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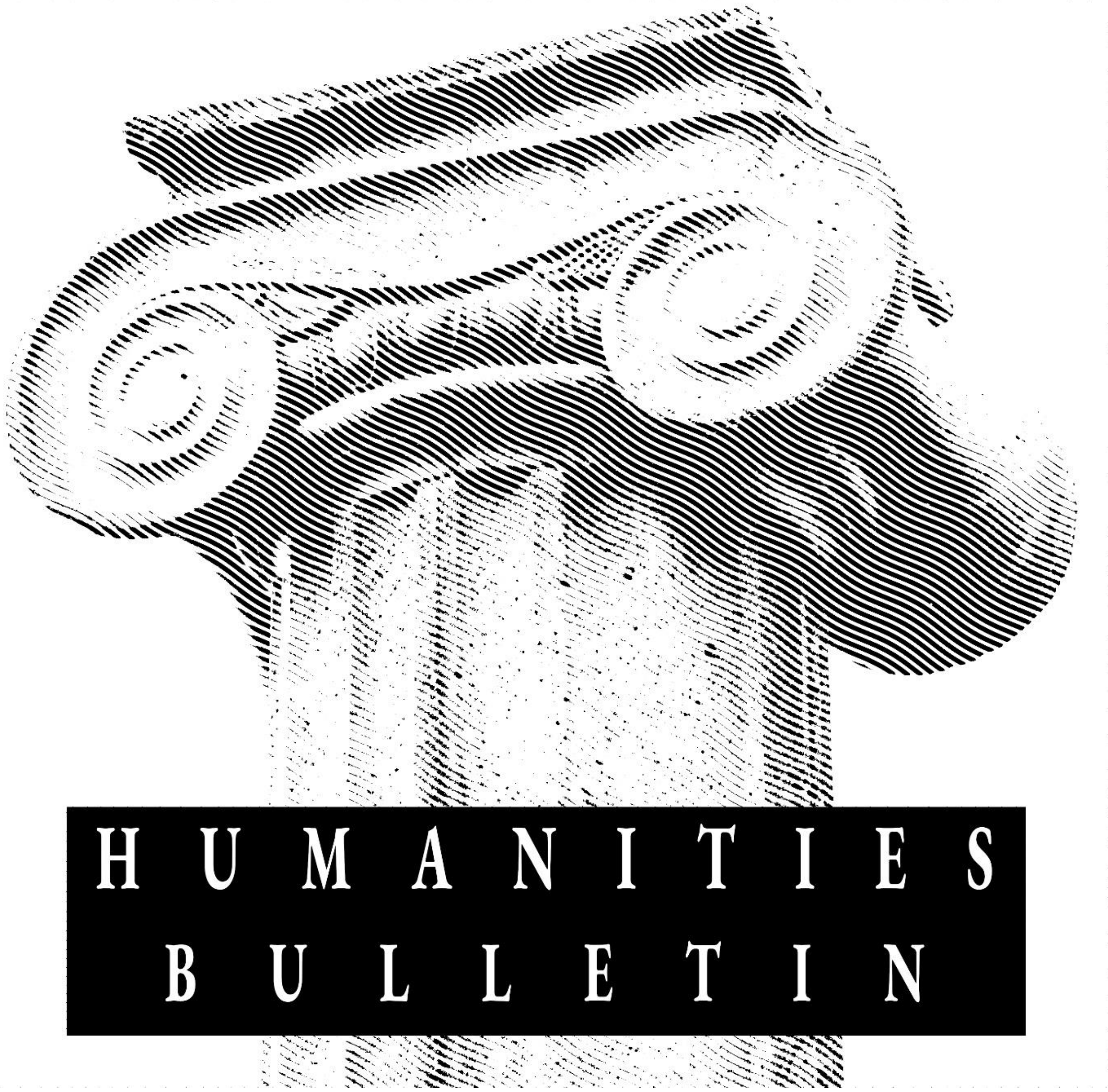
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On Narrative Identity and Truth of the Self

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Abstract:

The following paper offers an account of Paul Ricoeur's "narrative identity" which proposes that the identity of human persons (or selves) is constituted through narratives about oneself. This account of personal identity is then further formulated through replies to the main objection raised against it, namely, that narrative identity reveals a division in the self: it shows there must be - the objectors argue - a more originary experiential self prior to the self-interpreted narrative self. The replies to the objection offer, first, with the help of Jan Patočka's conception of "movement", a way to conceive a kind of being that is constituted through its self-narration; secondly, with the help of Judith Butler, a way to understanding how an apparent division in the self when one lies about oneself is bridged in an understanding of our own human limitations and fragility.

Keywords: Ricoeur, Narrative Identity, Patočka, Butler, Self, Truth

Introduction

Who we are is not a decided or obvious matter for us. We discover several times throughout the course of our lives that we were wrong about who we thought we were: we find aspects of who we are that reveal versions of ourselves we did not know until then; we realise we are also often wrong about who other people are, that we and others tell lies about ourselves, sometimes without even knowing it. So, in philosophical terms, how can we know who we are? How do know the truth about ourselves or others?

The theory of narrative identity, here in its articulation by Paul Ricoeur, offers an account of how selves are formed and constituted, how our identity comes to be. In this article, I have given an account of narrative identity and further elaborated it by replying to its main objection, namely, that for a self to be narrated it has to already exist. This doubling up of the self also seems to occur in lying - when we lie about ourselves we create a division between who we are and who we claim to be. Or so it would seem. The article offers both a conceptual and a practical answer to the main objection raised, both which bridge this apparent division between different orders of self.

1. Narrative identity and a question about unreliable narrators

Narrative identity proposes an answer to the question of how we can account for the identity of persons through (changes in) time. One of its central claims is that the identity of persons is not only numerical or one where one speaks of an entity being identical to itself; that is, we should not speak of personal identity as only the *subsistence* of the same entity through time. In the famous thought experiment of the "Ship of Theseus", for example, we are asked to consider if a ship is still the same if all its parts are progressively replaced over the course of many years and the old parts reassembled to make a new ship. If in one dock we have the old parts reassembled into a new ship and in the other the now fully renovated old ship, where is the ship of Theseus? If we say it is in the new dock, we have to also ask when it was that the original ship stopped being itself and became a new ship (since the removing of parts was gradual). Whatever answer we may find for this ship, narrative identity argues that there is a *different* question when speaking of the identity of persons. Paul Ricoeur distinguishes between two different ways of speaking about identity, *idem* and *ipse*. If numerical identity - being identical to oneself - is sought for by sameness (and characterised as *idem*), identity of persons, on the other hand, would also refer to *selfhood,* which would be characterised by the latin word *ipse*. When we speak of someone "being themselves", we are not only speaking of them being the *same* (*idem)* entity over time, we are speaking about their identity as a *self* (*ipse*). A self is a different kind of being than a ship, or any other entity; so while the Ship of Theseus invites us to consider a question about identity in time which is in some respects similar to the matter of identity of persons - insofar as we are speaking of the continuation of that person in time - personal identity will also require a different kind of answer that speaks to the particular manner of being of persons or selves - that selves are self-relating, for example, or that they do not require the same kind of permanence. How, then, does a self maintain an identity through time?

Two ways in which one can give an account of a *self* throughout time are, according to Ricoeur, *character* and *keeping one's word* (1994, 118). With character, we are not so far from an account of "sameness" in that we are talking about the continuation of character, or of the persistence of some aspects of someone's character; it is not the same as an immutable substrate of a "thing", but we are still talking about maintaining a semblance of some aspects of oneself through time (Ricoeur 1994, 121). That my stubbornness and impulsivity reminds you of myself as a child, for example, is a testament to the continuation of my character (and my self) even when in so many other ways, physical and otherwise, I am not recognisable as that young person. Keeping one's word, or "self-constancy", on the other hand, assures identity exactly in cases where there might be a disruption in the continuity of the character or in the sameness of a self in some other manner. When I make a promise, I am assuring you that I will keep my word - maintain myself, in a sense - regardless of what happens in the future. Even if I feel or am very different, my word will maintain *me* from here until then. Whereas character is still talking about a kind of persistence in time, however non-numerical it may be - and so Ricoeur says it is that aspect of selfhood which overlaps with *idem* - self-constancy is the bridge of identity in cases of a disruption in the continuity - I am here, giving myself, even if I am no longer the "same". (Ricoeur 1994, 168) Finally, narrative identity proposes that while saying that something is the same as itself (or identical) - *idem* - indicates a persistence in time of some unchanged aspect of the thing we are speaking of (such as with the ship of Theseus), for selfhood proper, on the other hand, this is not the case: "identity in the sense of *ipse* implies no assertion concerning some unchanging core of the personality." (Ricoeur 1994, 2)

Ipse, then, describes the *kind* of identity we're after when we speak specifically of persons or selves. The theory of narrative identity proposes the way through which (this kind of) identity is formed or constituted. According to narrative identity theory, our personal identity, *who* we are, is constituted through the telling of stories about ourselves. In threading the events, projects, anticipation, memories and relationships into a coherent narrative - emplotment, Ricoeur calls it - we create our sense of self. As our stories are continuously told and retold, altered, extended and revised, so is our self, continuously formed through our making sense of our lives in stories: "The narrative constructs the identity of the character, what can be called his or her narrative identity, in constructing that of the story told. It is the identity of the story that makes the identity of the character." (Ricoeur 1994, 147-148) In threading the story of our life (or of a part of our life as we tell it at a specific time), we establish the constancy of the character in the story; the protagonist of our life, *who* we are, is continuously and progressively defined as she appears and reappears in our stories as this *same* person.

We can certainly see how this works in fiction: we learn who the characters are in the stories we read or watch as the story unfolds. How a character responds to certain events, how her hidden dreams are revealed in an emotional response, the reliability her of gestures and habits, these are the ways in which we come to know a character in a story. One can even argue that this is how we come to know others in real life as well: they show us in their actions and by how they behave every day.

There is an issue with this, however, when it regards self-narratives: in a narrative of my self, I am *claiming* who I am. If the identity of my character is made through the unity of my story, it seems I have far too much creative license in who I am: I can tell a story that makes myself out to be who I want, I can distort the narrative, pick and choose which events to tell, make myself grander, or simply lie about who I am. In this way it seems I would be creating who I am. Narrative identity is positioned against what Ricoeur believes are the two extreme theoretical positions for the *ego:* on the one hand, a fundamental ego perfectly delimited and transparent to itself, as it appears in Descartes or Husserl, and on the other a "shattered cogito", as Ricoeur calls it, (1994, 11) where there is no consistent sense of self, and it can only be illusorily projected. If narrative identity is allowing one to create one's own character, then this would be closer to a position like that of a "shattered cogito" (as it appears in Nietzsche), where one's self is whatever one chooses freely to project or assume. But this goes against what Ricoeur says (1994, 16). So what is the case in narrative identity regarding the truth of our identity? How are the stories we tell about ourselves constitutive of our identity?

Ricoeur himself raises this question regarding our own creative role in self-narratives: "What is to be said, first of all, about the relation between author, narrator, and character, whose roles are quite distinct on the plane of fiction? When I interpret myself in terms of a life story, am I all three at once as in the autobiographical narrative?" (Ricoeur 1994, 159-160)

2. Criticisms: a doubling of the self – is there already a self present before I narrate it?

Although not specifically asked in terms of lies one might tell about oneself, criticisms raised by several authors to the theory of narrative identity are tied to a question of a doubling or a division in the self (which I would argue is also present in our common conceptions of lying about oneself). Authors arguing for a more phenomenological account of the self (like Dan Zahavi or Jakub Čapek) ask if a narrative account of the self isn't constructed or based on a more originary "experiential self". According to Zahavi, a core self is assured by the first person perspective of experience which makes the experiences "mine". Before I make sense or recount the experiences through stories - and thus could construct a narrative identity - I first have these direct, *self*-referential experiences. The stories I tell about myself are constructed by and so depend on these first-person experiences which I experience as "mine" (Zahavi 2007, 6). My autobiographical self, he claims, requires my experiential self but the inverse is not the case making the "experiential self" more originary or fundamental (Zahavi 2007, 11).

Following Zahavi (and another philosopher, Tengelyi), Josef Čapek's also critiques the theory of narrative identity by arguing that the narratives of our lives are *retrospective:* we narrate the events and interactions after they've happened (Čapek 2015, 102). In short, Čapek claims - again, alongside Zahavi - that this shows that there is already a self which is living through or experiencing events prior to narrating them. There is a "split of the self": on the one hand, a self who experiences life in the immediate in its uncontrollable expansiveness and who acts in it, and then the narrated self who tries to makes sense of it backwards, and own it (Čapek 2017, 371). The two do not coincide perfectly, and the narrated self both limits, distorts, and constructs from the living of the experiential self.

Sara Fernandes asks a similar question in different terms: she asks whether Ricoeur means that the self can only be accessed or articulated through narratives or - more strongly - the self is actually *constituted* through narratives (Fernandes 2008, 83). These are two distinct pictures: in the first, there is a subject already present underlying the narratives and which makes narratives possible, while in the second, the self only occurs *through* the narrating. Although Fernandes initially admits it seems Ricoeur is defending the second stronger option, that the self is indeed constituted or made by the narratives, she eventually defends he is arguing the first, that the self is merely articulated or understood in the self-narratives.

All these objections share the commonality of pointing to a division in the self, suggesting there is an immediately experiencing self which is later articulated in its meaning through narratives, and becomes an articulated or reflected self. In all of them, the self is already there, albeit in "unrefined" form, and later it is articulated or understood by reflection and stories. In lying about oneself there is also a perceived division in the self: when someone is telling a false story about themselves we think of them as standing apart from the self projected by the story, designing and orchestrating the character that she hopes to convince others (and even herself) is the same as the one telling.

3. Answers to the criticisms of a double or divided self

3.1. Jan Patočka's "movement" of existence - a conceptual reply

In a titled "Phenomenology and Narrative Identity", Čapek suggests that, given the problems raised with the theory of narrative identity, it would perhaps be more fruitful to look to understand personal identity as a "movement" (Čapek 2017, 374). Although Čapek does not mention Jan Patočka by name, it is, of course, the fellow Czech philosopher who developed a central idea of human existence as "movement", a particular kind of ontological conception of movement which gives an account precisely of how existence is in its becoming. Although Čapek is suggesting we think of movement as an *alternative* to narrative identity, I would like to take his suggestion to instead think of Patočka's specific "movement" as what might be helpful to understanding narrative personal identity.

Jan Patočka proposes, as one of the central ideas of his work, that human existence is "movement" understood as the realisation of possibilities. Patočka's conception of movement is adopted from the Aristotelian concept of movement where it is understood as the changes occurring in a given entity based on the qualities it already has predetermined in a substrate, as the actualisation of a potential (*dunamis - entelecheia*). A fruit or a leaf, for example, has a certain range of colour it adopts, from blossom to decay (including possible alterations through disease). This range of colour is predetermined by the qualities this entity has established in the substrate which defines its identity as a leaf or fruit of a particular plant. Human existence, on the other hand, is a kind of being that does not have a stable substrate in this same way, it is not predefined with a set of characteristics it must adhere to in its living path; in this way, the "movement" that defines human existence will be understood differently to Aristotle's original movement as well.

> The "I" is not a substrate passively determined by the presence or absence of a certain *eidos* [...]; it is something that determines itself and, in this sense, freely chooses its possibilities. "Being" does not mean, then, "being given", but choosing oneself, creating oneself in truth, *becoming*, achieving *what one is*. (Patočka 1998, 263, my translation from French)

The "movement" which defines human existence in Patočka, then, is a so-called "radicalised" version of the aristotelian movement. The realisation of possibilities in human existence is not made from a previously determined set of properties in the substrate; as "existence" we are the realisation of possibilites *as they are realised*, meaning, that we become what we realise from the possibilities we understand as such only as we realise them. Further, our possibilities are not only those of our biological being, but of *who* we can become.

Human beings are not *there*, already given and waiting to be discovered, says Patočka, but are instead a kind of being that is in the making: "each instant of his action - or non-action - implicates a decision about his manner of being." (Patočka 1998, 263, my translation from French). Human existence is the only kind of being whose being is involved in its own discovery.

This is what it means to say that existence is *in* its realisation, or "movement": the act by which we understand ourselves is the same which constitutes us. The identity of a being that is a self is, in this way, continuously becoming through a process of self-reflection. We become who we are as we engage in the world reflectively: in our experiences, we don't simply act or realise possibilities unthinkingly, automatically; instead, we understand our actions and ourselves through the realisation of possibilities, and in this understanding become who we are. Our understanding of the world and the possibilities we realise in it are inseparable from our own self-understanding: only self-understanding can bring forth the understanding of "things" as they are useful in our field of possibilities, says Patočka (1998, 255) that is, only my interest, my project, opens up the world as meaningful; at the same time, my identity and my sense of self is inseparable from the realisation of possibilities - I understand who I am as I realise myself in the world.

Considering the critiques by Fernandes, Zahavi and Čapek, that one must have a self prior to the narrating self, Patočka's conception of existence as this particular ontological movement - movement without a stable substrate - could allow us to think how that same self could be both present and becoming in these experiences and narratives, it can help us conceive the continuity of a self without having it exist (or subsist) prior to its realisation (or narration). "Movement" understood in this way could help us understand how someone - a self - could simultaneously be both the *actor* and the *narrator who is the constituter of self*.

Josef Čapek's suggestion to consider the notion of movement to think of identity in time was attached to the way we experience some temporal unities like melodies. (Čapek 2017, 374) Patočka himself points to melodies as a manner of understanding his own conception of movement as a being *in* realisation:

> [M]ovement of this kind makes one think of the movement of a melody or, more generally, of a musical composition: each element is only a part of something which exceeds it, that is not there immediately in an achieved figure, but is rather something which, while being prepared in all its singularities is always, in a sense, still to come, for as long as the composition is playing. (Patočka 1995, 108, my translation from French)

Think, for example, of Chopin's Piano Sonata No.3: each note, each keystroke, with its rhythm and force does not exist independently as an individual building brick in the complete sonata. Instead, the sonata *is* the whole of the composition, but it also *is* in its occurring; that is, the sonata does not exist when it's completed at its end, but *is* precisely in its becoming, in its development and making sense of transitions and moods, expected and unexpected. Similarly, human existence *is* in its occurring, in its becoming, it makes sense in its unfolding, and can't be separated from it. It is not as if it is an outside entity living secluded from its own living, looking out (or in) onto its life happening.

If we adopt this same (ontological) model to narrative identity, we could say that the self who tells the stories is only - and also continuously - constituted in the story telling. The self does not need to occur as a stable entity prior to offering a narrative of itself; instead, like the melody, the entity or identity is only occurring as it narrates itself through stories. The self is in perpetual formation. In "Life in quest of narrative", Ricoeur writes: "we never cease to reinterpret the narrative identity that constitutes us." (1992, 32) One of the advantages of narrative identity over some other theories of personal identity (like ones offered by a cartesian style ego, for example), is precisely that it allows for a changing self.

Nevertheless, is there really not in the meantime, as Zahavi says, already a first person perspective underlying our experiences, *before* the narrative? One could certainly try to imagine an experience with the structure of an I which doesn't require a narrative self - a repeatedly emerging ego, each time new, for example, or perhaps a person just awaking with complete amnesia -, but when we think of a self, their experiences are usually attached to their other experiences. What we are looking for in personal identity is the continuity of a self through time. When we engage in the "simple experiences" Zahavi mentions as indicative of an experiential self prior to narration - "seeing the moon, reading a text, perceiving a windowsill, a red book or a steaming cup" (Zahavi 2007, 2) - these would in fact be narratively attached to our other experiences. These experiences are mine not only because they come with an I-structure, but because they are temporally connected to other experiences I have. This is not just *a* red book, this is *the* red book I have been working with, that I spilled coffee on last week, and nearly lost in the library last semester. That experiences have an I-structure does not, on its own, give us personal identity. In the same way that the certainty of the "I" in the *cogito ergo sum* does not assure me that it is the same "I" every time I say it, the fact that experiences are attached to an I does not alone make them *my* experiences, in the sense that "my" implies a notion of personal identity.

A narrative self is already implicated in experience, just as experience is implicated in the narrative. One's narrative identity does not emerge, cleanly and newly, *after* one has experiences. I do not decide *ex nihilo* who I am in my stories, but I discover who I am (continuously as a life project) as I tell those same stories. Ricoeur speaks of the "pre-narrative capacity of what we call life" (1992, 27). Life is not composed of a neutral sequence of experiences, it is made of meaningful moments, activities, relationships, and in that sense it is already narratively structured. Meaning for us occurs in narrative structure (isn't it difficult to conceive of it otherwise?). Our identity, who we are, is then threaded through those moments through emplotment, in making a narrative, and the self-understanding and self-constitution - both the making and the discovering of oneself - occurs there, when we make a narrative unity of those events as it relates to us and tell it to others (or to ourselves as the imaginary others we draw up as possible interlocutors). "By narrating a life of which I am not the author as to existence, I make myself its coauthor as to its meaning.", writes Ricoeur. (1994, 162) We may not decide to having been born and in many ways what kind of life we have, but we do constitute our personal identity in our narrative telling of ourselves to others.

3.2. Truth in narrative identity and Judith Butler's ethics of vulnerability - a practical reply

But how do we do so? How do we constitute ourselves through narratives? Patočka's conception of existence as "movement" helped us understand a kind of being that is in its own becoming, that is both the realiser and the realisation of possibilities, or both the character and narrator; but now how can we conceive of how this happens in practice? And further, how do we answer the original question in this paper about someone lying about themselves? If the self is, in the strong sense, constituting itself in narratives, what happens in cases of deception and self-deception? Are we really who we claim to be?

Truth for Ricoeur in narrative identity is not bound by the requirements of certainty. We never expect (or should expect) the absolute transparent truth when speaking of who someone is (including ourselves). Yet, truth - albeit conceived rather differently from a correspondence understanding of truth - is an intrinsic and important part of narrative identity. Further, it makes this conception of personal identity necessarily ethical (which is, in my opinion, an interesting aspect of it).

Ricoeur adopts the notion of truth as *aletheia,* a continuous unveiling, but includes in it the role of the other. In narrative identity, a self is making oneself through narratives and these are also attempts at self-understanding; through my stories I am coming to an understanding of who I am, and in that self-understanding becoming myself. Whether the interlocutor is real or imagined, I am telling my stories to another, and I am in this sense, claiming to be someone. Ricoeur calls this kind of truth "attestation": I am testifying to being this person to another (including the "other" of my own conscience). The role of the other implies that my self-narrative can be accepted as believable, or not, and can of course be set against my other previous narratives, as well as my actions. The other is implicated in the truth of my identity: if the truth of myself involves my credibility and the trust of the other (that she believes *in* me), then I don't decide alone and unilaterally who I am. The opposite of truth in the sense of attestation, says Ricoeur, is "suspicion". (Ricoeur 1994, 302) My stories, like all stories, have a requirement for some credibility and consistency, though not absolute consistency, since as a person I am varied, multifaceted, conflicting, contradictory.

As a human person, there are unavoidable limitations to my being and perspective; this means all accounts of myself will be necessarily partial, faulty, and liable to illusions and deception. Judith Butler elaborates the idea wonderfully in an article (with the same title as their book), "Giving an account of yourself".

> My account of myself is partial, haunted by that for which I have no definitive story. I cannot explain exactly why I have emerged in this way, and my efforts at narrative reconstruction are always undergoing revision. There is that in me and of me for which I can give no account. But does this mean that I am not, in the moral sense, accountable for who I am and for what I do? [...] The recognition that one is, at every turn, not quite the same as what one thinks that one is, might imply, in turn, a certain patience for others that suspends the demand that they be selfsame at every moment. (Butler 2001, 27)

Butler's account of the self is not the same as Ricoeur's (though they share some overlapping aspects). Butler is seemingly interested in precisely that unnarratable part of the "I", the unconscious and the psychoanalytic philosophies that explore it. But she argues for an opacity of the self and an ethics based on it, and in this regard, there is a shared project with Ricoeur's narrative identity. The argument is that my self-narratives are always attempts, incursions at making sense of my own life. Some I will find to make sense and be illuminating, others will be mistaken, or will contradict future understandings, many I will revise and continue to revisit until the end of my life (which I will not be able to narrate at all); in all of them, the criterion of truth is not certainty but something which I (and others) must see that it "fits" - my previous narratives, the situation, my actions.

The stories we tell about ourselves are always in some ways, fiction. We are attempting to find who we are precisely by telling these stories - we can only come to understand and become who we are in these tellings and in the reception by others. To be a self is to be in search of oneself. These fictional stories - these lies, really, if we want to be rigid - are not somehow opposed to what is true about ourselves, but are instead part of the way to the truth about ourselves (which is always a way).

> Perhaps one can already guess that the spirit of lying is inextricably attached to our search of the truth, like a tunic of Nessus clinging to the human body. (Ricoeur 1990, 146, my translation from Castillian)

When speaking of the self, truth and lie do not sit opposite one another, but are bound together; the lies a part of the tissue we thread and shed on the way to making and finding who we are.

The fallible truth that is possible in these self-narratives yields a valuable treasure in that it brings forth an understanding of my own limitations and vulnerability, and by this, a greater sympathy for others' faulty narratives. Further, it gives rise also to an understanding that my inability to give a perfect account of myself calls for my *commitment* in that I am still accountable for myself and my life - I must still take responsibility even if I don't have a final, absolute knowledge of who I am. Now, it is *exactly* this commitment that allows for a continuity of my self, *an identity* - it is the "keeping of my word" which Ricoeur claimed assures the continuance of my ipseity through time when there is no continuation through the persistence (sameness or *idem*) of my character. It is precisely because of necessarily faulty personal narratives that I come through in promising to hold myself responsible all the same.

> 'Who am I, so inconstant, that *notwithstanding* you count on me?" The gap between the question which engulfs the narrative imagination and the answer of the subject who has been made responsible by the expectation of the other becomes the secret break at the very heart of commitment. This secret break is what makes the modesty of self-constancy differ from the Stoic pride of rigid self-consistency. (Ricoeur 1994, 168)

The truth of a self cannot not attained or asserted in transparency - for myself or others - it is always struggled through, a work in progress, fallible and inconstant. And yet, I assert and guarantee my identity - I am truthfully me - in the promise to hold myself responsible *to you* even so. It is the necessarily humanly fallible account of myself that gives rise to my identity as *someone* who can be depended on and held accountable.

Conclusion

In an article discussing narrative identity and self-interpretation, Arto Laitinen gives several examples in Ricoeur's work as evidence of his aversion to dichotomies (Laitinen, 2002, 57): narrative identity mediates between *idem* and *ipse*, for example, as well as between theories of an absolute "I" (as in Descartes) or its complete annihilation (as in Nietzsche). In the replies to the objections raised and identified in this article, the responses have also unified or brought together alleged divisions. To the objections of a divided self, where there would be a primary experiential self and then a narratively interpreted self, Patočka's "movement" was used to show how this could be one unitary occurring. To the common way of thinking about how one lies about oneself where a true self is machinating a false self, almost like a puppet master, we proposed, with Judith Butler, that the lies we tell are part of the way we make and discover the truth about ourselves. The responses integrate these apparent divisions, reformulating them in ways more accepting of our human complexity.

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Nothingness in Nishida and Aquinas: *Mu* as Disjointed Human Person and as Unnoticed *Ipsum Esse Subsistens*[1]

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Abstract:

In this paper, I examine Japanese Kyoto School philosopher Nishida Kitarō's use of *mu* (nothingness) in comparison with the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas to show where, and how, Nishida equivocates on *mu* on Thomistic grounds, conflating it sometimes with the human person as principle of knowledge and at other times with the Catholic God as *ipsum esse subsistens*. I conclude by bringing in St. Thomas Aquinas' works in response to some of Nishida's speculations about "nothingness," suggesting how a reading of Nishida alongside St. Thomas can shed new light on the problems of being and nothingness.

Keywords: Nishida Kitarō; nothingness (*mu*); St. Thomas Aquinas; *ipsum esse subsistens*; *esse commune*

Introduction

Nishida Kitarō (1870-1945) is the representative philosopher of the Kyoto School, a loose grouping of thinkers centered on Kyoto University who have theorized a Japanese engagement with mainly Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment thinkers from the West. Nishida is perhaps best known for his early work, *Zen no kenkyū* (An inquiry into the good) (1911), but in his later work he returned with increasing frequency to the concept of nothingness, *mu* (無). (Nishida 2012; Rigsby 2014, 470) In this paper, I examine Nishida's use of *mu* in various places in his philosophical works and compare those uses with St. Thomas' philosophy to show where, and how, Nishida equivocates on *mu*, conflating it sometimes with the human person as principle of knowledge and at other times with the Catholic understanding of God as *ipsum esse subsistens*. (cf. Goto-Jones 2013, 136-137) I conclude by bringing in St. Thomas' works to help respond in part to some of Nishida's misunderstandings of and about so-called "nothingness," suggesting how a reading of Nishida alongside St. Thomas can shed new light on the problems of being and nothingness with which Nishida grappled.

Terminological Clarifications and Equivocations

Comparative philosophical investigations are always fraught with terminological difficulties, and this is perhaps nowhere more daunting a hurdle to clear than in comparative ontological investigations between Nishida, a Zen Buddhist, and St. Thomas, an Aristotelian-influenced Roman Catholic. At the center of these difficulties lie being and nothingness. On both of these terms the Buddhist and the Catholic are bound to disagree. The general Western understanding of "nothingness," for example, is generally of a negative de-presencing, a withering absence, a truly sterile void generative of nothing besides more nothing. It is not just that there is nothing there, but that there is no there in which there could be nothing. Many conjure up images of outer space when trying to conceive of nothing, but even this will not do. The vacuum of space, scientists tell us, is actually crisscrossed with particles and radiation. Nothing is something even nothing-er than empty space. Better to imagine, if we can (and we can't), the nothing that there was (not) before there was any empty space at all. As Fr. Robert Spitzer argues in *New Proofs for the Existence of God*, our best scientific indication is that, prior to the Big Bang, there was not an infinitely dense point, there was (not) simply, nothing. (Spitzer 2010) How to explain how the universe apparently came from nothing flummoxes many cosmologists, but this consternation seems only further to confirm that, in the West, nothing means just that: nothing.[2] (Delfino and Fradd 2018)

Nishida's use of the term "nothing" was very different from this. Drawing heavily on Buddhism, and in particular Zen Buddhism, Nishida deployed the term "nothing" to mean, not a total absence of anything, but the ground of ontological and epistemological arising, the field of co-dependent origination akin to the "nothing" argued by much earlier Japanese Buddhist philosophers Kūkai (774-835) and Dōgen (1200-1253). (Kasulis 2019, 134) For those medieval Buddhist philosophers, and for the Buddhist and later Zen tradition generally, "nothing" as understood in the West is not a possible category. There is no nothing, there is only nothingness, a kind of gerundive contingency which drains phenomena of permanence but does not reduce down to the total absence of any kind of being. Nothingness, *mu*, is not prior to somethingness, but is rather the inevitable consequence of there being anything at all and anyone around to be sentient of (no)things. Nothingness takes somethingness for granted.[3] *Mu* is the instability of the taken-for-granted world, the ineluctability of dharma and karma, akin perhaps to what Heraclitus means by the functional non-category *οὐδὲν* when he says that "nothing" (*οὐδὲν*) remains the same, and not "nothing" as conveyed by the Latin *nihil*.

However, Nishida's *mu* was not completely identical with the Dōgen and Kūkai conceptions of the same term. By reading Nishida in the light of the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas, it is possible to see that Nishida equivocated on *mu* in at least two ways, even at times within the Zen tradition. Nishida uses *mu* as a disjointed stand-in for God. (See generally Nishida 2012, 250-258) Nishida does this oftentimes explicitly, seeking to rectify the Christian, or Judeo-Christian, God with the Zen Buddhist understanding of ultimate reality, namely, *mu*. Although Nishida uses the word "God" (*kami* 神) in the Judeo-Christian sense in his writings and even refers to *mu* as "God" in some passages, Nishida blurs the distinction between the Catholic God and the Buddha, granting God a kind of buried transcendence or transcendent immanence and thereby rendering quite difficult any clarification, on a Thomistic reading at least, of Nishida's thought on this score. (Leonardi 2014, 449, 451, 453) In many places, Nishida's *mu* does, indeed, hew close to, if not restate, classical understandings of the Buddha within the Zen Buddhist tradition. However, in other places, what Nishida seems to mean by *mu* is not Buddha, and not even God in the abstract, but *ipsum esse subsistens* as set forth by St. Thomas in *De ente et essentia* and elsewhere. This is the root of the troubles in comparative Nishida-Catholic philosophy, and a cross-reading with St. Thomas' writings will make this clear and also point the way to solutions. As a consequence of this misunderstanding of being and apparent ignorance of St. Thomas' teachings on *ipsum esse subsistens*, Nishida also uses *mu* as a disjointed stand-in for what St. Thomas understood as the human person as a principle of knowledge.[4]

Some further clarification of terminology is in order. Nishida's use of *mu*, while heavily dependent on Nishida's Zen Buddhist background (before becoming a professional philosopher Nishida spent ten years as a lay Zen practitioner (*koji* 居士)), often does not retain, or even reflect, the specificity of terminology that other Buddhist philosophers have developed. (Waldenfels 1966, 361) When Nishida writes *mu*, he sometimes appears to mean *kū*, or emptiness. (Leaman 2001, 304-305, 393-394) Tibetan Madhyamaka philosophers in particular, for example Tsongkhapa and Shakya Chokden, refined the earlier Indian concept of *śūnyatā* (emptiness) to indicate the ultimate ontological and epistemological truth. (Leaman 2001, 181) What Nishida seems most often to mean by *mu* is closer to Nāgārjuna's *pratītyasamutpāda*, "dependent arising," a concept central to Zen philosophy and especially prevalent in the works of Dōgen. (Leaman 2001, 367) Speaking strictly within a Buddhist context, Nishida seems in his philosophy to be attempting to combine, in a creative way, the esoteric Buddhism of Kūkai, who thought that the "World Buddha," the compassionate body of the universe, presented no obstacles to the enlightenment of any sentient being (thus, the universe was "empty," that is, free from obstruction to the seeker after enlightenment), (Leaman 2001, 81; Heisig, et al. 2011, 59-61) and Dōgen, whose "existential moment" (*uji* 有時) was premised upon the codependent origination of all forms and, in turn, the emptiness of all phenomena. (Heisig et al. 2011, 148-151) Nishida wants his *mu* to be generatively empty but also not a hindrance to ultimate enlightenment. He therefore does not mean by *mu* what Westerners would probably think of upon hearing the term "emptiness" or "nothingness".

As might be expected, this ado about *mu* is precisely where Nishida's philosophy has been met by confusion and criticism. It hardly clarified things that Nishida brought into his philosophy a great deal of Western philosophy on top of his rich readings in Buddhism. Nishida was a teacher of German by trade, and he read widely in Kant, Fichte, Hegel, and Husserl. He also knew Plato and other non-German philosophers well. However, despite this broad familiarity with Western sources, Nishida seems not to have read widely in the Scholastic philosophers, and in particular seems not to have incorporated the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas into his work. Comparing Nishida's use of *mu* with Aquinas' understanding of God as *ipsum esse subsistens*, existence itself, we can see that what Nishida was groping towards in his writings was often, it seems, what Aquinas clarified some seven centuries before Nishida wrote. The *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* entry for Nishida argues that, "For Nishida, the final level that holds differences or contradictions together is ultimately unanalyzable absolute nothingness." (Maraldo 2019) But Nishida actually seemed to mean something closer to Aquinas' *ipsum esse subsistens*, not unanalyzable nothingness, but the very ground of being—or, as the Zen practitioner Nishida might have said, becoming—itself. (See Jacinto 1994, 142-144) Further, by *zettai mu*, "absolute nothingness," Nishida seemed to mean, not a total and utter non-existence, a nothing, a complete void, but, rather, a mystical dialectic, the unapproachability of the creature to the Creator on the creature's terms, an apophatic reading of the Godhead which is Zenlike only to a point but then becomes very much like what St. John of the Cross meant by "*nada*".[5] (Nobuhara 2008, 53; Kopf 2002, 237)

***Mu* and God**

For scholar of the Kyoto School Hans Waldenfels, Nishida's attempt to render in human language the ineffability of human existence springs from Nishida's "spirit of nonattachment to both being and nonbeing, which since Nāgārjuna was handed on through China to Japan, especially in Zen Buddhism". (Waldenfels 1966, 360) It seems more accurate to agree, however, with Noda Matao, whom Waldenfels cites earlier in the same paragraph, who held that Nishida "accepts, from the first, the position of a mystic. His metaphysics has its characteristic motif in his mystic religiosity." (Waldenfels 1966, 360) This mysticism seems to be a product of Nishida's ontological position. Nishida rejects most notions of God found in the West, but at the same time realizes that it is impossible to proceed any farther philosophically, in the light of the new knowledge and stimuli from the West, using only the Zen tradition. Nishida writes, in a Hegelian-Dōgenian vein:

> Something like the self-consciousness of God which develops in world history is nothing but empty time which could be imagined on the grounds of nature. The true God is not the creating God. It must be something like—what the scholar in the field of mysticism call—*Gottheit* (divinity). (Waldenfels 1966, 366)

As Waldenfels notes, "We realize here again that the insufficient notion of creation is one of the real stumbling blocks on the way to some kind of understanding of what people in the West mean when they speak of God." (Waldenfels 1966, 366)

Nishida must have realized that his attempts to speak of ontology equivocally across both Western and Buddhist traditions were unsatisfactory, because he ranged widely across Western philosophy in an attempt to put into non-Buddhist terms the idea he had of *mu*. Nishida was thorough, at least as far as non-Scholastics go, but for all that it is doubtful whether he himself ever hit on the right mode of discourse for the ideas he was trying to convey. As Waldenfels notes of Nishida's reading and responses:

> In a book of Max Stirner, Nishida finds a saying about God, '*Namen nennen Dich nicht*' (names do not express you), which he applies to the 'Ego' (II, 272).[6] He searches for other analogies in the West and quotes

from J. [Jacob] Boehme ('*Ungrund*', 'the reality is the bottom of an ocean which cannot be reached ... if it could be reached, it were not reality' (II, 274f)), Dionysius Areopagita ('While God is everything, He is not anything' (II, 275, 283)), Scotus Eriugena, whom he knows most probably only indirectly through J. [Johann Nepomuk] Huber's book *Scotus Eriugena* (II, 278).[7] Nishida repeatedly refers to Eriugena in this work. 'If you make God being, it does not fit, if you make Him nothingness, it does not fit; if you call Him motion, it does not fit, if you call Him stillness, it does not fit; He is what is said'—and here Nishida uses a frequently used Zen phrase—'"if you are able to say it,—thirty strokes; if you are not able to say it,—thirty strokes"'. (II, 279) God is at the same time—what Eriugena calls—*Natura creans et non creata* and *Natura nec creata nec creans* (II, 279; cf. 287, 301). He is *natura superessentialis*, which means that all categories are denied (II, 277, 283). Nishida even refers to Gnostics like Basileides ('ὁ οὐκ ὢν θεός', which Nishida translates 'the God who is not (yet?)', '*mizai no kami*') and Valentinus (βυθοσ, depth) (II, 319). One might, therefore, say that Nishida looks in the direction of God in order to clarify his own understanding of the ultimate reality. On the other hand, he is somewhat attracted by the word 'nothingness' and states several times that the 'Ego comes from creative nothingness and returns to creative nothingness'; he thinks that this expression is able to reveal the true state of the will (II, 272f; also 275, 281; again in later works, cf. especially IV, 238f). It is evident that this kind of nothingness does not refer to God (cf. II, 281); however, it is also not clearly related to the *creatio ex nihilo*. It rather seems that the '*creative* nothingness' is suggested by Bergson's *élan vital*. (Waldenfels 1966, 364)

In addition to this tour of the apophatic thinkers and mystics, Nishida also refers often to Nicholas Cusa to help explain Nishida's conception, or non-conception, of God. As Waldenfels quotes Nishida:

a God who is the creator or superintendent of a universe and who stands outside the universe cannot truly be said to be an absolute, infinite God. I think that the Hindu religion in the remote past and the mystical school which flourished during the 15th and 16th centuries in Europe were seeking God by intuition in the human heart, and this is the most profound knowledge of God. In what form does God exist? From one viewpoint, God, as such men as Nicholas Cusa have said, is found by negation, for that which one specifies or must affirm, i.e., that which much [sic: "must"] be seized, is not God, for if He is that which is specific and must be seized, He is already finite, and is unable to perform the infinite function of unifying the universe (*De docta ignorantia*, Cap. 24). (Waldenfels 1966, 357-358)

With Cusa even more than with the Western apophatic thinkers, Nishida can be seen to depart from the Catholic, Thomistic understanding of God. For it is not the same thing, on the Thomistic understanding, to say that one cannot speak of God, and to say that God and nothingness, *mu*, are identical. The shift Nishida makes in this passage illustrates the difficulty, perhaps the impossibility, of fusing Buddhist and Catholic conceptions of either divinity or nothingness at a fundamental level. "Seen from this point," Nishida continues, building on his citation of Nicholas of Cusa:

God is absolute nothingness (*mattaku mu*). [A better translation might be: "nothing but nothing".] However, if one says that God is merely nothingness (*tan ni mu*), this is certainly not so. At the base

> of the establishment of reality there is a unifying function which clearly cannot be moved... God... is the basis of reality, and only because He is able to be nothingness, is there no place whatsoever where He is not and does not operate. (Waldenfels 1966, 357-358)

Nishida thus understood God to have a kind of Keatsian negative capability which was His "unifying function". (See, e.g., Castellano 2010) At the basis of reality's "establishment," Nishida argues, God is there, an omnipotent cipher, the anode of all existence but by that measure only the universe's only omnipresent force, a presence of non-presencing which is also the confluence, for Nishida, of the Buddhist and Christian understandings of divinity and nothingness.

St. Thomas Aquinas on Being and Nothingness

St. Thomas Aquinas offers a stark, positive contrast to Nishida's insistence on a somehow-all-fecund, -all-encompassing *via negativa*. St. Thomas was working with his own set of philosophical forebears, and, like Nishida, Aquinas was also heavily influenced by two imperfectly blended religious and philosophical traditions—St. Thomas' Christianity can be compared in this sense to Nishida's Buddhism, both being world religions with various universal claims, and, by extension, the pagan forerunners to Christianity, such as Greek philosophy, can be compared to the various strains of Indian philosophy which later Buddhist thinkers in Tibet, China, Japan, and elsewhere were to appropriate and refine. St. Thomas' encounter with Aristotle, however, unlike the Buddhists' encounters with the Indian tradition, were made in the light of Christian Revelation, and so St. Thomas was predisposed to penetrate beyond the various forms and appearances to the *ipsum esse subsistens*, God Himself. Where Nishida reached back into his cultural and experiential field of understanding and found the doctrine of *mu*, St. Thomas, building on Aristotle, fixed on the transcendence what might be called "*yū* (有)," or being (or *Dasein*, in a better translation of *yū*, emphasizing the "in-place-ness" or "being-there-ness" of Nishida's ontology). From this insight St. Thomas was able to penetrate to an understanding of God, not as nothing, but as the ground of everything, as being itself.

In St. Thomas' writings on being and nothingness we find that what Nishida grasped for language to describe was probably what St. Thomas understood as *ens commune*, which is a preliminary to the deeper understanding of being and nothingness which Nishida sought but was apparently never able to attain on Thomistic grounds. As Thomist scholar and philosopher Fran O'Rourke explains:

> The primary metaphysical signification of 'being' is *ipsum esse commune creaturae*. It is the datum from which all other notions are derived. Even *ens commune*, the logical concept of the entity of things, which provides the formal object of ontology, stands at the threshold of metaphysical reflection and does not penetrate to the inner principle sought by a deeper reflection upon reality. [...] Our concept of *esse commune* (the perfection common to all particular beings), resides only within the intellect—a characteristic of all concepts. But it is grounded in concrete being. Just as the perfection of humanity

> exists in reality at the level of the individual, the perfection of *esse* is the primary perfection of each being. This act of *ipsum esse commune* is what the concept refers to. (O'Rourke 2005, 149)

Nishida was trying to understand God apophatically, and trying to reconcile Christian apophatic thinkers and mysticism with Buddhist *mu*-thinking, but he seems to have been stuck at the level of the conceptual, what St. Thomas saw as *ipsum esse commune creaturae*. By foregrounding *mu*, nothingness, Nishida made it difficult to make the further conceptual leap beyond what he saw, being a Zen Buddhist, as the emptiness of the self, the non-self, to the absolute Being which in Thomistic thought gives existence—not non-existence—to everything and everyone else.

Indeed, the more Nishida attempted to use *mu* as the framework or paradigm for his philosophical ecumenism, the more this ecumenism seemed to elude him. The problem seems to be fundamental, for, at least on the Thomistic reading, God is not *mu*, but Being pure and absolute. The human person, who possesses this being in a particular and finite way, is the principle of knowing, or approaching, the font of the individual's existence. (cf. Kopf 2002, 226-229; Abe 2008, 90-93) For St. Thomas, finitude does not lead to nothingness. Finitude instead points to Being, not non-being. O'Rourke continues:

> *Esse commune* is the act of existing inherent in finite beings, in which being does not as such subsist in its fullness. Reflection upon these beings reveals the value of being as a perfection in itself. [...] While we attribute *esse* to God, the *esse* signified transcends the mode of signification, which is proper to the *esse commune* of beings. We necessarily acquire our notion of God as absolute and infinite subsisting Being through the mediation and transformation of our concept of *esse commune*, the being common to his created analogues. The idea of God, however, infinitely transcends *esse commune* and refers beyond finite being to absolute and infinite subsisting Being which exists necessarily in itself as the plenitude of perfection. (O'Rourke 2005, 149-150)

This is the leap that Nishida did not make. Once the concept of an absolute God is introduced, then the predication of *mu* as ground of being instantly disappears. Nishida's conception of "God" seems to have precluded transcendence, clearing the ground for *mu* but only by prescinding from the Catholic, especially Thomistic understanding of the deity. (Shimomura 1966a, 336-337; Berthrong 2003, 175; Nakata 1997, 190-193) Nishida strove to draw the infinite down into the primordially contingent, the dark, feltlike, mossy *mu* from which, Buddhists hold, phenomena and observer both codependently arise and back into which both return, dharma and karma cancelling out in the long run.

St. Thomas taught something radically different. For there to be an *actus essendi*, an act of existing, for human beings, there must be an ungerunded verb, a pure and total Existence, an Aristotelian Unmoved Mover but with plenary power of *creatio ex nihilo*. This is God, *Ipsum Esse Subsistens*:

> The fundamental difference between *esse*, the *actus essendi* of finite beings, and *Ipsum Esse Subsistens*

> is that the act of esse does not itself subsist but is the act through which a being exists: *esse significat aliquid completum et simplex sed non subsistens*. [citing *De Potentia* 1, 1] *Esse commune* cannot subsist by itself, precisely because it is *commune* and not *unum*, diversified as it is by the substances which receive it [citing *De Potentia* 7, 2 ad 5] and distinguished, therefore, from *Ipsum Esse per se subsistens*. [...] Being as such is unique: *esse inquantum est esse, non potest esse diversum*. [citing *Summa Contra Gentiles* 2, 52, 1274] At the level of finite reality, however, in the immediate objects of our knowledge, the perfection of being is diversified throughout the multiplicity of concrete substances: *esse est diversum in diversis*. [citing *De Ente et Essentia*, V] By analogy, however, it is common to all. [citing *Summa Theologiae*, I, 4, 3: *Secundum aliqualem analogiam, esse est commune omnibus*] In finite reality being does not present itself as subsistent, but as inherent in beings, interior to all yet distinct in each. (O'Rourke 2005, 151-152)

There is, in a sense, a *mu* lurking in finite existence. Creatures do not exist of their own accord, an understanding of the contingency of being which is central to Buddhist philosophy and especially prominent in Zen, and also central to Catholic theology and philosophy (in particular the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas). However, while how anything comes out of nothing is a paradox for the Buddhist, for St. Thomas this seeming paradox was the window waiting to be opened to the glory of God.

This unresolved, "un-Thomased" paradox of existence in the face of non-existence is at the heart of what Nishida seems to mean by *mu*, nothingness, and even more so by "*zettai mu*," or "absolute nothingness". Nishida never quite gets beyond the dialectics of the Buddhist *mu*, and cannot absolutize the relativism at the bottom of his concept of the so-called "absolute". There may be a linguistic reason for this, at least in part. As Waldenfels points out, "*zettai*" in Japanese does not mean precisely "absolute," although that is probably the only feasible English translation of "*zettai*". (Nakata 1997, 196-197) Inherent in the term, Waldenfels notes, is a relation, a negation of something already there. It is a kind of Buddhist "absolute," the absolutism of codependent origination. "Unlike the western terms 'absolute-relative'," Waldenfels notes:

> the Japanese terms *zettai* 絶対 (absolute) and *sōtai* 相対 (relative) imply each other etymologically. Etymologically *zettai* is said with regard to *sōtai* and is determined as being free, separated, cut off from *tai* (that which stands opposite). This object tai is not expressed in the western term 'absolute'. (Waldenfels 1966, 369 fn 56)

This is a paradox that is more than merely etymological, however. It is the very nature of Nishida's work. As the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* entry puts it:

> Equally paradoxical are the positive descriptions Nishida gives it [i.e., *zettai mu*], in spite of the implicit claim that it defies description. Rather than a mere absence of being, meaning, or function, absolute nothingness is active and creative in forming the actual world; and it manifests or awakens to itself through self-awareness. It is the foundation of the world and of the self which is a focal point of the

> world; but it is an uncommon kind of foundation in that it functions through self-negation. It cannot be called 'absolute' unless it negates any particular determination of it and simultaneously enfolds them all. It is the universal of universals. (Maraldo 2019)

Thus, the problem of Nishida's apotheosizing of nothingness goes far, indeed infinitely, beyond the problem of etymological stickiness of terminology for "absolutism" and "relativism" in Japanese.

Nishida faced directly the problem of nothingness, *mu*, and made perhaps the most sustained attempt in the history of philosophy to reconcile the Buddhist, in particular Zen, understanding of "nothing" with the Western, in particular Christian, understanding of God. In the end, however, Nishida had no way to resolve the problem of *mu* other than by approximating it to Western apophatic thinkers' and mystics' conception of God. Nishida held that:

> Nothingness separated from being is not true nothingness; the one separated from the all is not the true one; equality separated from distinction is not true equality. In the same way that if there is not God there is no world, if there is no world there is no God. (Waldenfels 1966, 358)

The topsy-turvy "God" who is both creator and creature of the world of forms ends up causing more philosophical problems than "he" (or "it") explains. This tangle remains tangled sans intervention by St. Thomas Aquinas and his concept of *ipsum esse subsistens*.

There appears to be no way around this paradox as Nishida has framed it. On a Thomistic reading, the nothing and the everything, the one and the many, are hopelessly jumbled. For that reason, perhaps, Nishida tried two other methods for reconciling the apparently irreconcilable. When not nibbling at the edges of mysticism or engaging in the kind of ecumenical apophaticism to which his erudition in post-Enlightenment European philosophers seemed naturally to lead him, Nishida tried resolving the paradox described above, the apparent tension between existing individuals and the ground of being itself, by privileging on the one hand experience, and, on the other, place. In his earliest works, especially in *Zen no kenkyū*, Nishida attempts to ground being-in-the-world in, or even to identify it as, "pure experience". (Nishida 2012, 17-27; Fujita 2007, 40-42) "Pure Experience" is the title of both Part I and Chapter 1 of *Zen no kenkyū*, and Nishida attempts to say that "unity of consciousness" is the organizer of pure experience. However, facing criticism from his students and peers, Nishida later refined his doctrine on "pure experience" into what he called "place" (*basho*). (Nakata 1996, 169-170; Nakata 1997, 161-164; Tao 2005, 453) Thus, as Nishida wrote in "The Logic of Place":

> The opposition and relationship between form and matter emerge in the *place* of experience, as does the subject-object opposition in which the self, as a true 'I', reflects itself infinitely within itself, making itself nothing in order to contain the infinity of being. (Heisig, et al., 2011, 652)[8]

Neither pure experience nor place allowed Nishida to overcome his philosophical difficulties in attempting to lead *mu* into co-(non)existence with God, but this is not to say that Nishida's efforts were wasted. He probably did not realize it, but he did, in fact, brush up very close against the Thomistic position which, if but pursued, would perhaps have helped Nishida see clear of his longstanding difficulties and beyond the strictures of *mu*.

Place and Personhood

It was also in "The Logic of Place" that Nishida came close to arriving at the true crux of *esse commune* and *ipsum esse subsistens*, namely in Nishida's conception of the human person. Influenced by the non-self or no-self (*muga*, *anatman*, *anattā*) tradition of Buddhist philosophy, Nishida rejects the human person as the principle of knowing. (Shimomura 1965b, 9; Nakamasa 2015, 185; Carter 2009, 13) "We may think of the self," Nishida writes:

> as a kind of unifying point that sets up within the 'consciousness of the self' an opposition between the knower and the known, that is, between subject and object, form and matter. This unifying point is not the knower but merely that which has already been objectified and known. (Heisig, et al., 2011, 653)

A Thomistic understanding of personhood, however, might have allowed Nishida to rectify the apparent contradictions between the mind and the world that Buddhism resolves only by appealing to doctrines of emptiness, nothingness, and impermanence. Nishida approaches also, again seemingly unwittingly, to the Thomistic position in "Pure Experience," a later work on an earlier theme, when he writes that "Over time I came to realize that it is not that experience exists because there is an individual, but that an individual exists because there is experience." (Heisig, et al., 2011, 647) This is a simple inversion of what St. Thomas taught about the human person. When Nishida later transitioned from "pure experience" to "place," he came closer:

> The true self is the self at work, and true reality must be considered the object of this acting self. We are born in this world and realize our selves by acting in it. (Heisig, et al., 2011, 648)

However, even here we find that Nishida still apparently did not have the Thomistic mental furniture on *ens* or *esse* to overcome the discrepancies in his thought or in his encounters with the Buddhist philosophical tradition.

The following passage from St. Thomas' *De ente et essentia* helps resolve some of the tension in Nishida's philosophy between existence and non-existence, the human person and *mu*:

> If each thing which receives something from another is in potency to it, and what is received in it is its act, the quiddity or form that is the intelligence is in potency to the existence it receives from God, and that received existence is in the mode of an act. Thus potency and act are found in intelligences, but not form and matter except equivocally. (Aquinas 1998, 43)

On the Thomistic view, the fact that there is an intelligence, a human knower, pondering the apparent other facts of the existence of the world and of the concomitant non-permanence of the existence of either the knower or the known, points, if the sign is followed, to God. Not to nothingness, but to God. Not to a *mu*, but to a Thou. One wonders what a Thomistic Nishida might have written about the realization of the self acting in the world, past the fact of acting and to the deeper question of being. Nishida was guided in his attempts to understand being by his Buddhist training, and also by his familiarity with post-Enlightenment European philosophers. It is tantalizing to speculate on how a deep interaction with the Scholastics, in particular with the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas, might have prompted Nishida to refine his thought beyond the categories of *mu*, mere act, the apophatics of Nicholas of Cusa, and the quasi-nominalism of Duns Scotus.

Conclusion

In the end, instead of following the personalistic lead of the St. Thomas whose writings he apparently did not know in detail, Nishida returned, after his long detour into considerations of the divine, into nothingness, explicating Zen master Kanemitsu Kogun's teaching of "regain[ing] the world and yourself in wonderful self-identity" by realizing that *satori*, enlightenment, is awareness that "the Universe has become nothing, and the Ego has become nothing," but that in this "same spark of Nothingness" lies the attainment of the true self. (Waldenfels 1966, 368) Nishida ends his philosophical statements by arguing for "absolute contradictory self-identity". (Waldenfels 1966, 369) This is apparently a restatement of Nicholas of Cusa's "*coincidentia oppositorum*," but put into final Buddhist terms by a lifetime devotee of Zen. (Waldenfels 1966, 369)

Nishida Kitarō is known as the "philosopher of nothingness," but in this paper I have attempted to show that Nishida did not engage with the Thomistic understanding of what "nothingness," *mu*, means comparatively, or, more pointedly, what *mu* really is and is not in the language of Catholic theology and philosophy. On a Thomistic reading, especially, if nothingness is not total and final, then it has no meaning. It cannot generate out of itself, as many contemporary atheistic physicists and cosmologists assert. It cannot do anything. It is nothing. Nishida, of course, rejects this view explicitly. (Shimomura 1965a, 117) Nishida knew very well what *mu* meant in the Buddhist philosophic tradition, and it was his life's project to find a common ground—of nothingness—for speaking about both Zen and non-Buddhist ontologies. That from Nishida's common ground has not sprung forth the transcendence he may have hoped for is attributable, I have argued here, to Nishida's unfamiliarity with the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas (Shimomura 1966b, 204), and in particular Aquinas' teachings about the human person, a creature who participates in the *ipsum esse subsistens*, the pure act of "to be" Who is God Himself. *Mu* has no generative or combinatory power in Aquinas' thought. A fortiori, *mu* cannot be transcendent, and cannot be God. God is not nothing—nothing is not God. That is the crucial difference about which Nishida and St. Thomas Aquinas appear bound always to disagree.

Endnotes:

1. I wish to thank Professor Robert Delfino for his suggestions and critiques on an earlier draft of this paper. All errors and interpretations of course remain my own.
2. See also (Hawking and Mlodinow 2010; Hoyle 1982; Krauss 2012).
3. There is a correlative in prime matter and form in material substances. See (Robinson 1974, 168-188). (My thanks to Prof. Delfino for pointing out this analogy.) In fact, Nishida's first use of the term mu occurred in a treatment of Aristotle. (Nakata 1997, 178)
4. See, e.g., Nishida Kitarō, "Watashi to nanji [I and thou]" (Nishida 2002).
5. The comparison with St. John of the Cross' *nada* was suggested by Prof. Robert Delfino, personal communication, August, 2020.
6. These numbers refer to *Nishida Kitarō zenshū*, op. cit., volume number and page number(s).
7. But cf. (Aquinas 1998, 429-431)
8. Note here the similarities between the active and passive intellects in both Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas. I am grateful to Prof. Delfino for pointing this out. See also (Ri-zenfūba- 1987, 28).

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Genesis and relevance of the Frankfurt critical theory

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Abstract:

In the course of this work, it is important first of all, to explore the thematic texture of the Frankfurt School from a historical perspective, without claiming to present a complete balance, but revealing its originality and its fundamental ideas. We intend to explore this critical movement and present the various reflexive stages that allow clarifying the conceptual premises of a possible critical theory. We intend to revisit and highlight the philosophical, sociological and political meaning of this reality called the Frankfurt School and bring to light its main contents and priorities that continue to be the subject of debate today.

Keywords: theory, reason, criticism, emancipation, Frankfurt School

Introduction

Understanding the originality and the fundamental ideas of the Frankfurt School is essential in the task we set ourselves. It is important to question the philosophical, sociological and political meaning of this reality called Frankfurt School. Not forgetting that the School is not exhausted in these categories, it is important to highlight the originality of the Frankfurt project, in elaborating a critical theory of society which gave rise to a vast programme of interdisciplinary work, deeply marking the course of the social sciences not only in the Marxist strand, which was its original root, but also in the general panorama of contemporary social and political theory.

Our main objective is to revisit and highlight the main conceptions and ideas that led to the implementation of German critical theory and its inscription in the programme of philosophy, the social sciences, art and aesthetics, and, in general, in the current of thought. Therefore, we will revisit this school of social and political thought, which is still able to inspire us today, supporting our research in various authors and authors who continue to develop critical theory to this day.

The foundation of the Frankfurt School

The Frankfurt School would be the current that took shape in Frankfurt through a decree of the Ministry of Education, dated February 3, 1923, as a result of an agreement between the ministry and the *Gesellschaft fur Sozialforschung* (Society for Social Research) which enabled the creation of the *Institut fur Sozialforschung (*Institute for Social Research), as Paul-Laurent Assoun (1989, 11) states.

The origin of the Institute, preceding this date, is the initiative of Felix J. Weil, the son of a wealthy businessman and a doctor of political science, who organised during the summer of 1922 the *Erste Marxistische Arbeitswoche* (First Marxist Working Week) in Ilmenau (Turinge), with the participation of Lukács, Korsch, Pollock and Wittfogel, with the aim of fostering genuine Marxism. From this idea, benefiting from a donation from Hermann Weil and a contract with the Ministry of Education, the Institute for Social Research was born. Its first appointed director was Kurt A. Gerlach, who died in the same year and was replaced by Carl Grumberg, who held the post until 1930. The journal *Archiv* was launched, which in 1932 was replaced by *Zeitschrift*. The headquarters of the Institute were at no. 17 Victoria-Allee in Frankfurt and the first branch of the Institute was set up in Geneva in 1931. In parallel, two branch offices opened in Paris.

From September 1933, the Institute for Social Research ceased to be in Frankfurt with the exile of its researchers due to Nazi persecution in World War II. The journal continued to be published in France and its main structure was in Switzerland until August 1950, when the Institute resumed its work in Frankfurt. Meanwhile, the Institute had become linked to the United States, joining Columbia University, through the proposal of Nicholas M. Butler, in 1934 and, even after the return to Frankfurt, the Institute maintained its dependence in New York (Assoun 1989, 12).

Without the Institute there would have been no school, but the school goes beyond the Institute. According to Martin Jay (1989, 14), the "notion of a specific school only developed after the Institute was forced to leave Frankfurt, and only really became the term after the Institute's return to Germany in 1950". As the identity of this project is complex, there is an ambiguity in the early years, in which social phenomena are thought of under the influence of Hegel, Kant and Heidegger, in a mixture of philosophy and sociology. This issue only becomes clearer when Max Horkheimer assumes the leadership of the Institute in 1931 and the methodological demand is renamed social philosophy.

From the end of the 19th century, a new subject arises in Germany, under the effect of the development of social ideas, which neither sociology nor philosophy define satisfactorily. It is situated on the threshold of speculative reflection and sociological observation, influenced by ethical reflection related to the field of cultural history (*Kulturgeschichte*). Thus emerges an immense literature combining sociology, reflection on history and civilisation, inspired by various currents, such as social ideas, neo-Kantian ethics and the philosophy of values. Names like Max Weber, Max Scheler, Leopold von Wiese, Adolph Reinach, Wilhelm Sombart, Georg Simmel and Karl Jaspers should be mentioned (Assoun 1989, 13).

In the period between the two world wars, the founders of the Frankfurt School chose the name critical theory to symbolise the attempt to reconcile theory and practice, to achieve the unity of theory with empirical research and with the historical awareness of the social, political and cultural problems of a particular epoch. According to Craig Calhoun (1996, 437 e 448), they developed the programmatic conception of the potential role that critical theory can play within the self-reflexive public discourse proper to a democratic society.

The term social philosophy for Horkheimer assumes a fundamental problem when articulating the philosophical reflexivity, which is based on the requirement of the concept, with the scientific research, which is based on empirics, no longer constituting itself as a homogeneous discipline, sure of its validity, as it was considered until then. The need to theorise society and history is subject to conceptual reflection. This justifies the formal and logical precedence of philosophy over the theory of history and society. The contribution of the philosophy of the Frankfurt School is constituted by the principles of German critical theory, a process which mediates between the crisis in history and in the concept, in a stand against German idealism, which provides the starting point and the language of its own contestation (Assoun 1989, 14 e 25-26).

Horkheimer ([1932] 1974) in his writing on "Hegel et le problème de la métaphysique" proposes the refusal of the identity theory, concluded by Hegel and affirms this philosophical thesis as fundamental to the critical theory. In German idealist philosophy, from Kant to Hegel, the thesis of the identity of subject and object appears as a necessary presupposition of the existence of truth. So much so that the subject that knows itself should be infinite, according to the idealist conception, to be itself thought of as identical to the absolute. Since it was the identity of the absolute spirit and the being, the real and the rational that guaranteed the metaphysics as knowledge. Horkheimer in denying the identity, also opposed the affirmation of a true order of the world, which philosophy would have the task to present. Since for Horkheimer to deny the doctrine of identity is to reduce knowledge to a simple manifestation, conditioned by multiple aspects, the life of certain human subjects. Now, it is this denial that gives rise to German critical theory. For this new theoretical current, the affirmation of identity is no more than a pure belief, and it is necessary, at the very least, to pluralise identity. For such an undertaking it must be accepted that thinking loses the mystical sense of a union with being and is consumed in a multitude of processes, the origins and results of which differ greatly, and it is not a question of denying all metaphysics or of reducing science to positivism.

Horkheimer ([1931] 1993) in his inaugural lecture entitled: "The Present Situation of Social Philosophy and the Tasks of an Institute for Social Research", upon taking office as director of the Frankfurt Institute in 1931, set out the question on which the Frankfurt School is based: "the question of the connection between the economic life of society, the psychological development of individuals and the changes in the realm of culture" (Horkheimer [1931] 1993, 11). For the German thinker, this question is not only of current relevance, it presents itself as a contemporary version of the oldest and most important set of philosophical problems. The research project of the relations between the three processes enunciated will be above all a reformulation on the basis of the new constellation of the problem, according to the available research methods and the level of knowledge about the old question of the connection between the particular existence and the universal Reason, of reality and Idea, of life and Spirit, as defined by Horkheimer ([1931] 1993, 11-12). The author clearly states that a Critical Theory of society able to take on the complex project of reflecting on its social origins, as well as on the political possibilities of its practical realization, can only fulfill this goal in an interdisciplinary context. The model presented to fulfil this purpose is that of a continuous dialectical interpenetration between philosophical theory and concrete scientific practice.

According to Jay ([1974] 1989), in addition to Horkheimer we should include in the first line of this School the name of Theodor Wiesengrund-Adorno, which provides the theoretical alternative of the School after the period of exile. To this should be added other figures linked to the School, in different ways, but who contributed to the theoretical expansion of its principles and methods. Such as Herbert Marcuse, Walter Benjamin and Erich Fromm, who constituted the initial nucleus. It is also worth mentioning the main collaborators of the Institute from its inception: Franz Borkenau, Henryk Grossmann, Otto Kirchheimer, Mira Komarovski, Siegfried Kracauer, Leo Lowenthal, Franz Neumann, Friedrich Pollock, Andries Sternheim, Félix Weil and Karl August Wittfogel. It is also important to mention the name of Ernst Bloch, who, starting from different principles, through the concept of utopia, went towards critical theory.

Finally, it is necessary to add the heirs of critical theory, who, not belonging to the historical group of founders, refer to critical theory in their works: this is the case of Alfred Schmidt, Oskar Negt, Karl-Otto Apel, Albrecht Wellmer, Claus Offe and, most prominent of all, Jürgen Habermas. More recently, Axel Honneth has emerged as one of the most important thinkers of the third generation of the Frankfurt School.

The Frankfurt School is thus the label that serves to mark an event (the creation of the Institute), a scientific project (entitled 'social philosophy'), an attitude (christened 'critical theory'), in short a movement or theoretical current, at once incessant and varied, formed by diverse thinking personalities. It is “an ideological phenomenon which curiously produces its own criteria of identification through its creative process” (Assoun 1989, 23).

The project of critical theory

The thought of the Frankfurt School combined various influences, such as Marxism, psychoanalysis, German idealist philosophy and theology, romanticism and the thinkers of the “hidden face” of the Enlightenment, such as Nietzsche. Critical theory, as a distinct project, intended to combine traditional abstract and universal philosophy with empirical and historical knowledge of the social, was inspired by Hegel and the dialogue held with him, mainly Marx, as the most important of those who tried to recover the lost critical capacity, starting from schemes of reasoning influenced by Hegel (Calhoun 1996, 448-449).

Hegel attempted to redeem the potential of the Enlightenment, his philosophical project sought to reconcile modern life, as Habermas (1990, 16) reminds us: “the first philosopher to develop a precise concept of modernity was Hegel; we must therefore go back to Hegel if we are to understand what the internal relationship between modernity and rationality means”.[1] For Hegel, modernity was no longer one and total, there was no way back to the previous unity, the subject had to create a new social totality out of the historical circumstances of the present.

In Hegel, subjectivity was fundamental to the modern era, as was critical consciousness grounded in the tensions and contradictions of social life. Only reason could ascertain the basic changes that had distanced people from themselves, only reason could lead alienated people to realize "how the nature of each had been denied in the fragmented existence of the other" (Calhoun 1996, 449). The young Hegel in trying to reconcile freedom with social integration, points to an intersubjective solution, closer to later critical theory and not so much to the philosophy of the subject.

For Axel Honneth (2009, 31), Hegel was convinced that social pathologies should be understood as the result of the inability of societies to adequately express in institutions, practices and daily routines a potential of reason that is already latent in them. This conception leads to the general thesis that an achieved form of society is only possible if the maximum of the rationality developed in each case is preserved. For Hegel, the justification of this connection is made by the ethical premise that only the rational universal can indicate to the members of each society the guiding criteria by which they can direct their meaningful lives. According to Honneth (2009, 32), this substantial conviction is also present in the representatives of critical theory, when in their various approaches they attribute the cause of the pathologies of capitalist society to the lack of social rationality.

The Hegelian idea that a rational universal is always necessary to enable the full self-realization of the subjects within society is taken up in various definitions of the praxis of the human being: how Horkheimer's concept of "human labour", Marcuse's idea of "aesthetic life" or Habermas's concept of communicative understanding serve as a principle to the goal of stipulating a rationality in whose developed form the measure of a rational and satisfactory integration of society is determined. It is the reference to this instance of rational praxis that allows these authors to develop their analysis of society as a diagnosis of social pathologies based on the theory of reason: deviations from the ideal that would be achieved with the social realisation of the rational universal could be described as social pathologies, since they were accompanied by a painful loss of opportunities for intersubjective self-realisation (Honneth 2009, 33).

The representatives of critical theory share with Hegel the conviction that the self-realisation of the individual is only achieved if it is combined in its ends with the self-realisation of all other members of society, through principles and purposes accepted by all. As Honneth (2009, 34) emphasises, it can be said that the idea of a rational universal includes the concept of a common good, on which the members of a society have to agree rationally in order to be able to relate their individual freedoms cooperatively.

