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THE TROPE OF BORDER-CROSSING JOURNEYS:  
ETHICS OF HYBRID ENCOUNTERS IN J. M. COETZEE'S *WAITING  
FOR THE BARBARIANS* AND *AGE OF IRON*

Kamel Abdaoui

Faculty of Arts and Humanities

University of Sousse, Tunisia

kamal.38@hotmail.com

**Abstract.** The present paper examines the spatial and metaphorical representation of border-crossing experience and its ethical significance in (re)shaping the hybrid subjectivity in J. M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* and *Age of Iron*. Along with their encounters with the racially and culturally different Other(s), many Coetzeean protagonists undergo an identity crisis that leads them “to be rid of old self” (Coetzee 2002, 111). These characters respectively undertake perilous journeys to the other’s territories for the sake of not simply escaping what they deem as dysfunctional and autochthonous forms of identity but above all-embracing a hybrid identity capable of offering an enabling space of belonging. In *Waiting for the Barbarians*, the Magistrate encounters a captive barbarian girl, and probably out of human compassion, he takes it upon himself to return her to her tribe across the border. After the trip, he faces disgrace and imprisonment as he openly expresses his disavowal of the colonial discourse of the Empire which denigrates and dehumanizes the so-called barbarians. In *Age of Iron*, Mrs Curren endures a series of violent incidents that compels her to leave the safe white suburbs and venture into Guguletu, a squatter camp for blacks, in Cape Town. Witnessing the violent and almost inhuman conditions in which the majority of black people are doomed to live, she renounces the dominant discourse of apartheid propagated by the state-monitored mass media.

**Keywords:** border, self/other, (post)colonial identity, hybridity, ethical transformation, intersubjectivity

## INTRODUCTION

Encountering the Other in J. M. Coetzee’s fiction is not so much an act of hospitality and accommodation as it is a convulsive and

dislocating event that forces the Self to undertake a critical and decisive journey across identities. Border-crossing experience, in this regard, could be viewed as a determinant factor in not only propelling a hybridizing process but also triggering an ethical awakening that urges some characters to question their own identities as well as the barriers erected between Self and Other.

Following the Levinasian model of Self/Other intersubjectivity that tends to surmount the logic of discrepancy and binarism characterizing Self/Other relationship, Coetzee invests some of his protagonists, such as Mrs. Curren in *Age of Iron* and the Magistrate in *Waiting for the Barbarians*, with the capacity for self-analysis, change, and self-reformation that allows them to challenge dominant discourses informing their identities. Due to the fact that these characters are most of the time alienated and marginalized individuals even in their own communities, they reveal an ability to reconsider their concepts of humanity and justice.

Such characters reveal a readiness to go through a process of moral transformation that allows them not merely to sympathize but above all to empathize<sup>1</sup> with the figures of otherness they come across. Following the “cruciform logic” (Coetzee 1990, 125), these characters go through a metaphorical process of death and rebirth, during which they make a journey across the boundaries between identities, and they return changed in their attitudes towards themselves, the Other, and, above all, their affiliation and sometimes filiation to their national identities.<sup>2</sup> Coetzee illustrates his proposed Self/Other inter-relationship in the pattern of a mythological journey taken by the Self under the guidance of the Other to alien territories from which it returns not so much a newly born Self as it is a reformed one.

The main purpose of this paper is to explore the hybridization process characterizing this *Self/Other* encounter from a postcolonial as well as Levinasian perspectives. Hybridity in the aforementioned novels correlates with an ethical development that leads the main protagonists to abnegate their belonging to an autochthonous and

monadic form of identity and instead articulate their subjectivities in a post-binary space of belonging.

#### I. PROBLEMATIC BELONGING: DWELLING ON THE MARGIN

Even though the Magistrate is part of the Self, as he represents the imperial authority at a remote outpost, he feels he is marginalized and alienated from Colonel Joll, the Third Bureau's agent of interrogation, who comes afresh from the capital. When the Magistrate sees the sunglasses for the first time, he expresses his bewilderment: "I have never seen something like it: two little discs of glass suspended in front of his eyes in loops of wire [...]. He told me they are a new invention" (Coetzee 1980, 1). Both the fashionable way Colonel Joll dresses up and the newly invented sunglasses he puts on reveal the cultural distance between the capital of Empire, the centre of change, innovation, and the beacon of civilization, and the frontier settlement, the Empire's periphery; a small and isolated oasis in the heart of the desert whose three thousand dwellers live according to the natural rhythm of seasons away from the metropolitan life. Even the news and social gossip reaching out from the capital concerning the ascendancy of the Third Bureau in the political circle of influence of the Empire, as they become "guardians of the state" (Coetzee 1980, 9), are outdated: "The Third Bureau is the most important division of the Civil Guard nowadays. That is what we hear, anyhow, in gossip that reaches us long out of date from the capital" (Coetzee 1980, 2). When the Magistrate asks Joll about the itinerary of his second military expedition inside the barbarian lands, he ironically reverses the Centre/Margin dichotomy: "'if you get lost it becomes our task to find you and bring you back to civilization'. We pause, savouring from our different positions the ironies of the word" (Coetzee 1980, 13). The outpost, which is regarded in the first place as a marginal settlement distanced from the capital, the metropolis of civilization,

becomes literally the centre of events in the story. On the other hand, the centre of civilization is metaphorically dislocated from the capital towards the periphery where the Empire has to prove itself by imposing and expanding its dominion.

The Magistrate seems to be aware of the ontological chasm between him and Joll. When the Magistrate tries to explain to a newly arrived officer that the image that people in the capital have about barbarians is much exaggerated, the officer, astonished, “looks at [him] oddly [...]. [The Magistrate] feels a barrier descend, the barrier between the military and the civilian” (Coetzee 1980, 54). With the arrival of the representatives of the Third Bureau, the Magistrate starts to realize that he has no room in the Empire’s military campaign against the barbarians, since he represents the soft version of the Self that serves Empire at times of peace: “I was not, as I like to think, the indulgent pleasure-loving opposite of the cold rigid Colonel. I was the lie that Empire tells itself when times are easy, the truth the Empire tells when harsh winds blow. Two sides of imperial rule, no more, no less” (Coetzee 1980, 148). According to the Magistrate, Colonel Joll personifies the Empire at its most brutal state. The question that he poses when he sees Joll wearing sunglasses at the opening scene, “Is he blind?” (Coetzee 1980, 1), implies that the Empire is myopic in its way of perceiving the Other.

Like the Magistrate who is depicted occupying a marginal position vis à vis the central authority of the Empire, Mrs Curren, in *Age of Iron*, is presented as a detached, isolated, and dying figure. The unexpected presence of the homeless Vercueil on the threshold of her house disrupts her feelings of loneliness and seclusion after the departure of her daughter, her only family, to the United States. The house of Mrs Curren, which is metonymic of her subjectivity, is depicted as an “empty house, from which every echo has faded” (Coetzee 1990, 5). Feeling empty and abandoned while suffering from deteriorating physical condition due to recurrent pain attacks caused by cancer, Mrs Curren comes into view as a spectral figure just like the derelict Vercueil. They are both lonely and outcast and

therefore victims of their personal circumstances. While Vercueil is rejected by society, Mrs Curren is deserted by her own daughter, who decides to never come back to South Africa. This makes them share the same space of marginality and detachment. The unpredicted encounter is thus between two isolated and alienated individuals whose fates, despite the racial, cultural, and social barriers separating them, seem to become closely intertwined.

After witnessing a violent incident in front of her house, in which two black boys are deliberately hit by a police car, Mrs Curren decides to venture outside the white suburbs in Cape Town to see for herself the ugly reality of apartheid. While wandering around the black ghetto streets, Mrs Curren has some childhood reminiscences revealing her socio-cultural backdrop:

When I think back to my own childhood, I remember only long sun-struck afternoons, the smell of dust under avenues of eucalyptus, the quiet rustle of water in roadside furrows, the lulling of doves. A childhood of sleep, prelude, to what was meant to be a life without trouble and a smooth passage to Nirvana. (Coetzee 1990, 85)

Mrs Curren falls into a reverie of a golden age of peace and tranquillity as an attempt to escape the infernal reality she finds herself stuck in. Nevertheless, jolted out of her idyllic memories, Mrs Curren opens her eyes on a gothic, cold, and violent scenery so much unknown, ignored, or forgotten by people like her. "Around us was a wilderness of grey dune-sand and Port Jackson willow, and a stench of garbage and ash. Shreds of plastic, old iron, glass, animal bones littered both sides of the path" (Coetzee 1990, 86). Mrs Curren understands that she has been the victim of the propaganda fostered by the state-condoned mass media that try to fabricate a bright image of South Africa that reflects political stability, economic prosperity, and above all social peace and harmony between ethnicities and races.

## II. JOURNEY ACROSS IDENTITIES: THE ORDEAL

The ethical framework that characterizes the Self/Other relationship in Coetzee's two narratives corresponds with the Levinasian conceptualization of the ethical and the ontological, which offers the possibility of conceiving the Other beyond the imposing constraints of the dominant discourse. In order to surmount the ontological structures constructed by processes of knowledge, Levinas proposes an intersubjective paradigm operating a priori "to the present and to representation" (Levinas 1998, 15). The sense of moral obligation that the Self bears towards the Other unfolds into an ontological mutual indebtedness that transcends the historical and cultural modes of existence. Nonetheless, this moral obligation cannot occur without producing a sense of "exposure to the assignation by the other [...] into [one] by burglary" (Levinas 1998, 145). Defining what he designates as an act of assignation of the Self by the Other, Levinas maintains: "The subject in responsibility is alienated in the depths of its identity with an alienation that does not empty the same of its identity, but constrains it to it, with an unimpeachable assignation" (Levinas 1998, 141). The correlation between the *assignation* of the Self by the Other and the act of *constraint* intimates that the presence of the Other detaches the Self from its self-awareness of unity and sameness. The unexpected arrival of the visitant Other creates a sense of "responsibility and substitution" (Levinas 1998, 151) that subverts the processes of assimilation and modulation attempted by the Self to contain the Other within its power hierarchization.

To establish the possibility of moral transformation, Coetzee entrusts his alienated characters with the ability of self-analysis and self-reflection, and therefore with the capacity for challenging and questioning their own identities. In *Age of Iron*, Mrs Curren is much concerned about both discovering and uncovering the dark side of apartheid regime with which she was once complicit. Although she feels "[t]ired beyond cause, tired as an armour against the times,

yearning to close [her] eyes, to sleep” (Coetzee 1990, 117), Mrs Curren frequently struggles to keep her eyes open as an indication that she is willing to repudiate the version of truth maintained by official mass media. Instead, she adopts an unmediated and thus relatively truthful picture of reality. Referring to the majority of her white compatriots, she describes them as being blind to the truth about apartheid: “scales thickening on [their eyes], as the land-explorers, the colonists, prepare to return to the deep” (Coetzee 1990, 116). As a way of initiating the process of moral change, Coetzee introduces the notion of otherness, that is, people of a different gender, class, race, and culture from outside their familiar circle of life, into his characters’ existence. Through their involuntary encounters with figures of otherness, those characters start becoming actively involved in the reality that they have feared to face and tried in vain to avoid it.

The violence that Mrs Curren witnesses during her physical, as well as the metaphorical trip to Guguletu, triggers her sympathy for the blacks. “Full of misgivings” (Coetzee 1990, 83), she drives beyond the tranquil and secure boundaries of the white suburbs, which she describes as a “closed universe, curved like an egg, enclosing us” (Coetzee 1990, 20). Accompanied by Vercueil, she ventures into a wholly alien and dreary world, in which “swirls of mist floated towards us, embraced the car, floated away” (Coetzee 1990, 83), writes Mrs Curren to her daughter. However, it is her encounter with Vercueil, the epitome of the Other in the story, which disrupts her present withering life and makes her show some signs of spiritual self-awakening and empathy for the Other.

Now standing as a witness to the ugly reality of black ghettos, she refers to the streets as “a landscape of scorched earth, blackened trees [...] a wilderness of grey dune-sand [...] and a stench of garbage and ash. Shreds of plastic, old iron, glass, animal bones littered both sides of the path.” (Coetzee 1990, 86). The more she infiltrates into the ghetto, the more she witnesses an underworld of agony and anger. Driving from one street to another, Mrs Curren

feels appalled by the high rate of brutality and misery to which most blacks are cast: “Men passed us, dark, bearded, stern, armed with sticks, walking swiftly in single file [...], a scene of devastation: shanties burnt” (Coetzee 1990, 87). The black inhabitants are forced to live in crowded spaces with the absence of basic state services, facilities, and even a police force to secure the area against crime and violence. This unveils the colonial heritage of apartheid, the result of which those native people are displaced from their lands and placed into closed and marginalized cantons that lack the lowest degree of human dignity, probably to provide cheap labour as a substitute to slavery for the capitalist industrial and agricultural growing enterprises.

Like Mrs Curren, who ventures outside the white suburbs, depicted by mass media as the “land of smiling neighbours” (Coetzee 1990, 49), to seek the truth about the apartheid crimes committed against blacks, the Magistrate decides to cross the border to the barbarian lands to return the barbarian girl to her clan. The journey beyond the Empire’s territories casts him into an alien and uncharted space in which he realizes the limits of his knowledge of the Other. The deeper he goes into the barbarian land, the more he gets disentangled from the Empire’s physical as well as moral grasp. Therefore, being situated away from the centre, the Magistrate finally becomes able to observe for the first time some of the girl’s undiscovered human qualities he earlier failed to notice when he was submerged by the imperial representation of the barbarians. It is only now that he can see the girl as “a witty, attractive young woman [...], at no loss for words.” He realizes that instead of “giving her a good time [he] oppressed her with gloom” (Coetzee 1980, 68) by the inconsiderate imposition of his selfish desire to decipher her by turning her into an inhuman object of study. The girl’s body was fetishized and turned into a space of representation:

I realize that if I took a pencil to sketch her face I would not know where to start. Is she truly so featureless? With an effort I concentrate my mind on her.

I see a figure in a cap and heavy shapeless coat standing unsteadily, bent forward, straddle-legged, supporting itself on sticks. How ugly, I say to myself. My mouth forms the ugly word. I am surprised by it but I do not resist: she is ugly, ugly. (Coetzee 1980, 50-51)

Before the journey, the girl seems to be indecipherable when she is regarded as a mere object of scrutiny that bears witness, through the marks of torture on her body, to the atrocity of the colonial history of the Empire. The Magistrate has obliterated her human features, her personality, and her alterity. What he sees is only the ugliness of Empire transmuted into the marks of torture and scars upon the girl's body.

Having physically and metaphorically crossed the border, the Magistrate is released and somewhat liberated from the heavy spell of the Empire's colonial ideology. He gets disillusioned with the high value that he has so far ascribed to civilization. He starts sensing the impotence of the Empire to authentically and sincerely communicate human feelings for the Other. It is only during the journey that he becomes able to view the barbarian girl as a whole being, a "whole woman" (Coetzee 1980, 70) he needs to love and cherish. Before that, he used to see her as a fragmented entity, impersonal discrete parts of a stereotypically deformed body.

The encounter with the so-called "mountain barbarians" as well as the discovery of the girl's true character remind him of the Empire's hegemonic political and economic expansionist policy which has led to the displacement of the native population, who have been "pushed off the plains into the mountains by the spread of Empire" (Coetzee 1980, 78). He expresses both his regret and shame for never having tried to really understand them as a race of humans but just as a *barbarian* race—the term 'barbarian' is deployed as the disfavoured part of the civilized/barbarian binary opposition. The Magistrate admits:

I have never before met northerners on their own ground on equal terms: the barbarians I am familiar with are those who visit the oasis to barter, and the

few who make their camp along the river, and Joll's miserable captives. What an occasion and what a shame too to be here today. (Coetzee 1980, 78)

The Magistrate eventually realizes that it is the civilization that corrupts the natives' lives and souls by turning them into "lazy, immoral, filthy, stupid" (Coetzee 1980, 41) people. He also has a guilty conscience that he has never made an effort to know the natives deeply enough to respect them as a race endowed with ethos, culture and language equal to the people of the Empire. He even expresses his deep regret for not having learnt the barbarian language: "What a waste [...], she could have spent those long empty evenings teaching me her tongue! Too late now" (Coetzee 1980, 78). The realization that he is no different from his colleagues in sharing the same stereotypical images that dehumanize the natives leads to his recognition of the dubious role he is playing on the trip as well as in his official position. He confesses: "I am patching up relations between the men of the future and the men of the past, returning, with apologies, a body we have sucked dry - a go-between, a jackal of Empire in sheep's clothing" (Coetzee 1980, 79). His use of "we" allies him with the "torturers," whom he used to claim that "there is nothing to link [him] with" and whom he "must assert [his] distance from" (Coetzee 1980, 48). The use of "we" also implies his involvement in the crime of cultural imposition and economic exploitation committed by Empire. Significantly, it indicates his acknowledgement and acceptance of the shared responsibility and guilt that he has so far feared to face.

### III. IDENTITY LOSS OR GAIN? OR SOMETHING IN-BETWEEN?

The irruption of the Other, as put forward by Derek Attridge, has an ethical as well as an ontological effect on the construction of the Self: "The same," he explains, "is no longer the same after the irruption of the other." The encounter between Self and Other

invokes an ethical responsibility that leads to “converting alterity into familiarity” (Attridge 2004, 138). The process of including the Other in the space of the same does not solely affect the Other by rendering its alterity familiar, but it also “refashions” and “reshapes” (Attridge 2004, 128; 136) the Self by having it jeopardize its own homogeneity and instead venture into a heterogeneous space, or what Homi Bhabha calls “Third Space” (Bhabha 1994, 7), in which the Self loses its sense of originality and becomes hybrid.

The Magistrate’s liminal position reverberates Bhabha’s concept of hybridity, which he defines as a “dwell[ing] in ‘the beyond,’ in a sense a space of intervention in the here and now” (Bhabha 1994, 7). The need to circumvent the normative structures of identity suggests existing “in a moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity” (Bhabha 1994, 1). Bhabha emphasizes that the fact of being in transit entails living in “innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation” (Bhabha 1994, 1), which challenges any claim of stability and fixity of identity itself. Through subverting the rigid and traditional demarcations of cultural identity by “introduc[ing] other, incommensurable cultural temporalities” (Bhabha 1994, 2), he proposes a fluid and flexible paradigm of identity that tends to surmount the fixed and established cultural boundaries.

Therefore, it is the Magistrate, as the central protagonist in the novel, who seems to be located in the “interstitial space” (Bhabha 1994, 2) between the two cultures. More equally, being the narrator of the story, it is also he who has to carry out the burden of (re)writing and thus revisioning the history of the outpost and probably that of the Empire. Eventually, being the only character in the novel that undergoes the process of transformation, it becomes the fate of the Magistrate to inhabit the in-between space and to negotiate the possibility of a hybrid encounter between the Self and the Other.

The act of crossing the border, the interval space that bridges the gap between the Self and the Other, could be interpreted as an

interruption in the teleological and the homogeneous course of history that the Empire tries to impose on its subjects. Living in the here and now suggests articulating heterogeneous versions of history that can encompass different histories and dissimilar cultural identities. Moreover, being situated on the fringe, away from the centre of the Empire's nationhood, the border becomes a space of encounter and negotiation that is capable of articulating new signs of a hybrid identity that signals, reversely, from the margin towards the centre. Nonetheless, the Magistrate can neither completely lose his attachment to the identity of the Self he belongs to, nor thoroughly appropriate the Other's identity; hence, he is vacillating between either assenting to the Empire as a symbol of national identity or dissenting from colonial discourse held by the Empire, which he describes as the "empire of pain" (Coetzee 1980, 24).

After returning to the outpost, the Magistrate is accused of having been "treacherously consorting with the enemy" (85). However, undergoing imprisonment and torture in the granary enables him not only to experience the suffering and pain the native captives have endured, but it also arouses his sympathy for and identification with the Other which leads him to take his fateful decision to end his "alliance with the guardians of the Empire" to "set [him]self in opposition" (Coetzee 1980, 85) to its authority.

The solitude of confinement makes the Magistrate experience self-effacement; it even forces him to turn to "the evocation of the ghosts" (Coetzee 1980, 87-88) of the former prisoners as a desperate attempt to spiritually communicate with them and sense what it was like when they were tortured and murdered by Colonel Joll and his men. Dressed in "a woman's calico smock," he realizes that Joll is "deal[ing] with [his] soul" through the same kind of dehumanizing treatment that he has applied to the other prisoners (Coetzee 1980, 128-29). This experience symbolically stands for a radical metamorphosis in his identity which is suggested by the gender reversal. That is, the Magistrate is probably on the verge of disavowing the Empire's identity, as it is indicated by his having "a

crust like a fat caterpillar” (Coetzee 1980, 125) on his wounded cheek similar to the girl’s as well as by his roaring and shouting in the “barbarian language” that he uses for “calling his barbarian friends” (Coetzee 1980, 133). Furthermore, the fact of being hung upside down from a tree suggests that his original stance on the barbarians and the Empire has been subverted, reinforcing the idea that his old Self is lost, that he has “already died one death on that tree” (Coetzee 1980, 138). This mock hanging can probably be compared to the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ, which suggests, in addition to the possibility of resurrection and renewal, the ideas of self-sacrifice and martyrdom. In the same vein, the Magistrate’s dissent from the racist and oppressive rule of the Empire could be seen as an act of self-sacrifice as he ends up in prison after having been tortured and humiliated the same way the barbarian prisoners have been through.

