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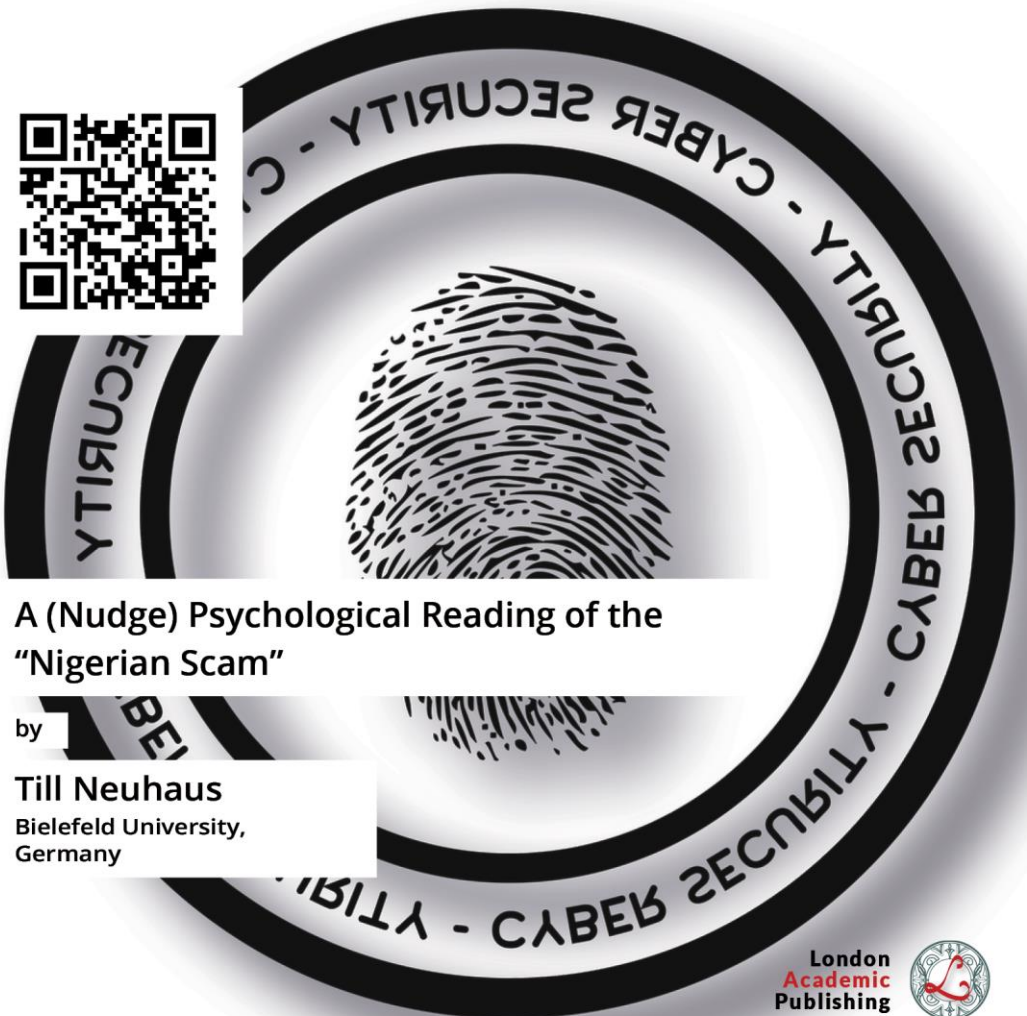
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A (Nudge) Psychological Reading of the "Nigerian Scam"

by

Till Neuhaus
Bielefeld University,
Germany

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A (NUDGE) PSYCHOLOGICAL READING OF THE “NIGERIAN SCAM”

Till Neuhaus

Bielefeld University,
Faculty of Education,
Germany

till.neuhaus@uni-bielefeld.de

Abstract. The “Nigerian Scam” (so named because of its prevalence in the country, especially during the 1990s, then continued by many organizations in other different regions around the world) is a scheme in which the sender requests help in facilitating a transfer of money. In return, he offers a large commission, sometimes up to several million dollars. The scammers request that money be sent to pay for some of the costs associated with the transfer. These attempts (also known as “advance fee fraud” or “419 fraud” - there is a section in the Nigerian Criminal Code, *i.e.* Section 419, that point at this type of fraud as illegal), are widely regarded as a joke among digital natives. However, forms and variations of the Nigerian Scam have been successful since the 16th century and continue to do so, even in the 21st century. The longevity of the scam hints at the exploitation of very basic human processes. Therefore, this article tries to analyse these processes from a psychological standpoint, trying to derive the mechanisms that these texts exploit. The different phases of the scam (from the creation of the target group, until the final contact) are analysed from the psychology of persuasion as well as behavioural economics standpoints – both being subsumed under the label of “Nudging” – trying to identify the settings, scenarios, framings, and signals which make the scam one of the most successful scams in human history.