According to Honneth (2009, 35-36), the idea of a rational universal of cooperative self-realisation shared by all members of critical theory is as critical of liberalism as it is of the current of thought called "communitarianism". All the concepts used in critical theory articulate actions whose execution requires a higher degree of intersubjectivity than that admitted in liberalism. Critical theory presupposes a normative ideal of society that is incompatible with the individualist principles of the liberal tradition, but which has as its orientation the idea of a cooperative self-realisation, where subjects can only achieve a fulfilled life in society if they recognise beyond their particular interests a set of shared value convictions.

In pursuing this argument, we might think that critical theory and "communitarianism" coincide in the same normative interest, but Honneth (2009, 36) reminds us that just as it is distinguished from liberalism by taking as its orientation a universal of self-realisation, it is separated from the communitarian idea in the sense that this universal is linked to reason. The main authors who form part of critical theory have never abandoned the Hegelian idea that cooperative praxis and shared values must have a rational character. The interest of this approach lies in seeing individual self-realisation linked to the assumption of a common praxis that can only be the result of the realisation of reason. The cooperative relations thus have the function of increasing social rationality.

Critical theory differs from communitarianism in the way it submits the universal, which social cooperation embodies and realises at the same time, to the coordinates of a rational grounding. Since, however different the concepts of reason used from Horkheimer to Habermas may be, they all culminate in the final idea that the consecration of the liberating praxis of cooperation will not be realised by affective attachment, nor by feelings of belonging or coincidence, but by rational understanding. The ideal of society shared by all members of German critical theory can no longer be explained in the philosophical language of Hegel, but must be illustrated through a sociological analysis capable of explaining the process of the pathological formation of reason (Honneth 2009, 36-37).

Other thinkers, influenced by Hegel, tried to recover the lost critical capacity. Karl Marx stood out as the most striking among them. In the first chapter of *Capital* ([1867] 1996) one can verify Marx's radical critique of the way in which the historically unique categories created of capital - labour, commodity and value - ended up imposing themselves as almost natural and even dominating in human life. "The reified categories of capital transform qualitatively differentiated human activity into oppressive uniformities and identities" (Calhoun 1996, 449).

The reification of categories was the starting point of Georg Lukács' critique, as an extension of Marxist critique. Lukács ([1922] 2003) devoted special importance to overcoming reification[2], summoning aesthetic criteria to define unreified life, similar to what the first Marx had done by drawing on the idea of aesthetic unity. Although he shared with the young Hegel the attempt to conceptualise the absolute creativity of the human being on the basis of the example of art, Marx expanded the concept in a more general analysis of labour (Calhoun 1996, 449).

The pioneers of the Frankfurt School further developed this strand of critical theory, maintaining the central place accorded to aesthetics. Together with the influence of Max Weber's analysis of bureaucracy as a finished form of instrumental rationality, they woke up against the danger of a totally administered society. These authors, according to Calhoun (1996, 450-451), questioned the traditional philosophy of individual consciousness and the absolute identity of the cognising individual, clearly evident in Descartes' "I think: therefore I am". Under the influence of various authors, they considered the individual as a social being, constituted by intersubjective relations with others. A human nature which is always conceived in a historical context and which includes the search for happiness, the need for solidarity of others and natural sympathies. In this sense, according to Horkheimer ([1931] 1993), from human nature derived a form of reason implicitly critical of civilization.

The various approaches to critical theory, according to Honneth (2009, 38), with the greater or lesser influence each has of Marx, share a central premise in their analysis of capitalism: the social circumstances that constitute the pathologies of capitalist societies have the structural characteristic of veiling precisely those actions that would be the motive of a strong public critique. Critical theory has to broaden the tasks to be undertaken in the critique of society. It differs from other current approaches by connecting the critique of social anomalies with an explanation of the processes that have generally contributed to veiling them. It is necessary to complement normative critique with elements of historical explanation: when a rational universal is not found, which constitutes the social pathology of the present, the historical process of the deformation of reason has to be causally explained in order to make it possible to understand the non-public thematisation of social anomalies (Honneth 2009, 39).

The members of the Frankfurt School, by articulating Weber's contribution with that of Marx, arrived at the shared conviction that the rational potential of human beings unfolds in historical learning processes, in which rational solutions to problems are inextricably linked to conflicts over the monopolisation of knowledge. This is why for critical theory, as Honneth (2009, 40) states, there is no doubt that the Hegelian realisation of reason must be understood as a conflictual learning process, with many stages, in which generalisable knowledge is only realised to the extent that problem solutions are improved and against the resistance of dominant groups.

Honneth (2009, 41) adds to critical theory's concept of reason the need to include new and alien, non-Western criteria so that the concept of rationality can be permanently expanded and differentiated to be able to account for the multiform character of social learning processes.

We can conclude with Honneth (2009, 41-42), that it is on the basis of the post-idealist version of the Hegelian idea of the realisation of reason that the necessary underpinning is provided for the idea that constitutes the deepest core of the entire tradition from Horkheimer to Habermas: that the process of social rationalisation has been interrupted or conditioned in such a way by structural features that are peculiar to capitalism alone and that have as an inevitable result the pathologies that accompany the loss of a rational universal.

For Honneth (2009, 42), the conception of capitalism reached by critical theory, rather than being influenced by Marx's work, was driven by the theory of the first Lukács. It was in *History and Class Consciousness* ([1922] 2003) that Lukács suggests the idea that in the institutional reality of modern capitalism we can see a form of organisation of society that is structurally linked with a determined and restricted constitution of rationality.

For Lukács ([1922] 2003, 205), the specialisation and fragmentation of the object of labour leads the subjects to be similarly fragmented in a rational way. What leads to the objectification of their labour power in relation to the whole of their personality - which already happened through the sale of labour power as commodity - is transformed into an insurmountable quotidian, so that "the personality becomes the powerless spectator of everything that happens to its own existence, an isolated parcel integrated into a foreign system" (Lukács [1922] 2003, 205). Similarly, this defragmentation of labour and the circulation of commodities promote a form of perception in which all human beings appear as things, without sensibility and no longer linked to a community, where the important features of interaction do not deserve any attention.

In terminology more appropriate to the representations of today's world and calling upon the analysis of Honneth (2009, 42), we can present the result of Lukács' analysis as follows: with capitalism we have reached a form of praxis which leads to indifference towards the characteristics of value of other human beings; instead of relating to each other by recognising each other, the subjects perceive themselves as objects, relating according to their own interests. It should be emphasised that it is from this diagnosis of Lukács that critical theory is provided with "the categorical framework within which we can speak of an interruption or partialisation of the process of the realisation of reason" (Honneth 2009, 42). For, starting from a historical learning process, the structural coercions that Lukács demonstrates in modern capitalism present themselves as a blockage of the potential of rationality that had been accumulated since the beginning of modernity. In this way, the organization of social relations in capitalism prevents the application in praxis of the rational principles that are already available according to cognitive potentialities.

According to Honneth (2009, 44), despite the different approaches of critical theory, all present the same basic scheme of Lukács in the criticism of capitalism, only in a differentiated way and without exalting the proletariat since the philosophy of history. All the authors of critical theory perceive capitalism as a form of social organisation in which practices and schemes of thought predominate which make it impossible to make social use of a rationality already provided in historical terms. Thus, we can underline in the continuation of Honneth's reasoning that capitalism may continue to be interpreted as the institutional result of a cultural way of life or a social imaginary[3] where the practice of a limited and instrumental type of rationality predominates.

The main representatives of critical theory, in Honneth's analysis (2009, 45), "share the same formal diagnostic scheme of capitalism as a social condition of blocked or partialised rationality", as well as the idea of what is the appropriate therapy: "the forces that can contribute to overcoming social pathology must come from that same reason whose realisation is being impeded by capitalism's form of social organisation". Without underestimating its importance in critical theory as a whole, the influence of an outstanding theorist of modern thought, Sigmund Freud, reveals itself to be fundamental here.

The same importance that Hegel, Marx, Weber and Lukács have for the central content of Critical Theory should be attributed to Freud's psychoanalysis. From it they draw the central idea that social pathologies always express themselves in suffering that keeps alive the interest in the emancipatory power of reason. Just as psychoanalysis enables an intersubjective relationship, in which doctor and patient break down barriers to communication and make possible the understanding and conscious control of previously repressed motivations. Similarly, critical theory constituted an intersubjective and communicative enterprise, which was to accomplish this task in a society that was similarly incapable of recognising the true sources of its history (Calhoun 1996, 461).

Critical theory versus traditional theory

The founders of the Frankfurt School aspired to differentiate critical theory from traditional theory which adopted a self-definition of what was familiar and proved incapable of looking differently, with another insight, at how the categories of consciousness were appropriated and how these at the same time constituted the world of the observable and the realizable (Calhoun 1996, 448).

Horkheimer ([1968] 2003, 231) in his fundamental text on "Traditional theory and critical theory" states:

> the traditional idea of theory is abstracted from scientific activity as it is conducted at a given stage of the division of labour. It corresponds to the activity of the scientist (academic) and takes place simultaneously with all other activities in society, without the relationship between the isolated activities being directly perceived. Hence, in this idea the real social function of science does not appear, nor what theory means in human existence, but only what it is in its own, separate sphere, within which it is produced in certain historical conditions.

This view of theory, according to Horkheimer, reveals some social irresponsibility and an illusory view that theorists have of themselves. "They believe they act according to individual decisions, when even in their most complicated speculations they are exponents of an unfathomable social mechanism" ([1968] 2003, 231). This self ignorance reveals a gap at the level of both reflexivity and the demanding empirical analysis of the conditions of theorization, leading to the illusion of treating existing social conditions as if they were the only ones that could exist (Horkheimer [1968] 2003, 232-235).

The project of critical theory intended to recover for human beings the totality of their capacities, coinciding in this objective with an extension of Marxism. According to Calhoun (1996, 452-453), critical theory, relying on the young Marx, especially the first chapter of *Capital,* and on Lukács's analysis of reification, sought to show how human history had been capable of alienating human capacities. The critique operated through de-fetishisation (*defetischisierung*), through the diagnosis of inhuman relations, in which individuals were mere mediations between things, so as to make social transformation possible. Thus, in this exercise, theory would assume centrality in revealing the form of consciousness in which the reified relations of capital were constituted and maintained.

The fight against reification and alienation is related to the critique of positivism that occupied Horkheimer and his coreligionists for much of their journeys. Positivist social science, by accepting the world as it exists and uncritically reproducing reification, through which the human content has been removed from social institutions and processes, prevents the recognition of the existence of possibilities for essential change. Through this reification it has been possible to treat aspects of humanity as if they were simply aspects of nature, to treat social facts as things, according to Durkheim's inspiration (Calhoun 1996, 453). The reification of the social world is related to the elevation of the individual subject, apparently isolated and without influence on the social organisation that integrates him or her. Critical theory intended to be different:

> critical thinking (...) is not the function of an isolated individual or of a generality of individuals. It has, however, consciously as subject the determined individual, in his actual relations with other individuals and groups, and in his critical relationship with a particular class and, finally, in his interconnection, thus mediated, with the social totality and nature. (Horkheimer [1968] 2003, 243)

Taking as a starting point the individual in an asocial, ahistorical and objective perspective, "this appearance that idealism lives since Descartes, is ideology in the strict sense: the limited freedom of the bourgeois individual appears in the form of perfect freedom and autonomy" (Horkheimer [1968] 2003, 243). For this author, to think about the human being that subject and object are separated from each other is to place their identity in the future and not in the present. The method pointed out in Cartesian terminology would be that of clarification. However, in really critical thinking method does not only mean a logical process, but at the same time a concrete historical process. In the course of it, the social structure in its entirety and the relation of the theoretician to society are transformed. Thus, both the subject and the role of thought are transformed. The acceptance of the essential invariability of the relation between subject, theory and object distinguishes the Cartesian conception from any dialectical logic.

According to Calhoun (1996, 453-454), critical theory extrapolated from proletarian thought, representing a means of thinking about the social totality, which would displace the empirical and partial vision of the proletariat, resulting from its class position, to the vision of a society without classes and unstructured by injustice. Critical theory did not start from a specific social group, but from a group of individuals concerned with questioning the most basic structure of the totality of society in order to point to the possibilities of its transcendence. Considering critical theory at this time to be a form of Marxism, it already anticipated in some way the later crisis. Calhoun (1996, 454) notes, firstly, that the theory applied to the contemporary empirical situation pointed more to a new barbarism than to its transcendence. Secondly, Horkheimer avoided describing a potential revolution and engaging politically, his Marxism remaining abstract. Finally, his contribution to critical theory was more consistent in the intellectual realm than at the social level.

For this author, “at the heart of critical theory was the notion of *immanent critique*, that is, an exercise in criticism that started from within the categories of existing thought, radicalising them and showing, at various levels, their problems and unrecognised possibilities” (Calhoun 1996, 455). The activity of critique is fundamental to revealing the tensions existing between what exists and its possibilities. For the first generation of the Frankfurt School, the exercise of *immanent critique*, rooted in history, proceeded from the dialectical analysis of the contradictions internal to all epochs, all situations and social organisations.

For Horkheimer and Adorno, “social and cultural forces - science, capital and the mechanisms of political power - had become autonomous and gained the ability to dictate the course of social stability and change” (Calhoun 1996, 456). The two theorists, in expanding Marx's argument, made evident the way in which human beings had been reduced to objects by the very forms of social relation they had created.

Other authors of the Frankfurt School, like Neumann and Pollock, were clearer in indicating concrete historical causes for the problems of that time. Causes such as the dissolution of the distinction between state and society and the erosion of the market' s autonomy in the face of the dominating force of state capitalism. Reason had been reduced to the narrow realm of the instrumental, even put at the service of the Nazi industry of death. Both Horkheimer and Adorno feared that the state of society did not make possible a truly transformative critique, or that it could ground any action that would end the dehumanizing and dangerous social order (Calhoun 1996, 456-457).

For Jay (1989, 430-450) this pessimistic stance stemmed from several factors: the subjectivisation of reason, together with *free enterprise* capitalism, seemed to empower individuals, but this was illusory. Conformism had taken the form of ideology, combined with an increasing egalisation of people, each responding only to his or her personal interest as a consumer in a world of corporate capitalism and cultural massification. Helped by modern psychology that presented adaptation and social integration as the most important individual goal, which makes it impossible to critically equate the values of existing social reality. Already no social group, including the proletariat, intellectuals and artists, seemed immune from this mortification of the competence of reason to discern the ends of social processes.

For Horkheimer and Adorno the concept of “cultural industry” assumes special importance and was first presented in the joint work: *Dialektik der Aufklärung* in 1947 and then further developed in 1963 by Adorno in the essay “Résumé über Kulturindustrie” (translated as "Résumé" on cultural industry). These authors replaced the expression “mass culture” by “cultural industry” to separate it from the meaning given by its defenders: that it is a question of a culture that arises spontaneously from the masses themselves, in a form that could take the form of popular art.

Now, for Adorno ([1947] 2009, 18) the culture industry differs from popular art in the most extreme way. “The novelty consists in the fact that the irreconcilable elements of culture, art and entertainment, are reduced to a false common denominator, the totality of the cultural industry ”.

The cultural industry is still the entertainment industry. The power it exerts over consumers is mediated by entertainment, which proves hostile to anything that could be more than entertainment. The cultural industry offers the same everyday life as paradise, in which evasion is determined *a priori* as a means of returning to the starting point. Amusement fosters resignation and forgetfulness.

> The cultural industry has perfidiously realised man as a generic being. Each one is only what any other can replace: a fungible thing, an exemplar. He himself as an individual is absolutely replaceable, pure nothingness, and this is what he begins to experience when, in time, he ends up losing his likeness. (Adorno [1947] 2009, 26)

In the cultural industry, individuality is apparent due essentially to the standardisation of production techniques. Individuality is only tolerated insofar as it offers no challenge to the universal. The cultural industry reveals a tendency to transform itself into a set of presuppositions that allow it to become the irrefutable prophet of the already existing.

The abolition of cultural privileges seemed not to make it possible for the masses to enter the fields that were previously barred. Liquidation and selling at a reduced price contribute to the ruin of culture itself, to the development of inhuman inconsistency (Adorno [1947] 2009, 38). The culture industry suggests as something comforting that the world is ordered in the precise way it indicates. By simulating happiness it becomes deceptive. The total consequence of the culture industry is that of an anti-enlightenment; in it enlightenment, for Horkheimer and Adorno, through the progressive technical domination of nature, becomes the deception of the masses, the vehicle that allows the subjection of consciences. Thus, for Adorno ([1972] 2001) the culture industry does not enable the formation of autonomous, independent individuals, capable of judging and consciously deciding. Since only in this way would be constituted the assumptions of a democratic society, which only emancipated individuals can maintain and develop.

In the research that Verlaine Freitas (2005) presents, the mass culture is a culture of resignation before the collective omnipotence. In the same way the individual perceives that the economic order is not commanded by his desire, that it is better to adapt to it than to go against it or remain indifferent. The symbols of the cultural industry, through its varied heroes, establish images and ideals with which people can identify. As if all this concerned something that the individual can perceive in himself.

Horkheimer, after the death of Adorno, as a balance sheet and perhaps a testament of critical theory, in his article "Pessimismus heute" (1971) defines critical theory again as that which adds to science something essential, a reflection on itself and on the existing society. Somewhat disillusioned with revolutionary hope, he points to the preservation of critical theory through the autonomy of the individual.

Already before, in the mid-1960s, when the crisis erupted and the student movements gave politics a new focus, the already ageing critical theorists of the first generation were not prepared for this. Marcuse was the only one, of the first generation, who thought radical action possible. Despite his involvement and his mediatisation as the 'guru' of a new left, the student movement was disappointed in him. Marcuse did not see in it the heritage of the proletariat and its social positioning was not the most suitable to apprehend the crisis of the social totality, since the students despite their support for the underprivileged did not constitute an underprivileged class. Marcuse thought that the only social group capable of triggering a real revolution would be that of the "wretched of the earth", spoken of by Frantz Fanon (1968), the oppressed of the third world and the permanently unemployed of the first world. Nevertheless, the ideas of the Frankfurt theorists were incorporated into student discourses, both in Germany and in the United States (Calhoun 1996, 458-460).

Challenges of critical theory between history and praxis

A second generation of theorists followed, most notably Habermas. His early work aimed to "reset the possibility of a politically meaningful critical theory" (Calhoun 1996, 460), guided by the problem of the relationship between theory and practice. He took up the debate on the methodology of the social sciences, trying to overcome the mere hermeneutic concern and the fallacy of positivist beliefs, which distinguished objective knowledge from interested human action. Habermas attempted to enable the unity between theory and practice, expanding the meaning of political practice, as the constitution of forms of joint living that allows the full realisation of human potential.

Habermas' *Theory of Communicative Action* (1981) aims to develop a critical assessment of forms of life and concrete epochs in their totality, without projecting norms granted by any philosophy of history. The communicative rationality of this author brings a clear evolution: it is the ambition of a critical science of society, in particular of its communicational structure, which serves as the basis from then on to constitute an evolutionary knowledge of history, created as a logic of social contradiction. This is the possibility that allows for the economy of a philosophy of history, however pessimistic. Habermas does not stop at the impasse of first generation critical theory; he opens new perspectives for the direction of praxis (Fontes 2021).

Today, the second generation exists side by side with the third generation, represented most prominently by Axel Honneth's reformulation of recognition, ethical life and the normative reconstruction of social institutions. Recognition theory, drawing on the Habermasian paradigm of communication and the Hegelian and Marxist legacy of critical theory, proposes an original model of articulation, in the form of "mutual dependence" between a normatively founded social philosophy and a sociology invited to present these norms to the verifiability of facts. Honneth critically examines the tradition of the Frankfurt School and on the basis of the achievements of sociological research develops a project, albeit primarily philosophical, for the reconstruction of a social theory capable of offering an alternative to the impasses of critical theory.

German critical theory, as we have seen, whose cultural horizon was constituted mainly in the processing of the history of European thought from Hegel to Freud, relies on the possibility of considering history following the thread of reason. Now, according to Honneth (2009, 28), nothing will be more alien to the current generation, which has grown up with an awareness of plurality and the end of "great accounts", than this grounding of the critique of society in the philosophy of history: the "idea of a historically active reason" with which all the representatives of the Frankfurt School agreed, from Horkheimer to Habermas, must result incomprehensible where it is no longer possible to recognise the unity of a single reason in the plurality of grounded convictions. Similarly, following Honneth's reasoning, the broader idea that the progress of such reason is halted or interrupted by the capitalist organisation of society will also be strange, since it is no longer possible to see capitalism as a unitary system of social rationality.

The political changes of the last decades have not failed to influence the status of criticism in society. With the awareness of cultural plurality, as well as with the experience of the disparities of social emancipation movements, expectations about what criticism should and can be have been greatly reduced. As Honneth (2009, 28-29) tells us, in many cases critique is no longer conceived as a reflection of a rationality that should be anchored in the historical process. In turn, critical theory insists, in a singular way, in Honneth's words (2009, 29),

> In a mediation of theory and history in the concept of a socially active reason: the historical past must be understood in a practical sense as a process of formation whose pathological deformation by capitalism can only be overcome if those involved initiate a process of enlightenment.

It is this intellectual model of mediating theory and history that underlies the unity of German critical theory in the multiplicity of its voices: whether in the positive form of the first Horkheimer, Marcuse and Habermas, or in the negative form of Adorno and Benjamin, the background of the various projects is always constituted by the idea that a historical process of formation has been distorted by the social situation to such an extent that it can only be corrected in practice. According to Honneth (2009, 29), to point out the legacy of critical theory for this new century should mean rescuing from this idea of a social pathology of reason the negative charge that it nevertheless contains for current thinking; against the tendency to reduce criticism of society to an undertaking of normative, situational or local positioning, it is necessary to make comprehensible the relationship in which it finds itself with the pretensions of a reason that has been formed in history.

Critical theory, from Horkheimer to Habermas, is guided by the idea that the pathology of social rationality leads to incapacities that are expressed in the painful experience of the loss of rational faculties. For Honneth, this idea converges in the strong thesis, essentially anthropological, that the behavior of human subjects cannot be indifferent to the restriction of their rational faculties; since their self-realization is related to the assumption of the cooperative action of their reason, they cannot avoid psychic suffering for its deformation. Honneth (2009, 48) points out that "to have understood that between an intact psyche and undistorted rationality there must be an internal relationship is perhaps the strongest impulse that critical theory received from Freud".

The various authors who constitute the core of critical theory share the same idea that the desire for the emancipation of suffering can only be satisfied by recovering an intact rationality. For Honneth (2009, 50), this assumption carries risks, but it is the one that allows establishing a link between theory and practice, different from that given by the Marxist traditions. The defenders of critical theory do not share among themselves a set of common goals or political projects, but a set of common reasons which keep open the pathological present to the possibility of a transformation through rational understanding.

Despite the deformations or partialisations of social rationality and continuing Honneth's thinking (2009, 51), only insofar as the rational impulse of human beings to extend reason can be counted on can theory reflexively refer to a potential praxis, in which its explanations are developed with the aim of liberating from suffering. Thus, critical theory, according to Honneth, in the form in which it was developed from Horkheimer to Habermas, can only subsist in the future if it does not renounce demonstrating the existence of this kind of interest. For Honneth, the project of critical theory will only have a future if it develops a realistic concept of "emancipatory interest", which presupposes an inextinguishable core of subjects' capacity for rational reaction to the interests of critique.

Conclusion

Summoning a synthesis of the above, we highlight three main ideas that characterise the initial project, at once sociological and philosophical, of critical theory. Firstly, this project is anchored in historical materialism and in the idea of a progress-oriented historical development - from the idea that the socially effective practical forces are realised by the interests of emancipation, by reason and by the suppression of the factors that exercise domination over human beings. Theory can therefore draw on this practical example to base its view and its support for this emancipatory process on the way to a "society governed by reason", as Max Horkheimer would put it. Secondly, he proposes to understand the "pathological" processes and the growing irrationality that hinder this dynamic through social research. Against the irrational tendencies that fragment society, critical theory adopts the viewpoint of the "totality" of social relations and provides the means capable of articulating specialized knowledge in an interdisciplinary way. Sociology will play the role of understanding the social and structural mechanisms that not only impede the implementation of this process of emancipation, but also increase domination, such as the cultural industry, monopoly capitalism, fascism and authority, among others. Thirdly, this articulation between a normative theory anchored in an effective practice of emancipation and recourse to sociology, as well as to psychoanalysis, to understand the difficulty of this process is what constitutes the background of this programme in the encounter of social philosophy with empirical research.

We believe that the set of ideas presented so far shows us the central content of the legacy of the first generation of German critical theory. As long as we do not abandon the intention of understanding critical theory as a form of reflection of a historically active reason, there is no way we can renounce the normative motif of the rational universal, the idea of the social pathology of reason, and the concept of emancipatory interest. On the other hand, we also consider that these three conceptual elements cannot be preserved today in the form in which the members of the Frankfurt School originally developed them; they all need to be reformulated in a mediation with the current state of our knowledge.

Endnotes:

1. For an in-depth reading of Hegel see Habermas (1990) and Taylor (1975).
2. On the influence of Lukács' analysis of reification on Critical Theory see Habermas ([1981] 1999, vol. 1, ch. IV) and Honneth (2007).
3. The studies by C. Castoriadis (1983) and (1989) and by L. Boltanski and E. Chiapello ([1999] 2009) are important to deepen this context.

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Rawls and the Morality of Civil Disobedience

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Abstract

Political obligations require citizens to obey states' laws. In the case of morally objectionable laws, some political philosophers contend that our political obligation can be overridden by higher countervailing obligation through the act of civil disobedience. John Rawls appeals to this view. He contends that citizens can engage in civil disobedience in a nearly just democratic regime only when there is a sufficient justification that the principles of equal liberty and fair opportunities have been violated. Some commentators think that by viewing civil disobedience as a political act, Rawls seems to limit the justification of civil disobedience to only political principles. This paper offers an interpretation of Rawls' theory of civil disobedience that highlights his appeal to potential dissents' moral dispositions. We argue that the Rawlsian non-violence and fidelity to law requirements for civil disobedience create a moral limit for the dissenter. However, dissenters are obligated to resist the state when it attempts to suppress them from correcting injustices in the society forcibly.

Keywords: John Rawls; Civil Disobedience; Fidelity to law; Respect for rights and dignity; Moral duty; Non-violence

Introduction

The central idea of political obligation is that citizens are morally obligated to submit, cooperate, and obey political authorities and state laws. One of the reasons adduced to justify this view is that political obligation is grounded on the citizens' consent. According to Harry Beran, "consent consists of accepting membership in a state by each person who is under political obligation. For in accepting membership in an association, one agrees to obey the rules of that association; and in agreeing to obey the rules of the state, one puts oneself under an obligation to obey its rules and gives it authority to govern" (Beran 1977, 262). Some theorists contend that citizens also consent when they participate in democratic elections. Steinberger, for instance, notes that by voting, citizens indicate that they accept a political process as legitimate even though they are not favoured by such a process (Steinberger 2002, 460). By consenting either through voting or through citizenship, a person imposes on themselves a moral duty to abide by the state's laws and regulations or be submissive to the state's authority. Other alternative theories that justify political obligation are the principle of fair play (Rawl 1964), the principle of samaritanism (Wellman 1996), and the theory of common good (Duke 2017).[1]

It is plausible to argue that citizens are obligated to obey state authorities because they consented either through voting or by agreeing to be a member of the state. However, some political philosophers contend that the obligation to obey the state's law is *prima facie* because substantial or higher countervailing obligations can override it (Thoreau 1849; Beran 1977; Rawls 1971). It is morally acceptable to resist or disobey government actions or laws antithetical to equity and justice and threaten citizens' rights and dignity. The Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests in the United States against racial discrimination, the EndSARS protest in Nigeria against police brutality and extortion, the protest against discriminatory citizenship law in India, and so on seem to corroborate this point. Thoreau, for example, observes that the obligation to resist and refuse allegiance to a government when it becomes tyrannical, unbearably inefficient, and propagates immoral laws, is both an inherent right and natural duty of all human beings (Thoreau 1849, 367-369). In other words, it is unnatural for anyone to feel at ease with tyrannical or immoral policies.

Not all kinds of resistance against unjust or immoral laws are morally acceptable. For instance, the aim of the BLM, EndSARS, and India's anti-discriminatory citizenship law protests was to speak against unjust systems that violate citizens' rights and dignity. However, some protesters were criticised for engaging in unruly acts like looting businesses or setting government and private properties ablaze in these protests. In the case of the EndSARS protests, police stations were burnt while some police officers were lynched to death.[2] In Delhi, many lives and properties were lost to violent protests.[3] Why are violent protests not morally acceptable? Mahatma Gandhi thinks that dissenters who engage in violent protests lack discipline and respect for the rights of others. It is morally appropriate to resist and confront an unjust system. But attacking government officials or acting in a way that endangers the lives and properties of other citizens, however, "is tantamount to resisting and attacking oneself. We are all tarred with the same brush and are children of the same Creator, and as such, the divine powers within us are infinite. To slight a single human being is to slight those divine powers and thus to harm not only that being but with him the whole world" (Gandhi 1958, 26). Martin Luther King, Jr. adds that protesting injustices in a nonviolent system is to act in love for all members (King 1958, 97).

Rawls agrees with Thoreau that it is morally plausible for citizens to disobey unjust laws. He also supports Gandhi and King's views that an act of disobedience against unjust laws must be civil and non-violence. In other words, dissents should not violate citizens' rights and dignity.

In what follows, we explore Rawls' account of civil disobedience in detail, highlighting its moral significance. In Rawls' estimation, civil disobedience is morally permissible when the state refuses to honour conditions of social cooperation by enacting laws or policies that violate citizens' rights to equal liberty and fair equality of opportunity. We also explain Rawls' idea of civil disobedience as a public act. The interpretation we offer contrasts the views of some commentators who claim that Rawls's account of civil disobedience requires dissenters to notify the public and authorities about the resolve to engage in the act of civil disobedience (Celikates 2016; Brownlee 2016). We show that such an interpretation is faulty.

Furthermore, we examine the moral significance of Rawls' notion of non-violence and fidelity to the law. We argue that even though a dissenter is morally permitted to resist injustices perpetrated by the state, such resistance must be done in a civilised and considerate manner to protect other citizens' rights and dignity. We also defend Rawls' account of civil disobedience against Celikates and Brownlee's criticisms. We show that Celikates and Brownlee's criticisms stem from a mistaken interpretation of Rawls and the reliance on non-paradigmatic cases of civil disobedience like Snowden's case. We conclude the paper by noting that it is morally necessary to act nonviolently and in fidelity to the law. However, dissenters are also obligated to resist the state when it attempts to suppress them from correcting injustices in the society forcibly. We also highlight some implications of Rawls' account for policies and good citizenship. Let us explore Rawls' account and its moral significance.

Rawls and the Moral Significance of Civil Disobedience

Political philosophers often grapple with the issue of when it is morally justified to engage in the act of civil disobedience. Some protests like those cited in the introductory section are embarked upon in defiance of the government's restrictions. For instance, two weeks into the EndSARS protest, some Nigerian governors imposed 24-hour curfews in their various states to impede the protests. However, the EndSARS protesters defied the curfews and continued with the protests. The governors unleashed armed police officers and the military on the protesters. Some protesters were killed, while many got injured. In criticising the violent approach of the state governors, some critics argue that civil disobedience was one of the reasonable ways the oppressed masses articulated and publicised their grief.[4] So, some political philosophers think that civil disobedience is justified because it is a strategy citizens employ to point out the moral missteps and failures of the government to adhere to the normative principles that underpin the political community (Thoreau 1849; Bedau 1961). For instance, Bedau views civil disobedience as a public, nonviolent, illegal, conscientious violation of one of the laws the dissenters view as morally objectionable (Bedau 1961 653-56). Bedau's point is that besides being nonviolent, a dissent who commits an act of civil disobedience must be known to *intentionally* violate or object to a specific law or policy (perceived as obnoxious). Dissenters justify civil disobedience by appealing to the incompatibility between their political circumstances and moral convictions. This appeal stems from the conviction that it is better to suffer the consequences of civil disobedience than the dire consequences of an objectionable law (Bedau 1961, 659). Rawls agrees with Bedau view that civil disobedience is a conscientious, public, and nonviolent violation of unjust or morally objectionable laws. Bedau contends that the primary intention of a civil disobedient is to frustrate the implementation of an objectionable law (Bedau 1961, 656). Rawls does not think that the role of civil disobedience is *basically* to frustrate the government's effort in implementing unjust laws.

John Rawls' view of civil disobedience stems from the belief that in a constitutional democracy, there is a shared sense of justice, which regulates the activities of both the government and the citizens. It is this shared sense of justice that is the core of the social cooperation of the society. The state must structure political institutions to guarantee fairness and equality in a democratic political milieu. For instance, in distributing state resources, the state is obligated not to discriminate against citizens based on race, sexual orientation, or religious belief. It is expected that those who are poor should have opportunities for improvement. However, the citizens are obligated to reciprocate by adhering to existing policies and legislations of the state. Another act of reciprocity by the citizens is to ensure that the policies and legislations made by the state conform to the principles of justice. So, when a state makes legislation that is discriminatory or seems to favour a specific class of individuals in the society or is repugnant to natural justice (like a law that puts to death citizens who criticise the government), it is required that citizens resist such laws because the state refused to respect the conditions of social cooperation (Rawls 1971, 320). So, Rawls defines civil disobedience as a public, nonviolent, conscientious and yet a political act contrary to law usually done to bring about a change in the law or policies of the government" (Rawls 1971, 320).

From a superficial glance, the act of civil disobedience is done to oppose laws perceived to be unjust even where the majority think that such laws should be upheld. Besides addressing the common sense of justice, civil disobedience is "guided and justified by political principles, that is, by the principles of justice which regulate the constitution and social institutions generally" (Rawls 1971, 321). So, in Rawls' view, a fundamental element of civil disobedience is fidelity to the law. What is the moral significance of Rawls' insistence that civil disobedience must be nonviolent, and a dissenter must act in fidelity to the law? What does Rawls mean by civil disobedience is a public act? We will attempt to answer these pertinent questions in Rawls' account of civil disobedience.

Civil Disobedience as a Public Act

Rawls thinks that for an act to pass as civil disobedience, it must be done publicly. The idea that civil disobedience is a public act also resonates with the views of many political philosophers. For instance, Betz argues that "civil disobedience is an open, or public, or non-secretive action, and it is different from most other crimes. The dissenter characteristically alerts the police and news media before he acts and characteristically expects to be arrested" (Betz

1970, 16). The reason for such a security alert and public notice is to indicate that the dissenter is publicly declaring that they intend to commit a crime and are willing to bear the consequences.

Some critics think that this Betzian intuition about the publicisation of civil disobedience through the media and security alerts also underpins Rawls' account of civil disobedience. Celikates, for instance, argues that what Rawls implies by civil disobedience being 'public' is that before an act of civil disobedience is carried out, dissenters are required to inform authorities in advance (Celikates 2016, 983). Similarly, Brownlee claims that "Rawls' publicity condition includes giving fair notice (to the society and, consequently, to its authorities) that one is about to engage in civil disobedience" (Brownlee 2016, 966). Justifying this claim, she notes in a footnote that Rawls appealed to Bedau, who explicitly identified fair notice as a fundamental requirement for an account of civil disobedience. Therefore, Brownlee thinks that Rawls' idea of fair notice is over-demanding because certain situations may warrant a non-publicisation or notification. For instance, dissenters may not have the financial resources to run media advertorials or organise town hall meetings. They may also be discouraged if the government feels threatened by it. So, the best approach is to take immediate action.

Brownlee is correct to argue that Bedau's idea of civil disobedience includes the notification requirement. According to Bedau, the government must be aware of the dissenter's plan to disobey a law or policy they believe is unjust. This point explains why authorities are customarily notified in advance in many countries by those intending to commit civil disobedience" (Bedau 1961, 656). However, the idea of fair notice seems to connote something different in Rawls' account. Rawls does not suggest that an act of civil disobedience would be unjustified if dissenters do not notify authorities and the public. Rawls argues that civil disobedience addresses the sense of justice of the majority in the society because when dissenters publicly object to unjust laws or policies, they appeal to the moral sentiments of the majority in society. Rawls notes that in a democratic system, for example, citizens have a good idea of what a sense of justice requires. Despite this sense of justice, "citizens may be tempted to avoid making a contribution when they believe, or with reason suspect, that others are not making theirs" (Rawls 1971, 296). This argument suggests that people may know what the principle of justice requires, but they may fail to act based on that principle. The role of civil disobedience, thus, is to stimulate the community consciousness of the need to act based on the principles of justice by ensuring that policies or laws that are repugnant to the principle of justice like the Jim Crow Segregation Law of 1896 or the Indian Citizenship Discrimination legislation, are repealed.

The idea of appealing to the moral sentiment of the majority vis-à-vis their sense of justice is exemplified in King's approach to civil disobedience. The key reason for the city of Birmingham's protest was caused by the failure of the city's authority to implement the 1954 Supreme Court decision that outlawed the segregation law. King, in his "Letter from Birmingham Jail", explained that the purpose of the protest he led was to "urge men to obey the 1954 decision of the Supreme Court because it is morally right and also to urge them to disobey segregation ordinances because they are morally wrong" (King 1963, 3). King's view implies that it is not the case that the public does not have the sense of justice which underlies the Supreme Court decision. The issue is that the government and the public deliberately refused to obey it. The duty of a dissenter like King and his associate was to persuade the public to act in line with their sense of justice by obeying the Supreme Court decision by disobeying the segregation ordinances, which contradicts the principle of justice of equal treatment. Similarly, in Rawls' account, by acting publicly, the dissenters draw the attention of the majority in the society that there is a need for them to persuade the government to align its laws or policies to the principles of justice, which are at the core of social cooperation of the society.

Another reason why civil disobedience ought to be done publicly is that it serves fair notice that "in one's sincere and considered opinion the conditions of free cooperation are being violated. We are appealing to others to reconsider, to put themselves in our position, and to recognise that they cannot expect us to acquiesce indefinitely in the terms they impose upon us" (Rawls 1971, 335-36). In other words, the role of civil disobedience is to draw the attention of the majority in a morally reasonable way that the injustices being perpetrated are negatively affecting the conditions of free cooperation that underlie their democratic system. And, since the oppressed citizens cannot accede to such oppression indefinitely, there is a need to repeal such unjust or immoral laws or policies. Based on this understanding, one can justifiably claim that what King or Gandhi did was to serve a fair notice to the public that unjust laws or policies like the South African Poll Tax, Fugitive Slave Law, et cetera, violate the conditions of free cooperation, and as such, need to be repealed. So, in Rawls' view, to serve fair notice is to invoke the community's conviction or to draw the public's attention in a morally reasonable way (nonviolent way) that something morally despicable is happening and that it needs to be addressed.

Does Rawls' account allow dissenters to engage in civil disobedience promptly whenever they think that injustices have been committed? Rawls thinks that the only time dissenters can promptly confront injustices in the state through the act of civil disobedience is when such injustices involve a blatant violation of the principle of equal liberty and the principle of fair equality of opportunity. If, for instance, "certain minorities are denied the right to vote or to hold office, or to own properties and to move from place to place, or when certain religious groups are repressed, and others denied various opportunities, these injustices may be obvious to all" (Rawls 1971, 327). Minorities can engage in the act of civil disobedience without necessarily seeking other means of redress when the state violates the principles of equal liberty and fair equality of opportunity such that "they are publicly incorporated into the recognised practice of social arrangements" (Rawls 1971, 327). In this case, the role of civil disobedience is to serve a fair notice to the majority by appealing to their sense of justice that the state has grossly violated the principles of justice that underpin the social cooperation of all members of the society.

Note that in Rawls' view, it is morally inappropriate to engage in the act of civil disobedience just because an injustice has been committed. Before embarking on the act of civil disobedience, the dissenter must ensure that a serious wrong like a gross violation of the principles of equal liberty and fair equality of opportunity has been committed by the state or their agents. Where it is known that such an outrageous violation of principles of justice has been committed, Rawls thinks that a prompt act of civil disobedience is necessary because such a wrong is "so extreme that there may be no duty to use first only legal means of the political opposition" (Rawls 1971, 328). Where a wrong committed is outside the scope of principles of equal liberty and fair equality of opportunity, Rawls thinks that dissenters are required to engage in civil disobedience after "normal appeals to the political majority have already been made in good faith that they have failed. The legal means to redress have proved of no avail" (Rawls 1971, 328). So, depending on the wrong that the state or political majority has done, Rawls thinks that legal redress is necessary.

Furthermore, Rawls thinks that the legal actions that precede the call for civil disobedience are also a form of *fair notice* – that is, a kind of appeal to the conscience of the political majority to ensure that an unjust law or policy is repealed, or that fraudulent and highhanded state agencies (like the Nigerian SARS) are disbanded. The idea of fair notice implied here is not a *formal notice* that a wrong is about to be committed. To engage in legal protest or to seek redress for a perceived injustice does not suggest that the protesters are publicly declaring or alerting the security that they want to commit a crime. Instead, the step is to show that since civil disobedience is a last resort in most cases, there is a need to follow a legal means to correct the perceived wrong committed by the state.

Rawls' persuasive account of civil disobedience seems to face some challenges. If oppressed citizens ought to seek legal redress as the first step to persuade the government to repeal an unjust law or obnoxious policy, this may hinder their efforts given that such legal redress may be time-wasting or involve substantial financial resources. Such a Rawlsian persuasion requirement may not be tenable, especially where the aggrieved citizens involve the have-nots. They may take more drastic steps by threatening the government to accede to their legitimate demands (Barry 1973). Rawls, however, thinks that the persuasive approach does not suggest that the aggrieved minorities must exhaust all legal actions before embarking on civil disobedience. Suppose they have a justifiable reason that a persistent legal action may not yield any positive result, and the state and the political majority are indifferent or unwilling to have the unjust law or policy repealed. In that case, they can call for civil disobedience (Rawls 1971, 327-328).

Non-violence and Fidelity to Law

Although the act of civil disobedience addresses the public sense of principles of justice, the application of non-violence gives it moral credence. Rawls offers two fundamental reasons why civil disobedience ought to be nonviolent. The first reason is that it gives "voice to conscientious and deeply held convictions" on the part of the dissenter. The second reason is that "it expresses disobedience within the limits of fidelity to law, although it is at the outer edge thereof" (Rawls 1971, 322). Explaining these two fundamental reasons for nonviolent civil disobedience is pertinent for our discussion.

Why is it essential for a dissenter to conscientiously carry out their civil disobedience act by acting nonviolently? Rawls contends that by acting nonviolently, a dissenter publicly resists unjust policies or immoral legislation by acting within the limits of moral obligation to adhere to the principles of justice (Rawls 1971, 322). To resort to violence by hurting or inflicting injuries on members of society is to act outside the moral conviction that underlies the act of civil disobedience. So, if the essence of civil disobedience is to oppose unjust law, the act that repairs unjust laws must be such that it does not endanger the lives and wellbeing of those whose interests it is trying to protect. The act of civil disobedience is not intended to threaten the peace and well-being of the public. Instead, its purpose is to warn the public of the danger of the government's violation of the principles of justice and to admonish them to ensure that the injustice is redressed (Fried 1964, 1268-1269).

It is reasonable to oppose or protest an unjust law. However, such a protest or dissent should not create a situation that endangers citizens and causes chaos in the situation. A constitutional democracy considers the rights, liberties, and privileges of equal associates who willingly and voluntarily come together to form a common political system. So, any form of force or violence is alien to a healthy relationship and the constitutional democratic tenets. It is precisely on this assumption Rawls argues that violent actions are incompatible with the practice of civil disobedience. The dissenter's action will be considered threats, not an appeal, warning, or caution. Cohen corroborates this fact when he notes that in resisting an unjust system if citizens adopt a violent means, they assume that civil disobedience is not an appropriate form of political activity (Cohen 1970, 103). Put differently, since civil disobedience is an appeal to the public to support changing unjust laws, the application of violence would only mean abuse of process and desecration of the conscience appealed (Fried1964; Rawls 1971).

In civil disobedience, the dissenter is morally obligated to react to injustice in a civilised and considerate manner. To act in a considerate manner is to appeal to the Kantian idea of moral commitment that the essence of civil disobedience is not to violate or threaten the dignity of members of society. Sabl explains this point nicely. According to him, the civility that constitutes civil disobedience stems from the understanding that the dissenters acknowledge that both those in government and the citizens that support them are related to them as fellow citizens, capable of rationally discerning and acting on moral demands. By acting nonviolently, the dissenters try to reflect this belief by not acting in ways that threaten their cooperation with other citizens. This point shows that the injustices being protested are severe. Dissenters "regard the laws or practices being contested as direct and open assaults on the human dignity and equal citizenship of those whom the laws and practices oppress" (Sabl 2001, 308). So, by acting nonviolently, the dissenters affirm that they do not want to indulge in another assault on the human dignity and equal citizenship of the oppressed members of the society.

Another reason civil disobedience ought to be nonviolent is that citizens express their disobedience or resistance to unjust laws in fidelity to the law. What does Rawls mean by acting in fidelity to the law? Rawls argues that when a dissenter acts in "fidelity to law, it helps to establish to the majority that the act is indeed politically conscientious and sincere and that it intends to address the public's sense of justice" (Rawls 1971, 322). For an act of civil disobedience to be conscientious and sincere means that the dissenter is willing to accept the consequences of their seemingly disobedient action. According to him, "men of great honesty with full confidence in one another might make such a system work. But as things are, such a scheme would presumably be unstable even in a state of near justice. We must pay a certain price to convince others that our actions have, in our carefully considered view, a sufficient moral basis in the political convictions of the community" (Rawls 1971, 323). So, since dissenters act publicly, the dissenters' acceptance of the consequences of their public act signals that resisting unjust laws or practices does not entail total rejection of a legitimate political system.

Brownlee faults Rawls' view on the significance of fidelity to the law on civil disobedience. Rawls contends that one of the moral requirements of civil disobedience is that the dissenter must be willing to accept the consequences of being disobedient. Appealing to the Snowden example, Brownlee argues that neither willingness nor an unwillingness to accept legal consequences is necessary to justify the act of civil disobedience. One may decide to accept the consequence of an act just to draw some attention. Others may refuse prosecution to show that the legal process, which has been breached, is faulty. In the Snowden case, Snowden violated the U.S. Espionage Act of 1917 by disclosing some NSA documents to the public but refused to face prosecution by fleeing the U.S. because he was declared wanted for treason (Brownlee 2016, 966-67). So, because Snowden evaded prosecution, Brownlee thinks that such action offers credible evidence why Rawls's view of fidelity to law is faulty.

The Snowden example is not a paradigmatic case of civil disobedience but rather a whistleblowing case, although there are some similarities among them. One significant similarity between civil disobedience and whistleblowing is that dissenters in both cases act in defiance of law(s) or corporate regulations based on a moral reason. That is, because such an act of dissent appeals to the principle of justice or because it intends to promote the social or common good (Elliston 1982; Pozen 2019). However, two key features of civil disobedience missing in the Snowden case are worthy of note.

The first feature is that the purpose of civil disobedience is to change or repeal morally objectionable laws or policies, or laws that blatantly violate the principles of justice – the principles of equal liberty and the principles of fair equality of opportunity (Rawls 1971; Bedau 1961). In Snowden's case, his motive was not to change the law or policy governing the U.S. national or international intelligence and surveillance. Instead, his motive was "to *inform the public* about what is done in their name and that which is done against them".[5] In other words, his intention of exposing those secret documents was to notify the public and the international community that, unknown to them, the United States NSA have their data and is doing something sinister with them. In the act of civil disobedience, the motive of the dissenter is not just to warn or draw the public's attention to the danger of the state's violation of the principles of justice, but also to admonish them to ensure that the injustice perpetrated by the state is corrected.

The second feature is that civil disobedience ought to be nonviolent. We have discussed this earlier in the paper. But clarification is necessary here. *Prima facie* understanding of the non-violence requirement of the act of civil disobedience is that a dissenter is morally obligated not to act in a way that would cause physical harm or threaten the rights and dignity of other members of the society. Another aspect, that non-violence also captures is the tendency for dissenters to ensure that their law-breaking through civil disobedience does not cause collateral damage (Pozen 2019, 329). Such collateral damage threatens the social cooperation of members of the society or threatens the well-being of the state and the members of the society, which the act of civil disobedience attempts to enhance (Rawls 1971; Betz 1970).

In Snowden's case, reports show that many sensitive documents were stolen, which severely harmed the United States' national security interests. According to a report published by Deb Riechmann in *Associated Press* News (APNews), some of the sensitive documents that Snowden disclosed to the public "includes recent reporting on a mass surveillance program run by close U.S. ally Japan and on how the NSA targeted bitcoin users to gather intelligence to support counterterrorism and to combat narcotics and money laundering." Riechmann also reported that "Glenn Greenwald, an Intercept co-founder and former journalist at *The Guardian*, said there are "thousands upon thousands of documents" that journalists have chosen not to publish because they would harm peoples' reputation or privacy rights or because it would expose 'legitimate surveillance programs'".[6] Snowden intended to protest what he felt was an obscure and morally reprehensible U.S. security policy and surveillance regime. However, he lost control of what information to divulge and retain without considering the harm some of that sensitive information may cause to the reputation and wellbeing of people and the integrity of the legitimate U.S. surveillance programs. Such a characteristic disposition to act without deep-seated moral consideration shows that his action is not civil disobedience. Rawls thinks that an essential feature of a civil disobedient is their disposition to reflect deeply, consider carefully with due restraint and sound judgment about their actions before engaging in it to ensure that such actions do not harm or cause unnecessary injury. So, the disposition of a dissenter is to promote stability or to correct injustices perpetrated by the state without threatening the dignity and wellbeing of citizens or compromising the state's interests and security (Rawls 1971, 336). This disposition was lacking in the Snowden case.

Since Snowden's case is not a paradigm example of civil disobedience, there is no way anyone would have expected him to act in fidelity to the law, which is a fundamental feature of civil disobedience. Brownlee contends that a dissenter doesn't need to accept the legal consequences of their actions to prove that their civil disobedient action is conscientious and sincere. Rawls also takes note of this objection. He contends that "certainly one does not accept the punishment as right, that is, as deserved for an unjustified act. Rather, one is willing to undergo the legal consequences for the sake of fidelity to the law. There is room for latitude herein that the charge may be contested in court" (Rawls 1971, 322). So, a dissenter is obligated to act in fidelity to the law by accepting the legal consequences of their actions. It does not imply that they are conceding to the unjust law there are protesting. Instead, such a move demonstrates that though the dissenter objects to unjust and morally repugnant laws or policies, they still respect and promote those laws that are judged just. It is also a way of demonstrating that their actions are conscientious, sincere, and morally grounded (Rawls 1971, 323). It is, therefore, morally acceptable for a whistleblower to either act anonymously or run for safety (especially where their identity has been disclosed as in the case of Snowden and they no longer enjoy any legal protection under the Whistleblowing Act of that state). But for a civil disobedient, refusing to act in fidelity to law by fleeing prosecution weakens their moral claim on others always to adhere to and uphold justice.

Conclusion

We explored the moral import of Rawls' account of civil disobedience. Based on Rawls' view, we noted that dissenters are morally required to act nonviolently. They are required to carry out their civil disobedient act in a way that does not threaten the rights, dignity, and wellbeing of members of the society or compromise the interest and security of the state. Dissenters are also required to act in fidelity to law, that is, to act sincerely and conscientiously by accepting the legal consequences of their actions. This point implies that for civil disobedience to be morally justifiable, a dissenter must ensure that they do not appeal to morally repugnant means by acting violently to achieve a reasonable means – to repeal or correct an unjust law. Suppose the state sees a morally and politically justified civil disobedience as a threat to civil harmony. In that case, it is its moral duty to identify the law(s) that have caused the act of civil disobedience and repeal it. Suppose the state forcibly suppresses dissenters from publicly speaking out against injustices; dissenters are morally justified to resist the state, even if such a resistance leads to a disruptive conflict.

Rawls' account of civil disobedience suggests that citizens who disobey unjust laws or policies do so with the intent of impeding their implementation. His account, however, shows that civil disobedience operates as a moral check to support and strengthen state institutions. By resisting those unjust laws while still acting in fidelity to the law, a civil disobedient persuades the state to enact and execute laws and policies that promote and protect the fundamental liberties of citizens, their freedom of conscience and their rights to freedom of thoughts and expressions. Also, they facilitate equality of fair opportunities, such that social and economic policies are enacted on terms that are justifiable to the least advantaged citizens. The enactment of laws or policies that protect the liberties of citizens and guarantee their social and economic wellbeing is vital for their practical and reciprocal social cooperation in a well-ordered society.

Finally, the act of civil disobedience strengthens individuals' sense of good citizenship. There is a natural tendency for human beings to stay aloof amid injustices for fear of the risk of harm or unlawful incarceration. For instance, besides the EndSARS protest, many Nigerians have feared speaking out or protesting the numerous violations of the rule of law and abuse of human rights by Buhari's administration for fear of unlawful prosecution or possible harm. But as Rawls notes, to submit to unjust and morally objectionable policies or government actions that violate the rights and dignity of citizens is to stimulate and approve of their unjust actions. Being a good citizen is not to cause chaos in society to resist injustices. Instead, it is a moral resolve to protect the democratic system by ensuring that injustices are resisted without violating the rights and dignity of other members of the society.

Endnotes:

1. For objections to the theories of political obligation, see Simmons (1980), Klosko (2003), Edmundson (2011).
2. https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2020/10/31/endsars-death-toll-now-73-with-205-police-stations-burnt.
3. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-50818192.
4. Adegbite, A (2020). "Community Reactions: #EndSARS", https://africa.wisc.edu/community-reactions-endsars.
5. Greenwald, Glenn et al., https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jun/09/edward-snowden-nsa-whistleblower-surveillance
6. Riechmann, D, "Costs of Snowden leak still mounting five years later", https://apnews.com/article/797f390ee28b4bfbb0e1b13cfedf0593.

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Constructing a World Without Evil: Some Conceptual Obstacles in Discourse on the Problem of Evil

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Abstract:

This paper addresses the problem of evil, specifically the possibility of constructing an evil-free world. Someone might assert that God could and should actualize a state of affairs such that the evils characteristic of lived experience should be prevented or rendered impossible. "If God is omnipotent, omnibenevolent, and omniscient, then God should be able to create a world without evil," one might say. If such a God exists, it is not immediately obvious how such a God could simply actualize some state of affairs, P, that excluded evil. To suggest that God could do this presupposes that P is actually conceivable and within God's power to bring about. If one concedes that an omnipotent God could do only that which is not logically impossible for God to do, then a person, S, who proposes that God should bring about P seems to shoulder a burden of proof for demonstrating how the actualization of P is not impossible. If S suggests that God can and should bring about P, then it is not unreasonable to expect S to spell out the particulars of an evil-free state of affairs. Suppose S succeeds in showing that it would not be impossible for God to actualize P. In that case, S is readily justified in inquiring why God, provided he actually exists, has not done so. However, perhaps it is the case that this concept of an evil-free state of affairs, one compossible with the stipulations of some semblance of free agency and regularity in the laws of nature, is somehow incoherent.

In this paper, I aim to identify two potential problems related to proposing an evil-free world and suggest that one should, at best, remain agnostic about the possibility of whether an omnipotent God could actualize any such state of affairs.

Keywords: Possibility, Evil, Freedom, Philosophy of Religion, Omnipotence, Creation

Someone might assert that God should actualize a state of affairs such that the evils characteristic of lived experience, especially those evils classified as horrendous evils, should be prevented or rendered impossible. “If God is omnipotent, omnibenevolent, and omniscient, then God should be able to create a world without evil,” one might say. Assuming that such a God exists, it is not immediately obvious how God could simply actualize a state of affairs that satisfactorily eliminates evil. To suggest that God could do such presupposes that some ideal state of affairs, *P*, is actually conceivable. Allow me to define *P* as “a state of affairs in which: (1) various kinds and degrees of evil are no longer possible, (2) sentient beings retain some semblance of free agency, and (3) the regularity of natural laws obtains." I assume that freedom and regularity in the laws of nature are goods worth retaining.

If one concedes that an omnipotent God could do only that which is not logically impossible for God to do, then any person, *S*, who proposes that God should bring about *P* seems to shoulder a burden of proof for demonstrating how the actualization of *P* is not impossible.[1] If *S* suggests that God can and should bring about *P*, then it is not unreasonable to require *S* to spell out the particulars of an evil-free state of affairs. If *S* succeeds in showing that it would not be impossible for God to actualize this state of affairs, then *S* is justified to inquire why God, provided he actually exists, has not done so. However, perhaps it is the case that this concept of an evil-free state of affairs, one compossible with the stipulations of free agency and the laws of nature, is incoherent. I contend that a demonstration of the coherence of *P* will involve at least two obstacles:

(1) *The Problem of Conceiving Coherent Alternatives*. *S* should be able to propose an account of the conditions that obtain under *P*. She might surmise that an omniscient and omnipotent God can account for the contingencies, so she exempts herself from the responsibility to explain *how* everything would work out under *P*. "Let God handle the particulars. After all, God is omnipotent and omniscient," she might say. However, if the implications of *P* are such that *S* cannot coherently account for contingencies with respect to the elimination of just *one kind of evil*, or if *S*'s proposed account of *P* yields a contradiction, should one suppose that God could actualize *P* for all sorts of evils? Perhaps S expects something from God that is impossible for him to do.

(2) *The Gaunilo's Island Problem*. Somewhat correlated to the previous problem, the Gaunilo's Island Problem suggests that, unlike God—whose conception entails maximal-perfection—there is no conceivable, maximally perfect state of affairs. Any proposed state of affairs could vary with respect to the preferences of the person(s) advancing it, and the circumstances could constantly improve with the addition or subtraction of just one constitutive feature. In addition, there seems to be no consensus as to what satisfies an "evil-free" world.

Thus, in the absence of a plausible construct of *P* that properly addresses concerns about (1) free will, (2) natural laws, (3) the potential improvability of *S*, and (4) the problem of consensus on what constitutes "evil," I suggest that one should, at best, remain agnostic about the possibility of whether an omnipotent God could actualize any state of affairs satisfying with the demands of *P*.

The Problem of Conceiving Coherent Alternatives

Becky's car breaks down on I-95, and a tow-truck transports her to the nearest garage. She is understandably upset in these circumstances. In a moment of frustration, Becky shouts at the nearest mechanic, "Mechanics and engineers should just produce a car that cannot break down! Cars should never have flat tires, blown engines, failed brakes, etc." Becky, who is not as knowledgeable of the workings and design of automobiles as the mechanic, wants the mechanics and engineers to build a line of super-cars immune to damages and systems failures. Somewhat amused by the idea, the mechanic replies, "Becky, what would such a super-car look like? Can you explain your design plan and how would it work?" Off the top of her head, Becky describes a number of features such a car would have (impenetrable tires, maximally efficient engine, etc.), without bothering to explain the structural composition of any of the features or how they properly relate to one another in generating a super-car. After all, Becky is not a mechanic; why expect her to know how everything in the super-car should work? All she knows is cars *should be better* than they are.

When pressed for answers, Becky says the impenetrable tires would be made of indestructible materials that could withstand the most intense obstacles of road travel and never need service. Still intrigued, the mechanic asks, "What material(s) should we utilize to build these tires? And if the tires are indestructible, how would one go about disposing of or recycling these tires? What happens if two of these super-cars crash into one another at full speed?" These are fair concerns that introduce variables Becky has not contemplated up to this point. Becky is unaware of any existing materials that are indestructible, and she cannot account for what would happen if—supposing those materials existed—someone ever needed to dispose of anything made from those materials. On the question of these cars meeting in a collision, Becky, whose high school education in the principles of physics eludes her in the moment, cannot account for the aftermath of the scenario. If Becky claims that mechanics and engineers should do otherwise than they have done when building cars, is it fair hold Becky to account? It would seem she bears a burden of demonstrating why her suggestion is, at best, plausible and, at a minimum, worthy of consideration. However, Becky realizes she cannot satisfactorily explain how the super-car would actually work. In this case, Becky's super-car is nothing more than a wishful idea that raises a number of puzzles she is ill-equipped to solve. Even for a team of the wisest and most skilled mechanics, building a machine satisfying Becky's idea of a super-car seems highly improbable, if not impossible.

To conceive of a state of affairs in which the evils normative to human experience are no longer a possibility, one should be able to at least account for what the world would look like if God eliminated just one kind of evil. There are a number of apparently-natural[2] evils at one's disposal: hurricanes, cancers of various kinds, volcanic eruptions that displace large populations, etc. For the sake of simplicity, let's consider just one kind of evil to eradicate. Consider a dog dying a slow, painful death after being crushed by a fallen tree.[3] All persons—theists and non-theists alike—will probably agree that the dog's gruesome death is unfortunate and apparently meaningless. In other words, the dog's death is not immediately indicative that some sort of greater good results from the extreme suffering. Let's let *F* represent "the evil of some sentient creature experiencing death by a fallen tree." Suppose that *S* considers *F* and contends that God should actualize a state of affairs, *P*, in which evil *F* is no longer possible. It seems intuitive to *S* that an omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent God *could* and *should* actualize *P*.

Reflect on what *P* would actually look like with respect to *F*. *S* contends that on *P*, *F* would be impossible. So it is not unreasonable to expect *S* to account for what *P* would entail. Would *P* involve, for example, God fashioning the world such that trees are unable to fall on any sentient creatures, including even the smallest of creatures? For this to be possible, maybe God would sweep away all objects in the path of a falling tree. Must God exercise control of creatures such that he ensures none wander in vicinity of trees prone to fall? Suppose a man and his son explore the same wooded area as the dog. Must God arrange a course of events that precludes the men from wandering the wooded vale with any possibility of *F*, or even merely the possibility of being struck by a stray branch? How far away must they be? Can they cut down a tree for firewood? Can they even witness a falling tree?

In any case, it seems that in order to prevent catastrophe and preserve the well-being of all creatures, God has a lot of work to do. God must limit the course of action of creatures and/or manipulate the laws of nature to the extent that *every time* a tree should begin to fall that it never falls on any sentient beings. This might imply that God's occasional manipulation of freedom and/or the laws of nature in order to preserve the well-being of sentient beings is a good thing. However, if *S* believes free will and regularity within nature are goods, God's interference with those laws of nature and/or creaturely autonomy might be an evil in itself. If *S* allows God's intervention in autonomy and/or the laws of nature, then this violates the very conditions of *P* that involve retaining regularity in the laws of nature and creaturely autonomy. In other words, God's restriction of the goods of autonomy and/or natural laws in order to prevent an evil becomes an evil in itself. *S*'s account of *P*, then, appears contradictory, since it entails that God should actualize a state of affairs such that the possibility of *F* is always eliminated by divine interference with human free will, the laws of nature, or some combination of the two.

Some might wonder what exactly qualifies as a "satisfactory account" of *P* that addresses any problems that crop up. Consider Peter Van Inwagen's expectation for those designing a world:

> One should start by describing in some detail the laws of nature that govern that world. (Physicists' actual formulations of quantum field theories and the general theory of relativity provide the standard of required "detail.") One should then go on to describe the boundary conditions under which those laws operate; the topology of the world's space-time, its relativistic mass, the number of particle families, and so on. Then one should tell in convincing detail the story of cosmic evolution in that world: the story of the development of large objects like galaxies and of stars and of small objects like carbon atoms. Finally, one should tell the story of the evolution of life. These stories, of course, must be coherent, given one's specification of laws and boundary conditions. Unless one proceeds in this manner, one's statements about what is intrinsically or metaphysically possible—and thus one's options about an omnipotent being's "options" in creating a world—will be entirely subjective, and therefore without value.[4]

This appears to be an enormous task, even given the restricted attention to just one particular kind of evil. The smallest change to any feature of reality yields variables for which *S* should be expected to give an account in order to demonstrate the coherence of her construct of *P*. Perhaps, *S* concedes, it is acceptable for God to occasionally intervene in freedom or the laws of nature to prevent serious evils. Where should *S* draw the line concerning how much intervention on God's part is too much? What constitutes a "serious evil," and is it the same for everyone? John Hick raises a similar concern as to whether or not God could eliminate evils in a way that would satisfy everyone. "There would be nowhere to stop, short of a divinely arranged paradise in which human freedom would be narrowly circumscribed, moral responsibility largely eliminated, and in which the drama of man's story would be reduced to the level of a television serial."[5]

Over time, *S* might find God's occasional intervention arbitrary or annoying. Perhaps she would grow frustrated with God's constant intervention in the affairs of the world. To stave off this kind of cynicism she would need to have keen perception of God's purposes behind intervening in a given situation, in order that she could discern when his intervention was appropriate. It is not obvious that *S* could always adequately discern that God was only intervening for the prevention of some evil.[6] In any case, if God has to eliminate *F*, then it seems he has to (1) exercise control over creaturely actions such that no creatures are susceptible to death by fallen trees, and/or (2) interrupt laws of nature to preclude the possibility of trees falling on creatures. This creates a larger worry about whether or not such intervention itself becomes an evil on God's part by gerrymandering with freedom and psychical laws such that nature becomes an inscrutable mess. If this is the case, God's intervention becomes problematic.

Another variable to consider in a state of affairs in which *F* is impossible has to do with the mortality of sentient beings. If *F* is impossible, what—if any—forms of mortality are appropriate (i.e., not evil) for sentient beings? If *S* considers *F* a truly horrendous evil, then *S* purports to know at least one form of creaturely death that is an evil which God should render impossible. "God should construct the world such that sentient beings only die peaceful deaths in their sleep after living long, fruitful lives," says *S*. Let *X* represent this proposal of peaceful death. While *X* sounds preferable, *S* must once again confront the ramifications. Can God actualize *X* without regularly violating free will or manipulating natural laws? In the case of humans, it seems that *X prima facie* rules out participation in any number of activities (i.e. bungie jumping, driving on the interstate, football, etc.) and occupations (i.e. construction, airline industry, crossing guard, etc.) in which a degree of risk is involved. One would have to account for all activities in which there is even a marginal risk of fatality. In the case of non-human animals, for example, what would *X* entail concerning the food chain? Lions, for example, would starve and die were it impossible for them to hunt gazelles. These examples give rise to legitimate concerns for anyone who supposes God could eliminate a given evil with the wave of a hand.

It is important to clarify that just because *S* cannot immediately offer a coherent account of *P* that answers all the variables does not necessarily entail that *P* is *actually* impossible. Absence of evidence is not necessarily evidence of absence. However, to confidently assert that God could have done better without adequately addressing the variables in one's notion of *P* is not to argue anything.

Instead, it is little more than asserting what might otherwise be impossible. As Michael Peterson notes:

> Even the slightest modification may produce manifold and intricate differences between this present natural order and the envisioned one. The whole matter becomes so complex that no finite mind can conceive of precisely what modifications the envisioned natural world would have to incorporate in order both to preserve the good natural effects and avoid the...evil ones. And if the desired modifications cannot be detailed, then the further task of conceiving how the proposed natural world is better than this present one seems patently impossible.[7]

If *S* maintains that God could and should actualize *P*, then it is reasonable to expect *S* to offer an explanation of how the actualization of *P* is not contradictory or incoherent. In the absence of a coherent account, then perhaps one need not expect God to actualize a different state of affairs.

The Gaunilo's Island Problem

In addition to the above problem of conceiving alternative states of affairs that harmonize (1) human autonomy and (2) reliability within the laws of nature, another concern involves whether or not a maximally great state of affairs is possible. If God can and should create a much better world than this one, why is there a lack of consensus as to what actually constitutes an evil-free world, such as *P*? I find Anselm's well-known dialogue with Gaunilo relevant to this concern. Responding to Anselm's ontological argument, Gaunilo proposed a perfect island, akin to God in terms of possessing supremely good properties. Anselm objected to Gaunilo by pointing out the contingency of the island and its lack of intrinsically maximal qualities. For example, if one's concept of perfect island contains 100 trees, someone else could conceive an island with more or better features, like 105 trees and numerous soda machines. In short, Anselm believed that it was impossible to conceive of a contingent object having maximally good properties, at least the kinds normatively bound up in a classical Western notion of God. I think Anselm's reply is on point and worthy of consideration in any discussion of actualizing an evil-free state of affairs.

For any account of *P*, someone could, in principle, conceptualize a better state of affairs by adding or subtracting certain features from *P*. If this is the case, it is unlikely that account of *P* will unanimously satisfy everyone. If *S* takes the actual world as a model from which she begins constructing *P*, then it seems that the results of *P* will largely depend on certain convictions she holds.[8] Any feature of the world which a person counts as an evil might be something which another person counts as a good. Hence, perhaps any one individual's construction of *P* would not be an account satisfying all persons; thus, perhaps there is no maximally great state of affairs.

For example, suppose God granted five lucky people the opportunity to actualize their own version of *P*. Instead of constraining each participant to account for all the contingencies of their respective states of affairs, God merely asks them to verbalize whatever version of an evil-free world is in their mind so that he can actualize it. Supposing we could zoom out and observe these five evil-free worlds alongside one another, we would notice unanimity in the elimination of some evils (cancer, homelessness, war, rape, natural disasters, etc.). However, we would also notice a few differences between them.

One of the participants, Alice, is a vegan who is passionate about animal suffering and believes human consumption of animals is morally reprehensible. On her account of P, P^A, human beings would no longer consume animals and follow a vegan diet. Another participant, Brad, is likewise concerned about animal suffering. In fact, his account, P^B, looks nearly identical to P^A in multiple respects. However, Brad is not a vegan. He enjoys the occasional ribeye steak, so he does not eliminate the possibility of animal consumption because he does not consider it an evil. Brad tries to brush off the differences as insignificant, but Alice's conviction regarding animal consumption prevents the parties from coming to a consensus. Though this is one seemingly-small detail of the two worlds, P^A and P^B demonstrate a fundamental disagreement on what qualifies as an evil worth eliminating. What Brad considers an insignificant evil, Alice considers a significant evil. Thus, the two "perfect" worlds stand in tension.