Nevertheless, the Magistrate’s experience of metaphysical death and reincarnation leads him to give up his idea of being a self-pitying “martyr,” of wanting to “go down in history” and “make a name for [him]self as the One Just Man, the man who is prepared to sacrifice his freedom to his principles” (Coetzee 1980, 124). Instead, he recognizes an egotistical motivation in confronting the Empire, “easier to be beaten and made a martyr [...] than to defend the cause of justice for the barbarians” (Coetzee 1980, 118). Rather than feeling pity for himself, he is now determined to speak out from his heart instead of his mind: “‘Let everything be said!’ I told myself when I first faced up to my tormentors [...]. ‘Declare your terror, scream when the pain comes! [...] Open your heart!’” (Coetzee 1980, 141). After his homecoming, the Magistrate seems to have gained not only a cleansed and humbled Self but also a better understanding of himself, the Empire and the Other. Above all, he has become able to challenge the Empire through denouncing and condemning publicly the atrocities committed by the Third bureau officers:

‘Look!’ I shout. I point to the four prisoners who lie docilely on the earth,

their lips to the pole, their hands clasped to their faces like monkeys' paws [...] 'We are the great miracle of creation! [...] How!' Words fail me. 'Look at these men!' I recommence. 'Men!' (Coetzee 1980, 117)

The Magistrate seems to be liberated from the racist modes of representations that have dominated the colonial discourse. Before that, especially when the first prisoners are brought into the settlement, he adopts the same prejudices propagated by the imperial discourse that tend to dehumanize the barbarians by representing them as savage and uncivilized creatures unworthy of being treated as equal human beings. Now that he has become a man of conscience who rejects the injustice even if it is inflicted on the Other, he refers to the barbarians as "Men" and "miracle of creation;" they are human again. This is a reversal of the Empire's standards and ideologies that demonize the barbarians and construct them as the "enemy" (Coetzee 1980, 115).

While the Magistrate needs only to undergo the same acts of torture and humiliation meted upon the barbarian captives to recognize the humanity and difference of the Other, Mrs Curren has to go through a painful process of moral transformation that leads her not only to denounce the apartheid discourse propagated by mass media but above all to love the "unlovable" (125) and to "embrace" (Coetzee 1990, 181) the once alien Other.

After the journey to Guguletu, where she undergoes a moral development that leads her to a kind of loss of her "doll" identity, Mrs Curren is submerged by the feelings of emptiness and sorrow: "Grief past weeping. I am hollow, I am a shell. To each of us, fate sends the right disease. Mine a disease that eats me out from inside" (103). What remains of her old Self is apartheid, metaphorically represented by her growing cancer and likened to "a crab sitting inside licking its lips" (Coetzee 1990, 103). Engulfed within a state of limbo, Mrs Curren expresses her relentless desire not to succumb to death. She is willing to refashion her old Self into a reformed one: "To do with a life that isn't worth, much anymore. I am trying to work out what I can get for it" (Coetzee 1990, 104). In order to fill

her emptiness, Mrs Curren takes refuge into the ritual of writing to exorcize the demons of apartheid from what remains of her life before the claws of death close upon her: "Death may indeed be the last great foe of writing, but writing is also the foe of death. Therefore, writing, holding death at arm's length, let me tell you that I meant to go through with it" (Coetzee 1990, 106). After seeing the truth in the black ghetto, she wants to write or rewrite the story of the changing, transiting South Africa from apartheid to post-apartheid as she herself is transiting from life to death:

Why should it be left to me, old and sick and full of pain, to lift myself unaided out of this pit of disgrace? I want to rage against the men who have created these times. I want to accuse them of spoiling my life [...]. I want to sell myself, redeem myself. (Coetzee 1990, 107)

The public and the personal stories are both fused into a single narrative that recounts the traumatic experience of the dying Mrs Curren who tries to seek redemption for the crimes of apartheid. When she starts writing after her journey, she seems less confident as she loses control over her voice: "I wrote. I write. I follow the pen, going where it takes me. What else have I now?" (Coetzee 1990, 99). Mrs Curren concedes her subject position as an agent, enunciator of the narrative, and occupies what Bill Ashcroft designates as "interstitial space in which there is a constant slippage between abjection and subjectivity" (Ashcroft 2001, 44-45). Through occupying this space of marginality and abjection, Mrs Curren as a transformed/reformed Self enters a space of difference and alterity, in which she becomes able to reconstruct a different story or history that could probably challenge the authority of the official record of the apartheid history.

Mrs Curren is regretful now of having returned home leaving the horrible events in Guguletu behind her. After her border-crossing to the Other's space, she returns not only changed but above all more capable of self-criticism:

'I want to go home!' So I had whinged, to my shame [...]. Home to my safe house, to my bed of childhood slumber [...]. From the cradle a theft took place: a child was taken and a doll left in its place to be nursed, and reared, and that doll is what I call I. A doll? *A doll's life? Is that what I have lived?* (emphasis added, Coetzee 1990, 100-101)

Mrs Curren refers to her old Self as a 'doll' controlled by a hierarchical discursive system that starts from the family and then moves to educational institutions and finally circulates to the other structures of knowledge to constitute a whole ideological system that shapes such an identity. Seeing the whole picture, Mrs Curren becomes disillusioned with her old self and all the system that has so far spawned it. She starts revisioning and interrogating the so-thought fixed traits in her old identity. She becomes disillusioned with her upbringing as a white Afrikaner insofar that she begins referring to her generation as 'ugly:' "How ugly we are growing, from being unable to think well of ourselves! Even the beauty queens look irritable. Ugliness: what is it but the soul showing through the flesh?" (Coetzee 1990, 121). She regards her background as a predetermined mode of life according to which individuals are contained by an iron system of 'discipline' and 'surveillance' that leaves no room for dissenters like her to forge their own identities<sup>3</sup>.

The second journey undertaken by Mrs Curren's, in which she deserts her house (her old identity) and spends a night in the open air under a flyover like a homeless, marks a turning point in her moral transformation. Mrs Curren's shift from sympathy to empathy with the Other leads her to cede the privileged position of the Self - a white widow living in the 'cocoon'-like white suburbia - and reversely occupy the marginalized space of otherness, in which she is othered herself by the Gestapo-like police when she is accused of cooperating with black insurgents. Mrs Curren is depicted wedged into a liminal space between identities, from which she could hardly disentangle herself except through recognizing her moral obligation towards the Other. This reversal in positions urges

Mrs Curren to reject her belonging to the Afrikaner nationalist identity as well as her filial bonds towards her daughter and her grandchildren. Instead of surrendering to the doom of being eaten out by cancer (apartheid), Mrs Curren returns to the Other not only to be redeemed but above all to avoid the fate of dying in shame.

After witnessing the atrocities of the apartheid regime during her trip to Other's territories, Mrs Curren begins to put into question an important trait that constitutes her old Self as an Afrikaner: the zealous love for the land and the lifestyle related to it. Evoking her childhood in the farm, Mrs Curren looks sceptical of her pastoral background: "Now that desire, which one may as well call love, is gone from me I do not love this land any more [...]. I am like a man who has been castrated [...]. Instead, he would feel a tug, light but continual, toward stupor, detachment" (Coetzee 1990, 111). This rupture with the old self is not smooth and without consequences for Mrs Curren. The loss of the old identity jettisons her into an uncomfortable state of torpor and alienation that will develop later into a crisis of belonging. This in-between and transient position is described by Bill Ashcroft as "ambivalence of white resistance in South Africa [which] allegorizes the dilemma of any dissenter in an oppressive regime" (Ashcroft 2001, 145). Although Mrs Curren exposes her inner feelings, worries, and ambivalence to Vercueil, her sole interlocutor in the narrative, her confession is countered by another kind of detachment so much different from hers. Vercueil's detachment and indifference are far from being provoked by an existential crisis of identity, but it is rather a strategy of evasion from and resistance to any prescriptive discourse.

Mrs Curren's process of revisioning her old identity renders her more capable of seeing the dark image of the apartheid so far dissimulated by propaganda. She eventually recognizes the crimes of apartheid, which she earlier failed to denounce when urged by Mr Thabane: "The age of iron waiting to return [...]. Now, in South Africa. I see eyes clouding over again [...] as the land-explorers, the colonists, prepare to return to the deep" (Coetzee 1990, 116). Mrs

Curren acknowledges the justness and legitimacy of the young blacks' struggle against such an oppressive and criminal authority. Like iron, they are rigid, unbreakable, and probably unstoppable. For Mrs Curren, they belong to the 'age of iron' that shall rise again from death and overthrow the racist regime of apartheid. Such a decaying regime is depicted drowning deep into a sea of troubles during the mid-eighties of the last century: "what honour is there in slipping off in these times when the worm-riddled ship is so clearly sinking [...]. The Afrikaners of Paraguay joining the Afrikaners of Patagonia in their sullen diaspora: [...] bullies, thugs, torturers, killers - what company!" (Coetzee 1990, 117). Now that she is illuminated by the truth about apartheid, Mrs Curren not only dissociates herself from the political affiliation but also from her racial filiation and its colonial history. She portends the downfall of the white regime and the diasporic dispersal of its leaders who would run away for their lives by deserting the sinking ship.

In order to seek redemption and rebirth as a new or reformed Self, Mrs Curren associates her moral awakening with the reconciliation with the Other. This is achieved through reciprocity with and recognition of the unwanted Other. After having thought of death, Mrs Curren has two dreams in which she expresses her longing for human togetherness and communion: "I embrace the longing, embrace the regret, embrace the king, the swimming girls, embrace whatever will occupy me" (emphasis added, Coetzee 1990, 24). The more her painful cancer grows and her body becomes weaker, the more her longing for human communion becomes intense. Her moral responsibility for the Other allows her to wish to embrace not only her far away daughter - her own flesh and blood - but also any other being including her black housekeeper, Florence: "I want to be held to someone's bosom, to Florence's, to yours, to anyone's, and told that it will be all right" (Coetzee 1990, 37). Mrs Curren realizes that her moral salvation would never be accomplished without the guidance of the Other. She feels so empty and lonely that she grows eager for being absorbed by and filled with

other entities even if it means embracing a filthy and smelly derelict like Vercueil by the end of the story.

## CONCLUSION

In the two texts, the flight from a pre-determined and an a priori form of subjecthood may impart the idea that there is no definite and ultimate framing paradigm for identity. Rather, identity in Coetzee's texts is presented as complex and multifaceted. It can be a matter of political affiliation and allegiance as well as one of race, ethnicity, history, and nationality. There are individual characters, such as the Magistrate in *Waiting for the Barbarians* and Mrs Curren in *Age of Iron*, whose ethical awakening enables them to abnegate their belonging to an autochthonous and monadic form of identity and instead articulate their post-binary form of subjectivity in a hybrid constructive space of becoming, on the threshold of new modes of existence.

## NOTES

1. In his book *Postmodernity and its Discontents*, Zygmunt Bauman relates the idea of empathy to the notion of reciprocity between Self and Other. Defining empathy, he supposes that "if we put ourselves in another person's place, we will see and feel exactly 'the same' as he or she sees and feels in his or her present position - and that this feat of empathy may be reciprocated" (Bauman 1997, 9).
2. According to R. Radhakrishnan, the concept of 'national identity' is "a normative measure that totalizes heterogeneous 'selves' and 'subjectivities', [...] and secures the regime of a full and undivided Identity. And in our times [...] the dominant paradigm of identity has been 'the imagined community' of nationalism" (Radhakrishnan 1993, 752).
3. According to Michel Foucault, the state-condoned mechanisms of discipline and surveillance hardly permit any space of individual freedom or even the possibility of resistance outside the constraints of the prevalent discourse. Resistance, as determined by Foucault, is an element of power itself. He argues: 'Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather

consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power” (Foucault 1978, 95).

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JANET MUCH BETTER THAN SARTRE ...  
TO STUDY THE LINK BETWEEN EMOTION AND BEHAVIOUR<sup>1</sup>

Lucien Oulahbib

University Jean Moulin Lyon 3, France

lucien.oulahbib@free.fr

**Abstract.** If we had to show the actuality of Pierre Janet, we should simply begin with the phenomenon of emotion, which is perceived today much more as an expression of consciousness than only as a physiological reaction. Where does this interest come from? How is it that emotion today is rather understood as implying also meaning and, therefore, consciousness? It seems this change is the result of a better understanding of emotion as an expressive sign of something other than a purely physiological signal, especially when it comes to anything other than the view of a bear, to use the famous example of William James.

**Keywords:** Janet, Sartre, emotion, behaviour

The genuine psychology which, by fear of metaphysics, had  
thrown itself in mathematics, in alleged brain anatomy, in a pseudo-  
psychology of vasomotor, came back in the end to its true purpose,  
the study of human behaviour.  
(Janet 1975, T1, 203)

(...) feelings, in particular, are not built with sensations.  
(Janet 1975, T2, 62)

(...) scientific psychology must consider the psychological facts as  
actions and express them in terms of action.  
(Janet 1975, T2, 71)

We will assume, as a guiding hypothesis, that today's frenzy to studying emotion as *meaning* is more the congruent product of various psychological, artistic and philosophical movements stating there is a strong connection between *the mind* and *the body*, a

connection validated by varied experiences ranging from the psychedelic to the *athlete*, than those advanced by neurobiology.

In fact, it seems that some neuroscientists concerned with psychological (Reuchlin 1995, 240) and sociological approaches have found themselves blocked when have tried to analysis what generates emotion besides its physiological stem. This indicates the great significance of consciousness, who becomes gradually aware of itself and continuously defines itself by its conduct.

All these things were not unknown to Janet, hence his importance for the present day, and that contrary to what Jean-Paul Sartre thought, whose criticism has undoubtedly contributed to the sidelining of the janetienne analysis<sup>2</sup> in addition to Freudianism, which subject consciousness to the unconscious<sup>3</sup>, a hierarchy which is now being challenged by cognitive psychology (Reuchlin 1995, 246) and the psychology of motivation (Nuttin 1980, 26), both highlighting the conscious intervention of an active subject.

Let us take the fragment below from Sartre as an example of his misunderstanding of the janetienne analysis:

A theory of emotion which sought to restore the preponderant part played by the psyche would have to treat emotion as a kind of behaviour. Yet for all then, Janet is aware no less than James of the apparent disorder presented by every emotion. He, therefore, threats emotion as a behaviour that is less well adapted, or, if one prefers, a behaviour of disadaptation, a behaviour of defeat. When the task is to difficult and we cannot maintain the better behaviour appropriate to it, the psychic energy that has been released expands itself along another path; we adopt an inferior behaviour which necessitates a lesser psychic tension. Hence, for instance, is a girl whose father has just told her that he has some fear of paralysis. She falls to the ground, prey to a violent emotion which returns a few days later with the same violence, and which finally obliges her to seek help from the doctors. In the course of her treatment, she confesses that the thought of nursing her father and leading the austere life of a nurse has suddenly appeared to her as insupportable. Here, then, the emotion represents an attitude of defeat; it is the substitute for the 'non-maintainable-conduct-of-a-nurse'.

Similarly, in his work *Obsession and Psychasthenia*, Janet cites the cases of several patients who, having come to make confessions to him, could not

finish their confessions, but broke down in tears, sometimes even bringing on a nervous crisis. Here again, the required behaviour is too difficult. The whipping, on the nervous crisis, represents a behaviour of defeat, which substitutes itself for the former by a deviation. (...)

But what are we to understand by it? If we regard the individual objectively as a system of behaviours, and if the deviation takes place automatically, then there is no defeat, it does not exist; all that happens is the replacement of a kind of behaviour by diffusion of organic manifestations. If emotion is to have the psychic significance of a defeat, the consciousness must intervene and confer that signification upon it, there must be conscious retention of the emotion as a defeat precisely in relation to that superior behaviour. But that would be to give consciousness a constitutive function, which Janet will not have at any price. (Sartre: 1962, 35 – 38)

This last statement of Sartre is wrong. Janet gives, on the contrary, a “constitutive” role to consciousness, which can be observed even in the example that Sartre advanced. The nervous crisis is less a “deviation” than a *solution* expressing the refusal to meet the prospective father’s wish to have to take care of him. The fact of rolling on the ground is the *immediate affirmation* and the one which triggered it *the reflected affirmation* - if we use the distinction between these *two types* of conduct made by Janet (Janet 1975, T1, 207)

In other words, the immediate assertion, rolling on the ground, constitutes, from the viewpoint of the subject, a solution, that is to say, a decision of action, a reflected affirmation, which the girl acknowledges it only later.

What else, therefore, consciousness could be if not an act of reflected affirmation, as it is, for instance, the girls’ decision of throwing herself and rolling on the ground to refuse to submit herself to what it is *believed* to be the wish of the other. She *believes* indeed that *if* his father tells her about his paralysis, *then* she must turn into his nurse. Hence the significative “solution” – meaning that it shall be seen as a sign, that it designates, in fact, that something which troubles. There is a twofold temporality here. Not perceiving it would merely mean playing the words instead of seeing

consciousness as constitutive behaviour, as Sartre himself defines it in his text.

Let us now return on this issue more rigorous. Does Janet use precisely the term “consciousness” in his work? Yes, when he defines what the “psychology of action” means:

In this psychology of action, it is necessary to make room for the consciousness, space which can be suppressed when we speak of inferior animals, but which cannot be ignored when we speak of men or even of animals with superior intelligence. But we must speak of the phenomenon of consciousness as a particular type of conduct, as a complication of the act which is superadded to elementary actions. We can reach it by studying the elementary social behaviours and especially the feelings that are, as we shall see, regulations of the action, reactions of the individual to his own actions. (Janet 1975, 175)

Thus, consciousness proves to be a “specific action”, a “complication of the act” that “superimposes itself on particular actions”. This “addition”, Janet says, is perceivable when the “elementary social behaviours” are studied, especially “feelings that are (...) regulations of the action, reactions of the individual to his own actions”. Janet considers the action of consciousness as a regulation of the same nature as that emerging through the formation of feeling.

One question arises at this point: does the very fact of regulating means that consciousness is indeed constitutive to behaviour, as Sartre believed although he did not accept to see it in Janet? For Sartre, it seems that consciousness is a particular capability able to “confer meanings” (as Husserl had demarcated in his *Logical Investigations*, not to mention Hegel, Kant, and, in fact, all philosophy).

If we objectively consider the individual as a system of behaviours, and if the derivation is automatic, failure is nothing, it does not exist, there is simply a replacement of behaviour by a diffuse set of organic manifestations. For emotion to have the psychical meaning of failure, it is necessary that the consciousness intervene and confer meaning to it, it is necessary that it retains

as a possibility the superior conduct and that it perceives emotion precisely as a failure by relating it to this superior type of conduct. But it would give consciousness a constitutive role, which Janet does not want at any price.

For Janet, consciousness is the basis of the regulations of action, namely of feelings. It is even a necessary condition for the psychology of action to exist.

Janet delves deeper into this question by stating that, if feeling turns out to be an “elementary social behaviour”, this requires a thorough study of its foundation, that means analyzing the sense of feeling, of its regulation and thus of the very organization of consciousness. This is what Janet emphasizes in defining the second ground condition for the psychology of action (consciousness being the first; see the quote above):

A second condition is that in this description of behaviours, one must be concerned with superior behaviours, beliefs, reflections, reasoning, experiences. These facts have usually been expressed in terms of thoughts; in order to preserve the same language in psychological science, they must be expressed in terms of actions. (...). In psychology, we must abandon the anatomical and physiological pretensions and humbly limit ourselves to be a psychologist always speaking the language of conduct and action. This is possible even when it comes to the highest behaviours taking into account an essential behaviour, characteristic of man, that of language. (Janet 1975, 175)

We cannot be clearer as to what is Janet induces as a part of consciousness (even though he does not mention it every five minutes) when it comes to higher behaviours, especially that of language. On this topic, Janet adds immediately after:

Language is a particular action of man, which is, in the beginning, a real external action, that is to say, an act of a subject that determines reactions to others. But language can very easily become an internal action, that is to say, an act of a subject that only determines reactions in himself. I tried to consider the very different behaviours between external behaviours and thoughts, those in which language intervenes as an intermediary; they allowed me to objectively approach the highest psychological phenomena, those that are most intimate of man, and express them in terms of actions. This psychology,

we can call it psychology of behaviour to indicate that it is about an extended and higher form of behavioural psychology. This is how we should study the psychological issues of the sick.

