over Documentaries and Friendly Foreigners

I want to thank the Academy for not considering Na'vi a foreign language.

Juan José Campanella, director of Best Foreign Language Film.

The Documentary Short win for *Music by Prudence* provided one of the memorable moments of the evening when a white middle-aged female producer who seemed to appear out of nowhere rudely interrupted the African-American male director during his acceptance speech. Producer Elinor Burkett just burst in on his speech saying "Let the woman talk …" and then continued on with her own speech, one that highlighted the African band as the subject of the film. Apparently, as I found out later from a website, Burkett wanted the film to be about the band while the director Roger Ross Williams focused on Prudence, a handicapped band member. Burkett had left the film but her name was still connected to it and she obviously got admitted to the ceremony. Williams managed not to lose his cool and pointed to Prudence who was shown in a wheelchair in the audience. In his backstage interview, he said this about Burkett: "I own the film. She has no claim whatsoever. She has nothing to do with the movie. She just ambushed me. I was sort of in shock."[4] This incident came early in the show and seemed a very visible sign that fundamental conflicts exist beneath the glittering surface of this televised ceremony.

The Documentary Feature winners also provided some spectacle when they got to the stage. Their film, *The Cove*, was about stopping the illegal hunting of dolphins in Japan, and Ric O'Barry, who appears in the film, dramatically held a large sign above his head that read "Text DOLPHIN to 44144" just behind the producer, Fisher Stevens, who gave the acceptance speech. Stevens praised O'Barry in his speech, grandiosely announcing: "….my hero, Ric O'Barry, who was not only a hero to this species, but to all species." O'Barry had trained the dolphins for the *Flipper* series and later became an advocate for dolphins held in captivity. His participation in the film may have attracted some of the many show business people who backed the film—Louie Psihoyos, the director, read a very long list, including several famous names, to the backstage camera and mentioned that the idea of the film began in producer Norman Lear's home. First-time director Psihoyos must have had the right connections to get the backing of so many rich Hollywood insiders and perhaps their influence also translated into Academy votes.

It was once rumored that the award for Documentary Feature was selected according to the whims of influential Hollywood voters, and, for instance, films related to the Holocaust—of whatever quality—often won because of the large Jewish presence in Hollywood.[5] This year, it seemed to me, the Documentary Feature award went to a director because he had Hollywood connections. For a few years recently this had not apparently been the case, when the Documentary Feature Oscar has been awarded for skill and also for tackling politically challenging subjects; veteran documentarians, Michael Moore and Errol Morris, had each won the award in recent years. *Bowling for Columbine* and *The Fog of War* were more controversial films than many past winners in this category. This year, the choice seemed to be made neither on the basis of the director's skill (when compared with some of the other films nominated in this category) nor on the basis of the film's willingness to take on a contentious subject (as the plight of the dolphins seemed a less debatable cause than the subjects of some of the other nominated films). My choice for winner was *Food, Inc*, a film about the shocking corporate practices of the American food industry. The director had extensive experience in making documentaries including four films for the PBS series *The American Experience*. I would also have liked *The Most Dangerous Man in America: Daniel Ellsberg and the Pentagon Papers* to win. Its director had previously made a TV film about conscientious objectors in WWII. I was excited to see Ellsberg in the audience. An award for Best Documentary Feature for a film about this great peace activist would have joined two other important documentaries on Vietnam to win in this category: Peter Davis' *Hearts and Minds* won in 1974 and *The Fog of War*, Errol Morris's probing interview film with former Defense Secretary Robert McNamara, in 2003. Instead, *The Cove* seemed to be selected not on its merits but upon the basis of the strength of the director's network of friends and acquaintances.

If the award for Best Documentary Feature was disappointing this year, the Oscar for Best Foreign Language film was not only disappointing but also, for the second year running, a seemingly inexplicable choice. The Japanese film *Departures* won last year but was judged by several movie critics as an inferior film and I, probably along with many, had not heard of it or its director. It was barely released after it won and lasted one week in Boston where I missed it. This year I had expected the French film, *The Class*, to be the winner as this film has already won Palme D'or at Cannes earlier in 2008 and was made by a director who, I thought, had made some great films. I've followed the career of Laurent Cantet since his

first film, *Human Resources*, and felt that all of his work, including *The Class*, examines urgent contemporary issues, particularly in the work place. This year, *The White Ribbon* had won the Golden Globe for Best Foreign Film and, with *A Prophet*, had won the top prizes at Cannes. Both of these lauded films were nominated by the Academy but ignored in favor of an obscure film from Argentina. *El Secreto de Sus Ojos* was only the second feature film of a director who has mainly directed for television. Since 2000, Juan José Campanella has been behind seventeen episodes for the American *Law and Order* series. This information from the *Internet Movie Database* suggests a director with this background would make a film appealing to Academy voters. It also made me suspect that a director with good contacts in Hollywood will get more votes.

Michael Haneke's *The White Ribbon* and Jacques Audriad's *A Prophet* are important films and were made by serious directors with distinguished careers. Fortunately, the two films, because of their acclaim and previous awards, have had relatively wide distribution in the United States and an Oscar would probably not have made a huge difference for the box revenues for either film. Yet both directors would benefit nevertheless from the prestige of an Oscar, helping in the arduous task of raising money for difficult art films. *El Secreto de Sus Ojos* looks and feels like a TV movie. The director tried to blend romance, comedy, murder mystery and political thriller—but he did not succeed in making any of these genres interesting.

Part II: Southern Voices: Losers As Winners

And this ain't no place for the weary kind
And this ain't no place to lose your mind
And this ain't no place to fall behind
Pick up your crazy heart and give it one more try

> **"The Weary Kind," Ryan Bingham & T Bone Burnett from *Crazy Heart***

Jesus is my friend
America is my home
Sweet iced tea and Jerry Lee
Daytona Beach
That's what gets to me
I can feel it in my bones