Notice that the moral assumptions of the participants regarding what properly constitutes P play into their respective constructions. Like Anselm's observation of Gaunilo's "perfect island," perhaps there is no way of constructing P in a way that meets the demands of every person. Even the smallest details of the worlds are subject to scrutiny. Thus, some degree of evil will likely remain on any construct of P.

Conclusion

While reconciling the concept of a God that is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent with the evils normative to this world has proven difficult, it is equally—if not more—difficult to put forth a preferable, coherent state of affairs that does not include problems of its own. A satisfactory account of an evil-free state of affairs should not contradict itself by compromising goods like creaturely autonomy and/or regularity within nature, nor should it have wiggle room for further improvement by successive addition or subtraction of certain features. If any state of affairs is such that it could incessantly be improved upon by even the slightest of modifications, then it seems that no state of affairs will meet universal criteria for an evil-free state of affairs. In agreement with Anselm, the nature of contingent objects is indicative that any state of affairs could, in some manner, always be better. In the absence of an alternative, comprehensive proposal that accounts for the problems of (1) free will, (2) the laws of nature, and (3) potential improvability, it seems reasonable to remain agnostic about the prospect of God actualizing any evil-free state of affairs.

Endnotes:

1. Peter Hare and Edward Madden, *Evil and the Concept of God* (Springfield: Charles C. Thomas, 1968), 55–59. Hare and Madden insists that the concept of a perfect world as "one in which there is no positive evil" is possible because the concept is not self-contradictory.
2. I need to qualify this term "apparently-natural evils." There are a number of apparently-natural evils

for which humans, in some form or another, are culpable. For example, while no person deliberately develops cancerous lesions on the lungs, scientific research indicates life-long smokers are, to a degree, responsible for such a state of affairs. While humans cannot manipulate the weather according to their will, there is extant evidence that humans impact the climate in ways that can alter the weather. Thus, I contend that while some natural evils are largely out of our hands, there are ways in which humans contribute to certain natural evils.

3. The inspiration for this example is William Rowe's "suffering faun" case in "The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 16.4 (1979): 335-41.
4. Peter Van Inwagen, "The Problem of Evil, The Problem of Air, and the Problem of Silence," *Philosophical Perspectives* Vol. 5, Philosophy of Religion (1991): 146.
5. John Hick, "Soul-Making and Suffering," in *The Problem of Evil*, ed. Robert Merrihew Adams and Marilyn McCord Adams (Oxford: University Press, 1990), 181.
6. This might raise concerns about divine omniscience, the inscrutability of God's ways, trust that divine intervention is always good, etc.
7. Michael L. Peterson, *Evil and The Christian God* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1982), 115–6.
8. Van Inwagen, 181–2. Van Inwagen suggests that the only model we have for designing a better world can only begin from our experience and perspective in this world.

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Stating the Thermo-Entropic Limits of Substantive Democracy

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Abstract:

This article first offers a criticism of the theory of neoliberal democracy, not because of its philosophical assumptions, but because of the unreasonable claims it presupposes about thermodynamics. This paper then outlines a dissipative, systems-theoretical view of democracy based on thermodynamic analysis of the viability of democratic social structure within the system of capital. The paper claim that democracy confronts the challenges of any system: it must fight off its tendency to decay (entropy) across perturbations in its environment by drawing inputs of matter, energy, and information from energy pools in its environment in order to reproduce its social structure as an output. The two ultimate limits to any viable democratic social structure include 1) ecological, physical environments (this is indeed an ultimate limit for any system) and 2) the overcoming of the structural parameters required for the reproduction of capital (e.g., capital's expansionary profit motive, the exploitation of human labor, particularly in the Global South and periphery), which any democracy must be structurally opposed to, in principle. Here it is argued that a rich, substantive form of democracy is thermodynamically impossible within the system of capital because it cannot provide the substantive (vs. merely formal) equality that is a generative condition for any democracy, no matter the scale of analysis.

Keywords: democracy, thermodynamics, entropy, neoliberal, systems theory

That public men publish falsehoods
Is nothing new.
That America must accept
Like the historical republics corruption and empire
Has been known for years.
Be angry at the sun for setting
If these things anger you.
(Robinson Jeffers)

Democracy's Outmoded Assumptions

It may be peculiar to quote Robinson Jeffers in the context of any theory of democracy, but his poem, "Be Angry at the Sun," perfectly expresses a key challenge to the establishment and successful reproduction of democracy and its institutions: that of stating the ultimate, thermo-entropic and ecological limits within which any viable democratic space may be constituted.

This article will outline a dissipative, systems-theoretical view of democracy based on entropic-thermodynamic analysis of the viability of democracy's social structure within the system of capital. Democracy confronts the challenges of any system: it must fight off its tendency to decay (entropy) across perturbations in its environment by drawing inputs of matter, energy, and information from energy pools in its environment in order to reproduce its social structure as an output. Rather than maintain that democracy can exist within the structural space of the system of capital, this article argues that it cannot, and that a low-input alternative to capital's high-input dynamics must be theorized. This thesis follows precisely from thermo-entropic analysis of the capital system and its limitations and forms of exclusion of democracy; the thesis thus does not make a formal appeal or morally condemn capital. Indeed, the idea is that low-input alternatives require a democratically constructed, community-oriented view of social practices because low-input alternatives are not compatible with capital's imperialist and thus exclusionary, high-input modes of control over social systems. Low-input strategies of social reproduction offer viable alternatives for theorising the restructuring of social systems in line with the sorts of democratic objectives that would be required by ecologically healthier, and thermodynamically less wasteful, social systems. Thermo-entropic and ecological limits to democracy must, then, be taken into account when theorising democracy.

Yet such important limits to democracy are entirely missed in conventional analyses which view democracy, and associated notions like liberty and freedom, in the absence of such limits, ignoring basic biophysical laws. Ralf Dahrendorf's 2006 piece, "Inequality and Discontent," published at Project Syndicate, is here representative. Despite its somewhat recent date of publication, Dahrendorf's piece could no longer be written today, not in good conscience. After the 2007-2008 financial crisis and with growing awareness about the relation between the financial-economic system and global warming and its dire consequences, the world has perhaps become wiser to our thermo-entropic, energetic, and ecological limits. There is a consensus that the global populace, whether Main Street or Wall Street, in New York City or rural Pakistan, knows we can no longer pretend to believe in the world Dahrendorf characterizes. In his "Inequality and Discontent" Dahrendorf (2006) makes the following claims: "the last two decades have brought increased wealth to the world as a whole;" "globalization's dynamism has benefited many;" "an egalitarian climate does not promote innovation and a sense of dynamic development." Perhaps the article's least critical line is expressed in Dahrendorf's (2006) assertion, "inequality is not merely compatible with freedom, but is often a result of and stimulus for freedom." But freedom for whom? And what is meant here by freedom?

While Dahrendorf addresses freedom, this article extends analysis of freedom to the theory of democracy. For, while this need not be the case, it is often argued (and more often assumed) that the political pre-condition of freedom is some actual democratic framework (often capitalist and nation-state-oriented) of concepts and especially of material institutions. If democracy itself confronts thermo-entropic limits, how might we better conceive the term freedom? Startlingly, questions about the material and institutional conditions of freedom are never addressed in Dahrendorf's piece. Readers are left in a position of having to reconstruct the answers for themselves. One does catch a glimpse of Dahrendorf's (2006) assumptions when it is stated that "a free society recognizes two limitations to economic and general inequality." Dahrendorf (2006) cites these limitations as follows: 1) an individual's access to participation in political community (by which he means the market and civil society) and 2) a basic economic income status. Access to rights and economic means. Such limitations form the matrix of an all-too-common common sense, consistently presupposing an already-established democratic framework. Thus again, this article is intended to interrogate the limits of a more concrete conception of democracy (and its attendant social structure), but uses Dahrendorf's insights on freedom as a springboard to provoke reflection on democracy and its limits.

But why distinguish between economic and *general* inequality, as Dahrendorf does? From what point of view are the two different? This is left unstated, but certainly from the democratic point of view, the distinction seems specious. Yet if one believes, as many ecological economists do (and many heterodox economists more generally) that the economy ought to be embedded in the ecology – Georgescu Roegen's famous insight – then it is *not* possible to separate out the economic from the ecological sphere, so long as one wants to do good economic analysis. Further, is it not the case that economic inequality already signifies a generalized inequality?

Democracy cannot rightly count as democracy if it is not undergirded by the concept of a substantive, material equality on a global and not-limited scale. Reaching back to the conceptual and historical origins of democracy, this piece contends that democracy is only democracy if it equates to a rule by the many (the "demos"), carrying connotations of a global realization of substantive equality. Further, since inequality in the economic sphere is here already a sign of generalized inequality, democracy must be attained through real, substantive means, for example, equality of not only access to, but real acquisition of the material supports of equality.

By contrast, what is meant by formal equality above is merely a non-material ideology of democracy, one that, definitively does not carry the mark of real substantive or material equality but might be represented by, say, the capacity to vote in an election, or by a mere constitutional guarantee where in either case there is no correlate in the real acquisition of substantive equality, on actual, material terms.

But for Dahrendorf, economic inequality is not general inequality; the two are left separate. This is why Dahrendorf (2006) will make such claims as "an egalitarian climate does not promote innovation and a sense of dynamic development." No? Why not? Where then does such innovation come from? Has Dahrendorf solved this riddle? Has Dahrendorf witnessed some model of egalitarian climate and traced out its structural causes and consequences? What can be said definitively – and here again we see a sea-change in basic ideology – is that Dahrendorf remains committed to the notion that egalitarian phenomena stem from a framework of individuals poised in basic competition with each other.

So where are the free individuals, the free markets they create and that rightly constrain them? Where is the invisible hand? Such assumptions, often characterized as neoliberal but with their roots in neoclassical theory, have now realized their Cartesian nightmare. They have been identified and brought to the fore of the global consciousness for rigorous examination; they have largely been isolated as fantasy. Now, perhaps we cannot do without fantasy, but some fantasies are downright dangerous. In terms of our awareness of today's ultimate, thermo-entropic and ecological limitations, Dahrendorf's core theoretical commitments seem both quaint and sinister. Of course, Dahrendorf's views are partially representative of a certain neoclassically-trained establishment; still, the neoclassical tradition continues by and large to support a richer, more far-reaching network of analysis – what might be termed "liberal political economy" – dominant in contemporary economic thinking. For the space of this article, we will not rehearse liberal political economy's guiding assumptions about freedom, liberty, and democracy, but suffice it to say that liberal political economy remains an anti-ecological view on the world. Thus, its vision of freedom and democracy tends to reject the wider ecological view, as with neoclassical theory.

We confront new limitations to democracy (and to freedom and liberty) today: they are ecological and energetic, broadly construed. They are, ultimately, thermo-entropic, respecting basic biophysical insights about how the dynamic systems that constitute our world actually work and how they can be empirically modeled. If we are to speak of democracy and the "wealth" (however measured) it brings, we must cast democracy in lights that respect the basic insights of thermodynamics, of entropy and energy production. Here, democracy must be measured on the standard of the ecological and thermo-entropic limits to equality it might present, versus Dahrendorf's limited perspective. Like all phenomena, democracy is not some basic essence, naturally given from the past and promised for the future, but would, like any real world system – open and dynamic – be threatened from without, for example, from forms of fascism or crass interventionism (to say nothing of ecological threats); rather, like fascism or interventionism, democracy is constructed in physical confrontation with actual, ecological limits in its environment (that which is external to its constitutive social structure).

From this point of view, democracy *is* compatible with inequality, but the inequality that characterizes the behavior of dynamic, dissipative systems, *in toto*. Following the work of Ilya Prigogine, to take a seminal instance, such systems violate the postulates of some natural and universal equilibrium, both in the physical universe and in neoclassical economic theory (which depends upon its own specious postulates of equilibrium). If we are to adequately address the limitations democracy suffers today, the sense of inequality – or rather, disequilibrium – that characterizes actual systems cannot be conceived on terms akin to Dahrendorf's. Thus, what is outmoded in much of the theory of democracy today is 1) its rootedness in the still dominant neoclassical theory that support's today's liberal political economy, the mainstream view for economic and political policy formation today and 2) its anti-ecological character which neglects insights from the study of thermodynamics and entropy.

Recent systems-theoretical work in the theory of democracy (and its institutions) views democracy in the context of its entropic and ecological limits. I here make reference to dissipative systems theory in particular as it has made impact on social theory. Democracy, like all things, is subject to the basic laws of thermodynamics. Democracy must confront the challenges of any dynamic being or system: it must be constructed or built by taking inputs of matter, energy, and information from environmental surrounds. It must then be reproduced, continuously, and is subject to the law of entropy: the tendency to decay. Not only this; in this very act, democracy—and whatever liberty or freedom it might afford—produces waste. Just in order for systems – actual systems in the real world, in real geographies in space and time – to reproduce themselves, they must also dissipate their decay, their entropy, into some external environment. Confronting its internal limits, the production of democracy must flush its own entropic by-products into an external environment. If this cannot be achieved, its waste attacks it from within, as with a bodily cancer run amok, or from without.

Historically, if the (symptomatically Western) wealthiest enclaves of countries have enjoyed greater degrees of democracy, this is because these countries have found ways to better manage – ecologically; certainly not "better ways" – and to expel their waste. Such countries have exported or flushed the waste that comes with generating democracy into the Global South, where labor seems to come cheaper, and into natural environments, like oceans, forests, and the atmosphere. Yes, Dahrendorf is right: freedom is compatible with inequality. But shall we continue to view this inequality as stemming from the differential behavior of individuals and nation-states? (No; such views and the assumptions upon which they are built are outmoded.)

After all, it is difficult to pursue democracy where one has been stripped of the political communities necessary for its production, as when the Global South finds its labor forces decimated. Or, shall we begin to view inequality as the *necessary* precondition of system-building in the very basic sense, thus establishing the ultimate, thermodynamic and ecological limits that any democracy must overcome just in order to *be* at all? On these latter terms, we may refuse Dahrendorf's (2006) limits and thus his entire conceptual apparatus of inequality and freedom. He states, and we quote him at length here:

> ...while a free society recognizes limits to inequality, it also accepts that inequality exists, for it provides hope for many by showing what one might achieve with ability and luck – or perhaps even luck alone. Inequality adds color and variety to societies; it is one of the marks of lively, flexible, and innovative countries. It is thus not bad in itself, even if its excesses must be capped in the name of citizenship for all. Social exclusion and personalized power through wealth are always unacceptable. But if we want freedom, then social and economic inequalities are a legitimate, and necessary, price to pay.

The global populace has been paying the price for such disappointingly mainstream views for far too long. What is worse, and it bears repeating, the entire viewpoint is based on outmoded assumptions. Let us consider new limits to democracy.

The Thermo-Entropic Limits of Any Viable Democracy Within Capital's Structural-Reproductive Mode of Social Control

The two ultimate limits to any viable democratic social structure include 1) thermo-entropic, ecological, physical environmental constraints (this is indeed the ultimate limit for any system) and 2) the *overcoming of the structural parameters required for the reproduction of capital* (e.g., capital's ceaseless and expansionary profit motive and its exploitation of human labor particularly in the Global South and periphery, to name but two parameters).

Any democracy must be structurally opposed to the second limit, in principle. This is because the system of capital cannot provide the *substantive* (vs. merely formal) equality that is a generative and sufficient condition for any democracy. By generative, I mean that democracy cannot be constructed and maintain in its structural reproduction unless it respects physical, thermodynamic laws and limits. By sufficient, I mean that not only must the necessary, physical thermodynamic limits be respected in terms of the energy requirements (on the ecology) for the construction of democracy, but that democracy must be concretely actualized in space and time out of the matrix of limits and potentials provided by the thermodynamic laws. We might find the criterion of democracy's actualization in space and time as the attainment of substantive equality.

Yet these are tough conditions indeed to meet, stretching the limits of our imagination as well as, most likely, our physical world. For, if we were to model the construction of democracy on anything like the material realities of the wealthiest enclaves of countries which identify themselves as democratic, i.e. – attaining the wealth resources and satisfying the energy consumption demands of the U.S, Western European countries, and Japan (the global core countries) – then it is well-nigh impossible, *given current* material and technological resources, to imagine any global conception, a true rule by the many, whereby democracy might be actualized. Imagine extending the wealth and energy extraction and consumption patterns of these wealthiest countries to a global context (especially given peak oil). At best, in our current context (of the capital system) we might be able to speak of democracies only in certain countries, but again this would violate the historical conception of democracy as rule by the many, or as the attainment of (a global) substantive equality.

What prevents the actualization of democracy on a global scale is internal to the capital system and to the reproduction of its structural parameters. That is, the core parameters that make the capital system what it *is*, are extremely expensive (on Energy Return on Investment (ERoI) parameters, for example) to reproduce over time (capital now in its perhaps 5th century of existence is already taxing, very highly, natural ecological systems and human labor). The capital system, just in order to reproduce the basic structural parameters within which it can be reproduced, contains mechanisms that cause it to 'overdevelop' and which require it to produce immense, *high-input* quantities of disorder in its environments, high-input quantities (e.g., from the production of food waste and hydrocarbon fuel burning to the maintenance of its militarization tendency).

These high-input quantities cannot be sustained within anything like a democratic structure conceived on terms of substantive equality; the entropy of capital makes this impossible. This is because, as stated, just as a condition of its reproduction, capital produces massive quantities of entropy, energy which can no longer be taken back up into its core wealthiest enclaves of countries in anything like a fashion that would be consistent with democracy. This makes the capital system, and especially its core wealthiest enclaves, wasteful and harmful to the environments it funnels its entropic disorder into.

Moreover, for the first time in its five-hundred year history, this production of entropy now seems to spell catastrophe for the system as a whole. There is no longer a true periphery to dissipate capital's entropy into. We now confront a systemic and no-longer cyclical crisis. The difficulty of democracy can thus be gauged according to the ways in which this entropic dumping is conducted, governed, and reproduced. According to Robert Biel, for example, we now live in an age in which capital is trying to adapt to its own entropy production, becoming "cannibalistic," (Biel 2012, 235) ramifying the difficulties for democracy (or for any non-authoritarian order of control over energy and resource management).

Before discussing Biel's framework of analysis of the capital system it is important to be clear about why it is that the key confrontation with democracy lies in the realm of the transcendence or abolition of the capital system. Accepting this argument, it will also become apparent why reforming the capital system also fails democracy, putting emphasis on the necessity of a revolutionary transformation of the system. Again, capital, like any dynamic system, must direct inputs (and outputs) of energy, matter, and information toward the maintenance of the key structures which allow it to emerge and maintain its order. It must continuously reproduce core, structural components, over time, in order to maintain its integrity, as a system, against perturbations from its environment (financial meltdowns, ecological disaster, systemic revolt, etc.). Indeed, if the core structures of any system are not reproduced, then the system will undergo determinate crises or collapse. For example, the feudal/seigniorial system depended on certain inputs—e.g., an agricultural surplus product, distributed in a certain proportion between lord and vassal, precise obligations, services, and bonds of fidelity between the social networks—ultimately, when these structural components could no longer be reproduced, the feudal system collapsed.

The driving idea here is that the dynamic material structure of a society cannot be maintained other than by directing its inputs and outputs in the service of reproducing its structurally necessary components; otherwise, it succumbs to entropy. With respect to the capital system, for instance, there must be a continuous conversion of the bulk of its energy, materials, and information into the reproduction of the following structurally necessary components (brief list):

- A structurally enforced inequality between capital and (ultimately human) labor.
- Constant accumulation of capital with an expanding profit motive.
- Property system with private ownership of means of production.
- An, in principle, uncontrollable global market with fetishistic production objectives.
- Nation-state system as framework of international relations where each state confronts each other, sometimes violently, over the control of inputs and outputs.

- Nuclear family which socializes individuals to ensure the legitimization of the minimal, status-quo objectives of the state.

If a significant portion of these structurally necessary components of the system of capital are removed or suffer breakdown, the system demonstrates signs of crisis or collapse and the reproductive integrity of the system is threatened or ruined.

So why isn't democracy compatible with capital, say, even in a reformed version of it? First, it is impossible to generate substantive equality, for example, when there is a deeply structurally-enforced gulf between capital and human labor. Capital is not human, though labor, in our definition, is. First, then, democracy is, in our conception, a human form of social organization and its reproduction. Capital acts then as a sort of alien force in democracy. Even if democracy may admit of alien forces, it is nonetheless clear that democracy cannot tolerate an alien force that, in virtue of its very structure, produces inequalities between capital and human labor. If the substantive aims which make possible anything like a democratic rule by the many are to be made concrete and integrated within a thermo-entropically viable social-institutional framework, then capital's structural inequality with human labor is an intolerable condition for any democracy.

The requirement of a constant accumulation of capital with an ever expanding profit motive (over the long term, if not the business quarter) also clearly confronts the thermodynamic and ecological limits mentioned above. Accumulation and expansion cannot go on forever, not least without dire consequences for our ecology, as we witness today. Certainly a private property system with ownership by the capitalist class, which, by definition, dispossess labor – here again, human labor – from the very means of generating wealth is also in deep structural disagreement with democracy, defined substantively.

If reform is impossible in such a system it is because the deep, core structural components, establishing the parameters of capital's systemic dynamics, act to generate inequalities in the first place. Reform here becomes a mere patch on the wound. For, there would be no capital without such inequalities, yet such inequalities structurally reinforce the impossibility of democracy and deepen the rift between the established capitalist order and any attempt at democracy-building from within this frame. Additionally, the core structures of capital have also generated cyclical problems with over-accumulation and underproduction (boom and bust cycles). Excepting Dahrendorf's (2006) ecologically and thermodynamically (severely) limited views on wealth inequality, it seems undeniable that such cycles have long interfered with social attempts to build democracy in any substantive, global sense. The same should be said for the appropriation of human labor by capital since it separates the majority of the population from access to the inputs defining the means of producing wealth and oftentimes bare subsistence. As well, the structure of the private ownership of the means of production, and the productive resources and technologies used to extract surplus labor, aids separation of productive forces (i.e., between capital and human labor).

On Biel's thermodynamically astute assessment of the capital system – one he defines on high-input terms – capital's over-dependency on material resources (e.g., hydrocarbon inputs) for surplus wealth production (both industrial and financial) limits the construction of democracy severely. Add to this the fact that capital's monetary system, reserve banking, and fiat money-systems support the financialisation of the economy rather than the development of a real economy based on substantive material wealth, the kind that would be a pre-condition for democracy. (This understandable lament over the financialisation of the economy is a common complaint of Keynesians and post-Keynesians as well (the reformatory nature of their economic programs notwithstanding)). Ecologically, the politics of nation-states and national identities within the international relations framework become problems not only of political representation (merely formal democracy versus substantive), but are more and more problematic inasmuch as these international political relations are controllable only under the parameters of a militarization tendency produced within the capital system, indeed, as the control agency vis-à-vis its core structures. Without heavy militarization, and the vast sums of capital investment that go into it, it is likely that the capital system would collapse. All of the aforementioned structures of the capital system, most of them visible from the system's outset, produce the sort of non-democracy-inducing problems of poverty which global governance institutions like the IMF and World Bank are simply unable to control, despite promises of their bringing democracy. Rather, such institutions more and more act to violate the kind of autonomy that democracy requires simply as a coherent concept.

Biel's assessment of the system of capital is attuned to the thermodynamic and entropic limits of capital and thus can provide ecologically astute analysis of the limits and potentials of democracy. For Biel, because of thermodynamic and ecological constraints, the system of capital is now cannibalizing itself. In his *The Entropy of Capitalism*, he notes: "...in order to survive, the system must parasitise (sic) upon sources of vitality wherever it can find them. The key problem then becomes how to control them while doing so" (Biel 2012, 235). Capital, for Biel, thus has distinctly constrained paths of development open to it. He mentions three: one, the attempt to continue to impose top-down order within the system, the reinstatement of "the hierarchical and state-centric methods of early imperialism" (Biel 2012, 235). Now, with the system becoming "too complex," (Biel 2012, 235) as Biel puts it, and suffering a global crisis (economically and ecologically), this top-down form of control goes hand in hand with the *restoration* of the old order (including in the more contemporary sense: domination by the Western core countries, neoliberal political economy, globalization, business as usual, etc.). Forgetting the point that top-downism of any variety ought to conflict with any but formal (not concrete) actualizations of democracy, capital, at least within the wealthiest enclaves, has historically unfolded through top-down control (powerful nation-states have always captured and controlled flows of capital and distributed them out to allies). Capital has always had its anti-democratic command centers, even if they have shifted over time (though located in the Global North, Euro-centrically, almost exclusively), and thus has always relied on differentials of power and political and military force to reproduce its structural order. What makes such top-down control incompatible with democracy, however, is the very thermodynamic impossibility – within our current, capitalist system – with its economic and ecological crisis, to construct democracy. Biel's is not a moral theory. It is not a liberal (or neoliberal) theory which eschews thermo-entropic, ecological analysis, but is a thermodynamically informed theory which actually takes into account the thermo-entropic and ecological impossibility of democracy within the capital system.

Biel's analysis of capital's entropy production suggests, then, that top-downism, with all of the inputs of energy required to maintain it, is thermodynamically too costly. Attempts at restoring capital's conventional order in times of systemic, ecological crisis seem doomed to failure. Moreover, such top-downism, considering the thermo-ecological limitations of our planet at this point in its history, would necessitate imperialist dominance over the capture of the essential inputs and outputs of matter, energy, and information. It would (and indeed has) yielded the creation of a periphery in which the capitalist core countries dump their waste. After all, selling vast amounts of consumer products using plastics and radioactive materials has to go somewhere. But leaving aside the issue of imperialism, even post-Keynesian theories today which call for renewed investment in infrastructure (the fixing of rotting pipes or crumbling roads and bridges) express precisely the problem with the restoration of top-down order as a governance and control strategy within the capital system: where is the money and the resources for such infrastructural improvement projects to come from?

This difficult question leads Biel to imagine his second path of development for the capital system: the spontaneous emergence of the energy required to build order (Biel 2012, 263-342). As complex systems theories confirm, order "comes for free" in a variety of natural and physical systems. One might here think of Stuart Kauffman's theories on the generation of life, as self-organization, where life emerges "spontaneously" from the merely chemical pools defining Earth's early elemental history. Instead of managing the extraction of material and energetic wealth through costly forms of top-downism, why not take advantage of social order that "comes for free," as it were, as in the emergence of social movements like the Arab Spring, or the ways in which communities may abandon usual behaviors and share resources in times of crisis?

The problem with this more laissez-faire phenomenon of capitalist control and management of energy is that it can easily be co-opted by capital's current top-down regimes and interests, thus reintroducing the problem of ant-democratic imperialism. While locally or in punctuated times of crisis such spontaneous emergence of order can generate democratic behaviors, these do not arise globally or perdure. Capital's top-down imperialist regimes tend to take advantage of such spontaneous emergence of order, forcing the creation and diffusion of bad forms of chaos. Biel (2012, 263-342) suggests as an example the U.S. Defense Advanced Research Project Agency's – initiated under the U.S. neocons of the George W. Bush regime – development of robots that are designed to forage over battlefields consuming human and other biomass to refuel themselves and thus go on killing or serving whatever other programmed directive they are meant to carry out. This is the unfortunate consequence that too often attends to Biel's second path: the co-optation of spontaneous emergent order represents one of the scarier trends in capital's development. As Biel (2012, 255) puts it, "it's a bit like the control of the seed multinationals over experimentation in farming: the system cannot tolerate diffuse innovation, or any autonomous emergence which might go in creative directions."

The Low-Input Alternative as Thermo-Entropically Viable Case for Democracy

Given the limitations of the first two paths of capitalist development, Biel puts his hope in the third path he isolates: low-input solutions to capital's high-input modes of systemic control. Again, this control is here conceived as control over the inputs and outputs of matter, energy, and information that serve as the material resources through which some viable construction of democracy might proceed. Low-input means simply that lower quantities of inputs of matter, energy, and information would go into the creation of a structural (here, social) order and its generation of the structural outputs it needs to reproduce or maintain that order. Biel conceives this as an alternative to the capital system because, just in order to be, capital has, historically, as mentioned, drawn its inputs from natural environments and cheaper labor pools in the Global South through top-down imperialist control.

Since, again, today the system of capital is in danger of being unable to reproduce itself except through the most dangerous and anti-democratic of ways, the low-input approach – which does not mean low-output production, as Biel contends, "surprisingly, small farms and gardens turn out to be more efficient than plantation agriculture" (Biel 2012, 321) – must be conceived as an alternative to the capital system; it must be a revolutionary reordering of the dynamics of the social system of human beings. This does not hold true only for the way in which the low-input alternative challenges the historical constitution of capital, but, because capital's dynamics have everything to do with the history of its reproduction, the challenge is to capital's structural-reproductive dynamics as a whole.

Indeed, low-input methods of the extraction and production of energy are less wasteful and more efficient. They produce less entropy, thus avoiding the forcing of the social system into a cannibalistic phase (at least not in the near-future, that is, should the capital system actually be abolished and replaced by a social system that is ecologically sound, respecting thermodynamic laws and entropic limits). If the low-input alternative has the outcome of using lesser quantities of inputs of matter, energy, and information – drastically less as compared to the system of capital – it might provide the framework for a potentially democratic alternative. Biel (2012, 321) thinks as much when he notes:

> this is the real significance of urban agriculture with sufficiently high productivity to make a serious contribution to feeding the people (this is the crucial condition), then we could afford to withdraw

> part of rural agriculture from the current, unsustainable system and still retain the total net food production while this part is being converted to organic, low-input methods.

Here we see that Biel believes that low-input food production would minimally allow for the withdrawal of the food production sub-system from the capital system, thus removing a frame of social control which, as argued, is structurally incompatible with democracy. Moreover, low-input alternatives do not apply solely to the realm of food production, even if this is Biel's preferred example. He focuses on examples of low-input food production such as the urban agricultural movements operating in metropolitan centers like Detroit, Chicago, or New York City, but peoples in rural Pakistan are also implementing similar low-input projects, and not just in food. He also cites the aquaponic greenhouse system technologies as another example of his proposed low-input alternative. So, the third path Biel has in mind is not solely concerned with one subsystem of the capital system (low-input food production) but suggests a fully systemic alternative to capital.

Because low-input alternatives are, potentially, enriching to local communities everywhere, especially *if* conditions of imperialist control over the system can be transcended, there is a global import to such methods (and Biel *does* think imperialist control can be transcended because thermo-entropically it *must* be: again, the system can no longer continue to function *via* its high-input dynamics because it is too costly ecologically). The global import of low-input methods align historically and conceptually with the construction of democracy, implying the "demos," the global many, as well as notions of autonomous self-rule for communities. Low-input alternatives actually *require* a democratically constructed, community-oriented view of social practices in order to work because low-input alternatives cannot be based on (capital's, for instance) exclusionary dynamics (core-periphery, capital-labor, private property-commons), but must be based on tactics that actually empower communities, substantively, to grow their own food, for instance.

Any low-input practice would, in principle, not exclude active participation in autonomously generating the inputs required as part of larger democracy-building practices. Low-input strategies of social reproduction may thus offer viable alternatives for restructuring social systems in line with the democratic objectives that would be required by healthier social systems. Where the system of capital requires high-input structural reproduction just to reproduce itself, low-input regimes require a different set of structural supports premised on the logic of a different, democratic form of political economy (one that is systemically and ecologically rather than liberally or individualistically-minded)—supports such as community-based resource production divorced from all the trappings of high-input drains on natural environments.

The theory of democracy and its concepts (e.g., substantive equality in the economic sphere, liberatory formulations of postcolonial identity, etc.) often runs aground on poor analyses of the capital system as a totalized and totalizing structure, which must then be countered by high-input forms of resistance or else escaped or abandoned. Missing the point of Jeffers' poem above, pro-democratic resistance (to capital) tactics are, then, founded on poor assumptions about the thermodynamics of viable social structure ("Be angry at the sun if these things anger you"): high-input modes of resistance would fail *just the same* as capital's high-input dynamics are failing, especially as concerns the construction of democracy (even if this were even feasible within capital's structural-reproductive parameters). Thermodynamically feasible and ecologically more sound (that is, within the parameters of democratic social structure and its reproduction), *low-input alternatives* to the system of capital would allow for more intelligible opportunities for resistance to capital, for the construction of democracy.

Briefly, recently there have been raised objections to low-input alternatives, often referred to as horizontalist (versus top-down, bottom-up) oriented solutions to the problems generated by the capital system (one thinks here of the accelerationist movement as is put forth in the *Accelerationist Manifesto for an Accelerationist Politics* of Nick Srnicek and Alex Williams). Objectors believe rather that we ought to harness the rich techno-capacities of capital in order to transform the system toward positive ends or else encourage use of the robust economic and political dynamics of capital to hasten its demise. Yet how such strategies would work is unclear, especially when one realizes that the core structures *of* capital are the ones that generate capital's immense problems to begin with, for example, its poverty-creation for those dispossessed from the technologies of wealth-production.

Other accelerationist arguments include appeals to the notion that people need large-scale institutional social structures (like vast transport or health-care systems), especially in times of crisis. Yet such objectors and objections miss the point that the question is not so much whether such strategies are really in keeping with the needs or desires or human beings, but whether the capabilities to continue to take advantage of heavier technologies and large-institutions is still thermodynamically possible, entropically safe, or ecologically-sound in today's world. They also miss the point that Biel's low-input alternative does not imply a low-output result (Biel thinks that low-input food production can be even more productive than high-input production). In any case, where the theory of democracy is concerned, what the low-input alternative gets right is the fact that such an alternative provides a thermo-entropically astute assessment of possibilities for viable democratic social structure.

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Themes in New Left Histories

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Abstract:

This article discusses some of the themes in the New Left's approach to history, highlighting common themes, addressing criticisms of the movement's approach to history, raising certain issues with the New Left's approach to history, and suggesting ways forward given the rise of importance for the New Left's approach given modern social movements. The four common themes are 1) are a rejection of corporate liberalism, 2) approaching history from the bottom up, 3) a rejection of U.S. power projection in international relations, and 4) a rejection of a certain form of intellectualism, and an appreciation for Marxist interpretations of history that focused on class, economics, and bourgeois society inside and out of the academy.

Keywords: historiography, New Left, scholarship, history, social movements

This article discusses the common themes in New Left history in order to understand what constitutes the New Left approach to history. The New Left was a complicated philosophical school prominent in the 1950s and 1960s, which also resonates today in the understanding of modern social movements.[1] The themes central to New Left historiography are a rejection of corporate liberalism (the conjoining of capitalist and government interests), approaching history from the bottom up (including the study of social movements and the inclusion of voices typically excluded from historical study), a rejection of U.S. power projection in international relations (ranging from post-colonial and decolonial politics to protesting U.S. involvements in wars), and a rejection of a certain form of intellectualism, and an appreciation for Marxist interpretations of history that focus on class, economics, and bourgeois society inside and out of the academy.[2]

This article is significant because it organizes thought about what New Left historiography is, hopefully making it easier for historians to understand New Left historiography and its lasting impact. This should be the goal of all leftists, to understand the history of New Left history both as a way to understand how the study of history progresses as well as to understand what relevance older approaches to history may have in the present day. As Brian Thill argues, "every committed leftist is necessarily interested in the genealogy of leftism: its key figures and concepts; its historical traditions of protest, revolution, and liberation; and its accounts of the complex relationship between theory and praxis."[3] Thill is arguing that leftists have a unique responsibility for and interest in their history. This article, then, is a part of that genealogy.

It will also highlight absences, like historians who happen to be women or Black, and provide for a better understanding of the New Left that focuses less on certain names or certain institutions, and more on what ideas and interests occur in the New Left's historical scholarship and treatments of the New Left movement. I will also suggest new avenues for the New Left and ways that historians might continue to utilize the New Left in their work.[4] Given the continued relevance of the New Left in publications like *New Left Review*, which is a journal that reads very different from what others classify as New Left history, understanding the New Left approach to history remains relevant today.

The New Left found a home in several graduate programs at the University of Wisconsin, and notably in the history department where there were many professors and graduate students unsatisfied with how history was done as well as with politics in the United States.[5] While there has been considerable writing about the New Left and history as well as historiography, there has not been much scholarship on the themes common across New Left histories save for Staughton Lynd's early treatment of the New Left.[6] Lynd's essay is an important contribution to defining the New Left's approach to history and social science, but it should not be the last word. Common treatments of New Left history often assign the label New Left to historians, but fail to explain what that means or defend the application of this label.

Much of what might be considered historiographic research on the New Left was completed contemporaneously with the New Left movement, but this research lacks the value of time or separation from that which it studies or represents.[7] It can be difficult to be reflective in the middle of completing one's scholarship, so there are opportunities now to assess what the New Left did for history beyond generic claims of disrupting the discipline and the writings in *Studies on the Left* (1959-1967). Also, in order to honor the New Left's historic focus on pragmatism, historians would benefit from an understanding of New Left historiography that provides a method or theory that they might be able to use today.[8]

The New Left grew out of dissatisfaction with the conservativism of the preceding decades as an attempt to counteract the disempowerment of women and people of color.[9] There was widespread interest in Black rights and the rights of women, as well as a radicalizing feminist movement. Interest in critiquing United States involvement in other countries was also on the rise as the folly and violence of U.S. involvement in the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Hawaii fell under increased scrutiny. As the late 1970s and early 1980s returned to political conservativism, the New Left seemingly vanished, or at least lost much of its momentum.

One of the major criticisms of New Left historiography was that it was revisionist, which was a criticism often levied by conservative writers and historians, yet resisting the negative connotation of revisionism, one finds that New Left historiography was revisionist in the best sense because it sought to tell a more objective history, one that included all who participated in the long course of history.[10] If history did not include the many voices that made up the American historical experience, it could, as the New Left historians argued, hardly make a claim for objectivity or truth. The New Left's political bent was a cure for the political bent of current historical writing.[11] It challenged the underlying assumptions about who and what mattered.

One of the New Left's concerns was the conjuncture of capitalism and government. Based in part on a rise in anti-capitalist and anti-government sentiment expressed by a wide range of student groups and young people.[12] The New Left took aggressive anti-capitalist stances, often tying these positions to their support for marginalized populations around the world.[13] This also made the New Left suspicious of the corporatization of the university and the increasing number of defense contracts given to university researchers. New Left historians would call into question the assumed benefit of capitalism in the United States and beyond. In terms of on-campus activism, New Left historians would also put their anti-capitalist beliefs to the test by questioning the close ties between universities, businesses, and governments.

New Left historians also focus on telling stories from the bottom up, with a particular interest in marginalized groups. This emphasized the conflict New Left historians found in U.S. history that was often obscured by the focus on wars and the country's great leaders.[14] The New Left rose with the student protests in the 1960s and 1970s, the Black Power Movement, Free Love Movement, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and other like-minded organizations and movements. These organizations clearly influenced the New Left and are almost always included in the discussions of the context that gave rise to the New Left. This approach to history, focused as it was on marginalized groups, is best characterized by Howard Zinn's wide-ranging work.[15] Zinn focused much of his historical study on raising awareness about people that many historians had failed to cover. He wrote about common people, everyday interactions, and marginalized groups to build a history of the United States that looked much different from the "great men and great wars" approaches to history.

The New Left rejected U.S. involvement in foreign countries, critiquing this involvement as militaristic, colonialist, and decidedly political.[16] While these arguments are fairly commonplace today, they were radical in the 1960s. The New Left historical approach was anti-militaristic. As such, the New Left has been critical of Vietnam, involvement in Central America, and Iraq. For New Left historians this means that many have been critical of U.S. foreign policy and have resisted the urge to glorify U.S. involvement in wars and overseas affairs. Concepts like democracy promotion, humanitarian aid, and other "do-good" justifications for U.S. foreign policy are all subject to critique, which allows New Left historians to challenge traditional beliefs about the benevolence of U.S. involvement abroad.

New Left thinkers also reject several scholarly norms, most importantly that history could only come from the winners or the powerful.[17] While this practice resonates with the idea that history should come from the bottom up, it also serves as a critique of how scholarship is done. Scholarship should not be confined to citing the same sources, using the same theories, and following the traditional Anglo-pragmatic tradition of argumentation.[18] It is not a discipline where one must cite the same canonical scholars in every essay. This also includes a rejection of empiricism and the scientificity of history, not necessarily because these concepts are bad in and of themselves, but rather because they often fail to value individual people and collective organizations.[19]

The New Left also draws considerable theoretical influence from a range of Marxist thinkers prominent in the 1950s and 1960s including Mao Zedong, Fidel Castro, and Jean Paul Sarte.[20] While versions of Marxism are as plentiful as versions of feminism, a general concern for class interests, suspicion of the bourgeois, especially in the university, and an interest in the empowerment of marginalized peoples fueled New Left projects. Marxist interpretations of history that focused on class, economics, and bourgeois society inside and out of the academy have all resonated with New Left historians. Howard Zinn though has warned that the New Left was always susceptible to theoretical irrelevance if it followed Marxist dogma too closely.[21] Conservative commentators have also argued that a central difficulty with the New Left is that it adhered too closely to various Marxist principles, which hurt its ability to succeed (in the space it was critiquing), but does however explain why the New Left matters so much for current leftists political struggles.[22]

Of course, there was also disagreement among New Left historians about what and who mattered. Social history grew out of the New Left, and social historians took widely different views on who needed to be included in history, and what the political function of history was.[23] This was to be expected, no doubt, as scholars attempted to find their way in a new version of history, and world turned upside down with radical political ideas. It is not shocking then that there have been internal struggles in the New Left political or historical project.

New Left historiography has a troubled relationship with marginalized populations. First, New Left historiographers certainly did not tend to include marginalized scholars. Although the New Left's focus on marginalized populations certainly helped the advances of women historians and historians of color, it was not the diverse all-inclusive movement that we may imagine it is today. Put another way, while the New Left writ large may have been more diverse than its traditional history counterpart, and while New Left history certainly took up the study or marginalized populations and rejected U.S. actions that put marginalized peoples at risk, it did not always appear as the multicultural populations it was writing about. This tension certainly casts doubt of the New Left as potentially not realizing the importance of the scholars from the communities about which the New Left wrote.

The New Left has had a troubled relationship with the Black Power Movement, and if it is to matter today then we must think about how the New Left can be relevant to the current racial struggles around the world. Both the Left and Right seem to agree that the New Left's relationship with the Black Power Movement was complex at best, and at worst dangerous and unhelpful for Black Americans involved in the Black Power Movement.[24] As Rossinow put it: "Black power advocates argued that white radicals should work on their own 'thing.'"[25] The New Left was largely a white-led movement, and as such what it could, should, and did do for Black people in the United States remains open for debate.[26] Rossinow further argues that it was Black radicalism that encouraged whatever may be termed as radical from the New Left, thus reversing the question of what the New Left did for Black people.[27]

Likewise, the New Left struggled with women's support because feminism while clearly benefiting from the agitation of the student movements, struggled to fit in to the New Left's radical reconfiguration of democracy.[28] It is not that the New Left sought to actively exclude women, but rather that its socialist agenda did not seem to sufficiently address women's issues, and women were weary of the student movements because of their difficulty finding leadership roles in much of the Civil Rights Movement. Put simply, there were many leftist groups pursuing a wide range of issues, but many suffered from the gender-based discrimination still prevalent at this time in the United States. The New Left did not avoid society's patriarchal tendencies. Indeed, much of the scholarship cited in this article is written by men about male historiographers and activists because this was the New Left's makeup.

The logical next question is: How radical was the New Left?[29] While historians seem to agree that it represented a challenge to the way history was done, there is quite a bit of debate about how radical it was. Opinions vary, including leftist critics who argue that the New Left might have been politically charged and a challenge to how history was done, but it was not radical.[30] It matters, however, how one defines what is radical. In the sense that the New Left critiqued what history was and how it had been written, the New Left certainly challenged prevailing orthodoxies. But, at the same time, New Left historians were publishing in many of the same places those they critiqued did, and many were employed by the same universities on which their criticisms focused. Many New Left historians earned their doctoral degrees from the same places that produced their conservative or centrist colleagues. The New Left wanted a history written about marginalized peoples, but did not easily welcome in to its fold marginalized scholars. One hates to reduce a complex social movement and a new perspective on the study of history to the trite notion of "a mixed bag," but the New Left did struggle to do what it set out to do and despite its long legacy never really broke free from the system it was critiquing.

There is always a danger in understanding whatever then-radical movement existed as not radical by today's terms. John Lewis Gaddis writes, "To reconstruct the real past is to construct an accessible but deformed past: it is to oppress the past, to constrain its spontaneity, to deny its liberty."[31] Criticisms of the New Left seem too quick to judge the New Left by today's standards while also failing to appreciate that historical study always limits history. In this sense, historical study is always bound up with the conservativism of the scholarly moment. The New Left was no more guilty of this than any other theory or method of history. If the question of the New Left's radicalism is whether or not its politics limited history then this is arguably what historical study must definitionally do.

The New Let was also co-opted by the conservative tendencies and actors it critiqued.[32] Of course, many movements were, and various forms of co-option, sabotage, and infiltration characterized many of movements of the 1960s and 1970s, including the Black Panther Party. One might arguably conclude that the infiltration of the Black Panther Party was so destructive that a theoretically robust Black radicalism struggled to gain a permanent and prominent hold in U.S. society until the birth of critical race theory in the mid-1980s, which is now subject to wide-ranging political attack. The New Left then suffered too as conservatives claimed to be leading various forms of revolution, and the culture wars of the 1990s made significant headway in demonizing leftist approaches to scholarship. Despite the themes around which New Left historians focused, and their resilience in today's radical scholarship and activism, the New Left struggled to endure conservative attacks.

There are also themes with respect to what the New Left got wrong. These themes go beyond the New Left's approach to history and include wide-ranging critique of the movement. These criticisms include "the absence of effective organization, the growth of militancy and violence, a lack of discipline, and a purportedly foolish utopianism."[33] It is relatively easy to understand how these problems would hamper a social movement, but less clear how they apply to New Left history, although some extrapolation makes the critiques more relevant. Absent organization, social movements often struggle, as do movements in academia. Now it is common for new journals to form as well as new associations, but the New Left historians struggled on these fronts. The flagship journal *Studies on the New Left* lasted only eight years and the *Radical History Review* would not carry the leftist political history flag until nearly 10 years after *Studies on the New Left* failed. While militancy and violence are not commonly associated with historical study, one can imagine how the perceived political extremism of the New Left historians alienated many of them from institutional and public support. A lack of discipline might partially explain the trouble New Left historians had in promoting their work and earning tenure at some universities. Likewise, utopianism is a complicated political commitment that would have been difficult to actualize in the politically divided 1960s and 1970s, as it is in today's complicated and divisive political climate. Yet, there are still reasons to think about the New Left's legacy today.

The New Left is relevant today because it takes up issues that still matter in our study of history and beyond historical study to the present day. In a time riven with political extremism, racism, police violence, dis- and misinformation, decreased voting rights, threats to intellectual freedom, and more, New Left historiography emphasizes the role of scholars in challenging the norms of their universities and the communities around them. That New Left history was decidedly political, makes it an important focus for those scholars who understand their work as political and who want to enter the public sphere. As our students ask questions about how their majors can impact the lives of their communities, it behooves us to investigate and reevaluate the currents of historical study that can help answer these questions and empower students and instructors to reform the study of history and make history relevant outside the classroom to current political dramas.

Breines argues that despite these struggles and reasons for failure the New Left remains relevant at its time and today because it nonetheless challenged orthodoxies in liberal American politics.[34] That a movement or new way of thinking has issues does not relegate it to the dustbin of history. Everything from various forms of feminism to Occupy Wall Street have had issues, but nonetheless affected how people thought about important issues of the day and improved understanding. The lessons of the New Left for history suggest "we still have much work to do."[35]

The New Left approach to history can be fruitful today, especially as concerns over racism, police violence, and identity politics dominate the news, our campuses, and our communities. New Left history's continued interest in social history, violence, and discrimination warrant reading them in the present day. In fact, what we call identity politics may be the most obvious outgrowth of the New Left. As Farred argues, "The movement to define the contemporary public self…owes more to the emergence of the new Left than any other political movement."[36] Perhaps this alone warrants continued investigation into what New Left historiography was. With the increasing amount of scholarship focused on race, gender, sexuality, class, and ethnicity published in history, understanding one of the intellectual roots for these new studies is a worthwhile project.

While a better New Left history would have encouraged more historians of color and women historians to participate, there is certainly much it can contribute to the present moment. The history discipline is also fortunate to have many more historians of color and women in its ranks than in years past, and an increasing interest in the history of marginalized peoples, which stems from the New Left's push decades ago to include these groups. A New Left history in this moment would include Indigenous voices and authors. It would add to its agenda the importance of intersectionality and representation that were a focus of feminists, especially Black feminists, throughout the 1980s and 1990s. It would continue its capitalist critique and reference the on-going expansion of Marxist thinking that has taken up a range of racial, gender, and religious issues. It would resist Marxist orthodoxy and consider the expanding theories of communicative labor, informal economies, and affective labor. New Left history would be, in essence, more inclusive and less dogmatic. The foundation is there, but more must be done to make New Left history relevant to historical study today beyond generic orthodox Marxist criticism. This is not to indict that orthodox Marxism does not have its place, but rather to suggest that as our understanding of Marxism has moved beyond the class-based understanding of society originally promoted by Marx to a more complex understanding of the nature of power, the economy, and economic position.

Lastly, the New Left must fight back against the perception it failed, which is far too extreme a claim.[37] The New Left in history has certainly had a lasting impact, and spurred new types of research on new topics for at least half of a century. While criticisms of the 1960s leftists will always revolve around strategies and objectives, and for every success one can easily find a difficulty, the New Left contributed greatly to the study of history. By rejecting corporate liberalism, or what we might now refer to as neoliberalism, emphasizing history from the bottom up, opposing U.S. interventionism, rejecting certain elite forms of intellectualism, and committing to the possibility of Marxist insights into a range of older and current struggles, the New Left expanded the theoretical and methodological approaches historians continue to use to the present day.

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Beyond Epistemic Paranoia: Graham Harman and the Rise of Object-Oriented Social Theory

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Abstract:

If someone asks a classical Social Theorist "how do you define your field of research?", he will probably get a flood of answers, with various shades, colors and even smells, but there is always something on the horizon, an insistent and unavoidable trace. Like any member of the humanities, he is supposed to study the behavior of humans and anything associated with them, right? So we are supposed to study things like language, culture, ideology, power, class, gender, and so on. It does not matter if you are a structuralist, pragmatist, or postmodernist, it does not even matter your background methodological choices, since there is always a humanism lurking in the epistemic shadows. The "human" in Social Theory, therefore, is not just a moving piece of matter, a simple primate walking around with its complex signs, but a transcendental structure, a kind of persistent and dangerous matrix, at least when used without caution. The aim of this essay is to map this displacement, its ups and downs, as well as to suggest all its unexplored contours, while bringing in the Object-Oriented Ontology (OOO) of the American philosopher Graham Harman as a possible way out of what we call here "epistemic paranoia".

Keywords: Object-Oriented Ontology, Graham Harman, Social Theory, Posthumanism

Introduction

The purpose of this essay is to understand one of the possible implications of Graham Harman's thinking, and object-oriented ontology, in the field of Social Theory, contrasted with what we might call its more classical tendency. If one asks a classical Social Theorist "how do you define your field of research?" one will probably get a flood of answers, with various shades, colors and even smells, but there is something always on the horizon, an insistent and unavoidable feature. Like any member of the humanities, we are supposed to study the behavior of humans and anything associated with them, right? So, we are supposed to study things like language, culture, ideology, power, class, gender, and so on. It does not matter if you are a structuralist, pragmatist, or postmodernist, it does not even matter your background methodological choices, since there is always a humanism lurking in the epistemic shadows. The "human" in Social Theory, therefore, is not just a moving piece of matter, a simple primate walking around with its complex signs, but a transcendentalist structure, a kind of persistent and dangerous matrix, at least when used without caution. When a social theorist speaks of *human acquisition* (Gasset 1963), *labor* (Marx 1955), *individual/society* (Durkheim 1982), *historical sciences/natural sciences (*Freund 1968), *structuration theory (*Giddens 1963), *society/community* (Adorno 2002), *habitus/campus* (Bourdieu 1991), they all maintain the same old premise, i.e., they all preserve the same transcendentalist structure in their approaches, especially the most famous transcendental[1] created by the humans: the *Human*.

The key point of this essay involves simple questions, bordering on the obvious: a) Can Harman and his Object-Oriented Ontology offer an interesting way out of the epistemic dilemmas facing the humanities? b) Is a human science possible where the *Human is* no longer the star of the show, with its suffocating monopoly of meaning, but a simple character like any other? No doubt, these questions will hardly be answered in these lines, but at least it is possible to extract from them some of the distant aroma of a possible Object-Oriented Social Theory, a term suggested by Harman himself in his book "Immaterialism" (2017).

What are transcendental sciences?

Although he emerged from phenomenology, and studies on Heidegger, with his *Tool Being,* written in 2002, Harman cannot be framed in the phenomenological field, although it is tempting to follow that reasoning, as many do (Sparrow 2014). His theory, and OOO itself, presents critiques to this tradition of thought and to what Meillassoux (2013) called *correlationalism*[2], an approach that considers the boundary between subject (human) and world as something fragile, often even non-existent, making it impossible to understand reality without talking about a subject always on the scene, almost as a necessary condition of access to the world. In this sense, instead of choosing an *intersubjectivity, an* obvious result of the phenomenological and pragmatic influence of authors like Schütz, Goffman, Garfinkel, Bourdieu, Giddens, Boltanski and others, Harman proposes an *interobjectivity*[3], a kind of approach that displaces the human horizon in favor of a *strange realism*, as he himself suggested in one of his books. This means that not only humans interact with things, which is obvious in most Social Theory, but also things themselves interact with each other, in an interesting rhythm of agency. Of course, in the face of this ontological *decentering*, and the critique of what Whitehead (1978) called the *bifurcation of nature*, a question springs from the horizon: if meaning is not only in what humans do, think, and speak, that is, if we are here far beyond the anthropocentric projections typical of a *philosophy of* the *subject* that runs through the field of Social Theories, with emphasis on Weber himself, what other parameters can be discovered? And, above all, what is the epistemic path that helps us follow this interobjective journey?

As a representative of *post-humanism* and, therefore, not distancing himself from Bruno Latour's Actor-Network Theory, OOO dives headfirst into reality as such, albeit indirectly, as will become clear shortly. It does not matter whether we talk about *real objects* (Harman, 2012), *hyperobjects (*Morton 2013), *stubborn objects* (Whitehead 1978) or *decentered objects* (Bryant 2011), since in this universe something always escapes, compromising at the same time the convenient and transcendental dimension of our comprehensive arrangements, whether theoretical or practical. This approach further reinforces its *realist* label, reserving to the human only a supporting role, a negotiator, alongside any other instance, be it real or imaginary, what has been called by Manuel DeLanda (2012) a *flat ontology*. Everything is "on equal footing" (Delanda and Harman 2017, 22), whether a person or a chair, at least in ontological terms, what sociologist Frédéric Vandenberghe (2013) calls a *two-dimensional view*. Of course, political or ethical distinctions (distinctions *a posteriori*) are still allowed, a detail that goes unnoticed by OOO critics. They disregard this aspect, this basic boundary between ontology and politics or ontology and ethics, by imagining everything as a simple undifferentiated goo of equivalent elements. Undoubtedly, all things are valid from an ontological criterion, insofar as they participate in the definition of what is real, presenting an agency and a creativity that cannot be limited only to humans and their precious transcendentals (language, soul, rationality, work, etc.), but this does not mean the non-existence of boundaries or other types of a *posteriori* distinctions. In other words, everything is real, but not everything is real in the same way (Harman, 2010).

Another interesting detail neglected by critics is the fact that OOO does not refuse the human as an important vector of meaning, but only displaces its ontological monopoly and its *transcendentalism*. Humans cannot be seen as a necessary matrix of meaning hidden in the depths of reality, connecting the whole world within a predictable and convenient flow of experiences[4], but rather as negotiating elements in a complex flow of objects. This means, in a very Goffmanian way, that the members of our species continue to act on the stage of life, so to speak, although no longer as directors of the play, but as actors alongside many others, including curtains, lights, figures, ghosts, speakers, or the city of São Paulo. "Who commands the play, then?". "If the human is no longer the master signifier, the transcendental of the transcendentals, who takes the role?" You ask, probably curious after so many speculative flights. That is exactly the point... for OOO no one controls the theater of life, no transcendental takes over and determines the contours of what exists, not even the famous *transcendental man* with all his overly modern pretension. This does not mean that structures and systems cease to exist, since they are important as epistemic resources for understanding the world, or even as concrete features on the surface of reality itself. What they in fact lose are their *a priori* profiles, beyond the ontological monopoly they once claimed for themselves, being now nothing more than provisional effects of a complex and *a posteriori* network of experiences. In other words, they cease to be transcendental carcasses covering every inch of the world and become epistemic tools or, at most, transient, small ontological elements, thus escaping the dangers of an *ontotheology*. Faced with this anti-copernican reasoning, at the limits of the aesthetic itself, two reactions may spring from our reader, depending on your type of contact with Social Theory: 1) If you are someone more classical, like Marx or a representative of the Frankfurt School (Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse, and Erich Fromm), you will probably argue that all this discussion about the de-centering of the human is, at the very least, something strange or even something dangerous that needs to be avoided at all costs[5]. Thanks to this line of interpretation, you can undoubtedly claim: "Maybe OOO is just an ideology, that is, a new form of objectification in which humans lose centrality and recognition and collapse into some alienated register of some sort, nothing more than a new kind of fetishism." 2) But if you happen to be a weirder, vitalist Social Theorist, like Bruno Latour (2005), Tim Ingold (2011), Donna Haraway (2008), Mol and Law (1994), and many others, you may end up seeing this post-humanist perspective in a good light, even if you do not agree with all their metaphysical construct. It is okay if you are not so comfortable with Graham Harman's *substantialism* and his constant return to Aristotle, or if you have created some resistance to Levi Bryant's Lacanianism and his reconstruction of the famous *four discourses*, or even if you are not so attuned to Timothy Morton's quantum approaches, but despite all these obstacles OOO can be a great ally in Contemporary Social Theory, as I intend to suggest throughout these pages. In this way, we can group all these people under one interesting umbrella, even if they do not feel very comfortable under it, wishing for their own umbrellas. At least for now, how about calling them all *posthumanists* (Haraway 2008)? This term is a bit loose and generic, I know, but it may help us clarify the contours of our initial question. In other words, "the thread that runs throughout the work of these thinkers is a profound overthrow of the human" (Bryant 2011, 28).

We need to keep in mind that in *posthumanism*[6], as in OOO, the exclusion of the *transcendental man,* and its suffocating centrality, is not replaced by other transcendentals, such as *nature*, *God* (occasionalism), *body, class*, *language*, etc., but rather by a completely new opening on the horizon, as we can notice right from the beginning. The ontological and epistemic fields become a little more flexible, a kind of open space, rich and full of possibilities. Here, in this contingency-laden soil, we are far beyond *Kantian transcendentalism* and its philosophy of the subject, at least in the philosophical universe, since in Social Theory the trap of the Königsberg philosopher is deeper and more dangerous than it seems, mainly because of the prestige and comfort it offers to its most engaged members. Social Theory still cultivates a transcendentalist form of reasoning, whether in its structural, materialist, and postmodern approaches, or even in certain poststructural versions of decoloniality, such as those mixed with orthodox Marxism and its conception of ideology as bad consciousness. As Latour once said, we still live with *transcendental sciences* (Latour 1991, 70) wandering around without anyone noticing, defining at the same time our own field of operation and even the parameters that define our critical thinking. This transcendentalist form in Social Theory "[...] must be thought of as a series of substitutions of center for center, as a linked chain of determinations of center" (Derrida 1978, 27), as it reveals at every step a new master signifier (Žižek 1992) monopolizing the entire ontological realm, as if there were no autonomy left in anything beyond its own borders. In other words, according to OOO and posthumanists this transcendentalism, especially *transcendental man*, is the opposite of *a democracy of objects* (Bryant 2011), being much more of a dictatorship, so to speak.

According to Latour, this *transcendentalism* wishes

> To put everything into nothing, to deduce everything from almost nothing, to place in hierarchies, to command and obey, to be deep or superior, to collect objects and force them into a tiny space, be they subjects, signifiers, classes, gods, axioms (Latour 1984, 163).

In this transcendentalist soil, understanding the world is nothing more than sewing every inch of its surface, never leaving gaps, never leaving excesses, what in philosophy we call *Epistemological Realism* (Bryant 2011), although it is also a constant feature in Classical Social Theory, as is evident in authors like Durkheim. According to him, society is not just something external, not just presented as a thing (Durkheim 2007), but can also be represented, preferably by tracing its transcendent and coercive movement through a statistical and reliable method. According to philosopher Levi Bryant, "epistemological realism is a variant of ontologies of presence that strive to bring objects or the world into the field of presence in an adequate representation" (Bryant 2011, 264). This means that *silence is* not really an option, quite the contrary; it *is necessary to name EVERYTHING that happens*, creating categories and a whole set of tools responsible for the coherence of relations. That is why in front of a event you can hear several interpretations, besides countless methodological maneuvers or epistemological juggling, depending on your theoretical line, but never the pure and disconcerting *silence*. We start from the idea that the world "[...] is a place where everything that now exists or will exist is preparing to be put into words" (Merleau-Ponty 1973, 6). The non-transparency and the very escapability of the world, as well as its autonomy from humans, are seen only as obstacles that need to be circumvented, a kind of fetishism that demands a quick fix, either by epistemic or practical means.

It must be clear that there is no boundary in this essay between transcendentalism on the one hand and Object-Oriented Social Theory on the other, as if it were a simple choice between two options, since transcendental structures are not only necessary, but inevitable. They ensure the integration of both my I and the world around me, providing firmness, consistency, and completeness. Even this essay, with its 22 pages, would be completely impossible without a background axis of meaning, without a transcendental horizon that organizes the flow of its words. Unlike more philosophical approaches, such as Meillassoux's own, I do not believe that the major goal of our endeavor should be the complete "abandonment of transcendentalism" (Malabou 2014). A Social Theorist, by having a slightly more empirical commitment, cannot turn his back on the importance of this matrix within conversations, conflicts, justifications, gossip, crises, etc. The real problem presented in these lines, as will become clear throughout my writing, are the instances when this transcendentalism goes over the edge, when it starts to suffocate other instances of meaning[7], be they human or non-human. This means that transcendental structures are problematic only when they enact a certain kind of *ontological monopoly*, rather than guaranteeing passage to other alternatives, possibilities, and encounters. This particular and very dangerous kind of transcendentalism will be called here *paranoid*. The proposal of an Object-Oriented Social Theory is summed up in a simple Latourian question: "what happens when we abandon this burden, this passion, this indignation, this obsession, this flame, this fury, this dazzling goal, this excess, this insane desire to reduce everything?" (Latour 1988, 157).

Roughly speaking, this transcendentalist matrix, by being within tolerable limits, without much exaggeration, guarantees the firmness of a certain chain of signifiers, not only scientific, but of any language exposed to the world. It can assume, as a form, various configurations, such as *subject, reason, god, human, class, body, nature,* etc. Imagine this matrix as a tower, a kind of support that helps to organize the elements dispersed around it, in this case, the semiotic elements in a text, in a research, or even the data extracted from one's own experience as a phenomenological result, a reflection of a more spontaneous involvement with the world. There are, therefore, *theoretical* and *practical* transcendentals (Pinho 2018), that is, transcendentals that can be found in dissertations and theses, but also in John's bakery, understood here as a metaphor for everyday life, although it is not necessary to go into these details now. The important thing is to keep in mind that even varying in size, color, and shape, this tower always plays the same role in structuring reasoning, practice, and life, in general. Following a path taken by Bruno Latour and Graham Harman, with their Object-Oriented Ontology (OOO), two questions pop up on the horizon: *what are the implications when* "transcendental"[8] *structures are de-centered*[9]*, what new possibilities open up in the field of Social Theory?*

Harman and Epistemic Paranoia

In classical Social Theory, from Marx to Durkheim to Bourdieu and Foucault, transcendentalism is not simply an approach, as it is in Philosophy, and its various Kantian implications, from the most phenomenological to the post-structuralist ones, but it has always been an inevitable destination, almost as a condition of possibility for almost everything that have been said and done. The transcendentalist role with its roots in the modern project is convenient in Social Theory, since everyone recognizes it as an absolute and even indispensable criterion when it comes to the construction of knowledge. If everything around you escapes the clutches of the arbitrary, if every object is connected within an obvious and totalizing comprehensive matrix, in an ontotheology, which can be a system or a structure, you will probably be seen as someone differentiated, smart, maybe even genius, what we call "critical". As long as you have a transcendentalist language at hand, in which empiricism itself disappears amidst a convenient line of reasoning, do not worry because you are safe, comfortable, and welcomed. And if you have understood that transcendentalism has a roommate called *paranoia*[10], you will grasp my sarcasm even more. I call this uncontrolled attitude, where language completely paraphrases the world in a game of complete simplification of an ontological multiplicity, *epistemic paranoia*, where paranoia not only exists as a psychological trait of scattered individuals, but is also reproduced institutionally as the condition of critical thinking and of political practice itself. Like any kind of transcendentalism that goes beyond the pragmatic boundaries of its function, in paranoia nothing can be random, strange, or inexplicable, nothing can simply be, but always needs a name, a connection, a system, and so on, as is to be expected from variations of a metaphysics of presence. Objects end up becoming a mere by-product of a delirium, a great theoretical fiction, a speculative flight that went too far, without any conditions for a concrete and prudent landing, as Whitehead would say. The autonomy of things, people and circumstances disappear in the exact measure that language literalizes the world (Harman 2010). That is why Freud draws a close link between paranoia and philosophy, at least the more classical Kantian philosophy: "the delusions of the paranoid have an [...] internal familiarity with the systems of our philosophers" (Berthold-bond 1989, 285).

However, talking about transcendentalism is a bit vague because it "receives different forms or names [...] eidos, arche, telos, energeia, ousia, (essence, existence, substance, subject) aletheia, transcendentality, consciousness, God [...] and so on" (Derrida 1978, 280), but especially the most famous transcendental ever created and also the center of this whole essay: *the transcendental man*. The *human*, in Social Theory, is not just a concept, or a word, but a structure of meaning, a condition of possibility for knowledge itself, an inevitable transcendental structure. If you do not believe me, if what you just read seems so exaggerated, let's take a simple example, a quick story about something that happened to me some years ago. While attending a lecture on the novel *The Trial,* at the Federal University of Bahia (UFBA), the lecturer conducted his entire talk in a way that was too problematic, although I confess it did not surprise me: he basically said that Kafka was a bourgeois writer and his writings were nothing more than a reflection of capitalism and its bureaucratic relations. Now, imagine *The Trial* as a universe, a huge aesthetic space full of fictional objects, like tables, people, buildings, chairs, clothes, and so many other things that walk through its arrangement of words. Imagine that this whole universe suddenly finds itself trapped within a single chain of interpretation, dominated by a single *signifier*, a structure of reasoning that reduces everything around it. This is the problem with limitless transcendentalism, when its provisional epistemic arrangement is taken too seriously, turning into an ontological matrix that stifles the autonomy of everything that exists. Its paranoid tendency lurks in every imaginable space, waiting for the right moment to take semiotic and material control of everything it touches. In other words, epistemic paranoia is basically the instant when epistemological structures, mere comprehensive tools directed at the world, lose this pragmatic foundation and monopolize the contours of reality itself, nothing more than a renewed version of Heideggerian *ontotheology.* We can say that epistemic paranoia is the ontologization of epistemological structures, at least thought of here at the borders of a Social Theory. Within a transcendentalist (paranoid) structure, especially human transcendentalism, meaning is reduced to a single denominator, a single signifier. Because of this, there is no *excess of* objects, or even of the world, nothing that can surprise or *seduce* us (Harman 2010).

The fact that this paranoia is not individual, much less clinical, but institutionalized, makes it difficult to track or even to fight against it. As Freud showed in his "Civilization and its discontents" (Freud 2010) about *neurosis*, there are both an *individual* modality, specific to psychologists and their comprehensive apparatus, as well as there is also its *institutionalized* face, proper to the universe of social theorists, as is typical of Freud in the last years of his career. The difference between the two levels of neurosis, as with the structure of paranoia itself, is only in the level of acceptance, nothing more than a secondary difference. The former is seen as a problem, a deviation, while the latter is embraced as part of institutions and their cultural by-products, that is, embedded in the language structure as a whole. When we follow up to *psychosis*, such as paranoia, we can see something equivalent. In an essay called "*Claims of psycho-analysis to scientific interest*" (Holowchak 2013), Freud compares the *transcendental structure of* philosophers to *paranoia*, although we can also expand the reasoning to the more empirical lands of Social Theory.

Many share, and wish to share, this paranoid (transcendental) atmosphere as a kind of *enjoyment* (Ẑiẑek 2006), so to speak. In other words, paranoia, disguised as transcendentalism, and especially *transcendental man*, is not just an epistemic element, but a concrete form that materializes in the structure of the world itself, organizing varied instances, such as universities, courts, schools, and congresses. Fighting against it is not only fighting concepts and propositions, it is not simply invading the space of philosophical theories surrounding the 19th century, but it is also an onslaught against experiences, expectations, and beliefs. As already stated at the beginning of our essay journey, transcendentalism is useful, convenient, and even fundamental, but its exaggeration, its "monification"[11] (Savransky 2021), thus not recognizing its own epistemic limits, leads us into a dangerous space on every imaginable level, from the political to the scientific. Despite all this reductionist atmosphere, perhaps there is still a way to escape the *paranoid cage* that has trapped Social Theory for so many decades, by recognizing the ontological merit of other species, objects, and circumstances, while decentering the limits of the "transcendental man."