To better understand how Janet brings consciousness into the formation of emotions, let us consider another case, of a woman who, Janet says:

(...) believes, in her delirium, that she is transformed into a lion, that she is a lioness. She walks on all fours, roars, scratches a drawer with her claws, takes out photographs, chooses photographs of children and devours them. Can we imagine a more beautiful symbolism and absurdity? But when it comes to dinner, she refuses papers and eats her soup with a spoon.

A woman in a crisis of doubt wrote me the following letter: 'I am again very unhappy, unable to write or read a word. I have before me a letter from my daughter and I cannot read it because I absolutely do not understand how black dots on paper may bear someone's thoughts. Could you write me a note to tell me when could I come to see you?' But finally! If she cannot understand a written word, why is she writing to me and why is she asking me for a written answer? In all these innumerable cases, the disorder exists only in the acts of reflected belief, in the reflected establishment of a relation between the speech and the action made by the members. When the question of belief does not arise, when it comes to the act done only with the members, there is no trouble. (Janet 1975, 205)

Janet thus establishes a link between a word and an action through the reflection constituted as a belief and which will materialize itself in action, that to refuse to read. It is necessary the intervention of another process, of reason, to succeed in getting out of it. Janet also reports the following case:

Delboeuf used to describe this amusing experience: he had suggested to a sleepwalker that her head had been cut off and that henceforth she had to live without the head. The poor girl was walking around the room, feeling her neck, never raising her fingers above the imaginary cut. She was looking at herself in the mirror, saying, 'It's very ugly and sad to no more have a head'. An assistant awkwardly remarked that to see in the mirror and speak one has to have eyes, a mouth and, consequently, the head. This remark made the somnambulist very uneasy and awakened her, but she had not previously felt the complete opposite of the two parts of the belief. (...)

In order for the affirmation and belief be stopped when the terms imply opposing and irreconcilable actions, a new act must be added to the simple assertive belief. It is necessary that the thought of a rule come to oppose the affirmation. This act is performed correctly only at this rational stage when the mind has become capable of giving force to logical or moral formulas and of transforming them into orders. We do not have to study these higher stages but already at the considered stage of the logical and moral rules, it can have some importance. (Janet 1975, 209)

Let us remember that the rational stage is that moment when “the spirit has become capable of giving strength to logical or legal formulas and of turning them into powerful orders”. Janet notes, however, that the premises exist as to the belief staffing to logical or legal formulas, which he calls the reflected belief.

Janet thus establishes a scale of meaning (Janet 1975, 223) that, contrary to what Sartre believed, complicates the organization of consciousness<sup>4</sup>. The idea that we are always rational seemed incongruous to him:

(...) The principles of reason necessarily apply, it was said because it is impossible to have two contradictory behaviours simultaneously. The physical laws of the movements and the psychological laws of the beliefs were completely confounded. (Janet 1975, 208)

Hence the act of observing the non-application of the principles of reason over each one's consciousness (what Janet called the *assertive stage*, where assertive combines the real and the imaginary and his trouble: the belief pithiatic (Janet 1975, 210)). Janet also writes:

The reflected belief is formed through discussion with the other members of society, a discussion which ends up becoming internal in an isolated individual but always retains its primitive character of social discussion. The other *socii*, to designate them with the expression used by Mr Baldwin, opposed to the temptation of affirming their own beliefs. These are not always individual, they are often common to many and constitute the beliefs of society. He, who tries to support and defend a different belief, learns to his cost that it is dangerous to contradict common beliefs.

This rule of social concordance, which imposes a certain harmony in the beliefs of a social group, will become, at the rational stage, the starting point of the principle of non-contradiction: it will become forbidden to contradict oneself as to contradict the others without reason. But already at the reflected stage this rule intervenes at least from time to time and determines a certain coherence of beliefs. (Janet 1975, 209 - 210)

We shall observe that apprehending the significance as a *comprehensive scale of the endowment of meaning* is close to the broad definition that Max Weber gives to the term “reason” in his *Sociology*<sup>5</sup>.

For Weber, it is indeed to widen the horizon (to include the irrational as a “significant set” (Weber 1995, 35)) by considering that although behaviours can be contradictory, they must be perceived from the moment when they make sense for the actor; on the other hand, that on a completely different scale, that of reason as universal thought, such behaviours cannot last either because they prevent the advancement of a development or because they compete with other behaviours that are much more adequate in the organization of the action.

For instance, as Janet observed above, the *distinction* (and not the irreconcilable separation) within reason itself, taken in the broad sense of significate between the logic of the excluded third (which, historically speaking, produced the scientific and technical methodology) and the logic of *belief*, can very well accommodate, at least to a certain extent, with the contradictory rules of behaviour and, thus, of a dissociated organization of acts of consciousness and their translation, in terms of actions, whether it is an emotion or a drive.

We then see that the challenge for consciousness and behaviour resides in *scheduling the stages of apprehension of belief as a synthesis*. When this weakens is not possible, dissonances going up to dissociation disorder, when the last is not resolved, are observed.

In *The Psychological Automatism*, Janet had well seen this perspective in all its asperity (*Conclusion*, Chapter III, Second Part 488).

The mental disintegration, the formation of successive and simultaneous personalities in the same individual, the automatic functioning of these various psychological groups isolated from each other are not artificial things, bizarre results of experimental manoeuvres. These are perfectly real and natural things that experience allows us to discover and study, although it does not create them. (Janet 1998, 488)

In the *Conclusion* of the Chap. IV (*Second Part*), Janet adds:

How could a psychologist like Moreau (from Tours) write this astonishing sentence: 'In becoming an idiot, a subject goes through a psychocerebral state which, while continuing to develop, should make him a man of genius (in *Psychologie morbide*, 71). How could he believe that the diseases of the nervous system and even madness could favour the development of intelligence? It is probably because of the word 'excitement' that he constantly uses to designate madness. No, whatever the analogies in external circumstances could be, madness and genius are two extreme and opposite terms in all psychological developments. The whole history of madness, as Baillarger said and, after him, many other alienists, is only the description of the psychological automatism left to itself, and this automatism, in all its manifestations, depends on the current weakness of synthesis which is moral weakness itself, the psychological misery.

Genius, on the contrary, is a power of synthesis capable of forming entirely new ideas, which no previous science could have foreseen; it is the last degree of moral power. Ordinary men oscillate between these two extremes, more determined and automatic if their moral force is weaker, worthier of being considered as free and moral beings when the small moral force that they have in them and whose nature we do not know is growing further. (Janet 1998, 525 – 526)

What should be concluded from all these? Firstly, the fact that it is necessary to distinguish the necessity of the synthesis and the fact that we act in a non-identical manner according to our character (or *conation* for Reuchlin) and the historical conditions in which we live.

If the synthesis is essential, syntheses are possible and we should define how can they evaluate themselves from their singularity, especially today, in the media age, where the multiplication of realities and references attracts and produces compensations that further complicate the problem.

The role of an *objective* evaluation of the action in the light of Pierre Janet's psychology of behaviour becomes, once again, an indispensable reference framework recognized more and more at the international level.

#### NOTES

1. A French version of this paper was first published in *Dogma. Revue de Philosophie et du Sciences Humaines*, Édition Automne-Hiver 2016, pp. 1 – 11. <http://www.dogma.lu/edition-hiver-2016/>
2. For example, in Jean-Paul Sartre. *Esquisse d'une théorie des émotions*. Paris: Hermann, 1960, 23-25.
3. This subordination actually imitated that operated by Marxism, which made of consciousness a reflection of economic and political interests: the Freudian Marxism was born and continued to flourish with Bourdieu. See my book *Ethics and Epistemology of Nihilism, the Murderers of the meaning*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2002.
4. See my book *Pierre Janet Is Not Dead*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2007.
5. When Weber is studying, for instance, the “motivations” (Weber 1995, 34 – “Categories of Sociology”, *First Chapter*, “The Basic Concepts of Sociology”) it is about “understanding” (*Ibid.*, 34), the “meaning” (*Ibid.* 28) as a “significant set” (*Ibid.*, 38). That is to say, as a “pattern” or “reason”: ‘We call ‘cause’ a significant set which appears to be, in the eyes of the agent or the observer, the significant reason of comportment (*Ibid.*, 37).

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## MACHIAVELLI, THE IMMORALIST? THINK AGAIN!

Rocco A. Astore

Borough of Manhattan Community College

The City University of New York, USA

Astor421@newschool.edu

**Abstract.** Human nature is far from being perfect. Such a statement made Niccolò Machiavelli, the philosopher of the Renaissance known for his brand of political realism, claim that it is necessary for a ruler to keep a firm grasp on his/her populace in a way that neither favours them too much nor treats them outright oppressively. In other words, Machiavelli believes that a prudent leader is one who knows how to steer his/her population without the use of too much force while refraining from being too lackadaisical. However, by reading Machiavelli's *The Prince*, one may wonder why the author portrays such a blatant support for ghastly measures like exterminating the family of the house that ruled the state one seeks to conquer, or why it is that a potentate must reside in a newly captured territory, even if the ruler has no heartfelt interests in doing so. Can we argue that because Machiavelli divorces politics from morality, as well as affirms a nasty view of humanity's nature, an amoral, instead of an immoral interpretation of *The Prince* is possible? If we could justify that human nature is at least somewhat abysmal and that politics does not need to be ethical, could this help wash clean the repugnant reading that Machiavelli's *The Prince* invites? Quite simply, this essay will argue that we can and that morals and politics are, in fact, divorceable.

**Keywords:** Machiavelli, *The Prince*, amorality, immorality, political philosophy, Renaissance thought

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The name Machiavelli is synonymous with cruelty, nefariousness, deception and outright violence in the minds of many. However, could we argue for a more amoral interpretation of this Renaissance diplomat, even if we only adhere to his words in what is his most famous, or perhaps infamous, compositions, *The Prince*? It is the purpose of this essay to make such a case if we can justify two main

assertions: that politics is separate from morality, and that the nature of humankind is indeed lacklustre.

## 2. SITUATING MACHIAVELLI'S *THE PRINCE*

*The Prince* was written during a time when its author was not in the most favourable position, career-wise (Nederman 2014, 1-2). Machiavelli was out of a job, for the Medici Family suspected him of subversion and disloyalty against their power over Early 1500's Florence, in present-day Tuscany, Italy (Nederman 2014, 1-2). However, this time off Machiavelli put to good use, and through reflecting on his various political roles throughout his career before the era of Medici-ran Florence, he penned a guide for those in the utmost positions of power (Nederman 2014, 1-2). In this instructional text entitled *The Prince*, Machiavelli divorces politics from morality and declares that because human nature is not at all pristine, it is necessary for a ruler to employ various means, not all being pleasant, to maintain an orderly, well-run, and safe state (Nederman 2014, 5).

## 3. MACHIAVELLI'S SCHISM OF POLITICS AND MORALITY AND THE REAL HUMAN NATURE

Firstly, Machiavelli asserts that insincerity, ungratefulness, and timidity plague human nature (Nederman 2014, 2-4). He also claims that when people have the opportunity to gain from breaking bonds with others, and thus become, or reveal their hidden disloyalty, odds are they will (Machiavelli 1979, 108). In other words, he would assert that although we politicize morals or claim that we should act in such a way that our political institutions, beliefs, and treatment of each other reflect lofty ethical ideals like justice, fairness, and equality, our actual political actions tell a different tale. At the same

time, Machiavelli would continue to claim that because we fail to moralize politics or not act in such a way that our political behaviour displays our moral convictions, it is not the case that morality and politics form an inseparable bond.

As such, because human nature is grim or absent of genuine moral worth, especially in the theatre of political life, Machiavelli asserts that a ruler must be crafty or shrewd as a fox, while as dangerous as a lion, to maintain his/her station of power (Machiavelli 1979, 142-143). To do so, he first recommends that a leader must have the most martial might or armed formidability in his/her state to display the ferocity of a lion when necessary (Machiavelli 1979, 124, 142-143). At the same time, it is through statecraft, such as forming smart alliances, with minor powers, to thwart the plans of stronger states and by maintaining buffer zones between one's dominion and the territory of other nations, that a leader can display the cunning of a fox (Machiavelli 1979, 81-82, 142-143).

In this same vein, we may also assert that Machiavelli's famed recommendation that it is safer for a ruler to cultivate fear, rather than love, assists in further revealing Machiavelli's views on the essence of humanity (Machiavelli 1979, 130-133). Now, to Machiavelli, because a ruler must arouse fear or demand obedience from others, we may continue to assert that he was well aware of gainsayers, conspirators, and those who seek to either topple the mantle of a leader's authority, or benefit from using a ruler, to solely fulfil their desires (Machiavelli 1979, 130-133, 154-157). Consequently, because people are chiefly out for themselves, and since they may see a kind, loving, or authentically upright leader as someone who would be easy to take advantage of, Machiavelli believes it is most secure, politically savvy, and politically wise, or characteristic of a virtuosic sovereign to inspire a healthy amount of dread in others (Machiavelli 1979, 130-133). Finally, we may claim that because people are far from angelic, it is only necessary for a potentate to employ fear as a method of ensuring control over

people, for, in Machiavelli's view, individuals are justifiably a sorry lot (Machiavelli 1979, 130-133).

At the same time, we also see Machiavelli asserting that not even a leader is entirely trustable, for excessive cruelty and evil deeds on the part of a ruler, are, at times, commonplaces, and such tyrannical rules are remediable by a populace bearing arms (Nederman 2014, 3-4). Irrespective of this, Machiavelli was sincere when he asserted that a leader must allow for an armed populace, it is nonetheless the case that he does make this assertion. Resultingly, we may adhere to the view that because Machiavelli believes that an armed populace is necessary for the functioning of a state, we may tie this notion back to his understanding of human nature as being, in part, abhorrible (Nederman 2014, 3-4). For, in utopic conditions, no one needs bearing weaponry to ensure their safety from one another or the state. Lastly, these Machiavellian provisos to help resolve the lack of complete trust between ruler and subject and subject and ruler assists him to confirm that the purity of human nature is indeed something he seeks to at least cast into doubt.

#### 4. POLITICAL *VIRTÙ* IS NOT MORAL VIRTUE

From these considerations above, we may assert that Machiavelli unpacks two central claims in *The Prince*. First, that it is of human nature to be, at times, less than wanting and, secondly, that because of this, we may surely claim that politics and morality are not inseparable. Let us now explore what Machiavelli means by political *virtù*, and why it is not equivalent to moral virtue.

To Machiavelli, political *virtù* is that ability on the part of leaders at the apex of positions of power to acquire more power and secure their stations in such a way that it is necessary or undoubtingly safe (Machiavelli 1979, 80-81, 108, 124). One display of political *virtù* that he draws his readers to in *The Prince* deals with which troops, or soldiery, are most beneficial to a ruler (Machiavelli 1979, 115-120).

He begins by describing three types of soldiers: citizen-soldiers, mercenaries, and auxiliary troops (Machiavelli 1979, 115-124). The first, citizen-soldiers, or well-trained militias, are those troops that come from, live, and have their livelihoods invested in the state (Machiavelli 1979, 115-116, 124). As such, the author believes that a leader possesses the most control over these soldiers for without their leader these armed forces have the most to lose (Machiavelli 1979, 120-122). Accordingly, it is these troops that would be most willing to die for their leader and nation, for they seek valour through courage so that their ruler may reward them upon return for being successful in battle (Machiavelli 1979, 120-122). To Machiavelli, it would be wise of a leader, or demonstrative of his/her political *virtù*, to indeed grant titles, land, and praise on these soldiers, for it further solidifies that sovereign's grip on what is arguably his/her greatest asset military might (Machiavelli 1979, 115-116, 120-122). Hence, whether or not these soldiers wage war morally, it is necessary for a leader to take care of them and to hold them in high esteem, for the safety of his/her reign, as well as the safety of his/her populace, depends, in part, on them (Machiavelli 1979, 120-124).

Next, Machiavelli talks of mercenary and auxiliary troops which he recommends against, entirely (Machiavelli 1979, 115-120, 120-124). That is, to Machiavelli, it is best to avoid the use of these soldiers for a few main reasons. First, mercenary troops and auxiliary, or rented soldiers from another state, are, ultimately, disloyal; they seek to gain from the highest bidder as in the case of the former soldiery, and they have no real stake in the country that uses them as in the case of the latter soldiery (Machiavelli 1979, 115-120, 120-124). Hence, we may claim that both forms of warriors lack genuine concern for their hirer's state, for they have no real stake in the well-being of their hirer's dominion (Machiavelli 1979, 115-120, 120-124). Accordingly, we may assert that both mercenaries and auxiliaries pose a danger to their hirer's or renter's sovereignty and territories, for it is not the case that either is or could

be, entirely under the thumb, so to speak, of their client, that leader who employs them (Machiavelli 1979, 115-120, 120-124). That is because mercenaries and auxiliaries could cause great havoc in their employer's nation if that leader refuses to pay mercenaries more money for their service and if he must wage war with the home nation of the auxiliary troops (Machiavelli 1979, 115-120, 120-124). As such, it is only politically wise or displaying of political *virtù* if a leader refuses to use these types of soldiers, regardless if it is morally right to use them (Machiavelli 1979, 115-120, 120-124). That is, regardless if mercenaries, who usually disregard the standards or protocol of war, and irrespective if auxiliaries are convenient to use, it is not a moral concern as to why a leader should never employ them; instead it is a safety concern (Machiavelli 1979, 115-120, 120-124). Consequently, ethical deliberations should be void in consideration of using such soldiers, preferably it is never advisable to do so, for they pose too much of a threat to a leader and his/her state if that leader chooses to hire or rent them (Machiavelli 1979, 115-120, 120-124).

Another example of political *virtù* that Machiavelli recommends is the practice of a leader having to reside in his/her newly acquired lands, to cement loyalty in that newly held state, to thwart any plans of rebellion or revolt (Machiavelli 1979, 79, 91-92). First, Machiavelli gives this advice mainly to leaders who recently assumed control over a territory that was once independent of his/her state (Machiavelli 1979, 91-92). Now, to soothe, or ease the shift of power from one ruling house to a new ruling house, Machiavelli calls for the execution of the family that once held control over a leader's newly acquired domain (Machiavelli 1979, 91-92). This is an example of political *virtù*, for it is most prudent of a leader, especially in a land that does not hold the same customs or traditions as that ruler's nation, to clear the way for his/her recently established authority, by exterminating any old remnants of power that may challenge that sovereign's supremacy (Machiavelli 1979, 91-92). At the same time, this is far from being morally correct, for killing

because one must establish his/her authority in an unchallengeable way, hardly provides a genuine ethical reason to kill.

However, in a sense, we may claim that Machiavelli would view this move on the part of a leader as being a form of self-defence (Machiavelli 1979, 91-92). As such, there is more wiggle room, so to speak, to argue that slaying an enemy family, pre-emptively, may prevent future harm to a leader who recently came to own that enemy clan's former nation (Machiavelli 1979, 91-92). We may interpret the vanquishing of an enemy clan as a precautionary move on the part of a keen leader who wants to solidify power in his/her new lands fully (Machiavelli 1979, 91-92). Thus, although it may not sound morally correct, or ethically right, to partake in such astonishingly drastic measures, like executions, it is indeed in the mind of Machiavelli best, or most necessary to do so, to keep power, and thus displaying political *virtù*.

Moreover, Machiavelli also draws his readers as to why it is that refraining from raising taxes as well as refusing to change the laws of a newly conquered nation, demonstrates a leader's political *virtù*, which does not arise from a moral concern for that newly acquired populace (Machiavelli 1979, 136-137). To Machiavelli, by keeping order in a state, such that a people remain used to how to go about following their day-to-day lives in a way that they recognize the rules, laws, or codes of conduct expected of them by their government, is a wise move on the part of a new ruler (Machiavelli 1979, 136-137). That is because the more a leader gives less of a reason for a people to try to topple his/her authority, the more that leader will be able to reap the benefits of controlling that state, such as gaining from its economic resources (Machiavelli 1979, 136-137). Accordingly, it is not because a leader cares for the people that they refuse to alter the laws of that state; instead, it is because it makes it more simple, easy, and beneficial for a ruler to do so (Machiavelli 1979, 136-137). Thus, again, we see that political *virtù* is not a moral virtue, because it does not emerge from purely ethical considerations.

5. ARGUING FOR AN AMORAL INTERPRETATION OF MACHIAVELLI'S *THE PRINCE*

From these notions above, we may now begin to piece together how it is that an amoralist interpretation of Machiavelli's *The Prince* is producible, as well as why it is more faithful to the spirit of that text to do so.

Since politics and morality are divisible, or that it is that the experience of political life is drastically eviler than what people imagine or take politics to be, the view that politics is a means to a better life of peace, happiness, and prosperity for all, Machiavelli would claim, is not the purpose of *The Prince*. That is because Machiavelli, as the author behind *The Prince*, endorses the view that a leader must act in a way that is necessary, or fitting of the social and political climate of the times, and not according to any moral standard (Machiavelli 1979, 135). To Machiavelli, this is due to the fact that people come in various degrees; there are those who will support a leader and those who will betray a leader, and consequently, sovereigns must have an array of techniques to choose from, to quell insurrections and/or pacify those who seek too much from them (Machiavelli 1979, 133-136).