Keywords: scam mail, nudge, nudging, behavioural economics, Nigerian scam

1. INTRODUCTION AND THE NUDGE THEORY

Almost all texts are written with an intention. The text’s intention can be – just to name a few – to share information, to publicly position oneself towards a topic, or to manipulate others. Every day,

we consume countless (fractions of) texts (*i.e.* news, adverts, text messages, books etc.) and have to select the corresponding mode of perception. Almost instantaneously we figure out the author’s intentions, their agenda, and our relationship with him. While our systems to analyse the aforementioned aspects developed under different evolutionary conditions, the world and, thereby, also the production, positioning, and form of texts has changed tremendously. Often, authors of particular texts try to exploit our evolutionarily grown systems to perpetuate their agenda; an (in)famous example may be the advertisement’s struggle for our attention. However, some other authors have more malicious intentions and whose fraud generates roughly \$3 billion in damages annually (cf. Park et al. 2014: 1) – scam emails. May it be a Nigerian Prince, a clergyman in need, or a tragedy-struck high-ranking military official, most scam emails are degraded to the status of a running-joke for online natives. However, the scam proves to be relatively stable, having a history of more than 400 years. Therefore, it can be assumed that the authors of scam emails (and the genres prior to online communication) have perfected the art of exploiting evolutionary grown mechanisms. Therefore, this contribution will analyse scam mails from a psychological standpoint trying to highlight the mechanisms which famous scam mail narratives and their presentation attempt to exploit. The 21st century is certainly a century of mass media but it is also the century of persuasion, may it be in politics, public debate, or personal matters. The study of scam emails will prove to be valuable to understand the basic mechanisms of human perception, recognition, and thinking, highlighting the mechanisms which a plethora of actors – from advertisement professionals to politicians – attempts to exploit.

In this contribution, the communication between scammers and victims will be conceptualized by highlighting the four crucial stages of the scam: (1) the pre-conversation phase (referred to as the *bait* phase), (2) the *hook* phase in which the scammers try to convince the victim to transfer money, (3) the *line* phase in which it is attempted to extract more money from the victim, and (4) the *sinker*

phase. In each of the paragraphs, the underlying psychological processes will be highlighted, contextualized, and explained. In the final section of this paper, the prior analysis' insights will be summarized and it will be attempted to outline the future potential of reading texts from a psychological/Nudge theory perspective. First, however, the theoretical framework of this paper, the so-called Nudge psychology approach, will be presented.

The *Nudge theory* assumes that human beings categorize decisions by either letting system 1 or system 2 decide (cf. Kahneman 2012). Instead of system 1 and 2, Thaler/Sunstein (2017, 34) use the terms *Humans* (for system 1) and *Econs* (for system 2) as they associate the traits of system 1 with rather irrational and thereby human behaviour while system 2 represents a more analytical, rational-choice-like approach – a way of thinking they associate with the discipline of economics. However, Kahneman as well as Thaler and Sunstein, both describe the same differentiation. System 1/*Humans* is intuitive, uncontrolled, decides fast, is highly associative, and uses props and cues it has learned earlier. On the contrary, system 2/*Econs* is rule-governed, highly reflective, slow, conscious, and controlled (cf. Thaler/Sunstein 2017, 34). At the very core, this systemization of decision-making is the psychological explanation of and differentiation between the *blink vs. think* dichotomy (cf. Gladwell 2005).

Nudging further assumes that there are patterns in human decision-making, especially when decisions deviate from rationality and/or the best interest of the decision-maker. The deviations of actual behaviour from the rational choice paradigm cannot be predicted by von Neumann's and Morgenstern's (1944) (normative) rational-choice theory as “deviations of actual behaviour from normative models are too widespread to be ignored, too systematic to be dismissed as a random error, and too fundamental to be accommodated by relaxing the normative system” (Tversky/Kahneman 1986, 3). This led Tversky and Kahneman to the conclusion that rational choice theory “is grossly inadequate as a descriptive model of individual choice behaviour” (Tversky 1975,