According to Harman, this transcendentalist framework can be described within two different approaches. If someone asks you what an object is, there are two ways to answer, two classical ways: "what a thing is made of [or] what a thing does" (Harman 2017, 2). The first is *undermining*, an approach that reduces an object to its most basic components, identified here with the pre-Socratics and their relentless search for the constituent elements that structure reality as a whole. Perhaps it is *water* (Thales), *fire* (Hieraclitus), *air* (Anaximenes), or the *Apeiron* (Anaximander). Or, in more contemporary approaches, we also see it in the neurosciences and the new forms of materialism, such as chemistry or physics. But what about in Social Theory? *Undermining* can be found in the first Durkheim[12] and in some structuralist and functionalist authors, where there is always an originating substratum that can explain not only the action of agents, but the very materiality of the world and its grammar of objects. In this scenario, the main goal is to discover this substrate, going beyond the superficial layers of action, or of objects and their accidental qualities, digging its depths in search of a lost, hidden, structuring realm.

The *method of undermining* can be seen in Durkheim's positivism, especially when he uses sociology as a tool that reveals the basic, constitutive substratum of reality, thus removing the more superficial layers of action, such as those of psychological origin. According to Harman, *objects* in *undermining* are presented as superficial, being second-order dimensions just waiting for a more fundamental matrix behind the scenes. In his book "The Rules of Sociological Method," Durkheim (1982) compares sociology to any kind of hard science, suggesting that they share a similar, though not identical, scientific method. According to him, *society* must be seen as a *thing*, as a reality not only external to us, not only coercive, but also as something material and constitutive. In other words, it is not a simple projection of ideas or representations, but a creature with a life of its own, defining everything around us, especially the way objects are made and used. This means that society is not an epistemic resource of curious philosophers, but a matrix that defines the very ontological space shared by humans, as well as the materiality of things. Just as a physicist breaks down water into a chemical formula (H20), to its most basic elements, its most fundamental components, Durkheimian sociology follows a similar course, as do structuralist approaches such as Althusser's structural Marxism, or Talcott Parsons' functionalism. *Structure* and *system* in this scenario are not epistemological terms randomly chosen by the sociologist to understand reality, but are seen as part of reality itself, its most sensitive foundation. Behind the many layers of action, behind the scenes of chairs, tables, books, and humans, there is always one most important element that orders and justifies everything around, and the sociologist's goal is to go through these layers in search of this core. This is even the same movement found in chemists, physicists, or even in pre-Socratic philosophy, as suggested above. As you can see for yourself, the undermined *object* is just a pretext, nothing more than a persistent obstacle in the way of great structural and systemic flights. The important thing is behind the scenes, just as in the second Heidegger the objects, in their more pragmatic functions, only hinder, or hide, the ontological displacement of a Being that is curiously too mystical.

Marx, like Hegel and his *objective idealism,* can be understood as authors of *undermining*, an approach in search of a basic explanatory chain that lies behind the phenomena. In fact, materialist currents in Social Theory are in serious danger of falling into this terrain, especially those that share an *ontotheology*, as Heidegger put it, or a *metaphysics of presence,* in Derrida's words. In this model, the world is always seen as shallow, superficial, which forces us into an intense search often for something deeper, almost as if trying to replicate the steps of the pre-Socratics, but now in a more sociological way. Classical Social Theory basically reproduces the Heideggerian distinction between *thing* and *object*, keeping the same reasoning, although using a different language. *Objects*, at least in this scenario, have nothing special, much less central, being just a byproduct of something deeper and more meaningful.

The second type of transcendentalist knowledge and "the greatest danger for the humanities and social sciences is the opposite, *overmining*" (Harman 2017, 9). The first type of *overminer* is *the* one we could call *ontological*. According to them, the world outside exists, of course, but it is seen only as a set of connections that it establishes in a circuit of *exchanges*, *flows*, and *experiences*, with nothing solid or singular hiding behind the curtain. There is nothing behind or below, but always a "between", a constant practical and horizontal movement. Unlike *underminers*, the first type of *overminers* bet on the idea that objects are very deep, with nothing underneath or hidden in their accidental and contingent manifestations. Here, there is nothing but transitory exchanges, be they pragmatic, phenomenological, or vitalistic, that is, encounters that cease to be with impressive ease, almost like a wind passing by and knocking down the aging branches of some tree. The second type of *overminer* are the *social constructivists*, also known as the *idealistic part of* the movement, also called the "epistemic" portion. According to them, reality disappears completely, and may be a product of the mind, language and its justifications (linguistic turn)[13], ideologies, power, and so on. This is the reason that led Foucault to state that "the objects to be known [...] are the effects of the fundamental implications of the knowledge of power and its historical transformations" (Foucault 1995, 27). In this post-structural scenario, at least when one thinks of the archaeological Foucault, we do not have any kind of ontology, not even the escapist scent of Heideggerian Being, for the world itself is only a distant and impossible dream, a simple discursive mirage suffused at various epistemic levels. One can see this tendency also in the *culturalists* within Anthropology, the postmodernists, poststructuralists, and so on. In any case, both types of *overminers* mentioned so far believe that the identity of an object, and its internal consistency, is just an optical illusion. To understand an action, the goal is not to decompose its layers in search of a consistent and fundamental space (undermining), but to observe the connections it establishes and the effects it produces in the world. In other words, there is always a *theory of affects* (Massumi) or a *theory of difference (*Deleuze) within *overmining*. There is nothing here but relations, whether linguistic, phenomenological, pragmatic, or vitalistic. According to Harman, by contrast, "rather than replacing objects with a description of what they do (as in ANT) or what they are made of (as in traditional materialism), OOO uses the term 'object' to refer to any entity that cannot be paraphrased in terms of its components or its effects" (Harman 2017, 3). In other words, "the object is deeper than any possible relation to it" (Harman 2011, 37). The curious part is that even the link between *objects* (interobjectivity) does not exhaust their particular qualities either, for it always points to a characteristic that overflows. That is, even *objects* tend to reduce other *objects* into an interobjective bond, making any kind of direct contact impossible, as can be seen in "Harman's favorite example" (Bryant 2011, 39):

> For fire to burn cotton, which is the favorite Islamic example discussed in all these ancient texts, fire does not need to react to most of the properties of cotton: its smell and color are irrelevant to fire. Fire will burn cotton based on flammable properties, whatever they are [...] (Harman 2011, 37).

According to Harman, not only does human interference reduce objects to a certain reductionist and even paranoid horizon, offered by language, power, culture or the like, but even objects tend to reduce each other, which reveals an ontological abyss in the world itself and not only in our limited epistemic categories. The world escapes from itself, so to speak, and not just from our imperfect, and violent, language, as certain genealogical lines seem to suggest (Butler 1999). Access is always "by indirect, allusive, or vicarious means" (Harman 2017, 17), even when two objects interact with each other (*sensual objects*). Therefore, translation is never fully complete, something overflows, fails, frustrates. There is a kind of *excess* that escapes even interrelation, as if there were a gap, an abyss, at least of *ontological* origin, in constituting the core of the world itself. Each *object* is not only barred by others or from others, but is barred from itself all the time. Something goes beyond the contours of interobjectivity itself, that is, the Latourian network and its vitalist derivatives finds its limit here as well. And if we pay attention, something not only goes beyond the limits of the network, but can, under certain circumstances, compromise its very functioning[14], as an excess, a "surplus value" in the sense given by Žižek (2006). In other words, the object at its core, in its essence (in Harman's terms), is not a merely functional or useful tool, but an *excess* that surpasses even any kind of pragmatic and phenomenological bond.

The approach of authors like Bourdieu, Giddens, and Habermas, figures that attempt to combine *undermining* and *overmining, that* is, structure and experience, Harman called *Duomining*, a type of synthesis more problematic than its isolated parts. Despite their differences, and the very originality they carry in their respective fields, both share the same transcendentalist model, like that of the "transcendental man" himself. Harman would probably have some resistance to micro-sociological approaches, as well as those that try something more macro, or even those that seek to reconcile the two trends. Both would suffer from two persistent forms of reductionism: The second one understanding reality as a pure flow of interactions, a simple movement of exchanges, encounters, always accompanied by a certain kind of *flat ontology*, either in Schütz's phenomenological project or in Garfinke"s pragmatics. There are no level shifts here, no explanatory chain that stands out from reality, which can generate, in methodological terms, an exaggerated commitment to description and a deep fear of more theoretical flights, as is very evident in "studies in ethnomethodology" (Garfinkel 1967). Here the identity of the object is merely an optical illusion caused by the practical movement of subjects in the world (an ontological approach) or produced by discourses, ideologies, and power (in a more epistemic way). The first trend, on the other hand, reduces that same world to something more materialistic, as in Althusser's structuralism or Durkheim's functionalism. Unlike the *overminers*, the *underminers* really believe that objects exist and that they have their own identities, but this fact would not matter much. What really matters is the *Apeiron* behind everything, the *truth behind* the *phenomenon*, the *thing* behind the *object*. Besides the *Overminers* and *Underminers*, the authors of synthesis (*duominers*) would not escape criticism either, since they continue to move between the two extremes, sometimes suffering from phenomenological (or pragmatic) pains, sometimes suffering from the structural and functionalist blows.

Harman, on the other hand, proposes a third form of cognition, an alternative way to confront the *transcendental man* and his monifying and paranoid process, without resorting to the previous strategies. This non-reductionist approach, far beyond *undermining* and *overmining*, Harman will call "*anti-transcendentalism*" or "anti-Copernicanism" (Harman 2010). Reality, then, cannot be reduced to a search for some more fundamental core and its embedded ontotheology, nor reduced to relations and their consequences. In other words, he questions both functionalism and pragmatism, both phenomenology and positivism, both Durkheim and Gabriel Tarde, both Bourdieu and Latour. The curious thing is that this form of cognition suggested by Harman is not a knowledge, a kind of knowing, but something else, something that can only be accessed indirectly through art, jokes and metaphors, since an excess always escapes in the end. Moreover, it cannot be reduced to human contact or any other form of interaction, however spontaneous and pre-reflexive it may seem. Although reality is much more than the *transcendental man*, we cannot conclude that the human being is something optional, for without him there is no art or any other sphere of coexistence. In other words, the human being is an important ingredient for understanding Harman's *weird realism*[15], but it is not enough. The world has this escapist and overflowing characteristic, and that leads us straight to an unusual kind of post-humanist project, much more radical than the *relationalism* proposed by Whitehead or Latour.

In Harman, the concept of experience, very important *in overminers,* such as phenomenologists, ends up becoming a kind of obstacle, since something always escapes, including traces of silence, rupture, that is, a kind of gap in the fabric of our own circuit of experiences. As a result, there is what OOO calls a critique of *correlationalism*. Rather than understanding the human as dissolved within a grand relational totality, where everything remains stitched together in a constant and indistinct web of encounters, for Harman, on the contrary, there is something beyond, something that cannot be reduced to any pragmatic and phenomenological pact, to any convenient indistinction between "subject and object." A kind of excess breaks this pact, this transcendental integration, almost as if threatening the harmony of Cézanne's phenomenological strokes, while at the same time pouring out some wild drops in Pollock's style.

By radicalizing the OOO's statements, Harman manages to go beyond most posthumanists, since they are still close to *overmining*, especially by using phenomenology or vitalism as a metaphysical background. An example offered by Harman, which reinforces this boundary between him and most poshumanists, can be found in his re-reading of Heidegger's famous "*tool analysis*". By denying the Heideggerian distinction between theory (*present-at-hand*) and practice (*ready-to-hand*), Harman claims that the spontaneous use of the hammer or the very act of reflecting on it when it is broken would be two equivalent processes, both reductionist. Practice would not be more problem-free than theory, as Heidegger imagined, as if the former accessed the world directly and spontaneously, that is, realistically. This space of interactions, this practical arrangement between Dasein and its surroundings, a phenomenological and pragmatic feature in *Being and Time*, ends up being seen by Harman as another limitation. The Latourian network, therefore, does not extend to infinity, as if it were some persistent substance, but finds here a limit, a boundary that cannot be crossed, compromising at the same time its cohesion and effectiveness.

In other words, this kind of homogenizing *relationalism* (the network) is faced with an object that withdraws, that escapes, while at the same time it cannot be reduced to its interactions, whether theoretical or practical. In this sense, Harman does not completely reject Actor-Network Theory (ANT), nor the possible pragmatic and phenomenological approaches that may exist behind its scenes, but only presents its limitations, and offers an additional[16] path. The object does not deny the existence of networks, or any other pragmatic (or phenomenological) arrangement, but only points towards something beyond, something incapable of being exhausted, literalized (Harman 2010). Given this, you may ask, "What is an Object-Oriented Social Theory? What does it mean?". Instead of merging structural and phenomenological (pragmatic) tendencies, as a good part of Social Theory has done, it abandons them almost completely in search of another line of reasoning. Perhaps we are in a new space of possibilities, probably an unexpected kind of *posthumanism*.

Epistemology as an extension of Aesthetics and not the other way around

Harman's posthumanism not only invades epistemology and compromises its *transcendental man*, or the ethics associated with it, but also delves into aesthetics, being a place where OOO shines most brightly. "This means that aesthetics becomes the first philosophy" (Harman 2007, 221). On the other hand, in classical Social Theory, following a more predictable path, we have quotes like this:

> Now humanism, that is, the passionate study of man's nature, is essential to all literature and art; and good art and good literature are humanistic in that they not only investigate man and the true essence of his nature with passion, but also and simultaneously passionately defend human integrity against all attacks, degradation and distortion (Lukács 1970, 69).

So, is that all we need to know? Is a work of art nothing more than a reflection of human relations and underlying historical conditions? Perhaps something is missing here, something in art itself as such, what we could call its *mode of existence*, its autonomy. Harold Bloom, an American critic and very much aligned with OOO formalism, presents very well what this missing element would be when he analyzes Shakespeare's works, synthesizing at the same time what Harman, OOO, and the posthumanists are trying to say:

> Here they [the critics] face insurmountable difficulties in Shakespeare's most idiosyncratic strength: he is always ahead of you, conceptually and imaginatively, whoever you are and wherever you are. He makes you anachronistic because he already *contains* you; you cannot subsume him. It cannot illuminate you with a new doctrine, be it Marxism or Freudianism or Demanian linguistic skepticism. Instead, he will illuminate the doctrine, not by prefiguration, but by post-figuration, so to speak: everything of Freud that matters most is already there in Shakespeare, with a persuasive critique of Freud himself (Bloom 1995, 24).

Aesthetics in OOO is not just an important detail, but its fundamental core. Philosophy follows the path of art as a way of understanding the world, mainly by not simplifying the contours of what happens, by guaranteeing its autonomy, its capacity for rupture and surprise. Moreover, aesthetics ceases to be just a pretext within some well-defined theoretical arrangement or any kind of transcendental structure and becomes an extension of philosophical doing itself, which resembles approaches such as those of Badiou and Deleuze.

> Works of art [...] are misunderstood if we reduce them downward to their physical components [undermining] or upward to their socio-political effects [overmining], despite occasional attempts within these disciplines to do just that. There is something about these works that resists reduction in either direction, opposing the literal paraphrase of which knowledge always consists (Harman 2017, 12).

Badiou always rescues the curious aroma of an anti-philosophy, whether in books or lectures, at least when he considers along the way authors who do not defend truth as knowledge, as a systematic body of concepts, some kind of linear reasoning. Badiou thinks of Lacan and Nietzsche when he offers this definition, but no doubt it could also be Graham Harman and his Object-Oriented Ontology (OOO). The implications here are enormous, especially in the contours of scientific propositions. According to Harman, philosophy was never directed to knowledge, but to the love of knowledge, which indicates a certain distant relation to something that cannot be properly represented. Socrates never defined concepts in his dialogues, even when he encountered sophists like Gorgias and Protagoras along the way, reinforcing the idea that philosophy was born not as a form of knowledge, but as something beyond, a more slippery kind of element. Would an approach be possible in which truth is not knowledge, not a systematic set of definitions and concepts, but something deeper, though also undefined? What would be an approach that gave up a simple and naive criterion of validity, of pure epistemology, in favor of a more aesthetic criterion, almost as if following the Kafkaesque path or that of directors like Hitchcock? Contrary to the suspicions of the first Wittgenstein, at the end of his *Tractatus*, in one of the most read aphorisms, would it be possible to talk about something that cannot be named? About what cannot be talked about, should one really be silent? Is Social Theory possible without its classical *transcendental man* and his convenient transcendentals? There are many questions hovering in the air, although answers are still beginning to appear on the horizon. The important thing is that new challenges are springing up in Contemporary Social Theory, new ways not only of organizing ideas, but of understanding the world itself beyond the arrogance of the *transcendental man* and his dangerous paranoia. As Harman once said, "The object-oriented model holds great promise for many fields of knowledge, but especially for the various disciplines of the human sciences" (Harman 2010, 138).

Endnotes:

1. *Transcendentalism is* used here in a *broader* and *weaker sense* (Habermas 2003), that is, as an *a priori* matrix that organizes, reduces and simplifies reality in a certain way. As a result, it does not matter

whether we are talking about *signifiers*, *Class*, *God*, *Body, Power*, *Nature* or *Man*. It does not matter whether this transcendentalism is epistemic, with respect to arguments, concepts or categories of understanding the world, or phenomenological, including here a practical, pre-reflexive contact with reality. The point is the same old Kantian structure: "its status is transcendental, that is, it organizes our experience into a meaningful totality" (Žižek 1992, 15).

2. "I call 'correlationism' the contemporary opponent of any realism. Correlationism takes many contemporary forms, but particularly those of transcendental philosophy, the varieties of phenomenology, and postmodernism" (Meillassoux 2008, 1).
3. "For a long time it has been agreed that the relationship between one text and another is always a matter of interpretation. Why not accept that this is also true between so-called texts and so-called objects, and even between so-called objects themselves?" (Latour 1984, 166).
4. Which here will be called *the transcendental man* (Merleau-Ponty 1964).
5. Even today there is clear resistance to this kind of displacement, especially from neo-Marxists and neo-Lacanians such as Russell Sbriglia, Slavoj Žižek, and Alain Badiou.
6. This Posthumanism (or Anti-transcendentalism) has also been called "Anti-Copernicanism" by Harman (2010) and Latour (2012).
7. Although it is not the purpose of this essay, it should be remembered that there are criticisms made of the neo-Kantian model, and its transcendentalist implications, also in decolonial authors, such as British sociologist Martin Savransky, in one of his most recent books: *Around The Day in Eighty Worlds: Politics of Pluriverse (2021)*. In this work, he establishes a close link between colonial practices of violence (exclusion) and neo-Kantian models of thought.
8. It should be made clear that the entire critique of transcendentalism in this essay only applies to its Neo-Kantian version, as will become clear later, and not to its alternative versions, such as Brassier's "transcendental realism" (Shaviro 2014) or Deleuze's "transcendental empiricism." For example, "the Deleuzian 'transcendental' is infinitely richer than reality - it is an infinite potential field of virtualities from which reality is actualized" *(*Žižek 2004, 4). These specific and very unorthodox uses of the term "transcendental" do not apply to what is called "transcendentalism" here.
9. As will become clear, "de-centering" does not mean "excluding", but rather a process of re-signification.
10. As I said at the beginning of this essay, transcendental reasoning is inevitable, and even important, within Social Theory or any other arrangement of relations. What is being criticized is the exaggeration, when this transcendentalism goes over the edge, becomes "ontologizing", monopolizing and suffocating the possibilities of meaning in the world and even in other human groupings.
11. "monification of the world: the disqualification and devastation of differences [...]" (Savransky 2021, 6).
12. The last Durkheim, the more Kantian and author of *Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (Durkheim 1912), changed so much his approach that reminds us of Wittgenstein's path and his two great phases. If Wittgenstein oscillated from a more logical approach to a more pragmatic path in maturity, Durkheim started as a materialist and ended his career diving into more Kantian approaches, being, therefore, a profound change of direction.
13. "[...] we will never be able to step outside language, we will never be able to apprehend a reality that is not mediated by a linguistic description" (Rorty 2000, 57).
14. It is for this reason that Latour states: "everything happens as if there is, in fact, a border, a kind of internal limit to networks" (Latour 2011, 35).
15. "Weird Realism" a term created by Harman himself to describe his own realist journey.
16. Many of the limitations to TAR presented by Harman had already been suggested by Latour himself in his AIME (An Inquiry Into Modes of Existence) in 2011, at which point he reevaluates many of the postings of his earlier works, in particular "We were never modern" (1991).

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Digital Humanities: Ethical Implications and Interdisciplinary Challenges

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Abstract:

What is meant by Digital Humanities? This paper presents and discusses characterizations of Digital Humanities, with emphasis on methodological and ethical problems related to the use of Big Data in human sciences. There is still no consensus regarding the definition of Digital Humanities, but there is a general agreement that collaborative inter/multi/transdisciplinary practices are involved in the study of computational processing of massive amounts of data available in areas of human sciences. Studies concerning digital resources, electronic publishing, and digitized historical newspaper collections, among others, have played a prominent role in these areas. This paper addresses questions about the genuine interdisciplinary nature of research on Digital Humanities, and discusses ethical issues associated with Big Data analytics, from a complex systems perspective. Emphasis is given to implications (positive and negative) of the use of information and communication technology in studies of the dynamics of human autonomy. To conclude, we discuss possible upcoming challenges of the extensive use of Big Data technology for the development of Digital Humanities in the domain of human autonomy.

Keywords: Digital Humanities, Big Data analytics, meaning, interdisciplinarity, human autonomy

Introduction

The notion of Digital Humanities (henceforth DH) arose around the year 2000, as a development of the project "Computation in Humanities" that started in the 1950s. Although there is no consensus regarding the definition of DH, there is a general agreement that it involves collaborative inter/multi/transdisciplinary practices in the generation and analysis of digital data and computational processing available in the disciplines of the humanities.

In general terms, DH emerged with the interplay between traditional humanities and computational methods of designing, computing, and modelling human activities in a variety of domains (Burdick et al., 2013). The extensive use of algorithms, standardization of data for packing and analysis, and the possibilities for reuse, reanalysis, repurposing, and recombination, among others (Leonelli, 2014; Collmann et al., 2016), have challenged the standard methods in humanities. In addition, DH encompasses the digitalization of knowledge and historical artefacts, involving structuring and modelling, including the analysis of data from social media.

The development of Artificial Intelligence and Big Data Analytics in the 21st century, along with Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), has empowered DH, altering practices and forms of knowledge dissemination. Although there is no precise definition of the term Big Data (BD), it may be understood as describing the technology of mining, cleaning, modelling, storing, and analysing massive amounts of a wide variety of data, generated at high speed, with current computational power. In general, the data are not well structured and have to be integrated in databases, in accordance with specific objectives, in order to acquire epistemological, political, or economic value. In this technological scenario, Big Data was initially characterized in terms of the 3 V's: velocity, volume, and variety (Laney, 2001).

As a consequence of the extensive use of Big Data and statistical tools, scientific practice has faced a growing process of automation, especially in the elaboration of probabilistic/algorithmic models. Inspired by Breiman (2001), Pietsch (2013) argues that Big Data analytics allow a shift in modelling from explanatory hierarchical modelling, which encompasses few variables to account for a wide range of the objects studied, towards predictive algorithmic modelling that changes according to the database.

The humanities were not left out from the overflow of new computational technologies, and new modelling assumptions, imported from the formal sciences, are growing in DH. In linguistics, for example, by applying complex algorithms for natural language processing, the predictive power of machine translation has increased according to the input received from users. Automated translation does not require a deep understanding of the general rules of the structure of language, as advocated by Chomsky. Instead, it requires massive data acquired from users' inputs, together with probabilistic algorithms. A well-cited example is the statement of Frederick Jelinek, a former IBM researcher, concerning speech recognition: "Every time I fire a linguist, the performance of the speech recognizer goes up"[1].

Areas of social sciences have also incorporated the development of computational tools that allow the investigation of social phenomena, which brings new possibilities of communication, but also new challenges. For instance, with the massive amount of available data, models of the dynamics of public opinion have emerged, aiming at understanding collective opinion. In the realm of arts, methods to analyse and produce artistic works have emerged in unprecedented ways, with multimedia installations and automated analyses leading to new possibilities for the creation as well as evaluation of artistic material.

Philosophy has not escaped from this revolution in DH. The developing field of computational philosophy aims at analysing problems related to philosophy of science, philosophy of language, social epistemology, and philosophy of mind, among others, by applying computational techniques (Grim & Singer, 2020). A novelty in this area is that computational philosophy is not the same as philosophy of computers or philosophy of technology; what characterizes this emerging field is the use of computational techniques for the study of philosophical problems.

The present paper addresses questions about the genuine interdisciplinary nature of research concerning DH, as well as ethical issues associated with Big Data analytics, from a complex systems perspective. Focusing on semantic and pragmatic aspects of automated human activities, the following questions are addressed: (i) How could genuine interdisciplinary research be developed in Digital Humanities? (ii) What is the role of meaningful information in the digitalization of human events? Our working hypothesis is that research in human sciences requires understanding of the complex dynamics of events where a relational concept of meaning plays a fundamental role.

Questions (i) and (ii) will be investigated in two steps. In the second section, a characterization of Digital Humanities is proposed, inspired by Complex Systems thinking. In the third section, the notions of data and meaning are introduced, in the context of the growing datification of DH. In addition, an example of a mechanical generator of meaning is presented, in the domain of natural language, as indicative of the role of new methodological practices in DH. Finally, ethical challenges of DH are considered for the maintenance of autonomy of researchers, arguing for a strong interdisciplinary commitment to the development of ethically sound research in humanities.

Digital Humanities: A perspective from complex systems thinking

> The wars over the core in the humanities have contributed to a malaise in which the humanities are widely perceived as "irrelevant," lacking the practicality of business, law, or medicine.
> (Burdick et al. 2013, 16)

Since the coining of the term 'Digital Humanities', attempts to define it have flourished. Callaway et al. (2020) built up a corpus with 334 attempts to characterize DH, in which they identified four 'clouds' of words, associated with four general topics mechanically extracted from the analysed papers by topic modelling algorithms. These four topics were given names considered representative of each set: (i) Code, (ii) Community, (iii) Distant Reading, and (iv) Diversity and Inclusion. A curious commitment, suggested by Callaway et al. (2020), is that the validation of arguments, involving uses of quantitative and qualitative methodologies from diverse disciplines, requires that the interpretive work of a specific type of knowledge should be described in terms of the connection of the topic to a specific DH area. In the end, conclusions based on a quantitative analysis of text documents indicated the obvious, namely the polysemic use of the term DH concerning the issue of interdisciplinarity.

By analyzing the use of the term DH in different scientific communities, Roth (2019) proposed that the notion of Digital Humanities could be understood considering three different aspects, regarding: (a) research undertaken in contemporary humanities, encompassing the community whose work is performed using digital tools such as digital archives; (b) the use of quantitative methods in order to develop abstract models to understand human phenomena, such as agent-based modeling in social studies; (c) the study of human-computer interaction and the analysis of online communities.

Interpreting the Roth classification, Piotrowski (2020) suggested that the first sense of the term DH, which he called *Contemporary Humanities*, refers to humanists that simply incorporate digital tools in performing their habitual practices with their traditional methods. According to the author, this does not involve interdisciplinary commitment, with every discipline having its own home. In contrast, the second sense of DH, which he called *Computational Humanities*, relates to the use of new methodologies, along with the creation and manipulation of models by computers:

> And this is exactly where the root of the problem lies: the majority of actors in "the field" (to use a maximally neutral term) belong to the "contemporary" or "digitized" humanities, which can be seen as a natural and organic development *within* the existing disciplines. The actors in the "numerical" or - as I am going to argue: "computational" - humanities, however, are not only a minority, but they are typically the ones with an explicit DH denomination or affiliation. (Piotrowski 2019, 4)

Piotrowski argues that DH should be equated to *Computational Humanities,* which is strictly composed by the community that applies computational models in a given domain and also creates abstract models, such as metamodels potentially manipulated by computers. He concludes that *Computational Humanities* should be considered a new discipline that gathers knowledge from computer science and the humanities. From this perspective, DH would have a disciplinary character, despite being constituted by different methods imported from other disciplines.

In a different vein, Burdick et al. (2013), instead of defining DH as a discipline, proposed that, generally speaking, DH should be characterized by "[...] the opportunities and challenges that arise from the conjunction of the term *digital* with the term *humanities*". We understand, nevertheless, that the challenges should be faced according to an interdisciplinary approach, taking into consideration methodological and ethical aspects. To do so, we propose a characterization of DH from a Complex Thinking perspective, by inquiring: How could a genuine interdisciplinary research practice be developed in Digital Humanities?

At the present stage of development, the following methodological scenario dominates sciences in general: On the one hand, in formal sciences, mainly quantitative methods of investigation are applied; scientists undertake computational methodologies and, more importantly, focus on kinds of objects that can be easily formalized by the process of standardization. On the other hand, in human sciences, qualitative methods are mostly applied, which strongly rely on interpretative assumptions that are historically and contextually embedded[2]. The challenges faced by the so-called digital humanists are altering the ways that researchers act in academia, arts, literature, history, and social sciences, among other disciplines. However, it is hard to see which changes have been undertaken in the hard/formal sciences under the influence of humanities.

Far from advocating a methodological unity of science, as was the aim of the logical positivists of the 20th century, our proposal here is an intercultural, honest, and critical dialogue among researchers from different sciences, recognizing the incompleteness of the various types of knowledge. We believe that DH should be developed as a field of multi/inter/transdisciplinary research grounded on critical and genuine dialogue that considers epistemological and ethical implications of uses of digital technology in the study of humanities.

Challenges brought about by DH should be characterized as problems of organized complexity that, according to Weaver (1948, 539), "[...] are all problems which involve dealing simultaneously with a *sizable number of factors which are interrelated into an organic whole*". To tackle such problems, in addition to the use of new technologies of Big Data within the sciences of complexity, which develop sophisticated techniques for modelling, there is the need to focus on perspectives of complex systems thinking.

Inspired by Zoya & Aguirre (2011), we propose a characterization of DH that considers the study of the problems of organized complexity that involve technical aspects, as well as ethical and political issues. In this way, there would be complementarity between complex thinking and complex (hard and soft) sciences:

> Complex thinking can provide the reflective field necessary to develop an inclusive epistemic framework of ethical and political values consistent with the needs and challenges of social, local, national, regional, and planetary communities. The sciences of complexity can provide concrete methodological tools for the study of complex phenomena. We believe that the most fundamental challenge is to stimulate the development of the sciences of complexity guided by complex thinking. (Zoya & Aguirre 2011, our translation)

Zoya and Aguirre indicate a way to deal with our initial question, (i): How could a genuine interdisciplinary research practice be developed in Digital Humanities?

Our suggestion is that research in DH, involving statistics, data science, computer science, data visualization, and ontology, among others, should be developed according to an approach that considers, as far as possible, the multiple dimensions of the studied object, together with its epistemological and ethical implications. In short, investigations based on complex systems thinking should include the following presuppositions:

i) Multilayer analysis of events, ranging from micro to macro levels;
ii) Attention towards phenomena emergent from the interplay of different disciplines;

iii) The relevance of circular causality in DH practices that might be affected and affect other areas, modifying the object of investigation.

Presuppositions (i)-(iii) require a collaborative perspective to be developed in DH that comprises qualitative and quantitative approaches to express the complexities underlying human, environmental, and political events. Thus, Digital Humanities could be characterized as a genuine collaborative dialogue among social, formal, and hard sciences, by emphasizing shared techniques for modelling, analysing, and interpreting data. DH would then be a genuine multi/inter/transdisciplinary area of study, providing a multi-way road towards scientific research in which the main aim should be to benefit society.

A core challenge in contemporary DH that contemplates the proposed collaborative perspective is the attempt to deal with topics, investigated in the next section, about the semantic and pragmatic aspects of human activities involving the application of Big Data analytics resources, in accordance with a Complex Systems perspective.

Meaning as the core of humanities

The digitalization of information concerning human events, in order to express them as units of data that can be structured in integrated databases for mechanical analysis, is a hard task that involves qualitative and quantitative criteria of relevance. To begin with, the study of human events requires a careful approach that takes into consideration multiple dimensions of analysis, such as historical and contextual foundations. For instance, analysing a human trait such as dishonesty by applying only quantitative methods that search for metadata and correlational patterns among variables may lead to disastrous results[3]. To illustrate this claim, we discuss the notion of data and the process of meaning generation, indicating challenges of an automated approach to meaning.

Some methods imported by DH from formal sciences mirror the presupposition that data are a commodity that shares quantitative, meaningless aspects of the reality, that the so-called ‘raw data’ can be digitalized without much loss. In this regard, Drucker (2013, 2) alerts: “[...] the digital humanities can no longer afford to take its tools and methods from disciplines whose fundamental epistemological assumptions are at odds with humanistic methods”. The author advocates that the idea of raw data as a mirror of reality, providing a faithful reflection of such reality, should be revisited by data-driven research in humanities.

The revision of what counts as data in humanities should not open the doors for relativism. It is not to say that data has no connection to reality, but that this connection is a temporary framework communicated through sign-relations, as partial expressions of the object under scrutiny.

The concept of raw data has been investigated by Leonelli (2015, 813), among others, who calls the attention to the following paradox, which: “[...] consists of the observation that, despite their epistemic value as ‘given’, data are clearly made.” She suggests a relational concept of data that are intrinsically context-dependent, with their epistemic value depending on the context in which the data are collected and stored, and the context in which they are analysed.

In order to apply computational techniques to vast amounts of data stored and integrated in massive databases, the data have to be ready for *data journeys* (Leonelli, 2014). Data journeys involve de-contextualizations, re-contextualizations, and, most interesting, the possibility of reuse of data. Adding to that, Collmann et al. (2016) emphasized the possibility for reanalysis, recombination, and repurposing of data. They indicated that when data are *generated*, there is usually a purpose for which they are *meant*. However, reusing, reanalysing, recombining, and repurposing the data may change their primary meaning. The context-dependency of data may change their epistemic values, according to their journeys, with ethical and epistemological implications for science and society.

In short, once integrated in structured or semi-structured databases, data can grow in meaning by the process of re-contextualization, which could re-direct their original purpose when generated in a given context. According to our working hypothesis, research in human sciences requires understanding of events where a relational concept of meaning plays a fundamental role. Our challenge then is to characterize meaning in such a way that highlights its relational aspects in the context of DH.

In the history of philosophy, one can find many attempts to characterize the notion of meaning. A common hypothesis, which interests us here, is that meaning is an emergent property of the relationship between the dispositional patterns of a given environment and the perception/action of embodied and embedded organisms.

Highlighting the perspective of the organism, von Uexküll (1982 [1940], 2010 [1934]) proposes the notion of meaning in terms of the 'species-specific environment' to express the recurrent cycle of perception and action in which organisms are shaped by the physical constraints of the specie. (Uexküll 2010 [1934]). The author exemplifies his hypothesis in the following passage:

> If we stand before a meadow covered with flowers, full of buzzing bees, fluttering butterflies, darting dragonflies, grasshoppers jumping over blades of grass, mice scurrying, and snails crawling about, we would be inclined to ask ourselves the unintended question: Does the meadow present the same view to the eyes of so many various animals as it does to ours? (Von Uexküll, 1982 [1940], 45)

Von Uexküll argues that the constraints of our species may indicate different possibilities for us to explore, contemplate, and enjoy the meadow, while the meadow offers dispositions for action for other beings that have different constraints.

In a view not epistemologically distant, but methodologically distinct from that of Von Uexküll, Gibson (1956, 1979) emphasizes the role of niches, characterized as those parts of the environment containing engravings of the relationship between the environment and the perception/action of different species. In his *Ecological Philosophy*, the concept of *affordance* is proposed to represent meaningful information available for embodied and embedded agents, allowing the occurrence of actions in a direct way that is not mediated by subjective representations. Thus, the conceptions of meaning proposed by Gibson and Von Uexküll are relational, in that they emerge from the dynamic agent-environment relationship. However, they differ methodologically, since Gibson asserts that meaning is not dependent upon the subjective universe of the animal, but instead is an emergent property of the dynamic relation between the action of the organism and its natural niche.

In the context of digital objects, *technological affordances* can be understood as types of emergent second order dispositions embedded in the context of digital niches. Such second order dispositions allow for investigations of meaningful perception/action in virtual reality. One example of a technological affordance is the use of GPS, for motorists familiar with this kind of gadget. In the case of DH, indications by recommender systems (RS) of possible relevant papers that might drive people to further reading, in a specific context, provides another example of technological affordances. A common property of these examples is that they both presuppose an interactive familiarity with the digital environment, in a way that allows the user to navigate appropriately and perform meaningful actions.

The relational aspect of meaning is also highlighted by Peirce (CP 5.402), who emphasises the role of signs in the establishment of the agent-environment relationship. In his theory of signs (or semiotics), he claims that the meaning of a sign (characterized as something that stands in the place of something else[4]) lies in the possible consequences that the perception of a sign can play in the action of an agent in a given context (Peirce, CP 5.402). An interesting aspect of the approach of Peirce is the presupposition that signs grow in meaning through the process of thinking and doing. It is by working with signs that one can exert self-control, to adjust the held beliefs in accordance with the environment.

To sum up, the three approaches to meaning outlined here emphasise the relational property of the agent-environment relationship. Assuming that meaning is an emergent property of perceived informational patterns (which indicate law-like relationships) and actions of embedded and embodied organisms in virtual and/or ecological environments, one might ask: Can a machine generate meaning in the relational sense?

Inspired by a biosemiotic notion of meaning, grounded on the approaches of Uexküll and Peirce, Menant (2013) provides a positive answer to the above question, proposing a mechanistic Meaning Generator System (MGS hereafter). His main hypothesis is that humans, machines, and non-human animals have constraints (general and specific) that allow them to generate meaning when faced with information from the environment. According to Menant, meaning is relational and encompasses three elements: (i) the constraints of the system, (ii) the incident information from the environment, and (iii) the emergence of meaning from the relationship between (i) and (ii). Menant argues that while human and other animals generally have constraints on survival acquired during their evolutionary history, machines, in contrast, depend (so far) on designers to specify their constraints. In both cases, he claims that meaning is a relational property that emerges from the interaction between agents (including specific constraints) and the environment (in a given context).

In short, according to the MGS, a given system encompasses a meaning generator subsystem whose role is to compare the information received from the environment to the established or learned constraints. The flexibility and origin of the constraints of the system depend on the kind of system analysed. Thus, the MGS can generate meaningful information that guides the action of the system, which, in turn, might modify its surroundings, generating new affordances that are sometimes perceived by other systems that, in a circular feedback, may grasp informational patterns and generate new meanings.

A simplified version of the MGS proposed by Menant is illustrated in *Figure 1*.

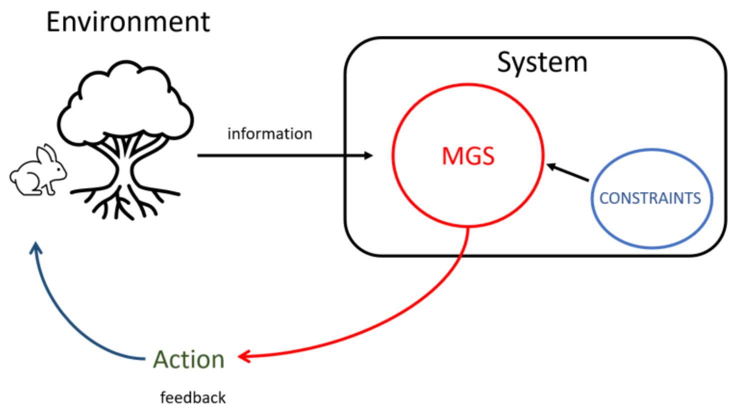

Figure 1. A simplified version of the MGS (adapted from Menant, 2009).

With the growing development of deep learning algorithms, the possibility for artificial systems to adjust their constraints to new input data may shed light on the future of mechanical meaning generation. This suggests the need for an ethical reflection on the growing possibility of the automation of meaning generation within humanities. In the next section, possible ethical consequences of the growing automation of human practices are discussed in relation to autonomous action.

Autonomy and the mechanical generation of meaning in the Big Data era

To what extent could mechanical generation of meaning, incremented by Big Data analytics, modify well-established practices of human autonomous action? As indicated, the extensive use of computers in DH has led to growing automation of scientific practices in the human and social sciences. In the Big Data era, automated analyses of data require structuring of data that, once integrated in massive databases, might provide fruitful insights by means of extraordinarily powerful computer analysis. However, in the context of humanities, the retrieval of fruitful insights from the mechanical generation of meaning requires understanding of the subject matter, which implies the need for sound and genuine interdisciplinary research.

In the area of Computational Literary Studies, for example, Da (2019, 623) highlights 'the stop word dilemma': "Keep them [the stop words] and they produce the only statistical significance you have; remove them and you have no real results". In natural language processing, 'stop words' are highly frequent words in a text (such as the words 'the', 'a', 'an', or prepositions). For the extraction of interesting patterns from a corpus of written texts, it is necessary to 'clean' the data, which usually includes the removal of stop words. However, in literary studies, small changes in the corpus or in the parameters of statistical analysis can make a relevant difference. For instance, in the context of topic modelling, Da (2019, 625) alerts that "[...] you need only to tweak small details to discover completely different topics".[5]

On the one hand, using statistical analysis for automated reading of texts, for example, allows the results to become reproducible. On the other hand, application of the same code to the same corpus can lead to the discovery of different results (Da 2019). This happens because the meaning extracted from the data is sensitive to the decisions one makes.

A relevant novelty is that the development of mechanical text analysis and the use of natural language processing in DH go beyond the gates of universities. In dealing with recommendation systems and commercial chatbots, for instance, high accuracy and explanatory power in text analysis and text generation are not always required. The growing use of language generation models outside universities indicates that DH, characterized here from a Complex Systems perspective as a set of methodological and ethical challenges, should be considered as a systemic set of activities that surpasses academic disciplinary boundaries.

Nowadays, it is common when writing an email to receive suggestions on which word should come next. The technique applied for such recommendations is also found in the translation machine: a probabilistic analysis based on a massive database, which predicts the most common word following the words already typed. The advent of powerful generative language models took this recommendation process to the next level. In the case of GPT-3, a pre-trained, auto-regressive language model that performs tasks such as translation, text generation, and arithmetic, among others, it is possible to generate full texts (journalistic, comedy, and literary, among others) with a single input. Sooner or later, generative models of natural language will account for a large part of the activity of producing texts, making it difficult to distinguish the authorship of the text (Floridi & Chiaritti 2020).

What makes generative language models powerful is the massive database used in the pre-training phase[6]. Databases comprising texts produced by humans are the building blocks for training in the language generator, so the output of this new tool could reflect human shared opinion (at least, the opinion of a given class, namely people who write in English and have access to the internet and social media). Recognizing this, Prabhu (in an interview to Strickland in 2021) pointed out that GPT-3 is "[...] not coming out of a vacuum. It's holding up a mirror".

One of the problems faced by the developers of automated language generators is that the quality of the output, whether offensive (or not), appropriate (or not), or insensitive (or not), depends on the context within which it is generated. In other words, the success of the human-machine interaction depends on the meaningful information that emerges from this kind of interaction. Some users may enjoy offensive message exchange (when playing a game, for instance), while users of a mental health chatbot may need more careful evaluation of the effects of messages. Similarly, in the area of visual classification, Misra et al. (2016, 2930) call attention to the problem of biases associated with learning algorithms trained with the use of readily-available resources that gather data previously posted by internet users. So-called *reporting bias* emerges because when users classify an image, they choose specific properties to be highlighted, to the detriment of others, according to their criteria of relevance.

Due to the rapid advance of ICTs supported by machine learning and Big Data analytics, it is difficult to be aware of the possible consequences that their use may have in the future. However, by considering our autonomy at individual and collective levels, possible positive and negative consequences might be anticipated. A characterization of *autonomy* was proposed by Gonzalez (2017), inspired by a pragmatic notion of embodied and embedded meaningful information, according to which a person P will have a degree of autonomy if at least two conditions are satisfied:

(1) P possesses *reliable* anticipatory meaningful information of choice opportunities for future actions.
(2) P has the capacity to choose, regardless of coercive external pressure.

If (1) and (2) are satisfied, autonomy can be characterized as the human rational ability to establish independent decisions, free of external imposed determinants, in such a way that the action of the individual may be self-governed on the basis of anticipatory *reliable* meaningful information. At the collective level, autonomy might express the capacity for people to act according to their own self-organizing habits that maximize common interests. Thus, the degree of collective autonomy also depends on mutual self-governed agreement based on anticipatory *reliable* meaningful information.

The requirement for reliability of meaningful information available in the digital environment in the Big Data era leads to the following difficulty faced by Digital Humanities: Given that Big Data analytics might involve reusing, repurposing, recombining, and reanalysis of the collected data (Collmann et al. 2016), how reliable is the information available for researchers and other citizens in their exercise of autonomous scientific practice?

In the context of data-driven humanities, the use of Big Data tools and models is not neutral, so the requirement for reliability necessitates ethical and epistemological criteria to ensure that some degree of autonomy might be preserved in individual and collective action. Thus, the use of quantitative and qualitative methods requires genuine interdisciplinary research practice, where investigators have to trust each other, in order to be able to rely on the expertise of their colleagues and, by doing so, achieve a collective level of autonomy.

In the epistemological context, Alvarado & Humphreys (2017, 373) suggested the need for a new epistemology to deal with 'thick mediation', pointing out that: "[i]t is thick in the sense that the goal of the enabling channel is not to get out of the way, but precisely to get in the way and fundamentally reshape the message" They contrasted *thick* and *thin* mediation, by referring to technologies that faithfully communicate a message from a given source to a suitable receiver. In the case of thick mediation, the information communicated is stored, along with its metadata, to be available for future analysis, recombination, reuse, and repurposing. The advent of thick mediation, they claim, gives new meaning to McLuhan's sentence 'the medium is the message' because "[...] it is not simply that the medium has its own message. It is that the message itself is augmented and shaped by the medium" (Alvarado & Humphreys 2017, 373). It seems to us that McLuhan (1964, 2) had foreseen the potential of ICTs, when he explained: "[...] 'the medium is the message' because it is the medium that shapes and controls the scale and form of human association and action". But, if that is the case, would there be a place for autonomous action in the Big Data era?

The process of *datification* and the possibility of *mechanical generation of meaning* bring to the fore not only epistemological challenges faced by data-driven humanists, but also ethical dilemmas intrinsically related to data journeys. As pointed out by Collmann et al. (2016, 142), the possibility of *reusing* the data "[...] raises the responsibilities that investigators have for what happens to data once they become available to secondary investigation". The process of *repurposing* of data "[...] poses the question about the legitimacy of analysing data acquired under one privacy context and employing it in a different privacy context." Furthermore, they alert that "[...] *recombining* data poses the question about the possibility of obtaining new information not available from the constituent data set. From a privacy perspective [...] it potentially enables re-identification of individuals from data that contains no identifier."

To sum up, in data-driven humanities, by using Big Data resources, information can flow in a paradoxical way. On the one hand, the provision of massive amounts of data can open paths for the exercise of autonomous individual and collective action. On the other hand, it has the power to exert undesirable influences on privacy and mass surveillance, threatening human autonomy by mechanically shaping messages, without ethical concerns, involving the reuse, repurposing, and recombination of personal data. Hence, DH might provide positive and negative fuel for the growth of a myriad of mechanical systems, with economic, epistemological, political, and ethical implications.

Final remarks

From the Complex Systems perspective advocated here, Digital Humanities should not be seen purely as an interdisciplinary field with challenges involving computers, humanists, and modelling assumptions. Since, in DH, the digital escapes the walls of universities and enters our homes, it is necessary to incorporate ethical and epistemological concerns, considering the complex thinking perspective and the interrelationship between science and society. As pointed out, DH can help with the diffusion of reliable information and the use of computer modelling to analyse the digital shadow of humans, which might become more and more digital as the digital humanists import methods from the formal sciences. In a feedback loop, we might create our digital selves, which would be studied in the future by digital humanists using digital tools.

The complex thinking approach to DH allows the scientific investigation to undertake ethical statements from the outset: "The aim of complex system thinking is to produce the least possible uncertainty for responsible innovation." (Bourgine 2013). Considering that not everything that is technically possible is ethically defensible, a sound, genuinely interdisciplinary Digital Humanities should combine wisdom with the systemic integration of knowledge. This includes ethical, cultural, political, economic, and ecological contexts that should be treated as integrated and co-dependent.

In practical terms, a way of approaching interdisciplinarity in DH would be to develop an honest and humble dialogue among people of diverse backgrounds and expertise, with the possibility of developing research around problems and topics in common. This should include patiently sharing the weakest points of one's practices and seeking advice, together reflecting carefully on the possible consequences of the group's research for science and society. Encouragingly, some projects are emerging in the direction of collaborative efforts to think about the role of data and data science to society, examples being the movement 'Data for Black Lives'[7] and 'The Human Error Project'[8].

What could be the future of DH, and to what extent might its development threaten the degree of autonomy of human action? Considering the future of DH, the Complex Systems perspective alerts us to the difficulty of establishing precise predictions. However, insofar as autonomous action is concerned, it may (or may not) be threatened by the development of Digital Humanities, depending on the human capacity to understand the informational-technological dynamics of the social/ecological systems, and the conceivable ways of altering (when necessary) the processes that govern such dynamics.

Endnotes:

1. https://www.ibm.com/ibm/history/ibm100/us/en/icons/speechreco/team. Accessed in April 2021.
2. D'Ignazio & Klein (2020, p. 27) call attention to the qualitative *versus* quantitative dichotomy, stating that dichotomies usually hide underlying hierarchies: "[...] in this case it is that quantitative data can be incorrectly perceived as 'better' than qualitative data for being more objective, true, generalizable, larger, scale, and so on".
3. This was the case of a paper retracted from Nature in January 2021, which associated dishonesty with obesity: https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-020-80528-2.pdf. Accessed in April 2021.
4. In other words, a sign can be characterized as a logical relationship that has three elements: (i) the sign-vehicle, which is determined by (ii) the object of a sign that determines (iii) an interpretant, i.e., the

possible effect of a sign which is, also, a sign (but a more developed sign). The sign-vehicle, object, and interpretant are signs that have different logical roles in the relationship that constitutes the sign.

5. For more examples of the mismatch between statistical tools, together with valuable insights into computational literary studies, see Da (2019).
6. In the case of GPT-3, it was trained with a massive dataset of 175 billion parameters, compared to the 1.5 billion parameters used for the second-generation model.
7. https://d4bl.org.
8. https://thehumanerrorproject.ch.

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Promoters of Carmelite Spirituality in Romania, Especially Saint Theresa of the Child Jesus

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Abstract:

The history of the Roman-Catholic Dioceses of Romania is not an ancient one. Its growth can be observed within the last centuries. This is the reason why there are not many traditions of spirituality born here and many of the currents present even nowadays come from abroad. Among these spiritual currents, a strong one is that of St. Therese of Lisieux. Her spirituality, like in many places around the world reached even Romanian lands through the hard work of some holy men who took care of the flock here. The list of those contaminated by the theresian spirituality is a long one, but I present you the main figures: Saint Joseph Rafael Kalinowski O.C.D., Blessed Vladimir Ghika, Mons. Anton Gabor, and Mons. Dr. Ioan Coltor. Through them the writings, the cult and the thinking of the Little Carmelite Therese helped Romanian Catholics on their way to God.

Keywords: St. Therese of Lisieux, Theresian spirituality, Joseph Rafael Kalinowski, Vladimir Ghika, Anton Gabor, Ioan Coltor

Introduction

In this article, I set out to present the first protagonists of Carmelites spirituality in Romania, in a special way that of Saint Theresa of the Child Jesus, promoters followed by many priests, be they diocesans or monks, who have effectively contributed to the propagation of the cult and to the knowledge of St. Theresa in this country.

The clear perception that exists is that of a limited but not silent presence. With the strength of their radical testimony of life, the Carmelites arrived into Romanian land long before the friars of the Venetian Province or the Italian Carmelite Province set foot on these lands.

There are several ways in which the Carmelite spirituality reached Romania. First of all, in the area of Transylvania, empress Maria Theresa of Austria, who had her as her patron, founded several churches dedicated to her: for example, the church called Teresian[1] in Sibiu or the church in the village of Orlat, where there was a border regiment. Here for the Roman Catholic officers was built the church of the “Germans”, dedicated to Saint Theresa of Avila.

Secondly, we can remember that coming from Bulgaria, the Passionist monks shepherded the

Catholics from Muntenia. Their founder, Saint Paul of the Cross, was very much inspired by Saint Theresa of Avila. For this reason, in the Roman Catholic Cathedral in Bucharest, built at the end of the 19th century by the passionate Bishop Ignazio Paoli, we find Saint Theresa painted among several other saints who constitute the allspice of the coronation scene of the Mother of God (*Sfânta Tereza de Avila* 2020, 7).

Saint Joseph Rafael Kalinowski O.C.D. (1835-1907)

To begin with, it is worth remembering the example and contribution of Saint Joseph Rafael Kalinowski (1835-1907). In 1902, Kalinowski established a Scapular Friary in Sulina, Romania, through a spiritual daughter, Teresa Moruzi, a member of the secular order, and sought canonical recognition from the General of the Order by sending him the necessary requests, including a request form.

He encouraged the Jesuits working in Iași to promote the devotion of the Scapular, and also wrote to the daughter of the Austrian consul, Fanny Jelinek[2] of Sulina, asking her to spread the scapular devotion.

To spread the scapular piety, Father Raphael was able to use - as mentioned above - the people he knew and his penitents, spiritual sons. In this way he managed to introduce it far into Romania[3], where it developed almost throughout the Diocese of Bucharest, bringing many redemptory fruits, especially in the ecumenical field, because many Orthodox brothers and sisters received the Marian robe, returning at the same time to the Roman Church. The Catholic priests in Romania reported what a positive influence the scapular had on the Christian life. There have been cases of conversions from Orthodox Christianity to Catholicism because of the scapular. Rafael even made plans to establish the secular order of Carmel related to a Carmelite house in the capital Bucharest. This was one of the great joys of Father Raphael who so longed to "work through the Carmel of the Mother of God for the unity of the Church"[4].

Therefore, with the help of Fanny Jelanek, daughter of the Austrian consul, who lived in Braila, of Princess Teresa Moruzi, the spiritual daughter of Kalinowski and of the Jesuits who managed the major Seminary in Iasi, the first fraternity of the scapular in Romania was founded in Moldova. From Iasi, the fraternity reached to Bucharest, Sulina, and Braila (Galofaro 1988, 313).

The promoter of the unity of the churches. Mother of God, Mother of Unity

In a few words, I would like to emphasize the question of ecumenism in the life of Father Kalinowski. Today, many years after the Council, an attitude of openness characterizes, if not all, at least the majority of Christians. In the early 19th and 20th centuries, an extraordinary intuition was needed to express similar views. Saint Raphael Kalinowski read the signs of the times and did not spare any effort to take initiatives to unite the churches.

Although sometimes lacking strength and health was not always a good sign, the unification of the Church was his only concern, his only desire, his only intention, for which he offered his sufferings and sacrifices: "Please pray for me!" he wrote to a Discalced Carmelite nun in France, "so that above all God may give me the grace to love suffering and persevere on this path. Although I am at the end of my days – I am already 62 years old – I cannot free myself from the thought that the good God, if I remain faithful to him, will oblige me with his grace to work even more for the unity of the churches through the Carmel of the Mother of God. Not just in Romania, but in Russia too"[5].

Saint Raphael Kalinowski was deeply convinced that the Union between the Catholic and Orthodox churches could take place through the veneration of the Mother of God, very alive both in the Roman Catholic Church and in the Orthodox Church. We must not overlook this intuition of his inspired by the Holy Spirit. The Virgin Mary gave birth to the one and indivisible Christ, Head of the Only Mystical Body, the Way, the Truth, and the Life of all Christians. Therefore, would it not be good for us in our ecumenical efforts to return to the beginnings of Christianity, to Mary of Nazareth, and through her to rediscover the lost unity?

This insight was taken up by the Second Vatican Council, which, in its Decree on ecumenism, *Unitatis redintegratio*, speaking of the factors that unite us with the Eastern churches, did not fail to mention the worship of the Mother of God. Holy Father John Paul II, in his encyclical *Redemptoris Mater*, also mentioned these aspects.

Saint Raphael confidently wrote: "Holy Unity! Holy Unity!" Only this word already kindles the flame of hope in the suffering heart.

It is the immaculate Virgin who will bring to this Union a people in whose chest many noble and thirsty hearts beat with light[6].

Joseph Rafael Kalinowski and Saint Theresa of the Child Jesus

The meeting with Saint Theresa of the Child Jesus took place while translating for publication *History of a Soul* in Polish. His first reaction was very negative: he considered her style too sentimental and declared herself frankly hostile to the Polish edition (1901). But he would later tell the Lisieux superior, in a letter he did not hesitate to call "Repair", that he had experienced a great inner disturbance shortly before, which he had alleviated by reading the poem *Vivre d'Amour*:

> I was in my cell about eight days ago, my soul stirred by the waves of a stormy sea, and I didn't know where to find shelter. My eyes fell on the French book of the life of my saving sister. Equipped with the sign of the cross to banish all the instincts of nature, I opened the book and the place of refuge was in the hearth of a heart united with Jesus, in the flame of the 'life of love'. Suddenly the storm subsides, the calm returns and something ineffable invades my entire being and transforms me from top to bottom the song was a lifeboat for me. The loving sister offered to guide me. (Letter to the Abbess of the Carmelite Monastery from 9/10/1902, *Congregatio De Causis Sanctorum* 1997, 388)

From that moment on, he became a fervent admirer of the one he called "the Angel of Peace." We can see in the situation of Kalinowski that the Little Way of St. Therese should be understand as a way for everyone, at the same time easy to follow and hard to comprehend.

Who is Saint Joseph Rafael Kalinowski O.D. (1835 - 1907)?

Discalced Carmelite, he was canonized in Rome on November 17th, 1991, by Pope John Paul II. Born on September 1st, 1835, in a Polish family in Vilnius (Lithuania), he sipped his faith and nurtured his Catholic affiliation in the sanctuary of Ostra Brama: The face of the Mother of Mercy will accompany him throughout his life.

As officer in the Russian army, he took part in the Polish uprising against the tsarist government in 1863. Arrested and deported to Siberia, he was released in 1874 and spent some time in France before joining the order of the Discalced Carmelite, where he was ordained a priest on January 15th, 1882.

Endowed with apostolic zeal, he did not shy away from helping the faithful and assisting the Carmelite brothers and sisters in the ascent of the mountain of perfection. After his ordination, he consecrated his life to the obedience of confessions in the sacrament of reconciliation, lifting many from the misery of sin. It was called the "martyrdom of the confession see", an expression repeated by pope John Paul II in the beatification speech. He also dedicated himself to the mission of spiritual accompaniment, working hard for Christian unity and the restoration of his order in Poland.

He did his best for the work of reunifying the Church and left the legacy of this mission to the Carmelite brothers and sisters. His superiors entrusted him with many important missions, which he perfectly fulfilled, right up to the moment of his death. Joseph Rafael gave his soul into the hands of God on November 15th, 1907, in Wadowice. He was buried in the cemetery of the monastery, in Czerna, near Kraków. (Sicari 2011, 200; 209-210)

On October 11th, 1980, Pope John Paul II promulgated the decree on the splendor of his virtues, and on June 22nd, 1983, he was beatified. He was canonized in Rome on November 17th, 1991. Its celebration was established on November 19th.

Blessed Vladimir Ghika (1873-1954)

An in-depth study, if it really wants to offer its passionate and free Christian witness, must be aware of the challenges that the Church has had to face in Romania with great courage, creativity and a spirit of communion. To know the recent history of the Catholic Church in Romania also means to know the authentic life of holiness of one of his sons: Blessed Prince Vladimir Ghika, who died in 1954, after a life overflowing with charity, consumed among the harshest persecutions.[7]

Few know of the special devotion that Blessed Vladimir Ghika had to St. Theresa of the Child Jesus. He certainly discovered Saint Theresa during his studies, during his stay in France, where he met philosophers, literates and artists, during which the message of St. Theresa was imposed in all its beauty (Sicari 2006, 123-142).

In 1926, Blessed Father Vladimir Ghika wanted to "live in a corner of the suburbs of Paris, where the absence of God is most sensitive." Encouraged by Bishop Emmanuel Chatal, auxiliary bishop of Paris, who gave him a small piece of land in the southern suburbs of Villejuif, he moved to a wooden cottage, which was then used as an improvised chapel.

Between 1924 and 1928, at Villejuif, starting from a poor shack in which he carried out his noble activity, the Monsignor built a chapel comparable to the stable of Bethlehem, where he "put Christ within the reach of a population that needed to be evangelized". (Novac 2013, 23)

Under the coordination of Bishop Emmanuel Chatal, construction of a church began. Originally planned in the same area, it was eventually erected on Sorrières Street and dedicated to St. Theresa of Lisieux, to whom Father Ghika had a particularly great affection. Inaugurated in 1934, in 1949 it became the parish church and the seat of the parish "Saint Theresa of the Child Jesus and the Holy face".

The testimony that Marie Antoinette Pardessus Génin gives on the occasion of the beatification of Monsignor Vladimir Ghika is very eloquent, because she had the chance to meet Monsignor Ghika personally. Even if at that time he was only a child, Antoinette confesses, his physiognomy, the gentle expression of his face, his gestures, words and love marked him for life.

> My father, Mr. Génin, had a brick in Villejuif, where I was born. He learned that a priest had come to evangelize that suburb and that he lived in an old car, wishing to be poor among the poorest. After contacting him and with his consent, my father, on land that belonged to him, built a wooden chapel with a concrete foundation. It was a large room, whose space was separated by the curtains that my mom had made. Father Ghika often went there to celebrate the Liturgy and the Holy Mysteries... because it was made of wood, the Monsignor, in a familiar way, called this chapel "shack", a fact which created confusion. Later, at Villejuif, the chapel was replaced with the church "Saint Theresa", which was then called the chapel of Saint Theresa... they gave my father a relic (a lock of hair) of Saint Theresa to keep until the completion of the works (Genin 2013, 14).

This is a great example of how a simple, but holy priest, could bring out for the Christian he had to take care of, a great treasure of grace, just by naming a little shack upon a little saint who proposed the Christian world the Little Way. A little shack is a great manner of presenting the simplicity of the Little Way.

Mons. Anton Gabor (1883-1936) – promoter of the cult of Saint Theresa of the Child Jesus in the Roman Catholic Church in Romania

Mons. Dr. Anton Gabor is one of the pioneers of devotion to Saint Theresa in Moldova and also the most illustrious personality in the history of the "Presa Bună" Institute in Iasi and, at the same time, one of the most important Romanian Catholic journalists in the first half of the 20th century (Doboș 2007, 11).

Convinced of the importance of the Christian press in Catholic life, he founded 1913, *Lumina creștinului* magazine (*The Light of the Christian*), and after the first World War, the *Santinela Catolică* (*The Catholic Santinel*) which took the name of *Dacia Creștină* (*Christian Dacia*) in 1933.

On May 17th, 1926, in the courtyard of the Cathedral "Assumption of Our Lady" begins the construction of the new building, which will become the headquarters of the publishing house and the printing house; the foundation stone is consecrated on June 11, 1926, and on October 31, on the Feast of Christ the King, Bishop Mihai Robu[8], together with many priests, celebrated a Holy Mass in the cathedral and then "all went to the workshop where the walls and machinery were sanctified" under the patronage of Saint Theresa of the Child Jesus (Cadar 2013, 11). In 1926, Mons. Anton Gabor founded the "Presa Bună" Institute, placed under the protection of Saint Theresa of the Child Jesus, for which he went from house to house across Catholic villages to ask for financial help (Dumea 2002, 124). A great merit of Mons. Anton Gabor was able to bring together valuable collaborators, "people with great souls, lovers of the church writing", who all made sacrifices for the progress of the magazine and the "Presa Bună" Institute founded in 1926, as well as for the dissemination of Catholic press and publications among the faithful people. He was able to attract the material support and promotion of the publications of the Institute's "Presa Bună". Numerous benefactors whose names were popularized in the pages of publications (Ciobanu-Doboș 2022, 137).

In a letter to Archbishop Alexander Th. Cisar said, "but great is the power of God, and great is the support of St. Theresa for our institute." (Doboș 2006, 6)

Mons. Anton Gabor, the father of the "Presa Bună" Publishing House, great venerator of Saint Theresa, the beneficiary of the intercession of this Saint, entrusted to Iosif Bălan, for translation, the precious book *Rain of Roses*, printed later with the approval, on March 1st, 1930, of the Bishop of Iași, Mihai Robu, at the "Presa Bună" Publishing House.

This was the first edition, *editio princeps*, because in 2016 the second edition was republished, also at the „Presa Bună" Publishing House.

Thus, in 1930 began the dissemination of the book among the Catholics of Moldova, Saint Theresa being thus more and more known and loved. In his address to all the venerators of St. Theresa at the beginning of this book, he stated with the fact that the "Presa Bună" Publishing House wants the development of piety toward this Saint (Despinescu 2016, 2).

> Therefore, in bringing a new printing machine, I entrusted this matter to her, promising that the first work to be printed on her would be *Rain of Roses*. Since the machine has arrived safely and is already in working order, that is why we keep the promise made, hoping that even in the future st. Theresa will lead the Presa Bună Institute to an ever greater development (*Ploaia de trandafiri*, 2016, 3).

An Apostle of the good press, as it was Mons. Gabor – it was written in the "Presa Bună" Almanac in 1934, on the occasion of the Jubilee of 25 years of priesthood for Mons. Gabor –, must be valued as a gift of God for the good of the Catholics in Romania and deserves all the support of each one, to continue his work that he conducts with so much zeal and sacrifice and for which the divine providence itself seems to have destined him (Doboș 2007, 11).

In 1927, the little *Flower Saint Theresa of the Child Jesus* is published at the "Presa Bună" Publishing House, with 61 pages, and was republished in 1936 (Dumea 2002, 199).

Mons. Dr. Ioan Coltor (1886-1933)- promoter of the cult of Saint Theresa of the Child Jesus in the Greek Catholic Church in Romania

Fr. Dr. Ioan Coltor was born on September 25th, 1886, in Blaj, having parents of modest condition: his father had been a printer gatherer, and he was the only brother among his three sisters. In Blaj is doing his primary and secondary education. He is one of the most remarkable figures of the Greek Catholic Church, priest, diplomat, and politician. It is the fruit of Blaj schools, due to its intellectual training to the educational institutions in the city at the confluence of Târnavei.

In 1904 he passed the examination of maturity at the Greco-Catholic Superior Gymnasium in Blaj, and his special inclination toward study and science determined, in the same year, Metropolitan Victor Mihali of Apşa to send him to Rome for the completion of his intellectual training. In the Eternal City, Coltor studied theology and philosophy at the *De propaganda fide* Pontifical Urban College (1904-1910), being one of the most talented students of the Roman University (Bălibanu 1934, 3).

Three years later, on March 31st, 1907, he was made a lecturer, then a subdeacon and deacon, and on March 27th, 1910, by laying on the hands of Blessed Bishop Vasile Hossu was ordained a priest, celebrating his First Holy Mass in the Vatican Basilica, at the tomb of St. Peter, where he would return several times, celebrating on the occasion of the national pilgrimages which he arranged and led in the Jubilee years 1925, 1930, and 1933 (Macaveiu 1934, 3). In 1906 he became a Doctor of Theology.

Young John Coltor chose to follow the priestly vocation, and in 1910, in Rome, he was ordained a priest by the Bishop of Lugoj, Vasile Hossu. Returned to Transylvania in 1910, he works for some time in the offices of the archdiocesan office, then receives the Chaplain mission in Cluj, where he has the opportunity to minister in the land of a large city, with people of all categories, preaching, instructing, caring for the sick, fighting currents and sects contrary to the Greek-Catholic Church (Bălibanu 1934, 3). He has the opportunity to serve as a priest in Orlat, where, for a year, he supplants fr. Ion Agarbiceanu. In Orlat he succeeded in bringing back to the church, through his life and preaching, the faithful who had embraced sectarian doctrines while laying the foundation for an ideal pastoral ministry, the effects of which are still present.

He was later a professor at the Archdiocesan Theological Seminary in Blaj, where he taught moral theology and pastoral theology. In 1918 we find him among the leading fighters for the realization of the national dream of generations. He participated in the Great Union on December 1st, 1918. Mons. I. Coltor was part of Romania's delegation to the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 and during the period between the two World Wars, his career experienced a fulminant ascent (Bălibanu 1934, 3). "Knowing the European languages, French, English, Italian, he has made a great deal of use to our country and our cause by the connections he has made among the delegates and journalists of other countries, with whom, together, they have investigated the contentious war zones at the borders of different countries" (Bălibanu 1934, 3). He worked in the national Party of Peasant and was a Member of Parliament several times.

He was the first priest of the United Romanian Church to participate in governing the country, when in the government of Alexandru Vaida Voievod in 1932, he was appointed Minister under Secretary of State at the Department of Health. In 1924 he was named canonical within the Capitum of the Holy Trinity Cathedral in Blaj. But with all his political concerns, he did not neglect his pastoral activity, participating in numerous spiritual exercises for priests and consecrated persons and popular missions for the faithful of Blaj, Cluj, Lugoj, Beius, and Arad, never ceasing to be the ideal priest, faithful to his vocation. Even as a minister, he celebrated the Divine Liturgy daily. Without making a mistake, we can say that John Coltor was the greatest preacher of the Greek Catholic Church in the interbelic period (Bălibanu 1934, 3).

Ioan Coltor is the personality that spread the cult of Saint Theresa of Lisieux in the Greek-Catholic Church in Romania, reviewing in the characteristic style of a fine theologian, educated in Rome, for the reader audience the event of the canonization of the Blessed woman on May 17th, 1925. In Rome, in the Basilica of "St. Peter", he presents St. Theresa as the one who succeeded in cultivating holiness in the modern world, despite the claims that modern life cannot be reconciled either with the purity of the Gospel or with the superior postulates of faith (Rusal 2020, 141; Coltor 1925, 153).

> Today's science overloaded with theories and hypotheses ends the integral understanding of the Christian creed, engaging contradictory theses about religion. Admits that from cinemas and from the daily bustle, dizzying of all the sensations that obsess the brain, from the demanding and newer attractions can only result in the diminution of the religious phenomenon: in the 20th century there are no more miracles or saints; at most a surface Christianity, or Christianity of esthetics, or one of purely artistic or purely philosophical value.
> But the Church in the 20th century defies the barren wisdom of all philosophies, and in the ten Commandments, she preaches her most perfect method of soul exaltation, an example of the effectiveness of the Church system being Theresa of Lisieux, among the saints in the age of all the modern lights (Coltor 1925, 153).