> **"Southern Voice," Tim McGraw from the soundtrack of *The Blind Side***

One of the surprises of last year's ceremony was its recognition of Sean Penn's brave performance as Harvey Milk with the Best Actor Award. This year the Academy nominated Colin Firth's equally courageous but very different performance as a gay man in *A Single Man*. Jeff Bridges playing a loveable

macho country singer, however, won as Best Actor in a film that firmly reinstated heterosexual norms for men who wear Stetsons (*Brokeback Mountain* had cast some doubt on the sexuality of cowboys and just missed winning the Best Picture award a few years ago). The Academy apparently decided it was time someone from the Bridges family won an Oscar. This is not to say that the award was undeserved or that Bridges gave a lazy performance, but the role is a familiar one in American cinema and the Academy had previously rewarded a similar performance when Robert Duvall, who appears in *Crazy Heart*, won Best Actor in *Tender Mercies* back in 1983. The portrayal of a fictionalized Merle Haggard type was more realistic in *Crazy Heart* yet the romantic myth of the washed-up and booze-ridden but talented country singer was hardly tarnished. The ballad from the film, "The Weary Kind," won in the Best Original Song category and was written and sung by the 29year-old Ryan Bingham. This "hard living"-sounding young man—his voice has been described as emanating from a "whisky and cigarette throat" --used to be a bull rider. When I first heard this occupation pronounced I thought they said he was a "bull writer." His band is called "The Dead Horses." I think he flogged a few proverbial dead horses in reviving this kind of bogus country and western imagery.[6]

In a very gracious but rambling speech, Bridges, channeling the Dude from *The Big Lebowski*, praised the major players behind the film, referring to his young director, Scott Cooper as "the Scott Man" and also paid tribute to the distributor, *Fox Searchlight* with his "Thank you guys for keeping us all together." This hippyish diction and manner seemed even more incongruous when he went on to individually praise a list of those who support the anything but laid-back lifestyle of a top movie star: his business agent, entertainment lawyer, personal make-up woman, stunt man and even CAA, the corporate talent agency he belongs to. But his tribute to his showbiz parents was both endearing and comic: "Oh, my dad and my mom, they loved show biz so much. I remember my mom, getting all of us kids to entertain at her parties. You know, my dad sitting me on his bed and teaching me all of the basics of acting for a role in *Sea Hunt*."

Such speeches make watching the Oscar ceremony worthwhile. This is more than can be said for Sandra Bullock's lengthy acceptance speech for Best Actress. Coming as it did after a long segment of the show when an on-stage line-up of stars fulsomely praised her and her fellow nominees, the speech was hard to take. Miss Congeniality felt impelled first of all to give her praise to each of her four co-nominees--as if they hadn't listened to enough encomiums—and this winner was not good at acting "sincerity." She ended her acceptance speech with a long peroration thanking her mother for making her a good liberal American but then, drawing upon Sarah Palin spiel, thanked all mothers: "…I would like to thank what this film is about for me which are the moms that take care of the babies and the children no matter where they come from."

The Blind Side was as corny as her speech, showing how a compassionate rich conservative family can solve the problem of poverty in America and at the same time ease the nation's racial tensions. Although it was supposed to be based on fact, the film seemed to blend, like *Field of Dreams*, the sports genre with the fantasy movie. Bullock played Leigh Anne Tuohy, a rich Memphis housewife (the real Tuohys were in the audience) who invites a young homeless African American male into her home. The hulking but amiable "Big Mike," with a lot of expensive coaching and tough love, becomes a high school football star

and finally wins a National Football Association scholarship to the prestigious University of Mississippi. This "feel-good" movie seems to belong to a previous era of television sitcoms when endearing African American kids came to live with rich families, as in *Different Strokes.* The film depicted the prosperous New South with few reminders of the institutional racism of the Old South. One clue that the South has not changed much was that the many football coaches (who were playing themselves) appearing in the film were white. The film also had the country and western singer, Tim McGraw, playing Bullock's husband. His song, "Southern Voice" played over the final credits of *The Blind Side* and was a litany of incongruous cultural references intended to foster "Southern pride." The glib and jaunty lyrics seemed intended to endorse the film's historical amnesia. African Americans are unable to help themselves and languish in the projects and, in the absence of a civil rights movement, only a rich white woman can rescue them. This view of African Americans immersed in their own pathologies is also endorsed by another widely nominated film.

Part III: The Ghost of Hattie McDaniel

I know that in my business popularity is a weedy ground—here today, gone tomorrow. I've learned by livin' and watchin' that there is only eighteen inches between a pat on the back and a kick in the seat of the pants. **Hattie McDaniel, 1941[7]**

Precious: Based on the Novel 'Push' by Sapphire was an unlikely entry for the Oscar race but it ended up winning two of its six nominations. Despite the recognition by the Academy and its significant mainstream success, I couldn't help feeling that it reflects more of a divide than a rapprochement between African-American and white mainstream conceptions of popular cinema. *Precious* seems close to the so-called "race movies" that were produced by African Americans in competition with Hollywood after the success of *The Birth of a Nation.* Directed (by Lee Daniels) and produced by African Americans and with a largely African American cast, *Precious* focused on a overweight teen who has children by her own father and is living with a mother who makes Joan Crawford look like Florence Henderson, the perfect mother from the sitcom, *The Brady Bunch.*

Tyler Perry[8], one of the executive producers of the film, has been making the modern-day version of "race movies" for some time, although he has been more successful in crossing over to a white audience than predecessors such as Oscar Micheaux.[9] Perry's extremely successful series of films starring himself as Madea, a comical matriarch, resonates more strongly with African Americans but his films have occasionally reached the number one box office position in the nation. During the evening, Perry was invited to introduce the award for editing and some of his comments and humor hinted at Hollywood's racial divide. After his name had been announced, Perry wistfully sighed: "They say my name at the Oscars. It will probably never happen again…" He also joked that backstage one of the show's co-hosts had said to him "I loved you in *The Blind Side.*" This was a joke and not a true story but its humor touches upon how some white people see African Americans as types—Perry is tall and built like a quarterback--and the joke also

suggests that Hollywood films like *The Blind Side* perpetuate certain stereotypes. Unfortunately, I think *Precious* also plays into some of these stereotypes and whatever serious intentions it had in exploring a pathological family the film's promotion into the mainstream revives the racially-inflected paternalism just under the surface of white American culture. It seems to me to be entirely the wrong film to be a popular success in the age of Obama.

Oprah Winfrey, who was also an executive producer on *Precious*, has done much to promote the film. Winfrey is America's greatest crossover success and her talk show has also brought undreamed levels of success to her guests, particularly authors.[10] Her celebrity status as an African-American female does not necessarily mean that her massive media clout is always progressive in terms of both gender and racial politics: Sarah Palin recently appeared promoting her book on *Oprah*. The famous talk show host is also an actress and her most important role was in the film version of Alice Walker's novel, *The Color Purple*. Nominated for Best Actress in a Supporting Role in Steven Spielberg's film, Winfrey—and the film— failed to win in 1986. She at last got the privilege of making a speech to the Academy Award's audience—and to a television audience even larger than the audience for her talk show—when she appeared in the lineup to praise those nominated for Best Actress. In her speech honoring Gabourey Sidibe, Winfrey could have been talking about her own career when she spoke of a "Hollywood fairy tale" and called Sidibe "an American Cinderella."