This opens the field to interpret Machiavelli as more of an amoralist than an immoralist, for there is no evidence to suggest that Machiavelli would not believe it politically savvy or an excellent display of political *virtù*, to reward those who help to solidify a ruler's rule, although never overwhelmingly (Machiavelli 1979, 128-130). As such, it is more accurate to claim that Machiavelli believes that in the field of politics what is right is always a form of might, or a display on the part of a ruler to be the best at all that is doable in his/her state (Machiavelli 1979, 128-130). In other words, if a populace requires correcting, a leader could employ means that may appear cruel, but never in unhealthy doses, and if soldiers are victorious in battle, a potentate may bestow greater power on them,

but never in a way that may lead to his/her downfall (Machiavelli 1979, 136-146).

Thus, *The Prince* is more appropriately a work of strategy in statecraft than an immoral work sanctioning inexplicable measures taken by a leader, to merely decimate his/her lands and people or foolishly wage war, to cement his/her demise (Machiavelli 1979, 80-81, 136-146). These actions are moronic, and it is evident from Machiavelli's recommendations that a new leader must refrain from them, as well as refrain from raising the taxes, and customs, or laws of a foreign nation that is recently under the mantle of that ruler (Machiavelli 1979, 80-81, 136-146). Also, it is evident from Machiavelli's advice that a leader should reside in a newly taken state, to solidify loyalty, and to not be too heavy-handed with a new populace (Machiavelli 1979, 80-82). Furthermore, not partaking in extreme decisions is evident in Machiavelli's analysis as to why mercenary and auxiliary forces are never wise for a leader to use, and also why it is that cruel, unusual, and senseless violence should never be a hobby of a ruler (Machiavelli 1979, 115-124, 103-104, 136-146). Thus, Machiavelli's *The Prince* is instead a consistent text insofar as believing that one must meet tradition with tradition and legality with legality, as well as proximity to a people, to closely monitor them when one is a new ruler, as well as cultivating a level-hand when dealing with various types of subjects (Machiavelli 1979, 80-81). Lastly, this consistency even extends to the warriors a sovereign must use, to wage warfare properly, or to fight battles with fighters who stand to gain or lose from war, depending on if they win or not (Machiavelli 1979, 115-120).

Because different circumstances demand different types of behaviour on behalf of a leader, Machiavelli also draws his readers to the concept of fortune, or what he calls *fortuna* (Machiavelli 1979, 133-136). *Fortuna*, to Machiavelli, encapsulates or involves those situations that call for action that a ruler must take so that he/she may continue to hold and secure his/her reign within his/her state (Machiavelli 1979, 133-136). Accordingly, since fortune, or *fortuna*,

is not always lovely or beneficial to a leader, Machiavelli believes, is further reason to embrace an amoral stance when considering which decisions and conduct a ruler must apply and display (Machiavelli 1979, 133-136). That is because when fortunes turn for the worse, a leader must employ more severe measures to ease that turmoil, in such a way that displays not only that ruler's political *virtù* but also that that leader will stop at nothing to maintain what he/she possesses and the people he/she leads (Machiavelli 1979, 96-99, 133-136). Regardless if it is ethical or moral in the colloquial sense of those words. As such, when luck runs out, or when good *fortuna* is absent, we may assert that there is little space for error, and as such, it becomes more of a matter of using political *virtù* than fulfilling a leader's or his/her people's wants, than a time which necessarily requires benevolence (Machiavelli 1979, 96-99, 133-136). Thus, we may claim that an amoral reading of *The Prince* is more appropriate than looking for what may seem to be its immoral elements, for times change, fortunes wane and fade, and instead, acting by political necessity is, to Machiavelli, paramount for a ruler to always keep in mind.

Finally, we may close this section by recapping what Machiavelli asserts regarding what is right or wrong in the political arena of official life. That is, a ruler must conjure the strength to be mighty, or as ferocious as a lion, to subordinate individuals to behave in a way that is in step with the demands of that leader (Machiavelli 1979, 133-136). A leader must also be as cunning as a fox, or level-headed, especially when situations go awry, so that that leader may secure his/her station, in such a way that adversaries within and exterior to his/her state, will fail to succeed at stomping or trampling, that potentate's control over his/her government and people (Machiavelli 1979, 133-136). Accordingly, by doing away with what we usually understand by moral or ethical behaviour, Machiavelli would assert that we clear the way to deal with people, as they are, and not as they should be. Finally, by doing so, or treating people as they behave, we can see how it is that the common, but mistaken,

idea of the link between politics and morality is divorceable. Thus, politics by being separate from morals is indeed a field that calls for a specific form of integrity, which is the skill of a leader who will not fail to do whatever it takes, to hold and acquire power (Machiavelli 1979, 80-81, 133-136).

## 6. CONCLUSION

It was the intention of this piece to draw readers to a more amoralist interpretation of Machiavelli's *The Prince*, by explicating why a proper reading of this work must include adhering to the view that Machiavelli believed morals and politics to be separate fields of inquiry. Now, to accomplish justifying this divide between ethics and politics, this piece focused readers on why it is that the conduct of people proves them to be far less than pure. Appropriately, it only fits that *The Prince* looks for other solutions than those provided by moralists or ethicists, to handle the reality of human wickedness, properly. Lastly, these two conditions, that politics is divisible from morals, and that human nature is far from innocent, helps to reveal a more level-headed, balanced, and genuine interpretation of Machiavelli's *The Prince*, that is fairer to its writer's intentions.

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TRANSITIVITY IN TENNESSEE WILLIAMS'S *A STREETCAR NAMED  
DESIRE*

Olfa Gandouz

University of Gabes, Tunisia

olfagandouz@yahoo.fr

**Abstract.** The present paper shows how the use of language reflects female dilemmas and constructs the psychological profile of female heroines in Tennessee Williams's *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947). Halliday's transitivity system will be employed to examine female mobility in *Streetcar*. The focus will be on the opposition between Blanche's refusal to adjust herself to the values of the New South and Stella's social compromise. Blanche's split between the values of the utopian old South and the New one deepens her physical, emotional and psychological dislocation. The paper will also delve into the attitude of female characters concerning their repression.

**Keywords:** transitivity, female identity, gender, material process, mental process, relational process, heteroglossia, fixity

The centrepiece in the grammar of experience is the transitivity system  
Halliday, *On Language and Linguistics* (2003, 383)

The rationale behind using Halliday's approach is to "show why and how the text means what it does" (Halliday 2003, X). Our paper intends to create interdisciplinarity between linguistics and literature as we will deploy linguistic tools to decipher the female quest for survival in a patriarchal society. The first part aims to study the way in which transitivity helps the audience perceive Blanche Du Bois's physical and psychological dislocation in a new Southern American context. Transitivity is defined by Halliday as "all phenomenon and anything that can be expressed by a verb, event, whether physical or not, state or relations" (Halliday 1976, 159). Put differently,

transitivity consists in going beyond the grammatical structure of the clause and in understanding the implied meaning. The first type of processes is the material process. It introduces the physical action and delineates the relationship between the character and the real world. Within Halliday's model, the material process is defined as "one about which useful work has been done in relation to news reporting (...). In the material process clause, participants can be one of two kinds: *doers*, which are referred to as actors, and *done to*, which are referred to as goals" (Delin 2000, 28). In the play, the material process is based on the physical existence of Blanche. There is a stark contrast between Blanche's aristocratic elegance and the working-class people's casual dress. Stanley is the representative of the proletariat and is "roughly dressed in blue denim work clothes" (Scene 1, 8). The brother-in-law criticizes Blanche when she is elegantly dressed "as if she were arriving (...) at a cocktail party in the garden district" (Scene 1, 9). The material process is based on the action of Blanche: the doer of action or actor is Blanche; the process is the idea of arrival and the location is a cocktail party. This material process underscores that Blanche's outstanding appearance is not in line with the new urbanized way of life in New Orleans. Blanche often relapses into the past, she reckons that her mission resides in invigorating the values of the mythical South and in fighting for the revival of the idyllic Belle Reve. In this context, she scorns Stella for betraying her aristocratic roots and boastfully asserts: "You are the one that abandoned Belle Reve, not I. I stayed and fought for it, bled for it, almost died for it" (Scene 1, 18). The material process is punctuated with the use of successive verbs of action "stayed", "fought" and "bled", the recipient of action is Belle Reve. We notice through this process that the Southern belle accentuates her heroic deeds and foregrounds her desire to freeze the past glory of the South, which used to be an earthly paradise. Blanche is nostalgic to the age of plantation that is different from the new South where chivalric values started crumbling down. The denigration of Blanche by Stanley and her exclusion from the

new Southern social fabric can be noticed through Stanley's mental process. In his *Introduction to Functional Grammar*, Halliday writes: "mental processes are processes of feeling, wanting and seeing. They are not kinds of doing, and cannot be probed or substituted, by the verb 'to do' (...). The lack of a substitute verb can render some things unsayable" (Halliday 2014, 125). The mental process is helpful in detecting the way of thinking of some characters. For instance, Stanley is astonished by the sight of authentic jewellery (a symbol of Blanche's aristocratic flair): "A solid gold dress, I believe! And this one! What are these here? Fox pieces! Genuine fox fur pieces, a half-mile long" (Scene 2, 26). The process of cognition is suggested through the use of the verb "to perceive". Stanley is the sensor and the phenomenon is "a solid gold dress." We infer through this mental process Stanley's failure to recognize that jewellery is a sign of belonging to plantation aristocracy. The voice of the sayer shows that there is a chasm between the past and the present and that Blanche is not accepted because she refuses to grasp the passage of time and to get adjusted to the principles of the New South, where the maxims of Southern belle hood fade away.

In addition to the sartorial appearance, Blanche's fixity is made explicit through her artistic orientations and her appreciation of the literary heritage. Heteroglossia<sup>1</sup> is useful as it shows the polyphony between different voices. Halliday affirms the importance of heteroglossia as it shows the "constantly shifting relationship between the text and its environment" (Halliday 2002, 51). Blanche is not able to accept the new social environment in the South and she is still influenced by the literary heritage of her ancestors. In her quest for platonic love, she repeats some verses from her Elizabeth Browning's Victorian sonnet - "And, if God Choose, I shall but love thee better-after death!" (Act 3, 43). She is dreaming of an eternal love that cannot wane after death. This belief in heavenly love contributes to the formation of Blanche's romantic soul. Her romanticism is noticed through some activities like dancing. Indeed, "Blanche waltzes to the music with romantic gestures" (Scene 3, 43).

She dances on the tones of a Viennese waltz entitled “Wien, Wien nur du allein” (Scene 3, 43). This waltz outlines the magnificence of utopian love, as it gives a “sentimental expression of love for old-time Vienna, the city of dreams” (Ehrenhaft 1985, 7). The dreamy quality helps her refresh the myth of the old South in a modern oasis devoid of romantic preferences.

Blanche is excluded from the South when Stanley offers her a ticket to Belle Reve because she threatens the serenity inside Stella's flat. She is seen as the troublemaker; that's why she ends up being confined in a clinic. The image of the candle can explain her fragility; she observes that “candles aren't safe, candles burn out in little boys' and girls' eyes, or wind blows them out” (Scene 8, 88). Her observation contains a relational process<sup>2</sup>: candles (carrier) are not (process) safe (attribute). We deduce through this relational process that like the candles which are threatened to burn out, Blanche is threatened to be denigrated in the New South. Unlike Blanche, who sticks to the principles of the old South and undermines the importance of mobility, Stella has understood that mobility is a necessary step of cultural development and defined it as the compromise between the old and the new values. Stella opts for complicity and submission in order to survive within the mainstream New Southern community. Stella survives because she applies her husband's rules about “the survival of the fittest” and his belief that luck is constructed and not related to heritage. She affirms: “to hold front position in this rat-race, you've got to believe you're lucky” (Scene 11, 108). The use of the spacial placement “in this rat race” and the goal of believing in luck testify to Stella's belief that luck resides in accepting the reality of being the spouse of a working-class man and, thus, in leaving the memories of the past behind.

Stella's adaptability to the new system is recognized when she refuses to raise her rebellious voice and rejects Blanche's demands of overthrowing Stanley's patriarchal hegemony. She addresses her sister: “You're making too much fuss about this (...). He was as

good as a lamb when I came back and he's really very, very ashamed of himself" (Scene 4, 49). This sentence includes a relational process: the token is Stanley and the value is the lamb. This process shows that Stella easily forgets her husband's domestic violence. Stella is different from her sister in the sense that she accepts the insults of her husband; she orders her sister to stop being noisy and making much fuss about Stanley's humiliation of his wife during the poker night. Indeed, Stella is more practical than her sister because she longs for security and accepts Stanley's harshness for the sake of leading a peaceful life. Stanley's triumph stands for his dominance over Blanche and his ability to control her. His predominance and the affirmation of male power are further noticed through the dichotomy between Blanche's "social death" and Stanley's rebirth. In the final scene, he reveals himself with a voice thrilled with the victory: "Now, honey. Now, love. [He kneels beside her and his fingers find the opening of her blouse] Now, now, love. Now, love" (Scene 11, 118). Stanley is relieved when Blanche quits his house because he has the opportunity to celebrate the love of his wife without any threat. "There is a systemic pattern of co-selection, which can be observed in relation to tense selection and the selection of material processes" (Lukin 2004, 267). The present is the dominant tense: Stanley is clearly concerned with the present and he refuses to unearth the ghosts of the feudal past when the proletariat used to be undermined. The material process is noticed when Stanley excludes Blanche: "You left nothing here! Unless the paper lantern you want to take with you. You want the lantern?" (Scene 11, 115). Stanley uses a derogatory language and debases Blanche since she refuses to adjust her parameters and accept the changes in the new South. The failure of Blanche to acquire some power is noticed through the lower tune of the blue piano. When Blanche is raped, "the blue piano goes softly. She turns confusedly and makes a faint gesture. The inhuman jungle voices rise up. He takes a step toward her, biting his tongue which protrudes between his lips" (Scene 10, 107). The act of fainting suggests the presence

of a behavioural process<sup>3</sup> (Blanche is the behave; “makes a faint gesture” is the process) that invites the audience to grasp Blanche’s psychological turmoil. The state of dizziness evokes Blanche’s detachment from reality after being punished by Stanley. From the standpoint of Stanley, Blanche deserves to be punished as “[she is] guilty of abusing and using sensitive men so that her punishment, her rape-fits her crime” (qtd. in Lant 1999, 229). This motivation betokens that the rape of Blanche is brought about by her social degradation without probing into her inner psychological workings.

To conclude, the female dwellers of *A Streetcar Named Desire* have different reactions to the new changing face of the American South. Transitivity has shown the passivity of Blanche as she is not involved in the process of change. The older sister has a backward glance as she refuses to set her old parameters and chooses to adopt the new system. She is threatened of extinction as she uses a romantic jargon in an animalistic world reigned by apes. Her tragic error remains her failure to understand that fluidity of time cannot be recaptured. She reacts passively to mobility and the passage of time by being fixed in the idyllic South. Freezing the past leads to her immersion in magic and makes her fall in insanity. The wish at re-enacting the past and constructing her own identity by imposing the old values make Blanche to be ostracized by Stanley, who excludes her from the geographical boundaries of the new South. Unlike Blanche, who is still admiring the old Southern gentility and residing in the remote past, Stella has adjusted her old principles to make them suitable with the modern South. She is an active participant in the process of mobility. She is victorious in the race of the fittest because she has apprehended that adaptability is the best reaction to mobility; it is a prolific survival strategy that helps her remain alive in a new Southern jungle dominated by brutal creatures. In reality, “what characterizes the fittest is the ability to adapt to circumstances, an ability which Blanche ultimately does not possess despite her claim that she does” (Saddik 1999, 66). Stella is more practical because she has the capability of being complicitous

with the new Southern order. Mobility necessitates the presence of sacrifice and Stella succeeds socially at creating a compromise with the new social order at the expense of her female freedom.

#### NOTES

1. Heteroglossia is a term coined by Bakhtin and it refers to “another’s speech in another’s language, serving to express authorial intentions but in a refracted way. Such speech constitutes a special type of double-voiced discourse” (Bakhtin 2004, 324).
2. Relational Process: “he verbs that most frequently occur as the process of a relational clause are be and have” (Halliday 2014, 262).
3. Behavioural processes: “They are processes of (typically human) physiological and psychological behaviour” (Halliday 2014, 248).

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## ANGELA CARTER'S *NIGHTS AT THE CIRCUS*: THE OTHER SIDE OF PROSTITUTION

Wiem Krifa

Faculty of Arts and Humanities  
University of Sousse, Tunisia  
wimaksousse@yahoo.fr

**Abstract.** The feminist postmodern writers have always attempted to depict the struggles of underrepresented categories and reveal the injustice committed against them. In this context, Angela Carter's *Nights at the Circus* studies the condition of British women of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, mainly the prostitutes as an undermined category. Carter unveils the patriarchal misjudgment of prostitutes and puts forth a new view. She presents to her readers Ma Nelson's brothel as a historical and cultural site rather than a promiscuous place. The economic necessity behind prostitution does not hinder the girls from positively engaging in political activism and contributing to rewriting the historical path of the new woman.

**Keywords:** feminism, postmodernism, patriarchy, prostitution, the new woman

### INTRODUCTION

The feminist postmodern literary theory represents a new alliance between the cherished tenets of feminists and postmodern principles that support women's development and endeavour them to achieve gender equality. It tends to pay tribute to the previously marginalized and silenced categories to which subjectivity has been denied. Thus, the previously voiceless groups are voiced and given an opportunity to reveal their sufferings and inner struggles. The patriarchal atrocities, which have troubled their psyches and crippled their personal freedom and self-esteem, are ironically exhibited to the readers in order to highlight the inherent injustice with which the underprivileged classes have been treated. More

specifically, the women writers who adhere to feminist postmodernism work hard to raise the status of women. At the time when philosophers underwent a crisis of subjectivity that culminated with the announcement of the death of man, feminist writers were eager to achieve their own female presence and personal subjectivity, far distinct from the shuttered masculine one. During the bygone ages, the subject has always been tied to maleness, while the object designates femaleness. The latter has been relegated to an inferior position and has always been denied a subjective presence. This binary division is refuted by contemporary feminists who believe in gender equality and aspire to achieve it. The feminist postmodern writers depict women as both subject and object, passive and active. Within this literary realm, men and women are equal partners and overcome the metaphysical rigid binary oppositions. Among the writers who have appealed strongly for the principle of gender equality, Angela Carter stands as the most prominent advocate of women's rights and their political and social improvements. She has been known as a strong feminist who dedicated her entire literary career for the benefit of women's development and the birth of female subjectivity.

Carter does not empower one part over the second, rather she aims to equate both males and females. Although she provides her readers with a multitude of feminist escapes, she usually ends her narrative by reshaping the traditional heterosexual marriage relationship. Her writings fluctuate between revealing the patriarchal atrocity that has been exercised on women and the advancement of her feminist postmodern model of new women and men. Carter's writings start by displaying women's suffering only to justify their insurrection. Her vision provides females with a chance to regain their previously denied sexual, social, political and historical rights. More specifically, the writer dwells on the different socially-excluded members, such as the prostitutes, the circus aerialists, the physically disabled and the sexually and psychologically unbalanced. In contradistinction with the widespread metaphysical view of

prostitution, Carter unveils the real social and economic causes behind it, within the London society.

#### 1. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC REASONS BEHIND PROSTITUTION

Carter's masterpiece, *Nights at the Circus*, unfolds numerous epitomes of suffering female characters, penalized by the males due to their belonging to underprivileged categories. Carter provides her female heroines with an unprecedented loud voice to divulge their troubles. Throughout the narrative, they reveal their inner struggles caused by atrocious masculine figures in order to overthrow their despondency and declare their independence from the patriarchal realm. The reader witnesses the metamorphosis from the traditional woman dominated by the men's power to the new one, who searches for gender balance, economic independence and a unique subjectivity. Carter's literary pursuit for political, social, and sexually empowerment astounded most feminists, who have blamed her for pornographic writing and inclination towards revealing the world of prostitution and sexual liberation. The writer emancipates her heroines by insisting on their autonomous sexual practices, with or without masculine involvement. She dwells on those marginalized categories who have been stigmatized as socially unfit and inappropriate to be represented in the mainstream literature. The heroine of the novel, Fevvers, is brought up in a brothel and has been adopted as the common daughter of numerous prostitutes. She is conveyed as a half fantastic woman with imaginary wings, which symbolically connote her liberated self. She represents Carter's model of a postmodern new woman able to surmount the barriers. Introducing herself to the American journalist Walser, Fevvers says:

"As to my place of birth, why I first saw the light of day right here in smoky old London, didn't I! Not billed the 'Cockney Venus', for nothing, sir, though they could just as well've called me 'Helen of the High Wire', due to the unusual circumstances in which I come ashore - for I never docked via what

you might call the normal channels, Sir, oh, dear me, no; but, just like Helen of Troy, was hatched (Carter 1984, 3).