Distinguished writer, among his many writings published in Christian Culture, in *Unirea* and other magazines, we emphasize the beautiful work, through which he made known and popular among the Romanian people the little Theresa of the Child Jesus, whose *History of a Soul* and *Rain of Roses* he translates into Romanian. "He was a devoted son of the purest Virgin Maria, whose beauties in such vibrant words he so often proclaimed from the pulpit, of little Theresina (Bălibanu 1934, 3), his prosecutor next to the divine throne", as he liked to call it (Bălibanu 1934, 3).

Fr. dr. Ioan Coltor has printed in Romanian since 1914 *History of a Soul*, the life of Saint Theresa of Lisieux, which appeared in several editions.[9] In the Greek-Catholic religious environment some books come from the Romanian Roman Catholic environment (Gârleanu 1925), as is the case for those who have fr. Ion Gârleanu OFM. as their author. He will publish the *Abatis of our Holy Mother to the miracle-maker Saint Theresa Lisiosana*, with the high blessing of the Most Holy D. Valeriu Trajan, Bishop of Oradea, 1928. At the Bixad monastery were published in 1936, with the approval of Dr. Alexandru Rusu, Bishop of Maramureş, brochures that include biographies of the Saint, novenas, and prayers to and in honor of her. On the occasion of the Jubilee of 50 years since the death of Saint Theresa of Lisieux (1947), a group of Franciscan collaborators, led by pr. Iuliu Hirtea, the confessor of the Academy of Theology of Oradea, future bishop, publishes the volume *After fifty years. Patron of missions celebrated on Romanian lands*, Oradea, 1947. The volume contains the circulars of Greek Catholic bishops on the occasion of the Jubilee and Mission Day, the letter of Pope Pius XII to the Bishop of Lisieux, a conference of fr. dr. Iuliu Hirtea about the missions and Saint Theresa, other materials, and a chronicle about the celebration of the Teresian Jubilee in Romania (Rusal 2020, 141-142).

Fr. dr. John Coltor died at the age of 47, but his life, though brief, was "a sermon of faith. Rarely we have seen a man fuller of faith." (Macaveiu 1934, 3)

In one of the speeches given at his funeral, the canonical father, Dr. Victor Macaveiu stressed that, at the time of the holy anointing, he invoked himself, for the health of Mons. John, the help of the Holy Virgin Mary, and prayers were offered to St. Theresa of Lisieux, "whose cult had popularized him in us, so much the sleeping one in the Lord, and whose marble statue adorned his reception room, only a few days ago arriving from Italy, next to the Great Dom of Pisa". In the same panegyric, Father V. Macoveiu pointed out that Mons. I. Coltor has abundantly placed, in the service of culture and the enlightenment of the Community, the agile pen, with which God endowed him: "In tens of thousands of copies, his foliation of the novena and Christian piety, or the biography for everyone's understanding of St. Theresa of Lisieux, which he so adored, have been spread" (Macaveiu 1934, 4).

11 years after his death, Joseph E. Naghiu dedicates an article to him in *Unirea poporului* magazine, where the importance of Mons. Dr. Ioan Coltor in spreading the cult of Saint Theresa is emphasized: "In the history of the church, he has the merit of having worked hard to spread the cult of Saint Theresa of Lisieux. He worked in Romanian the beautiful book *History of a Soul*, a work that we read today with much spiritual benefit" (Naghiu 1945, 5).

In the end, we could also mention other published works, by other authors: *Rain of Roses. Some miracles and interventions of St. Theresa of the Child Jesus*, translated from French by I. B., Presa Bună, Iași, 1930; P. Iosif Tălmăcel OFMConv. *A rose of Saint Theresa, or the life of Teresa Hesselmann* (Craiova, 1911 – Bacau, 1929), Presa Bună, Iași, 1932; *Novena to Saint Theresa of the Child Jesus* followed by several prayers collected and translated by I. B., 1934[2]; Presa Bună, Iaşi, 1943[3]; *Saint Theresa of the Child Jesus*, Presa Bună, Iași, 1936 (Rusal 2020, 142).

Conclusion

This Carmelite and Teresian spirituality developed particularly and with intensity, even from the first years after its canonization. This was favored by the fact that, in all the dioceses of the country, true knowledge of the little Saint of Lisieux took place through the dedication of churches, statues, paintings of icons, but also through the first translations of her writings.

Among the greatest witnesses of Christ of our time is certainly St. Theresa of the Child Jesus. This young Carmelite, unknown to her world, has become famous throughout the world: Its holiness, authenticity, and intuition have remained unique in the history of the Church; her writings, starting from the first page of her manuscript, express an excellent theological synthesis. It's really about a theology of the heart, thanks to which Theresa discovered the presence and action of God in her life: her mission is about the experience of faith, the Gospel translated into everyday language, the wisdom that expresses itself in the prosaic circumstances of life. This mission refers to the universal call to evangelical holiness, a path that opens for everyone.

The special call for her worship lies in its extreme natural simplicity and its obvious pleasant appearance (somewhat compared by some believers to the sweetness of sugar) (Farmer 1999, 476).

In the mostly Catholic countries and regions of Eastern Europe, St. Theresa was known and venerated immediately after her canonization in 1925.

This is also the case in Romania, because the first churches that are dedicated to St. Theresa already appear, as is the case of the stone Church of Beznea-Bratca, belonging to the Greek Catholic Diocese of Oradea, built and consecrated in 1929 by Blessed Valeriu Trajan Frenţiu, with the dedication "Saint Theresa of the Child Jesus" (*Şematismul...* 1934, 5).

We can easily see that in most Catholic churches in Romania, we discover representations of St. Theresa that denote an uninterrupted veneration of Romanian Christians for "the greatest Saint of modern times", as she was called by Pope Pius X.

In both rites, there is almost no Catholic church in which the classic image of Theresa with roses does not appear. People keep as relics the books of the Teresian prayers edited especially by the Franciscan fathers before the establishment of communism. After an absence of 30-40 years, these books are now being reprinted (Jakubinyi 1997, 204).

Endnotes:

1. It was in fact a church and orphanage complex built at the behest of Empress Maria Theresa, who issued an order on September 1st, 1767, ordering the town magistrate to hand over the buildings previously intended for Austrian emigrants to the Jesuit priest Theofil Delphini, for a Catholic orphanage, who arrived in Sibiu following religious persecution and settled in villages around Sibiu, in 1858 the Catholic Bishop of Transylvania raised this institute to the rank of a normal school for teachers, in front of the building is located, since 1909, the bust of Empress Maria Theresa. See https://www.sibiul.ro/biserici-sibiu/biserica-si-orfelinatul-terezian.html.
2. Her father, Franz Jelinek, was consul in Sulina at this time. It is not clear how Kalinowski knew them, probably through the Moruzi family.
3. Through Princess Theresa Moruzi (his penitent and later Carmelite tertiary), Fanny Jelinek (daughter of the Austrian consul in Bucharest), Fr Józef Wasilewski SJ (companion in exile) and others. See Gil Czeslaw, *Ojciec Rafat Kalinowski 1835-1907*, Kraków 1984, 302-306.
4. The Blessed was not satisfied with the erection of Confraternities of the Scapular in various parishes in Romania, but wished to found a convent of sisters there. He obtained the nulla osta of the Archbishop of Bucharest (who promised to obtain the King's placet), joined the Father General of the Order and negotiated with the Barefoot Carmelite community of St. Dié in France (whose superior was Romanian) who could contribute to the new establishment. Even if these projects did

not materialize, they demonstrate Father Raphael's zeal for the propagation of the Order "which should bring the Eastern schismatics back into the bosom of the Church of Rome", as it appears from his Memoirs. See Szczepan T. Praskiewicy, „Maria sempre e in tutto, Spriritualità Mariana del Beato Raffaele, Kalinowski, O.C.D. (1835-1907)", in *Teresianum*, 41 (1990/1), 154.

5. https://www.karmel.pl/ajswietsza-dziewica-maryja/2.
6. *Ibidem*.
7. One of the few articles written to illustrate his heroic testimony is not published until 1957. See Filip G., *Un principe Apostolo e Martire: Vladimir Ghika*, în «Unitas» (1957), 65-72.
8. Mons. Anton Gabor was colleague in Innsbruck with the first local bishop, Mihai Robu.
9. Richard Söpkéz, *Sora Terezia de Pruncul Isus*, translated and published by dr. Ioan Coltor, Blaj, Tip. Seminarului teologic greco-catolic, 1914; *Fericita Terezia,* trans., Tip. Seminarului, Blaj, 1923[2]; *Istoria unui suflet. Sfânta Tereza. Ploaia de roze*, trans., Blaj, 1924[3]; 1928[4]; *Istoria unui suflet*. *Viaţa Sfintei Teresa de Lisieux.* Translated after the original version [*La vie d'une âme*], Tip. Seminarului Teologic Gr.-Cat., Blaj, 1929. See Anton Rusal, *Pietate și devoțiuni. Istoria vieții spirituale în Biserica Greco-Catolică din România (1918-1948). Vol. 1: Spiritualitatea laicală*, Globe Edit, Beau Bassin, 2020, 141.

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The Voice is the Voice of Jekyll, and the Hands are the Hands of Hyde: The Role of Religion in Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

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Abstract:

This article challenges the predominantly secular and scientific reading of *Jekyll and Hyde,* making a case for a new reading of Stevenson's novel—a theological reading—through an analysis of the text of the novel, through reading the novel in connection with other works of literature wherein horror is also linked to the "*Heilige*" ["the holy"] (in works such as Mann's *The Magic Mountain,* Philip Roth's "Eli, The Fanatic," and José Saramago's *Memorial do Convento*), and through a consideration of the biblical story of Jacob and Esau and James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* as key intertexts to *Jekyll and Hyde*. It elucidates the nexus between the gothic and the religious and explicates the connections between the biblical text and Stevenson's text. Some scholars have read *Jekyll and Hyde* through a theological lens; some have argued that it is a Pauline tale rooted in the Romans. These scholars have noted only "passing allusions" to the Old Testament in *Jekyll and Hyde*, and chose to focus on the novel's parallels to Paul's teachings in Romans, or to Stevenson's allusions to other sections of the New Testament. This article, while in agreement with the notion that *Jekyll and Hyde* should be read theologically, departs from this position and argues that *Jekyll and Hyde* is as much grounded in the Old Testament as it is in the New. While this article does not deny that Romans and Pauline theology was a critical source for Stevenson in his construction of the character of Henry Jekyll, it argues that Stevenson's references to the Old Testament are no mere passing allusions, but are in fact essential to the novel's theopoetical project; accordingly, this article further argues that Genesis is just as much a key intertext for *Jekyll and Hyde* as is Romans. This article engages seriously with the novel's Old Testament allusions and argues that the literary-theological task Stevenson set for himself was a Victorian-era retelling of the Jacob and Esau tale from Genesis—and that in Stevenson's version of this tale, the biblical drama of the Jacob and Esau conflict becomes situated within the psyche of a singular Janus-faced soul.

Keywords: Robert Louis Stevenson; *Jekyll and Hyde*; Thomas Mann; Dante's *Inferno*; James Hogg; Philip Roth; Albert Camus; José Saramago

The critical literature that has proliferated on *Jekyll and Hyde* in the hundred-plus years since its original publication is as wide-ranging as it is vast. Scholars have examined nearly every facet of Stevenson's signature work, from its relationship with the Gothic tradition[1] to its possible autobiographical elements[2] to the ways in which the novel engages with science,[3] medicine,[4] law,[5] politics,[6] professionalism,[7] consumerism,[8] class,[9] crime,[10] psychology,[11] philosophy,[12] drugs,[13] mental illness,[14] alcoholism,[15] addiction,[16] adventure,[17] authorship,[18] artistry,[19] sexuality,[20] masculinity,[21] femininity,[22] bachelorhood,[23] selfhood,[24] and even superheroes.[25] One area, however, that has been relatively underappreciated and under-examined in Stevenson scholarship is the role of religion in *Jekyll and Hyde.* This article challenges the predominantly secular and scientific readings of *Jekyll and Hyde* as well as the few theological readings of *Jekyll and Hyde*.[26] This article makes the case for a new reading of Stevenson's novel—a theological reading that is rooted less in Romans or in Augustinian theology, as some have read *Jekyll and Hyde,*[27] than it is in the Book of Genesis: this article asserts that *Jekyll and Hyde* is Stevenson's Victorian-era retelling of the Jacob and Esau tale, wherein the biblical drama of the Jacob and Esau conflict becomes situated within the psyche of a single Janus-faced soul.[28]

In *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, religion is not a quaint, innocuous relic from a simpler age; it is a living entity of considerable consequence. Theological themes and religious locutions appear exceptionally often in this novella and are used to great literary (and psychological) effect.

Rather than viewing it as some gentle, soothing opium of the masses, writers have long recognized that religion can often function as a frightening, anxiety-inducing vehicle for the horrible and the uncanny; as Sancho Panza is told in *Don Quijote*, "*détras de la cruz está el diablo.*"[29] Witness, for instance, how the holy and the horrifying are yoked together in *The Magic Mountain,* where the narrator describes the horrifying painting of the crucified Jesus hanging in Leo Naphta's apartment as "profoundly frightening" ("*innig Schreckhaftes*"),[30] a piece of "pious horror" ("*frommen Schrecknis*")[31] that causes Hans Castorp to exclaim, "*Das ist ja schrecklich gut*" ("[i]t's frighteningly good").[32] And later in the novel, a sensation that causes individuals to tremble ("*so stark...daß alle erschauerten*") is characterized as "holy" ("*heilig*").[33] Or the ways in which religion and terror are intertwined in Albert Camus' *La peste*—particularly in the sermon of père Paneloux, who emphasizes not love but fear of God ("*Dans l'immense grange de l'universe, le fléau implacable battra le blé humain jousqu'à ce que la paille soit séparée du grain*"[34]; "*Voyez-le, cet ange de la peste, beau comme Lucifer et brillant comme le mal lui-même, dressé au-dessus de vos toits, la main droite portant l'épieu rouge à hauteur de sa tête, la maine gauche désignant l'une de vos maisons*"[35])—and in Isabel Allende's *La casa de los espíritus,* particularly in the Boschian sermon of the zealous padre Restrepo:

> Lo seguían sus fieles de parroquia en parroquia, sudaban oyéndolo describir los tormentos de los pecadores en el inferno, las carnes desgarradas por ingeniosas máquinas de tortura, los fuegos eternos, los garfios que traspasaban los miembros viriles, los asquerosos reptiles que se incorporaba en cada sermon para sembrar el terror de Dios. El mismo Satanás era descrito hasta en sus más intimas anomalías...[36]

The gothic is also conspicuously coupled with the religious in Philip Roth's "Eli, The Fanatic," wherein Eli first encounters the Orthodox Leo Tzuref in front of a "sagging old mansion" into which Tzuref beckons him, not unlike the way Count Dracula—the embodiment of another archaic tradition that has uncannily survived into the modern era—ushers the modern, cultured English lawyer Jonathan Harker into his crumbling Transylvanian castle—which may very well be the association that Roth attempts to evoke.[37] Tzuref's run-down mansion, replete with bookless bookshelves and a cracked marble floor, causes the *dépaysé* Eli to "shudder,"[38] while the voices of children enter the manor in a ghostlike manner, "like a third person."[39]

José Saramago, in *Memorial do Convento*, also capably conjoins the morbid with the moral, detailing the more macabre aspects of repentance in eighteenth-century Portugal:

> Vai sair a procissão de penitência. Castigámos a carne pelo jejum, macaremo-la agora pelo açoite. … sofrendo alguma coisa escovam-se as costuras da alma. … Passa a procissâo entre filas de povo, e quando passa rojam-se pelo châo homens e mulheres, arranham a cara uns, arrepelam-se outros, dâo-se bofetões todos… [40]

In Saramago's lurid depiction of Lent in Lisbon, the religious is construed as downright gruesome, and suffering is seen as the prerequisite of salvation.

Religion and horror are interconnected because the elements that Hobbes characterized as "the natural seed[s] of religion"—awe, terror, fear, and mystery[41]—are some of the very same elements that horror traffics in as well. Moreover, religion has long been interstructured with two other predominant features of horror: (1) the uncanny: a constitutive quality of religion, according to Franz Rosenzweig, is uncanniness [*Unheimlichkeit*], a kind dreadful, unsettling feeling that one has been torn away from one's home [*Heim*];[42] and (2) superstition: as Joseph Conrad recognized, "there is no real religion without a little fetichism."[43] According to Spinoza, the innate, irrational human predilection toward superstition is caused by and maintained through fear ("*metus*") of the unknown,[44] and it is this primordial fear that gave birth to gods, deities, and religion.[45] It is thus not surprising—in fact, it is almost natural—that the gothic can conjure the godly just as assuredly as the godly can conjure the gothic, especially in a predominantly religious society such as Calvinist Scotland where the emotions of fear, terror, and dread are—like awe, mystery, and wonder—several of the standard ingredients that are typically used in the concoction of the common religious brew. And it is thus no wonder that when Stevenson attempts to evoke the sentiments of horror and the uncanny, religious motifs are so prominently and frequently sprinkled into the mix.

Jekyll and Hyde is permeated with religious rhetoric, this article posits, because Stevenson was keenly conscious of this close connection between religion and horror. Like Sade's atheists, whom Camus intuited posit the non-existence of God because the existence of a living deity would be too horrible to contemplate—God's existence "*supposerait chez lui indifférence, méchanceté, ou cruauté*"[46]—Stevenson was highly attuned to the unsettling interconnection between the holy and the horrible. Stevenson was well aware of how religion contains terrifying elements[47]—evil; the devil; demons; damnation; hell—which can be used by a writer to heighten the atmosphere of horror within a writer's work. (Compare Gabriel García Márquez, in *El amor en los tiempos del cólera*, describing a parasol purchased by Fermina Daza as "*roja como los fuegos del infierno.*"[48]) And this is precisely why Stevenson draws so frequently upon religion in *Jekyll and Hyde*: in the literary effort to create an ambience of dread and the uncanny, Stevenson knew that there are few more effective tools a writer can have in his supply than those elemental pieces of existential equipment that have been part of the stock-in-trade of religion for millennia.

Stevenson grew up in a Scottish Calvinist environment and was undoubtedly well-acquainted with such matters.[49] In *Jekyll and Hyde,* Stevenson concomitantly employs, and plays with, the emotion of existential dread—of not knowing whether one is one of the saved—that can easily come to haunt the consciousness of Calvinists, Scottish Presbyterians, and others who believe in the doctrine of predestination. The idea of "not knowing" surfaces a significant number of times in *Jekyll and Hyde*. We do not know who Hyde really is;[50] we do not know the true nature of the relationship between Hyde and Jekyll; Jekyll does not know (and gradually loses control over) which of his personas will be the one to win out within him. The idea of "not knowing" is heavily pregnant with religious significance for readers of Stevenson's religious milieu because it touches upon the existential dread and theologically-fueled fear that comes with not knowing whether or not one will be saved or damned as well as upon the spiritual anxiety that is a natural byproduct of not even being able to influence this outcome.

In *Jekyll and Hyde,* religion serves three primary purposes: it accentuates the novella's atmosphere of Gothic horror; it allows the novella to become susceptible to a hybrid reading wherein it can be read as a Dantesque descent into a hellish netherworld; and it enables the novella to be read "biblically," as a modern-day Jacob and Esau tale.

In *Jekyll and Hyde,* Stevenson refers to religion and utilizes religious language early and often. On the very first page of the novel, Stevenson tells us the following about Utterson: "'I incline to Cain's heresy,' he used to say quaintly. 'I let my brother go to the devil in his own way.'"[51] Soon after, when Enfield is recounting the incident of Hyde trampling the little girl, Enfield states that the silent nighttime streets were "as empty as a church" (7). He tells Utterson that the sight of Hyde trampling over the child's body was "hellish," and that Hyde's appearance was of some "damned Juggernaut."[52] Enfield tells Utterson about women who were "as wild as harpies," and claims to have never seen "a circle of such hateful faces" as the one that surrounded Hyde—whose face looked "really like Satan" (8).[53] We are descending into a kind of inferno, Stevenson is signaling to us—harpies appear in Circle Seven in cantos XII-XVII of Dante's *Inferno*, and hateful faces are strewn throughout the various circles of Inferno, whose lowermost circle is the dwelling place of Satan. The further we progress in this story, the deeper into this hellish version of London we are led. Additionally, coupling Hyde with the harpies and Satan is a not unsubtle suggestion that Hyde belongs in this pantheon of terrifying religious-literary creatures.

The allusions to religion continue apace: Enfield avers that he doesn't like being overly inquisitive because "it partakes too much of the style of the day of judgment" (10), and makes use of the religiously tinged trope of the ineffable in describing—or, more precisely, failing to describe—Hyde: "He's an extraordinary looking man, and yet I really can name nothing out of the way. No, sir; I can make no hand of it; I can't describe him" (11).[54] In the beginning of the second chapter, Stevenson tells us that Utterson's postprandial Sunday custom was to read "a volume of some dry divinity" (12).

Utterson views nearly everything he sees through the prism of religion. After meeting with Jekyll—who, aside from his medical work and philanthropic pursuits, is "no less distinguished for religion" (34)[55]—and learning of his plight, he suspects that Jekyll is being punished by God for some unexpiated sin: "in the law of God, there is no statute of limitations. Ay, it must be that: the ghost of some old sin" (19). The moral universe in which Jekyll and Utterson operate is neo-biblical: suffering is not meaningless; it is visited upon an individual as a result of that person's sins. Even sins committed long ago, when the sinner was "wild" and "young" (19), cannot go unpunished. As Jekyll declares, "I have brought on myself a punishment….If I am the chief of sinners, I am the chief of sufferers also" (36).[56] Poole, Jekyll's butler, uses religious language in his speech as well: "[W]e heard him cry out upon the name of God; and *who's* in there instead of him, and *why* it stays there, is a thing that cries to Heaven" (43).[57] Jekyll, Utterson, and Poole almost appear doomed from the start in their attempts to succeed in what Eve Sedgwick has termed "the often very fragile concern to provide the self with pleasure and nourishment in an environment that is perceived as not particularly offering them."[58] How can they be expected to find pleasure in a Calvinist, soteriologically predetermined, Deuteronomic environment when the strict Scottish Presbyterianism of their environs,[59] in concert with the lurid, Dantesque setting into which they have startlingly descended, appear to be conspiring together to prevent any possible peaceable resolution?

The atmosphere of London begins to take on biblical hues as well. When the fog descends upon the city, it descends upon it in the fashion of the plague of darkness that afflicts the Egyptians in the Book of Exodus: it is a "great chocolate-coloured pall lowered over heaven" (26), phraseology which evokes the way Moses lowers the plague of darkness upon the Egyptians by "stretch[ing] forth his hand toward heaven" (Exodus 10:22, KJV).[60] Like the darkness that plagues the Egyptians, the London fog of *Jekyll and Hyde* is not a benign meteorological condition; it is a "mournful re*invasion*" (26)[61]—a tangible, hostile force, like the palpable darkness of the plague ("a darkness that *can be felt*"; Exodus 10:21); it is a threatening, implacable substance that makes the city seem "like a district of some city in a nightmare" (26). And the fog lies "thickly" (29), like the "thick" ("*choshekh afeilah*") darkness that afflicts the Egyptians (Exodus 10:22).[62] Stevenson's writing here serves to confirm the philosopher Graham Harman's assertion that there is "always something more to [an object] than whatever we see or say,"[63] as there is far more to Stevenson's descriptions of the darkness of London than what we see on the page—namely, the ample intertextual allusions lurking underneath these words, which can be seen quite clearly once we shine a little light onto the surface of Stevenson's text.[64] These now-illumined allusions to Exodus signify that Stevenson is moving us not merely into a religiously tinged landscape but into a biblical one—and, specifically, an Old Testament one—in which the doctrine of predestination may or may not apply, but in which the moral principle of free will certainly does.

As Jekyll has transformed into Hyde, the prosaic cityscape has morphed into a surreal phantasmagoria wherein "there was literally nothing to be seen but lamps. Street after street, and all the folks asleep" (7),[65] and in which a "sinister block of building" (6) juts out into the street. The modern metropolis's avenues have metamorphosed into mythological "labyrinths" (15), and even Utterson's bed—what would normally be a person's *locus amoenus*, a comfortable retreat from the dangers of the outside world—has been transformed into a "great, dark bed" in which he "tosse[s] to and fro" (14). No one is safe in this "nocturnal" (15), nightmarish city in which an innocent child can be trampled by a "human Juggernaut" (15)—a creature more fit for the underworld than for this world. It's as if Stevenson is telling us "*lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch'entrate*", because we are no longer within the conventional, realistic boundaries of this earthly realm—we're in Dis, perhaps, or maybe in Pandaemonium, or at the very least in Calvinist Scotland; we're certainly no longer exactly in nineteenth-century London.

Directly juxtaposing the purity of religion with the corruption of Hyde's "hellish" evil further heightens the portentous atmosphere of dread (especially for Stevenson's religious readers) by amplifying the theological tension implicit in the type of primal good versus evil confrontations such as the one Stevenson creates. The "bells of the church" are located "so conveniently near to Mr. Utterson's dwelling" (14). And lying ominously in the heart of darkness, next to the laboratory in which Jekyll creates and transmogrifies himself into the story's force of evil—in the center of *Dr. Jekyll*'s ninth circle of hell—is "a copy of a pious work...annotated, in [Jekyll's] own hand, with startling blasphemies" (50). Nothing is more sure to send chills up the spine of an upright Christian than a Bible bent and broken by blasphemies, but it is Hyde himself, Stevenson seems to be suggesting here, who is the true blasphemy: for a believing Calvinist or Scottish Presbyterian, Hyde's very person is a walking, breathing blasphemy, a being of antinomian evil created by man that blasphemes the "very good" (Genesis 1:31) world order created by God.

Stevenson furthers ups the religious ante by analogizing Jekyll's discovery of the chemical method he uses to metamorphose into Hyde to the eating of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge: Jekyll's scientific breakthrough opened up "'a new province of knowledge'"—much as eating the forbidden fruit opened up a new province of knowledge to humanity—"'and new avenues to fame and power'" that "'stagger the unbelief of Satan'" (59). Jekyll seems to believe that his "[f]ear of the unknown," to paraphrase the psychoanalytic theorist Adam Phillips, can be "cured through the flight into the intelligible"[66]—that his unconscious dread of not knowing his salvific destiny can be resolved through scientific experimentation—but it is his very flight into the domain of the intelligible that leads to even greater dread, and an even greater fall.

In Genesis 3:22, the reason God gives for driving Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden after eating from the Tree of Knowledge is that if they then eat from the Tree of Life, they will become even more powerful than fallen angels such as Satan—if they were to eat from the Tree of

Life after this "new province of knowledge" had been opened up to them, God worries that they will become as powerful as the gods themselves: "Then the Lord God said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of Us…And now, lest he put his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever." For religious readers, Jekyll is such a terrifying character because he emblematizes the figure who possesses knowledge of good and evil—unlike the amoral Hyde, Jekyll still retains a moral sensibility—yet also possesses the superhuman, quasi-divine power to transform himself into an amoral creature who appears to have a life beyond himself; such a specter would certainly seem satanic to any reader possessing a *sensus divinitatis*.

Stevenson thus situates Jekyll's "sin" within the cosmic and mythological landscape of Adam and Eve's primordial sin, signifying that Jekyll's fall is of the same nature as Adam and Eve's: both are the result of man's freely chosen action to overstep the divinely ordained boundaries for human endeavor, and both, consequently, bring about terrible suffering to those around them.

Stevenson deepens the novella's connection with the Old Testament and further signifies that the moral atmosphere in which the story of Jekyll and Hyde is occurring is that of the Hebrew Bible through an extended analogy that he constructs between Jekyll and Hyde and Jacob and Esau. This is the novella's most elaborate biblical metaphor, and though it is never made explicit—as compared to, say, the good versus evil leitmotif that courses through the novel—it is immediately evident to any semantically sensitive, biblically literate reader of the text. Like Jacob, a "smooth" man (Genesis 27:11), Jekyll is "smooth-faced," whereas Hyde's hands are "thickly shaded with a swart growth of hair" (68)—like Esau's, who is a "hairy man" (Gen. 27:11). Like Jacob, "a plain man, dwelling in tents" (Gen. 25:27), Jekyll is a phlegmatic, ordinary man, earning a decent living in a respected profession. Hyde, on the other hand, is "savage" (17) and "ape-like" (25)—a wild, undomesticated creature whose screech sounds "as of mere animal terror" (48) and who preys upon others—like the brutish Esau, who is a "cunning hunter" and a "man of the field." (Gen. 25:27) Additionally, like the ruddy (Gen. 25:25) Esau, Hyde is of a "dusky pallor" (68). And when Jekyll writes of the way his good and evil sides battled within him—"in the agonized womb of consciousness, these polar twins should be continuously struggling" (62)—it is remarkably similar to the way the Bible describes the intrauterine struggle between Jacob and Esau: "the children struggled within her…and when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb" (Gen. 25:22, 24).

This extended analogy indicates that Stevenson wished for *Jekyll and Hyde* to be read not solely as a horror story that happens to have a theological theme but as a modern-day retelling of the biblical Jacob and Esau tale wherein the Jacob and Esau conflict, an externalized struggle between two distinct people, becomes an internalized struggle between the "Jacob" and "Esau" sides of a single person—a story about the ways in which the human psyche is, as Gilles Deleuze has written, "composed of a plurality of irreducible forces."[67] Jacob and Esau are doubles—they are twins, mirrors of each other, each possessing the polar opposite trait of his counterpart. The other archetypal antagonists of the Bible—Cain and Abel, Isaac and Ishmael, Joseph and Judah—are siblings but not twins, adversaries but not doubles. Jacob and Esau is as close as the Bible comes to telling a doppelgänger tale—and some might even go so far as to say that it *is* the Bible's doppelgänger story *avant la lettre.* Superimposing the Jacob and Esau story onto *Jekyll and Hyde* enables Stevenson to simultaneously connect his doppelgänger story to both the modern literary genre of stories about doubles[68] and to the archetypal biblical doppelgänger tale as well.[69]

Stevenson, perhaps sensing that ordinary adjectives would not suffice for his purposes, uses religiously tinged descriptives in order to indicate that the tale he is telling is not a simple mystery yarn or run-of-the-mill detective story, but rather a "dark night of the soul" fable—a fictional story of a primal good versus evil struggle for the soul narrated as if it were a factual account—that is closer in spirit to the literary modality of James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* than to *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* or *The Purloined Letter.* The similarities between *Jekyll and Hyde* and Hogg's *Confessions* are unmistakable: *Confessions,* like *Jekyll and Hyde,* is a religiously valenced, parabolic doppelgänger tale about a man who becomes a criminal, and like *Jekyll and Hyde,* it is paraenetic narrative that is also heavily imbued with Calvinist theology and Scottish Presbyterianism. *Confessions* was deeply influential in Scotland, writes Ian Duncan, to such an extent that it even "displaced the novels of Walter Scott…to become the world's favourite nineteenth-century novel."[70] Thus, in *Jekyll and Hyde*, a woman's face is not merely "ugly" or "unsightly"; it is "evil" (27). Indeed, the novella's final chapter, "Henry Jekyll's Full Statement of the Case," reads more like a confession of a sinner than a summation of a case by Hercule Poirot or Sam Spade. In a statement written with a vocabulary that includes the words "angel," "diabolical," (65), "devilish" (74), "damned" (72), "divine" (65), "iniquity" (72), "penitence," "spiritual side" (73), "hellish" (77), and "evil" more times than can be counted—and in which he makes reference to "the captives of Philippi" (Acts 16:26) (65) and the "Babylonian finger on the wall" (Daniel 5:5)—Jekyll complains of a "horror of the spirit" (63) and castigates himself for his "recklessness," for casting off "the bonds of obligation" and sipping the sweet, forbidden waters of "an unknown but not an innocent freedom." Hyde is a "child of Hell" (75), an "ugly *idol*" (65)[71]—a verboten graven image whose existence is a direct affront to the unseen all-seeing biblical God—whose creation, which is "wicked, tenfold more wicked" than anything he had ever before done, results in Jekyll's being "sold a slave to my original evil" (64). And as if to make sure that readers would not miss the fact that this story—and this chapter specifically—is meant to be read as a sinner's confession, a story about the struggle between good and evil, Stevenson practically hits readers over the head with it:

> Even as good shone upon the countenance of the one evil was written broadly and plainly on the face of the other. Evil besides (which I still believe to be the lethal side of man) had left on that body an imprint of deformity and decay. …. all human beings, as we meet them, are commingled out of good and evil: and Edward Hyde, alone in the ranks of mankind, was pure evil. (65)

Jekyll, apparently in possession of a Deuteronomic sensibility, believes that he is being "punished" for his "moral insensibility and insensate readiness to evil" (71):

> My devil had long been caged, and he came out roaring. ... It must have been this, I suppose, that stirred in my soul the tempest of impatience...I declare, at last, before God....in my case, to be tempted, however slightly, was to fall.
> Instantly the spirit of hell awoke in me...(71)

Jekyll and Hyde, Stevenson is telling us, is not a mythical tale of a man metamorphosing into a monster because the gods have ordained it; it is a moral tale of a man freely choosing to commit monstrous acts because his evil inclination has driven him to defy the Divine: "it was as an ordinary secret sinner that I at last fell before the assaults of temptation" (73).[72] Accordingly, Stevenson's choice to situate the novella within the moral atmosphere of Genesis and Exodus—within the cosmic landscape of the Hebrew Bible—signifies that Stevenson is departing from the Calvinist doctrine of predestination, much as he departed from Calvinism in his actual life,[73] in order to emphasize that sin is something freely chosen by each and every human being, as the Hebrew Bible says it is,[74] rather than a primordial condition thrust upon a person before he or she is even born. Just as Cain is to blame for succumbing to his jealousy of Abel, and just as Adam is to blame for succumbing to his temptation to eat from the Tree of Knowledge, Jekyll is to blame for his transformation into Hyde—he is to blame for letting his dark side overtake him rather than subduing it and integrating it into a single persona, as did his biblical antecedent Jacob.

Though *Jekyll and Hyde* certainly contains outlandish, paranormal elements, there is nothing grandiosely horrific or epically tragic about this story, Stevenson is saying, as counterintuitive as this may seem; it is a simple story of a sin and a fall—a story not about the extraordinary but the ordinary: a story about "an ordinary secret sinner" (73) and the normality sin. It is a novella, ultimately, that operates not within a supernatural realm but rather in accordance with a Levinasian sensibility, maintaining that "[e]vil is not a mystical principle...it is an offence perpetrated on man by man."[75] Sin, for Stevenson, is a moral error, not a metaphysical condition. Jekyll's final act, fittingly—in both a linguistic and thematic sense—is to "seal up" his "confession" like a penitent sinner, bringing "the life of that unhappy Henry Jekyll to an end" (78).

This paper, by connecting the gothic and the religious elements of *Jekyll and Hyde*, and by explicating the connections between the biblical text and Stevenson's text, has made a case for a new reading of *Jekyll and Hyde*—a biblical, theological reading wherein *Jekyll and Hyde* is as grounded in the Book of Genesis as it is in the epistles of Paul. In light of this biblical reading, *Jekyll and Hyde* is meant to be understood as a modern Jacob and Esau fable: the story of an interiorized conflict between good an evil; the story of a man who, like the biblical Jacob, wrestles with his own inner demon but who, unlike Jacob, does not succeed in subduing his inner Esau.[76] Within this biblical reading of the novella, Jekyll's task, like Jacob's, was to vanquish his maleficent twin not by entirely eradicating it but by conquering it and making it part of himself; his task was to make Hyde subordinate to him, rather than becoming subordinate to Hyde—his task, in short, was to engage in a Jungian integration of the shadow, whereby man's shadow side, his dark, Dionysian, monstrous side, is not meant to be wholly eliminated but is rather meant to be conquered and incorporating into man's light, wholesome, Apollonian side, so that the moral man can make use of his shadow—of his inner monster—for the good, when the need arises.[77] That Jekyll fails to conquer Hyde—that he fails in his Jungian quest to integrate his shadow and fails to become a *unia personalis*—is indicative of the fact that Jekyll fails to subdue his inner Esau; though he wrestles with his malicious twin, he cannot conquer him, and is instead conquered by him.[78] His last, eleventh-hour attempt at a confession becomes Jekyll's frantic attempt to attain the blessing that Jacob attains but that Jekyll does not: to become the man who wrestles with gods and with men and who lives to tell the tale of this desperate psychological struggle.[79]

And in light of the theological reading of *Jekyll and Hyde* presented in this paper, which illustrates how Stevenson uses the literary modality of the confession—a sub-genre of autobiographical literature inaugurated by Augustine's *Confessions*[80] which came to be employed by later religious writers, including Abelard, Teresa of Avila, John Bunyan, and Hogg[81]—Stevenson's brief but highly influential text is not merely a monster or detective story. It is a religious story, with sin, confession, and repentance lying at the core of its literary artistry and moral imagination, as well as a story that subtly challenges the Calvinist doctrine of predestination and theological determinism in favor of Old Testament notions of free will. (Jekyll, in his confession, emphasizes that his changing into Hyde was "voluntary" [69], and that he "had to choose" whether to cast in his lot with Jekyll or with Hyde [70].) It is the story of a man who "in an hour of moral weakness" [71] succumbs to one of the oldest imaginary temptations known to men: the story of a man who, like the finder of the ring of Gyges in Greek mythology, discovers a means whereby he can engage in all the sins and vices he desires *sine pecunia*—or, at least he believes that donning the ring, or imbibing the formula, will have no repercussions upon him. In Plato's brother Glaucon's retelling of the myth (discussed briefly by Plato as well in his *Republic*), there are no repercussions for the man who, after donning the ring which grants him invisibility, commits adultery and murder. But in Stevenson's modern, post-Enlightenment version of this age-old tale, there are consequences for criminal behavior. And because Stevenson situates his tale within the Judeo-Christian monotheistic matrix, wherein an omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent God rewards the righteous and punishes the unrepentant, Henry Jekyll cannot escape unscathed from his forays into the forbidden; he must be held accountable—as much to the biblical God, who punishes sinners, as to Stevenson's Calvinist contemporaries and Christian readers, who desire to see the order of their moral universe maintained, even in works of art. (Witness, for example, the ways in which many of the greatest novels of the nineteenth century written in the Christian West, from *Madame Bovary* to *Anna Karenina,* have their protagonists engage liberally in sin—only to have their creators, Flaubert and Tolstoy, respectively, not fail to punish their female heroines for their moral turpitude.) Stevenson makes sure that his hero—or, more precisely, his anti-hero—is punished as well, and severely so. And, because the novella is crafted not only as a biblically inflected morality tale but as a story fitting snugly within the confessional genre, he also makes sure that Henry Jekyll does not meet his doom before first, vividly and comprehensively, confessing it for posterity, so that readers for the rest of time will be unmistakably forewarned that, though they may enjoy the thought—or the literary representation—of being able to engage in an unlimited amount of vice, their deeds will not go unpunished: if they succumb to the temptation of Dr. Jekyll, they very well may end up meeting the fate of Mr. Hyde.

Endnotes:

1. Urszula Czyżewska and Grzegorz Głab, "Robert Louis Stevenson Philosophically: Dualism and Existentialism within the Gothic Convention," *Roczniki Filozoficzne / Annales De Philosophie* 62:3 (2014): 19-33, at 20, 24-28, discuss some of the ways in which Stevenson both borrows from and departs from Gothic fiction. See also Donald Lawler, "Reframing *Jekyll and Hyde:* Robert Louis Stevenson and the Strange Case of Gothic Science Fiction," in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde after One Hundred Years,* ed. William Veeder and Gordon Hirsch (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 247-261.
2. Jerome Charyn, "Afterword: Who is Hyde," in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Bantam Books: New York, 1981), p. 114.
3. See, e.g., Julia Reid, *Robert Louis Stevenson, Science, and the "Fin de Siècle* (New York: Palgrave, 2006), 5-12, 92-105; Ann Stiles, "Robert Louis Stevenson's *Jekyll and Hyde* and the Double Brain," *SEL* 46 (2006): 876-900; Allen MacDuffie, "Irreversible Transformations: Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and Scottish Energy Science," *Representations* 96:1 (2006): 1-20; and Robert Mighall, "Diagnosing Jekyll: The Scientific Context to Dr. Jekyll's Experiment and Mr. Hyde's Embodiment," in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" and Other Tales of Terror* (New York: Penguin, 2002), 143-161.
4. Jason Daniel Tougaw, *Strange Cases: The Medical Case History and the British Novel* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 139-75.
5. Cathrine O. Frank, "Privacy, Character, and the Jurisdiction of the Self: A 'Story of the Door' in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," English Language Notes,* 48 (2010), 215-24; Scott Veitch, "Binding Precedent: Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde,*" in *Reading the Legal Case: Cross-Currents between Law and the Humanities,* ed. Marco Wan (New York: Routledge, 2012), 217-30.
6. Christopher Harvie, "The Politics of Stevenson," in *Stevenson and Victorian Scotland,* ed. Jenni Calder (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 1981), 107-25.
7. Stephen D. Arata, "The Sedulous Ape: Atavism, Professionalism, and Stevenson's 'Jekyll and Hyde,'" *Criticism* 37:2 (1995): 233-259, argues that *Jekyll and Hyde* is Stevenson's meditation on the devolution of pure romantic expression into bourgeoisie professionalism.
8. Patrick Brantlinger and Richard Boyle, "The Education of Edward Hyde: Stevenson's 'Gothic Gnome and the Mass Readership of Late-Victorian England," in Veeder and Hirsch, 265-82.
9. Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin-de-Siecle* (Handsworth: Penguin, 1990), 111.
10. See, e.g., Gordon Hirsch, "*Frankenstein,* Detective Fiction, and *Jekyll and Hyde,*" in Veeder and Hirsch, 223-46; Beth Kalikoff, *Murder and Moral Decay in Victorian Popular Literature* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1986), 166-68; Marie-Christine Leps, *Apprehending the Criminal: The Production of Deviance in Nineteenth-Century Discourse* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press,

1992), 205-20; and Simon Joyce, *Capital Offenses: Geographies of Class and Crime in Victorian London* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003), 145-78. Nabokov, however, was adamant that *Jekyll and Hyde* is *not* a detective story. See Vladimir Nabokov, *Lectures on Literature* (London, 1980), 179.

11. See, e.g., Jill L. Matus, *Shock, Memory and the Unconscious in Victorian Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 160-82; Michael Davis, "'Incongruous Compounds': Re-Reading *Jekyll and Hyde* and Late-Victorian Psychology," *Journal of Victorian Culture* 11:2 (2006): 207-25; Ed Block, Jr., "James Sully, Evolutionist Psychology, and Late Victorian Gothic Fiction," *Victorian Studies* 25:4 (1982): 443-467; and John Sanford, *The Strange Trial of Mr. Hyde: A New Look at the Nature of Human Evil* (Harper & Row: San Francisco, 1987).
12. Martin Tropp, "*Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde,* Schopenhauer, and the Power of the Will," *Midwest Quarterly* 32 (1991): 141-55; Harriet Hustis, "Hyding Nietzsche in Robert Louis Stevenson's Gothic of Philosophy," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 49:4 (2006): 993-1007; and Czyżewska and Głab, "Robert Louis Stevenson Philosophically."
13. Susan Zieger, *Inventing the Addict: Drugs, Race, and Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century British and American Literature* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008), 155-95.
14. Mary Rosner, "'A Total Subversion of Character': Dr. Jekyll's Moral Insanity," *Victorian Newsletter* 93 (1998), 30; Melissa J. Ganz, "Carrying On Like a Madman: Insanity and Responsibility in Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 70:3 (2015): 363-397.
15. Thomas L. Reed, *The Transforming Draught:* Jekyll and Hyde, *Robert Louis Stevenson and the Victorian Alcohol Debate* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2006).
16. Patricia Comitini, "The Strange Case of Addiction in Robert Louis Stevenson's "Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," *Victorian Review* 38:1 (2012): 113-131; and Daniel L. Wright, "'The Prisonhouse of My Disposition': A Study of the Psychology of Addiction in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," Studies of the Novel* 26:3 (1994): 254-67.
17. Edwin M. Eigner, *Robert Louis Stevenson and Romantic Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966).
18. Patrick Brantlinger, *The Reading Lesson: The Threat of Mass Literacy in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998), 167, provocatively argues that the enigma enveloping the origins of the novella—as well as Stevenson's ambiguous account of his writing of the tale—cast doubt upon Stevenson's "ownership" and "authorial control" over the story.
19. Henry James, one of Stevenson's earliest readers, chides us—in an essay first published in 1888—to devote the bulk of our attention to form over philosophy, stating that it is "not the profundity of the idea [of *Jekyll and Hyde*] which strikes me so much as the art of the presentation—the extremely successful form." James, "The Art of Presentation," in Robert Louis Stevenson, *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde: An Authoritative Text, Backgrounds, and Contexts, Performance Adaptations, Criticism,* ed. Katherine Linehan (New York: W. W. Norton, 2003), 101-2. This paper, while also devoting attention to matters of form, believes, as will be shown, that philosophy follows form: that an analysis of the form in which *Jekyll and Hyde* is written reveals the novel's latent (and often explicit) neo-biblical theology.
20. See, e.g., Grace Moore, "Something to Hyde: the Strange Preference of Henry Jekyll," *Victorian Crime, Madness and Sensation,* eds. Andrew Maunder and Grace Moore (New York: Routledge, 2016), 147-61; Kellen M. Williams, "'Down With the Door, Poole': Designating Deviance in Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," English Literature in Transition* 1880-1920 39:4 (1996): 412-29; and Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle* (London: Bloomsbury, 1991).

21. E. D. Cohen, "Hyding the Subject? The Antinomies of Masculinity in 'The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde,'" *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 37:1/2 (2003): 181-99.
22. Janice Doan and Devon Hodges, "Demonic Disturbances of Sexual Identity: The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr/s Hyde," *Novel* 23 (1989): 63-74; Renata Kobetts Miller, "Jekyll and Hyde and the Modern Woman," in idem, *Recent Reinterpretations of Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2005), 63-75; and William Patrick Day, *In the Circles of Fire and Desire: A Study of Gothic Fantasy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 91-92.
23. Masao Miyoshi, *The Divided Self: A Perspective on the Literature of the Victorians* (New York: New York University Press, 1969), 297.
24. Ronald R. Thomas, "In the Company of Strangers: Absent Voices in Stevenson's 'Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde' and Beckett's 'Company,'" *Modern Fiction Studies* 32:2 (1986): 157-173.
25. Andreas Reichstein, "Batman—An American Mr. Hyde?" *Amerikastudien / American Studies* 43:2 (1998): 329-350.
26. Kevin Mills, "The Stain on the Mirror: Pauline Reflections in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde,*" *Christianity and Literature* 53:3 (2004): 337-348, reads *Jekyll and Hyde* as a Pauline conversion tale which reflects upon the way the self can undergo radical changes of personality (à la Saul to Paul) in extreme circumstances.
27. Larry Kreitzer, "R. L. Stevenson's 'Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde' and Romans 7: 14-25: Images of the Moral Duality of Human Nature," *Literature and Theology* 6:2 (1992): 125-144, details the ways Christian preachers, particularly in the United States, have utilized Stevenson's novel as a way to expound upon Paul's epistle in Romans 7 about the duality of the human being and the struggle within each individual soul between good and evil.
28. It was Borges who observed that the major surprise of *Jekyll and Hyde,* as well as the novum it represents within the doppelgänger genre, is the discovery (which still contains the capacity to shock for those who somehow manage to come to the novella with no prior knowledge of the story) that Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde are in fact the same person: "la identidad de Jekyll y de Hyde es una sorpresa: el autor la reserva para el final del noveno capitulo ... no hay lector que adivine que Hyde y Jekyll son la misma persona; el proprio titolo nos hace postular que son dos." Jorge Luis Borges, "El Dr Jekyll y Edward Hyde, transformados," *Obras completas* (Buenos Aires, 1974), 286.
29. "The devil skulks behind the cross." *Don Quijote* (Nueva York: Vintage Español, 2010), 864; translation from Tobias Smollett (New York: Barnes & Noble, 2004), 710. Cervantes' statement that horror—far from being religion's antipode—is more often than not its handmaiden was later echoed by T.S. Eliot: "[t]he demon of doubt...is inseparable from the spirit of belief." *Pascal's Pensées* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1931), xv (Eliot's introduction).
30. Thomas Mann, *Der Zauberberg* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag, 1924, 1952), 538; H. T. Lowe-Porter (New York: Vintage, 1969), 392, translates "*Schreckhaftes*" here as "startling," but "frightening," or "horrifying," is likely the more apt translation of "*Schreckhaftes*."
31. Mann, *Der Zauberberg,* 539.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid., 785.
34. Albert Camus, *La peste* (Gallimard, 1947), 92 ("In the immense barn of the universe, the relentless scourge will beat the human wheat until the chaff is separated from the grain" [translations in this article are mine unless otherwise noted]).
35. Ibid., Camus, *La peste,* 93 ("Look at him, this angel of the plague, beautiful like Lucifer and shining like evil itself, erect above your roofs, his right hand carrying the red spear at the height of his head, the left hand pointing to the one of your houses"). See also ibid. at 94: "*Vous savez maintenant ce qu'est le péché, comme l'ont su Caïn et ses fils, ceux d'avant le dèluge, ceux de Sodome et de Gomorrhe,*

Pharaoh et Job et aussi tous les maudits" (You now know what sin is, as Cain and his sons knew, those before the flood, those of Sodom and Gomorrah, Pharaoh and Job and also all the accursed).

36. Isabel Allende, *La casa de los espíritus* (Nueva York: Vintage Español, 2015), 13 ("His faithful followed him from parish to parish, they sweated listening to him describe the torments of sinners in hell, the flesh torn by ingenious torture machines, the eternal fires, the hooks that pierced the virile members, the disgusting reptiles that were incorporated into each sermon to sow the terror of God. Satan himself was described even in his most intimate anomalies").
37. Philip Roth, "Eli, The Fanatic," in *Goodbye, Columbus, and Five Short Stories* (New York: Vintage, 1959; 1987), 250. Steven Milowitz argues that the horror that Roth attempts to evoke is the horror of the Holocaust (and the crisis of American Jews' failure to adequately confront it). Milowitz, *Philip Roth Considered: The Concentrationary Universe of the American Writer* (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000), 171.
38. Ibid., 250-51.
39. Ibid., 250.
40. José Saramago, *Memorial do Convento* (Lisboa: Caminho, 1984), 28 ("The penance procession will leave. We punished the flesh by fasting, we will now lash it out with the scourge. ... suffering something, the seams of the soul are brushed. ... The procession passes between rows of people, and when it passes men and women rush across the floor, some scratch their faces, others shudder, everyone slaps each other").
41. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (ed. Michael Oakeshott; Oxford: Blackwell, 1955), 69.
42. See Leora Batnitzky, *Idolatry and Representation: The Philosophy of Franz Rosenzweig Reconsidered* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 83, 90. Batnitzky observes that "Rosenzweig's views of the uncanny...call to mind Freud's much remarked upon essay on the uncanny, written in 1919, the same year Rosenzweig finished *The Star of Redemption.*" However, "[i]t does not seem that Rosenzweig knew Freud's essay." Ibid., 92.
43. Conrad, *Victory* (New York: Penguin, 1996), 183. Cf. Conrad's allusion to "that pagan residuum of awe and wonder which lurks still at the bottom of our old humanity" in his note to the first edition of *Victory*; ibid., at 45.
44. Baruch Spinoza, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus,* 6[5](I).
45. Spinoza, *Ethics,* I, appendix, pp. 439-40; G, 2:77(28)-78(12).
46. Albert Camus, *L'homme révolté* (Gallimard, 1951), 55 ("would suppose in him indifference, wickedness, or cruelty"). Camus goes further, averring that, at least as far as Sade and his epigones were concerned, "murder is an attribute of the divinity" ("*la meurtre soit un attribut divin*"), and God—if God exists—is a "criminal" who "oppresses and denies mankind" ("*qui écrase l'homme et le nie*"). Ibid., *L'homme révolté,* 56; *The Rebel,* trans. Anthony Bower (New York, 1956), 37.
47. The scholar of religion who perhaps most famously recognized, and expounded upon, the way in which the element of horror is intrinsic to the religious experience is Rudolf Otto in his *Das Heilige*, wherein he wrote that at the heart of religion is a "*mysterium tremendum et fascinans*" that causes man to tremble in fear and which is at once awful and fascinating. Not for nothing, then, did Søren Kierkegaard title his work of religious philosophy *Fear and Trembling* (*Frygt og Baeven*)—which itself is a reference to a verse in Psalms.
48. Gabriel García Márquez, *El amor en los tiempos del cólera* (Nueva York: Vintage, 1985, 2003), 218 ("red as the fires of hell").
49. As G. K. Chesterton observed, "It is an obvious truth that Stevenson was born of a Puritan tradition, in a Presbyterian country, where still rolled the echoes, at least, of the theological thunders of Knox." Chesterton, *Robert Louis Stevenson* (University of Adelaide Press, 1927), ch. 3, available at https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/c/chesterton/gk/robert-louis-stevenson/chapter3.html

In her authoritative biographical study of Stevenson, Jenni Calder proclaims that "Calvinism marked Stevenson's personality and imagination unequivocally." Calder, *R.L.S.: A Life Study* (Oxford University Press, 1980), 8. G. A. Hayes-McCoy also discusses the Calvinist context of Stevenson's upbringing, noting that the God of Scottish Calvinism was "a God of wrath more than a God of love." Hayes-McCoy, "The Centenary of Robert Louis Stevenson," *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 39:156 (1950): 395-406, at 398. See also James Allen Geissinger, "Robert Louis Stevenson as an Interpreter of Life," *The Harvard Theological Review* 2:1 (1909): 85-94, at 91.

50. The much-remarked upon pun within Hyde's very name (see, e.g., Saposnik, "The Anatomy of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," p. 730, n. 12) evokes the aspects of existence that are "Hyde-ing" in plain sight, but which we choose to ignore, similar to the way Victorian society which Stevenson is in part critiquing wished to ignore and suppress the more primal aspects of human nature.
51. Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 2003), 5. All citations (hereinafter in-text) from *Jekyll and Hyde* in this article are from this edition.
52. Ibid. Today a "juggernaut" colloquially refers to a massive, unstoppable force, but the term has its origins in religion; according to *Merriam-Webster*'s dictionary, a "juggernaut" refers to an "enormous carriage that carried an image of the Hindu god Vishnu (whose title was *Jagannath*) through the streets of India in religious processions." https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/juggernaut
53. The great Fallen Angel is referred to again on p. 18, where Utterson tells Jekyll that Hyde's face has "Satan's signature" upon it, and on p. 59.
54. Cf. ibid., p. 28: Hyde is described as having an "unexpressed deformity."
55. Both Utterson's and Jekyll's speech is peppered with phrases such as "for God's sake" (48), "God grant" (51), and "I have seen *devilish* little of the man." 14, my emphasis.
56. Larry Kreitzer notes that this specific phrase is a reference to Paul's description of himself as "chief" of sinners in 1 Timothy 1:15. Kreitzer, "R. L. Stevenson and Romans 7," 132.
57. Emphasis in original; cf. *Jekyll and Hyde,* 47: "Weeping…like a lost soul."
58. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 137.
59. The incongruity between the Scottish Calvinist environment of the novel and its setting in the non-Scottish Calvinist city of London was remarked upon as early as 1927 by G. K. Chesterton, who noted that although the novel is set in London, its moral atmosphere is that of Scotland. Jekyll possesses a "Caledonian" quality, and his aversion to having his reputation ruined by evidence of his moral failings is a fear that "belongs to the upper middle classes in solid Puritan communities." Even Utterson's choice of Sunday reading, as Chesterton dryly and wittily remarks, is Puritan: "No modern English lawyer ever read a book of dry divinity merely because it was Sunday." Chesterton, *Robert Louis Stevenson,* ch. 3. For solutions to this incongruity that have been proffered in the critical literature (as well as one of my own), see infra, n. 64.
60. All translations from the Bible in this paper are from the KJV.
61. My emphasis.
62. The medieval Spanish scholar Nahmanides explicitly compares this Egyptian darkness to a fog (*Commentary of Ramban* [Nahmanides] *on the Torah,* Exodus, op. cit.)—mirroring the way Stevenson's prose invites comparisons between the fog of *Jekyll and Hyde* and the darkness of Exodus 10. Richard J. Walker compares the function of the fog in *Jekyll and Hyde* to the London fog of Dickens' *Bleak House,* arguing that the way Stevenson portrays the fog as constantly metamorphosing evokes nineteenth-century anxieties of a once-stable society suddenly in constant flux. Walker, "He, I Say—I Cannot Say, I: Robert Louis Stevenson's Strange Case," in *Labyrinths of Deceit: Culture, Modernity and Identity in the Nineteenth Century* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), 68-90, at 70. It is clear that Stevenson uses the fog as an anxiety-evoking device; indeed, a prime reason that Stevenson set the novel in London may very well have been so that he could avail

himself of the famed London fog, long a symbol of angst and foreboding in Gothic fiction (see Mary E. Sondgrass, "Doppelgänger," in *Encyclopedia of Gothic Literature* [New York: Facts on File, 2005], 83-5). Nonetheless, among the contentions of this article is that Walker's argument (as well as the arguments of many other astute readers of *Jekyll of Hyde*) must be supplemented with the consideration that the anxieties Stevenson is attempting to evoke are not only sociological but theological.

63. Graham Harman, *Heidegger Explained: From Phenomenon to Thing* (Chicago: Open Court, 2007), 1.
64. Stevenson's decision to set the novel in London (as opposed to, say, in his native Edinburgh) is the single most significant detail of the story, according to Irving Saposnik. In his essay on the novel, one of the more well-known discussions of *Jekyll and Hyde*, Saposnik asserts that Stevenson chose London as his setting because it symbolizes the center of Victorian civilization ("only London could serve as the *locus classicus* of Victorian behavior") (Saposnik, "The Anatomy of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900,* 11:4 [1971]: 715-731, at 717), a civilization which Stevenson wished to assault fictionally at the hands of Hyde, who represents this society's failure to integrate the primitive, shadowy dimensions of human nature. But perhaps we can suggest that Stevenson chose London for an additional reason: so that he would be able to avail himself of the literary-atmospheric possibilities that the famed London fog would offer him—namely, the creation of scenes evocative of the biblical plague of darkness, which enable him to further accentuate the novel's neo-biblical, theologically ramified atmosphere.
65. The plague of darkness transforms the Egyptian thoroughfares into eerily empty spaces as well; during the three days in which the darkness covered the land, "[t]hey saw not one another, *neither rose any from his place*" (Exodus 10:22).
66. Adam Phillips, *The Beast in the Nursery: On Curiosity and Other Thoughts* (New York: Vintage, 1998), 110.
67. Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy,* trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 40.
68. The literature on the idea of the double in *Jekyll and Hyde* is voluminous, far too lengthy to catalog fully here. Excellent sources on this topic are Nathalie Abi-Ezzi, *The Double in the Fiction of R.L. Stevenson, Wilkie Collins, and Daphne du Maurier* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2003); Linda Dryden, *The Modern Gothic and Literary Doubles: Stevenson, Wilde and Wells* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); and Douglas Thorpe, "Calvin, Darwin, and the Double: The Problem of Divided Nature in Hogg, MacDonald, and Stevenson," *Newsletter of the Victorian Studies Association of Western Canada* 11:1 (1985): 6-22. On the double in literature generally, Karl Miller's *Doubles: Studies in Literary History* (New York: Oxford, 1987) C. F. Keppler's *The Literature of the Second Self* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1972), and John Herdman's *The Double in Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (New York: Macmillan, 1990), remain indispensible.
69. Mills notes that critics, as early as 1912, observed that Jekyll's interior struggles parallel St. Paul's inner conflict as depicted in Romans 7. Mills, "The Stain on the Mirror," 340-41. Larry Kreitzer argues that these parallels are so conspicuous that one cannot but aver that Stevenson was heavily reliant upon Romans 7 for his construction of critical elements of the novel. Kreitzer, "R. L. Stevenson's 'Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde' and Romans 7: 14—25," 127. Kreitzer refers to Stevenson's "passing allusions" to the Old Testament (ibid., 131) but, in his assertion that the key biblical intertext for *Jekyll and Hyde* is Romans 7, engages far more with Stevenson's allusions to the New Testament than the Old. Katherine Linehan, "The devil can cite scripture: intertextual hauntings in Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," *Journal of Stevenson Studies* 3 (2006), 5-32, similarly engages deeply and astutely with Stevenson's allusions to the New Testament while only touching briefly and cursorily upon his intertextual references to the Old Testament. (Linehan cites eighteen allusions to the Bible, but cites none of Stevenson's key references to the Jacob and Esau tale

in Genesis, nor his allusions to the plague of darkness in Exodus.) While this paper does not deny that Romans and Pauline theology was a critical source for Stevenson in his construction of the character of Henry Jekyll, it argues that Stevenson's references to the Old Testament are no mere passing allusions, but are in fact essential to Stevenson's theopoetical project: the creation of a neo-biblical novella informed as much by the Old Testament as it is by the New, with Genesis as crucial an intertext for the novella as is Romans. (Romans 9:13 refers to Jacob and Esau, underscoring the way in which the Genesis narrative of Jacob and Esau and its theological anthropology of human duality is itself a key intertext for Romans—further stressing the point that in order to fully understand the biblical and theological background of *Jekyll and Hyde,* one must go fully *ad fontes,* back to the sources, not only to Romans and the New Testament but all the way back to the Old.) Even the novel's very composition is neo-biblical: even if we do not take Brantlinger's argument (see supra, n. 18) literally, it at the very least needs to be taken seriously. Whether it was a conscious choice or not, Stevenson's apparent lack of authorial control over his own work, which he describes in his *Scribner's* essay (Stevenson, "The Dream Origin of the Tale," from "A Chapter on Dreams," *Scribner's Magazine* [1888]: 122-8, in *Jekyll and Hyde,* ed. Katherine Linehan, 87-91, in which he asserts that the story came to him in a dream, in a night vision, and that therefore "That part which is done while I am sleeping is the Brownies' part [viz., the imaginary forces which visited him with the vision of the story] beyond contention; but *that which is done when I am up and about is by no means necessarily mine*, since all goes to show the Brownies have a hand in it even then" [ibid., 90, emphasis added]), enabled him to become less the "author" in the modern sense of the term and more of a vessel through whom a vision can be communicated, a pre-modern conception of authorship that is closer to transcription than authorship. This destabilized notion of authorship in which Stevenson implicates himself at once evokes the modernist problematizing and deconstruction of earlier notions of stable authorship (indeed, although *Jekyll and Hyde* is not usually labeled as a "modernist" novel, Ronald Thomas argues that the text of the novel enacts "one of the central problems of modern fiction: the 'death' or 'disappearance of the author'"; Thomas, "In the Company of Strangers, 158) while also evoking pre-modern, traditionalist conceptions of the composition of Scripture according to which Moses, the Christian apostles, and Mohammed are not the actual "authors" of the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, and the Qur'an, but were rather transcribing the words that were being dictated to them by God and by angels.

70. James Hogg, *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (ed. Ian Duncan; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), ix. It is thus not surprising to learn that Hogg's *Confessions* influenced Stevenson's *Jekyll and Hyde*; see ibid., xvii. Duncan also notes several allusions to the biblical Jacob in Hogg's "*roman maudit*" (on pp. 76 and 88). I am grateful to Colm Toíbín for bringing Hogg's *Confessions* to my attention.
71. My emphasis.
72. My emphasis.
73. See, e.g., Geissinger, "Robert Louis Stevenson as an Interpreter of Life," 91.
74. See, e.g., Genesis 4:7 (God telling Cain that it is within his power to "rule" over his desire to sin, or to succumb to it); see also Deut. 30:15-20.
75. Emmanuel Levinas, *Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism* (trans. Seán Hand; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1990), 20.
76. This reading follows Maimonides' figurative interpretation of the biblical story—while still incorporating the standard midrashic reading of the story, which maintains that the "man" Jacob encounters in Gen. 32:25 is the angelic representative of the tribe of Esau (see *Bereshit rabbah,* 77:3, and *Midrash Tanhuma,* 8)–rather than Nahmanides' literalist reading. In accordance with his view of prophecy, as explicated in *The Guide for the Perplexed*, for Maimonides, Jacob's struggle with the angel in Genesis 32, like all human meetings with angels and like all human encounters with the

divine (save for those of Moses) were not literal, face-to-face encounters but metaphoric meetings taking place within the mind (and often within the dreaming mind) of the individual. For a recent scholarly synopsis of the Maimonidean-Nahmanidean debate on this topic, see Moshe Halbertal, *Maimonides: Life and Thought* (Princeton, 2014), 362.

77. In a fascinating prolepsis to Jung's concept of the integration of the shadow, over fifteen hundred years ago, the talmudic sages developed a similar concept relating to the need to harness one's "*yetzer hara*" (evil inclination)—rather than completely destroying it—and to put this inner monster at the service of one's "*yetzer hatov*" (good inclination). According to the sages of the Talmud, the *yetzer hara,* one's inner Hyde, is not wholly evil: it is called "*tov me'od,*" "very good," because "were it not for the Evil Inclination, man would not build a house, marry a woman, reproduce, or pursue commerce" (Genesis Rabbah 9:7, Vilna edition; my translation). In this same vein, the early Christian theologian Origen of Alexandria (an Orthodox Gnostic whose teachings later became very influential in Eastern Orthodoxy) claimed that evil has a hidden good buried within it: even Satan will eventually repent. Our "Satanic," Dionysian ids, our shadow sides, are our doubles who have to be defeated—but then integrated. We must learn from our Hydes, take what we can from our Esaus without being corrupted by them, and use their powers for the good.
78. Oscar Wilde's sole novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray,* can also be read as a story about the evils that befall a character who fails to integrate his shadow and who lets his "Hyde"—his appetitive soul, his inner "Esau"—overcome his rational soul (his "Jekyll," or his Jacob).
79. In this regard, I am in agreement with Emily A. Bernhard Jackson that *Jekyll and Hyde* should be read less as a novel about doubles and more so as a novel about twins and twinship. Jackson, "Twins, "Twinship, and Robert Louis Stevenson's 'Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," *Victorian Review* 39:1 (2013): 70-86. Where I depart from Jackson is in my belief that the novel should be read not only as reflective of Stevenson's interest in the burgeoning nineteenth-century science of gemellology (twin studies) but as Stevenson's nineteenth-century retelling of the story of Jacob and Esau, the archetypal tale of twinship in the Hebrew Bible.
80. On the importance of Augustine in the development of the genre of autobiography, see William G. Spengemann, *The Forms of Autobiography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980). Jekyll's confession is decidedly Augustinian (viz., a religious confession), not Rousseauean (viz., secular).
81. Terrence Doody defines the literary modality of the confession as the "deliberate, self-conscious attempt of an individual to explain his nature to an audience who represents the kind of community he needs to exist in and to confirm him. Confession is always an act of community, and the speaker's intention to realize himself in community is the formal purpose that distinguishes confession from other modes of autobiography or self-expression." Doody, *Confession and Community in the Novel* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1980), 4-5. Jekyll's confession at the conclusion of *Jekyll and Hyde* conforms to this criteria insofar as it is an attempt to situate himself within, and to the find the favor of, the Scottish Presbyterian community (albeit posthumously).

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For a *Post-Historical Poetics* in the Contemporary African Urban Novel

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Abstract:

This paper argues that contemporary African literature has exhausted the impetus that the postcolonial condition gave it and that recent iterations of African urban novels have set in motion a new way of looking at and reading African literature that is referred to here as post-historical poetics. That African literature has had a protracted discourse should not take away from this article's propositions of emergent poetics. Indeed, this article is an attempt to suggest a possible alternative reading that would open up a novel avenue, roughly outline such an alternative reading, contribute to the prevailing discourses and champion for sustained dialogues without foreclosing continuing or any further critical possibilities. This paper is aware that the proposition of a post-historical poetics can hardly be discussed exhaustively in such a brief format and thus seeks solely to sketch the approaches to such a reading. By looking at two novels with strong leanings to fantasy and science fiction, the paper seeks to analyse and exemplify those narrative modes and techniques that would make up the suggested post-historical poetics.

Keywords: contemporary African literature; postcolonial literature; post-historical poetic; African urban novel; science-fiction

Introduction: establishing the paradigm shift

The birth of the African novel has been linked to a turning point in African history, namely the peak of the anti-colonial liberation struggles of the African nations in the 1960s with many African states gaining independence. Its main stated aim was to provide a much-needed counter-narrative[1] to "powerful and enduring images of life in colonial Africa" while critically engaging the legacy of imperialism on the continent (Genova 2005, 266). The trend of postcolonial literary studies has also tended to accentuate the primacy of this historical moment in their engagements with the African novel. (see also Ogundele 2002, 125). In this constellation of a historical turning point and emergence of a new genre, the urban space emerged as a site for literature to sound out "the fundamental experience of the colonial encounter" (Kurtz 1998, 7) in all its fascinating and chaotic overlaying, interweaving and swirling ways (8). This urgency and agency of the urban space in the development of the African novel can be explained thus: With the changing political landscape prior to and immediately after independence, most of the restrictive colonial city segregation ordinances were repealed and movement into the urban areas consequently exploded, setting the urban space as the ideal site where one met the legacies of the recent colonial past. The postcolonial African urban novels, therefore, in their engagement with the colonial past and contest of the postcolonial space in the newly independent states turned to the urban centres as the microcosm of the larger society. The city, as a metaphor and literary trope, has, therefore, been present in the African novel almost right from the beginning. The African urban novel is, therefore, as old as the African novel. It has also been in the cities that most of modern predicaments of Africa and the African subject are centred (Kehinde 2007, 74).