Unfortunately, I think the talk show host is right that Sidibe's fame and the success of *Precious* exists solely on the level of a mass media fairy tale. The people behind the film are very much part of this fairy tale world and they perhaps even share similar fantasies as those shown as the dreams of Sidibe's character. The full title of the film heralds that it is "Based on the Novel *Push* by Sapphire." Tyler Perry and Oprah Winfrey are not only listed as executive producers on *Precious* but also have the on-screen caption "Presented by Oprah Winfrey and Tyler Perry." Such grandiosity fits in well with the contemporary culture of celebrity. Like several African-American sports heroes, Winfrey and Perry and now Sapphire are mega celebrities. I'm not sure, however, the promotional power of the three very prominent African Americans really contributes to the ideal behind the old "race movies" of "uplifting the race."[11] To quote Pino, John Turturro's racist Italian American discussing his African-American celebrity heroes in Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing:* "I mean, they're Black but not really Black. They're more than Black. It's different."

Academy recognition in the Best Actress category will probably ensure that the twenty-fouryear-old British actress Carrie Mulligan will have a long and successful career. The star of *An Education* is also gifted, slim and white. The twenty-six-year-old Gabourney Sidibe and the forty-two-year-old Mo'Nique are both gifted but there are fewer film roles for African-American women in Hollywood and slimness is still mandatory for actresses. Mo'Nique will continue to have success with her talk show—on the Black Entertainment Network. The leading African-American magazine, *Ebony* has given over this month's cover to a flattering photograph of Sidibe and several full-page photos inside. However, things are different in white mainstream media. *Vanity Fair*, for instance, blatantly omitted Sidibe from the group of nine young actresses—all Caucasians—photographed by Annie Liebovitch on its Hollywood issue cover with the blurb "A New Decade, A New Hollywood! Starring the Fresh Faces of 2010." One of the "fresh faces"

was Carey Mulligan, her fellow nominee for Best Actress. Inside, there were more photographs and write-ups about the nine svelte aspiring actresses. A Liebovitch photo of Sidibe with Mo'Nique and Lee Daniels over a two-page spread was the one reminder of this young African American Best Actress nominee. The copy on the cover of *Vanity Fair* should have read "The White Fresh Faces of 2010." Such coverage only adds to the impression of continuing segregation in American mainstream culture.

So I am not convinced by Mo'Nique's statement in her acceptance speech: "…I would like to thank the Academy for showing that it can be about the performance and not the politics." The liberal reputation of Hollywood might make us believe that the Academy's nominations and voting are solely about assessing talent but this has never been true, and never will be true as long as inequalities in the film industry continue to be addressed only by ceremonial gestures. Mo'Nique clearly knew something about Hollywood history and paid tribute to Hattie McDaniels, the first African-American actor to win an Academy Award, by dressing like her and wearing a gardenia. She also explicitly acknowledged the actress in her acceptance speech: "I want to thank Miss Hattie McDaniel for enduring all that she had to so that I would not have to." While Mo'Nique and other African-American actors do not endure overt racism today, they are far from being fully integrated into the film industry and the tokenism behind McDaniel's award as Best Supporting Actress for *Gone with the Wind* in 1940 is, unfortunately, only marginally different from the tokenism that led to the nominations for *Precious* in 2010.

Part IV: Lipstick Traces

*I made it (**The White Ribbon**) for adults, so it may not appeal to most of those who go to the cinema these days.* **Michael Haneke**[12]

The Golden Globes gave the Best Picture Award to *Avatar* rather than to the Academy's choice of *The Hurt Locker*. The Golden Globes also voted James Cameron as Best Director while the Academy chose Kathleen Bigelow for this award. But both of these influential institutions heavily nominated the two acclaimed films and the voting was probably close in each of these major categories. I predicted the Best Director Oscar for Bigelow but the Best Picture Oscar for

Avatar. I guessed the Academy would finally give the director's award for the first time to a woman and the show's organizers also must have predicted correctly as they chose Barbra

Streisand (one of the films she directed, *Prince of Tides* was nominated for Best Picture in 1992 but she had not been nominated for directing) to present it (this decision, like the choice of Coppola, Spielberg and Lucas to give the same award to Martin Scorsese in 2007 made it seem, as I noted at the time, as though the winner was known in advance).

As critics have pointed out, *The Hurt Locker* is a violent war film and Bigelow's work in the genre,

however brilliant, focuses on three men—a theme that was emphasized by the three actors making macho gestures on a raised platform behind Bigelow as she accepted the Best Picture Award. It was as if the Academy would only acknowledge a woman director if she made male-oriented films and Bigelow, as everyone kept reminding us, was the ex-wife of Cameron; a repeated fact that seemed to undercut in some way her achievement. I was interested to observe that the TV cameras avoided shots of Bigelow's male companion during her speeches for both awards. There are usually many reaction shots of tearful females as their male companions who have won awards are on stage but very rarely vice versa. This practice by cameramen (I assume camera operators are still largely male) could change if the proportion of female film professionals increases but I doubt that any institutional change will result from the passing of this seemingly important award milestone.

The conservative populism in the country impacted many aspects of the ceremony. Katherine Bigelow chose not to make any statement that condemned war and her acceptance speech for Best Director was very conventional: "And I'd just like to dedicate this to the women and men in the military who risk their lives on a daily basis in Iraq and Afghanistan and around the world. And may they come home safe." A few minutes later she made another, briefer speech when her film won for Best Picture: "Perhaps one more dedication, to men and women all over the world who... Sorry to reiterate, but wear a uniform, but even not just the military – HazMat, emergency, firemen. They're there for us and we're there for them." This kind of knee-jerk endorsement of the military and uniformed authority is everywhere in American culture and another sign of its militarization.