Presenting herself as being hatched rather than humanly born, Fevvers was raised by a dozen prostitutes in a whorehouse after being found at the threshold of the brothel managed by Ma Nelson. Carter challenges the male discourse by bringing forth the excluded social categories via a fantastic way of writing. She not only works to liberate women in general but attempts to reveal the mysterious lives of prostitutes who have been denied morality and positive political, historical and social contributions. Indeed, one appealing literary feature in her work is the ceaseless efforts to show the masculine role in perpetuating prostitution within society.

The writer is mainly concerned with divulging the economic necessity lurking behind this phenomenon. If they still cling to prostitution, this is due to their harsh economic necessity rather than their sexual drives. In *Nights at the Circus*, prostitutes are conveyed as honoured ladies who behave according to the accepted social norms and polite manners. In this context, Fevvers proclaims:

Only poor girls earning a living, for, though some of the customers would swear that whores do it for pleasure, that is only to ease their consciences, so that they will feel less foolish when they fork out hard cash for pleasure that has no real existence unless given freely- oh, Indeed! We knew we only sold the simulacra. No woman Would turn her belly to the trade unless pricked by economic necessity. (Carter 1984 42)

Fevvers' admission of the prostitutes' material pursuit provides justification for their demeanour and accuses the male customers who make a profit from their weak position. In the absence of decent professions in British society, underprivileged females have been forced to follow alternative ways to ensure their survival. This fact does not necessarily ascertain their sexual perversion as much as it reveals the masculine manipulation of the economically and socially weak women. Carter's characters prove to be intellectual and refined. They practice their daily life activities similarly to any other

high-class woman. During the day, they engage in reading books and participate in the current social and political lives.

[Fevvers] never saw a single blow exchanged between any of the sisterhood who reared [her], nor heard a crossword or a voice raised in anger. Until the hour of eight, when work began [...] the girls kept to their rooms and the benign silence might be interrupted only by the staccato rattle of the typewriter as Grace practised her stenography or the lyric ripple of the flute upon which Esmeralda was proving to be something of a virtuoso (Carter 1984, 42).

For these female characters, prostitution is a mere work and a means to cover their living expenses, knowing that they are struggling in life alone without the supposed husband breadwinner. Thus, digging beneath this phenomenon, we detect that the material level is the prior cause behind the female presence in such brothels, though we have to acknowledge as well the male' search for sexual gratification, which is intended to be uncovered by feminist postmodern writers. Carter wants to negate the female role in keeping prostitution in society, as it is claimed by the male supporters of patriarchy.

As such, prostitutes are misjudged as immoral and violent women who don't adhere to ethical values. "When we refer to somebody's virtues, what we usually have in mind are relatively stable and effective dispositions to act in particular ways, as opposed to [prostitutes'] inclinations which are easily lost, or which do not consistently lead to corresponding kinds of action" (Porter 2001, 96). From a social perspective, prostitutes are viewed as vicious sexual psychopaths and almost never as victims who search for material interests. Meanwhile, masculine sexuality has never been talked about or judged as an important cause beneath their ubiquitous existence. This fact is highly acknowledged by the writer, who searches to disclose it and circulate the female innocence.

Though Fevvers insists that she has never been subject to prostitution, her presence within the brothel as a fetishist body can be interpreted as a means of male sexual gratification. She produces

“the eroticization of the commodity, which finds its ultimate expression on and in the body of a woman” (Tonkin 2012, 14). Without engaging in sexual intercourse, Fevvers implicitly posits as a sexually arising female body. She has behaved as the object of masculine fetishism while exhibiting her supernatural winged body. Thus, while the other girls have been the subject and object of prostitution, Fevvers symbolically impersonates prostitution without its concrete realization. Subsequently, she admits:

(...) as for myself, I worked my passage on Ma Nelson’s ship as a Living statue, and, during my blossoming years, from fourteen to seventeen, I existed only as an object in men’s eyes after the night-time knocking on the door began. Such was my apprenticeship for life since is it not to the mercies of the eyes of others that we commit ourselves on our voyage through the world?

Fevvers’ life journey has usually been dominated and guided by the male gaze, from Ma Nelson’s brothel to Madame Schreck’s museum of monsters, to end by being an aerialist in the Circus. She stands for the perfect fetishist body. She submits herself to men’s gaze without being physically engaged. However, the other prostitutes explicitly represent the sexual object, “the form of the commodity and its content” (Buck-Morss 1898, 185). As a result, they are spiritually alienated and physically exploited by the customers. However, within society, the prostitutes’ economic endeavour has never been recognized or dealt with as a serious problem, which is the root of a perverse social calamity.

Consequently, prostitutes should be saved from the bad reputation which has clung to them all along the bygone ages. Literary speaking, through the deployment of her characters, Carter provides them with the opportunity to reveal their inner self and divulge their secret thoughts. As part of the narration, Lizzie, the ex-prostitute and Fevvers’ foster-mother, recounts the life events within Ma Nelson’s brothel to the journalist Walser who joins Fevvers’ circus to query about her mysterious origin and deflate her claimed real winged body.

Ironically, in Carter's works, the prostitutes are the subject of the writing rather than its object, as women used to be before. Moreover, bringing the topic of prostitution into the feminist literary realm is considered to be a daring initiative from the part of a writer who has been accused of supporting pornography. This point is implicitly alluded by Fevvers when she addresses Walser: "Come on, sir! Now, will they let you print that in your newspapers? For these were women of the worst class and defiled" (Carter 1984, 20). The characters seem to have internalized the masculine prejudices and act according to them. Through Fevvers' speech, Carter alludes to her own position as a female writer who risks being rejected due to her daring literary topic. As such, she has been aware of the critics' reaction to her book and has expected its literary harsh criticism.

What Carter attempts to achieve in *Nights at the Circus* is the birth of both the new woman and new man who go beyond the western metaphysical minds and linguistic limitations to attain gender equality regardless of the crippling patriarchal society. Her exemplary models are Fevvers, the winged girl able to fly over the wreckage of the despotic masculine reign and Walser, who represents the best epitome of the new man succeeding to detach himself from the traditional masculine characteristics. As a response to Fevver's underestimating depiction of prostitutes, Walser answers:

Manners in the New World are considerably more elastic than they are in the old, as you 'll be pleased to find, ma am,' [...]'And I myself have known some pretty decent whores, some damn'fine women, indeed, whom any man might have been proud to marry'(Carter 1984, 20).

His attitude towards women in general and prostitutes, in particular, is more tolerant and lenient than of the past generations. Similarly, we can interpret, Walser's answer as a hint to postmodern literature, which is more tolerant and inclusive to endorse all the previously casted out people.

*Nights at The Circus* is set at exactly the moment in European history when things began to change. It is set at that time quite deliberately and [Fevvers] is the new woman. All women who have been in the first brothel with her end up doing these new women jobs, like becoming hotel managers and running typing agencies, and so on (Gamble 1999, 144).

Consequently, Fevvers' hunger for money is understandable at the dawn of the twentieth century, when women have started to be as economically and politically active as males. Similarly, Ma Nelson's prostitutes search for their economic satisfaction, which would save them from the masculine conquest. After the death of Ma Nelson and the burning of the brothel, all ex-prostitutes set up their own businesses.

## 2. HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF PROSTITUTES

In *Nights at the Circus*, Carter unveils a series of hidden aspects of British society at the threshold of the twentieth century. She tackles intricate political issues, which are of high importance to women. The setting of the novel is extremely meaningful since it sketches the political milestones under the Thatcherite term.

[It] is associated with the issue of emergent women's rights, and was a critical phase in the drawing of consciousness about and agitation for women's rights. The late nineteenth century laid the ground for what would be, in part at least, consolidated and crystallized and turned into British parliamentary legislation in the twentieth century. The issue then at centre-stage was, of course, women's suffrage. (Day 1998, 59)

Carter situates her narrative within this period because of its positive outcome regarding women's civil rights in order to achieve a realistic historical novel intermingled with fantastic happenings. She attempts to regain the usurped historical achievements by rewriting them via an imaginary literary style that fuses authentic historical events and landmarks with fantastic ones. Thus, with her fairy

wings, Fevvers discloses the veiled occupations within the mysterious atmosphere of Ma Nelson's brothel, situated at the heart of London.

While scrutinizing the novel, the readers are surprised to discover the prostitutes' hidden interests. The brothel, which is supposed to be a place for sexual practices, proves to be a site for historical achievements and political engagements. The prostitutes are actually militants who inform their clients about the current political and historical issues. At daylight, they engage in reading and debates to teach what they have learned to their night visitors.

The girls relegated to the lowest social class are secretly preparing their feminist insurrection. Although they have internalized the masculine and social grudge, they work to overcome their denied subjectivity and erased history. Hence, their sexual pursuit is a means to an end rather than a goal in itself. Prostitution provides them with economic satisfaction and enables them to fulfil their historical status. These attempts to attain an egalitarian gender relation and achieve a female subjectivity have been mocked by most male conservatives. This fact is made explicit by Carter in her essay titled *The Language of Sisterhood*, where she observes that "[a] good deal of harmless fun has been poked at certain neologisms coined by the Women's Movement in its sexually egalitarian or sometimes even female supremacist zeal" (Carter 1997, 226). Nonetheless, the feminist alliance has made it possible to achieve their common goals, mainly the principle of gender equality. As Fevvers announces to Walser: "We are all suffragists in that house; oh, Nelson was a one for 'Votes for Women', I can tell you!" Does that seem strange to you? That the caged bird should want to see the end of cages, sir?" queried Lizzie, with an edge of steel in her voice" (Carter 1984, 38).

Carter compares them with "the caged birds" (*Ibid.*) due to their real imprisonment by the patriarchal institution. The fact that they are prostitutes does not negate their strong will to be liberated and obtain sexual, economic, social and political autonomy. Albeit

Carter's writings instils in women sexual liberation, they nonetheless unveil the hidden economic and political reasons behind prostitution and sex trade. The writer advances the example of the brothel to shutter the social misconceptions surrounding the prostitute's body and female existence. Despite their necessitous condition, they are looking for redemption beyond the masculine realm. Their political and historical engagements elevate their status to the British political figures whose names sprinkle all along the novel. The goal is to debase their fake grandeur and equate them to the prostitutes' status. The writer deploys their names as an intertextual aspect of postmodern writing and as a feminist weapon to execute the principle of gender equality.

One of them is the parliamentary Rosencreutz, who has been known for his fierce opposition to women's right to vote. This particular figure is presented to the reader as a psychologically troubled man who looks to purchase Fevvers from Madame Schreck's museum in order to kill her and extract from her body a substance that would procure him eternal virility. He utilizes his richness and political power to possess the female body as a fetishist object. His perversions have been divulged by Fevvers to the American journalist, Walser, as part of her autobiographical story.

You must know this gentleman's name!' Insisted Fevvers and, seizing his notebook, wrote it down. [...] 'Good God,' said Walser. 'I saw in the paper only yesterday how he gives the most impressive speech in the House of Votes for Women. Which he is against. On account of how women are of a different soul-substance from men, cut from a different bolt of spirit cloth, and together too pure and rarefied to be bothering their pretty little heads with things of this world, such as the Irish question and the Boer War (Carter 1984, 90).

Ironically, his eternal masculine virility depends on the death of Fevvers and the spilling of her blood. Carter implicitly refers to his negative political attitude towards the extension of the franchise to women. To secure his powerful image, Rosencreutz seeks to exclude women from the political arena. To describe Ma Nelson's task in

the brothel, Fevvers has never referred to her prostitution. On the contrary, she highlights the following:

(...) her habit of lecturing the clients on the white slave trade, the rights and wrongs of women, universal suffrage, as well as the Irish question, the Indian question, republicanism, anti-clericalism, and the abolition of the House of Lords. With all of which Nelson was in full sympathy but, as she said, the world won't change overnight and we must eat. (Carter 1984, 272)

Ma Nelson's insistence on food displays the prostitutes' immediate need for money. Though they are strongly aware of the current political debates and the urgent feminist intervention to gain their rights, the girls are bound to prostitution to ensure their livings prior to these rights. Besides, apart from her economic goal, Lizzie's secret activism is made explicit only at the end of the novel, when she reveals her belonging to the English Radical Movement. During their Circus tour in Russia, Lizzie asks Walser to send her private letters together with his own professional ones to Britain. The American journalist sent them thinking they were only her personal letters. Unexpectedly, "[i]t turns out that these were not just personal communications but news of Russian internal politics to Russian dissidents in exile; dissidents who would eventually produce the Revolution of 1917" (Day 1998, 175).

During this journey, both Fevvers and Lizzie have been politically engaged but they have never announced their plan to their companions. Subsequently, the activism of the prostitutes has not been acknowledged although it has been of paramount importance for the male historical success. What is conspicuous throughout the book is Carter's aim to equate her female prostitutes to famous political male figures. According to the narrative, the brothel's owner is named after the famous British naval Horatio Nelson. To present Ma Nelson to Walser, Fevvers explains that she was: "called Nelson, on account of her one eye, a sailor having put the other out with a broken bottle the year of the Great Exhibition" (Carter 1984, 22). This depiction is drawn from Lord Nelson's authentic

biography. As a matter of fact, during a historical battle, he “had lost his right eye and right arm, and been severely wounded and bruised in his body” (Rhys 1906, 100). The parallel physical description of the prostitute Nelson and the soldier Nelson is purposefully deployed to connote equality.

In addition, by attributing the name of a great male historical figure to that of a prostitute, Carter alludes to his notorious love affair with the married lady Emma Hamilton, who has inspired him to stand for women’s liberation and civil rights. What Carter aims to attain through this comparison is equality of human beings regardless of their gender or sex. Whether it is a male or a female, people are both positive and negative, object and subject. Like the prostitute, Horatio Nelson has lived a socially unaccepted love relationship. Ma Nelson, on the other hand, has taken part in the political activism and embraced women’s rights, mainly the franchise.

## CONCLUSION

Although Carter calls for women sexual liberation, she does not encourage prostitution or pornographic writing, rather she aims to make explicit the female drives behind these acts. The main reason behind them is economical. The girls are obliged to work in a brothel to earn their living. Besides, the writer exposes how prostitutes marked British history so pertinent and helpful in respect to female subjectivity. In *Nights at the Circus*, Angela Carter pays tribute to this marginalized category of people. She empowers it by drawing to the light their socially disregarded virtues. She brings forward the positive attributes of prostitutes and highlights the vice of some male figures, seeking to show the injustice they committed to women. This novel proves, therefore, to be a literary tool to promote a cherished feminist program and democratic gender equality.

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## THE IMPACT OF INFERTILITY ON WOMEN'S SOCIAL LIFE AND THE ROLE OF ASSISTED REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGY (ART)

Adina Elena Tanase and Mircea Onofriescu

“Cuza Voda” Obstetrics and Gynecology University Hospital, Iasi  
“Gr. T. Popa” University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Iasi, Romania  
adinnatanase@gmail.com

**Abstract.** Infertility shall be defined as failure to conceive naturally after one year of unprotected sexual relations with the same partner. Worldwide, average births per woman have been falling for at least two generations, and for the first time in more than a hundred years, the total world population growth is slowing. Europe has the lowest total fertility rate. Since 1950, the average births per woman in Europe has fallen from more than 3 to only 1.6

There are multiple factors that affect a couple's chances of conceiving. Apart from changes in attitudes, affordability of child and healthcare, it is partially down to infertility.

Western countries have undergone variable economic expansion, marriage is no longer essential to family life, fewer people adhere to religions that encourage large families, tertiary education is available for both men and women and women are now more likely to be employed outside their home.

**Keywords:** infertility, pregnancy, IVF, Europe

### GENERAL FINDINGS

Infertility generally refers to the failure of becoming pregnant after one year of regular, unprotected intercourse. The clinical definition of “regular” intercourse is every two to three days.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has classified infertility as a disease affecting approximately 15% of the reproductive-aged couples. This disease is not characterized by mortality but rather by the morbidity which it inflicts in individuals and couples. Morbidity includes social, economic and psychological aspects but is not confined to them. Women especially may be caught in a spiral of

attempts to achieve their social and evolutionary need namely to have a child (Polit, 2006).

After one year of regular sex, approximately 84% of couples will have conceived naturally, with this figure rising to 92% after two years and to 93% after three years. After three years of not conceiving, the likelihood of a couple to achieve pregnancy in the following year falls to 25% or less. One in seven couples in the UK has difficulty in conceiving, which translates as 3.5 million people (Gannon 2004, 59).

The socioeconomic consequences of infertility are not easily overcome by the availability of care. The cost of ART is an indicator of the underlying costliness of the countries health system. Consequently, it differs between countries, as does the out-of-pocket payment per individual couple. The cost to the consumer is a function of the underlying cost of treatment, the level of subsidization or third-party cost coverage and the available income of the consumer (Cousineau 2007, 21).

Infertility has many potential causes, which may involve the man, the woman or both partners. Sometimes, no cause of the problem can be determined, in which case the infertility is described as “unexplained”. Among the causes that are known, the most common are irregular ovulation, endometriosis and blockage of the fallopian tubes. Among men, the most common one is sperm disorder.

Infertility represents a major crisis for most couples, with both partners experiencing loss in ways that affect them as individuals, as family members and as members of society as a whole. Examples of such losses include: loss of the experience of pregnancy and birth, loss of opportunity to pass on family genetics, loss of chance to contribute to the next generation, loss of chance to parent or become a grandparent, low self-worth and self-esteem, loss of family stability, loss of sense of control over destiny, loss of sense of hope for the future and loss of work productivity (Feldman-Svelsberg 1994, 39).

Infertility can have a highly negative impact on self-esteem, with individuals who previously had successful and well-planned lives, suddenly feeling they have lost control of their destiny (Dyer 2013, 28). A combination of the body failing to respond as expected, a sense that life has been put on hold and having to face the disappointment of failure to conceive month after month, can leave both partners at an increased risk of depression.

Worldwide, around 70 to 80 million couples are currently experiencing infertility. For most individuals having a child is an important part of their life plan and being unable to conceive represents a major life problem. There are also many men and women with children from a previous relationship who are desperate to conceive with their current partner.

#### EPIDEMIOLOGY

Some countries like Israel and Australia have state-funded programmes that enable certain state-imposed restrictions to be placed on these cycles. Examples of these include age limits and the requirement for single embryo transfer thereby decreasing the downstream indirect cost of multiple pregnancies and prematurity associated with this Dhont 2011, 26).

However, developing countries do not have the authority to standardize costs. (Lechner 2007, 22). This leaves women vulnerable to exploitation by both western and traditional medical practitioners (Sundby 1997, 31). Efforts to make Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) affordable in developing countries have been undertaken by non-profit organizations.

Studies showed that involuntary childlessness in the Western world has various psychological and psychosomatic effects, especially among women. The most common are distress, depression, anxiety, reduced self-esteem, somatic complaints, reduced libido and a sense of blame and guilt.

Data from Africa and Asia have highlighted the many important roles of children which collectively allow their parents, especially their mothers, to become more esteemed members of the family and community. Children are a reliable source of manpower in many rural and developing areas (Okonofua 1997, 7) and provide economic security at old age; infertility often leads to instability in a marriage and the possibility of divorce or abandonment with consequent loss of financial security. Certain customary laws and cultural traditions lead to negative attitudes to infertile women and may potentiate the scourge of gender inequality.

When the social and cultural consequences of involuntary childlessness are considered, they are often related to studies of elderly individuals with no children. Studies have shown that elderly, frail people with no children receive less social support and a less substantial framework for independent living compared with those of the same age who do have children.

Some studies also report on how childlessness can impact on a couple's communication with friends and family who have children. (Chambers 2013, 100). Childless couples can perceive well-meant remarks made at social gatherings or birthday parties, for example, as negative. However, couples can also find those close to them supportive, with relatives or good friends giving the couple the opportunity to participate in the "world of children" by sometimes taking care of their own children or taking them to school, sports activities or music lessons (Nahar 2012, 4). 10% of couples adopt this type of strategy as a way of coping with never having their own children.

#### INFERTILITY IN THE WORLD

Many studies have also been carried out into the effects of childlessness in the developing world. Unlike in the Western world, although psychological effects are found, the main concerns for

childless couples in developing countries are the social and cultural effects.

A number of international decisions have placed infertility care in the context of reproductive health as a health priority. For many affected couples improvement or restoration of infertility-related reproductive health requires Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART). According to the latest reports, more than 1.6 million ART cycles were undertaken in 2006 (Wiersema 2006, 54). The availability and accessibility of ART differ greatly between regions and countries. An important factor influencing accessibility is the cost of treatment and how these costs are covered. In many countries and especially in low resource settings, ART requires out-of-pocket payments by the consumer and while these may be affordable to some they may be impoverishing expensive to others (Domar 2011, 95). The latter raises the question of why couples would be willing to pay for treatment that they are unable to afford (Gerrits 1997, 39).