163). The first systematization of irrationalities in decision-making processes under uncertainty has been presented by Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman as they focused on the cognitive-perceptual aspects of this phenomenon – a line of thinking they coined Prospect Theory and which can be understood as a descriptive psychological model of decision making and judgement under uncertainty (cf. Tversky/Kahneman 1974). Prospect Theory is the umbrella term for a plethora of effects and biases in which the presentation or availability of information changes the decision outcome. One such example is a study in the field of medicine in which participants of all level of expertise (expert/physician, amateur/patient) have been confronted with a treatment option. In the first case, it was presented with a 10% mortality rate, in the other experiment with a 90% chance of survival. While both presentations describe the same treatment, the expert as well as the amateur test subjects “were influenced by several variations in the nature of the data and the form in which they were presented” (McNeil et al. 1982, 1262) – a clear violation of rational-choice principles which should later find its way into the literature as the *framing effect* (cf. Tversky/Kahneman 1979: 3/4; Tversky/Kahneman 1981). Generally speaking, Prospect Theory identifies cases, scenarios, and modes of presentation which allow a predictable modification of decision outcomes (cf. Kahneman/Tversky 1977). Nudge theory widens this approach as not just cognitive-perceptual aspects of the environment are considered but all aspects with the help of which a decision is made – the sum of these aspects is often referred to as the “decision architecture” (Thaler/Sunstein 2017). The decision architecture incorporates all relevant aspects, such as provided information, contextualization/framing of information, reference groups, social aspects, wording, and a plethora more; nudging thereby enriches the insights from decision-making psychology and behavioural economics with knowledge from social psychology, socio-linguistics, and sociology (cf. Neuhaus 2020, 74). The conscious modification of decision architectures has proven to be a potent tool as it has the potential to influence the decision-maker

and ultimately change the outcome/decision; in the following, institutions, corporations, and governments used nudging to improve settings in their interest (cf. Straßheim/Jung/Korinek 2015).

The power of nudging lies in its possibility to create a decision architecture – providing the *right* information and present it accordingly – which leads the decision-maker to a fast, intuitive, and unconscious System 1 decision while the problem the decision-maker is actually tackling would rather require the analytical, slow, and reflective System 2. This mismatch of the presented problem and the responding system can be used to nudge people into a certain direction. However, as this paper will show, the same mechanisms can also be exploited to modify decision architectures aiming at the victimization of people as decision architectures play a tremendous role in online communication as the owner of a website, the host of a blog, or the writer of an email fully controls the decision architecture. S/he solely decides which information is provided and how the information is presented. Decision architectures are a powerful tool as people do not act based on objective reality or facts but what they assume reality to be (cf. Haltermann 2012, 64) – Daniel Kahneman coined this availability bias the *What You See Is All There Is* (WYSIATI) rule (cf. Kahneman 2012, 115). As this paper will show, the scammers conducting the Nigerian Scam have perfected the modification of decision architectures by applying a plethora of nudges – an, up to this point, neglected perspective on spam emails as one sub-category of online communication. This paper will analyze the different steps of the scam, highlighting, contextualizing, and explaining the applied nudges and later outline their potential for legitimate online communication.

2. HOW NIGERIAN SCAMMERS NUDGE THEIR VICTIMS

The Bait Phase: Spam emails are, compared to other media and modes of communication, relatively cheap while being quick, direct,

reliable, well-scalable, and globally accessible (cf. Saini 2012, 1). Therefore, they are sent to either stolen, collected, or otherwise made available email accounts; the scammers do not discriminate based on any observable trait. It could be assumed that scammers aim at a high response rate as it enhances their chances to victimize responders. However, the way the spam mails are written directly contrasts this assumption as scammers emphasize their Nigerian nationality – whether this is actually the case or not cannot be confirmed – and also construct highly unlikely and dubious scenarios, a red flag for every well-informed internet user (cf. Schaffer 2012, 162). The disparity between the scammer’s approach (the mails) and their obvious aim (victimize people for monetary benefit) can be explained by looking deeper into the economics of the scam itself. Initiating the contact by sending a spam mail is comparatively cheap. Costs for the scammers are caused by ongoing and continuing exchange with the potential victim as writing more personal messages requires time and human capital. As a result, it is in the scammers’ interest that, if they invest time, money, and effort, the endeavour results in the victimization of their contact and pays off monetarily. The worst-case scenario for the scammers would be the investment of time, manpower, and money by having a long-lasting conversation which results in no payment (cf. Herley 2012, 11). The scammers rightfully assume that naïve internet users make better targets as they are less likely to research the presented narratives online, seek advice (*i.e.* in forums), or discuss such matters with informed people offline (cf. Herley 2012, 11/12). Based on these observations, it could be concluded that the core traits of a potential victim are social isolation, advanced age, and naivety. All of these items are unobservable based on the information source the scammers use, *ergo* the email addresses (cf. Levitt/Dubner 2016, 160). For the scammers, this poses the question of how they can make a usually unobservable trait visible. The solution the scammers came up with is a mechanism called self-selection, sometimes also referred to as the self-selection bias, which could be described as a selection by proxy; in legitimate businesses, pricing is often used to