The right wing has also made a big comeback in the last few months with the activities of the moronic Tea Party movement and increased membership in heavily-armed militias. I have mentioned Sandra Bullock parroting Sarah Palin sentiments in her speech. She also wore a lurid shade of lipstick during the evening. Was this a deliberate tribute to Sarah Palin, who recently spoke at the Tea Party's first convention, or an ironic joke?[13] I wish it was the latter, as I was reminded of the title of rock critic Greil Marcus's great book on the subversive acts of the punk movement.[14] And was Jeff Bridges undermining the mythology of country and western stars in *Crazy Heart* by resuscitating the Dude in his speech? I suppose I was on the lookout for any hint of rebelliousness as *The Blind Side* and *Crazy Heart* were hardly progressive films with their Southern settings and their respective veneration of the dedicated soccer mom and the wasted but talented Country musician.

The Blind Side, Crazy Heart and even the more formally adventurous *Precious,* are simplistic stories tapping into old cultural myths but the skill of the actors and directors make audiences believe these films are up-to-date dramas of today's society. *The Blind Side* parades the redemptive comfort of the American myth of success that is now propagated endlessly on talk shows and "reality" TV programs. The myth disguises the real inequalities of capitalism and justifies the rugged individualism and the day-to-day Social Darwinism of American life by showing how those on the lowest rung can rise up. The Tuohys in *The Blind Side*, like the benevolent millionaires of the Horatio Alger stories, help out a hard-working and plucky kid who knows his place. Unlike the lazy, drug-addled members of his race hanging out in his neighborhood, Big Mike gets to stay with the rich white folks in their MacMansion and be courted

by the corporate athletic establishment.[15] *Crazy Heart* draws upon the romantic artist myth laced with the mythology of the West and compels audience to identify with the struggles of a loveable, alcoholic rogue. The talent of this aging singer/songwriter keeps rising to the surface despite all his weaknesses. *Precious* is about how a vulnerable teenage girl is rescued from the pathologies of a grossly dysfunctional family by dedicated members of the caring professions. A teacher, a social worker and a male nurse, following the therapeutic nostrums of the talk show, give an abused young African American woman identity and new hope.

The Academy's endorsement of these so-called liberal films of triumphant, or at least dogged, individualism, does nothing to offset the right-wing tone of many mainstream media outlets that feed the ignorant politics and increasingly overt racism of the Tea Party movement. Like the policies of the besieged Obama administration, the liberal intentions of Hollywood filmmakers have recently become either obscured or discounted. The progressive ecological message of *Avatar*, for instance, has been eclipsed by the success of 3D technology that is now turning cinema into an even more immersive spectacle than the Disney Company ever achieved. The fad makes it even less likely that moviegoers will take a chance on watching uncompromising art films that discourage audience passivity by deviating from standard cinematic conventions; one reason perhaps why *The White Ribbon* did not win is that it is in black and white.

The Hurt Locker can also be read politically, particularly from a left wing perspective, but many critics neglected to consider it in this way and audiences were encouraged to focus more on the nail-biting drama of defusing bombs and on the spectacle of loud explosions. Colin Farrell, who sings the award-winning song in *Crazy Heart,* adopted lyrical but apolitical blarney to praise Jeremy Renner's leading role in the film: "Your work gloriously avoided political persuasion. For me it was lovely. It wasn't right or left…." In 2000, Farrell was in a film called *Tigerland* that was more critical of the military and he has also starred in an epic directed by Oliver Stone. Did he forget all this? The so-called "liberal" Hollywood community, on the evidence of the 2010 Academy Awards, desperately needs to counter the growing right-wing climate of the country instead of mouthing the pieties of liberal neutrality or applauding stories of talk show uplift or continuing to retreat into 3D fantasyland.

Michael Haneke has stated that *The White Ribbon*, his long meditation on a feudal Protestant community in pre-WWI Germany, comments on the later rise of fascism. This connection is by no means obvious, but the film opens itself to all kinds of reflections which do not preclude a Freudian/Marxist political analysis. The viewer is plunged into an unknown past era that is fully realized without recourse to CGI and instead of being awed by the elaborate costumes of monarchs and aristocrats, the unadorned and expressive faces of Haneke's characters invite us to think—in an almost scientific way--about humanity in the last century. Haneke has mentioned he was influenced by the photographs of August Sander and I was reminded of Walter Benjamin's comparison of this German photographer's work to the films of the great Soviet filmmakers: "August Sander has compiled a series of faces that is in no way inferior to the tremendous physiognomic gallery mounted by an Eisenstein or a Pudovkin, and he has done it from a scientific viewpoint."[16] *The White Ribbon* rigorously explores a specific historical environment and Haneke's images never make us feel comfortable or nostalgic about the distant past. The American film

industry could learn from such a film. Audiences urgently need to be aware that the threat of fascism is not so safely buried in the past.

Notes

1. The quote was taken from the 2009 winners page at "The Oscars" website. For this year's speeches see http://oscar.go.com/oscarnight/winners/

2. For a critical article on the film followed by readers' posts see Soutik Biswas. "Why Slumdog Fails to Move Me" for the BBC at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7843960.stm

3. See my previously published commentaries: Robert Goff "No Ceremony for Older Women: Some Observations on the 2008 Academy Awards Broadcast" *Nebula* 5.1, June 2008 and, "Convenient Truths: A Commentary on the 2007 Academy Awards Ceremony as a Global Event." *Nebula* 4.2. June 2007

4. Quotes from backstage interviews as well as from the acceptance speeches are taken from the "The Oscars" website mentioned in note 1.

5. Steve Martin made a dubious joke about the Best Supporting Actor nominated for the role of a "Jew hunter" in *Inglorious Basterds*. He quipped that Jews were all around the actor who played the Nazi.)

6. For a recent critical examination of the Country music industry see Diane Pecknold, *The Selling Sound: the Rise of the Country Music Industry*. Durham, Duke University Press: 2007.

7. quoted in Jill Watts *Hattie McDaniel: Black Ambition, White Hollywood*. New York, HarperCollins: 2005. p.180.

8. For a recent profile see Hilton Als, A Critic at Large, "Mama's Gun," *The New Yorker*, April 26, 2010, p. 68

9. See Patrick McGilligan, *Oscar Micheaux, the Great and Only: the Life of America's First Black Filmmaker*. New York, HarperCollins: 2007.

10. For essays on Winfrey's popularity see Jennifer Harris and Elwood Watson (eds.) *The Oprah phenomenon,* Lexington, University Press of Kentucky: 2007. For essays on her book club see Cecilia Konchar Farr & Jaime Harker (eds.), *The Oprah Effect: Critical Essays on Oprah's Book Club,* Albany, State University of New York Press: 2008.

11. See the interviews in George Alexander, *Why We Make Movies: Black Filmmakers Talk about the Magic of Cinema.* New York, Harlem Moon: 2003 for discussion of the motivation of African-American directors in different periods.