Infertility may lead to abandonment and more economic hardship if women have to pay back their bridewealth or pay bridewealth for husbands to enter into new unions (Gerrits 1997, 39). These social inequalities are reinforced when infertile women are treated as social servants by tending to the sick and infirm (Hollo 2009, 68) or caring for the children of others (Okonofua 1997, 205). Women may not be allowed to inherit or continue living in their household compound after he dies. Sons are seen to strengthen the lineage and the inheriting capacity of a family (Nahar 2012, 149) – consequently, girl-children are seen as less important thereby reinforcing gender inequality.

## DISCUSSIONS

Methods to reduce the cost of ART exist and must be pursued wherever possible. The introduction of third-party funding usually

requires the imposition of some restrictions or regulations. Restrictions may apply as to who is given access to ART while regulations may apply regarding the number of embryos transferred with the view of reducing the biggest risk of ART, and its resultant downstream costs, namely that of multiple pregnancies. (Dyer 2013, 2755). Additional cost-reducing strategies include less aggressive stimulation cycles with less monitoring, novel use of incubation techniques, earlier embryo transfers and effective use of cryopreservation. There should be also specific start and end points to treatment modalities with age-appropriate and cause-appropriate interventions. Clinics may offer risk sharing, package pricing for multiple cycles or cross-subsidization (Dhont 2011, 623).

Not only does the cost and funding models of treatment provide an important explanation for the differences in the utilization of available treatment, but they also help to explain clinical practices especially relating to embryo transfer.

In a study on infertile couples in an infertility treatment centre, participants experienced emotions like deep grief, guilt, loneliness and fear of the future insecurity (Lechner 2007, 288). However, many healthcare providers and mental health clinics still give little value to the negative psychological effects of infertility. These feelings were also experienced by participants in this study on the cognitive and emotional-affective reactions due to infertility. In a qualitative study, Khodakarami *et al* reported two sub-themes of guilt and an unclear future (Spannagel, 1-17). According to their study, a person's guilt is rooted in her infertility which is consistent with our study. Another sub-theme is the unclear future which resulted in frustration, worry and fear in infertile women. The fear of disclosure and the unclear future of the present was consistent with the results of the qualitative study by Shavazi *et al* (Wiersema 2006, 54).

According to the existing studies, the use of therapies is one of the factors affecting the psychological problems of infertility (Ruganga 2001, 315; Sundby 1997, 29). As a systematic review by

Gameiro *et al* revealed, in 453 infertile individuals from eight countries, the mental burden stemmed from the treatment has been one of the main reasons for the discontinuation of the infertility treatment (Inhorn 2008, 96). Fortunately, there are some studies in the literature that only discuss the psychological consequences of the treatment including IVF.

Although it is assumed that the lower cost of treatment will improve access, this is not always the case. Some studies have indicated that lower socio-economic and certain ethnic groups may still be disadvantaged (Lechner 2007, 288). Care must also be taken that more affordable treatment does not lead to the inappropriate perpetuation of ART the couples caught in an unrelenting pursuit for a child (Khodakarami 2010, 287).

The benefits of ART are difficult to quantify but important. They centre on the quality of life and happiness. The majority of people consider parenthood as part of the fulfilment of life goals. Cost-utility analysis is the main method that governments use to guide allocations of public resources to specific health outcomes. This is usually measured in quality-adjusted life years, which captures improvement in health among living patients (Domar 2011, 95). It is very difficult to quantify this for fertility treatment as the creation of new life cannot be captured in the indicator. However, United Kingdom National Institute of Clinical Excellence fertility guideline incorporated concluded that under most clinically appropriate circumstances, access to ART treatment and single embryo transfer represented good value for money from a societal perspective (Hollo 2009, 68).

#### A TAKE-HOME MESSAGE

Improving access to infertility care requires a two-faceted approach. Infertile couples must be able to access quality care at affordable cost; however, this is attained. In addition, efforts to prevent

infertility should be escalated, according to the WHO, up to 45% of adult conditions develop during adolescence and this is the target group for education regarding preventative strategies (Abbasi-Shavazi 2011, 95).

Many women from these countries consider their lives as hopeless if they cannot conceive. In many cultures, childless women face discrimination, ostracism and stigma if they fail to become pregnant or carry a baby to term. They may even be regarded as non-human or described as “cursed”. Furthermore, in most of these countries, there is poor availability of infertility services and in vitro fertilization procedures are unaffordable.

The situation is further worsened by the fact that women in these countries face a lack of support, both emotionally and financially. In Africa, women are not encouraged by their male partners to seek modern technical treatments. This, combined with the unavailability of fertility services, means the path for women seeking fertility care because they wish to conceive is often a lonely one.

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ROHINGYA AS *HOMINES SACRI*: THE STATELESSNESS  
CONUNDRUM

Igor Milić

University of Trento, Italy  
igor.milic.mi@gmail.com

**Abstract.** Since the outburst of the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar, the people of the latter have widely and quite light-heartedly been depicted as refugees and it is no coincidence that such depictions often result in simply calling for Myanmar's responsibility to protect (R2P). At a closer look though, the sole status of refugees is debatable and there appears to be much more than the mere R2P (ICISS 2001). Actually, what is happening at the Bangladesh-Burmese border is the recurrence of Hannah Arendt's 1943 scenario, in which it was not possible to be simply a refugee. In Agamben's words, a refugee's temporary state of exception has to be resolved through either nationalization or repatriation. But how come that a WWII's allegedly resolved situation still haunts us, notwithstanding even the most thorough legislative attempts to tackle the issue? Has the Universal Declaration of Human Rights really brought any improvement of the matter and what might be its drawbacks? Is it a void tautology? This paper aims at some responses also by examining whether the state of exception is actually the possibility of each and every sovereignty (Derrida 2009).

**Keywords:** Rohingya, Myanmar, homo sacer, statelessness, sovereignty, human rights

INTRODUCTION

It is difficult to trace the origin of the Rohingya crisis without running the risk of privatising the absolute knowledge of the affair. As a rule, some sort of a nation-building curse always accompanies national pride and an endeavour aimed at disentangling not only the affair but what paradoxically comes first, the knowledge of it or the knowledge of the knowledge of it, would arguably amount to doing away with referentiality by inevitably referring to its always-already plural cause: namely, the search for an origin at the origin. On the

contrary, what is needed is an all-around and comprehensive approach as possible that remains also open rather than only ended and closed to revision and any further discussion.

In this sense, to seriously face the long-lasting calamity rather translates into taking a look at different aspects of the present-day crisis: not only is the sole engagement with social dimensions thereof counter-productive, but at the end of the day, by means of a veiled reasoning, it boils down to demanding a genuine politico-legal solution. It is this tension between the two so far outlined dimensions, if homogeneous at all, if only two at all, that has to be explored. As will be shown, current reductive requests range from the restoration of the citizenship status of the Rohingya to the call for the application of the perfectly legal responsibility to protect (R2P).

As a matter of consequence, the main difficulty stemming from these light-hearted assumptions is that nowhere the intersection between social, political and legal aspects is actually even mentioned. This is why a *different* approach is needed for the debate on these conceivably blurring facets to be fruitful, where different does not mean immune without standing for the autoimmune as well, for the dynamic and perfectible.

In an attempt to compensate for the widespread shortcoming in coping with this thorny case study, the first part of this contribution unpretentiously addresses precisely a general background on which there seems to be some kind of agreement. Needless to say, such a historical approach is to be considered as merely provisional and by no means exhaustive, if any history is such at all. Rather, its exclusive function should be that of pointing out at the specificity of the Rohingya crisis so as to fully appreciate the potential conundra at the intersection of the often neglected fragile borders between the political, the legal and the societal realms. The second part engages with the legal ramifications of the current situation at the Naf river border, whereas the fundamental importance of statelessness and its nexus with refugeehood are discussed in the last part.

A BACKGROUND PROPOSAL: THE DISTINCTIVENESS OF THE EXODUS

Since the Second World War, Burma has arguably been home to the highest number of rebel groups opposing the central government. Even the recent Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement, dated October 15, 2015, counted only eight out of sixteen ethnic armed groups which accepted the truce: the ongoing tensions between the government and a number of ethnicities that followed, as well as the occasional internal frictions within both, eventually resulted into some groups' exclusion. Far from the fact that such an agreement was a precedent and a landmark event in Myanmar's troubled history, what really compounds this first framework in which the once colonial struggle was shaped is that the country's ethnic groups are often themselves divided. This fertile ground has been exploited not only by the central government: even the National League for Democracy (NLD) made use of it whenever it was deemed useful for the purpose of contrasting the military's rule and their 2008 Constitution (Ganesan 2015, 273-4).

It is within such a context of a fragmented and extremely implosive society that even an ancillary historical background of the Rohingya should be analysed. In spite of the sudden rise of yet another armed group, the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), formerly called "Faith Movement" (Harakah al-Yakin), it would still be somehow reductive to treat the Rohingya issue as a mere matter of a recent, inter-community, radicalization (Saikia 2017). And the same is probably true for other ethnic groups in Myanmar. Instead, by looking back to a variety of historical sources, it could be said that the Rohingya minority has notably enjoyed a period in which full-fledged citizenship status was uncontestedly and automatically assigned under the previous 1948 Citizenship Act (Zarni & Cowley 2014, 699). It was only in 1982, twenty years after the army's coup d'état, that a new citizenship bill was adopted. Namely, in the aftermath of the Operation Nagamin in 1978, which drove one of the first waves of the Rohingya minority out of

Myanmar, those who remained were all of a sudden placed beyond the national legal framework in force and thus deprived of the privileges they had enjoyed until then, not appearing anymore among the newly-established 135 national races (“*taingyintha*”). Furthermore, by inserting a discretionary clause, the State Council reserved itself the power to decide upon whether and when an ethnic group is national or not. Such measures were apparently preceded by the information that many “Bengalis”, a common name for the Rohingya in contemporary Burma, the other, more offensive, being “Kalar”, benefited from the almost absent border control along the Naf river between Bangladesh and Myanmar and freely moved from one State to the other, eventually populating the secluded Rakhine State (Jones 2017, 52). In an attempt to curb what soon became perceived as illegal immigration albeit dating back to the colonial era, the Rohingya have ever since faced increasing discrimination and gradually become the “world’s most persecuted” (Kingston 2015, 1163-75). It is in this way that the following recurrent waves of violence, the major of which took place in 1992, 2001, 2009, 2012 (Zawacki 2013, 20) and, most recently, 2017 became the notorious milestones of the majority’s discriminatory practices.

However, from both an ostensibly historical and contemporary perspective, thinking of the Rohingya issue as a bipolar clash between two fundamentally different religious identities could easily reveal to be excessively simplifying. Contrary to the tendency of the signifier Rohingya to invisibly homogenise this particular Muslim group on account of the idea that Rohang means Rakhine, whereas *-ga* or *-gya* point out at an origin and stand for “from” (Albert 2018), it may be proved that the two groups are not as compact as they may appear. The Rohingya are not even the only Muslim group populating Rakhine State, the Kaman being another one, itself theoretically eligible for citizenship as one of the *taingyintha*. In pretty much the same way, its antagonistic community is often taken as homogeneous as well. Yet, arguably, on both tendentially

monolithic sides, critical nodes of disunity have long been there and are rather inflammatory. If “Arakan [...] looks back to a largely autonomous history in Burma’s periphery” (Leider 2008, 412), then the tendency to blend both Muslim and Rakhine Buddhist population must be acknowledged. This is particularly true if one does include the central government in the equation, without necessarily or, at least, *not* unconditionally fusing it with the Buddhist residents of Rakhine State. Through such lenses, rather than there being a uniform religious rush to expel barbarians, what seems to be at stake is actually the law of the lesser evil whereby an extremely unstable *ad hoc* coalition is convened to achieve a common good in the short term.

On the one hand, one of the difficulties with which the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State (ACRS), wanted by Aung San Suu Kyi and chaired by Kofi Annan, was faced is precisely that of having to investigate the predicament of a portion of the population not to be designated directly by any means. To compound the matters, the particular identity of the aforementioned Kaman Muslims populating themselves the contested Rakhine State had to be preserved. By using the general cognomen qua “Muslims” and “the Muslim community in Rakhine”, the Commission eventually managed to engage with the security concerns and diffused violence, for which it had been established in 2016 (ACRS 2016, 12). It ended its mandate in August 2017, concomitantly with the attacks which occurred on 25 August of the same year. The underlying security situation in the peripheral Arakan that the latter worsened could be proved as specific without much difficulty. For some, wider regional disturbances were already at work a long time ago, being precisely at the root of the Anglo-Burmese War in 1824 (James 2006, 120). Added to that is the datum stating that the Muslim population already present in the area could probably be traced back to at least the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Leider 2013, 70). Allegedly, it used to live peacefully and side by side with other inhabitants of the region adjacent to the Naf river until recently. In this sense, the contemporary hostilities

are actually grafted upon the long-lasting multicultural history characteristic of and somehow intrinsic to this Burmese territory. The latter has always been *both in and out* with regard to the core provinces of Myanmar. Recognising this already in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the British rule constantly exploited Arakan's vulnerability by obliging the residents to incessantly move. This tragic episode within a broader evolution of Rakhine's communal reality became eventually epitomised in a single year, 1823 A.D., as enshrined in the aforementioned 1982 Citizenship Law. From then on, only those who could prove their presence prior to 1823 and the British colonial interference were (re)granted "first-class" citizenship.

On the other hand, even the often blamed Buddhist majority appears as an undermined union, especially in today's Rakhine (BBC 2018). In line with the analysed existence of many state-repelling groups, the reasons may be, once again, historical. Similarly to the absence of a single and unified Muslim community par excellence in Burma, even on the portrayed majority side the local factor is of paramount importance and has been shaping the regional dynamics for a long time now. For instance, Buddha's teaching, also known as *sasana*, the Mahamuni statue and the status of Mrauk U in northern Rakhine State have compounded the process of unification between Rakhine Buddhists and the Bamar since Burma's independence in 1948 (Leider 2008, 413-9).

Having said that, the uncontested diacritical sign of the most recent exodus remains, however, the *statelessness* status to which the Rohingya minority has been compelled since 1982. Its implications will be further elaborated upon, especially in relation to the hitherto advanced initiatives on how to tackle the crisis. The following bottom line will then hopefully emerge: the tendency to take statelessness as simply wrong and for granted, to see it as a Danaian gift to be refused without even being inspected and to ignore it as precisely one of the products of the solutions which will soon be illustrated.

## LEGAL APORIAS: THE IMPERVIOUSNESS OF SOLUTIONS

The latest wave of violence which followed ARSA's August 25, 2017 attacks against border posts with Bangladesh engendered a mass departure of at least 624,000 people (ICG 2017) from Myanmar. They headed mainly towards the preexisting Kutupalong camp in the proximity of Cox's Bazar but did not completely disregard other options, such as Thailand. No matter where they escaped, by the existing international legal framework they could have by no means become refugees without the hosting governments' consent. As their main destination, Bangladesh, is not a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention, nor to its 1967 Protocol, it is *de facto* governments' *bona fide* attitude towards UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) a condition *sine qua non* for a successful management of this kind of calamities. Indeed, notwithstanding even the reach of art. 31 of Bangladesh's Constitution and the fundamental rights thereby indiscriminately guaranteed, the particularity of the region, as a veritable black hole of international law, easily comes to the fore. Today, this can be noted from a recent agreement between Bangladesh and UNHCR on the *voluntary* repatriation plan, namely Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), to be implemented as soon as conditions in Myanmar allow so (UNHCR 2018a). At almost two months from the failure of the previous Bangladeshi-Burmese "private" deal (The Independent 2018), it can be seen a step forward, but it simultaneously shows how delicate the dialogue must be and how fragile the solutions are. For the sake of clarity, the previous bilateral attempt failed in January precisely on account of the absence of satisfying conditions in Myanmar. But, why are there few alternatives to that and why is the underlying message still the same today, after so many failures? Namely, the impression is that repatriation could be voluntary or involuntary, but it *must* occur. For this reason, Myanmar's key stance on the issue was fortunately not left out as UNHCR and UNDP drafted a separate MoU with Nay Pyi Taw shortly after Bangladesh signed its own (UNHCR 2018b).

Obviously, the first proposal of these lines is *not* to superfluously outline the difference between the institutionalized and improvised consent of a government to a convention and a memorandum, respectively between a fully integrated human rights-based country and those who are more recalcitrant towards pooled sovereignty, and not even to criticise by envisaging a perfectly workable *pharmakon* in the background. Rather, the aim is precisely to go beyond and cope with the development of the institution of the refugee status which brought us to this tortuous case study. In other words, the problem tackled here is not a specific *modus operandi*, but the very necessity of any *modus operandi* in presence of refugeehood whereby it forcefully becomes an interim safety net.

However, a vehicular pattern of behaviour will not be omitted and it can be effortlessly observed: even the previous solutions to Rohingya's exoduses followed the above and current model with some minor differences. These eventually affected the group's voluntariness, especially once the return in 1978 did not really change the apparently conciliatory attitude of the Tatmadaw. In 1978, UNHCR assisted the process of voluntary return *without* Dhaka's approval (Leider 2013, 71), whereas in 1992 the operation was carried out in direct coordination with the government of Bangladesh (Parnini 2012, 287-8). Even by just scratching the surface, it can finally be appreciated how deeply embedded is the idea that the arguably human figure by itself, the refugee is to be monitored through what has calcified and stratified as a transition, a void, an unpleasant situation or moment and as a nightmare. Moving towards a detailed analysis thus requires us to discern the common element of all international community's responses so far. Far from the latter being voluntarily malevolent, it must be said that the *temporariness* of the refugee status qua *de facto* avoidance of and a disregard for nude humanity has long been unaddressed. A refugee is *not* simply

any person who [...] owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group

or political opinion is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, *not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it*

but also, quite conceivably, he who, being caught in an *exceptional* situation, has to be either *repatriated* or nationalised so as to (continue to) fully enjoy their *human* rights. The Rohingya undoubtedly fall within the last part of the above definition just by means of an *ad hoc* expression of tenuous political will, namely Bangladesh's cooperative stance. Therefore, the sense of the underlying and tempting statement that no Rohingya is *merely* a refugee is not anyhow intended to deny them humanitarian relief. Quite on the contrary, it recognises something *unheimlich* and uncanny in them being refugees without being *proper* refugees. Hence, a Rohingya is both a refugee and the negation of *pure* refugeehood, even before taking for granted their former status and guiding them towards the Eden of citizenship.

To sum up, national politico-legal systems and, as it will be shown, the ostensibly supplementary and disciplinary international institutionalism simply leave no room for the refugee in the capacity of the human as such (Agamben 2008, 90-5). As Arendt put it: "We actually live in a world where human beings as such have ceased to exist for a while" (Arendt 1978, 65). It can now be claimed that nowhere does this Second World War scenario appear with more clarity than in our contemporary world, even though it has so far been largely neglected on account of its alleged resolution with the arrival of the age of rights. For instance, through the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which it is high time to examine *differently*.

#### STATELESSNESS, REFUGEEHOOD AND HUMAN RIGHTS

If it can be assumed that a stateless person shall be the first and immediate personification of article 1 of UDHR, since "all people

are born free and equal in dignity and rights [...]”, an important aporia arises with the birth of the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, the former of which states as follows: “[...] the term ‘stateless person’ means a person who is not considered as a national by any state under the operation of its law”. For, in the first of the two legal documents, it is the basic act of factual birth which entitles to freedom, decent and rightful life, whereas with the second it becomes clear that a further step is needed: the birth within a specific national legal context, which, most importantly, accepts to recognise, attest and certify the apparently self-sufficient factual events. The latter Convention even pledges to *reduce* and eventually *end* statelessness. What is more, on the basis of the previous analysis of the Rohingya exodus, the UDHR appears contradictory by itself: namely, articles 1 and 15 arguably clash in that no human being is actually a bearer of “first-class” rights *unless* a citizen of a State. If being born entitles to a set of rights which, in turn, entitled to the right to citizenship, then this stratification of rights cannot anymore be taken for granted without exploring its fundamental drawbacks, its *raison d’être*. In other words, the “constitutional dilemma” (Zucca 2008, 20), that which cannot be pinned down here and now, is that one is either a holder of a set of rights by the act of mere physical birth independently of all circumstances or one has such entitlement as long as they possess a citizenship, the so-called “right to have rights”:

Citizenship *is* man’s basic right, for it is nothing less than the right to have rights. Remove this priceless possession and there remains a stateless person, disgraced and degraded in the eyes of his countrymen. He has no lawful claim to protection from any nation, and no nation may assert rights on his behalf (Perez v. Brownell 356 U.S. 44).

Even in this statement, as is clear, little effort is made towards thinking statelessness in terms of bare humanness: rather, a stateless person is “disgraced and degraded in the eyes of his countrymen”, as though their personhood lacked something essential on account of the sole absence of an identification document. Without

anarchical claims, as should be apparent so far, and with respect towards the above pragmatic way of reasoning, the most impactful and simple way of expressing such a paradox is probably the following: at the end of the day, the subject of full-fledged *human* rights may turn out to be the figure of a *citizen*.