trigger this self-selection (cf. Harford 2007, 52/53). The Nigerian Scam, on the contrary, uses the absurdness of the initial story to select for unobservable traits and thereby exploits the core insight from the game theory which assumes a change in behaviour from all involves actors in case of a change in rules and/or signals (cf. Binmore 2013, 155/156).

By making their narratives highly dubious and using fraud-connoted buzz words, the scammers target a specific sub-population of the people they approach. Only the ones who respond to these outrageous narratives have proven to have a tendency for naivety – the key trait of a potential victim. By responding to the initial mail, the – prior to the self-selection process – uncategorizable crowd of people has organized itself into potential victims and non-responders. Simultaneously, this selection process makes the scam financially more profitable as the non-responders – which could have been lured into a conversation as they would have responded to a less fraud-laden mail – would have had a higher probability of opting-out at a later stage of the scam; the worst-case scenario for the scammers as it produces the highest cost while generating zero revenue. By including certain connoted buzz words, the scammers reduce the amount of responses dramatically as only one out of 12.5 million emails is responded to (cf. Wainwright 2017, 150; Kanich et al. 2008, 11). However, by letting the tremendous amount of approached people categorize themselves among the line of desirable traits for the scammers, the initiators of the scam improve their likeliness for monetary reward and minimize the probability for high costs, low revenue scenarios. By intelligently using the right wording and narratives, the scammers do not only reduce their target group, they optimize their target group. This *target group optimization* has a long history with the Nigerian Scam. In the 1980s, online communication was far away from being a mainstream phenomenon and scams of this kind took place by letter mail. This changed the setting dramatically as initial costs were much higher compared to the digital version of the scam. As the scammers could not address all people indiscriminately and hope for self-selection

processes, the scammers showed a prevalence for addressing people with partly visible traits. In the times of letter-based communication, the scammers primarily targeted people registered with drug abuse and/or addiction backgrounds. Furthermore, they addressed people related to charities, churches, or registered debtors and/or alcoholics (cf. Kich 2005, 129). The reason for this kind of pre-selection can be explained by the hidden, yet often related, traits of the aforementioned groups. Alcoholics, debtors, and/or addicted people constitute a sub-population which is, compared to the rest of society, relatively short on money. As the scam promises financial rewards for providing advanced-fees, people with a lack of monetary resources are expected to respond more positively to a *make money fast* scheme (cf. Stajano/Wilson 2011, 73). The selection of charity and/or religion-related populations can be explained by the assumed trait of empathy. People being engaged in such kind of organizations are assumed to be more empathetic and therefore respond more positively to people in need – the second catch of the scam. These reflections of the scam’s past, as well as its present, illustrate that the channel of distribution – and the costs it creates – correspond to the amount of people being addressed. While cheap distribution allows more people to be addressed and requires a different mode of (self-)selection, higher costs require a more careful selection of the target group.

The Hook Phase: The second phase of the scam, the hook phase, prepares the potential victim psychologically and mentally to transfer money to the scammers. This is primarily achieved by a modification of the relationship between the victim and the scammer. Therefore, the scammers send out signals (cf. Spence 1973, 356) which should lead victims to the assumption that they speak with a trustworthy person. One key tendency which helps the scammers in this phase – even though it expands through all phases of the scam – and significantly contributes to its success is the *truth default* (cf. Levine 2014). The truth default can be described as the tendency that humans generally assume that other people tell the truth, at least as long as the narrative follows certain conventions.