12. Quoted in "The Revenge of Children" by Geoff Andrew, *Sight and Sound*, December, 2009.

13. During the election campaign, Palin made a joke about the difference between a hockey mom and pitball was lipstick. See Richard Kim and Betsy Reed (eds.) *Going Rouge: Sarah Palin, An American Nightmare*. New York, Health Communications: 2009. Sarah Palin's own book is called *Going Rogue: An American Life.* New York, Harper: 2009.

14. Greil Marcus, *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press: 1989.

15. See Mark Yost, *Varsity Green: A Behind the Scenes Look at Culture and Corruption in College Athletics.*

Stanford, Calif., Stanford University Press: 2010.

16 "Little History of Photography" in Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland and Gary Smith (eds.) *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings Vol.2 Part 2, 1931-1934.* Cambridge, Harvard University Press: 1999. p. 520.

Stepping Out from the Margins: Ireland, Morality, and Representing the Other in Irish Chick Lit.

By Mary Ryan

In her introduction to a study on Irish writer Kate O'Brien, Adele M. Dalsimer cited the two structures that have long been identified as the heart of Irish culture: as she says, the 'family is at the centre of communal life" and "Catholicism is the anchor of unquestioned orthodoxy and cohesive moral standard" (Dalsimer: 1990, xiii). Though these attitudes were largely enforced by the Church, whose teachings were adopted by the entire nation, the law in Ireland also reflected these same attitudes; both Church and state in Ireland maintained that people should hold a certain morality, particularly relating to areas of sexuality and reproduction:

> Single motherhood was considered shameful in Ireland at that time and children born outside of wedlock were discriminated against in the law. Domestic violence was widely considered a private issue to be dealt with primarily within "the family", and use of contraception/artificial family planning was illegal. (Connolly: 2005, 3)

Irish society became so fixated on issues of so-called "morality" that they took even further precautions to ensure the moral values of their people were upheld:

> As part of the continuing campaign to control the personal morality of young people, the Free State took measures to limit the number of public houses and to reduce opening hours; film censorship was also introduced to protect young minds from corrupting influences. However, the craze for modern dancing, which provided the opportunity for young men and women to associate together in venues outside the control of the Catholic hierarchy, was a particular cause of alarm. (Hill: 2003, 106)

Such strict codes of moral behaviour resulted in Irish people often feeling limited and repressed by society. Such "ideals" for morality among Irish people were even encouraged in various other formats; even the Irish television and radio broadcasting company, RTÉ, was advised 'to defend traditional ideals of

marriage and motherhood' (Hill: 2003, 143-144), which were intrinsic to the notion of Irish morality. Irish people therefore felt enormous pressure from a wide variety of outside influences – Church, society, family, even television – as to the path their life should take.

Towards the end of the twentieth century, however, Irish society underwent many changes which had a direct impact on Irish family life and which were seen to lessen the call for so-called morality, such as easier access to divorce and remarriage, and so 'the nature of family life for many was radically different at the century's end' (Hill: 2003, 243).

However, while progress was undoubtedly made as Irish society became more accepting of behaviours which deviated from the "norm", issues such as those of lone-parent families (particularly single mothers) and single-sex relationships, among other things, have taken longer to be acknowledged, and have been the source of much controversy and objection. This paper will outline the difficulties "marginal" groups – such as homosexuals and single mothers – faced in an Ireland obsessed with morality, and will then use the example of a selection of Irish chick lit novels to demonstrate how these issues are being acknowledged and voiced by such authors, and how, in doing so, they are helping to distance such groups of people from their currently marginal and largely ignored status.

Single Motherhood

The Irish puritan morality mentioned above spread itself through a huge part of Irish culture, and the development of popular culture was hindered by the application of strict censorship laws. For example, many books, particularly by female writers, were banned for containing scenes which were deemed "unsuitable" for Irish society. Irish writer Kate O'Brien's *Mary Lavelle* (1936) was banned for obscenity in Ireland, while her later novel *The Land of Spices* (1941) was also banned due to a 'brief allusion to a gay male relationship' (Garnes: 2002, par. 6). Edna O'Brien's *Country Girls* trilogy was similarly censored, 'not least because all three books were banned under Ireland's Censorship Law. In particular, *Girls in their Married Bliss* contains explicit sex scenes that surely must have stuck in the censors' craw. Reading them today, one must wonder what all the fuss was about' (Imhof: 2002, 73). Feminist magazine *Spare Rib* was banned in Ireland on numerous occasions, once because it 'showed women how to examine their breasts' (Wolf: 1991, 138), and again 'because it carried information on contraception' (Connolly: 2005, 39). Films did not escape Irish censorship laws as:

> *Gone With the Wind* was not screened in the Republic of Ireland when it was released because the official film censor, James Montgomery, required so many cuts that the distributor withdrew it. Ironically, Montgomery vigorously objected to the childbirth scene! Thus, while the state of maternity was formally recognized with the Irish constitution, the embodied processes of becoming a mother – sex and childbirth – were deemed obscene. (Pramaggiore: 2006, 120)

It is ironic that *Gone with the Wind* was banned because of its childbirth scene, when we consider the sanctity of family and motherhood that was upheld in Irish society. Ireland, however, long viewed sex as a sin, and the only situation which allowed women sexual freedom was within marriage and even then only with a view to conceiving. Even childbirth, with the perceived "uncleanness" of birth, was imposed with purification rituals, such as 'the ceremony of churching (blessing after childbirth)' (de Beauvoir: 1997, 178), which supposedly cleansed the woman from the "sin" of having had the sex which resulted in the baby being conceived. Despite assertions regarding the sanctity of motherhood, the reality was that, considering Ireland's emphasis on chastity and self-restraint, 'children were only welcomed when born within a union legalised by marriage' (Hill: 2003, 27); illegitimacy was considered socially acceptable and the unmarried mother found herself "punished" by society for her "deviant" ways. For many women in various societies, the prospect of 'illegitimate motherhood is still so frightful a fault that many prefer suicide or infanticide to the status of unmarried mother' (de Beauvoir: 1997, 505). Such fears resulted in many Irish women being conservative in their pre-marital relationships. The Catholic Church maintained that 'illegitimacy rates were low because of the shame and humiliation with which such a condition was associated' (Hill: 2003, 29). However, with the absence of reliable, accessible, and affordable contraceptive methods for a long time, it is more likely that other precautions were taken to assure that a child conceived out of wedlock was not considered "illegitimate", largely in order to protect the mother (and her family) from shame:

> It is likely that in many cases couples – Catholic and Protestant – legitimated their expected child by marriage, either through preference or under pressure from family and Church, passing off the 'early' birth as premature. Illegitimate children were also frequently brought up by their grandmother or other family member, or in the workhouse or other charitable institution. (Hill: 2003, 29)

Of the women who suffered so much shame and guilt at falling pregnant that they gave their babies up for adoption, their experiences have often remained hidden, their "wrong-doing" silenced. Those women who did fall pregnant outside of marriage – and who remained unmarried and kept the child – had to rely on their families for economic survival, and this was only when the woman in question could depend on her family's tolerance and acceptance of her "sexual nonconformity"; many Irish 'parents, particularly those of the middle classes – fearful of public contempt or reluctant to support the economic burden of an unmarriageable daughter – cast their daughters from their homes' (McCarthy: 2000, 104). Up until the early 1960s, in fact, 'women who had children outside of marriage were perceived as "Magdalenes", and were cut off from the community for most of their lives in institutions under Church control' (O'Connor: 1998, 119). As well as creating shame and controversy for both families and society in general, the unmarried mother is also viewed as problematic in Irish society because it is seen to undermine the sanctity of the family that was inherent to Irish morality:

> The pregnant woman evokes not only the fragility of the public/private divide (because her condition makes sexuality visible), but by self-consciously performing pregnancy in defiance of social norms, she implies that national, religious, and gender identities are less stable than

they appear. As a multiple and split subject, she acts as an emblem of the underlying indeterminacy of all identities. (Pramaggiore: 2006, 118)

Single motherhood was once considered so shameful in Ireland that 'children born outside of wedlock were discriminated against in the law' (Connolly: 2005, 3). However, this situation has changed in Ireland in the last few years, largely due to the fact that 'the number of unmarried mothers in Irish society continued to increase during the last two decades of the [twentieth] century' (Hill: 2003, 193). In these early years of the twenty-first century:

> Ireland's birth rate outside marriage is among the highest in Western Europe. There is no simple explanation for these statistics. In the South, everyone over sixteen has had the right to contraception since the early nineties, and with AIDS making it a public health issue, condoms could be bought from machines from 1993. (Hill: 2003, 193)

Whatever the reasons for the high birth rates outside of marriage, it is clear that the consequences of pregnancy outside of marriage are now considered less catastrophic than in earlier decades. Some theorists, such as Pat O'Connor, have even depicted lone parenthood in a positive light, stating how it has the potential to reflect 'the ability of women to survive on their own, and their willingness to redefine the family, excluding a residential heterosexual tie as the basic element in that unit' (O'Connor: 1998, 119).

Irish chick lit appears to have similar opinions to Pat O'Connor, as such authors attempt to remove the negativity surrounding single motherhood. It portrays women who become single mothers either by circumstance (in Marian Keyes' *Watermelon* (1995), for instance, Claire Walsh's husband leaves her for another woman on the day she gives birth to their first child) or by choice. An example of the latter is evident in Keyes' *Anybody Out There?* (2006), when Anna's best friend, Jacqui, becomes pregnant as the result of a one night stand. Far from this being the tragedy it would have been up until relatively recently, Jacqui is admirably calm and rational about the situation:

> 'I know. I've been thinking.' Pause. 'Being pregnant isn't the horrible disaster it would have been five years ago, or even three years. Back then, I'd no security, I hadn't a bean and I'd definitely have had a termination. But now... I have an apartment, I have a well-paid job – it's not *their* fault that I can't live within my means – and I sort of like the idea of having a baby around the place.' (Keyes: 2006, 470-471)

In the epilogue to *Anybody Out There?,* we learn that new-mother Jacqui is part of the narrator calls a 'modern-day family unit' (Keyes: 2006, 587) in which the baby's parents both enjoy time with their child but the parents do not become a couple merely for the child's sake, as society would once expect. The novel therefore demonstrates how the 'marginal position of the unmarried mother provides a good perspective from which to consider changing gender roles' (Joannou: 2000, 42). Unmarried mothers were once 'identified as a threat to the status quo and a cause for unofficial concern' (Joannou: 2000, 52). In a country like Ireland, 'which placed a high value on chastity and self-restraint, illegitimacy was socially

unacceptable' (Hill: 2003, 27). However, while we still tend to 'think of the family as a heterosexual unit, lone parenthood is an increasingly common family form' (O'Connor: 1998, 109), *Anybody Out There?* presents a depiction of the "modern family", where the parents are happily unmarried, and neither mother nor child are "punished" for this. By portraying lone parenthood in a positive sense, Irish chick lit is providing an implicit challenge to 'the traditional "unthinkableness" of a family life which is not based on a residential conjugal unit' (O'Connor: 1998, 122), thus helping to remove the stigma so commonly associated with unmarried mothers.

Homosexuality

As well as the stigma which was once attached to single mothers, another area which was once the cause of great controversy in Ireland was the issue of homosexuality, which was, 'according to Catholic theology [and Irish law], a sin' (Breen: 1993, 170). It has already been stated how books were banned by Irish censorship laws for depicting homosexual relationships. This was often in spite of the fact that, in some cases, homosexuality may not necessarily be approved of, or the word "homosexual" may not even have been used, as in the case of Kate O'Brien's *The Land of Spices*. In such instances, it was argued that 'even to mention or suggest the possibility of homosexuality could be read by some as a promotion of it: whether or not homosexuality is approved of in the novel was irrelevant to those who chose to be offended by it' (Breen: 1993, 168). Even when Irish censorship laws became less severe, to speak of, for instance, 'sex between women would still have been inflammatory' (Enright: 2005, v) as it was seen to provide a threat to 'Catholic nationalism, whose ideal of the lovely Irish girl did not include her falling in love with other women' (Enright: 2005, viii). Of course, it was hardly surprising that homosexuals felt alienated in Irish society; along with 'adopting a censorious attitude towards sexual behaviour and stressing the importance of marriage and family life' (Hill: 2003, 104), homosexuality was another area which saw the Church and state working in accord with one another. Both Irish Church and state argued that the criminalisation of homosexuality served public health, Irish morality, and the institution of marriage, and homosexuality remained illegal in Ireland until as recently as the 1990s. Even feminist discourse was divided on the matter because although meant to liberate all women from patriarchal confines:

> Feminist discourse was and still is dominated by heterosexual women, and the area of sexual identity itself was often neglected as a potentially divisive subject, which meant that lesbians felt alienated and unrepresented by mainstream feminism. Heterosexual women themselves appeared to be threatened by lesbian dissenting voices in the movement. (Whelehan: 1995, 160)

Homosexuality has, of course, proved a problematic area for both men and women. Men are, for example, expected to live up to a certain standard of a "masculine ideal", and a gay man is seen as not performing his gender "correctly":

Those men who do not live up to the hegemonic masculine ideal (particularly gay men) may find themselves disadvantaged by the operation of double standards. Heterosexuality is an important component of hegemonic masculinity and gay men's sexuality is evaluated in relation to it. Thus, while prolific sexual activity by heterosexual men may be condoned, the alleged prolific sexual activity of gay men is vilified and forms an important part of homophobic discourse. (Pilcher: 2004, 36-37)

A recent novel by Irish author Colette Caddle, *Between the Sheets* (2008), highlights the negativity surrounding homosexuality in Irish society, as the protagonist learns that, when her brother was young, he was subjected to cruel treatment by their father after he learnt that his son was gay:

'Oh my God! Is that what it was all about? He treated you that way because you were gay?'

'I'm afraid so. He did everything he could to knock it out of me – literally. He even dragged me down to Father Flynn and made me confess. He asked him what saint we should pray to in order to turn me back to normal. If he caught me even looking at another boy he dragged me out to the shed and took the belt to me.'

'Oh, Ed, I'm so sorry. I had no idea. Did Mum know that was the reason he treated you so badly?'

He frowned. 'I'm not sure. We never talked about it. I'm not sure the ever did either – too disgusting to put into words. When Dad was angry or drunk, though, he'd refer to me as a perverted little bugger.' (Caddle: 2008, 414)

Irish society has also typically rendered lesbians invisible, an occurrence which is 'rooted in pervasive gendered societal attitudes to Irish women and their sexuality' (Connolly: 2005, 173). Particularly in the late 1970s and early 1980s, it was noted that the 'Irish women's movement was not prepared to address the issues and experiences of lesbian feminist activists in Ireland [...] the question of lesbian feminism became one of the points of dissonance within the Irish women's movement' (Connolly: 2005, 176). Nevertheless, feminism (and the related bodies of lesbian theory and gender studies), did much to render portrayals of homosexuality in a more positive light. Because lesbianism 'requires a way of writing about girls that is not solved by marriage' (Enright: 2005, vi), it connotes a sense of freedom for women, allowing the number of options available to them to increase. It brings women closer to equality with men as it 'allows their lives to be treated with as much uncertainty and rigour as the lives of boys' (Enright: 2005, vi-vii). In this sense, lesbianism could be likened to 'an instance of utopian freedom from inauthentic and repressive bourgeois sexual norms' (Coughlan: 1993, 77). In Irish terms, writers such as Kate O'Brien 'render homosexuality unexceptional' (Dalsimer: 1990, 117) by normalising 'same-sex love by presenting it with the equal portions of objectivity and sensitivity that infuse her presentation of heterosexual love' (Dalsimer: 1990, 113). Homosexual relationships are frequently depicted as ultimately more durable and fulfilling than their heterosexual counterparts.

It is hardly surprising then that Irish chick lit writers portray homosexuality in a positive light, considering the trend was arguably already started by such Irish literary foresisters as O'Brien. In traditional chick

lit novels, homosexuality is visible, thanks to the gay best friend cliché. However, it has been noted that, while these men only serve the purpose of giving the heroine advice on fashion and relationships, in typical chick lit novels they never have any real plot of their own, therefore presenting homosexuality in a one-dimensional representation that lacks any real depth. Additionally, typical chick lit has been criticised for ignoring the existence of lesbians. This is not the case with Irish chick lit. Keyes' *Last Chance Saloon* (1999), in particular, is unique in that one of the main characters, Fintan, is a homosexual male, and, of the three main protagonists in the book, Fintan's relationship is shown as the strongest and most loving. *Last Chance Saloon* discusses the link often made between homosexuality and AIDS. Although he is eventually diagnosed with Hodgkin's Disease, a form of cancer, when Fintan originally repeatedly complains of not feeling well, the automatic assumption is that, as a gay man, he has contracted AIDS:

> That was the problem whenever a gay friend became sick. The A-word always cropped up. Then she felt uncomfortable with her train of thought – did she think gay people and Aids were uniquely linked? (Keyes: 1999, 130)

Fintan, however, is quick to remind Tara that someone in a heterosexual relationship is just as susceptible to AIDS as homosexuals:

> 'Look me in the eye,' she interrupted forcefully, 'and tell me that you've had an HIV test recently.' [...]
> > 'Have *you* had an HIV test?' Fintan surprised her by asking.
> > 'No, but...'
> > 'But what?'
> > She paused delicately. How could she say this?
> > Fintan interrupted, 'Do you always use a condom with Thomas?'
> > In different circumstances Tara might have laughed as she remembered the song-and-dance Thomas had made on their first night when Tara had tried to get him to wear a condom. 'Like eating sweets with the wrapper on,' he'd whinged. 'Like going paddling in your shoes and socks.' She'd never suggested it again. Luckily she'd still been on the pill from the Alasdair days.
> > 'Well, no, we don't always, but...'
> > 'And has Thomas had an HIV test?'
> > *As if*, Tara thought. He'd be the last man on earth to have one. 'No, but...' [...]
> > She said nothing, damning her misplaced, knee-jerk concern. There was probably more chance of *her* being HIV positive that Fintan. (Keyes: 1999, 158-159)

As well as providing a warning about the dangers of unprotected sex in both hetero- and homosexual relationships, extracts such as this are also helping to normalise homosexuality and lessen the stigma that has traditionally been attached to it, in this case by showing how HIV and AIDS are no longer "gay diseases". This "normalising" of homosexuality is also witnessed in novels such as Caddle's *Between the Sheets*, in which, as the following extract shows, a gay man discusses his feelings about a previous relationship.