Mirroring the developments in many African states not long after independence, illusions and shattered dreams regarding Pan-Africanism and African nationalism seeped into the literary imagination, (Kurtz 1998, 8) heralding a dystopian tenor in the novels. Big cities, as Freund (2007, 150) notes, became mired in crisis and stood apart as "vectors that triangulated the combined effect of several disastrous circumstances". The African urban novel has narrated this paradigm shift in different ways: Booker (1995, 58) remarks on "a powerfully dystopian turn" in the African novel, with texts from Ngugi, Achebe, Soyinka and others taking on decidely dsytopian overtones. Gaylard (2005, 5) also observes the same paradigm shift in the works of major African writers such as Achebe, Armah and Ngugi moving from the post-colonial realism to mythopoetic experimentation. According to Gaylard, Ngugi shifted from a narrative of socialist realism in *Petals of Blood* (1977) to the allegorical and millenarian *Matigari* (1987), Naguib Mahfouz produced realist fiction and later moved to more experimental works, and Ben Okri has also showed a movement from the prosaic *Flowers and Shadows* (1980) to the phantasmagoric *The Famished Land* (1991) (5). The African novel can thus be said to have been progressing with a view to depicting and interpreting the African condition different from the postcolonial consciousness of its inception.

These observed paradigmatic shifts have found resonance in the contemporary African urban novel, where it has had to bring forth an imagination of the African urban space beyond the *post*-colonial condition as a defining character. The contemporary African city can be looked at as being caught in a constellation beyond the "contradictory logics of an imperial past and postcolonial predicaments" (Demissie 2007, 1) that informed their predecessors immediately after colonialism. A quick look at the emerging titles of African novels leads to the hypothesis that there is a decisive disjunction between the past and the present in the contemporary African urban novel: negotiations between modernity, the postcolonial condition and globalizing cultural attitudes compete for attention with post-historical constellations in a fragile and dynamic arena. The master narrative of the 'imperial past and postcolonial predicaments' is undergoing a literary overhaul, a rewriting and re-figuration to produce works that envision the city in varied states, characters and shades; in a sense, these novels can be described as *post-historical*. The *post-historical poetics* here refers to a literary imagination that seeks new constellations between aesthetics, history and space; it is a poetics consisting of complicities and resistances: not necessarily rejecting history in totality, but rather operating with as well as beyond history and refusing to be solely defined by historical agencies, and thus presenting the African urban space with decidedly different rules of interaction.

Towards a *post-historical* poetic

There is a conversation in Fiston M. Mujila's novel *Tram 83* (2015) between Lucien, a writer, and Ferdinand Malingeau, a publisher, where, their conversation turns to the literary value of history. The publisher is of the opinion, that concentrating on history and historical figures – which he considers arbitrary and contestable anyway – diverts the writer's attention away from the aesthetic enterprise of literature. According to Malingeau, being true to realism or history leads to a production of essayistic texts "instead of blending genres" (45). Lucien tries to defend himself and the place of literature in "the shaping of history" (ibid.); in "exploring collective memory" (ibid.). The publisher disagrees:

> I'm familiar with that view of things. We've already had enough of squalor, poverty, syphilis, and violence in African literature. Look around us. There are beautiful girls, good-looking men, Brazza Beer, good music. Doesn't all that inspire you? I'm concerned for the future of African literature in general. The main character in the African novel is always single, neurotic, perverse, depressive, childless, homeless, and overburdened with debt. Here, we live, we fuck, we're happy. There needs to be fucking in African literature too! (Mujila 2015, 46)

By dismissing the postcolonial typology of the schizophrenic postcolonial subject and by zeroing in on the 'here' and 'now' as a post-historical dimension, the novel engages in a self-reflexive mode meant to pave way for a new poetics – what will be discussed in this paper as *post-historical poetics*. What is referred to here as the post-historical poetics should not be considered a synonym of *ahistorical*; it is not a cold, frigid and lacking in empathy look at the African urban novel vis-à-vis history. The post-historical poetics is aware of these issues; indeed, one can say it stems from these issues, which is why it tries to present narratives that go beyond the historical agencies. The impetus is on the contemporaneity.

The idea of a post-historical poetics is hardly novel as can be seen in deliberations by Echeruo (1998) and Gikandi (1991) that look beyond the historical agency in African novels. Echeruo (1998) considered Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* under these premises of post-history, where, quoting Gikandi, he says that Achebe seems to be most concerned by

> those forms of narrative which would rewrite [...] history by 'creating a time-less and autonomous version of events so that they can speak to future generations', [as well as] with 'new forms of narration that might have the power to liberate us from the circle of our post-colonial moment'. (Echeruo 1998, 66)

The difference between Echeruo's idea and the idea of post-historical poetics advanced here is that he sees Achebe's novel as having "its attention [...] fixed on the post-colonial instance" and "as primarily about renewal and fulfilment within history" (66); history is, therefore, the discursive anchor for the novel. Post-historical poetics contends that it is problematic to subject the African novel today to the same look that informed the reception of its predecessors and that such an approach would seriously limit the critical understanding of the contemporary authors and the inherent aesthetics of their works.

A post-historical poetic, therefore, posits the following: first, it assumes that the historical agency that served as impetus of postcolonial realism nolonger holds; also in the mix as competing agencies and mediators are national specific and global specific as well as post-national issues. As Parker (2004, as quoted in Snyman 2010, 13) notes "every discourse [...] will exhaust itself as the context of its production shifts and changes; producing new, competing discourses and a fresh set of myths on which to build another narrative". And, secondly, if hitherto history has been looked at as the account of the post-colonial encounter because the colonial experience destroyed the native foundations for nations and peoples, then there is nothing to remember or recall (Echeruo 1998, 68), and as such a fresh perspective is of imperative. A post-historical poetic is this fresh perspective. The African novel of the second half of the last century tended to be over-determined by the reality of the postcolony. As Nuttall (2004), while writing in regard to the South African apartheid past, notes, not everything flows as a consequence of the historical – colonial – trajectory the African continent underwent;

> there are enough configurations in various spheres of contemporary [...] African life to warrant new kinds of explorations, [and] to confine these configurations to a lens of 'difference' embedded squarely in the [(post)colonial] past may miss the complexity and contemporaneity of their formations. (Nuttall 2004, 732)

For example: Nnedi Okorafor's *Lagoon* comments on the political administrative incompetence of the Nigerian government and the quintessential dysfunctional city of Lagos through an eco-critical narration that frames much more profound revelations and narratives; the same goes for Lauren Beukes' *Zoo City* that does not fashion the inherent poverty, segregation and criminality in her novel as narrative critiques of the postcolonial condition in Johannesburg.

The aesthetics of this contemporary African urban novel, thus, relies not so much on postcolonial realism's critical cartography of the postcolonial urban space, on the postcolonial critique of the agency of history, nor on the motley of socially, economically and politically critical themes, but more so, and in a rather self-consiously postmodernist fashion, on the ability to rise beyond these constants of the postcolonial African urban novel; critically rising beyond and subverting them, and at the same time finding ways of rewriting and re-figuring the same. Thus, the juxtaposition of the urban slum against the urban affluence no longer serves to highlight inequality in the African urban setting; because more often than not the characters in these urban novels do move relatively freely between the two, thereby undermining the socio-economic class borders that the realist urban novel tended to construct. For example: in her guises as a Private Investigator and Journalist – those typological cosmopolitan characters better known for transcending borders in the city's social, economic and political landscape – and in spite of the sloth on her back that singles her out as an *other*, Zinzi December, in Beukes' *Zoo City*, transcends Johannesburg's segregating borders without being instrumentalized as a symbol of critical commentary on the city. The black, white and grey areas of the city are thus marked, not in opposition to each other, but just as a simple cartography of what makes up a modern African city, albeit a post-apocalyptic one.

The post-historical poetic, thus, rejects the stasis of binary structures of 'now'/'then', 'here'/'there' or 'us'/'them' underlying the postcolonial realism. These rejections of historically mediated and as such stagnated construction paradigms are being witnessed in the contemporary cities themselves; the cities are engaged in their own perpetual dances with modernity, modernization and history. The city, according to De Boecke (2002), is a mutation continuously straining to reimagine itself, in effect tirelessly creating a dynamic web of plural meanings and social imaginary significations: "It is a product of a profound mixture between different cultural itineraries and sites. Its content is composite and is generated through crossing various borders and mediating between different opposites." (245) This composite construct, of course, applies equally to the historical agencies; no one historical construct can claim to define the contemporary african city. This inherent mutation and concerted rejection of historical agency can be found in the literary interactions within the contemporary African novel. As Gaylard similarly observes:

> The shifting context of postcolonial Africa requires the skill of metamorphosis, and for the individual and community this means the ability to mutate. The person or creature who can live in and through such heterogeneity is inevitably a shape-shifter or mutant, [...]. (Gaylard 2005, 137)

Indeed, in Okorafor's *Lagoon* and Beukes' *Zoo City*, literal shape-shifting, mutation and metamorphosis form an integral part of both the aesthetic appeal as well as the narrative realization of the post-historical poetics.

Going by the argument that the socio-political conditions that informed the postcolonial literary trends of the late last century have lost relevance and have been revised or replaced by the trends outlined above, it is further assumed that, being products of authors born well into the festering dystopias brought forth by the illusions of the pan-africanist and nationalist dreams that birthed the postcolonial cities as outlined above, these authors' single commonality lies in their alienation from the postcolonial nationalist project. Grzeda (2013, 173) refers to them as "born free", i.e. writers whose works' dystopian impulses stem from the writers disillusionment with their turbulent post-colonial contemporaneity. Being born in the dystopian cities themselves, they have a knowledge of the inner workings of the city that the last generation of writers, themselves 'immigrants' into the city, never possessed. As such, the urban space in these texts is not looked at as a microcosmic representation of the larger postcolonial society; rather, it is a world in its own; a world that sets its own conditions for interaction and understanding, and as such, it is (almost) a post-history, demanding to be experienced on its own. Its mapping defies – or goes beyond – the socio-economic, political or historical conditions.

The conception of the post-historical poetics here does not imply the end of individual and collective historical experiences in the African urban novel; it underscores the limitation of the historical agency to account for the contemporaneity of the African urban novel today and posits a poetic that mitigates such limitations. The aim of this paper, therefore, is to offer a reading of the contemporary African urban novel that is aware of the shifting parameters of representing the present and thus enabling an interrogation of the city space beyond the postcolony. Both *Lagoon* (Okorafor 2014) and *Zoo City* (Beukes 2010) employ narrative elements and modes that try to keep up with this dynamism: *Lagoon* stages a *peaceful* alien landing in Lagos, thus framing a series of themes through what at first seems like an ecocritical narrative; in fact, further analysis of the novel seems to reject this reading of a framing narrative as no hierarchy can be established to support it. The proposition here is that the contemporary African urban novel operates beyond the post- and neo-colonial constructs and conditions and espouses what Nuttall (2004) has referred to as "the extended idiom" of the city, i.e. "the ways in which urban life becomes the *irreducible product of mixture*, *each urban moment sparking performative improvisations which are unforeseen and unforeseeable*" (741; emphasis added, OJ). Bright also advocates for this discursive freeing of the city to *become*; to be organic:

> Every encounter between city and inhabitant is an event. *A meeting of singularities*, of countless elements in relative motions of speed and slowness, and capacities to affect and be affected. A double becoming in which each body is altered and composed and decomposed, producing something between them that is neither one nor the other, something else entirely that cannot even be thought. (Bright 2007, 419; empasis added, OJ)

This is an advocacy for an encounter between the city and the character unencumbered by historical agency. The encounters as "events" are spontaneous, particular and unhinged from historical agency. It is the postulation of a possibility to encounter the city without having to acknowledge whatever historical footprints there may be; especially where that historical past will assert its agency and insist on instrumentalizing the character to perceived constestations of power constellations.

A post-historical poetic of the urban space

So how would a post-historical poetic of the African urban space look like? The postcolonial realism discourse is involved in a political act; it tries to order and re-order the postcolonial urban space; it is involved in a cartography project that consists of mapping areas of contestation while engaging the historical agencies that brought about the African city as well as the contemporary economic and political power structures. It is thus acting within the real world with the aim of claiming territories. The city, for postcolonial realism is *as is*: a place; set; irreducible beyond the power structures it is locked in contest with. For the contemporary urban novel, the city is organic; it is alive; it is a character with its own push-pull energy; it interacts with the other characters; it is a mutant; a shape-shifter (Gaylard 2005, 137). As such, it brings forth its own organic components that, in as much as they might be caught in the ongoing power contestations as defined by postcolonial realism, they reject these and act beyond such constraints.

In *Lagoon*, this creation of organic components of the city can be seen, first and foremost, in the staging of the alien landing off the coast of Lagos, and the resulting literal rejuvenation of the aquatic life off Lagos coast. But it is not the alien species who have landed that is significant in this case of the city birthing organisms beyond the postcolonial constellation; the *process of becoming* is as important as *being*. The staging of the alien landing is the staging of the evolution of species and of a new Nigerian world order, all emanating from the singularity of whatever it is that Ayodele is only the avatar. The title "MOOM!" (3) of the prologue which announces the arrival of the aliens, thus, can be read as the big bang moment in this new Nigerian world order. The staging of the alien landing thus frames several spontaneous organic growths out of Lagos at once; organic growths that can be considered narrative modes designed to usher in emergent power constellations: the coming out of "Black Nexus" – the Lagos LGBTQ group (105); the undermining of Father Oke, the Bishop, as a power player in Lagos (123; 235); and not least of all, the healing of the president and the reestablishment of his power.

Also of interest, and perhaps to be read as a subversion of the narrative mode of postcolonial realism, is the fact that when the aliens choose to make contact with the Lagosians, they don't choose people from the fringes of society as is wont in a criticism of the postcolonial condition of the African city: Adaora, "a born and raised Lagosian [...] wearing nicely fitted Jeans and a sensible blouse" (7) is a respected professor of marine biology; Agu is a military man, who "looked like he'd already seen 'plenty plenty pepper'" (9); and Edgar aka Anthony Dey Craze, is a Ghanaian mainstream popular rapper "out for a post-concert stroll" (9); they hardly represent the usual urban flotsam and jetsam that are ordinarily employed for social commentary on the postcolonial city. Individually, these three characters do not mount the staging of the new Nigerian world order mentioned above. It is in their coming together – their being brought together, actually, by unknown forces – and their becoming somebody else that represents the act of the city birthing others beyond the prevalent power structures:

> It was an eerie moment as Adaora and the two strange men arrived at that spot, right before it happened. Exactly three yards from the water at exactly 11.55 p.m., 8 January 2010. Adaora from the east. The bloodied man wearing army fatigues from the west. They ambled in their general directions, eyeing each other as it became clear that their paths would intersect. (*Lagoon*, 7)

These three, thus, portray subjects from different biological make-ups, different evolutionary heritages, different historical, political and familial allegiances, and different social and cultural structures (Bright 2007, 417): where their locations within the societal power constellation would lead to an inevitable antagonistic figuration, the singularity of the "MOOM"-moment has decreed that they *become* somebody else, as the first stage of the city *becoming* something else; this becoming somebody else moves them beyond their strait-jacketed societal roles: Adaora moves beyond the clutches of her abusive husband; Agu makes a commanding come-back to his abusive military comrades; and Edgar, the outsider in Lagos, is left to orchestrate the birthing of the historical moment when the whole of Lagos and, indeed, Nigeria and beyond would encounter the new historical dispensation. The narrative of Lagos becoming a new city beyond the "infernal cycle" (Moudileno 2006, 38) of precepts of political dictators, power-hungry military and resources-grabbing multinationals presupposes the birth of beings beyond the stifling historical and societal agencies. The sickly president also gets a *system upgrade* in this push to reset history in Lagos.

Writing on the use of science fiction in the African novel, Moudileno (2006) notes that it can be used as a deliberate staging of a revolution to "interrupt the infernal cycle" (38) of history and usher in a new one. Quoting Blachere (2001), she observes that science fiction could function in such a way as to create an apocalyptic moment *to restart a history* whose progress seems to be caught in a loop: "When humans appear incapable of interrupting the infernal cycle on their own, natural forces need to intervene, like a flood or a tidal wave" (Blachere 2001, 62, quoted in Moudileno 2006, 38), or, as in the case of *Lagoon*, an alien landing off the coast of Lagos. This apocalyptic intervention aims at disengaging society from its historical agencies, getting rid of the postcolonial disorderly order, setting in motion a new chaos out of which a new social order should rise. Writing the city anew would require, what Gaylard (2005, 72) has refered to as the art of defamiliarization, i.e. "the production of enchanting newness and surprise through 'de-automatized perception'", which is exactly what framing the events in the city using the alien landing achieves. The post-historical poetic thus relies on a narrative mode that would orchestrate a radical break from the socio-historical conditions of the African urban space and stage the rebirth of the city. Staging the landing of the aliens as a narrative frame is the requisite defamiliarizing literary trope in Okorafor's *Lagoon*.

For *Zoo City*, the defamiliarization of the contemporary urban space and thus the construction of the post-historical poetic occurs, first, through the narrative presentation of a dystopian fantastic cityscape, and secondly, through the figuration of the magical and the fantastic, as well as the peppering of migrants throughout the whole novel. The migrants, in particular, take the wind away from any nationalistic historical discourse; their presence undermines conversations framed by historical power dynamics by contributing towards a narrative of a cosmopolitan urban space, where nationalistic historical contestations have no place. Quoting Manase (2007), Putter (2012, 63) observes that that immigrants by their very nature of not belonging challenge the idea of a historical singular national home or nationhood. So, the "Zimbabwean vendor rigging up the scaffolding of a pavement stall" (6); the grateful Cameroonian for whom Zinzi has located lost keys and who promises her discount on airtime as bonus (10); the woman named Marabou, with her "Eastern European, Russian maybe, or Serbian" accent (12); or, the Moroccan bouncer who gets murdered by Maltese and Marabou for trying to protect Songweza, are all instances of wrestling the urban narrative away from the historical and nationalist dynamics that would otherwise render them invisible, and consequently the cosmopolitanism of the African urban space with it. The international face they lend the city helps it claim an identity that is informed primarily by the encounters of these other faces and not by the foregone postcolonial power dynamics.

Secondly, by providing a dystopian fantastic urban setup in which political and social structures have all but collapsed, *Zoo City* preconfigures a narrative mode that would disallow any discourse within the postcolonial realism framework. The construction of the post-historical poetic is, therefore, achieved here through the narration of an apolitical, ahistorical and asocial urban space. This narrative mode demonstrates the inadequacy of the political and historical references that hinge the discourse of postcolonial realism as well as their unsuitability to catch up with the emergent urban constellations that anchor this novel. Through the presentation of the "aposymbiots", "zoos" or the "animalled" – as those with animal companions are referred to in the novel – the novel presents an aspect of *othering* that is not defined by the historical postcolonial condition of the African urban dweller; the "aposymbiot" is thus the construction of the new *other* in a society that, through destroyed social and political structures, seems to be looking to transcend the traditional discourses of othering. As Mark and Amira, the two side-kicks of the villainous Odin, remark: "'They'd bring back the quarantine camps if they could.' 'What do you call Zoo City?' I say. 'Just be glad we don't live in India,' Amira says. [...] 'Because who knew there was a caste *below* untouchable?'" (*Zoo City*, p. 85-86). Interestingly, being an "aposymbiot", and, therefore, a societal other is still as a result of external power plays and thus beyond the control of the person: one gets "animalled" after either undergoing a serious personal trauma or after committing a serious offence. Thus, othering is still very much a function of external forces upon an individual, with the difference being that no postcolonial power constellations come into play in this process of othering.

The main narrative function of an "aposymbiot" or a "zoo" and its narrative contribution to the development of the post-historical poetics in this novel is that it presents a disruption of the normal order of society. In its arbitrariness "aposymbiosis" defines the subjects outside of the ordinary social discourses.

With the narrative mode of the fantastic world of the "animalled", *Zoo City* further constructs a dystopian urban space that operates in an ahistorical environment. In Zinzi's movements across Johannesburg – playing at once the Private Detective and the Journalist – searching for the missing teenage popstar Songweza, not once is the city presented against a backdrop of anything of historical significance. What one gets by following Zinzi around is a cityscape like any other – "asymbiosis" being not confined to Zinzi's Johannesburg – but stripped of that historical archive that proved such a fertile ground for postcolonial realism. Criminality –

'ordinary' (49); perpetrated by the "zoos" (28); and against the "zoos" (253; 260; 305); the support groups for the "zoos" (51-52); against Zinzi during her visit to the *sangoma* (179-189) – and homelessness (179ff; 254ff.) among other social urban phenomena of the postcolonial African urban space pepper the novel, but with neither didactic nor social commentary value. The places she visits are not intended to be a cartographic archive that can be read as a postcolonial critique of the contemporary urban condition, neither are they palimpsestic: Makhaza's Place whose "popularity in a neighbourhood packed with bars and churches can be ascribed to two things: the Lagos-style chicken, and the view" (42), Sun City – the prison (49), Midrand (85), Rosebank (110), Auckland Park (129) or Brixton (190). It is noteworthy that her paths within the city avoids any historically laden landmarks that might draw the novel into having to partake in discourses of rewriting power structures in the city as read by (Putter 2012) in *Movement, Memory, Transformation and Transition in the City: Literary Representations of Johannesburg in Post-Apartheid South African Texts.* Indeed, in her guises of the Journalist and Private Detective, Zinzi's forays into these places, if undertaken with any critical lenses, then only in as far as she is searching for the missing Songweza. The seemingly conscious avoidance of the inherently historically discursive palimpsest in viewing the city emphasizes the post-historical poetic that this paper seeks to advocate for. The various discourses on what the narrator calls "Former Life/Lives" (42; 123) are constructed for the advancement of biographies, and nothing further.

Perhaps the most effective narrative mode that has been employed by the two novels in the construction of the post-historical poetic has been in the seemingly anachronistic mixing of folklore, myths and traditional knowledge bases. The anachronism, especially in their seemingly harmonious comingling with the modern – indeed, futuristic – elevates the whole narrative beyond the regular known ontological bases; it gives an inkling of the sheer size, amount and the complexity of reality (Gaylard 2005, 74), discursive constellations as well as the multiplicity of knowledge bases that the contemporary African urban novel borrows from in its engagement with the urban space. Thus, in a true "African postcolonialism" fashion, the novels, through genre hybridity, "hold [...] the voice of hegemonic authority in suspension" (Gaylard 2005, 85) while allowing for a multiplicity and maybe competition of knowledge bases into the narrative. By allowing for narrative modes that recall the myths and folklore of the African societies – alongside the contemporary scientific discourses as seen both in *Lagoon* and *Zoo City* – the novels, in a bid to undermine the discourses that themselves undermined the myths – a counter coup on modernist discourses that dethroned the traditional African lore –, engage in a reanimation of "forgotten mythic or symbolic approach to perception and culture" (Gaylard 2005, 92) so as to defamiliarize the perception of the contemporary African urban space. As Gaylard further notes, the use of myths is to reinforce the "perception that what is important in African culture has survived and will survive confrontation with the West" (92). *Lagoon* recalls the folkloric "*Udide, the narrator, the story weaver, the Great Spider*" (*Lagoon*, 228) and her cousin *Ijele* (291) and Anansi (292), and "Mami Wata [...] the goddess of all marine witches" (235), while *Zoo City* combines the fantastic "mashavi" and "aposymbiots" with the traditional *muti, nyangas* and the *sangoma* to transcend the narrative realism of Johannesburg.

The whole narrative in *Lagoon* is carried forth by the construction of the preternatural; at its beginning, there is the staging of the alien landing with the incorporation of *Udide* as a narrator towards the end of the novel. While regarded as the mode used in the construction of the post-historical poetic, framing the whole narrative through the supernatural could be looked at as a project to bring together the competing civilizational discourses with the alien landing presenting the view of salvation from outside of the African society, which the appearance of Udide at the end of the novel again undermines, especially when Udide claims ownership, while rejecting 'foreign' narratives, that have brought Lagos into being:

> *I have been spinning these stories in this cave for centuries. I've spun the birth and growth of this great city. Watched through the vibrations that travel through my webs. Lagos. Nigeria. I know it all because I created it all. I have seen people come from across the ocean. I have seen people sell people. I've knitted their stories and watched them knit their own crude webs. They came in boats that creaked a desperate song and brought something I'd never have created. Lagos has fed me. Fast life, fast death. High life, low life. Skyscrapers, shanty towns. Flies, mosquitoes. [...]*
> *I have watched, heard, tasted, touched these new people. Shape-shifters of the third kind. Story weavers of their own time. I respect them.* (*Lagoon*, 291-292; italics in original)

Yet, at the end of the novel one does not read a rejection of one ontology over the other. Indeed, the use of two seemingly antagonistic views of civilization systems and reality can be considered a concurrence with the post-historical poetic's held assumptions for the need to disallow the hegemony of any one single centre or base of knowledge. *Lagoon*, in this case, has gone one further and presented not two inimical ontologies, but rather a complementary relationship between the two. Perhaps by letting Udide tell the tale of the people from across the ocean who sold people – a reference to slave trade and colonialism – the novel presents a picture of Lagos as city capable of surviving external forces and their agendas and capable of rising from colonial subjugation. In addition, it asserts that the arrival of the "shape-shifters of the third kind" (292) – Ayodele and her fellow aliens – will also be survived by Lagos and Lagosians.

In *Zoo City,* the preternatural and thereby the construction of a post-historical poetic relies on the characterization of Zinzi and her *shavi* – "Mashavi – a Southern African word (spec. Shona) used to describe both the preternatural talents conferred by an aposymbiot and the aposymbiot animal itself" (177) – of sensing attachments to lost things. The novel brings together different constellations of the supernatural to bear in the construction of a not antagonistic relationship between the various world-views surrounding Zinzi and the construction of "definitions of what modern Africa meant" (164): her superstitious mom who "used to insist we covered up the mirrors during storms to avoid drawing the lightning" and who slaughtered goats for the ancestors at various milestones in the family (164) and bookish dad who felt that its such "superstitious rubbish" that was "holding the continent back" (164); Zinzi's foray into the healer's market with

> a grisly *wunderkammer* in every window, hanging in every doorway. Tortoise shells, a wildebeest skull with a broken horn, shrivelled twists of dead animal or plant matter, it's hard to say, and drifts of magic, like a static hum in the air, a harmony to the drone of traffic on the highway above (165);

the difficulty of differentiating between the real and the magical: "My head feels hangover-muzzy, and as I stand up, the world reels away from me for a moment. It's either the incoming storm or the goddamn magic" (166); her interaction with the D&G vest-wearing, iPhone wielding *sangoma* (167):

> 'I didn't know the ancestors were SMSing now.' 'No, he calls me. The spirits find it easier with technology. It's not so clogged as human minds.' […] 'They still like rivers and oceans most of all, but data is like water – the spirits can move through it. That's why you get a prickly feeling around cellphone towers'. (168)

The sometimes tongue-in-cheek but not outright irreverence of the folklore that Zinzi is confronted with, the cynicism and fear, and, not least of all, a feeling of deference to the forebears brings this previously relegated ontological system to the fore. Channelling the key narrative function of magic and folklore in this novel, Dumisani Ndebele, the *sangoma,* tells Zinzi: "It's not so different, the statistical analysis, the number-crunching. It's just the same with the bones. It's knowing how to read them" (169). It is not a subordination of one system over the other; it is a statement that dissolves discursive categories by rejecting a universal base of knowledge.

This construction of a multiplicity of knowledge bases is also at the core of *Lagoon*, where folklore and mythology successfully stand up to colonial discourse and is ready to meet the landed aliens on an equal footing. The dynamic and transitional nature of the urban space renders it especially useful for the purposes of the construction of a multiplicity of knowledge bases in both novels. The underlying factors in the construction of the fantastic, magical and folklorist narrations in both cases are the "co-existence of a wider scope of contradictory ontologies" and a "propensity to admit a plurality of worlds" (Grzeda 2013, 158); contradictions, which thus allow for liminality and transition, and the same that characterize the urban space. Therefore, to maintain fidelity to the nature of the urban space and not reduce it to an allegory or metaphorical space for postcolonial realism, the competing narratives within the contemporary urban space may be realized in the contemporary urban novel most effectively through a decidedly political intervention in aesthetics and poetics. This involves the framing of the said competing narratives through the presence of fantastic events; it is a narrative beyond realistic representation, but not in any way failing to tackle the underlying postcolonial issues. The novels combine the contentious narrative strands of postcolonial realism's socio-criticism and postmodernist formal experimentation, syncretism, and meta-fiction (Grzeda 2013, 156). The contemporary African urban space, being the quintessential space of postcolonial realism's binary oppositions – "unevenly developed places where old and new, modern and ancient, the scientific and the magical views of the world co-exist" (Cooper 1998, 216 quoted in Grzeda 2013, 158) – ironically, lends itself more to the ontology of plurality that defines the fantastic and the magical way of looking at the world and to post-historical poetic, than to the postcolony that brought it forth.

A discussion of post-historical poetics, as carried out in this paper, therefore, considers the postcolonial African urban space as a place of illusions and, thus, a perfect place for the staging of the perceived conflicts between magic, fantasy and folklore on the one hand and the west-oriented knowledge bases on the other. Furthermore, if the urban space were the quintessential place for those seeking anonymity and, therefore, protection from politics of belonging, then the urban space as constructed in the post-historical poetics appeals even further to a new breed of citizens: characters – in both novels, these are mainly immigrants and social outcasts (in *Zoo City*) and entitled self-assured young people (in *Lagoon*) – for whom belonging, identity and history are not necessarily constructed on essentialisms. The world according to post-historical poetics in both novels is "fissured, distorted, and made incredible by cultural clash and displacement" (Boehmer 1995, 229 quoted in Holgate 2015, 643). History, therefore, in both cases, is not necessarily erased; it, however, is not the narrative centrepiece, but simply just another strand within a multiplicity of narrative impulses.

Endnotes:

1. As reiterated by Achebe: "Here then is an adequate revolution for me to espouse – to help my society regain belief in itself and put away the complexes of the years of denigration and self-abasement. And it is essentially a question of education, in the best sense of that word. ... I would be quite satisfied if my novels (especially the ones I set in the past) did no more than teach my readers that their past – with all its imperfections – was not one long night of savagery." (Quoted in Ogundele 2002, 125)

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Latino Youth in Film: *McFarland, USA* and *Spare Parts*

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Abstract:

The representation of youth in American cinema has undergone many changes in the last decade. The "teen film" identified by Timothy Shary, emerged in the 1950s and fully developed in the 1980s with varieties ranging from horror and rock to beach teen. Until the first decade of this century, all these forms of the American teen film represented mainly one social class and ethnicity. In the introduction to *Youth Culture in Global Cinema* (2007), Shary and Alexandra Seibel explain, "When Hollywood has focused on characters between childhood and adulthood, the films tend to follow the dreams of success and popularity that many young people share, and youth culture is portrayed as primarily white, middle class, non-religious, and fun" (2007, 1). In 2015, *McFarland, USA* (Niki Caro) and *Spare Parts* (Sean McNamara) were released. Produced by two major studios—Walt Disney and Pantelion respectively—, these films focus on Latino youth, both immigrants and first-generation Americans. Interestingly, these films bring to the fore a demographic that has been characterized by Victor Sáenz and Luis Ponjuan as "vanishing from the American education pipeline" (2009, 54). Based on real-life stories, *McFarland, USA* and *Spare Parts* show low-income and undocumented Latino students dealing with high school life. Ronald Chennault notes two patterns: "all the films share the centrality of a white educator who is depicted as the savior of the students in the film" (2006, 152) and "a reliance on disparaging stereotypes of racial minorities to propel their narratives" (2006, 153). In this essay, I examine the challenges that Latino teens face in their high school education and analyze their representation in *McFarland, USA* and *Spare Parts*, arguing that these films, released at the end of the second Obama administration, present Latino teens as having the talents and qualities needed to achieve their potential and become good American citizens. I begin by contextualizing common features of Latinos' education.

Keywords: McFarland, USA, Spare Parts, Latino youth, Latino cinema, American high school films, undocumented migrants

Latino Teens and Education

In the last several decades, there has been increased scholarly and cinematic attention to the obstacles faced by young Latinos. Their rise to prominence coincides with the worldwide phenomenon of globalization, which has particularly impacted young people. Addressing its effects on youth, Néstor García Canclini notes

> the great number of young people who contribute the greatest percentages to unemployment and informal employment statistics and, in many countries, also contribute to the convoys of migrants, to the statistics of violent deaths like those of soldiers, hitmen or victims of urban violence or narco-terrorism. (2013, 342)

In Latin America, young people encounter higher levels of unemployment which often propels them to migrate in search of better opportunities, while Latino youth are many times, exposed to urban violence. Latinos' turning to gangs has been briefly shown in films such as *Stand and Deliver* (Robert Menéndez 1988) and *A Better Life* (Chris Weiss 2011), reinforcing the common stereotype of young Latinos as criminals. Although Latinxs are the largest minority, they continue to be underrepresented in television and film.[1] When they are represented, they are portrayed "in stories related to crime and participate in a disproportionate amount of conversations about crime and violence on primetime programming" (Rivadaneyra et al. 2007, 263). In addition to their negative representation, Latinxs also experience the pressure to assimilate to the dominant White culture. Wayne Cornelius explains that "many Anglos view [them] as a 'problem minority' because they do not appear to assimilate fast enough into the dominant culture" (2002, 178). Thus, on one hand, visual depictions either omit or distort Latinex, while on the other, the values of the dominant culture are presented as better. If, as Andrea Sharkey and Rob Shields perceptively argue, "while youth experience second-class citizenship as they are relegated to the status of 'citizens in becoming', most go on to attain the rights of a 'full citizen' with time" (2008, 240), many Latino high school students are subjected to second-class citizenship beyond their adolescent years and never reach the status of full citizen, due to either their ethnicity or their immigration status.

This "second-class citizenship" begins at schools, where Latinos constitute a demographic group that lags behind others in achievement. In the early 2000s, Richard Valencia stated that "wherever Chicano communities exist, school failure appears to be widespread among Chicano student enrollment" (2002, 4). Among the many reasons for Latinx school failure, Valencia notes school segregation, teacher discrimination, and curriculum stratification (2002, 23-30). Moreover, Valencia and Mary Black have judiciously noted the existence of a myth that Mexican Americans do not appreciate an education. They explain:

> Given that Mexican Americans (allegedly) do not hold education high in their value hierarchy, this leads to inadequate family socialization for academic competence, which in turn contributes to the school failure of Mexican American children and youth. (2002, 83)

Although this myth has been debunked, it still permeates the views of many educators in the United States. There is another reason that Latinx lag behind other groups in academic achievement. As Sáenz and Ponjuan argue, Black and Latino males often "reject academic excellence because they perceive it as 'acting White'" (2009, 60). That is to say, young men of color who pursue academic success are believed to identify with the values of the dominant American culture.

Latino adolescents face other hurdles in their access to postsecondary education. Watson Swail, Alberto Cabrera, and Chul Lee list the following: poor academic preparation, parents without a high school diploma, and low family income (2004, 4). The problems are considerable if we take into account the increasing number of Latino students: by 2008 they accounted for 21% of the students in public elementary schools, and in 2010, Latino children became the majority population in California (García Bedolla 2014, 135). Another crucial issue is the legal status of young Latinx. In 2001, the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (Dream) Act was introduced to legalize the status of almost 800,000 youth who had entered the United States illegally and had since resided in the U.S. As the Dream Act was not approved in Congress, in 2012, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) was passed to grant temporary permission for those young residents, mostly but not exclusively, Latinx, to study, get a driver's license, and work if they had no criminal records.

In the twenty-first century, the effective integration of Latino teens depends on their access to higher education. As they become an increasingly significant portion of the American population (comprising 11.3 million children and adolescents today), their college education—or lack thereof— has noticeable implications for the American economy (Nancy Gonzáles et al. 2012, 259). Although Latinx constitute the largest minority and the fastest-growing segment of the American population (Gándara and Contreras 2009, 5), a 2004 report from the Pew Hispanic Center mentions that "73% of Latinos aspired to postsecondary education but only 55% aspired to a B.A." (2004, 4). In 2009, Patricia Gándara and Frances Contreras called attention to the fact that "only one in ten Latinos has a college degree, compared to more than one in four white Americans" (2009, 5). These scholars successfully made the case for the correlation between Latinx achievement and its impact on the American economy. Due to their low education, they argued, Latinos will be limited to low-skilled and poorly-paying jobs. Their low socio-economic status, in turn, will affect the American economy in future decades as young people will enter the workforce and replace retiring baby boomers. If the earnings of Latinxs are modest, so will be their social security contributions. The educational attainment of young Latinx thus has broad societal consequences for the United States. During the Obama administrations (2008-2016), the period in which *McFarland, USA* and *Spare Parts* were made and released, there were hopes for new educational policies that would benefit minorities.[2] However, Lisa García Bedolla, who has studied documents of the Obama administration concerning Latinos, concludes that "Latino influence remains largely symbolic" (2014, 141) because structural inequalities are still pervasive in the American education system

In the last decade, young Latinos started reaching important educational milestones, a trend that is represented in *McFarland, USA* and *Spare Parts.*[3] In these films, however, Latino families are shown as indifferent to or discouraging of Latino teens' access to higher education.

Consequently, it befalls to external White mentors to encourage these Latino high school students. Despite this similarity, *Spare Parts* gives voice to two Latino students, thus representing them as less stereotypical, while at the same time, educating the audience about their plight.

McFarland, USA

McFarland, USA (2015) was directed by New Zealander director Niki Caro.[4] Produced by Mayhem—which specializes in feel-good sports films (Graser 2011, n.p.) and Walt Disney Pictures, the film is loosely based on a real story involving a Caucasian coach—Jim White (Kevin Costner)—who led a team of Latino high schoolers to several cross-country state championships. Caro's film, which grossed $44.5 million, was described by A. O. Scott as "very much a heroic-teacher melodrama about a white coach leading a team of poor, nonwhite strivers toward glory" (2015, n.p.). Indeed, *McFarland, USA* deals with the issue of lack of aspiration among young Latinos, but displaces them from the title, emphasizing instead the town where they live. Located in the San Joaquin Valley in California, McFarland is surrounded by orchards and fields in which all members of Latino families—regardless of their age—work.[5] In a recent review of the literature around the topic of child work, Harry Shier identifies four different stances surrounding this issue. The first deals with the child as a victim of abuse and exploitation, the second sees child labor as an activity that has to be eliminated, the third places child work in a wider spectrum created by labor demands, and the fourth views child work as part of social movements to liberate young people (2017, 37-38). *McFarland, USA* adeptly avoids taking any of these positions: rather, it portrays young Latinos working as a normal facet of their community. The film also depicts other Latino teens as lost, either practicing the wrong sport or engaging in unproductive activities that may lead them to petty crime. The film's narrative begins with White's relocation to McFarland—a working-class municipality, predominantly inhabited by Latinos—after being fired from more mainstream school districts.

In *McFarland, USA*, Coach White brings an outsider perspective that disrupts the status quo of the residents in general and a small group of Latino boys in particular. When he and his family take a first look at the town, they see a lower-middle-class community in which gangs of Latinos appear to dominate the local scene, making the newly-arrived family fearful for their well-being. In McFarland, the high school and penitentiary are near one another, as if reflecting the only two options available for young people: education or criminality.[6] At the high school, White sees his senior coach colleague act indifferently towards Johnny Sameniego (Héctor Duran), who gets injured during a football game, and steps in to protect him. Seeking to leave his mark on the school and his students, White discovers that some of them are good runners, a fact that gives him the idea of coaching a cross-country team. Though he has neither competed nor been trained in cross-country, he sees untapped potential in his young Latino students and quickly recruits Johnny as the first member of the team. However, White faces negative institutional culture of the high school. One colleague tells him "Nobody wins around here."

Moreover, not all Latino teens are enthusiastic about his idea of putting together a cross-country team.

The student who most exemplifies both the promise of being an excellent runner and the reluctance to join Coach White is Thomas Valles (Carlos Pratt). Thomas is an aloof, resilient Latino teenager who has become invisible to others but White notices that he effortlessly traverses fields with long, graceful strides. At first White's attention makes the young Latino uncomfortable. His decision to not join the cross-country team is rooted in his determination to follow the path available to him so far: study, work, and live in the margins of a consumer society. His stoic but rather limited autonomy is the product of both his individual circumstances and the plight of Latino youth in general. His father, a migrant worker, spends long periods separated from his family, leaving the adolescent without a strong role model. In addition, Thomas has accepted society's unspoken rule of not asking for help. This leaves him literally without a way out of a life of solitude. As a Latino, he is simultaneously called to be a leader, that is, to protect his mother and sister, but without standing out. When he is involved in a fistfight at school, White, who is running out of options for his initiative, pleads Thomas' case and gets him out of detention—with the condition that he join the cross-country team.

McFarland, USA displays a sharp contrast between what takes place during and after school. The young Latinos who make up the cross-country team are never seen in class, only in the social spaces—the cafeteria, the football field, etc.—, thus suggesting that academics are not a priority. When the school does appear, it is shown painted in dull gray and beige tones, denoting a lack of enthusiasm. Though the school system does little to engage and inspire the young Latinos, as the drab setting reflects, there is one character who is concerned about these students. Twice, María (Vanessa Martínez), another teacher at the high school, speaks on their behalf. First, she encourages White to invest in them, saying that they are "invisible." Later, she reads the essay of one of the Latino students on the cross-country team who expresses the liberating and rewarding experience of running. Competing has empowered him, divesting him of his "poor Latino" identity. María serves to link the extra-curricular Latino activities with the school's academic mission, but those brief instances of attention illustrate the pervasive indifference of the rest of the school staff in improving the lives of the Latino students.

McFarland, *USA* shows the ways in which the coach and the members of the cross-country team benefit each other. The Caucasian coach rescues a group of underprivileged Latinos, and, is, in turn, enriched by them. At first, White appears as the consummate outsider when he asks whether "Díaz is a common name where you come from" only to learn that he is dealing with numerous members of the same family. His initial inadequacy to guide the team is shown again when he trains with the boys, only to realize that his endurance does not match theirs. When he loses the Díaz brothers because training for cross-country reduces their time working in the fields, White volunteers to help them. He soon discovers that picking produce is an extremely demanding job and that his young mentees have more stamina than he, a finding that further convinces him of their ability to run cross-country. Despite his shortcomings, White is portrayed as a willing learner: he does not hesitate to pitch in to work the fields if he can help his mentees have time for cross-country training. His attitude gradually earns him acceptance into the Latino community, a shift that it is marked by his being called "Blanco" (a translation of his last name). As White learns of the impact of his concern for the welfare of the team members, he invests time and energy in familiarizing himself with cross-country. When he finds that he has prepared the team to run only on flat terrain, and not climbing and descending slopes, he acknowledges his responsibility in the team's defeat and quickly changes their training routine. White also notices the profound ties of affection between Latino adolescents and their parents.

White's initial failure with the Latino teenagers entails a cultural clash that he overcomes by getting more involved in the lives of the team members, but to the detriment of his own family life. Thomas, the fastest athlete, challenges his authority, insisting: "We are not runners, we are pickers. We are always gonna be pickers.... It is never gonna change." These words display a resigned outlook about the opportunities available to him and the other team members in McFarland: their physical efforts result in few occasions for advancement and recognition. Despite the teens' stance, White spends more time with them, even forgetting his own daughters' birthday celebration. In one scene, he drives around town and finds Thomas sitting on an overpass. Despite the early tension between them, White takes the opportunity to ask the young Latino about himself and his familial circumstances. Although the coach notices the profound ties of affection between Latin adolescents and their parents, Thomas reveals— in spite of his bravado—that he still needs the guidance and supervision of a caring adult. Acting as a concerned mentor, White saves him from personal injury or even death with a candid talk in which he opens up about his own shortcomings and convinces Thomas that belonging to a team means being part of a new "family."

McFarland, USA does not hide the problems of a town populated mainly by Latinos. Just as evident as the residents' hospitability and generosity are youth who threaten and disrupt the town's hard-working environment are also evident. While the film does not give them screen time, one night their presence is felt sowing chaos and violence, perhaps explaining the prominent place that the local penitentiary occupies so close to the school. Gangs jeopardize the wellbeing of all members of the local community and are a constant reminder that they co-opt young, disaffected Latinos whose lives take place at the margins of society due to their social class and intense manual labor. Another issue among Latino fathers is their prioritization of work over leaning and extracurricular activities. Mr. Díaz, for example, sees his sons' participation in the cross-country team as a luxury, while Mr. Valles tells Thomas, "Saca la cara de esos libros, van a arruinar tus ojos. Nadie necesita libros en el campo" [Take your face out of the books. They will ruin your eyes. Nobody needs books in the countryside]. Both fathers appreciate work in the fields as a form of survival, without considering the benefits of an education.

Within this context, the McFarland cross-country team defies the stasis and conformism of the local Latino community. Whereas the team members always end in the same place, returning to their town after each competition, participating in races across the state takes them outside of their habitual milieu and opens their eyes to new opportunities and dreams. After the McFarland team qualifies for the state championship, White takes them to see the Pacific Ocean, a first-time experience that conveys both a recognition for their efforts and a widening of the Latino teens' mental horizons. For these youth, competing is also a means of showing their talents and earning respect outside their tightly-knit community. Conscious of the steep challenges that the Latino teens face, White gives them a pep talk, encouraging them to "Believe in yourself and in your team mates." The objective assessment used in the cross-country races highlights their undisputable achievements for both themselves and larger audiences. Crossing the finish line at the competitions is an apt metaphor for the encouragement needed for the Latino athletes to move beyond their individual and local circumstances, thus projecting themselves as citizens of a larger community. *McFarland, USA* reflects what Martin Japtok has noticed in relation to some ethnic bildungsromane: "encounters with the mainstream and a maturation process, however, cause the main characters to reconsider their relationship both to the ethnic group in general and to the dominant parent figure in particular" (2005, 21). For the Latinos of the McFarland cross-country team, competing and winning far from their community reveals that they are ready to tackle new journeys, particularly those leading to postsecondary education, a path that White encourages them to consider. The final credits show that all seven runners of the original team that won the state championship in 1987 attended college and returned to McFarland as counselors, teachers, and other civil service professionals. Therefore, their way out of working as pickers for life did not necessarily imply moving out of their community; rather, they returned and enriched it in other ways.

Spare Parts

Directed by Sean McNamara, *Spare Parts* is based on Joshua Davis' 2004 article that later became a New York Times bestseller, *Spare Parts: Four Undocumented Teenagers, One Ugly Robot, and the Battle for the American Dream*. With a script by Elissa Matsueda, *Spare Parts* was produced by Pantelion-Televisa, a company which, according to Henry Puente, saw in 2013 the unforeseen success of its film *Instructions Not Included* (Eugenio Derbez), and thus, decided to invest heavily in films for the Latinx audience (2019, 46). With a box-office gross of $3,6 million, *Spare Parts* narrates the real-life story of a group of Latino high schoolers from a public school in Arizona who took part in a robotics competition against teams from Duke, Stanford, and MIT, among others. Despite their humble means and low budget, the team of Latino students won first place in this prestigious competition. *Spare Parts* went into production in October 2013, a year after the passing of DACA and was completed in April 2014. The film received mixed reviews. Sheri Linden, the reviewer for *Hollywood Reporter*, wrote that "Matsueda's screenplay is alert to details that ground the film in the day-to-day lives of young people who are American in every way but technically" (2015, n.p.). For her part, Susan Wloszczyna of the

Roger Ebert blog found the film "more exhausting than it is inspiring. No A for effort here, just a passing grade for at least attempting to shine a light on a continuing problem that plagues the immigrant community" (2015, n.p.). In her review, Wloszczyna mentions *To Sir, with Love* (James Clavell 1967), but does not make parallels with more recent Latino youth films.

Spare Parts situates the action in an Arizona high school. The initial takes show a montage of several ethnic places in Phoenix with street murals and locally-owned businesses and different students as a new school day begins. As the camera shifts to Carl Hayden Community High School, there is a brief shot of a fence surrounding the school, which implies that it is more than a place of learning; it is also a place of containment. When Mrs. Lowry (Jamie Lee Curtis), the school principal is introduced, she indicates that she was just dealing with a fire marshal, possibly because of a prank, suggesting an environment that at times is unsafe. As she interviews Mr. Cameron (George López), a well-credentialed-engineer-turned-high school substitute teacher, she also mentions the school's high turnover of educators, a fact that conveys their dissatisfaction with the profession, the school, or both. In addition, as she and Cameron tour the school, the halls appear dark with almost no lighting, underscoring the grim statistics that Lowry shares: "It is impossible to estimate how many students will go to college. Possibly a third claim to go, but then they drop out after a semester or two. It is not easy. Half of them, are undocumented and then every once in a while, one of their classmates disappears and is deported to Mexico the next day." The following scene further shows a lack of resources: there are three working computers for 2,000 students, and Mrs. Kolinsky (Marisa Tomei) tries to stop a scuffle between female students saying that the school nurse is not available, revealing staffing deficits. For Cameron, the school is presented as a place of petty crime. First, student Lorenzo Santillán (José Julián) alters the sensors of the substitute's car. Second, Cameron inquires why students do not open their books, he is shown the cabinet where they are stored, only to discover that it is locked to prevent theft.

In a departure from other school films, *Spare Parts* tackles head-on the vulnerable status of four undocumented Latino students. This segment of the Latinx population has suffered both low high school graduation rates and low access to postsecondary education (Gándara and Contreras 2009, 27). The lack of avenues for undocumented Latino students is presented from the film's initial takes. Driven Oscar (Carlos Pena), who states, "I have places to go," hopes to join the Army, but given that he cannot claim American citizenship, his dreams to serve become unattainable. His plight is also a common one for undocumented youth who cannot apply for financial aid. Walter Nichols, who has studied the plight of DREAMers, explains that "as children moved into adulthood, the constraints of their 'illegality' become more apparent and burdensome" (2013, 8). In *Spare Parts*, Mexican-born Oscar suffers the consequence of his illegal status. Without the possibility of a career in the military, he quickly searches for another venue that could lead to opportunities after his high school graduation. For him, the robotics competition is a way to both redirect his energies and show his leadership abilities. Oscar displays a determination that has rarely been seen in cinematic representations of Latino youth when he uses one of the three in-high-demand school computers to print the flyer for the robotic competition. Despite his limited possibilities, he is highly motivated, a quick learner, and extremely articulate. His initiative makes him approach Cameron, who challenges him to gather a small group for the robotics club. Oscar first recruits Cristian (David del Río), a computer nerd who is being bullied. Lorenzo joins the robotics team after Mr. Cameron catches him breaking into Ms. Lowry's car and Luis Aranda (Oscar Gutiérrez) is also invited to the team. Jeannette Catsoulis argues that "each of the young men, students at Carl Hayden Community High School in Phoenix, is permitted a single, identifying trait" (2015, n.p.). All four students, however, share their undocumented status.

Even though the Latino members of the robotics team are all undocumented, Oscar and Lorenzo are given special status as they both tell their stories. One evening, Oscar tells his girlfriend Karla (Alexa Pena Vega) his journey of immigration: as an eight-year-old, he was hidden in a van for hours and promised a Happy Meal, but the emotions of the day overwhelmed him and he fell asleep, missing his opportunity to have the coveted burger. For his part, Lorenzo speaks about his mother's deportation and the fact that he has not seen her in six years. Oscar's and Lorenzo's confessions are significant. Sarah Wright and Tom Whitaker, who have studied the use of voice in film, note that "the act of speaking is thus intimately bound with broader questions of political agency, alerting us to the way in which identity—and, in particular national and social identity—can be constructed and contested" (2017, 91). Lorenzo's words reveal the problematic effects caused by the deportation of a family member. By using his voice, Oscar not only recounts his migration to the United States, but also and more importantly, expresses his lack of political agency as a young undocumented immigrant with few available opportunities due to the lack of documents. Oscar's story foregrounds his destiny as an undocumented Latino teen: his dreams are deferred and the promise of achieving recognition due to merit seems to fail to materialize. Moreover, he has to make multiple sacrifices just to evade deportation. When he is warned about an impending arrest, he decides to break up with Karla to liberate her from the fate of being with him, constantly subjected to insecurity and the threat of upheaval. His words seem to be premonitory, as moments later, he is approached by a man who might be an ICE official and has to run to save himself, probably from being arrested. Viewers see him sleeping on the bathroom floor of his high school, an action that suggests that he lacks safety at home, but feels secure at his school, in part, thanks in part to the robotics team.

The group solidifies around Mr. Cameron, the club's advisor who initially appears as a reluctant mentor given that his position is temporary. Furthermore, his recent arrival at the high school does not make him an involved member of the school community. Here it is important to mention that López incarnates two real-life White high school teachers: Fredi Lajvardi and Allan Cameron. In the film, Cameron's character slowly warms up to the possibility of helping the students enter the robotics competition. His main strength is the ease with which he relates to them, as they all use street smarts to overcome obstacles and find creative solutions. *Spare Parts* shows that their ingenuity comes from their experience in finding solutions to the many constraints and hardships of being undocumented. Oscar is constantly vigilant about the presence of immigration authorities who can deport him. Cristian sleeps in an unheated trailer and suffers the absence of his father who is a migrant worker. Lorenzo has seen his mother being deported and has to cover for his brother's pranks to maintain his clean record. And Luis faces the stigma of being considered unintelligent due to his big size and his tendency to use few words. Despite their backgrounds, Cameron challenges the team members in many ways. First, he asks them "to put themselves out there," that is to say, to raise money for the materials needed to build the robot. Oscar quickly sets out to solicit donations, and when he realizes the respect given to the Army uniform, he wears it and secures donations from local businesses. Second, when the team has to build a model for their prototype, Cameron encourages the members to work collaboratively.

As in *McFarland, USA*, in *Spare Parts*, the fact that the main activity is an extracurricular has both positive and negative implications for the representation of Latino and their interest in attending college. On the positive side, the film portrays Latino students' engagement in an activity that goes beyond the usual class schedule, showing their high motivation in this competition. On the negative side, their tight-knit community separates them from the main, more diverse student body of their high school, stressing academic segregation. Nonetheless, the group's composition seems to be based on the different talents and abilities of their members who happen to be mostly undocumented Latino students. In this regard, involved teacher Ms. Kolinsky alerts Cameron (and viewers) early on that she is watching what is going on in the robotics club. Her attentiveness to the students' needs and activities portrays her as a godmother figure for them. While Wloszczyna has read this character as Cameron's love interest, Ms. Kolinsky is the crucial link between the extracurricular organization and the high school and lends validity to the student club. In one opportunity, when she finds out that Mr. Cameron may leave the school, she tells him, "Every day they (the students) are told in a hundred ways that they are worthless, that they are beyond hope. They are kids. They need protection." Like Cameron, Kolinsky is another member of the dominant culture, who oversees the Latino teens.

One particular event that exposes the status difference between Cameron and the Latino students is their trip to California to attend the robotics competition. First, Lowry reminds Cameron that he will be crossing state lines with four undocumented students, and thus, he needs to avoid speeding and being stopped by the police. Once in California, Cameron shows his mentees the Pacific Ocean as he drives them to the competition site. This scene is symbolic as the Latino students are reaching the geographic border of the United States as they arrive at their destination, in a journey similar to the one so many Americans took to the West. Later, Cameron takes them to see the ocean and the beach—places of leisure and socialization. The timing for this excursion is crucial as it takes place in the middle of the competition. Thanks to the teacher's initiative, the Latino students feel temporarily liberated, momentarily leaving behind the pressures of the contest. This pause by the sea serves the purpose of highlighting the teacher's expansion of the young Latinos' minds: he has taken them to the continental confines of the American territory. Just like the robotics competition, the touristic enjoyment of the ocean introduces the Latino students to a new experience—playing with the waves—and a new landscape, made possible by the White educator. But despite his efforts to free the students from their burdens, Oscar tells Cameron that ICE has been looking for him, a stark reminder of the young Latino's undocumented status.

Nonetheless, participation in the robotics club provides the four Latino students with an unusual sense of belonging. *Spare Parts* chronicles the process through which these youth use their energies and problem-solving skills to tackle laws of physics and electrical circuits. As the members of the robotics team bond, they discover that they experience similar challenges and a shared cultural background. The night before the competition, Oscar and Lorenzo re-wire their prototype's circuit. Their closeness reveals that both have gained a new respect for each other: while Lorenzo still does not understand Oscar's desire to join the Army— "They want us out"—, his question to his teammate about his interest in serving reveals his openness to listening to him. For his part, Oscar apologizes for calling Lorenzo names, a fact that suggests a new appreciation for him. Their newfound trust and care for each other is one of the most valuable lessons of their preparation for the competition. The film's ending presents them excelling as a unified team in a prestigious STEM contest. The young Latinos of *Spare Parts* can successfully perform on an uneven playfield in which creativity has to offset a lack of resources. The constraints that they face in their daily lives have fully prepared them to innovate with scant means and a consistent level of dedication.

The victory of the Latino youth at the demanding contest acts as a catalyst for their path to postsecondary education. The rolling credits update viewers on the four students on whose lives the film was based, including some of the difficult choices they later made. Given that their undocumented status did not make them eligible for financial aid or scholarships, a special fund was set up for them. Oscar's story is emphasized by footage of Senator Dick Durbin petitioning for his case in Congress: the young Latino graduated with a degree in Engineering Mechanics from Arizona State University. He turned himself in and was deported but later joined the Army and became an American citizen. The other three attended a community college: Lorenzo became a chef and opened a catering business with Luis and Cristian. The positive experience of the robotics club paved the way for these Latinos' high school graduations, postsecondary education, and successful careers.

Concluding Remarks

In the time of the "vanishing Latino males in higher education," *McFarland, USA* and *Spare Parts* make Latino youth their focal point, showing the different challenging aspects of their lives:

low income, parental indifference or opposition to higher education, and undocumented status. In successfully overcoming these obstacles, Latino youth are shown as winners, in both athletic and robotics competitions, a needed step to build their self-confidence and showcase their talents before entering colleges across America. This more conspicuous representation of Latino youth has played a significant role in diversifying the types of adolescence found in films from the United States. They represent the new talent needed for the continuity and revival of meaningful forms of citizenship in the United States.

Although in *McFarland, USA* and *Spare Parts* and similar to other American films about minorities in high schools—White male mentors, who do not belong to the Latino community, guide Latinos out of their comfort zone, the coach and advisor in these two films are presented as less than ideal: in *McFarland, USA*, Jim White has been repeatedly demoted and in *Spare Parts*, Fred Cameron at first appears reluctant to become involved in the lives of his Latino students. But precisely because the mentors are learning alongside the Latino youth, their stamina, determination, and problem-solving also influence them. These adults, in turn, invest in their mentees' and expand their horizons: in both films, we find an excursion to the Ocean as a much-needed pause between the taxing demands of the competitions. These trips are also opportunities for leisure and bonding surrounded by natural beauty.

While *McFarland, USA* enjoyed considerable box-office success, *Spare Parts* allows two Latinos to tell their stories as undocumented teenagers. In doing so, the film shows the toll that the lack of legal status has on some Latino youth. Shot two years after the passing of DACA, *Spare Parts* makes a powerful statement about the plight of Latino high school students before the law that was approved during the second Obama administration. If adolescence has been considered as a period of second-class citizenship, for the Latino adolescents, their citizenship is even more devoid of rights as they face numerous challenges in their access to quality education and attention from qualified adults. Problems such as lack of family engagement (particularly for some members of the first generation), undocumented status, and low income (or the intersectionality of being a student and worker), emphasize their restricted citizenship, and hence, their lack of options for viable paths towards postsecondary education and upward mobility. Considered together *McFarland, USA* and *Spare Parts* are predicated on the values and potential of young Latino protagonists who are becoming an important segment of the American population.

Endnotes:

1. Rocío Rivadaneyra et al. cite a study of 50 popular films in 1996 in which Latinos were only 2 of the 147 lead characters (2007, 263).
2. Prudence Carter wrote:

   I delight in the possibility of the social and psychological benefits that President Obama's representation of excellence and leadership might have on Black and brown schoolchildren, as well as their nonblack and nonbrown peers, as they become immersed in daily media images and messages about President Obama and his work. (2009, 287)

3. Steve Murdock, former U.S. Census Director during the Bush administration, pointed out that "clearly there is a college-going culture among the Hispanic population" (in Marcus 2016), a statement supported by recent data from the National Center for Education Statistics: "the percentage of Hispanic 18- to 24-year-olds enrolled in colleges and universities increased from 21.7 percent in 2000 to 39.2 percent in 2016" (2016, n.p.).
4. Caro directed the highly acclaimed film *Whale Rider* (2002), about a Maori girl who is dismissed because of her gender.
5. *McFarland, USA* was shot in Albuquerque, New Mexico.
6. One of the films differences from real life is that Coach Jim White worked in a middle school (not high school) whose building was close to the local correctional facility and penitentiary.

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Old Blood, New Body: Gender on a Spectrum in *Richard II*

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Abstract:

When it comes to Richard II, this is a king with two bodies and not the typical body politic and body natural—but the representation of both the masculine and feminine bodies. In general people have seen Richard as either odd, an exaggerated masculine figure, or simply as a weak king. The loss of his power usually overshadows his reign and his divine right to rule is ignored. I want to connect these things that reflect the parts of Richard and demonstrate how together they make a new type of sovereignty. In my attempt to break down the categories of gender, I offer a blending of the genders to define Richard; although he successfully maneuvers back and forth through ideas of maleness and femaleness, it has an overall negative impact for the citizens on his ability to reign. In this paper, I will demonstrate how the ambiguous gender of Richard hinders him from retaining his crown and ruling among a group of dominant men. While I do not ascribe his masculine femininity as the absolute factor towards his undoing, this text does attribute his androgyny as a significant part in constructing his multilayered persona.

Keywords: Gender, Feminine, Masculine, Kingship, Richard II

When it comes to Richard II, this is a king with two bodies and not the typical body politic and body natural—but the representation of both the masculine and feminine bodies. Throughout the play, Richard embraces aspects attributed to both genders and, as Anne Fausto-Sterling writes, "concepts of masculinity and femininity might overlap so completely as to render the very notion of gender difference irrelevant" (Fausto-Sterling 2000, 69). The dilemma of Richard's kinship, I argue, stems from his performance of a non-binary character, which goes against the masculine idea of a ruler in the early modern period. In the play there is an absence of Richard behaving entirely male or female and in multiple scenes we witness an execution of both equally. Possessing these two genders causes tension between his two kingly bodies, while the feminine invades the political body, the masculine invades his natural body. Operating as a non-binary character, Richard's uncles and cousins constantly question the king's inconsistent behavior which ultimately leads to his downfall. In this paper, I will demonstrate how the ambiguous gender of Richard hinders him from retaining his crown and ruling among a group of dominant men. While I do not ascribe his masculine femininity as the absolute factor towards his undoing, this text does attribute his androgyny as a significant part in constructing his multilayered persona. Since Richard does not conform to a specific identity and navigates between femininity and masculinity, he complicates the way in which he is perceived. Although he is in this complex situation, Richard manages to personally retain his power regardless of the gender he is exuding, in fact he appears to be at his most potent state when he is theatrical and subservient, actions far from the idea of a brawny soldier.

In general people have seen Richard as either odd, an exaggerated masculine figure, or simply as a weak king. The loss of his power usually overshadows his reign and his divine right to rule is ignored. I want to connect these things that reflect the parts of Richard and demonstrate how together they make a new type of sovereignty. The text enables readers to consume Richard as a feminine character, more concerned with dress rather than his country as shown in "Privileging the Feminine: Courtly Revisions of Masculinity," "Richard II was criticized for lavish domestic expenditures, and his penchant for fashionable attire for himself and his court contributed to political opponents branding him as effeminate" (Keiser 1997, 150-151). In my attempt to break down the categories of gender, I offer a blending of the genders to define Richard; although he successfully maneuvers back and forth through ideas of maleness and femaleness, it has an overall negative impact for the citizens on his ability to reign. It is also worth mentioning Christopher Flecther's text, *Richard II: Manhood, Youth, and Politics, 1377-99,* and how during Richard's time there was not a concrete definition for the word masculine and instead the word manhood was often used—since he was often considered a boy because of his young age, this would have also stripped him from practicing society's concept of masculinity.

By using queer and feminist theorist more specifically Jack Halberstam, Judith Butler, Madhavi Menon, and Anne Fausto-Sterling to analyze this text I believe it opens up the conservation to go beyond the traditional gender aspects. Richard is transformed into this queer character because the way he acts is odd, not only for a king, but for the early modern period in general. As stated before, Richard is constantly switching between the concepts of weak and strong, and when he behaves in a particular way it usually occurs at the least expected time. There are certain features these two theories have, which assists in the consumption of Richard as both man and woman, king and subordinate. Madhavi Menon's *Shakesqueer* shapes the direction that I am trying to take with *Richard II,* by offering a reading that goes beyond labeling Richard as a homosexual and shaping him more as a new portrayal of a king, one who is between both man and God, male and female.

To begin, it is important to note that I am using Jack Halberstam's term for masculinity to discuss Richard's enactment of it or albeit lack thereof. He writes in "An Introduction to Female Masculinity," "Because so few people actually match any given community standards for male and female, in other words, gender can be imprecise and therefore multiply relayed through a solidly binary system...Ambiguous gender, when and where it does appear, is inevitably transformed into deviance, thirdness, or a blurred version of either male or female" (Halberstam 1998, 20). Richard embodies this blurriness, while he is not fully feminized or masculinized it is essential to recognize this in-between space he is occupying. The play itself tries to position Richard in belonging to a specific gender, while I believe, from Halberstam's blending of male and female, he is a combination of both. He may not represent the traditional idea of a king, but he is still the king nonetheless. When it come to the legitimacy to the throne there is no doubt Richard II's blood secures him. Son of the Black Prince, the crown rightfully becomes the possession of ten-year old Richard, after the passing of both his father and grandfather. Even though he is technically king his youth restricts him from ruling England and his uncles assume responsibility over the land and their young nephew. The lack of control Richard has when he gains the crown foreshadows his inability to maintain his nobility. When the audience encounters Richard II he is well out of his adolescences; however, a suspicion about his potential to rule effectively looms about the land. Almost instantly he is contrasted with his manlier cousin Bolingbroke, who will question Richard's gender and leadership until he is deposed. The gardener comments on the failed rule of Richard,

> They are; and Bolingbroke
> Hath seized the wasteful king. O, what pity is it
> That he had not so trimm'd and dress'd his land
> As we this garden! We at time of year
> Do wound the bark, the skin of our fruit-trees,
> Lest, being over-proud in sap and blood,
> With too much riches it confound itself:
> Had he done so to great and growing men,
> They might have lived to bear and he to taste
> Their fruits of duty: superfluous branches
> We lop away, that bearing boughs may live:
> Had he done so, himself had borne the crown,
> Which waste of idle hours hath quite thrown down. (3.4. 55-67)

This particular language sets up the comparison between Richard and a nurturer within the text. He neglects to care for his people and similar to the weeds, Bolingbroke overtakes Richard and assumes the dominate position. Richard fails in being both king and mother via the wording of the gardener, he does not direct the men that are growing under his rule in a particular way and they eventually become disorderly. Cynthia Herrup writes, "To rule well required both traits associated with both the masculine and the feminine: kings had to be both unyielding and tender, both economical and bountiful with words and goods, and both courageous and peace loving" (Herrup 2006, 498). Nonetheless, the way this scene is presented makes it seem as though Richard is punished for not being both mild and severe in keeping his subjects at a distance. The very men beneath him consume the upper hand when they infiltrate Richard personally and politically. Here his fluidity allows his court and his cousin to usurp his politically position, which negatively impacts him in the end. This scene goes on to have Richard's queen enter into the conversation and usurp the dominant role of a ruler speaking to a servant. In the absence of her husband, Isabella takes on the manly figure, as her husband is shaped into this delicate body on a doomed path. Rebecca Laroche and Jennifer

Munroe writes, "Feminist scholars have tended to see Queen Isabella as possessing importance typically only as she exists as yet another early modern 'mirror' to Elizabeth or other notable historical woman or extension of Richard's masculinity or potential redemption; she is they claim, a 'pathetic melancholy spectator of her husband's downfall,' characterized more by her absence than her presence, or a type of biblical Ruth" (Laroche 2014, 43). The text is often trying to have someone fill in the parts of masculinity that Richard lacks, making his feminine masculine presence appear as more of a problem than it should be considered. By reading Queen Isabella as an extension to her husband's maleness, I argue it shows how freely gender truly is among both sexes. The writers of this text goes on to claim, "In both cases, the female and the nonhuman serve the masculinist construct" (Laroche 2014, 43). The traits that create the identity for what is male would not be possible without the identity of women. The ability to define masculinity has to have something to differentiate itself from, and when Richard closes the gap on differences he becomes a complexed character.

The perception of Richard becomes swayed since his actions of kingly command differs from his dramatic speech, dress, and deed. The social idea of how he should dominate over his land conflicts with his deliberate conscious decisions. Aside from gender grouping, Richard is behaving the way he wants to, which helps strengthens his individuality and places him on a spectrum. With this being said, I think it is important to start at the end of the play for the best description of Richard, where although he is physically and emotionally at his weakest state, he is more forceful than we have seen. The deposition scene captures the beautiful language of a fallen king to his usurper. Although Richard is weeping at this moment of defeat, his speech is stronger than his words at the beginning of the play. Instead of emasculating him fully, his tears provide him with a source of strength. The weeping done before the court makes this entire exchange of titles more personal and intrusive—and having the amount of control to allow others to invade and observe the wounds of a crumbling sovereign solidifies Richard's endurance and perseverance. By openly displaying his weakness, he takes rule over what his audience is able to experience. While the play makes it seem as though Richard is the spectacle, it is really all those who are watching him that is show, as he has already labeled them as traitors similar to Judas. A tearful Richard states,

> Mine eyes are full of tears; I cannot see.
> And yet salt water blind them not so much
> But they can see a sort of traitors here.
> Nay, if I turn mine eyes upon myself
> I find myself a traitor with the rest,
> For I have given here my soul's consent
> T'undeck the pompous body of a king,
> Made glory base and sovereignty a slave,
> Proud majesty a subject, state a peasant. (4.1. 234-243).