While the truth default certainly helps, the focus of this section will be set on the exploitation of irrationalities in the form of nudging as it is the scammer's main concern to appear trustworthy – a trait which cannot be properly evaluated through email communication. The different signals/nudges discussed in this section can be found either in the initial spam mail or in later messages as multiple variations of the scam exist. These variations are partly caused by the informational props the scammers use (*i.e.* references to current events) but also due to different realizations competing in the market. A scam can be conceptualized evolutionarily as scammers try out different versions of fraud, wording, narratives etc. and continue the most successful ones while retiring the less functional versions. This would also explain why descriptive psychological research identified the approaches, settings, and scenarios in which predictable irrationality occurs and these scientific insights match with the observable praxis of scammers – both analyzed, yet with alternating intentions, the behaviour of actual human beings. The nudges discussed in this section (authority, scarcity, reciprocity, and likeability) are well-recorded and often applied cues, props, and narratives. Therefore, it can be assumed that they are, evolutionary speaking, relatively stable and hint at the more basic structures of human decision-making.

The first nudge almost all scammers use is the *authority* nudge. The majority of recorded scam mail, which could be classified as advance fee fraud (cf. Chawki 2009, 4), features characters of authority. These can be high ranking military staff, government officials, royalty, or clerical authorities (cf. Edelson 2003, 393/394). The authority nudge exploits a mental shortcut which has evolutionary roots. Human beings organized themselves in dominance hierarchies ever since. In modern times, these dominance hierarchies multiplied as the field in which one can compete diversified as well. The functionality of social entities (*i.e.* families, companies, states etc.) depends on these dominance hierarchies as – at least in functional hierarchies – skill, effort, and competence determine one's positioning in the hierarchy (cf.

Peterson 2018). This allocation mechanism promises that jobs and tasks are assigned based on competence. This should increase the probability that tasks and problems are handled by people who can actually solve them and thereby increase the overall well-being of the group. However, as human social structures increased in size and grew more complex, competence and skill could no longer be evaluated properly. One way to, at least in part, guarantee the allocation of duties based on merit was the certification of skills through diplomas, certificates, and job titles. Following this line of reasoning, it can be argued that – as long as the dominance hierarchy is functional – job titles, diplomas, and certificates are signals of competence and, as such, they are barely ever questioned (cf. Cialdini 1987, 176). Especially in times of and/or judgment under uncertainty, human beings show the tendency to turn to authorities. Also, almost all individuals have learned from experience that following the instructions of authority (*i.e.* a doctor or a teacher) leads to more satisfying results (cf. Cialdini 1987, 175). Especially in judgements outside one’s own domain of competence, the mental shortcut which equals authority with competence has proven to be particularly potent. One such example is the (in)famous Milgram experiment in which a medical/scientific authority figure urged participants to administer electric shocks to another person (cf. Milgram 1965). The Milgram experiment underlines human’s willingness to outsource decisions based on competence by proxy of authority. The same nudge is applied in the discussed spam emails as scammers assume that potential victims are more willing to follow instructions if an authority figure urged them to do so. The success of the scam partly depends on the credibility and authenticity with which the scammer can pretend to be an authority figure. This statement can be supported by observations from historical fraud research. Variations of the Nigerian Scam can be traced back to the 16th century (cf. Smith 2009, 28), back then being known as *The Spanish Prisoner*. The Spanish Prisoner was also an advance fee fraud in which an alleged Spanish royal needed money to get himself out of jail. In return for the generous gesture, the royal would make the

good-hearted helper a rich man. In the 16th century, few people ever received a mail and even fewer received letters written on an expensive, high-quality paper (cf. *ibid.*). The selection of the materials and the mode of communication were chosen on purpose to increase the credibility of the claims being stated in the letters. While multiple aspects of the scam have changed over time, some remained stable. One of the most resilient traits of the scam is the usage of authority figures – a powerful nudge with a recorded history of more than 400 years.

While the usage of alleged authority figures helps to perpetuate the authority aspects of the nudge, it also contributes to a second nudge, the *scarcity* nudge. Scarcity feeds two very basic human's needs: the desire to be special (cf. Cialdini 2003, 22) and regret aversion. The desire to be special is exploited by the scam as – at least for the naïve victim – it looks like as if s/he was chosen to help the authority figure in question. In the illusion created by the scam, the basic dynamic of competence hierarchies is reversed as the, based on position, a lower-level person is in charge to save the authority figure. The feeling of being needed by someone higher in standing creates a feeling of privilege. Dominance hierarchies also have the tendency that only very few people ascend to the top. As the scammers signal belonging to that precious and tiny group, scarcity is created and ultimately exploited. The power of the scarcity nudge can also be explained by evolutionary learning processes. In human history but also in almost every person's experience, scarcity signalled desirability (cf. Modic/Lea 2013, 5). May it be precious metals, prestigious institutions, or unique opportunities, scarcity has long been associated with desirability and thereby value. The well-known laws of supply and demand are a mathematical manifestation of this correlation. However, the scarcity nudge not just creates the illusion of being chosen for a rare and thereby precious opportunity but also triggers a mechanism called regret aversion. The analysis of spam mails has shown that many of these messages operated with words signalling urgency (cf. Bergiel/Bergiel/Balsmeier 2008, 137) and thereby multiplying the