Although he is having the conversation with a heterosexual woman, both characters can empathise with each other, therefore portraying gay and straight relationships as being no different from one another; in other words, love and feelings are the same, no matter the gender of the people involved:

> Dana squeezed his hand sympathetically. It was almost two years now since Wally had broken up with his partner. They had been together for an astounding twelve years when he discovered that Giles had been unfaithful at least twice. Even then, Walter was ready to forgive the love of his life but Giles decided to leave anyway. The agent hadn't dated since, and although he pretended interest in every gorgeous young man he met, Dana knew that it would be a long time before he trusted anyone again.
> She could relate to that now as she never could before. (Caddle: 2008, 31-32)

Representations of lesbians in chick lit are still quite rare; as the protagonist in *Watermelon* points out, 'lesbianism hadn't been done to death yet. People still got a little bit hot under the collar about it' (Keyes: 2003b, 343). Nevertheless, Irish chick lit is beginning to make attempts to remove the silence surrounding lesbianism, as well as voicing the mixed reactions and views it often provokes. From Anna's mother in *Anybody Out There?*, we are told that, 'bad and all as her daughters are, at least they're not lesbians who French-kiss their girlfriends beside suburban leylandii' (Keyes: 2006, 8). The lesbian relationships themselves are, however, shown as being more enduring than heterosexual unions. The surprise lesbian affair that begins in Kate Thompson's *Living the Dream* (2004) – between the protagonist's sister and her partner's ex-girlfriend, both of whom were thought to be heterosexual – is still going strong in her next novel, *Sex, Lies and Fairytales* (2005), and shows no signs of ending any time soon. By associating lesbianism with positive and desirable attributes, as Irish chick lit is doing, these novels are helping to portray lesbian existence as 'a healthy lifestyle chosen by women' (Zimmerman: 1981, 79), thus helping to eliminate the stigma historically attached to it.

Although attempts are now being made to compile a specific history of what it is to be gay, lesbian, and bisexual in Ireland, this process is still in its very early stages. It proves to be problematic when we realise that a 'marked difference between contemporary LBT communities in Ireland and those in other Western countries can be discerned in terms of the age profile of such groups – there is not a visible presence of "out" lesbians/bisexuals over the age of sixty in this country, which is telling' (Connolly: 2005, 192). Perhaps this is because, while the decriminalisation of homosexuality occurred in Britain in 1967, it was not decriminalised in Ireland until as recently as 1993. Additionally, while there have been remarkable changes in the Irish attitude to LGBT communities in the past decade or two, it is nevertheless obvious that some prejudices remain:

> So for example, although current equality legislation guarantees protection against discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, there have been few cases taken so far involving lesbians. To make such a case involves taking a public stand, and clearly few lesbians are ready to take this step. (Connolly: 2005, 173)

Despite such difficulties, the 'ongoing development of LGBT communities and cultures in a variety of locations is indicative of a thriving and active community moving into the twentyfirst century' (Connolly: 2005, 193). In terms of this realisation, we can be optimistic that Ireland will continue to advance its tolerance and acceptance of homosexuals, just as it has raised its awareness of other areas which were once considered to deviate from the "norm".

Race: The Next Step?

Racial prejudice, it is said, 'is often based on ignorance or fear, particularly when there is little contact between people of different nations or ethnic groups' (Fitzgerald: 1992, 249). Although becoming more diverse in terms of ethnicity and cultures in recent years, Ireland, in particular, is recognised as a society that has traditionally been, and perhaps to a point still is, predominantly white, and its struggles with racial prejudice have therefore tended to be just as problematic as its battles against sexism:

> The emerging struggle of minority groups for equal rights and protection against discrimination in Ireland has its parallel in the feminist movement. After long and hard battles sexism is now at least recognised as existing, though we have not yet managed to free Irish society of sexist thinking and behaviour. Racism is still struggling to be recognised as an inequity. (Fitzgerald: 1992, 253-254)

That much typical chick lit tends to only depict predominantly white characters is an example of how racist attitudes have, albeit unconsciously, been transmitted. In order to combat racism, we are encouraged to 'change both our thinking and our behaviour in order to develop anti-racist practices. We need to monitor our conscious and unconscious attitudes if we are to bring about individual and collective change' (Fitzgerald: 1992, 252). Although not yet as common, Irish chick lit also is also showing a recognition that we live in a multicultural, multi-racial society, thus altering the assumption that chick lit characters are unquestionably white. In Keyes' *Sushi for Beginners* (2000), Lisa's husband originally caused quite a commotion when he was first introduced to her mother:

> Though her heart had nearly stopped with fright the first time she'd met Oliver. If only she'd been *warned* that her daughter's boyfriend was a hard, gleaming, six-foot-tall black man. Coloured man, African-American man, whatever the correct phrase was. She had nothing against them, it was just the unexpectedness of it. (Keyes: 2007, 39)

Keyes' latest novel *The Brightest Star in the Sky* (2009) also contains a large number of characters from various parts of Africa and Eastern Europe. In doing so, Irish chick lit novels are acknowledging that the races and ethnicities located in Ireland are expanding in recent years, and it is refreshing that these changes are being portrayed in novels by Irish writers. Though still in early stages, that Irish chick lit is making attempts to acknowledge the existence of other races and cultures is a positive step forward for the genre,

and for Irish fiction in general. If such trends continue – and, as Ireland is becoming more diverse in terms of race, it is likely that they *will* continue – Irish chick lit authors may be viewed as actively influencing 'the role Ireland plays in ensuring that we live in a society which respects fundamental rights and rejects all forms of discrimination' (Fitzgerald: 1992, 265).

Conclusion

It has been suggested that any discussion of the changes in Irish society over the past few decades 'tends to elicit two views: that it has changed completely, and that it has not changed at all' (O'Connor: 1998, 1). While it is certainly possible to argue for the latter view, it is also important to note that life in Ireland has undoubtedly changed considerably in recent decades, and 'in modern Ireland things which were once hidden are now being told' (Hill: 2003, 218). This exploration of Irish chick lit is demonstrating how such novels are allowing authors to speak loud and clear about Irish issues, particularly those which were once hidden and silenced, and were largely related to the notion of Irish morality and purity, which has pervaded many areas of Irish life. Until recently, there existed a 'notion that the only sexuality compatible with Irishness is marital heterosexuality' (Pramaggiore: 2006, 118), and issues of race and ethnicity were rarely discussed in Irish fiction. That Irish chick lit writers are attempting to tackle such topics is a huge step towards portraying Ireland as a more tolerant and racially-aware society, therefore helping to diminish the traditional 'homogeneity of the Irish nation in terms of race, gender, and sexuality' (Pramaggiore: 2006, 118). Irish chick lit is thus developing into a socially-aware genre in terms of positively portraying, and promoting, difference and individuality, and, in doing so, may finally help to break the restraints of the notions of Irish "morality" that have repressed and controlled Ireland for so long.

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