Ricard hurls insults as he stands at the center of their attention and his crying should alter our perception of him; yet, the action of sobbing becomes weakened by his powerful words. By essentially emasculating him and stripping him of his power, his court becomes the weak men. Those who followed him before are now turning their backs on Richard's complicated rule and reality. Their traitorous positions morally situate Richard above them, even though he is the wounded one. Nevertheless, the text and many others read this display of sobbing as a loss of control. Dorothea Kehler states in *King of Tears: Mortality in* "Richard II", "Watching Richard the king weep, helplessly they witness loss of control where control is most expected" (Kehler 1985, 10). While it appears Richard makes his court and his citizens uncomfortable by deviating from their expectation of him, I believe his tears cloak his slander towards his betrayers—and their confusion about the entire scene unfolding is what makes them uneasy. He is not fully masculine and not fully feminine, but performing an action of both genders. His feebleness does not incapacitate Richard, however, it does bewilder his audience. Thus, the ambiguity of Richard is again the focus since his words stray from his presentation of them. Donovan Sherman writes a seemingly similar argument pertaining to Richard's control,

> The most prominently cast-off object is, of course, the king himself, who in his deposition ends where he began, in a public display of monarchical power transferring hands. Seemingly unlike the other discarded items and with an oft-noted irony, the king actually has a degree of agency in the very act of removing his agency. While Richard is largely despised and ridiculed, he is also the only figure capable of serving the connection between the divine and the political. (Sherman 2014, 22-23).

The uniqueness of Richard is often underestimated in this play, because his theatrics are viewed as a negative rather than as an absolute source of power. Sherman's assessment emphasizes my point of Richard being made more powerful via the fluidity of his gender.

Judith Butler discusses the problem with assigning an identity to a specific gender in her book *Gender Trouble.* Because gender is fluid and unrestricted, categorizing something as only womanly or manly becomes problematic. Butler states, "Gender ought not to be construed as a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts follow; rather, gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a *stylized repetition of acts*" (Butler 2007, 191). Richard's transition between society's belief of what is female and what is male is questioned only because it is different. Since Richard is the king then this idea of aggressiveness and assertiveness is something he should perform all the time, but these traits are not just reserved for the men. The text leaves room for the argument to develop more through the women within the play, who are widows, wives, and mothers. There are three moments where the women command the respect from the men in court and express their thoughts and voices freely. The Duchess of York pleads to King Henry, "A woman, and thy aunt, Great King; 'tis I. Speak with me, pity me! Open the door! A beggar begs that never begged before" (5.3. 74-76). While the Duchess of Gloucester demands revenge from Gaunt, "In suff'ring thus thy brother to be slaughtered, Thou show'st the naked pathway to thy life, Teaching stern murder how to butcher thee. That which in mean men we entitle patience, Is pale cold cowardice in noble breast. What shall I say? To safeguard thine own life, The best way is to venge my Gloucester's death" (1.3. 30-36). In both of these scenes we see the women taking on a very authoritative role, exacting some form of response from the men they are speaking to.

In writing assertive women into the play, it makes it easier to comprehend Richard's ability to display submission when Bolingbroke overthrows him; there is power in femininity. R.A. Martin discusses the absence of sexuality within the play, "This is why sexuality in the sense of difference does not exist in *Richard II*. Women are neither erotic objects nor are they autonomous subjects. They remain undifferentiated from their husbands and families, and while they have the status of individuals, they lack the contestatory and potentially dangerous self-sufficiency which marks genuine individuality" (Martin 1989, 257-258). Early on in the paper I introduced the two bodies of Richard, aside from his political and natural body, these are the two genders that mark his individualism. His untraditional manners elicit unwarranted judgment from those who do not view gender as existing on a scale within the text.

Richard II offers a biased reading when it comes to constructing the hierarchy of gender simply based on the contrasting images of the two cousins. Richard's depiction of a softer male complicates the presence of a manlier and tougher Bolingbroke, the one who believes he is the representation England needs, and only one can govern the people. Derrick Higginbottom writes, "The play, though, articulates the difference between Bolingbroke and Richard much more starkly in terms of gender, imagining Bolingbroke as masculine and the king as feminine" (Higginbottom 2014, 64). Bolingbroke and Richard are engaged in much more than family rivalry, their opposing personalities further separate the two men, presenting readers with two examples to characterize a man. *Richard II's* impartial build up to a banished Bolingbroke who has come back to defeat a tyrant king weakens Richard before his death. Here is a subject undermining the decisions of a king. By returning before his banishment Bolingbroke disrespects the authority of his cousin and triggers the same disloyalty in others. Bolingbroke tries to justify returning from his banishment early by referencing to his blood and upon the cruelty of his cousin,

> As I was banish'd, I was banish'd Hereford;
> But as I come, I come for Lancaster.
> And, noble uncle, I beseech your grace
> Look on my wrongs with an indifferent eye:
> You are my father, for methinks in you
> I see old Gaunt alive; O, then, my father,
> Will you permit that I shall stand condemn'd
> A wandering vagabond; my rights and royalties
> Pluck'd from my arms perforce and given away
> To upstart unthrifts? Wherefore I was born

If that my cousin king be King of England,
It must be granted that I am Duke of Lancaster. (2.3.112-123)

This scene emphasizes the tension growing between Bolingbroke and Richard, with Bolingbroke representing a more forceful and aggressive vengeance. When Richard abides by the laws of the land, he is illustrated as hysterical; for example, his decision to banish Bolingbroke temporarily was an extreme punishment to take against a kinsman, but the permanent banishment Mowbray receives was justifiable, mainly through him accepting his punishment and no one fighting against it. When Richard is harsh, the men in his court treat his actions as a form of exaggerated masculinity, which feminizes him through their belief that he does not properly perform the manly role. In a sense to compensate for the mannish trait he lacks, Richard inflates his control and Bolingbroke's return hints at the idea that Richard is a king that is not taken seriously. Other men do not take Richard fervently, because of his inability to prove himself more masculine than they are. By not having the expected form of manliness his leadership is questioned and his decisions are often challenged.

Once again the text sets up a biased reading for the type of man Bolingbroke is over the individualism of Richard. Seda Emine writes, "Richard II is the legitimate king with divine right to rule; however, he acts as a weak ruler and fails to exercise justice, which prevents him from having a just government. On the other hand, Bolingbroke take the throne as a stronger and more efficient sovereign as he acts lawfully and has the support of the whole English nation as an ideal ruler" (Emine 2018, 844-845). In this description of Richard and Bolingbroke the words 'weak' and 'strong' are left vague. Which leads me to assign the weakness in Richard to his feminine masculinity. Bolingbroke may act more lawfully, but neither this nor his strength makes him a stronger ruler as the text seems to suggest. The idea that Bolingbroke's undeniable virility boosts his support among the people and makes his removal of Richard from the throne seem acceptable is perplexing in and of itself. Although, Richard may not have been the perfect king to the people, their loyalty to him was equivocal as well. Richard reacts to the news of Bolingbroke and others uprising against him,

Mine ear is open and my heart prepared.
The worst is worldly loss thou canst unfold.
Say, is my kingdom lost? Why 'twas my care,
And what loss is it to be rid of care?
Strives Bolingbroke to be as great as we?
Greater he shall not be. If he serve God
We'll serve Him too, and be his fellow so.
Revolt our subjects? That we cannot mend.
They break their faith to God as well as us.
Cry woe, destruction, ruin, loss, decay:
The worst is death, and death will have his day. (3.2.89-99)

When the citizens stop believing in the capability of Richard, they lean on the manlier Bolingbroke. The way he runs his country loses him followers and allegiance, which continues to emasculate him. His subjects, those who were supposed to obey his command, find security in the opposite of their king. Richard's unconventional kingship clashes with the gender model for his period, in the attempt to stray from what is considered normal he widens the gap between those who will honor his position and those who believe he is unfit.

Richard's ambiguity pairs well with the position of the king, mainly because the king is already equipped with the idea of two bodies. The king has to split himself to meet the demands of the people and fulfill his own pleasures, separating the bodies does not alter the king however. This is because what the body natural does should not influence the body politic, the concept runs parallel to Richard's feminine masculinity. His language constantly provides him with the strength he needs regardless if he is appearing feminine or masculine. In Judith Brown's essay "Pretty Richard (in Three Parts) from *Shakesqueer* she writes, "The sweet tongue is thus the shared sign of pleasure—sensual, poetic, rhetorical, formal—and yet, and yet this is the complication, it will also be the instrument of Richard's demise as king, his untimely commands, his disproportionate demands. Richard's unguarded tongue will lead to his unguarded reign, a reign more thoroughly, openly, and delightedly sensual than it is cautious, abstemious, or judicial" (Brown 2011, 287). I believe this quotation emphasizes both the two bodies and the two genders of Richard. The elements that characterizes him as feminine makes him manly and authoritative, while those luxuries he enjoys gives him an outlet to practice and shape his language. Things that Richard finds pleasurable are not things that the other men in the court would deem brawny, this is the level of complication Brown talks about, the blurriness of the middle ground. The femininity that strengthens him also weakens him through the act of being deposed at the end of the play. Bolingbroke and the other courtly men are not impressed by the tongue of Richard and makes it out to be a disadvantage for him.

Richard introduces a new way to govern over the people in a temperate way and the old traditions of boisterous ruling is challenged. While some of his uncles abide by the olds laws, the younger generations want changed but not the changes brought on by Richard. Many of the old laws make Richard untouchable as the deputy of God; therefore, even though he is considered an awful leader there is an aspect of loyalty that remains. Imke Lichterfield writes, "When Richard realizes that his inheritance derived from the old customs and tries to insist on them, the tides have already turned against him. His crown is practically usurped and his title lost before Bolingbroke even ascends the throne" (Lichterfield 2016, 203). This coincides with my belief that Richard is deposed way before the action of it, his blood and rightful legitimacy to the crown does not matter anymore. He is a king that does not represent the people or dominance and he must be removed. Courtly men discuss the trouble with Richard's rule,

WILLOUGHBY:
The king's grown bankrupt like a broke man.
NORTHUMBERLAND:

Reproach and dissolution hangeth over him.
ROSS:
He hath no money for these Irish wars,
His burdenous taxations notwithstanding,
But by the robbing of the banished Duke.
NORTHUMBERLAND:
His noble kinsman. Most degenerate King!
But, lords, we hear this fearful tempest sing,
Yet seek no shelter to avoid the storm.
We see the wind sit sore upon our sails,
And yet we strike not, but securely perish. (2.1. 258-267)

The money that is supposed to fund the wars is supposedly paying for lavish parties and fancy clothes for Richard. What he chooses to focus on, the arts, should be the least of the king's concern when the citizens are hungry and the land is in danger of being overtaken. Northumberland, Willoughby, and Ross interrogate the obvious fact that Richard is broke and his tyranny must be stopped somehow. However, given the language of the men if Richard's bankruptcy would have stemmed from financing wars, then their perception of him might have been formed differently. Recurrently, his effeminateness hinders their perception of him as a trustworthy king. He does not do his job when it comes to the land and its citizens; therefore, he is no longer the king they need. Bolingbroke on the other hand, is the image of a warrior and someone who will protect the nation if a battle were to arise. His burliness is comforting, while the softer Richard is contentious.

Richard's speech labels him as weak, even though it is done purposefully and tactically. Charles Forker writes in "Unstable Identity in Shakespeare's *Richard II",* "Though one may acknowledge touches of the feminine in Richard's unstable and mutable personality (his almost maternal approach, for instance, to embracing Bolingbroke at Coventry, his touching the ground of Wales like a mother emoting over her baby, his evasion of Northumberland's written charges by the shedding of tears), it is clear that the central conflict in his tragedy, as Shakespeare presents it, is the progressive intensification of his own self-consciousness about the perplexities of royal identity" (Forker 2001, 17). By switching the thought of traits a king embodies Richard is perceived to be an unstable character; yet, he is the only one who remains the same from the start of the play until the end. Richard's refusal to alter his speech or change his personality solidifies his self-confidence and integrity, the person he is should be welcomed and not crucified. This is one reason he links himself to Christ throughout the text, he is punished for the normal performance of himself. Robert Reed Jr. explains, "Not only were God's powers over man without limit: once they had been willed, they were not reversible" (Reed 2015, 54). With that being said, God did not make a mistake making Richard king and everyone should accept what he brings to the throne, whether they agree with it or not. Richard creates a new sovereign power on a platform God has granted him and those beneath him should follow his lead without hesitation.

Reflecting back on the cultural design of early modern genders that I talk about earlier on in the paper, other essays in *Shakesqueer* assist in analyzing the absurdity of what emasculates a man. Steven Bruhm writes in "The Unbearable Sex of Henry VIII", "In a similar vein, John Bulwer argued in *Anthropometamorphosis* (1654) that 'shaving the chin is justly to be accounted a note of Effeminacy." Indeed, according to Will Fisher, the clean-shaven man in early modern England 'quite literally becomes 'lesse man' or even a 'woman'" (Bruhm 2011, 28). I include this excerpt to draw attention to the fact that Richard could have been feminized by anything during his reign, the ability to slip into either gender with ease should not have a negative effect on Richard, yet it does. Richard's authority within the text starts to diminish the more he is characterized as behaving as a weak king. Masako Hirai writes, "Although Richard seems to be far from an image of power in the proper sense of the word, the play *Richard II* focuses on the theme of power and each separate scene is connected with various kinds of power on various levels. Power here means little in itself. It is interesting because it has something to do with a gap or a dilemma in the play and produce a resistance, and this dilemma is also described on various levels" (Hirai 1997, 371). This gap in the play is the definition of masculinity. Because the text sets up the sturdier, blunt masculinity to prevail over a softer masculine figure, it is hard to consume the play as impartial. While a close reading does provide evidence to how Richard exudes both genders generously, on the surface the favor clearly resides with Bolingbroke. It obvious that two types of powers exist, however, only one is worthy of the crown.

Returning back to the end of the play at the moment where it appears Richard has ceded to his cousin Bolingbroke, his speech restores the brokenness he receives. And through his cries, the natural side of him shapes his vulnerability to be genuine. This act of meekness enhances Richard self-hood without focusing on his gender. Jonathan Lamb notes, "Shakespeare has Richard place himself of the spectrum going from king to beggar and back again, thus making it seem reasonable to call him 'fragmentary.' As we have seen, however, the impression of multiplicity derives from Richard's newfound stylistic wholeness. He knows how to talk about himself as a coherent set of parts because he has begun to talk about his self" (Lamb 2015, 139). Richard's spectrum goes beyond the political and spills over into the body natural. He is naturally both feminine and masculine and this is what makes him complete. The men in court who do not understand Richard see him as fragmented, mainly because he is not fully male. But they do not realize that they too are lacking in complete maleness. Sherman mentions, "By enacting the space between identities, he melts his subjectivity into a nonmimetic brand of action, manipulating his own vestigial body" (Sherman 2014, 32). His fluidity makes Richard a new ruler, a mixture of old and new laws, male and female, body politic and body natural.

Looking beyond the apparent reading of the text, this play suggests the existence of a non-binary king in the early modern period. The king's two bodies are also reflected in his two genders, which blend perfectly together in the creation of a new idea of sovereign power. Although, Richard's feminine masculinity works against him at the end, his reluctance to conform depicts bravery in the face of king who many believe lacks it. While there are many factors that contribute to Richard's downfall, my argument is that many of them would have been overlooked if only Richard matched their description of the model man. While Bolingbroke snatches the crown from his cousin in the play of *Richard II,* in Bolingbroke's own tale we witness that he comes with his own imperfections as well. Nonetheless, Richard dies as a testimony to how people negatively respond to changes. In the disruption of their usual pattern of kingship, Richard creates many enemies, among his family and his citizens.

Reading Richard as a queer sovereign is to examine his performance of the two genders and how he closes the gap between them, showing that there is overlap and analogous traits they share. Butler states, "If gender is the cultural meanings that the sexed body assumes, then a gender cannot be said to follow from a sex in any one way. Taken to its logical limit, the sex/gender distinction suggests a radical discontinuity between sexed bodies and culturally constructed genders. Assuming for the moment the stability of binary sex, it does not follow that the construction of 'men' will accrue exclusively to the bodies of males or that 'women' will interpret only female bodies" (Butler 2007, 9). Richard is reprimanded for not behaving like a man, when the idea of man is significantly opinionated in this text. He is compared to Bolingbroke and when they do not equal one another, he is presumed the weaker of the two—mainly since Bolingbroke publicly talks about battle and fighting, while Richard is more concerned with enacting violence privately. By living on this spectrum of male and female Richard has the freedom to go back and forth between gentle and stern; however, this freedom also costs him, his life. Needless to say, Richard is a threat because he is always in control and he operates beyond the boundaries of gender.

Richard II presents the fall of a tragic king, but depicts a successful individual via Richard. He is not accepted for what he embodies and since he is not the epitome of masculinity he dies without a title or name. Richard says to his cousin, "No, not the name was given me at the font, But 'tis usurped" (4.1.246-247). Bolingbroke tries to take the only source of masculinity that people recognized in Richard and though he succeeds, by the end of this deposition Richard is again convinced that he cannot be copied or disposed of. He is the beginning of a new era of men and his queerness will forever live on. Menon states that queerness "recognized the absurdity of limits and interrupts the ways in which we live our lives and write our texts, but it cannot be contained by how we live and what we write" (Menon 2011, 7). Richard definitely interrupts England with his reign and his deposition, because of his unconventional demeanor. Nonetheless, he remains a prominent figure as a multiplex gendered king who regulates from the margins. It is easy to use Richard's poetical language against him and to emasculate his being—but when reading his words closely his strategically worded wit is apparently one his is greatest and strongest traits.

Ultimately Richard's deposition stems from his fluid personality, which disrupts the concept of sovereignty the early modern period has created. Halberstam writes in *Trans*,* "The concept of 'agender,' then, names a wish to be outside of gender norms, rather than the real experience of being so" (Halberstam 1998, 9). This is where we find Richard existing in the play, outside of the normal performances of gender, at any given time he is performing an aspect of both genders; thus making it hard to identify which category he belongs to. Richard is unable to be labeled and this gives him more freedom as a ruler, which is unacceptable by some of those in his court, especially his cousin. Nonetheless as Harry Benjamin's belief about the wholeness of gender is explained in *Trans** he says, "that no man is 100% man and no woman is 100% woman" (Halberstam 1998, 115). The discrimination against Richard is a modern day nightmare, the idea of a queer ruler makes people upset and they forcibly remove him from his rightful position. As I have stated earlier, Richard may not have been the perfect king and his rule may have been controversial, but it is his ambiguous presence in court that is truly problematic. The people doubt his ability to govern them successfully and instead of having faith in Richard they remove him from authority and give his position to a stronger, vigorous man that his cousin happens to objectify. *Richard II* subtly creates the problem with genders among his court, since Richard would rather dress in extravagant clothing than wear a suit of armor his manhood is questioned and he is sequentially persecuted for his differences. At the end of the play Richard's queer body continues to intrude into the space of both Henry Bolingbroke and England reinforcing this idea that his agender presence will continuously trouble and impact those who knew encountered him. Bolingbroke tries to disassociate himself from the murder of Richard, he even states "Though I did wish him dead, I hate the murderer, love him murdered" (5.6. 39-40). Bolingbroke is forced to confront the uncomfortable double sided feelings about his cousin, further expanding the duplicity of this entire play. Richard's obscure character is transformed into an omnipotent figure, which ties back into his divine right and in the words of Richard, "God save the King!" (4.1.163) and all that he exemplifies.

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Political Sycophantism and State Governance: A Political Discourse Analysis Reading of Niyi Osundare's *The State Visit*

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Abstract:

Postcolonial discourse does not only interrogate western epistemology about postcolonial societies; it is a double-edged discourse that also analyses the activities of postcolonial states in order to establish whether they are not also responsible for their socio-political and cultural demise. This explains why issues of governance and political leadership are fertile discourses in postcolonial literature and cultural studies. This is so because the future of any society depends on how the society is governed. Thus, governance and leadership are the levers that can project a society to the summit of success or to the nadir of underdevelopment. This paper, therefore, aims at articulating the relation between postcolonial political drama and the governmental and leadership situations in postcolonial societies, especially in contemporary Africa. The paper shows how the ideological posture in postcolonial dramaturgy is an interpretation and dramatization of political governance and leadership management in Africa. From the theoretical paradigm of Political Discourse Analysis (PDA), this paper defends the premise that in Niyi Osundare's *The State Visit* (2002) the African postcolony is retrogressing in development because of the kind of political leadership that cropped up in Africa after most African countries gained political independence. This type of leadership and governance has been the trademark in most African states even up to contemporary times. In the play under study, there is an acute lack of visionary and patriotic leadership that can lay the foundation for meaningful development and progress. The political leaders and their sycophants in this play are most of the time indulged in political demagogy, paternalism, manipulation, and sterile propaganda which have very little to do with concrete development and progress in their nations.

Keywords: Postcolonial discourse, governance, leadership, postcolonial drama, political discourse analysis, and paternalism

Introduction

William Tordoff, in *Government and Politics in Africa*, gives a critical analysis of the political situation in Africa after the departure of the colonial masters. The critical spirit that animates Tordoff's work is that the dreams of independence have not been realised because of the excruciating hardship of the downtrodden masses due to the rigid individualism of the ruling elite. Tordoff lays the foundation to the argument that postcolonial discourse does not only interrogate western epistemology about postcolonial societies; it is a multi-faceted discourse that also analyses, *inter alia*, the activities of the postcolonial nations in order to establish whether they are not also responsible for their socio-political and cultural demise. This explains why issues of political governance are fertile discourses in postcolonial literature and cultural studies because the future of any society depends on how the society is governed. Thus, governance and leadership are the levers that can project a society to the summit of success or to the nadir of underdevelopment.

Postcolonial African writers and political scientists have been extremely acerbic of the kind of governance and leadership posture in postcolonial states after the departure of the colonial masters; they interrogate post-independence leadership and wonder whether it was even worth the trouble fighting for independence. To this effect, M.S.C. Okolo, in *African Literature as Political Philosophy*, notes that "In post-colonial Africa those who emerged as leaders are made up for the most part of petit-bourgeois nationalists more concerned with replacing Europeans in the leading positions of power and privilege than with effacing a radical transformation of the state and the society around it" (127). In other words, Okolo's assessment alludes to the fact that the post-colonial African political elite, after replacing the European in the administration of Africa, has become more dangerous to the very existence of the African people because they are more interested in the grandeur and paraphernalia that surround the position of political power and not in meaningful economic and infrastructural development.

Using Niyi Osundare's play, *The State Visit*, this paper articulates the relation between postcolonial drama and public governance in postcolonial societies, especially in contemporary Africa. The paper shows how the ideological frame in postcolonial dramaturgy are an interpretation and dramatization of political governance and leadership management in Africa. In this connection, Thomas Postlewait, in "The Idea of the "Political" in Our Histories of Theatre: Texts, Contexts, Periods, and Problems", notes that "Politics can be situated in the idiolect of each dramatic text, performance' or event – that is, in the semiotic features of the documents, works, and actions, that give them specificity and particularity" (25).

This paper, therefore, postulates that in Niyi Osundare's *The State Visit* (2002) the African postcolony is retrogressing in development because of the kind of political leadership that cropped up in Africa after most African countries gained political independence. This type of leadership and governance has been the trademark in most African states even up to contemporary times. In the play under study, there is an acute lack of visionary and patriotic leadership that can lay the foundation for meaningful development and progress. The political leaders and their cronies in these plays are most of the time indulged in political demagogy, paternalism, manipulation, and sterile propaganda which have very little to do with concrete development and progress in their nations. The activities of the postcolonial government have helped to undermine and slow-down the nation-building project in contemporary African states. However, what is *political sycophantism* and how does it affect *state governance* in postcolonial societies?

The concept of *sycophantism*, or *sycophancy* as the case maybe, is derived from the noun *sycophant*. The word sycophant, in itself, is derived from the Greek work "sykophantes" which has a whole range of synonyms: a flatterer; a swindler; an informant; a stooge; a lackey; or a yes-man. In other words, a sycophant is a person who uses exaggerated compliments, flatteries, or overstated encomiums to gain undue favours or advantages from another even to the detriment of others. In fact, a sycophant is Machiavellian and existentialist in character and strongly believe in the dictum of the end justifying the means. In this case, sycophantism is the attitude or behaviour of giving undue praises to a person or an institution in order to have unjustified favours from the person or institution or structure. By extension, *political sycophantism* could be seen as a political ideology which is aimed at defending a political system that controls a nation even when such a system is counter-productive to the wellbeing of the citizens. Those who indulge in political sycophantism hope to benefit from the largesse of their political leaders in the domain of appointments as the case maybe. In this case, political sycophantism is synonymous to patrimonialism or paternalism. Political sycophantism is different from patriotism because the former has to do with defending of political system in place because one is benefitting from the system while the latter deals with defending one's country. One can hate a political system that rules one's country but it does not mean that the person is not patriotic.

Another concept in political science and legal studies that needs to be elaborated upon is the concept of *state governance*. The word governance is a derivative from the verb "to govern" which signifies "to administer", "to manage", or "to control". In this connection, governance is concerned with the management and control of something – be it an enterprise, a corporation, or the state. Andrew Heywood, in *Key Concepts in Politics*, notes that governance is a broader concept than government. He defines governance as "any mechanism through which ordered rule is maintained is maintained, its central features being the ability to make collective decisions and the capacity to enforce them" (19). This definition shows that the concept of governance is loosely synonymous to administration since one cannot govern without administering or administering without governing. In this vein, the concept of state governance can be defined as the assemblage of all the institutional mechanisms and structures used by the executive arm of the state in the management and control of state activities and its citizens. This form of public control and management can be likened to public governance or administration.

Political sycophancy is a culture in contemporary African politics; it is this practice that has laid the foundation for a crisis in state governance. Preben Kaarsholm, in "States of Failure, Societies in Collapse? Understandings of Violent Conflict in Africa" examines the occurrence of political conflicts in postcolonial Africa and situates the cause of such conflicts in the way politics is practiced in Africa. According to him, the underdeveloped nature of Africa is caused by "its economic underdevelopment" although "a focus for debate has been whether the nature of African politics is in itself to blame for the economic crisis and lagging behind of nations" (3). In his article he asserts that the nature of politics in contemporary Africa is the cause of conflicts and underdevelopment in Africa because "Politics and the state in Africa are understood to operate through rent seeking, personal rule and patrimonialism" (3). This practice is visible in African politics because the political or constitutional structure under which must African states operate has transformed the leaders into political leviathans who are above the institutions that are supposed to govern the nation-states. In this context, the postcolonial leaders control every aspect of political, economic, and social life of the nation; those who desire to get into the administrative machinery of the state must demonstrate unalloyed loyalty to the leader before they can be appointed to positions of power. Thus, in most postcolonial African states, appointments are based on the degree of loyalty accorded to the leader and not on managerial competence as could be seen in Osundare's *The State Visit*. It is this political culture of sycophancy that has led to corruption and bad governance in postcolonial African states.

Theorising Political Discourse Analysis

Theorising Political Discourse Analysis (PDA) and its adaptation as a critical-theoretical paradigm in the interpretation of postcolonial literary texts presupposes the existence of a discourse which can be described as "political". What then is political discourse? Discourse analysts such as Teun A. van Dijk, Paul Chilton, Norman Fairclough, James Paul Gee, and Theo van Leeuwen unanimously agree that the concept of political discourse is complex and, albeit, difficult to define. The complexity of the notion of political discourse has given rise to different definitions of the concept by different discourse analysts. Thus, van Dijk, in "Political Discourse and Ideology", "confined[s] political discourse to the institutionally bound text and talk of politicians" (20). In other words, he is of the opinion that "only those discourses of politicians are considered that are produced in institutional settings, such as governments, parliaments or political parties" (20) are considered as political discourses and "the discourse must be produced by the speaker in her professional role of a politician and in an institutional setting" (20).

Notwithstanding the ideas of Teum van Dijk and those of his peers, it is the standpoint of this paper that political discourse must not only be rendered by professional politicians in a given political context. This paper contends that any discourse that has a political content and directed towards a political goal or dimension can be described as political – irrespective of the person articulating it and regardless of the context. It is for this reason that political discourse, in the context of this paper, is seen as a verbal communication, either oral or written, which is aimed at passing across a political idea with the hope of having a political effect on the reader or audience.; it is a system of political knowledge rendered in a specific language for a specific purpose. Thus, political discourse is concerned with the discourse of political issues in a way that will influence the minds and actions of people in a political society.

Mindful of the above-definition, Political Discourse Analysis (PDA) could be described as an approach in political/cultural studies, sociolinguistics, and discourse analysis which is concerned with the analysis and interpretation of political discourse at the triple levels of form, content, and intention. It is a discursive reading practice that tries to interpret political actions, texts, and talks within their expressive contexts and intentions. Proponents of this approach include, Teun A. van

Dijk, Paul Chilton, Norman Fairclough, James Paul Gee, and Theo van Leeuwen. This discursive strategy is based on the premise that political discourses, be they political actions, texts, or speeches, do not occur by divine prescience but are produced within specific political contexts. Consequently, the content-analyses of these discourses can only be meaningful when the political context of rendition is taken into consideration together with the intention of the discourse. Consequently, Teum A. van Dijk in "What is Political Discourse Analysis?", postulates that in the domain of political discourse, texts are mutually connected to their contexts since they are semiotic resources whose significations are informed by their contexts. Thus, "political discourse" Dijk says "should not be limited to the structural properties of text or talk itself, but also include a systematic account of the context and its relations to discursive structures" (15). Dijk's ideas are also shared by Adrian Beard who argues that texts are discursive products produced by authors "who live in the political and social world of their time" (3). Summarily, Dijk and Beard are of the opinion that political texts are semiotic agents which must be read in conjunction with their contexts in order to be meaningful and functional.

Most of postcolonial African literature could be described as political discourse because of their respective contents and visions. This is because must African writers present themselves, consciously or not, as political activists in their various societies. Ngugi wa Thiong'o, a foundational writer of political literature in Africa, forcefully argues that writers are political animals; thus, literature cannot be separated from political issues. This argument is buttressed in *Writers in Politics* where Ngugi posits that literature is coterminous with politics. In a Preface to the book, Ngugi contends that every writer is involved in politics and the only difference is the type of politics they are indulged into. In this context, Ngugi argues that "Imaginative literature in so far as it deals with human relationships and attempts to influence a people's consciousness and politics, in so far as it deals with and is about operation of power and relationship of power in society, are reflected in one another" (71). Niyi Osundare's *The State Visit*, therefore, could be expressed as postcolonial political discourse since its dramaturgical content and vision are political. Thus, this theatrical piece can only be meaningfully significant and functional when interpreted within the backdrop of its socio-political and ideological contexts an approach which is grounded in political discourse analysis.

The Crisis of Public Governance

Leon Trotsky, in "Class and Art", argues, *inter alia*, that there is a faithful link between art and the social class of the writer since a writer's social class provides the material cause and the vision of his artistic work. Thus, "Art is created on the basis of a continual every day, cultural, ideological interrelationship between a class and its artists" (81). In other words, literature, as political discourse, is the result of the creative consciousness of a writer who himself is a political animal and lives in the midst of other political animals and is affected by political decisions in his immediate social context. Therefore, Niyi Osundare's dramaturgy is a politico-literary discourse whose signification is deeply-rooted in the political context of the postcolonial society.

It is a radical political idiom on the irresponsibility of the postcolonial governing elite in the administration of the state. The ideological posture of the playwright is to expose how the lack of positive ideological foresightedness and insight in statecraft can plunge the post-colonial nation-state into an unfathomable socio-political crisis and imbroglio.

T. S. Eliot, in "The Frontiers of Criticism", argues that "[...] any critic seriously concerned with a man's work should be expected to know something about the man's life" (218). In other words, Eliot shows the important role of authorial biography in the interpretation of the author's work in question. This is because aspects of the writer's biography will enable the critic to understand the politics surrounding the content and the aesthetic slant of the work under examination. In fact, the strength of this argument is the reason why having a synoptic view of Osundare's biography is of categorical imperative. In this connection, Niyi Osundare is a Nigerian playwright, a poet, and a non-repentant literary iconoclast; he is one of the most popular and committed writers in Anglophone Africa especially in the domain of post-colonialism and neo-colonial theorization. In the preface to his collection of poems, entitled *The Eye of the Earth*, Osundare declares that he was "Farmer-born" and "peasant-bred" where he "encountered dawn in the enchanted corridors of the forest, suckled on the delicate aroma of healing herbs, and the pearly droops of generous moons" (xi). Osundare's declaration circumscribes him as a writer who grew-up in an agrarian and peasant background and still identifies himself with that social background of his birth. This explains why he represents the desires and aspirations of the suffering masses in his literary works as in *The State Visit*.

Furthermore, Christopher Anyokwu, in "The Essentials of Niyi Osundare's Poetry", describes him as a revolutionary writer whose artistic vision is "aimed at bringing about fundamental social change and a clear improvement in the quality of life and the economic emancipation of the lumpen-proletarian elements in society" (5). Anyukwu's statement finds relevance in *The State Visit* which is a postcolonial *dicta probantia* that dramatizes and also interrogates the lack of leadership foresight in the postcolonial fictional Republic of Yanke; it is a diatribe against political individualism as orchestrated by the ruling elite in postcolonial Africa. Yanke, therefore, is an extended metaphor of postcolonial states/nations, in general, where the ruling elites are more interested in their individual aggrandisement and absolutely uninterested and unruffled in the plight and miasma of despair of the downtrodden and destitute masses. Osundare's dramatic vision, thus, is to caution the post-colonial superstructure of the negative and devastating outcome of their political misdeed. It is in this context of political commitment that Wole Soyinka postulates that "When the writer in his own society can no longer function as conscience, he must recognise that his choice lies between denying himself totally or withdrawing to the position of chronicler or post-mortem surgeon" (21).

The title of the play is self-explicit because its discursive content revolves around a "state visit". In *A Dictionary of Diplomacy*, the concept of "state visit" is defined as "a markedly ceremonial nature paid by one head of state to another" (227). It further states that "the state visit may provide a cover for important talks" (227). In other words, these descriptions show that state visits in international relations and diplomacy are functional in the sense that they serve as an occasion for the heads of state to discuss issues beneficial to their states. According to the *Monte Video Convention* of December 26, 1933, one of the attributes of the state is the "capacity to enter into relations with the other states" (Article 1). The capacity of the state "to enter into relations" with other states should be exercised only in the context where such relations are beneficial to the citizens of the state. This is precisely so because, following Jean Jacques Rousseau's principle of "the social contract", the state is a moral personality that has the moral responsibility to take care and protect its citizens. However, the envisaged state visit in the play is not one that can be of any beneficial significance to the people of the fictional postcolonial state of Yanke.

The play is about the Executive of the state of Yanke which is preparing to receive the Head of State of the Republic of Wilama who is coming to Yanke on a state visit. In international relations, when a president of foreign country pays a state/official visit to another country, it is supposed that the two states are discussing issues of bilateral concern that will eventually and mutually benefit both states. This is due to the realist view of international relations that the quest for national interest is the driving force in international relations. Thus Kenneth Minogue, in *Politics: A Very Short Introduction,* notes that "Realists claim that national interest remains, and indeed ought to remain, the lodestar of international relations" although he argues that "National interests are in some degree negotiable" (60). However, the state visit in the play has very little to benefit the masses of Yanke neither can it benefit the people of Wilama because the head of state of this country and that of Yanke share the same ideological consciousness – that of individualism and political vainglory. The visit is just a show of elite aggrandisement and national wastage. The entire preparation of the visit of the leader of the state of Wilama to the state of Yanke is a symbolisation of how postcolonial states lay emphasis and carry out lavish expenditure on things that are of no beneficial consequence to the majority of the masses. This is due to the fact that many postcolonial states are constructed on the basis of bourgeoisie capitalism where it is individual wellbeing that supersedes collective wellbeing.

The play commences when the entire Executive Cabinet of the fictional Republic of Yanke are in session to prepare for the visit of the Head of State of the Republic of Wilama. However, before the commencement of the cabinet meeting, Narrator appears at the beginning and end of the play and performs the role of the chorus in Greek drama. Narrator's discourse, before the cabinet meeting begins, gives an extensive depiction of the socio-political situation in the Yanke coupled with the irresponsible nature in which the leaders rule the state. Through Narrator, it is understood that the "land of Two Rivers" is "a land blessed with milk and honey, the softest and the healthiest of sunshine" (9). Despite these riches, citizens of this state do not benefit from her resources because "a few men fouled and mix the honey with cow-dung" (9). In other words, the country is suffering because the leaders are not administrating the state in a way that cannot lead to prosperity and the equitable wellbeing of the citizens because "the wealth is in the hands of a few kings and queens" and "The only possession the people have in abundance is poverty" (10). Narrator's discourse shows that in this dystopian political context, the wealth of the society has been highjacked by the minority political elite while the masses languish in abject destitution. The attitude of these leaders, in the running of the state, shows that they are self-minded in their vision since they are concerned only with their wellbeing and not of the general wellbeing. In fact, the postcolonial or post-independence ruling elites are just a facsimile of the colonialists whose purpose was exploitation of the indigenous masses to their own ends. Thus, Adekunle Mojeed Animashaun, in "State Failure, Crisis of Governance and Disengagement from the State in Africa" argues that the nationalists who took over power from the colonialists after formal independence and later the soldiers have failed to transform the character of the state because "the post-independence governing elite have succeeded in deepening these attributes of the colonial state in post-colonial Africa" (4). These "attributes of the colonial state" include exploitation, corruption, and the insensitivity of the plight of the masses. In this regard, Adekunle contends that "The post-colonial state in Africa in several respects is a continuation of its precursor, the colonial state" for "It [has] inherited virtually all the salient features of its colonial forebear including its lack of legitimacy and capacity to deploy violence against civil society" (8). It is in this mindset, in the state of Yanke, that every sector of this society is corrupt from journalists, contractors, and the entire police force.

The Cabinet Meeting is presided over by the Head of State of Yanke (in the play he is simply called Head). From the perspective of onomastics, he is given the name "Head" in order to show his supremacy over the citizens which goes a long way to reveal his tyrannical nature. This explains why through, Osundare's use of stage direction, Head is portrayed as an autocrat who is deified by his ministers in his (mis)management of the state. The stage direction reads thus: "The stage is set for a state cabinet meeting" and "the Head of State is seated on a throne-like chair with a prominent backrest and gold-plated arm rests" (9). The playwright's use of diction and imagery such as "throne-like chair", and "gold-plated arm rest" conveys the image of a postcolonial emperor with the *locus standi* to administer the state according to his whims and caprices. Furthermore, the stage direction also notes that Head is "chronically obese" and "in army uniform" with "hefty soldiers in full combat fatigue, guns at the ready" (9). Samba Diop, in "African Elites and their Post-colonial Legacy: Cultural, Political and Economic Discontent – by Way of Literature" argues that "Africa's governmental ministers and those others appendaged to the all-powerful state apparatus … all enjoy a quality of life that rivals the wealthiest individuals in the West". Thus, "This pillaging of the resources of the state by the neocolonial bourgeoisie leaves nothing for the toiling masses who are victimised by the lowest salaries in the world" (225). Diop's assessment finds relevance in the content-analysis of *The State Visit* because throughout the play, members of the bourgeoisie regime are interested only in their individual wellbeing and not that of the community. In this regard, the above diction/imagery gives the impression of an over-fed and individualistic megalomaniac who is interested only in his own welfare and not that of the political community of the state. This goes ahead to strengthen the fact that one is in the realm of the postcolonial police state where the army is deeply-involved in the political life of the state with the aim of defending the ruling system at all costs.

Interestingly, the State Cabinet meeting commences with the singing of the Yankean national anthem. The national anthem in any country is a patriotic song which is chanted by the country's citizens to show their loyalty to their fatherland. It relation to this Robert Neustadt, in "Reading Spanish American National Anthems: "Sonograms" of National Identity" contends that analyzing the lyrical, musical, political, and historical development of national anthems "offers insight into the negotiation of national identity" and "Reading the various versions and modifications to national anthems underscores the manner in which these songs reflect a specific political culture at a given time" (1). The anthem describes the state of Yanke in superlative and hyperbolic terms such as "Land of Lion", "Land of the Strong", "Land of Righteousness", "Land of Plenty", and "Land of Wealth" (12). The anthem further states that Yanke is a land of "Equal Justice" and "equal Peace" and "Where every robe is sumptuous silk" and "Known everywhere for its gentle laws". The content of the Yankean national anthem shows that it translates the political culture of peace, patriotism, justice, and nationhood. However, the discussions during the Cabinet Meeting show that these ministers, who are supposed to be the harbinger of the above political culture, are not patriotic but sycophantic - with the exception of the Minister of Finance. Their sycophancy results from the fact that they are more interested in defending the political regime in place for their individual gains and not the country in itself. According to these high state functionaries, the entire country can crumble but let the system remain since they are benefitting exorbitantly from it.

In fact, the unpatriotic disposition of Head is visibly seen in his opening address to his ministers. He announces to them that "A brother head of state from the Republic of Wilama is paying us a state visit next month" (13). Thus, the *ad hoc* Cabinet Meeting is to brainstorm on how to give the Head of State of Wilama a befitting welcome and a rapturous reception. Since birds of a feather flock together, the manner in which the Yankean president eulogies his counterpart from Wilama shows that both of them are ideological bedfellows. According to him, the President of Wilama is "a true son of his father" because "As a benevolent leader of his people", Head continuous, "he banned [s] parliament", and prefers "the direct rule of his family to the endless bickerings of that house of words where the only thing that gets done is nothing". "Believing as we here do that opposition is injurious to good governance", Head says, the president of Wilama "burnt down unfriendly media houses and dumped vocal critics in some safe prison behind the hills where they receive a real royal treatment!" (13). Jo-Ansie van Wyk, in "Political Leaders in Africa: Presidents, Patrons, or Profiteers" notes that "Contemporary African political leadership is neo-patrimonial featuring presidentialism, clientelism, the use of state resources, and the centralisation of power" (12). Van Wjk's statements captures the behaviour of the Wilama leader who rules the country as if it is his family estate. His rulership in Wilama also portrays him as a bourgeoisie monarchical dictator who does not care about the existential needs of his citizens. In this guise, van Wyk asserts that although political leadership can be coercive, "Good" political leadership is exercised in the public interest, rather than in leaders' self-interest" (17).

After Head has posed the problem and the purpose of the Cabinet meeting, the debate is opened on how to raise the funds to prepare for the visit. The Minister of Public Morality says: "Our Head, Father of the Nation, our Most beloved leader, God-fearing, God-chosen to rule [...] you have spoken well. But money says: 'let nobody make any plans without me'. How much are we budgeting for this great visit?" (14). Achille Mbembe, in *On the Postcolony*, notes that personality cult is one of the features of postcolonial African politics and leadership. Most postcolonial leaders instil a reign of fear in their countries thereby raising up political lackeys whose purpose is to render absolute worship to the leader and not to serve the citizens they are supposedly appointed to serve. In this respect, Mbembe opines that, political flatteries are a culture in most postcolonial African states – since "flattery is not just produced to please the despot; it is manufactured for profit or favors. The aim is to share the table of the autocrat, to "eat from his hands". Thus, extraordinary deeds are attributed to him, he is covered with vainglory" (123). The Minister's use of these honorific phrases such as "Father of the nation", "our most beloved leader", "God-fearing", "God-chosen to rule" depict the deification of the leader in the Republic of Yankeland and, by extension, post-colonial societies as a whole. This is because most postcolonial states, after independence, were founded on the principle of paternalism – an ideological framework that breads tyranny and political sycophancy in postcolonial African.

Furthermore, Isabela Fairclough and Norman Fairclough, in *Political Discourse Analysis*, observe that "Politics is about making choices and decisions about what to do, what action to take in response to a situation. It is typically about making decisions in a context of scarcity" (26). In other words, politicians and policy-makers, in general, are bound to take decisions that will satisfy the interest of the highest majority. This, however, is not really the case in the postcolonial state of Yanke because the Cabinet meeting, in general, performs a semiotic role or framework; the meeting symbolises the fact that whenever these Cabinet Ministers are in conclave, the intention is to craft strategies on how they can conserve political power for their personal aggrandisement and not for the welfare of the postcolonial citizen. This view is grounded on the fact that when the discussion on how to raise funds to finance the occasion is introduced, different proposals come up which do not take into consideration the general wellbeing of the citizens. Head suggests that the state can "Borrow it from a friendly nation "or "Take it from America" because "America will give you anything as long as you promise to have nothing to do with the Russians" (17). The suggestion of Head shows that the state of Yanke is prepared to indebt itself and impoverish the postcolonial masses just to make sure that this state visit holds. This attitude relates to the absolute mismanagement and inability of the governing elite in postcolonial societies to prioritise their wants. It is interesting that the Head is proposing to borrow money to fund an event which does not yield any dividend to the state.

In addition, the Minister of Public Morality shamelessly suggests that the state should "print more money" (18) in order to finance the visit – an idea which is supported by the Minister of Agriculture. However, it is the Minister of External Affairs that cautions them of the negative economic consequences of printing money in a country since "the supply of money will exceed the quantity of goods, and the result will be inflation" (18). Peter Shirlow, in "Governance", argues that effective governance must take into consideration the participation of the citizens in the management of the affaires of the state. In this context, he argues that "Governance thus increasingly deals with issues relating to the mechanisms required to negotiate between various and competing interests" (43). The mentality of the Minister of Public Morality shows that the postcolonial ruling elites do not usually count the costs of their actions; they can go to any length to satisfy their individual political egos regardless of the consequences on the state and the masses as a whole. Nevertheless, at the end of the Cabinet Meeting it is resolved that the Maize Fund money (six million arina), earmarked to help farmers improve their agricultural productivity in Yanke, should be diverted to the Welcome Project. This proposal is made by the Minister of Public Morality which is supported by the Minister of Agriculture, and finally endorsed by Head who declares that they should "Transfer the entire amount to the Welcome Project" (18-19). On his part, the Minister of Finance argues that it is unreasonable to use money for the Maize Project because he had "already told the nation about the Maize Project at a wildly publicised press conference" (19). The views of the finance minister show that he is a man of conscience who believes that it is unfair for him to start shewing his words about the project after he had publicly and officially announced it. Head, in his characteristic tyrannical nature, hushes the minister by reminding him that "We can always unsay what we have already said" (19). He, thus, is insinuating that the state can go as far as coercing journalists to tell lies that the state has mentioned nothing of the sort.

In this guise, the state waylays the media to announce that the Minister of Finance said nothing about the Maize Fund project and that the mass media and the general public misinterpreted him. The state of Yanke, thus, is manipulating the mass media to serve her purpose against the general. This attitude of state-media manipulation is a visible attribute in postcolonial societies. In fact, Christopher Ochanja Ngara and Edward Ndem Esebonu, in "The Mass Media and the Struggle for Democracy in Africa: The Nigerian Experience" mentions that during the reign of Sani Abacha (1993-1999) the media suffered continuous persecution in Nigeria. They argue that during these years "General Sani Abacha embarked on a brazen elimination of perceived and imagined opposition against his rule particularly the mass media and pro-democracy groups who opposed the continuation of military rule" (187). The situation in Nigeria at the time, as painted by Ngara and Esebonu, is synonymous to the situation in the fictional post-colonial society of Yanke where the state is operating on the logic of suppressing media organs that she considers aggressive against the state. In this regard, the Minister of External Relations tells Journalist to lie the public that he "just had and fruitful discussion with the Cabinet and discovered that the six hundred million arina announced by the Finance Minister last week for the Maize Project has, in fact, not been received" and "the Minister announced it (hesitates) by mistake" (21). The statement of the External Affairs minister is an indication that the state of Yanke is one whose *modus operandi* is based on the manipulation of information and the media in general. This idea is further buttressed by Head who affirms that "We control the newspapers and the radio and the television, and we can always tell them what to say. Afterall, we spend a lot on these media and we must get our money's worth (21). In addition, after coercing the journalist to manipulate the information to the public, Head boasts that they owe no accountability to the citizens because they were never elected by them. This justifies why the postcolonial regime has the latitude to do whatever it wants because it does not enjoy legitimacy. Thus, "We have the people in our hand", says Head and "We decide what they eat, where they sleep, when they live, when they die. We may banish them, dissolve them if we choose. Our government owes nothing, absolutely nothing to their existence" (22).

The president's statement portrays the overbearing nature that the regime wields on the postcolonial subjects in the society. The statement portrays the postcolonial state as a monster which is predisposed to crush any acts of rebellion from any sector of the country, since "Our government owes nothing, absolutely nothing to their existence" (22). This declarative statement by Head is reminiscent of most postcolonial patrimonial rulers who are above the laws in their country and are endowed with powers to administer the country without any accountability. In fact Peter Takirambudde et al, in "Civil Society in Governance and Poverty Alleviation: A Human Rights Perspective" notes that "Lack of accountability and transparency … contributes to poverty and economic stagnation or recession by facilitating corruption. It is not uncommon to find poverty running rampant in countries with rampant government corruption" (70). This comment captures the situation in Yanke where corruption and lack of accountability are institutionalised political cultures amongst the ruling elite.

More so, the activities of the state also endorse the fact that there is heavy state censorship and even students are not predisposed to read any book of their choice since the state censors the books that enter the country. This is an important hallmark in most autocratic societies where the ruling oligarchy controls the books and documents that the citizens read. In these societies, citizens are banned from reading any book whose ideology is not *in tandem* with that of the state because of the fear of an uprising. When the External Affairs minister comments that students in Yanke are demonstrating because of communist books from Cuba, Head is furious and wonders how the students had possession of these books. He further comments that "One of the first progressive acts of this government was to ban all foreign ideologies, burn all Communist books, and impose heavy penalties on whoever tried to import them into our country" (23). Head's statement reveals his ideological posturing as one who is bourgeoisie capitalism, not Marxist-Leninism. In addition, the Yanke people do not have the freedom to express their views concerning the ruling of the nation. Even at the level of the university, students and lecturers do not have the right to freely express their political views especially when these views are against those of the rulers of the state because, just like in all dictatorial states, informants have been hired to report and blacklist those who project political ideologies which are contrary to those of the ruling elites. During the Cabinet Meeting, the Minister of Public Morality advices Head that the regime should device ways of handling and silencing students/lecturers who are criticising his government/regime. Thus, "My Head", says the minister, "as our people say, a desperate problem needs a desperate solution. Instead of sitting here and shivering like women .... I mean .... Like cowards, let us think of how to handle these students so that they don't ruin the good work our government is doing" (23-24). The Minister of Public Morality's views are ironical and satirical because the activities of the regime are not one that any rational analyst will describe as "good work our government is doing". Interestingly, Head accepts the proposal and affirms that "We shall tighten our security belt, recruit more spies among students and lecturers ... and send more of our spies on the campus" (24).

Throughout the discussion on how to manipulate the media to give a faulty information on the Maize Fund, the Minister of Finance is silent. His silence connotes that he is not in accord with what the government wants to do. In fact, Head enquires from him why he has been so silent throughout the discussion. He says: "Now, Finance, what is inside you that has kept you so silent since ...." (27). Head's worry is because he is suspecting that the Minister of Finance does not support the decision, they have taken concerning the Maize Fund. The same fear is also expressed in the utterance of the Minister of Agriculture. "Yes, I too have observed that he has said nothing for many minutes now. Heeen? What is your problem? You better talk now or we may mistake your silence for a conspiracy against our government" (27). The statement of the Minister of Agriculture shows that in the Yanke society, no one has the right to his opinion even the government ministers; they must follow the dictate of Head else they will be seen as treason against the state. Despite these threats the Minister of Finance, being a man of conscience, criticises the entire cabinet that they do not feel for the destitute masses by diverting the Maize Fund for a meaningless state visit. He lambasts them in the following rhetorical questions: "What is there to say when rulers have turned liars like prophets of the Bar Beach; when those pretending to be statesmen say one thing while they mean another? What am I to tell the poor people of Yanke? That their long and painful suffering and starvation have to continue because their Hunger Relief Funds have been diverted to the hosting spree of overfed dictators and their followers?" (27). Through the use of the flashback technique, minister goes ahead to explain how the Maize Fund came about; it was because of the famine in Yanke that caused the entire world to help the state with the funds which is being unjustly syphoned to a meaning state visit. The Finance Minister's critical stance on the state is responsible for his dismissal and his eventual death in the play. He is a signification that in the Yanke society any criticism against the state is synonymous to death or imprisonment.

The second act of the play is antithetical to the first act both in setting, characters, and the general discursive issues in the act. The setting of this act is at the "Frontage of an opulent Supermarket with large shop windows flaunting the latest in European fashion with large shop windows flaunting the latest European fashion" (30). The characters who are involved in the act are Sule, Etim, Obi, and Abeke. There are mendicants and sitting at the frontage of this supermarket is their mainstay so that they can beg from buyers/customers who come to the supermarket to purchase goods for themselves. Giuseppe Veltri, in "Social Semiotics and Social Representations" notes that in social semiotics "The focus of attention is the social life of signs, with the intention of considering the social and cultural context of the process of sense-making" (239). In this guise, this act is a semiotic rendition of the effects of bad governance and the mismanagement of political power on the citizens in contemporary Africa because these characters have turned into beggars because of the horrible way in which the state governs the country. It is for this reason that in the dialogue among themselves, Obi describes themselves as "victims of fortune at the mercy of a merciless world. Remember, nobody gives you anything unless they have been so instructed by their *dibia*, or *babalowo* or *afaa*" (30-31). Sule's reply shows that the beggars have now resigned to fate and their only hope is divine intervention. He says "Here God is the patron of beggars: his injunction provides us with everything. Fridays and Sundays, barrel-buttocked women (*demonstrated*) with their gold teeth, men in agbada, trying to please God by throwing a few coins in your bowl" (31). Obi and Sule's statements show that the state of Yanke does not have social welfare policies to take care of the underprivileged like the beggars; they are left to themselves and at the mercy of well-wishers.

While performing their customary activities of begging, the mendicants recount their stories to one another on how they came to be scroungers. Sule, who is blind, was never blind from birth. Following his discussion with Etim, he reveals that he used to be a labourer at a textile mill in Lagos before he became blind. Unfortunately for him "An outdated, badly serviced boiler burst open and poured its contents on my head. For several months, I was told, my neck was white like that of an albino. *(Pause)* Ah that terrible day! Humming machines and fleeing workers were the last I saw. And then everything went dim!" (31). Sule describes the boiler as "outdated" in order to bring to consciousness that the Yanke society is still very underdeveloped and the conditions under which workers work are not secured. The archaic nature of the boiler, therefore, is a connotative agent that symbolises the archaic nature of the entire country. What is really sad about Sule's situation is that the company, under which he was working, compensated him for six months but the Personnel Manager of the company "asked for one tenth of my allowance" (31). In other words, the Personnel Manager enjoined him as a condition that he must bribe him before continuously taking his compensations or allowances. Sule refused to abide to the demands of the manager because, as he says, "the rest would not feed me for one week". The manager retorted by expunging his name from the payroll and register of the company. One hearing this very sad account, Etim admonishes him that "You should have protested. Your rights! Your rights!" (32). Etim's response to Sule's story shows his revolutionary nature and keeps one in suspense on how the play will end – whether in a revolution or otherwise. Nevertheless, Sule replies to him that "Six times I tried to speak to the Chairman, but the secretary wouldn't let in. She said I would dirty the rug in their office" (32). The Personnel Manager's attitude depicts the corrupt mentality of bosses in postcolonial Africa who will stop at nothing to extort money from workers who depend on them for their existence and subsistence.

Obi is another beggar whose story is also as pathetic as Sule's own. He is a pushful and diligent character who lost his parents "during the civil war" but has been struggling to survive in this dystopic postcolonial society. In fact, the stage direction states that "all along he (Obi) has been watching with attention" (32) when Sule was recounting his ordeal. His attention comes from the fact that he too has a similar story of suffering and affliction from the hands of exploitative personalities in the Yanke society. In this guise, when Etim tells Sule that he should have protested when the personnel manager of the textual mile in which he was working treated him shabbily, Obi rebukes him thus: "Etim, you talk as if you don't know how easily the weak crumble under the weight of the powerful" (32). The exploitation of the weak by the strong is a similar experience that Obi goes through. He recounts his own story that he was a schoolboy in Enugu but had to work as a houseboy to pay his fees. One day, they were trying to move a new piano upstairs their master "had presented to his daughter for her birthday" (32). The piano is a semiotic resource to indicate that Obi's employer was a bourgeois in the Yanke society. In the process of carrying the piano, "The other houseboy fumbled and the big thing crashed down and landed on my back. That was the last time I ever stood on my own legs" (32). It shows that Obi's paralysis comes as a result of an accident he had at his jobsite of which his employer did no compensation for that. Instead, he was in the hospital for two years and was unattended to and "the birthday girl" never came to visit him. Instead "during one of her vacations, she sent me a card from London with the message: 'GET BACK ON YOUR TOES QUICK!' (32). The message on the card, which is written in upper case, is connotatively cruel and exploitative. In fact, it is a command for Obi to get back on his "toes quick!" so that they will continue to enslave him. The shabby treatment given to Obi, by his employers, depicts the bourgeoisie exploitation in the post-colonial Yanke society.

Abeke also recounts her story as a beggar. She was born blind and was sexually assaulted by a gang of young men who probably were jobless youths who had nothing to do in order to earn a living. In answering the question on what caused her to be a beggar with a baby on her back, she recounts her story thus: "Sometime last year, I was sitting under the bridge at our usual place near Koto. It was in the evening. Suddenly, I heard a truck pull up by the roadside, and about three men jumped down and pounced on me" (33). As she continues her narrative, she notes that she was taken to a house where she was handed over to the leader of the gang who finally raped her and she became pregnant. She recounts the scene as follows: "And what a terrible room that was: smelling so strongly of alcohol and other things. I felt like throwing up .... The master came close again breathing hard. He must have been a really fat and heavy man. His breathe as hot and seemed to choke the room. [....] I summoned all the strength in my little body and rammed my right knee into his big stomach. He fell back with grunt, then shouted for his thugs to come. They rushed in, held me down while their master .... The result is the baby I hold in my hands" (34). Although she was kidnapped in the presence of the other beggars, they were helpless and could not do anything substantial and concrete to rescue her.

In fact, Isabela Fairclough and Norman Fairclough note that "The development and pursuit of political strategies, with the ultimate goal of transforming the world in particular ways, is an essential feature of political action" (24). However, the "political strategies" foregrounded in the running of the state should be directed towards the common good of the citizenry. In this view, the above-stories and experiences of these beggars point to the fact that the state of Yanke does not have credible humanitarian policies to take care of underprivileged citizens since the victims are not directly connected to them. What is interesting is that the state sends the police force to oust the beggars because of the state visit instead of solving their problems. In an argument with the beggars, the Policeman warns them that "Maybe not, but right now you are sitting on the head of the law. Something important is about to happen here. Our country is expecting a guest and this (*pointing*) being our main street, must be completely, thoroughly, mercilessly ... clean" (37). The beggars, on their part, tell the policeman that they cannot live the streets because the street is their home (37) and they have nowhere to go. While Policeman sees them as "a disgrace to the nation" and "a dirt of our streets" (38), Sule retorts that "they are the conscience of the nation, the scruple of the streets" (38). In fact, according to Sule, "We beggars must unite against these injustices. Just consider this: the rich steal your food and then punish you for being hungry. Our rulers cast us on the streets and then jail us for homelessness ..." (38). In this context, the beggars start reflecting on the possibilities of creating a beggars' trade union. Sule says: "... Yes, we should unite – all the beggars in this country. I understand that in Ganisel, a country just a few miles from us, beggars have a trade union ..." (39). The action of Policeman shows that in Yanke, the state is only clean when there is an external visitor in order to create an impression of a clean and organised state that does not really exist.

Sadly enough, some members of the postcolonial cognoscenti have been infiltrated by the ruling elite and the few who have refused to sycophantise the system are victimised. Antonio Gramsci, the Italian Marxist, in "The Formation of the Intellectuals" argues that intellectuals have a crucial role to play in their various societies because they help in shaping minds and contributing ideas that can help in the positive development of their society. He states that "All men are intellectuals [...] but not all men have in society the functions of intellectuals" (1140). In other words, intellectuals are relevant in their societies in terms of their functions and not of their titles. It is in cognizance of this that Gramsci further postulates that "The mode of being an intellectual can no longer consist in eloquence, which is an exterior and momentary mover of feelings and passion, but in active participation in practical life, as constructor, organiser, "permanent persuader" and not just a simple orator" (1141). In a second Cabinet Meeting to evaluate the level of preparation of the visit, a university professor who had been assigned to write the welcome speech for the occasion is summoned by the Head to give a report on his assignment. The stage direction describes Professor thus: "Professor appears in an outlandish, obviously uncomfortable three-piece suit; an oversized black academic gown whose tail sweeps the floor behind him, giving him the look of an old penguin; and round-rimmed Victorian spectacles" (46). Through this description, the playwright satirises contemporary African intellectuals who allow themselves to be manipulated by the political lords. In fact, when this Professor appears before the Cabinet, Head says: "Eee, Professor, welcome. I ask people to bring you so that you can tell us how far you have gone with the welcome address" (46). The Head's statement shows that he has no respect for the professor who is supposed to be an intellectual. He says that "I asked people *to bring you*" and not "to invite you". The Head knows that using the verb "to invite" will mean that he is according respect to a professor he has no respect for. Professor's response depicts a prototype of personality cult in postcolonial Africa. As one reads into the discussion between Head and Professor, it is realised that he accepts this assignment because he is expecting to be appointed as the principal of the University College in the state of Yanke.

Religious institutions, both traditional and modern, which are supposed to be the moral conscience of society are conniving with the state to victimise the downtrodden masses. The corruption and negative infiltration of these institutions in the state of Yanke, by the ruling oligarchy, alludes the statement by Jon Abbink, in "Religion and Politics in Africa: The Future of "The Secular" where he notes that "political leaders' use of religion, including in Africa, is often highly dubious and opportunistic – a way to keep power and influence others" (85). These institutions are more interested in material things than spiritual and moral upliftment of the society. When Head enquires whether the Minister of Agriculture has consulted "the Rain-maker" to use his magical powers to prevent rain from disturbing the state visit event, the minister answers in the affirmative. "Yes, my Head, says the minister, "This time he is taking five million arina to keep the skies quiet for three days. *(The other Ministers open their mouths in amusements at the cost, but none utters a word)*" (55). Thus, the Rain-maker is asking for a sum/bribe of five million arina in order to prevent rain from falling during the occasion. The reactions of the other cabinet ministers, as seen through the stage direction above, show that they are flabbergasted with the amount but they are helpless to say anything since the Head is in support of the amount. In accord, the Head remarks that "Let him have anything as long as he does the job" (55). Moreover, the Head, also, inquires to know whether religious organisations have been contacted, the Minister of Public Morality answers in the affirmative. She says that she spoke to the Archbishop of Yanke and the Chief Imam of Yanke and the state visit. "They have promised", says the minister, "interdenominational prayers on Friday and Sunday. The have assured us that the Almighty God is behind this great government and its God-fearing Head. No cause for alarm. They are praying for success of the visit. God is on our side" (55-56).

In a bid to immortalise this event, Head appoints a new Medalsmith to fashion him a new medal for the occasion. Head, like must dictators in postcolonial societies, is only interested in issues that will project his self-image. According to the Ministers of External Affairs and Agriculture, the medal does not befit the dignity of the Head. In corroborating this fact, the Minister of Finance argues that "We judge a nation by the crown of its ruler. It is a widely accepted fact that a ruler is nothing without his medals. Look at Britain; they put the best of their diamonds on their monarch's crown: Napoleon's crown was not only made of the rarest French minerals; at his coronation he placed the crown on his head!" (50). The post-colonial state is one that depends on external trivialities and not on concrete programmes that can activate development in the society.

More so, the Painter who is called to paint the picture of the visit refuses the assignment saying that he cannot participate in the project of dictators. In his bluntness, he declares to Head that he is "not a public painter" and that his "brush wrinkles the face of tyrants" (51). In other words, the painter, as a committed artist of good conscience, does not use his art as a panegyric symphony for dictators but as an instrument of criticising their irresponsible and authoritarian leadership. This is unlike the Medalsmith who has compromised his art in support of an illegitimate and tyrannical machinery. In this regard, Ulrike Auga, in "Intellectuals Between Resistance and Legitimation: The Cases of Nadine Gordimer and Christa Wolf" explains the role of the intellectual-writer in shaping the destiny of their society as is the case of Nadine Gordimer from South Africa, and Christa Wolf from Germany. He expostulates the view that "writers [artists in general] act as public intellectuals within the processes of transformation undergone in their respective societies" (192). The painter is a semiotics of the remnants of postcolonial artists who have not been corrupted by the ruling elite to use their art in praise of them. Head is flabbergasted to hear the Painter's refusal to carry out this assignment for him and the state. Head tells the Cabinet: "Just wait, Lady and Gentlemen. Let us hear him well. *(To Painter)* So you refused to paint the picture of me and my visiting friend – the picture we are to put in the market-square? (51). The Painter responds that "The brush has a pulse which only responds to the feelings of humans; monsters need a witch's broom for her self-image" (51). His refusal to paint Head's image causes his arrest and his eventual incarceration (51-53). The Painter, nevertheless, retorts that "My allegiance is to those lead bones which fatten the paunch of the rich" (54). On the instruction of the Head, he is arrested and taken to the prison cell called "Chamber 40" (54).

Finally, Emmanuel Ngara, in discussing the role of the African writer in national liberation and socio-political reconstruction, notes that "In any epoch literature either supports the ideology of the ruling class or opposes it" (130). The ideological conflict in Osundare's dramatic text is between the ideology of the ruling class, which could be likened to the bourgeoisie ideology, and that of the mases, which is akin to socialist-communitarian ideology. The political vendetta between the ruling bourgeoisie class and the proletarian masses is related to Karl Marx observation in the opening lines of *Manifesto of the Communist Party* that "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles" which leads to "a revolutionary reconstitution of society, at large, or in the common ruins of the contending classes" (9). In this context, the play ends with a social revolution against the ruling bourgeoisie elite, thus, portraying Niyi Osundare's dramatic ideology as one of Marxist-socialism since every writer is associated with a social class (and ideology) which sharpens his world view and vision of art. In fact, the stage direction talks about citizens of all works of life and ages holding placards with radical messages alluding to the mismanagement of the resources of the state. These placards are a semiotic representation of the general frustration of the people against their leaders. In order to show their frustrations, the crowd composes a song which could be termed radical. The content of the songs shows how the people of Yanke have suffered under the rule of the Head.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Per Wasberg, in "The Role of the Writer in Modern African" argues that "One of literature's tasks is to help people understand their own nature and make them realize that they are not powerless" (24). In other words, literature should be functional and most have the spirit of galvanising a people for action against societal activities that posse as a threat to their existence and wellbeing. In this regard, this paper set out to show the relationship between political sycophancy and governance in post-colonial societies as expounded in Niyi Osundare's dramatic discourse, *The State Visit*. The play is a critical articulation of Osundare's political epistemology which is based on the perspective that no society can develop where political sycophancy has been established as a political culture. This is because in the present context of post-colonial political sycophantism, appointments are carried out on the basis of how the individual can praise and hero-worship the despot and not on the basis of any competence. Thus, when hero-worshipping is seen as a way of ascending to political leadership, mediocrity and mismanagement of the scares resources of the state become the inevitable consequence. This explains why the fictional post-colonial state of Yanke is constantly sinking into the abyss of underdevelopment and continuous hardship and misery. When this situation continuously persists, the possibility of a popular social revolution becomes evident as it is witnessed at the end of the play.

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The Body in Pain Ca. 1400: Solomon de Piera and the Chief Rabbi's Toothache

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Abstract:

Ancient authors paid attention to, meditated and articulated their observations on, the theme of teeth in Hebrew and Aramaic texts. In the Middle Ages, the theme of toothache appears in Hebrew texts written in Spain around 1400. The article reconstructs the historiography on the subject and questions it. It offers a reading of a poem on toothache by Shlomo de Piera and contextualizes it in the frame of European and Spanish representations of pain in the late Middle Ages.

Keywords: Jews in Spain, Representations of pain, Meir Alguadex, Shlomo de Piera, Myths of decline

Ancient authors paid attention to, meditated and articulated their observations on, the theme of teeth in Hebrew and Aramaic texts.[1] In the Middle Ages, the theme of toothache appears in Hebrew texts written in Spain around 1400. The site is the poetry of Shelomo b. Meshulam de Piera. Although a leading poet and teacher of poetry of his generation, much of his poetry still needs a great deal of study.[2] He is associated geographically with the Crown of Aragon in Northeastern Spain and socially with prominent personages of the Jewish community to whom he dedicated his poems. In some cases, he was their tutor and had taught them the art of reading and writing Hebrew poetry and literary prose. His prestige and influence did not wane for centuries.[3] Nevertheless, nineteenth century critics, using organicist metaphors, wrote about the Hebrew poetry of his age, the late Middle Ages in Spain, as an era of decline. Graetz for example maintained that:

> The Jewish sons of Spain were not so well suited for the study of narrow Talmudism as the German Jews. Prevented from occupying themselves with science, they lost their buoyancy of spirit, and became unfit for the studies permitted. Even their pleasure in song and their poetical talents died away. *Occasionally a poem was still produced, but it consisted merely of rude and unimaginative rhymes...*
>
> Indifference to scientific work resulted in so general an ignorance, that what formerly every tyro was familiar with now passed for transcendent wisdom. We have an example of *the mawkishness to which the new Hebrew poetry had fallen* in the verses of the poetaster Zarak (Zerach) Barfat, who, in a poetical paraphrase of the book of Job, completely marred the beauties of that work of art...

> *Neo-Hebraic poetry, which had blossomed so profusely on Spanish soil, faded and drooped*. Of those who cultivated it during this period only a few are remembered—Solomon Dafiera, [!] ...[4]

The twentieth century critics still adhered to such views. The very depths of literary decadence were located in de Piera's poetry because of his realism. Particularly targeted was his poem on toothache:[5]

> This "realistic" low image is absolutely in tune with the spirit of Shelomoh de Piera's poetry...In other cases he sings in a language hardly less exalted about the pain in his...teeth.