Yet, reflecting upon what has been said so far, a scenario of systematic deprivation of rights in Myanmar has been possible not because there was a *formal Ausnahmezustand*, i. e. “state of exception” (Agamben 2005, 4), but because State order always-already relies on a state of exception. It is so even when a State merely decides (lat. *de-caedere*), that is, even when, in Schmittian terms, the State does not necessarily decide on the exception in a conscious manner (Schmitt 2005, 5). As a matter of consequence, an intrinsically rogue State a priori undermines the supplementarity of any constitutional act which would be superfluously vehicular and unnecessary in relation to an allegedly accomplished sense - *the rogueness* in this case. Rather, the supreme law of a State *qua* Constitution is itself more of a tool to manage uncertainty, the fugitive degrees of uncertainty, to bet and offer a “constitution of risk” (Vermeule 2013, 1-51). Hence, there does not even need to be a state of emergency to generate a state of exception, the ultimate message being that a law is by itself a state of exception which appears as normality and simultaneously by no means as justice:

Law (*droit*) is not justice. Law is the element of calculation, and it is just that there be law, but justice is incalculable, it requires us to calculate with the incalculable; and aporetic experiences are the experiences, as improbable as they are necessary, of justice, that is to say of moments in which the decision between just and unjust is never insured by a rule (Derrida 1992, 16).

By being placed outside of the legal order by a rule, a law, an everyday legislative procedure, the Rohingya immediately turned into *homines sacri* (sacred men), “[...] who *may be killed and yet not sacrificed* [...] included in the judicial order [*ordinamento*] solely in the form of [...] exclusion (that is, of its capacity to be killed)” (Agamben

1995, 8). It is important to remark that to be *sacer* translates into being both sacred and holy as well as cursed and doomed. Hence, a homo sacer becomes or can become an outlaw *through* the law, a subjectivity deprived of *zoë*, the latter standing for political or community life. Its existence is always declined as half-done, suspended but not unviable, hindered but not unfree, rather than something which simply *is*.

Rancière comes up with yet another hermeneutical possibility: we have so far seen that human rights can be intended as the rights of a citizen as well as the almost useless rights of those with no rights. What is at the basis of this bipolarisation of the discourse according to him is precisely a way of thinking intended to surgically separate the private from the public realm and conceptualise politics even though it is precisely that which indefinitely escapes all definite conceptualisation. For, politics is exactly the infinitely finite, the incalculable part of those with no part at all, who, paradoxically, exercise the rights they do not have. Similarly, there are the unpredictable difficulties of those with a part, namely citizens, who, in turn, do not exercise the rights they have (Rancière 2010, 70). As a matter of fact, the sense of recognition espouses before all the idea that the recognised is always already a matter of debate and barely anything in itself: there is no signified which is not spoilt by a signifier and the other way around, there is no signified which is not a signifier, which cannot help but open up the question of the border. Human rights as rights of the citizen *and* the rights of the stateless are not then necessary to be seen as mutually exclusive, quite on the contrary. In this way, the previously hermetic categories become rather dynamic and the boundaries between them eternally blurred: human rights sign a great development, but not without the risk of being simultaneously completely void. This triggering paradox and empowering aporia engenders the *demos* for Rancière, the ameboid organ which stands silently at the basis of politics as a never-ending process rather than an accomplished state of affairs. Seen against this background, UDHR protects both the stateless and

the first-class, full and accomplished citizens, but *not* necessarily by placing them at two different levels.

This can probably be most properly observed with yet another instrument of the international community which appears to be impotent towards these challenges, namely, the responsibility to protect (R2P). Envisaged in the new millennium as a legal successor of the intrusive and controversially illegal *humanitarian* intervention (ICISS 2001), the same aporia within it was immediately and unconsciously reproduced. As a matter of fact, it is not clear at all whether a State and, jointly or alternatively, the international community have the responsibility to protect *citizens* or *populations* (ICISS 2001, VIII, XI, 13, 15, 16, 19, 39, 40, 49, 75; Bellamy 2009, 76; SG/SM/8125 2002; A/61/677 2009, 8). Certainly, the first two conclusions are self-sufficient: indeed, it is either about citizens or about populations. But, in a strange fashion, what is easily not accounted for is precisely the *demos* as the *people*, *both* an allegedly empowered political body and potentially a mass of those deprived of their rights. Consequently, the *demos*, the *people*, actually fuse the two apparently irreconcilable concepts of *citizens* and *populations*. The responsibility to protect belongs thus to those who claim the right and the entitlement to it on the basis of a set of initially void and unenforceable rights, *especially* when they have no legal entitlement to claim so. It is this oblivion and excess, supplement and surplus which is at the basis of the age of rights, which makes rights enactable rather than enacted, which signs the beginning of the age of rights before its solemn beginning.

In conclusion, one practical, biopolitical warning of the above apparently negligible divide remains a blatant illustration of politics as a process. Consider article 348 of Myanmar's 2008 Constitution: "The Union shall not discriminate any *citizen* of [...] Myanmar, based on race, birth, religion, official position, status, sex and wealth". For, the Rohingya having been stateless since 1982, this would imply no particular Burmese responsibility at all towards a *population* rendered stateless in a scarce human rights enforcement era. Or, at least,

hardly any major responsibility of any other State turning, out of personal goodwill, to those caught in the vacuum constitutive of any order itself.

## CONCLUSION

To sum up, it can now be fully appreciated how unstable and challengeable our international provisions are. They are so to the extent that thinking of other instantly actionable, precise, clear-cut and shorter rules and norms would be for nothing if the idea of transcending the hitherto known (inter)national legal order were not itself transcended. In this sense, no rule will ever be justice, which is precisely why the *unpretentious* rethinking of the existing rules is always a good start. They will always draw their *spiritus movens* from the Otherness, which is nothing more than the haunting hint of the inherent fragility of any rule as such.

It is in this sense that the somehow necessary post-WWII empowerment of the human in a certain sense brought us full circle to where it all began. In a homoeopathic manner, the proposed solution is nothing more than the diluted cause starting from which the whole Hobbesian political order was engendered, namely, how is *homo* different from the contemporary figure of the human? Answering to this question would hardly solve the following leitmotif: the empowerment of the human is not simply the progress of sovereignty without being the landmark of the imperfection of the concept of sovereignty itself (Derrida, 2005, 87-8).

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ON THE ROAD TO EPHEBUS: HARDSHIPS AND DESPAIR:  
AN EPISTLE FROM MANUEL GABALAS TO PHILIPPOS LOGARAS

Juan Bautista Juan-López  
University of Granada, Spain  
juanbtajuan@gmail.com

**Abstract.** The present essay provides the readers with the first English translation of an enlightening epistle belonging to a larger collection of letters written by Matthew of Ephesus in the early fourteenth century, which depicts and provides new data on the relationship between the Byzantine Empire and the Turkmen chieftains.

**Keywords:** Matthew of Ephesus, Manuel Gabalas, untranslated writings, Palaeologan Renaissance, negotiations, Umur Beg, Byzantine Empire

INTRODUCTION

Manuel Gabalas, this brilliant medieval scholar, was born in 1271/2 in the city of Philadelphia (present-day Alaşehir, Turkey). He was subsequently known as Matthew, after becoming monk, in the winter of 1322/3. Therefore, both his treatise titled *De Ulixis Erroribus* (whose first complete edition and translation in Spanish we are about to finish) and the present letter are significant expressions of the Palaeologan Renaissance. Their author made an “on-the-spot report”<sup>1</sup> (Vryonis 1971, 343) on the relationship between the Orthodox Church and Muslims in Asia Minor on one hand, and the negotiations between the Byzantine Empire and the Turkmens of the early fourteenth century, on the other. These writings should be therefore studied with the strictest impartiality.

Our reader can consult an updated bibliography on some works and the life of Manuel Gabalas in the brief entry from Pahlitzsch (2013). He may further dig into the epistle’s historical background by reading Vryonis (1971) and Nicol (1993), who both were familiar

with Gabalas's work. Also, we strongly recommend the exquisite philological works of Max Treu (1901), the discoverer of the authorship of the present epistle, and the Doctoral Thesis of Diether Roderich Reinsch (1974), the sharpest and encompassing study on these Byzantine letters. Diether Reinsch<sup>1</sup> edited, compiled and translated into German the entire epistolary collection of which this letter belongs.

For the reader's benefit, we prepared the original Greek text in a digitalised format. It can also be found in Reinsch 1974: 175-8, where the German scholar enhanced the critical apparatus with the readings of the *Vindobonesis* Theol. Gr. 174 fols. 53v-55. We are reproducing the letter B55 in an almost unaltered form. We only divided some paragraphs and proposed a numbering in the purpose of expositive clarity for further research. *Vindobonensis* manuscript is an autograph written by Matthew of Ephesus, but it also contains several unpublished prayers and treatises.

By taking into account Matthew's stylistic imitation, we concluded that he tends to identify his misfortunes with the obstacles overcome by the wandering Odysseus. Thus, the verse of Homer may ring in the ears of our readers. This can be even better perceived in *De Ulixis Erroribus*.

In the first paragraph of this epistle, Matthew of Ephesus announces his addressee that he actually sends him a second draft of the original letter. Due to the long time that passed without receiving any response, he believes that the first one was intercepted by the authorities of the Turkmen. We may thus infer that Matthew has rewritten the letter by including some new details and perspectives (Οὐκ ἔχοντες οὖν τὰ ἴσα τῶν ἐπεσταλμένων εἰς δευτέρους αὐτοὺς ἀφήγαμεν πόνους). Since communications were sometimes cut off, our reader may further deduce that the relationship between the two cultures was maintaining at that time only theoretical respect towards coexistence.

The addressee of the epistle, as the title clearly indicates, is Logaras, a person whose biographical details are almost unknown

to us. Since Matthew of Ephesus uses a familiar tone, we may conclude that Philippos Logaras was one of Matthew's inner circle of friends from Asia Minor. Logaras also held an ecclesiastical charge as ἀναμνήσιος, whose exact meaning remains hidden to us although he probably was, at that time, a secondary officer having tasks of intermediations similar to the ὑπομνήσεις. Darrouzès mentions that the *archon* received the requests, reported them to the patriarch and transmitted the answers back to their addressee (Darrouzès 1970: 375).

At the end of the epistle, our reader will find Matthew of Ephesus promising a new letter to his fellow, Philippos Logaras (ταμειεύσθωσαν εἰς δευτέραν ἐπιστολήν), and a more accurate account of the terrible circumstances in Ephesus<sup>2</sup>. He will report that stones were thrown into his door at night, putting his life in grave danger.

Indeed, Matthew of Ephesus has sent at least another two epistles to Logaras, corresponding to letters B54 and B56 of the Reinsch edition, all related to the incidents and the attacks against the Christian settlement. Since the stones episode reappear in the letter B54, Reinsch (1974: 36) rightly states that B54 is more likely to be subsequent of the present B55, despite the linear order of the *Vindobonensis* manuscript, which wrongly led us to think otherwise. We aim to devote soon a thorough study on these three epistles (B54-56 along with the letter B57, which are all datable around the years 1339-1341, according to Reinsch (1974: 54)) since they bring light on the vision of Matthew from inside the Turkish city. Our terminus *post quem* will be Mathew's return to the Metropolitanate of Ephesus after suffering a long wandering through the hostile territories, as the present letter shows. Based on some patriarchal acts, we must conclude with Vryonis (1971: 344) that he made his way to the church in Ephesus somewhere between June 1339 and February 1340.

Actually, Ephesus had not been visited by his Metropolitan since 1315, after the relationship between Amur Beg and Byzantium were

stabilized and, thus, a more tolerant policy was set up. Whoever closed this deal, remarkably for us is that, in this writing, Matthew of Ephesus refers to the ruler of the coastal emirate of Aydin, Amur Beg (Umur Beg), and his brother, Khidir Beg, with the names Ἀμούρπεγς and Χετίρπεγς. Indeed, it seems that Amur Beg, who was Emir from 1334 to 1348, and Khidir Beg maintained a certain military agreement with the emperor John Cantacuzenus and the present testimony may be one of the first that mentions it.

We urge the reader to read between the lines because the explicit mention of gifts and bribery coming from the hands of a Christian Metropolitan to the Beg brothers seems extremely bizarre<sup>3</sup>. We wonder what kind of gifts could have satisfied such a personality as Amur Beg to grant Matthew his passage into the region whilst returning him some of his ancient rights. Afterwards, Matthew held the Metropolitanate of Ephesus until May/June 1351. Then, he came back to Constantinople where, being old, he probably died in 1359/60.

Henceforth, we must focus on this journey from Constantinople to Izmir, passing through different decadent cities such as Clazomenae and the island of Chios. We are witnessing a very unique depiction of these cities in their full architectural and moral decline as they fell, bit by bit, during the second half of the thirteenth century and the early fourteenth century, into the hands of the Turkmen people. We should not forget, however, that this information comes from an unusual man who was Manuel Gabalas or Matthew of Ephesus.

## MANUEL GABALAS AND HIS WANDERINGS THROUGH THE WEST COAST OF TURKEY

Τῷ ἀναμνησίῳ Λογαρᾷ περὶ τῶν κατ' Ἐφεσον συμβεβη[κό]των ἡμῖν

Δυστυχοῦμεν ἐν τῇ τῶν βαρβάρων, ὅσα ἂν ἐξῆς γνοίης διηγουμένων· ὁ δὲ μάλιστα δυστυχοῦμεν, ὅτι μὴδὲ τῷ κοινῷ γοῦν ἔχομεν χρῆσθαι φαρμάκῳ τῶν λόγων, ὧν πάσχομεν, εἰς παραμυθίαν. Νῦν μὲν γὰρ δεδίαμεν γράφειν ὥσανεὶ προδεδομένοι μετὰ τοῦ σώματος καὶ τὴν τοῦ γράφειν ἐλευθερίαν, ὅτε δ', εἰ καὶ γράψαιμεν, λανθάνομεν ταῦτ' ἀφιέντες κατὰ κρημνοῦ καὶ βαράθρων. ὀλίγου γὰρ πρόσθεν, ὡς ἔσχε τὰ καθ' ἡμᾶς, πρὸς σὲ οὐκ οἶδ' ὁπότερον φῶ τραγωδήσαντες ἢ ἐπιστείλαντες ἔγνωμεν ἀκριβῶς ληφθέντα τοῖς πολεμίοις. Οὐκ ἔχοντες οὖν τὰ ἴσα τῶν ἐπεσταλμένων εἰς δευτέρους αὐτοὺς ἀφήκαμεν πόνους, εἰ οἷοί τε γενοίμεθα μνήμη καὶ διανοία συναγαγεῖν. ἔχει δὲ οὕτως [1]

Καταχθέντες ἐξ εὐθείας εἰς Χῖον, ὥς γε τῆς Βυζαντίδος ἐξήειμεν, καὶ μῆνα ὅλον αὐτοῦ που χρονοτριβήσαντες παρὰ τῇ νήσῳ ἔγνωμεν δεῖν θατέρῳ τῶν ἀδελφῶν, οἱ ἐπὶ κακῷ τῷ ἡμῶν τῆς Ἀσίας κατατυραννοῦσι, συντυχεῖν κατὰ Σμύρναν· Ἀμούρπεγίς ὄνομα τῷ βαρβάρῳ, ὥς γε καὶ αὐτὸς οἶσθα. Διαπεπλευκότες δὲ τὴν ἐν μέσῳ θάλασσαν σὺν πολλῷ δέει καὶ περαιωθέντες εἰς γε τὴν Κλαζομενῶν δι' ἀνύδρου μάλα καὶ τραχείας ἤκομεν δυοῖν<sup>4</sup> ἐντὸς ἡμερῶν, ὅποι δὴ καὶ προὔθεμεθα. [2]

Ἐνθάδε καταθροῦμεν πόλιν δηλαδὴ μεγίστην καὶ νεῶν οὐχ ἥττω κατὰ συμμετρίαν τηλικῇσδε πόλεως ἀπηρεμωμένα ἄμφω, λησταῖς ἐπιτήδεια καὶ πειραταῖς κατάγεσθαι, ἄλλοις δ' οὐδαμῶς ἑτέροις. Θρηνοῦμεν οὖν καὶ θρήνοις ἐπιτίθεμεν θρήνους καὶ Ἀριστείδαι τινες τῷ πάθει γιγνόμεθα οὐ πόλιν ἀπλῶς ὥς ἐκεῖνος δακρύοντες σεισμῷ καταπεπτωκυῖαν οὐδὲ θεάματα ἀγαλμάτων, ἀλλὰ καὶ Χριστιανῶν ἀποικίαν καὶ μετοικίαν ἐθνῶν ἐκ τῶν τῆς γῆς που ἐσχατιῶν. Καὶ δὴ

ἀπὸ δακρύων οὕτως ἀρξάμενοι πονηρόν τι τοῦτο σύμβολον ῥόμεθα εἶναι πρὸς γε τὸ ἐπίον, ὥς αὐτίκα γέγονεν. [3]

Ὁ γάρ, ὃν ἐσπεύδομεν ἰδεῖν, βάρβαρος οὐδ' ἀρχὴν ἐθέλων ἡμῖν συντυχεῖν, οὐδ' ἅπερ αὐτῷ πρὸς τοῦ βασιλέως ἐκομίζομεν γράμματα, ἢ λαβεῖν ἢ ἀπειπεῖν, οὐδὲ μέντοι συγχωρῶν ἀπιέναι διὰ τῆς αὐτοῦ χώρας εἰς γε τὴν Ἔφεσον ἡνία τὰ μάλιστα καὶ ἀπορία περιέβαλλε τῇ ἐσχάτῃ. Καὶ γὰρ ὑποπτον ἐδόκει τῆς εἰς τοῦπίσω ἄψασθαι, μὴ καθ' ὁδὸν ἐνεδρευθεῖμεν τοῖς ἐχθροῖς ἢ τὸν λόχον, εἰ καὶ τοῦτ' ἰσχύσαιμεν, διαδράντες πολλῶν τινων φύγοιμεν ἐγκλημάτων ὥς ἂν οὐ πρὸς τοῦ βαρβάρου εἰρχθέντες, τὸν δε νόστον αὐτοὶ ἐν νῷ ἔχοντες. ἡνώχλει δὲ παρὰ πολὺ καὶ τὰ τῶν ἐπισκόπων, οὓς αὐτοῦ προὔβαλόμεθα, τίνα σταθμὸν οἱ δυστυχεῖς εὕρωσι καὶ ποῖ ποτε λήξωσι; μὴδ' οὗτοι τέως συγχωρούμενοι τὰς σφετέρας ἰδεῖν ἐκκλησίας· ὃ δὴ καὶ ἄλλη τις ἐδόκει συμφορὰ κακῶν καὶ λογισμῶν ὁ σφοδρότατος κλύδων οὐχ οἷος ὥστε καὶ ὀπωσοῦν ἐνεγκεῖν. [4]

Οὕτω δ' οὖν ὅμως ὄντων ἐν ζάλῃ καὶ θορύβῳ πολλῷ ὑποψιθυρίζει τις τῶν ὀπαδούντων ἡμῖν ἐκ Χίου δῶρα ἡμᾶς τῷ βαρβάρῳ κομίζειν, καὶ δῶρα πολλοῦ τινος, ὥσπερ ἦν, ἄξια. Οἷς, ὥς ἤκουσεν, ἐκεῖνος ἐπικλασθεὶς μόγις ἡμᾶς εἰς τρίτην ἡμέραν ἀπαξιώσας πρότερον ἰδεῖν ἀξιοῖ· ἃ δὴ καὶ προπεπομφότας αὐτῷ, εἴθ' ἡμᾶς παραγεγονότας ὁρᾷ ἡδέως, ὥς γε ἔδειξε, καὶ συντυγχάνει καὶ ἀναπυνθάνεται, ἃ τε καὶ περὶ ὧν βούλοιτο. ἔνθεν παρατείνας τὴν ὁμιλίαν πλέον ἢ προσῆκεν ἀπολέλυκεν ἔπειτα ἰδίους αὐτοῦ γράμμασιν ἀπιέναι ἐπὶ τὴν Ἔφεσον. [5]

Καὶ δῆτα τῆς Σμύρνης ἐξιόντες ἐσπέρας ὅλην βαδίζομεν νύκτα διὰ λόχμης ἀβάτου σκόλοψι συχνοῖς περιπειρόμενοι καὶ ἀκάνθαις οὐχ ὁρῶντες, ὅποι δὴ καὶ φερόμεθα. Προσειληφότες δὲ καὶ μέρος τι τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκτὸς ὑπὸ τοῖς πρόποσι τῆς δυστυχοῦς ταύτης ἐνσκηνοῦμεν πόλεως, ἐνσκηνοῦμεν δ' ἐν βραχυτάτῳ μάλα καὶ ἀσήμῳ τινὶ τῶν εὐκτηρίων νεῷ. Οὕτω γὰρ ἦν προστεταχὼς θάτερος ἀδελφὸς τοῦ βαρβάρου· Χετίρπεγισ οὗτος βαρβαριστὶ λέγεται. [6]

Ἀλλὰ καὶ τῷδε εἰς συντυχίαν ἐλθόντες καί, ἅπερ καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν δῶρα ἐπεκομιζόμεθα, δεδωκότες ἐτρεφόμεθα τὸ μετὰ τοῦτο ψυχραῖς μάλιστα ταῖς ἐλπίσι παραχωρήσαι ἡμῖν καὶ ἱεροῦ καὶ οἰκίας καὶ πραγμάτων καὶ ὅς' ἀρχιερεῦσι τὸ κατ' ἀρχὰς διέφερεν, εἰ μὴ δι' ἄλλο τι, δι' ἃ γοῦν παρέσχομεν δῶρα πολλοῦ τιμώμενα. Ἀλλὰ μάρτην ἠλπίσαμεν πάντα, μάρτην ἐδράμομεν ὃν ἐδράμομεν δρόμον, ὥς εἰς τὸ μηδὲν ἡμῖν τὰ τῶν πόνων καὶ τῆς ταλαιπωρίας ἔληξε· πάντων γὰρ ὑφ' ἐν ἀπετύχομεν. Ὅρα δὴ· [7]

Συνθλιβόμενοι γὰρ καὶ καταστενοχωρούμενοι, ᾧ δὴ ἔφαμεν βραχυτάτῳ νεῷ, καὶ τῷ αὐτῷ ἀνθ' ἱεροῦ καὶ οἰκίας χρώμενοι ἰκέται γιγνόμεθα τῷ βαρβάρῳ ἀποδοῦναι ἡμῖν, ἃ χρεὼν ἀποδοῦναι· ὁ δὲ ὑπισχνεῖτο μὲν λόγοις, ἔργοις δ' ὁπωσοῦν οὐκ ἐδείκνυ. Καὶ δῆτα συμβαίνει, ἃ συμβαίνειν εἰκὸς τοῖς οὕτως ὑπὸ γε τῆς ὥρας κατεργασθεῖσι πρότερον (ἦν γὰρ ἡ τοῦ θέρους ἀκμή) καὶ δὴ καὶ τῆς περιλιμναζούσης κόνεως τῷ ἀέρι οὕτω πως πεφυκυίας τῆς χώρας καὶ τῆς κατὰ τὸν οἰκίσκον στενοχωρίας καὶ τοῦ μὴ ἔχειν, ὅποι ἂν ἀναπνεύσωμεν, πρὸς δὲ καὶ τῆς συντακείσης πικρίας ὑπὸ τῆς λύπης ἡμῖν. Οὐκοῦν καὶ νόσῳ περιπίπτομεν χαλεπῇ καὶ τοσοῦτον δυσέλπιδες γιγνόμεθα, ὥς παρεστάναι νομίζειν θανάτου προθεσίαν τὸ πρᾶγμα καὶ τὸν ἔσχατον τοῦ ζῆν ὅρον. [8]

Οὔτε γὰρ ἰατρὸς ἦν ὁ τέχνη τινὶ τὸ πάθος κουφίζων οὔτε τὰ τῆς νόσου φάρμακά ποθεν πόλεως ἐς τοσοῦτον ἀφεστώσης Ῥωμαίων, μᾶλλον δ' αὐτοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ πρὸς τῇ τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ τῆς τοῦ σώματος θεραπείας ἀπολιπούσης. Ἐντεῦθεν προὔβεβλήμεθα ῥίγεσι παρανάλωμα καὶ πυρετοῖς λάβροις πλὴν θανάτου μηδὲν ἕτερον προσδοκῶντες. Εἰς ἡμέρας δὲ πλείστας οὕτως ἔχοντες θεοῦ μόνου τυγχάνομεν ἱατροῦ, ὃς κὰν τοῖς ἀπόροις τὴν σφετέραν εἴωθεν ἐπιδεικνύναι δύναμιν. [9]

Οὐκοῦν καὶ ῥάους ἀπὸ τοῦ πάθους γινόμεθα καὶ τῶν συγκειμένων τῷ βαρβάρῳ τυχεῖν ἀξιοῦμεν συχνῶς ἐγκείμενοι τὴν γνώμην ἀπογυμνῶσαι, ὃ τί πότε ἔστι τὸ τούτου βουλόμενον. Ὁ δὲ τὸν μὲν

ναὸν οὐ φησιν ἡμῖν ἀποδώσειν ἅπαξ εἰς τὴν αὐτοῦ μεταστάντα θρησκείαν, οἶκον δὲ καθωσιωμένον τὴν ἀρχὴν τοῖς ἀρχιερεῦσιν οὐδ' αὐτὸν ἔχειν ῥαδίως, ὅτῳ βούλοιτο, παρασχεῖν· ὃν γὰρ ἀντ' ἀρχιερέως τῆς αὐτοῦ πλάνης προβάλλεται, τουτονὶ κατοικεῖν. Ἀγρῶν δὲ πέρι καὶ ἄλλης κτήσεως μάλα τινὰ ἔφη ἀστείαν ἀπολογίαν· ἡ δέ· ὅτι περ φασγάνῳ ταῦτ' εἴληφε τῷ αὐτοῦ, καὶ πρὸ αὐτοῦ μὴ χρῆναι ἕτερον ἔχειν. [10]

Πρὸς ταῦτα τίν' ἡμᾶς ἔχειν οἶει ψυχὴν, ἀνδρῶν βέλτιστε, καὶ ὅπως τοῖς τηλικοῖσδε διακεῖσθαι κακοῖς πάντων ἀποτετυχηκότας καὶ οὐδ' εἰς ἡμέραν μίαν τετυχηκότας τροφῆς, ὡς ὁ πάντων θεὸς ἔφορος οἶδε καὶ πᾶς τις τῶν ἐνθάδε ἀνθρώπων; Εἰς τοσοῦτον γὰρ ἠγνωμόνησεν ὁ βάρβαρος, ὡς μήτ' ἐνθυμηθῆναι ξενίαν μήτε δ' ἀμοιβὴν ἠντινοῦν, ὧν παρ' ἡμῶν εἴληφε, πάντα δ' ὥσπερ καὶ θεὸν ξένιον ἀτιμάσας ὕβρισεν εἰς ἡμᾶς ἀθεμίτως. [11]

Ὅψε δ' οὖν ὅμως ὑπὸ τοῦ τῶν συνήθων ὑπομνησθεὶς μὴ δίκαιον ἡμᾶς εἶναι προνοίας ἀπερρίφθαι πάσης, πείθεται τι δρᾶσαι τῶν, ἃ μεγαλοψυχίαν βαρβαρικὴν μαρτυρεῖ, ἥτις εἰ καὶ γελοία, ἀλλὰ καὶ χάριν ἔχει τὰ μάλιστα ἅτ' ἐν μέσῃ τραγῳδίᾳ παραφανεῖσα. Καὶ γὰρ τινα γραῦν, καὶ ταύτην Ἰσμαηλίτιν, τῆς σφετέρας ἀποικίσας οἰκίας τὸν Ἀσιάτιδος γῆς ἑξαρχον, βαβαὶ τοῦ θαύματος, εἰσοικίζει καὶ τῷ τοσοῦτῳ τὸ τοσοῦτον, ὡς ἂν τις εἴποι, δίδωσι δῶρον, εἰ μὴ τοῦ λαμβάνοντος, τοῦ γοῦν διδόντος ἄξιον, ἵνα τὸ Διογένηος κατὰ τούναντίον πρὸς Ἀλέξανδρον εἴποιμι. [12]

Προστίθῃσι τῇ τηλικαύτῃ εὐεργεσίᾳ καὶ χώραν πάνυ τοι ὀλιγίστην εἰς ἄροσιν, ἢ πόρρω τε οὔσα τῆς πόλεως, οὐ τροφὴ μᾶλλον ἢ εἴη τῷ ἔχοντι, ἀλλὰ καταστροφή, εἴ γε παρὰ θρησκείαν τοῦ διδόντος ὁμολογοίῃ· ἐπὶ δὲ τούτοις καὶ ἱερεῖς τοὺς σύμπαντας ἔξ, οὓς ἡ τῆς Ἀσίας μητρόπολις καὶ οὐ πλείους αὐχεῖ. Ἀλλὰ τούτους μὲν καὶ πρὶν φθῆναι δοῦναι ἐκ μετανοίας ἀναλαμβάνει καὶ τὸν ἐπικείμενον αὐτοῖς φόρον εἰσπράττεται. Τῆς δὲ γῆς ἡμεῖς ἐκόντες ὑπεξιστάμεθα δάκρυα παραιτούμενοι θερίζειν, ἀλλ' οὐ μὲν οὖν στάχυν. Τὸν δ' οἶκον

ἀξιούμεν ὑπ' ἀνάγκης οἰκεῖν, ὥς ἂν μάρτυρα ἔχωμεν εἰρκτῆς καὶ δεσμῶν, ἀλλ' οὐ κατοικίας. [13]

Οὕτως ἔχομεν καὶ οὕτω τῆς καλῆς ταύτης ἀπολαύομεν μητροπόλεως. Ὁ δὲ πλεόν τῶν ἄλλων κακῶν ἡμᾶς ἀνιᾷ, ὅτι περ ἐκ γειτόνων οἰκοῦντες τοῦ μεγάλου τοῦδε νεῷ καθ' ἡμέραν ἐπὶ τῆς ὁροφῆς ἐκπηδῶντας ὀρῶμεν τοὺς Κορύβαντας τούτους καὶ τὰ τῆς σφῶν ἀλαλάζοντας λατρείας, ὅσον χωροῦσιν αἱ κεφαλαί, ἡμεῖς δ', ὅποιοι τύχοι τῶν ἱερῶν, παραρριπτούμεθα ὡσανεὶ τινες ἀπόλιδες ἢ ἀμητροπόλιδες ἱεράρχαι. [14]

Προσανιᾷ δὲ καὶ ἡ τῶν αἰχμαλώτων πληθὺς, ἔστιν ὧν μὲν Ἰουδαίοις, ὧν δὲ Ἰσμηλίταις δυστυχῶς δουλευόντων. Εἰσὶ δὲ τινες τούτων, οἱ τῆς μοναδικῆς καὶ ἱερᾶς γνωρίζονται μοίρας ἐναγῇ διακονίαν παναγεῖς ὑφιστάμενοι. Οἱ δὲ νῦν αὖ ἀχθέντες ἐκ τῆς νέας ταύτης αἰχμαλωσίας κατὰ χιλιάδας ἡριθμημένοι, καὶ οὗτοι δ' ἐκ τῆς Ρωμαίων, ποίαις ἀλώσεσι χωρῶν ἢ πόλεων ἐκ τοῦ παντὸς αἰῶνος γεγενημέναις ἢ ἐλάττους εὐρεθεῖεν ἂν ἤγουν ἴσοι παραβληθέντες; πάντες δ' οὗτοι ὥς τινα καταφεύγοντες εἰς ἡμᾶς ἄγκυραν ἀποδύρονται τὰ τῆς συμφορᾶς, καὶ ἡμεῖς δ' αὐτοῖς ἀντιτιθέντες δάκρυα καὶ πλεόν οὐδὲν κενοὺς ἀφίεμεν. [15]

Εἰς τοσοῦτον εὐποροῦμεν ἀπεσταλμένοι ἐνθάδε. Διεξήειμεν δ' ἂν καὶ ἄλλ' ἅττα δεινά, εἰ μὴ τιν' ἐτέραν δυστυχίαν παθεῖν ἐνομίζομεν τὴν τῆς ἐπιστολῆς ἀμετρίαν. Οἱ γὰρ καθ' ἡμῶν αἰὲς νυκτὸς ἀφίεμενοι λίθοι παρὰ τῶν προσπόλων τοῦ διαβόλου καὶ τῶν λίθων αἱ μείζους διαβολαὶ πρὸς τοὺς ἰδίους σατράπας τέως ταμειεύεσθωσαν εἰς δευτέραν ἐπιστολήν, ἵν, εἰ ζῶμεν καὶ μὴ φθάντες ἀπολοίμεθα τοῖς ἀνόμοις, ἐπιστείλωμεν σοὶ τε καὶ ἄλλοις, οἱ τοῖς φίλοις πεφύκασιν ἐπὶ τῶν συμφορῶν συναλγεῖν. [16]

To Anamnesios Logaras, about what happened to me in Ephesus:

We are suffering in the barbarian territory as many deaths as you may find in my narration stated below, but the thing that saddens us the most is that the common remedy<sup>5</sup> of the words as a consolation to what we are suffering is no longer at our disposal. For we are now afraid of writing, as if we had also delivered, together with the body, the freedom of writing; but when we forget about [this fear], if we manage to write, we are sending this [writing] to a precipice and into an abyss. Indeed, when we recently sent to you –I do not know how I should state it– a tragedy or an epistle about how our matters were, we recognised glaringly that [our epistle] was intercepted by the enemies. In consequence, as we do not own a copy of the letter, we have dedicated ourselves to this same job for the second time to see if it is possible for us to compile it by heart and in a considered manner. It is as follows. [1]

After we left Byzantium, we headed without stopping towards Chios and, after spending a whole month in a place next to the island, we came to admit that it was convenient to meet with one of the brothers who rule over Asia, to the dismay of those of our kind, in front of Smyrna. Amurpegis [Amur Beg] is his name, as you yourself already know. After having crossed with great fear the sea in-between and the territory of Klazomenai, across a much drained and rugged [way], we arrived in two days' time to where we had already set before [Smyrna]. [2]

In this place, we spotted a truly big city and a church whose proportions were no smaller than those of the city, although both of them were totally abandoned and suitable for being walked by thieves and pirates, and by no other kind of people whatsoever. In consequence, we grumbled and put more grumbles into this grumbling and some of them were similar to Aristides's suffering but, unlike him who cried before a city destroyed by an earthquake

and due to the contemplation of statues, we cried before a colony of Christians and the homes of native [non-Christian] peoples of the outermost regions of the Earth. Therefore, due to this tearful beginning, we presaged a disastrous symbol of what would have immediately occurred. [3]

In fact, as the barbarian with whom we wanted to meet didn't either want to meet us at the beginning, nor to accept or reject the writing from the Emperor that we wanted to procure to him, neither did he allow us to pass through his territory towards Ephesus. All this distressed us enormously and plunged us into the biggest confusion. We also considered inadvisable to take the way back, as we could end up seized by the enemies or ambushed; even if we could resist this [ambush] and run away from all kinds of reproaches, [it would seem like] we weren't hindered by the barbarian but rather as if we ourselves were thinking about returning. And overall, we were distressed by the bishops' situation: what accommodation did those who had been proposed by us find and where would they set up? Up to that moment, they weren't allowed seeing their own churches either. This, certainly, seemed to us like another misfortune from evil and a very vehement torment for our thoughts, so we could barely resist it. [4]

Consequently, despite our confused and totally disconcerted state of mind, one of our fellow companions who came from Chios whispered to us the idea of bringing some gifts to the barbarian, valuable ones from all kinds, and so we did. When [the barbarian] heard of them, having some difficulties but showing mercy for us thanks to [the gifts], he chose to meet us on the third day, even though he had spurned us before. Once we had offered to him these [gifts], he instantly looked at us in a charming way or at least that is what he showed; he felt in with us and asked what he could give in exchange for them. Then, this meeting being extended too much,

he set us free and made us leave Ephesus with some writings which he himself had written. [5]

And, certainly, we left Smyrna late in the afternoon and walked throughout the night, crossing an impassable undergrowth where we were stung by a number of cuttings and thorns because we could not actually see where we were going. After having resisted this throughout part of the day, we camped outside, at the foot of this miserable city; we camped in a very humble and unknown chapel, which was intended for prayer. It had been actually planned this way by the barbarian's other brother, whose name is Chetirpegis [Khidir Beg] in the barbarian language. [6]

But when we met him and gave him the gifts which we had procured for him, our hopes were built by totally vain thoughts [because we expected him] to grant us to have the church, the house and all the properties and possessions which had belonged to the Archbishops from the beginning, if there was no reason for it, in exchange for all the great valuable gifts which we had given to him. Nevertheless, our illusions had been vain, our walking of the path which we had walked had been vain because all our efforts and hardships ended up in smoke; indeed, we had failed in all our proposed objectives. As you will observe, in fact. [7]

Since we were squeezed and cornered in the small chapel which we have already mentioned and which we were using, as a matter of fact, as a church and as a house, we went to where the barbarian was in order to beg him to give us back what should have been given to us; and his words promised so, but his acts didn't show it at all. In fact, it happened to us what seems it happened to those who were locked up before, due to this season – it was actually the peak of summer – and due to the stagnant dust which was emerged in that region's air for any reason and due to the narrowness of our dwelling and due to the fact that we did not have a place to rest and due to the sorrow and bitterness which were melting us... Likewise, we

contracted a severe disease and we were so desperate that we considered that the appointed day of our death, the cause and the final edge of our existence, were about to strike. [8]

For there was nowhere near a doctor who could ease, with any of his arts, our pain, nor medicine against the disease, because the city is far away from the Romans or, it would be better to say, from God himself, and lacks healing for body and soul. From this moment on, we fell victim to the cold and to terrible fevers, so we were expecting nothing else than death. This situation lasted many days and only God was acting as a doctor, for even in the inaccessible places is he used to show his power. [9]

Well, we are ready to recover from the disease and we consider licit to get what we had agreed with the barbarian, so we frequently met him to pull the covers off his opinion about what he is planning [to do] in any moment. He would not give us the church, because he had already reconverted it to his own religion and, in respect of the house which had belonged to the Archbishops from the beginning, it was not easy for him to give it away to anybody either. In fact, the man who had been named Archbishop of his wandering [religion] lived at that time in this [house]. And regarding the fields and other properties, he expressed a most elegant apology. This was the reason: as he had taken [these properties] with his own sword, no other person should use them instead. [10]

How do you, the best man on Earth, think our sol was in view of these circumstances and how do [you think] we were in view of such great ills, given the fact that we were lacking everything and we even did not have food for one day, as God omniscient and every man here knows? The barbarian was, in fact, humiliating us so much that he was not respecting hospitality nor [was he offering to us] a compensation for all that he had taken from us<sup>6</sup>, therefore boasting before us while dishonouring the god of hospitality. [11]

However, after his relatives reminded him that it wasn't fair to cast us out into Providence, he agreed to do something about it, which bears witness to the barbarian magnanimity, laughable indeed, but also helpful above all because it appeared all of a sudden in the middle of this tragedy. And after taking an elderly Ismaelite woman from her house, he gave shelter to the governor of the Asiatic lands. What a surprise! And he gave [that man] such a gift, to put it that way; even though the receiver was not worthy, so was the giver, to say it the other way around in comparison to the case of Diogenes<sup>7</sup> before Alexander the Great. [12]

He also added to this gift a very little plot of farming land, which was far away from the city and didn't provide its owner with nourishment but with accidents, although it was an agreement, according to the giver's belief. Apart from this, also six priests, and no more, are held by Asia's Archbishopric. But [the Barbarian], feeling sorry, got these [priests] back before they were handed over and imposed a tax over them. We walked away from the land voluntarily, relinquishing the crop of tears instead of spikes. We had to dwell in the house out of need so that we could have a witness to our agreement and our bonds, not to our residence. [13]

This is our situation, and this is how we are enjoying this magnificent Metropolis. More than any other illness, we are being tormented by the fact that, while we are living as neighbours of this enormous temple, we must see, every day, those Corybants jumping on the roof and uttering the chants of their cult, which fill their heads; whereas we were confined where the sacred things are officiated, as if we were Hierarchs with no city nor Metropolitanate. [14]

Likewise, we feel distressed by the number of war prisoners, among which there are Jews and Ismaelites enslaved miserably. Among these [prisoners], one can recognise monks and priests who, despite their all-hallowed destiny, were celebrating a cursed ministry. In turn, those who were caught in this new seizure can be counted by

thousands and, far away from the Romans, in what historical plunderings of territories or cities would we discover fewer or even the same amount of people being in such danger? All these [prisoners] grumble about the misfortune and come to us as if we were an anchor; but as we can only reward them with tears, we see them off not only empty-handed but also with empty souls. [15]

This is our situation since we were confined here. In fact, we would narrate the rest of the misfortunes if we didn't consider that the letter's disproportion would make us suffer another adversity. So here we are, resisting the stones thrown at night by those devil's servants and, even worse, resisting the slanders made by the satraps themselves, to which we will dedicate a second epistle, so if we survive and do not die in the hands of the lawless, we will contact you and also other people who are able to show sympathy for their friends and their misfortunes. [16]

#### NOTES

1. Reinsch refers to these letters as B[riefe] followed by a number. The present translation is of letter B55.
2. *Vid.* paragraph 16.
3. *Vid.* paragraph 5.
4. Reinsch - δεῦν
5. Manuel Gabalas provides evidence of the fact that the exchange of correspondence was suspended.
6. The gifts previously mentioned by Gabalas.
7. ἀπὸ τοῦ ἡλίου μετὰστηθι – “stand a little out of my sun”.

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