The "low" quality of De Piera's poetry is asserted without hesitation in formulations which have an air of extreme subjectivity. The question of the appearance of the toothache poetry in these late medieval surroundings is only one, concrete and well-defined area where curious peculiarities of some strands of twentieth century criticism make themselves manifest. They are, however, not untypical of the approach as a whole. In the following lines some attempts to [re]read the texts, recreate contexts and compare critical reactions to parallel literary treatments will be made.

I. Critical heritage

Late twentieth century criticism of medieval Hebrew poetry did not appear ex nihilo, as has been seen. Despite apparent "modernities" or universalisms there are aspects which suggest a certain isolationism. Given the subjectivity of such critical narratives and their expectations of complicity from their nineteenth and twentieth century readers, we may well ask: How evident is this link between "low quality" of literature and the tooth ache in the thought of these critics' contemporaries? The invention of these "evaluations" is a nineteenth-twentieth century phenomenon.

For the twentieth century reading public of literature, themes of toothache and dentition as a whole are by no means obvious signs of decadence and infraliterary quality. It suffices here to recall Theodore Ziolkowski 's study (1976) of dentition as image and metaphor. John Updike, Saul Bellow, Vonnegut are some exponents of literary concerns with odontological material. The theme reappears in different language traditions. The study encompasses Thomas Mann and nineteenth century antecedents – Dostoievsky or Edgar Allan Poe amongst others. Frequently they are metaphors for the state of society. Other remarkable examples could include Robert Burns' "Address to a Toothache": "My curse upon your venom'd stang, /That shoots my tortur'd gums alang," That is to say that the air of sarcasm directed at the medieval Hebrew poet, De Piera, and his choice of subject -his option for the toothache- is inexplicable, unless we entertain the notion that the literary critics concerned with de Piera are writing in isolation from mainstream literature and culture.

II. Pain and literature

Winckelmann, Lessing, Herder, Goethe, Blake, Freud, Curtius discussed the critical theory for understanding the archetypal representation of bodily suffering, the classical *Gruppo del*

Laocoonte. (Richter 1992) The discussion on this theme has by no means abated. Elaine Scarry, in *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (1987), begins by discussing the difficulty in expressing pain. She stresses political complications arising from the difficulty and objectification of central attributes of pain. The nature of material and verbal expressibility is linked to a translation of the pain into power. She argues that pain is inherently resistant to and destructive of language/expressibility. Pain is expressed through sensory, affective, and cognitive reactions. It deconstructs language and then rebuilds it – pain, for her, unmakes the world. Physical pain cannot be objectified; but she contends that psychological suffering, though often difficult for any one person to express, does have referential content, is susceptible to verbal objectification. We recognize pain in the weapon, which entails objectifying the pain and holding the referent in place. Pain, like trauma, occurs in a perpetual present/is always "happening". The feeling of pain entails the feeling of being "acted upon". To experience pain is to experience "certainty"; to witness pain is to experience "doubt". She asks: "What is the referent for this pain? The body [material]? Or the feeling of the pain [immaterial]?"

There have been a number of further treatments. Steven Bruhm's study of Romantic literature (1994) draws attention, for example, to the fact that both Radcliffe's and Wordsworth's depictions of terror reduce a dreadful story of past physical suffering to a benign scene of reading. The representation, imagining and expression of pain is not seen by these authors as a "low" realistic activity. Rather it is elevated to a philosophical problem – relations between subject and object, the nature of the material – and a problem of representation.

It is facile to object that they draw their texts from very specific linguistic, geographic and chronological cultural areas. Nevertheless, studies such as these have succeeded in problematizing the projects of representing, or, indeed, reacting to expressions of pain in language as a whole. Years after Scarry, in the field of philosophy of science, Murat Aydede and Güven Güzeldere[6] address toothache as part of their attention to a foundational problem in the scientific study of pain. Their attention to the sensory qualities of pain leads them to the conclusion that it is not homogeneous and simple. Acknowledging the tradition of the introspectionists since the nineteenth century [Titchener, William James, Trigg, Aydede, etc] they affirm that these distinctions later gained neurophysiological support.[7]

III. Medieval pain

The notion that such discussions are impossible in the context of the Middle Ages has no basis.[8] One strand in the writings about toothache is linked to the troubadours' poetry -influential in Spain till the fifteenth century inclusive-. Guillaume de Lorris (ca. 1200 – ca. 1240) was a French scholar and poet from Lorris. He was the author of the first section of the *Roman de la Rose*. He had compared the anguish of unhappy love to toothache: the lover is "*comme ome qui a mal as denz*". The poet from Provence, Peire Vidal (born mid-12th century) was an Old Occitan troubadour. He writes a poem in which he complains about his distress in love by exclaiming "*que* *mals de dens quan dol en la maissela*". Renart, in his *Le Lai de l'Ombre,* in the 13th century, wishes to express how far love has imprisioned him: "*m'a Amors en tel point pris* ..." It is worse than a toothache; worse than the pain of pulling teeth- "*barbiers saches les denz ne fu si angoisseus*" The lover's frustration in the courtly code is expressed by images of pain taken from the sphere of toothache. (West 1979)

The notion that the body in pain / toothache is also a medieval question finds support in recent scholarship on medieval texts. The *Vie Seinte Audree* is attributed to Marie de France. There is no doubt that it concerns the representation of pain in the case of toothache: "*si fort avoit la dent dolur*". June Hall McCash (2002) has drawn attention to the "performative verbs" in this vernacular composition which she does not dismiss as example of "low realism". She speaks rather of agonizing pain.[9]

One may recall Marla Carlson (2002) study of medieval spectator response to images of violence in connection with images of St Apollonia (particularly relevant to toothache) or her interest in: how did medieval spectators respond to pain and violence? According to her, the spectacular suffering of saint's plays, like that of public executions and penitential processions, had political consequences; they contributed to the birth of France. *Le Geu Saint Denis* would very likely have been performed in Paris at some point during the first half of the fifteenth century. According to her, there was a change in the representation of Apollonia's torture through teeth pulling: it became slower in the late Middle Ages as did other forms of torture of saints in literary and dramatic representations.[10]

Shelomoh ben Meshullam de Piera belongs in a cultural and historical context, (roughly described as "Christian Spain") - that of the late Middle Ages. Although he is known for his writings, one of the cultural features of his age and his background is that of the visual. Bearing this in mind, it is perhaps possible to offer explanations for the appearance of Hebrew toothache poems around 1400 in the upper echelons of Hispano-Jewish society. One of these new avenues of research would take account of the historical background. The cultural models in these social strata included the royal courts. In the case of royalty in the late fourteenth century and early fifteenth century Crown of Aragon, this implied a court closely connected [dynastically and otherwise] to the royal and noble houses of Valois, Armagnac and de Berry. In the case of the latter one need merely mention the *Tres belles heures du duc de Berry* or other examples of the *Book of Hours* genre to recall the magnificence of the visual art produced by their patronage. Equally important are the concerns with visual arts developed in the contemporary courts of the Crown of Aragon with their rich tapestries on classical themes. In Jewish society this is the age of an explosion of visual art best observed in the illuminations of Hebrew manuscripts. The density of the Jewish presence at these courts and the closeness of contacts with the ruling monarchs and courtiers are solidly documented. (Baer 1929)

In this period, roughly coterminous with Christian Spain in the Middle Ages, the concern with the issues posed by the representation of pain, in our case the toothache, led to the production of a number of works of visual art. Perhaps the most widely known or disseminated genre is that of the iconography of the above-mentioned St. Apollonia. The instruments of torture, the pliers with which her teeth were extracted are a standard iconographic feature or attribute. The rise of realistic visual representation inspired by scenes of dental pathology or scenes of daily sanitary life in late medieval Europe may be recalled by two examples. The first is in Wells' cathedral chapter, the second in the Portale maggiore of S. Marco in Venice. The first is a sculpture in arenaria rosa. The second is a sculpture of the barber in action.

The Toothache Man is a figure carved as a detail upon a capital in the west bay of the south transept of Wells Cathedral in Somerset. Despite its fame, it appears to be only one out of eleven carvings there of men with toothache from the thirteenth century. It may be linked to the figure of bishop William Button [elected 1267] whose tomb was believed to have the power to relieve toothache. The case of Venice, as Rosen recently wrote, shows the republic at work and could be viewed amongst other perspectives as a case of the depiction of trades.[11] The relief makes explicit reference to the class divide in thirteenth-century Venice. The scene of the barbershop shows the master barber who pries a tooth from the mouth of a squirming young man. The barbers' guild was in fact licensed to perform some minor dentistry, allowing them to keep their shops open on Sundays or feast days to take care of toothaches. This concern with representations of pain in the 13-15th centuries is the broader European context of the Hebrew toothache poems of ca 1400.

The explosion of visual arts patronized by Jews in this period in the case of the Hebrew manuscripts from fourteenth century Aragon, -and the frequently reproduced illuminated Passover Haggadot and bibles are by no means the only examples - shows us the cultural significance of the visual in these Jewish societies. In this period when visual representation grapples with the question of toothache there appear the Hebrew toothache poems.

IV. Toothache

Amongst the poems of that period there are at least two devoted to the topic of toothache.[12] They are part of a poetic correspondence by de Piera with the *Rabbi mayor* of the Jews of Castile ca. 1400, don Meir Alguadex[13]. That is to say that we are dealing with a number of literary compositions on toothache in one and the same chronological, geographic and cultural setting. The rubric informs us of the circumstances. It reads[14]

> ...when I fell ill of the toothache the wonderful scholar the exalted prince don Meir Alguadex sent [the poem] to me as if joking that he had the teeth of lions and the pains of the *lavi*/lion cub. Then I said/replied: [the poem follows][15]

Perfect in knowledge
pleasant plant scion of princes
prince of princes and pleasant ones
clean of hands and innocent the Lord has oppressed your heart

like the heart of the clouds and the matter of heavens
and would the forms of the creations [yesurot] fom the caves
fear the wounds and bruises
for this your heart is like the heart of the lion
to support the sickness of brothers and friends
even though there are roots of wasting and destruction
the pain as a woman that travaileth
the work of errors
my soul shall not be at risk
from the distress and hardship and the sight of plague
and my organs sink in the trap of pangs
and my muzzle / purposes are broken off
my thoughts are sunk in the mud in the streets
till I change humours [mezagim] for the pains
and I shall change the nature of the sickness
till the tired foundation/root
the cure of the plagues
and the giving of bandage for the wounds of the sick
and my heart's grief shall no longer distress me
and the messenger of the illness shall not pain me
and if your heart is like the rock of my heart
and if your teeth are like the teeth of lions
mine are like the horns of ivory and the crags of rocks

V. Reading toothache

The Hebrew poetics of that period relied of course on a dense texture of selected citations from the Hebrew Bible. We would perhaps expect the fields of teeth mentions in the Bible to be prominently represented in this kind of allusive poem. But, by then, the Bible was not the only source of allusions. Before 1310, in the Crown of Aragon, Ibn Adret [I, 413] was still discussing the old Talmudic (bSab.67) problematics of the fox tooth as talismanic remedy. The renewed interest and availability of such talismans and tooth remedies evidenced in this rabbinical text of the thirteenth/fourteenth centuries may have a historical context. The sale of St Apollonia's teeth as well as their use as relics was not uncommon in the Middle Ages. And yet these traditions are not prominent and seem to have been dismissed in the poem.

The poem is primarily a poem of friendship. This is a well-tried genre of the Hebrew poetry of the Jews of Spain since the tenth century. Its function is to some extent phatic rather than informative. Its purpose is to reassert friendship. The first few lines, therefore, contain a praise of the dedicatee in a kind of apostrophe or vocative mood: "perfect in knowledge/pleasant plant scion of princes/prince of princes and pleasant ones/clean of hands and innocent".

This is not an informative statement; its function is that of communicating. Shipley

(1975), in a study of medieval poetic toothaches, has seen the imagery of illness as grounded in a tradition which sees illness as a reason for communication between two parties. The very act of communication between Alguadex, a court Jew who accompanies the court of the King of Castile, a scholar who "translates" Aristotle's *Ethics* [albeit at several removes,] a physician or writer on medicine and De Piera – who was neither a prominent courtier nor a rabbi – is itself sufficient cause for celebration, speech, poetry. It should be remembered that De Piera is known for his large group of friends and contacts.[16]

There appears, at that moment, an intimation of the negative descriptions which will ensue: "the Lord has oppressed your heart like the heart of the clouds and the matter of heavens". The intimation is rather vague but it is based on a well documented, grand, ancient and medieval cosmic [mythical?] analogy between microcosm and macrocosm. (Rico 1975) Pythagoras had seen the cosmos and the body as a harmonious unity. (Conger 1922) There is in De Piera an analogy between the pain of the human body and the workings of heavens, between the cosmos and man, who in medieval terms was an '*Olam Qatan*', (Cuscito 2018; Saddiq 2003) hence the tacit logic of the cosmic/ Creation analogy which is extended to man's body. De Piera eschews other connotations in the sources, [Talmud] such as organs of the body resembling teeth: *beth shinayyim* is the part of the vagina which has glands in yYeb vi,7b. In bHullin 16b, teeth are aligned with the statement that "the glands of his rectum will fall off". Neither does he mention that [Gen. Rabba 36] Rabbah suffered from toothache for thirteen years. That is to say that he deftly navigates the available sources and expresses his own sensitivity by erasing or selecting some of them.

The language slowly becomes more concrete: "and would the forms of the creations from the caves fear the wounds and bruises". The introduction of "wounds and bruises" transports the reader much closer to the world of disease and pain which is the main theme of the poem, while still retaining the cosmic analogy. He then turns to his addressee: "for this, your heart is like the heart of the lion [*lavi we-laish*] to support the sickness of brothers and friends".

The meaning seems to be that De Piera, in his pain, communicates with his friend, the Chief Rabbi, offering his support and consolation. The association of his friend with the lion, the strongest and most magnanimous of the animals, resonates also with the teeth of the lion, which are a prominent part of the corpus of Hebrew biblical texts/images on teeth. Recent work has clarified the thrust of the image, relating it to an ancient near eastern Wisdom tradition whose existence de Piera would not have fathomed.[17] But the notion that, rather than zoology, there were Wisdom and theology aspects in the Psalms' concern with lions and teeth would not have been alien to him. Nor would the similar use of lion imagery which occurs in Eliphaz's first speech to Job, 4: 7-9: "Consider, what innocent ever perished, or where have the righteous been destroyed? I have observed that they who plow evil and sow trouble reap the same. At a breath of God they perish, A blast of His anger, and they vanish. The lion may roar, the old lion growl, But the young lion's teeth are broken".

By now the mentions of pain become more explicit, frequent and concrete. Thus, the tooth ache is described by allusion to the '*shod we- shever*', the prophet Isaiah's [59/7] "wasting and destruction" or "ruin and devastation". And then comes the analogy of toothache to birthpangs: "*havalim yeahzukha*" also a citation from Isaiah [13/21] where God threatens to destroy Babylon by the Medes: "And they shall be afraid, pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them *they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth*." In all of these cases the reference is not to an exclusive tooth ache but to the body in pain or ache in general.

The poet then takes up the theme of the psychological impact of toothache and treats the relation of pain and thought. This is the site of his poetic treatment of the above-mentioned questions of the relation between subject and object; inside and outside; between pain and speech/thought. While the intellectual concerns of Hebrew poetry from medieval Spain are very well attested in general, the precise and specific link to the body in pain even in this case of toothache seems clear: "my soul shall not be at risk from the distress and hardship and the sight of plague and my organs sink in the trap of pangs and my muzzle [or my purposes] are broken off, my thoughts are sunk in the mud in the streets till I change humours [*mezagim*] for the pains".

VI. Toothache in context

The introduction of the Hebrew technical term *mezeg* [humor] is a clear allusion/link to the language of medieval Hebrew medical texts – such as translations of Galen – and their echoes of the humoral theory. Claudius Galen argued that toothaches were caused by acrid and corroding humors irritating the pulp. (Lieber 1981) This also reminds us that by ca. 1400, the *zahut*, "classicist" or "purist" view, that only biblical Hebrew could be used in poetic diction, had long since given way to a more flexible attitude where expressiveness was allowed some linguistic space. The line in the poem becomes somewhat clearer if we learn about the medieval notions of the relation between humors and toothache. Gilbertus Anglicus in ca. 1240 wrote a *Compendium* where he treats this theme. According to Gilbert, toothache was caused by various factors such as imbalance of the four humors: (Anderson 2004) While De Piera's "bandage" recalls the iconic bandage at the above-mentioned Wells' sculpture of toothache, the allusions to the plague could be related to a synonym for illness, or to the Plague of the late 1340s or its recurrences in De Piera's area and period. This is the age which follows the appearance of various dental treatises. Guy de Chauliac wrote a comprehensive treatise which included sections on toothache in Latin in 1363, while he was papal physician at Avignon. John of Gaddesden wrote the *Rosa Anglica* in Latin around 1314 including dental sections:

> till I change humours [mezagim] for the pains
> and I shall change the nature of the sickness
> till the tired foundation/root
> the cure of the plagues
> and the giving of bandage for the wounds of the sick

and my heart's grief shall no longer distress me
and the messenger of the illness shall not pain me

The poem ends with a phatic enunciation of friendship which aligns the heart and the tooth, on the basis of the tooth and passion analogy in the Bible.[18] At the same time it develops and amplifies the possibilities of poetic tooth description. No longer the pearls and coral of the Arabic period[19], the teeth are described by appeal to the field of strength and power, as in the Bible, but with a certain measure of realism:

and if your heart is like the rock of my heart
and if your teeth are like the teeth of lions
mine are like the horns of ivory and the crags of rocks

Readers schooled in the old, classic, Hebrew poetry of the tenth to twelfth century with its universal, communal themes of God, the Universe, Love and Death usually find this kind of poetry distasteful-as has been seen above- and poems such as these seem to them emblematic of the depths of thematic triviality reached by a poetry of decline produced in the fifteenth century, an age of persecution. The recreation of a historical/cultural context in Christian Spain which necessitated some familiarity with its culture[20] seemed inappropriate or inaccessible until relatively recently.

VII. Spanish dentition

The late Middle Ages and particularly the fifteenth century are the frame of the most productive scholarly focus on medieval Spanish *romance* literary dentition. In the *Libro de buen amor* large teeth were a mark of rampant sexuality. Teeth and old age were associated in a poem of the late fifteenth century about an old woman.[21] For them, toothlessness can just be a sign of old age, but even in women it is associated with libidousness, as in the 15th-century poem about the old woman suffering from erotic insomnia.[22] A poem in the *Cancionero de Palacio* is about an old man who is about to marry a poor girl *"aunque le falten dientes /asi no te mordera"*. In the converso Rodrigo Cota's *Dialogo del amor y un viejo,* "Amor" refers to the old man's teeth. Indeed, Calisto's toothache – in Fernando de Rojas' *Tragicomedia de Calixto y Melibea* of ca. 1499 – has given rise to a large critical corpus unsuspected by today's De Piera readers. *Celestina* scholars have referred to this corpus as *inabarcable.* Calisto's toothache in Act IV occurs in a passage where Celestina, who has been referring to his love sickness, talks now of toothache and the remedy is to sing sad songs such as those of that great emperor and musician Hadrian. Given the specific literary frame, a story of a go-between, it is no surprise that there is so much critical emphasis on what is sometimes termed the unseemliness of Calisto's toothache, i.e. the obscene or erotic double entendre on teeth and toothache, its textual and oral folkloric parallels and occasional antecedents [e.g. Boccaccio]. More recently Di Camillo has argued that Sta. Apollonia had little importance in fifteenth century Spain. He underscores the link to Italian humanists. According to him, the cult of Santa Apollonia and her girdle acquires sexual and blasphemous undertones in the text of the *Celestina*, and may be linked to a religious tradition of the Florentines.[23] However, a study by Santiago Lopez del Rio[24] teaches us that Sta Apollonia, the toothache saint, was not foreign to Spanish mentality. In the Iberian Peninsula there are documents of the fourteenth century about the ancient fraternity of Santa Apollonia in Barcelona. In that century Pedro IV contributed financially to the conclusion of a painted *retablo* about her in the Church of San Carlos in Saragossa. In addition, various other images of Sta Apollonia have survived to the present day. He argues that the advocation of the saint in matters of toothache had to be *frecuentísima* in the Peninsula.

The comparison between the vernacular and the Hebrew traditions helps to delineate more precisely De Piera's rejection of this line of thought in his Hebrew poem to the Rabbi Mayor and to underline the success in lending an air of dignity and the sublime to such an apparently challenging and unpromising theme. And yet, De Piera, as the troubadours and the *Celestina* and its antecedents, relate to toothache in a mood of affect. A common link between the popular and the learned may consist of the focus on age-teeth motifs. These appear, as has been seen, in the vernacular treatments [e.g. Cota] but they are also present in the rubric to the Hebrew poem where there are allusions to the biblical [lion cub] *lavi* vs mature lion pair.

Endnotes:

1. Greif (1918), Tal and Stern (1976). In general, see Micheloni (1977), Samson (1939).
2. Classic studies include Yitzhak Baer (1966, vol 2, 134-137) on Solomon de Piera; Samuel (1937 481-496). Samuel propagated the notion of De Piera and Bonafed as the "last poets of Spain". The unasked questions are whether in the first half of the fifteenth century they knew that they were "the last"; whether this had an effect on their poetry or whether it adds anything to our reading.
3. Brody, (1893); Jarden (1971-1972, 461-465); Bernstein (1936-37, 335-244); Bernstein (1945-46, 1-74); Bernstein (1942); Bernstein (1958, 205-219); Habermann (1964, 24-42).
4. Graetz, (1898, vol IV, 86-87, 140, 240). He also speaks of the "Geschmacklosigkeit und Ueberladung des Dichterlings" as noted by Brody (1893, 5n1).
5. Schirmann-Fleisher (1997, 596).
6. Aydede and Güzeldere (2002, 265-283), Salmi and Vilkama (2014, 59–71).
7. Aydede and Güzeldere (2002, 272n11).
8. Archeologists interested in the fifteenth century have asserted that: "The experience of pain is connected to cultural understanding of the cause of the pain and the relationships between the body and the surrounding world... The osteological record ...together with historical and ethnographic data, gives us an insight into how people thought about dental pain and tried to cure it. The ways in which pain was relieved and treated help us to understand how people thought about the cause of pain and how they understood the human the body in relation to its environment. ...The boundaries between internal and external, as well as emotional and physiological, were thus porous and fluid." Salmi and Vilkama (2014, 68). See also Barthelemy et al (1999, 133-139), DeWitte and Bekvalac (2010, 341-354).
9. McCash (2002, 744-777).
10. Carlson (2001, 7-20); Carlson, "Theorizing Spectator Response to the Body in Pain: Le Geu Saint Denis."

11. Rosen (2008, 54-75); Tigler (1995, 61-151). For the Italian iconography of the saint see Bisogni (1975, 41–47). See also Callahan (1994, 119–138).
12. He also devotes a poem to the pain in his loins and kidneys.
13. For their relations see Bernstein (1958, 205-219). For original documents on Meir ben Shlomo Alguadex, see Leroy (1985, 723-743)
14. On the text see Solomon ben Meshullam de Piera's *Dīwān*, see Bernstein (1942, 46).
15. See the *Diwan*, edited by Bernstein (1942, 115).
16. His contacts include R. Zerahia Halevi Ferrer; Maestre Astruc Rimoch, En Shaltiel Gracian; Don Astruc Crescas from Solsona; Don Noa Chinillo; Don Salomo b. Bechai el Costantin. Amongst the younger ones: En Mose ibn Abbas from Saragossa; Don Shealtiel (Vidal) ihn Labi Bonafoux; En Samuel Bonastruc from Monzon; the brothers Don Samuel and Don Vidal al-Rabbi; Joseph b. Mose Messija [from Ecija?]. See S. Samuel, loc cit.
17. J. J. M. Roberts (1973, 265-267) "..., the poor starving lion of Ps 34, 1 1 is only the pious man's pictorial response to the sceptic's image of the surfeited, steak-gorging lion. In short, the image of the young lions in Ps 34,11, far from being the result of textual corruption, stems from an old pre-Israelite proverbial motif which, if not created by, was at least at home in the wisdom literature, and through this channel Israel inherited it."
18. See Ps 3: "Arise, God! Deliver me, my god! May you strike all my enemies on their cheek, Break the teeth of the wicked" or Ps 58: "God, break their teeth in their mouth; Break off the young lions' fangs...".
19. On teeth in Arabic poetry, see, for example Mohamed A. H. Ahmed (2018). For an earlier, though brief, Hebrew reference to teeth see Alfonso (2006); Prats and Alfonso (2007, 99-123). There are references to loose teeth as signs of death in Samuel Ha-Naggid and to women's teeth as bear's teeth in Al-Harizi, but they are so fleeting and furtive that they cannot be compared to entire poems wholly devoted to tooth ache. Ibn Gabirol famously referred to his bodily pain and illness in his poetry but not to tooth ache.
20. As in those of its *fourth serrana* who had "*dientes anchos e luengos, cavallunos,..*", Ruiz (1974, line 1014G).
21. "non tiene diente ni muela//rumia'l comer como oveja", see Vasvári (2009, 170-181). "Allá irás, doña vieja," in Alin (1968, 332). For somewhat later texts see Larsen (1992, 1116-1121).
22. West (1979, 3-10) "Sospira como moçuela, / Dice que amor le desvela; / Non tiene diente ni muela / Rumia al comer como oveja."
23. Di Camillo (2010, 91-157); Idem (2007, 3-87); Idem (2012, 216-226).
24. Moreno (2008,59-74) and the rich bibliography in the notes; Nagera (1986, 53-4); Gómez Moreno and Jiménez Calvente (1995, 85-104).

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Dissonant Dissent: Du Bois and the Terrible Beauty of Rap Music

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Abstract:

This paper argues for the necessity of a certain dissonant dissent as a condition of public responsibility (Du Bois) and public intelligence (Dewey). This can take the form today of rap music. There is no pure public sphere, there are no ideal conditions for communicative discourse; the nation state of America is not equitable in its provision of the conditions of what Du Bois calls "social uplift". The music of rap both discloses these claims and affirms them, and this is part-constitutive of its strength as an expression of creative dissent. I am sympathetic to Gooding-Williams' proposal of an affective turn, when he says that for Du Bois racial inequality must be attacked with weapons of sudden and immediate assault, and that principal among these is beauty. But rather than confront racism with another picture, another representation, I argue that we would do better to disturb the picture by creating and exploiting spaces and surfaces within it. After all, theories of aesthetics and taste are racially loaded from the start. Better, I say, to introduce dissonance into the picture. Not so much by offering another content of dissent, but by performing an irresponsibility towards the material of its medium.

Keywords: W. E. B. Du Bois, John Dewey, Robert Gooding-Williams, Tommie Shelby, Rap music, Beauty, Dissent, Dissonance, Responsibility, Irresponsibility

> "Our watch word today must be Social Solidarity—
> Social Responsibility" (Du Bois 1900, 155).

Public responsibility

It is striking the degree to which in his Editorial for the first issue of *The Crisis* (1910) confronting the problem of segregation W.E.B. Du Bois appeals to the notion of a public responsibility. The demand for segregation, he says, "is almost always a shirking of *responsibility on the part of the public* – a desire to put off on somebody else the work of social uplift... an attempt to shift *public responsibility* from the shoulders of the public to the shoulders of some class who are unable to defend themselves" (my emph.), by which he means "Negro children who are above average" (Du Bois 1910, 10-11). Du Bois does not differentiate between the public and the community, nor does he specify which community he is holding to account. But this first editorial is a manifesto for *The Crisis*, standing for "the rights of men, irrespective of color or race." Du Bois is addressing the public at large, the responsible community is all those who are segregated one from the other, whites as well as blacks.

Part of what makes this petition for a public responsibility so notable is its opposition to an individualistic responsibility, against which Du Bois had for years directed his thinking: "individual responsibility… led inevitably to a doctrine which interpreted the whole universe in the terms of single men… This individualistic regime still wields vast power over minds today especially in the American business and social world" (Du Bois, 1900, 139-40). It is only through culture that individualistic responsibility and its nefarious consequences can be countered. By culture is poverty measured. The year of the launch of *The Crisis* also saw the publication of John Dewey's *The Influence of Darwin*, which includes the essay 'Intelligence and Morals' where Dewey writes of an intelligence of the social body rather than of the individual. Conceiving intelligence collectively leads to an "increase of responsibility for its equitable direction toward fuller good" (Dewey 1910, 73). What Du Bois and Dewey are calling for is an understanding of the subject as a collective and social body, an overthrow of the model of essentially individualistic responsibility favoured by moral theory at that time, and made of "unfructified and irresponsible reason" (*ibid*, 49).

Noticeable too in this first edition of *The Crisis*, on the inside front cover, page 2, is a full-page advertisement for The Toussaint Conservatory of Art and Music in New York City, "under the supervision of Mme. E. Touissant Welcome, The Foremost Female Artist of the Race," adverting that to take a course there is "One of the surest ways to succeed in life." We are aware that music, along with the military and sport, is one of the "surest ways to succeed in life" today for black people in the US. Yet not by having gone to music school. Neither art nor music is mentioned in Du Bois's Editorial, but *The Crisis* would go on to become, in the words of Russ Castronovo, "an agent of black print culture push[ing] a confrontational aesthetics that revalued traditional categories of the beautiful" (Castronovo 2006, 1443).

By the time of *The Crisis*, the attainment of culture had long been, for Du Bois, a necessary requirement for the social uplift of his people, with an especial emphasis laid on music. As he put it in 1903: the achievement of the 'Negro folk-song' could not be greater: "the most beautiful expression of human experience born this side the seas… the singular spiritual heritage of the nation and greatest gift of the Negro people" (Du Bois, 1903, 168). It's the description he gives of the experience of this music which is of interest here: "And so most striking to me, as I approached the village and the little plain church perched aloft, was the air of intense excitement that possessed that mass of black folk. A sort of suppressed terror hung in the air and seemed to seize us, — a pythian madness, a demoniac possession, that lent terrible reality to song and word" (*ibid*, 128-9). A terrible reality embodied in song, what strikes Du Bois with such force is, we might say, the terrible beauty of music.

I want to suggest that music's ability to embody the terrible is a form of dissonant dissent, that such dissent has always been necessary as a provocation of collective intelligence, and that if public responsibility is to be realized then it needs to be disturbed, to the extent that a certain kind of irresponsibility is required. That dissent takes the form today of rap music. During the time of the civil rights protests of the 1960s it was free jazz which intensified the cultural expression of dissonant dissent. In Du Bois's time it was folk song, what he calls "the sorrow songs", the "weird old songs in which the soul of the black slave spoke to men" (*ibid*, 167). Today it is the disturbing dissonance of rap music which dissents in the public sphere to the furtherance of public responsibility.

Terrible beauty

In a lecture given recently on Du Bois, Robert Gooding-Williams proposes that for Du Bois segregation must be attacked with weapons of sudden and immediate assault, and that principal among these is beauty (Gooding-Williams 2021). Reason is not enough to unsettle the moral psychology of white supremacy, the habits of mind of white christians are too entrenched to be apt for reason's self-questioning critique, too fixed to be receptive to revision by science or logic. Beauty, though, with its power to astonish through its unfamiliarity, can play the critical role. It can develop a responsiveness on the part of the people to feeling, thought and action that strikes them as strange or remote, and in so doing cultivate a democratic civic virtue. This shift from the rational to the affective presupposes a differentiation of the public. Gooding-Williams reminds us of Du Bois's beautiful proposition: "The meaning of America is the beginning of the discovery of the Crowd" (Du Bois 1920, 103). Du Bois distinguishes between the crowd, a body of democratic culture, and the mob, which practices democratic despotism. Beauty's power over the crowd, according to Gooding-Williams's Du Bois, is twofold. It nurtures democratic culture, but also it can give a view of a possible resistance, a perception that the social body has not after all foreclosed the possibility of subverting racial discrimination, and this can aid those black citizens who despair at the possibility of undermining racial oppression. That perception is offered by the figure of the black stranger, for Du Bois the Negro is the paradigmatic American stranger.

There is one obvious objection to this two-fold thesis, and it's a paradox of democracy: the mob too claims for itself democratic validity. What is so troubling about last year's sacking of the Capitol, the seat of American democracy, is that in the very act of violating it, the attackers asserted that they were the protectors of democracy. The mob of overwhelmingly white men declared a sovereignty purporting to transcend the rule of law in the name of a greater public good and a higher law. Such a doctrine of sovereignty is a derogation of political responsibility. The troubling fact is that if today in the United States the distinction between a democratic polity of the crowd and a despotic democracy of the mob is increasingly under threat from Republican and right-wing demagoguery, it is because white supremacy is itself a form of democracy. Indeed, as Cristina Beltrán points out in her response to Gooding-Williams, American conceptions of democracy have historically been constituted through white supremacy, and the experience of democracy in the U.S. cannot be detached from its historico-political project of whiteness, the two are mutually constitutive. Beltrán is right, I think, to say that the task in the U.S. is to detach democracy from the political project of whiteness. Or at least, if not to disjoin the two then loosen them by enacting or forcing a space between them.

This is where music comes in, the music of rap and the ethos of hip hop. And it addresses other hesitations voiced to Gooding-Williams's thesis, by Linda Zerilli and Ernesto Grassi respectively. Zerilli: the white supremacist's belief is so recalcitrant to rational revision that the thought that they may be wrong is not even momentarily entertained, so how can beauty make any headway against it? Grassi: the basis of rational speech is and must be an imaginative language. Belief is groundless, based less on reasoned argument than on a picture, and it's this picture that we must resist. And the only way to counter that picture is with another, a politics with an aesthetic basis. Gooding-Williams thinks that, for Du Bois, we can do both by presenting the white supremacist with a different picture, for instance a different picture of what Christianity is. But my view is that we can approach the task differently than giving another picture; rather we must disturb the picture. I'm not sure that Steve McQueen's 2020 film *Lovers Rock*, for all its liquidity of space its embrace of freedom and its tensing of the beauty of the black community of West London in 1980, rightly affirmed by Gooding-Williams as an example of a non-austere aesthetics of loving black sociology, is a picture "astonishing", "sudden" or forceful enough to disturb the preconceptions of white supremacism. Or at least, not by itself. If it were shown in a double-bill with a film shot in South London during the time in question, *Babylon* by Franco Rosso (1980), or a triple with Charlie Ahearn's *Wild Style* (1983), shot in the Bronx a year later, then maybe, maybe white viewers might come to question how such music, respectively lovers rock, sound system dub reggae and hip hop, could have been made given the institutional and public racism, overt, casual and complacent, so rife in the U.K. and U.S. at the time. Taken together, these three films might begin to disturb the picture.

Yet the need is to open the picture, not to present other closed pictures, for closed is what representations tend to be. Instead the picture must be disturbed, by creating and exploiting spaces and surfaces within it, in which other voices and types of voices may be allowed to be heard. We do not need any convincing of how representations of beauty, and the concomitant theories justifying them, theories of "aesthetics" and "taste", with their supposed disinterestedness and supposed *sensus communis* and supposed universalism, have excluded and harmed black people. *Pace* Du Bois, who believed in a certain universalism of the value of beauty – "I do not doubt that the ultimate art coming from black folk is going to be just as beautiful, and beautiful largely in the same ways, as the art that comes from white folk, or yellow, or red" (Du Bois 1926, 297), which I think has more to do with equality of entitlement to and access to the judgement than the content of it – we contend that the concept of beauty itself was racially loaded from the start. If there is to be a revaluation of the value of the beautiful, then it will need to contest the ways in which representations of beauty are completed, ended, presented as 'it couldn't be otherwise', for such are closed representations. Rap's terrible beauty breaks open that space. Such breaking open is a precondition for democracy. When Dewey, speaking contemporaneously as Du Bois, affirms that democracy "is not a fact and never will be", he means that democracy is only ever 'to come' (Dewey 1927, 148). The idea of democracy is the idea of community itself. It may tend toward an ideal limit, but it will never attain it. Democracy can have no end "until experience itself comes to an end", and the task of democracy is "forever that of creation of a freer… experience" (Dewey 1940, 228). Experience is an ongoing process. Breaking open the fixities and finalities of representations of experience, contesting the processes of exclusion at the borders of every community, these are the essential creative workings of a democratic culture which would seek to keep open the road of democracy.

Public irresponsibility

The final section header of the inaugural *Crisis* editorial is AGITATION. Du Bois contends that those for whom agitation impacts negatively upon the cause mistake its usefulness. Agitation is necessary for it signals to the body of the social its decay and suffering. He analogises it with pain. Pain may not be good, but it is necessary, and it is for this reason that the association for which *The Crisis* advocates, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), will agitate. Not by causing pain, but by showing how pain is the outcome of suffering aggravated by racial prejudice (Du Bois 1910, 11).

In my perception, this is what rap music and the culture of hip hop can do: agitate by being the occasion of pain. One way to understand this is to consider it as music. A music no different from Du Bois's sorrow songs in that it embodies "the soul of the black slave" speaking, but speaking not to its fellow humans, but in the stead of its fellow humans. The language rap speaks is not the propositional content to which its lyrics can be reduced, as they so often are by both its detractors and defenders, nor is it the language of suffering articulated so terrorfully and beautifully by the 'negro spiritual'. Rap is the disturbing language of an ethos and a way of life which is no longer waiting for or arguing for equality, but declaring it, asserting it, owning it by wrenching it into the open where it has always been from the start. Rap does not shirk responsibility in the sense of waiting for the community or the public to facilitate social uplift. Rather, it faces head on the quietist tendencies of the public, it confronts the community's willingness to defer social change to the efforts of others. It does this by how it puts to use the materiality of hip hop's ethos. In doing so, it takes on an irresponsibility.

The culture of hip hop sampling is not simply the use or re-use, the appropriation, of part of a pre-existing recording in another recording, it is the appropriation of parts of arguments or claims or propositions or provocations. The lyrics are closer to propaganda than proposition, propaganda in the sense given it by Du Bois' in his "Criteria of Negro art" published in *The Crisis* in 1926: "I do not care a damn for any art that is not used for propaganda. But I do care when propaganda is confined to one side while the other is stripped and silent" (Du Bois 1926, 296). This appropriation and mixing can lead to seeming contradiction or inconsistency, but this is a problem only if you hear the music in terms of a propositional content to the lyrics. If, on the other hand, you listen to the track as a mix, an affective mix, of groove rhythm break, sound lyric look, beat phrasing syncopation, and are open to how it moves or shakes you, urges or speeds you, then the lyrics, its form of words, will be but one part which disturbs the picture. And if you do hear its word you will hear it differently because of its situatedness. The word spoken sung and sprung is just one part of the material with which the hip hop artist gives form to their music, no less a material part of the flow than any other, given more or less emphasis or directedness in the flow. The other elements in the mix, each occasioning an affective response or giving rise to passional feelings, may encourage or aid understanding of the lyric, or contradict it, and may themselves be embodied forms of understanding.

As is well-known, in *Souls of Black Folk* Du Bois writes of a cognitive and affective doubling of the black self, in which "true self-consciousness" can never be attained because the black self sees itself, is only ever allowed to see itself, "through the eyes of others", namely the white man (Du Bois 1903, 8-9). I think part of what makes white people so aversive to rap music (even allowing for a lessening of this over time, rap music has always been objectionable) is that they do not care to see themselves through the eyes of others, for instance through the affective dissonance of black rap musicians. To do so would not only allow in to the white body an ideal at war with it, it would be to bring in to question the self-sufficiency of the autonomous individualism which so informs western notions of responsibility. But for Du Bois, this doubling of consciousness has also a positive strength, for in striving to reconcile or merge these two 'selves', neither would be lost. In the later notion of a "double environment", blacks have the advantage over whites in that they have both the "white surrounding world", and the environment which is furnished by their own colour, which usually touches them "much more nearly and compellingly" (Du Bois 1940, 88).

I would argue that the white person who rejects an environment of a colour other than their own, is not touched, affectively, as nearly or compellingly by their 'own' environment as they might be. One way, I think, Du Bois himself in his own work tried to stage this is by juxtaposition, or radical montage. *The Crisis* ran a regular column 'Music and art', which was sometimes laid out alongside one on "Lynching": "The geography of beauty in the *Crisis* invites dissonance" (Castronovo 2006, 1452). His 1920 work *Darkwater* alternated sections of literary writing with autobiographical accounts and poetry. These are dissenting ways of staging dissonant encounters with environments and bodies culturally other than one's own. It's a question of the apprehension of nature, as Dewey puts it when writing of the encounter with "Negro art": by "install[ing] ourselves in modes of apprehending nature that are at first are strange to us... our own experience is reorientated. Barriers are dissolved, limiting prejudices melt away" (Dewey 1934, 334). It is a matter of changing attitudes. The displacements effected by attitude becoming form are far more productive than acquiring knowledge of conditions of production or enjoining the communicative fallacy of reasoning.

We might agree with an argument which says that the political dissent of rap is an expression of solidarity with the oppressed, a positive expression of loyalty and association, rather than a commitment to the belief that meaningful change is possible, rejecting as we do the idea that there are shared grounds for dissenting, an argument advanced by, for instance, Tommie Shelby in his *Dark Ghettos*. But if we do agree it is not because "the *content* of the dissent is what is being communicated" (Shelby 2016, 269). The reduction of rap to content, to the propositional content of its lyric, is a profound deafness to its music, its being music and what makes it music. This is why the term Shelby coins for rap's dissent, "impure dissent", is so misleading, if not objectionable. Who has ever voiced pure dissent? Rap's dissensual force comes not from its content, its "message", its… reasoning, or not simply or primarily from that, but from its material and how it assembles and forms that material, from its pressure of attitude, and from the affective force generated by the conjoinings of these. Listen again to Du Bois' description of the Negro folk spiritual: there is nothing about what is said, it is not about persuading with argument, it is an affective persuasiveness: "It varied in expression from the silent rapt countenance or the low murmur and moan to the mad abandon of physical fervor, — the stamping, shrieking, and shouting, the rushing to and fro and wild waving of arms, the weeping and laughing, the vision and the trance" (Du Bois 1903, 129). Of course, the white christian has always felt threatened by such affective expression. That these expressions should take place in the church! The singer, the preacher, the uniqueness of its identity is its multiplicity: "the most unique personality developed by the Negro on American soil. A leader, a politician, an orator, a "boss," an intriguer, an idealist, — all these he is" (*ibid*).

To accentuate its dissensual power art must perform an irresponsibility towards its material, and it must respond to the irresponsibility of its medium. Language has an involuntary power, a power which eludes the possession of the individual subject, and the rap artist can do no more than try to direct this or channel it, whilst seeking their own voice in it. They do so in the face of those who seek to impose the responsibility of meaning, or who try to hold them accountable to a prior responsibility determined by the very political bodies and institutionalised ideologies that have always done everything possible, whatever they can get away with (this is what characterises a Donald Trump and the mob and supremacists inspired by him), to deny them a voice in the first place and which still seek to deny space for that voice. The nation state of America is not and never has been equitable in its provision of the conditions of what Du Bois calls "social uplift", witness the renewed diminishments of the processes of democracy since the last election by those who are determined, at the limits of legality, to restrict the vote of minorities of colour, an act repeated throughout the history of the United States, in the hope of conserving their white majority and the supremacy of whiteness. There is no pure public sphere in which the lines of rap can be deemed impure.

If theory is to become, as it ever should be, "responsible to the practices that have generated it" (Dewey 1910, 55), then it must not seek to purify social responsibility of a necessary irresponsibility towards representations which would fix social relations according to the vested interests of powerful white constituencies. Instead theory, emerging from progressive practices, must become responsible to social intelligence. To the injunctions of white democracy the artist has a duty of irresponsibility. Only then will the collective intelligence of a different kind of democratic polity be formed. Indeed, we might go further and say that this refusal or resistance is perhaps the utmost responsibility of the artist. If rappers appear to be rejecting ethical norms it is not because they are being unethical, or voicing an impure dissent, it is because they dissent the right of white democracy to claim such language as its own, it is a dissensual appropriation of language by and into mouths white democracy has tried to stop. The performative dissent of the personae who rap will always elude the intelligence of a whiteness which prides itself on an identity with democracy.

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Gender, Power and The Politics of Memory: Weaving 'Just' Into Transitional Justice in Nigeria

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Abstract:

Recognizing gender-conflict intersections, the vulnerability that is institutionalised by patriarchy renders women most affected during periods of repression and systematic human rights violations. This study takes a historical approach to problematise Nigeria's 1999 Oputa Commission from women's perspective. By discussing how issues are prioritised amidst nuances of the politics of memory, the study analyses present-day transitional justice processes in conflict-ridden Nigerian communities, especially the northeast and northcentral zones. It presents an intercourse between the academia and civil society to build practical methodologies for policy environment to connect ideas with deployment of resources for integrating women into transitional justice initiatives. As a descriptive and prescriptive study, the hair metaphor of "weaving" alongside the idea of 'symbiotic interactionism' is deployed to discuss how to bring the 'just' back, in matters of transitional justice. Ultimately, the work argues that understanding transitional justice from a gender perspective is power itself.

Keywords: Gender; Oputa Panel; Power; Politics of Memory; Weaving; Transitional Justice

Introduction

Closely linked with conflict resolution, historical memory, social justice and peacebuilding, transitional justice (TJ) captures either fresh or stale events. It is restorative in nature, as it aims at getting appreciable justice for the wronged; retributive in trying and bringing criminals to book; and memorial in its process of acknowledging, exposing and documenting the past (Elster 2004). While emphasizing the need to right wrongs across aggrieved communities, the process of transitioning from grief, pains and losses experienced during conflicts/crises, to peaceful coexistence is a long and complex one requiring strategic communication (Omotoso 2015). Engaging communicative principles for social justice (Omotoso 2020a) are expected to result in reconciliation, peace and stability. These rely largely on reflection, documentation and the will of governing bodies to effects outcomes of such processes to the letter. Subsequently, by taking up cases of infringement and charting paths for healing (Nagy 2008), Teitel (2003) avows that transitional justice connects with internal political transformations based on genuine responses to redress transgression that emerge over a period of breakdown of law and order in a community (Roht-Arriaza 2006). Bearing all these components in mind, post conflict societies consider reconciliation as key to peacebuilding (Rigby 2001; Ojedokun & Ajayi 2015). Despite widespread accord on the necessity of transitional justice, in Nigeria, limited attention has been paid to gender in transitional justice issue and processes; for instance, how are issues ranked as important? How much attention is given to the nuances of the politics of memory? Whose history, whose memory? Whose voice is heard or not heard? Who is mainstreamed, and who is 'otherised'?

With a pervasive notion that truth-seeking and truth-telling are foundational to community healing, one wonders if all wrongs can be put right including psychological and biological outcomes of rape, displacement and loss of loved ones. These for women and girls in conflict-torn communities, connects with possibilities of irreconcilable goals amidst more complex issues connecting with justice (Leeblaw 2008). Reckoning with a wealth of literature that affirm how transitional justice processes could risk or reinforce exclusion of certain groups (Chinkin 2003; Mertus 2004; Bell & O'Rourke 2007), we argue in this work that facing the past in transitional justice could risk the exclusion of certain persons/groups. We appreciate the complexities of exclusion in TJ and how it complicates 'justness' in the expectedly reconciliatory outcome for women and girls. Consequently, we briefly examine Nigeria's past attempt at transitional justice to navigate a future TJ which will not be a lip service amidst the ever-rising ethnic conflicts and terrorist attacks since the 2000s.

Given that Nigeria is not a standardized case in TJ discussions, our focus on Nigeria examines failures of the Human Rights Violations Investigation Commission, popularly known as the Oputa Panel and attempt to reveal that Nigeria hold much potential to illuminate new perspectives in preparation for the unavoidable TJ processes across conflict and/or terrorist infested parts of the country. With the idea of 'weaving just' we conceptualize gender justice through a historical approach; looking at a brief narration of the 1999 Oputa panel from the perspective of the rights of women and the role played by civil societies. We do this by interrogating present-day transitional justice processes in northeast and northcentral Nigerian communities experiencing exclusion, conflict, displacement and loss of livelihood. From these, we establish that it is not primarily about whether and how women remember differently, but also about how their experiences are different, and therefore produce other narratives and memories than those that are centralized in existing processes.

Following sections of this study will provide a brief analysis of the 1999 Oputa panel as a case study for transitional justice in Nigeria; historicise TJ in Nigeria, highlighting the politics of memory; and, draw lessons and proposals from trends in civil society knowledge about practical methodologies of weaving 'just' back into transitional justice in Nigeria by integrating women into transitional justice initiatives.

Understanding TJ via the 1999 Oputa Commission in Nigeria

Transitional Justice (TJ) refers to the ways countries emerging from periods of conflict and repression address large-scale or systematic human rights violations so numerous and so severe that the regular justice system will not be able to provide an adequate response (ICTJ 2017). The UN Secretary-General characterized transitional justice as the full scope of components which may incorporate both legal and non-legal strategies, including global entertainers at an alternate level or none by any means, and indictments, truth-chasing, compensations, institutional changes, verifying and excusals (Secretary-General 2004). Along these lines, temporary equity stresses two expansive thoughts; retributive and therapeutic justice. Retributive justice underlines bringing to account culprits of common liberties infringement while therapeutic equity centers on the casualties of infringement and how to address their passionate, financial and social requirements through remuneration, pardoning and compromise (ICTJ 2017).

From an ethical viewpoint, Krotoszyński (2017, 12) describes transitional justice as "the concept of justice which is concerned with the treatment of the wrongdoers and the victims of human rights abuses conducted before a liberalising political change." Describing transitional justice from legal/non-legal perspective, Mani (2002) avers that it involves addressing "the structural and systemic injustices that led to conflict" through reparation and compensation. With reference to the value of transitional justice, the United Nations Security Council (2004) held transitional justice valuable in its being past- and future-oriented. Yet, Krotoszyński (2017, 12) notes the interconnectedness of the various perspectives to transitional justice stressing that "through political decisions the values are transposed to legal and social institutions" (Krotoszyński 2017). In the conflict management sense, TJ should be locally driven to achieve reconciliation in a just manner; it must be process-driven, rather than outcome-driven, it would factor cultural diversity and negotiation.

Studies on Rwanda, Sierra Leone and South Africa also affirm a systematic operationalizing of gender in transitional justice (Oomen 2005; Manjoo 2009; Oostervel 2012). Following the Rwandan massacre, transitional justice measure was set up likewise to help mend the injuries made by the emergency. Two level methodology (philosophy) to transitional justice was set up; The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (a unique global court) and Gacaca courts (a local area put together methodology for preliminary base with respect to standard laws). The huge development of the Gacaca conventional strategy was its capacity to attempt almost 2,000,000 cases within a brief period. To manage the unusual issue of overseeing situations where enormous number of its residents were blamed for cooperation in wrongdoings against humankind, it was important to receive an unpredictable technique, basically dependent on the Rwandan customs, to speed up public compromise, harmony, control exemption, and advance the way of life of law and order and regard for basic liberties (Duthie 2008). The Gacaca court framework offered an option in contrast to temporary justice component, in any case, the issues that Gacaca courts confronted, however basic, were not impossible. The analysis zeroed in on unreasonable preliminaries, debasement, uncouth adjudicators, and legal favoritism.

The shortcomings of the cycle were over misrepresented contrasted with its positive effect on the nation of Rwanda (Kirkby 2006).

Sierra Leone experienced common clash which went on for a very long time. The conflict left numerous individuals assaulted, thousands executed, ruined and tormented. By 1999, the Government and the Revolutionary United Front (a radical gathering) consented to the Lomé Peace Arrangement (LPA), a nonaggression treaty which tried to end the common conflict and build up Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). In June 2000, President Tejan Kabbah set up the commission. By 2002, the TRC presented its last report which found that defilement was the essential driver of the common conflict. Most of the culprits were adults and the casualties were largely ladies and youngsters. The regular infringements were constrained removals, kidnappings, discretionary detainments, killings, pillaging, and plundering. Likewise, progressive government's maltreatment of the utilization of capital punishment and crisis power additionally added to the discontent and possible clash. The Commission, in this manner, suggested intentional battle against debasement, creating another bill of rights, freedom of the legal executive, reinforcing of the parliament, stricter control of the security powers, devolution of force and local financial independence, the incorporation of youth and ladies for political cooperation and the foundation of an organization to carry out repayment programs. The Lomé Peace Agreement conceded amnesty to all groups in the contention which were maintained by the commission (Millar 2011).

In South Africa for example, to manage the post-politically sanctioned racial segregation period, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was set up and designed in a court-like way. The TRC was set up by the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act of 1995. The consultation meetings were communicated live on public TV to advance awareness among its kin. Notwithstanding the imperfections credited to the TRC, it was declared effective (SAHO 2011). The Truth Commission reported criminological records of infringement that cannot be questioned. The records confirmed various instances of assault, torment, political deaths, death in confinement, and the consuming of people alive by the politically sanctioned racial segregation government. Albeit the TRC could not have mystically joined the country however it assisted with mending some torment and forestalled the re-visitation of political viciousness, accordingly, establishing a solid framework for harmony and peacefulness in South Africa (Chapman 2007).

From the foregoing, scholars have registered skepticisms about processes, systems and approaches to transitional justice. For instance, Kasapas (2008) assert how limited and deficient trials, truth commissions and reparations could be, despite their being useful tools for achieving the goal of national and individual reconciliation. Gready and Robins (2020) argue that the evidence base of transitional justice is weak; as the idea is over-burdened and under-conceptualized. Ojedokun and Ajayi (2015) note the inability to curtail persisting enmity and bring perpetrators of human rights crime to justice as a major tailback in TJ.

The Oputa Panel represents one of Nigeria's attempts towards transitional justice. The

Human Rights Violations Investigation Commission, popularly known as the Oputa Panel was constituted on June 14, 1999. The Panel chaired by Justice Chukwudifu Oputa was charged by President Olusegun Obasanjo (who came from prison to the presidency), to review past authoritarian regimes and the human rights abuses in order to address human rights violation and cases of abuse, foster national cohesion and establish Nigeria's burgeoning democracy. The scope of investigation spanned from 1966 to 1999 when Nigeria began to settle into democratic rule. The commission's mandate was to explore common liberties during the time of military from 1984 to 1999. This was to be done by bringing clashing networks together to establish common freedoms breach and instances of abuse under Nigeria's military system then to pursue compromise of the different communities and groups so that peace accords between various Nigerian communities may be developed to achieve institutional changes (Nnamani 2011; Pilay and Scanlon 2007). By considering the encounters of survivors of the military system, the commission could only hear 150 of up to 10,000 casualty memories including workplace violence, human rights violations and other forms of deprivations that were gathered. It became a source of entertainment for the nation as viewers were glued to their TV, fascinated by some of the gory details unearthed. These exposed the personality of persons associated with violations (Bakiner, 2016) as the report revealed "information and proof, that the military was basically answerable for the tirelessness of common liberties infringement in the nation" (HRVIC 2002). Among the cases prescribed to be examined were the homicide instance of Dele Giwa, Chief MKO Abiola and Chief Kudirat Abiola (Oderemi 2005). Of the many personalities invited to the panel, very few including President Obasanjo, General Oladipo Diya and Major Hamza Al-Mustapha (Abacha's Chief Security Officer) showed up. General Muhammadu Buhari, General Ibrahim Babangida and Abdulsalami Abubakar deliberately ignored the commission's call with disdain (Solanke 2012). This attitude upset human right lawyers and a host of Nigerians masses (Isaacs, 2001) and contributed to setbacks of the panel. Also, the commission suffered inadequacy of finance and sufficient time to cover the many petitions brought to it. Assessing the Oputa Panel, Nwagwu (2006) held that, the order of the commission was counterfeit and not possible inside the period characterized by the terms of reference. The Commission exceeded their deadline of 90 days because the allotted for the task was inadequate (Guåker 2009). Besides, the commission needed clear and complete legitimate instruments for implementation. Government was also accused of taking sides with the military elites by constraining the commission's autonomy and subsequently disappointing Nigerians with the outcome (Akinterinwa 2001). Overall, the Commission's reports showed that the Nigerian publics were all the while requesting equity. The volume of the petitions submitted reasonably attests that Nigeria is troubled with numerous uncertainty and deprivation. Although the Human Rights Violations Investigation Commission was one of the main popularity-based action taken since independence to go up against injustice, it was marred by leadership's unwillingness to see the process through.

The commission presented its last report to President Obasanjo in 2002; it was not until 2005 that the report became public knowledge. It was released not by the government who set up the panel in the first place but two dissident groups, the Nigerian Democratic Movement and Nigeria-based Civil Society Forum (Bakiner 2016). The government suddenly realized that the Oputa panel was unconstitutional and proclaimed that only states had the powers to set up tribunals. This made it difficult for anyone to do serious business with the outcome, including the gender analysis that would have exposed the level of commitment to gender justice among others. Moreover, there has been no visible attempt to address the issues to date.

The politics of memory: the 'who' questions

Memory as cognition is the capacity to store and retrieve information. It may be classed within the private sphere since it connects with innate interpretation of experience which may be recalled when triggered, yet scholars have also noted the possibility of misremembering (Wang & Wang, 2003). The implication is that should personal memory be distorted, collective memory often augments it so as to make sense of what is being recalled. This allows the personal to become political without a clear grasp of its import, even though as feminists argue the personal is always political (Hanisch 1970). Still, personal memory risks being subsumed into the collective, specifically considering the status and personality of persons involved in the process of recall and retrieval. Politics of memory may be explained within procedures of controlling, organising and supervising how events and incidences are remembered. Rufer (2012) identifies two levels in politics of memory; first is state politics of memory, which approaches past injustices from judicial-political point of view including setting up public agenda to discuss the violent past, enactment of public memorial ceremonies, and establishment of museums among others. Second is the non-governmental approach to politics of memory, which involves civil society organisations, Human Rights Groups and international agencies who speak for the unheard masses and brings their cases to limelight. In both instances, institutions proffer how emotions are remembered, forgotten and/or silenced.

This introduces the 'who' question raised by Omotoso (2013) to weigh a person's worth against the power s/he holds in determining what reaction will be elicited. By extension, this raises the need to explore not only the personality of the 'who' in question, but to also factor in gender and class (Omotoso & Faniyi 2020) in the discourse of politics of memory. Memory in TJ becomes political as subjects relive and relay painful experiences with no assurance of redress. That the Oputa Panel unearthed memories of violence, suffering, deprivation and loss is not a problem, what is worrisome is whose history and whose memory was prioritized at the hearing? How are issues ranked as important in processes of transitional justice? Within contexts of memory-distortion, 'false memory' and 'forgetting', either personal or collective, politics of memory brings political agents into TJ processes in unprecedented ways, allowing them to use power and influence to determine how experiences are recalled and how events are documented and/or discarded.

Suffice to say that memories of several epochs in Nigeria's history have been largely politicized. The Biafra war of 1967-1970, the Maitatsine uprising of 1980-1985[1], the Ogoni killing of 1995, and more recently, the boko haram insurgencies (2002-date) are each laden with the masses' versions against government versions. Equally notable is the need to reiterate how historians, storytellers, artistes, writers and public commentators among others present these cases. Works of Akachi Ezeigbo, Chimamanda Adichie, Chinua Achebe, Obafemi Awolowo amongst others on Nigeria's history and many more tell various versions resonating with memories and memorials. It then brings to bear the 'who' question in multiple dimensions including, who memorializes? Who documents? Who determines how things are to be remembered? That the Oputa Panel left several issues unattended not only bred disgruntled citizens, but also called attention to many other silenced groups including minority ethnics, people living with disabilities and women.

Herstoricizing TJ in Nigeria: TJ Beyond OPUTA PANEL

In a country of diverse people like Nigeria, with a population of over 200 million people (2012 estimates) the politics of memory often reflect deliberate structuring for forgetting thereby determining how injustice would be addressed and how history would be written. The way and manner with which Nigeria's attempt at transitional justice was undertaken under President Obasanjo's administration brought critical eyes to enable a gender lens in the discourse.

Within the limits of the Oputa panel, not many women were allowed to present their cases. Women are more likely to remember events differently from men because of how they are caught within such events; the implication is that women's memories may not correlate with collective memory. Women also run the risk of being ignored, misconstrued, and reconstructed within the collective space under an assumption that their fatalities are already captured within men's losses. The argument here is that when personal memory faces collective memory some things are cast off, suppressed, or even recast. Subsequently, some histories deliberately sidetrack the memories of women, and these have considerable impact on how justice is served.

Beyond Oputa Panel, historicising TJ in Nigeria, has shown key trends of voice, inclusion and justice with gender connotations. For instance, from south-south region of Nigeria, the "fish farming businesses of women in the riverine areas such as the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria are often threatened by oil spillage (yet these are downplayed) "on grounds of being feminine and lacking rational basis" (Omotoso 2019, 35). Reports from the farmer-herder crises ravaging the middle-belt and parts of south-west Nigeria shows how women and girls are drawn in through rape, abduction and other forms of violence. The Boko Haram crisis which has continued to ravage mostly the northern part of Nigeria has taken various tolls on women, from using young girls as arms and food stuff carriers to recruiting them as suicide bombers thereby feminizing terror in Nigeria (Onuoha & George 2015, Bawa 2017).

Boko Haram insurgency which menacingly threatens national security has recently evolved a gendered dimension laden with victimization of women for sexual gratification and other domestic purposes (Zenn and Pearson 2014), to recruiting women as suicide bombers (Marks 2014; Bloom 2010; Bawa 2017). Resulting from these are internal displacement, death of loved ones, deprivation of women and girls from educational facilities and more. These effects of Boko Haram insurgencies bring on memories of various sorts which have been addressed by Government and Civil societies.

Government interventions have included provision of camps for internally displaced persons (IDP Camps), food items and healthcare services. Civil societies have also contributed in the form of relief materials, psychosocial support, media engagements, series of advocacy programs, petition writing among others. Development programmes and civil society are asking the questions; whose voice, whose narrative whose experiences are prioritized (Salihu & Hadiza 2021).

Weaving just: A civil society perspective to integrating women into transitional justice initiatives.

When justice systems exclude women or downplays their memories, it indicates inadequate spatial spotlight as a manifestation of social exclusion whose outcome is social injustice. Spatial spotlight prioritizes how women are positioned across spaces and how this connects with their welfare and holistic emancipation for positive transformation (Omotoso 2020a, Badru & Omotoso 2014). To this end, "to conceive of space as gendered requires that we look at those permissions and restrictions that are placed on men's and women's access to certain spheres of cultural life" (Ajisogun & Omotoso 2018, 98-99).

Symbiotic interactionism becomes a theoretical structure for weaving 'just' into transitional justice. Symbiotic interactionism is a pragmatic ethical standpoint proffered for the sustenance of a wide range of issues such as grassroots governance, women in leadership (Omotoso 2020c), intra-feminist partnerships, social inclusion and social justice (Omotoso 2020a). Founded on the principle of collective ideals and tactics for attending to women's encounters of violence and systemic oppression, a synthesis of the terms symbiosis and interactionism suggests partnership and support which collapses gender-based barriers and places premium on social processes as products of human relations between actors seeking to accomplish group goals (Omotoso 2020c). Within TJ discourse, stakeholders are to consider all as necessary elements whose memories cannot be swept under the carpet if transitional justice must be effective.

Therefore, weaving 'just' in the context of this work embodies TJ by conceptualizing it within weaving metaphor in alignment with earlier scholarly works on hair (Omotoso 2018, 2020b), and tapestry work (Salihu & Mahdi 2010). Here, we present the industry of weaving as a public good "valued by humans, particularly cherished by women, and can be owned by individuals without hoarding. [In a sense, weaving whether hair or cloth] "can be non-rivalrous as its availability to one does not deprive others" (Omotoso 2020a, 123). 'Weaving' thus becomes "a foundational claim to our cultural traditions and legacies of women" (In Conversation 2015, 86), productive time -use, occupation that centres women's industry, and by its combined intrinsic values as a social and economic good; it also becomes an act of healing.

Within our civil society perspective to integrating women into transitional justice initiatives, we propose a consideration of the following.

First, is the need to recognize the intersection of gender and conflict: Those most affected by conflict and its resultant effects of displacement are women and children. The men are either dead, conscripted or shamed into leaving by a ruthless patriarchal norm, which labels a man who cannot provide for his family, as a failure. Again, the vulnerability institutionalized by patriarchy renders women most affected. It will be difficult for a woman who has never been to school or 'allowed' to engage in paid work all their lives to swim when unexpectedly thrust into the murky waters of a sole provider. Understanding the intersection of gender and conflict requires research on conceptual evolution linked to policy. Traditional concepts and stereotypes of who/what is a household head, a breadwinner, the weaker sex; have become challenged and are inadequate to explain the experience of disorientation and denial, which requires transitional justice interventions. As is also necessary for government, civil societies measure emerging indicators of a safe space, the sex for food tragedy unfolding at the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps, along with a lack of basic amenities necessary for a life of dignity for every displaced person, especially women and girls. A framework which explains the new power relations thrown up by conflict is essential to crafting a response that will be just and adequate to plan for the lives affected.

Second, is the need to understand power and powerlessness: At the heart of understanding, TJ from a gender perspective is power itself. Power dynamics in the narrative of the offended versus the offender can be relational and transferable; it could strip the person violated of their victimhood. A colleague once narrated an instance of a man seeking redress before a TJ court in East Africa for the rape of his wife. The husband argued that harm was done to him because his wife was raped, as spite to his dignity. He was, therefore, the primary aggrieved. The question is; what about the voice and dignity of the person who suffered the violation directly? If patriarchal norms relegate her experience to a secondary location because she is considered the property of the man, is that Justice?[2]

Thirdly, will a bifurcated lens be needed to understand abuse and violation? In the TJ issue process, how is an issue defined as important? Where do we locate the constant violence against women in the domestic sphere, or their experience of exclusion in the political sphere – massive instances of exploitation, injustice and indignity? One in every three Nigerian women has experienced violence. Surely that is a mass violation. Certainly, if we were to go by numbers, it would count, but it does not. Boko haram insurgency would however count. While not in any way denigrating the import of displacement on anyone's life, civil society engages how the power to amplify or to diminish experience is wielded, and this is something that should be of concern to gender analysts watching the transitional justice space.

Fourth is weak psychosocial and physical care necessary for closure in TJ process: Closure is essential to humans. Civil Societies work to show the true and final state of affairs and not necessarily the propaganda engaged by government structures. As a part of the rite of passage of pain, this belief is demonstrated in the importance of burying the dead, no matter the nature of their demise. Closure is not an event; it is a process which begins from awareness that one's experience matters and has found empathy; that a person has the right first to feel they are victims before they can begin the transition to the desired state of a survivor. If victimhood is not given, survivorhood will be hard to attain.

Fifth, accountability and redress are crucial: For TJ to be effective, it must be rooted in accountability and redress for victims. It is not enough to declare that the goal is 'total reconciliation' as was the federal government's goal for the Oputa panel. The process must be a safeguard for the future and proof of the commitment of government and society to 'never again' allow such atrocities to happen.[3] When rights are violated whether through state oppression or genocide or at an Internally Displaced Persons' (IDP) Camp where safety nets are supposed to be provided to people running from persecution, it is a bad deep, long torturous personal experience. When state responses are designed, however, they come across as quick fixes, with a palliative distribution of relief (which should be a first and not the main aid) and quick narrative snapshots of what happened. For gender it is an add- on, shake over or stir in approach and seldom an analytical perspective on the design of the intervention. Therefore, in the personal versus collective memory, herstoricizing TJ points attention at what happens when a person remembers an event differently from how others remember it, and particularly when that person is a woman.

Conclusion: Attention to the Visible and the Invisible

Within the descriptive and prescriptive framework of this study, we have spotlighted the othering of women within TJ drawing examples from Rwanda, Sierra Leone and South Africa. With a specific focus on Nigeria's Oputa Panel, we established how the voices of women was suppressed and has remained so within emerging conflicts and crises across parts of Nigeria. Within the frames of Boko Haram insurgencies ravaging the northeast and northcentral Nigeria, the politics of memory has been shown to submerge, women's personal memories into collective memories which is often the crafting of the state. We introduced the theory of symbiotic interactionism which allows for a weaving (as found in women's craft of the hair and clothes), of intents, voices and action towards the achievement of gendered TJ. Such an approach suggests a mix of studies from the academia, investigative journalism, photography and advocacy to assert and preserve women's memories, activate agency and influence policies, thereby ensuring that any TJ does not suppress the voices, experiences, memories, needs and aspirations of women and girls, seeking justice, fairness, peace and progress.

Overall, this study recognizes that if conflict is inevitable, then transitional Justice remains unavoidable. As the article has shown why it is important to pay attention to the nuances of the politics of memory while also mainstreaming gender into the processes, it becomes pertinent for women to participate at every stage of the preventive, protective, promotion and prosecution stage of peacebuilding. As a multi-stakeholder process, government agencies need to be trained and retrained, such that indicators to measure gender responsiveness are in place. This in turn calls for independent monitoring evaluation with lesson ploughed back into design from the stage of design to reintegration. The telling should inform social learning and discourse across generations and States' response should not be presented as an event that diminishes the memory of the experience of violation. Furthermore, civil societies must also watch out and guide the State, to prevent drama and theatre built around the telling, from overcoming the substance of what the survivor tells. They must help ask the questions; and so what? And so, what next?

Downplaying women's experiences in TJ heightens their vulnerability. It reiterates assertion that "vulnerability is not a function of what a person or group lacks, but a question of what oppressors seek to either ignore or cultivate in society, in order to sustain their oppressive roles" (Omotoso 2020a, 126). In the manner with which Tunisia called its own TJ platform, the Truth and Dignity Commission,[4] dignity matters as civil society helps government to put the 'Just' back into justice, in matters of Transitional Justice.

Endnotes:

1. See Isichei, E. The Maitatsine Risings in Nigeria 1980-85: A Revolt of the Disinherited. *Journal of Religion in Africa* 17 (3) (1987): 194-208.
2. Conversation on a Panel on Transitional Justice at IPSA conference, Brisbane 2018.
3. https://www.ictj.org/about/transitional-justice.
4. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-tunisia-politics/tunisia-truth-commission-says-many-rights-abuse-cases-yet-to-reach-court-idUSKCN1R7245.

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