potency of the scarcity nudge. The creation of urgency has two aims. Firstly, it actively pushes the decision into the field of System 1/*Humans* – even though System 2/*Econs* should be the victim’s system of choice – as System 1 is responsible for fast and in this case urgent decisions. Secondly, the creation of urgency triggers *regret aversion*. Regret aversion (cf. Loomes/Sudgen 1983) describes the procedure in which humans imagine their future selves under certain conditions, *i.e.* realizing a scenario or spurning an opportunity. This procedure is a simplification mechanism to facilitate judgement under uncertainty. The incredibly complex System 2 question (Should I engage in this endeavour?) is replaced by the much simpler System 1 question (How would I feel if I miss out on this opportunity?). The imagined state of missing out on the opportunity results in a strong feeling of regret. The comparison of the anticipated future emotional states replaces the fact-driven analysis of the scenarios and results in higher degrees of participation. While the substitution of questions is against the laws of logic and analytical decision-making, the scarcity nudge – as one way to facilitate the processes described above – has proven to be a powerful nudge which can alter behaviour significantly.

Another relatively frequently occurring phrasing in these spam emails is the emphasis that the sender looks for a trustworthy individual to help him/her. Some scammers even go a step further and attach copies of confidential documents (*i.e.* ID cards, driver’s licenses, or passports) to the initial or one of the later mails – the attempt to attach credibility to the signal (cf. Zahavi 1997, 228/229). While the documents are likely to be manipulated, stolen, or forged, both – the overemphasis on trust as well as the attached documents – try to exploit the same weakness: human’s tendency for *reciprocity*. Reciprocity is a mechanism of mental bookkeeping which should tell the involved actors whether they are rather indebted or the debt holder in human relations (cf. Cialdini 2003, 20; Cialdini 1999). This form of mental bookkeeping is not limited to monetary or material units but is also used for the conceptualization of human relations. Historically speaking, reciprocity is the in-built mechanism which

urges humans to keep symmetrical relations with their environment and thereby enable long-term cooperation (cf. Cox 2004, 262). As all human beings – yet in varying degrees – have the desire to be in balance with their social environment, reciprocity makes human behaviour more predictable. Reciprocity may be the key factor facilitating long-term cooperation and thereby being a crucial building block for human development and progress as, from a game-theoretical/economic perspective, cooperation is crucial for utility maximization (cf. Hammerstein 2002, 84). The scammers try to exploit this mechanism by creating a scenario of asymmetrical reciprocity. As argued, mental bookkeeping is not an analytical tool which calculates amounts and compares these but should rather be considered an indicator whether an individual is indebted or not. Asymmetrical reciprocity aims at exploiting the differences between rational-based and feelings-based indebtedness. By providing immaterial and unsolicited gifts, such as trust, compliments, copies of forged documents etc., the scammers try to push the mental balance into the area of indebtedness. The victim's perceived indebtedness creates the urge to even out the balance (cf. Cialdini/Goldstein 2002: 43). Out of this asymmetrical relationship, the scammer approaches the potential victim and asks for the transfer of monetary resources. After having subconsciously consulted his/her mental bookkeeping, the victim arrives at the conclusion that s/he owes the scammer a favour and – to a higher degree than without the reciprocity nudge – decides to transfer money on a foreign account. Reciprocity is a well-known mechanism which has been exploited by multiple groups and organizations in real life, such as the *Osbo* cult which asked its members to beg for donations. The members of the cult gave potential contributors a flower and a blessing before asking for a contribution – the creation and exploitation of asymmetrical reciprocity which resulted in high revenue for the group. As shown, the exploitation of asymmetrical reciprocity has a long and vivid history. However, as the digital world does not allow the instant transfer of material goods, the scammers confine themselves to

immaterial asymmetry through signalling trust and the transfer of (perceived to be) important documents.

The last nudge applied in the hook phase is the *likability* nudge. An increase in likability makes cooperation between the victim and the scammer more likely (cf. Cialdini/Goldstein 2002, 40). The mental shortcut which is exploited by the likability nudge can best be described by the concept of the *mental shotgun* (cf. Kahneman 2012). The mental shotgun effect takes place when a relatively difficult question is replaced by a related but significantly easier one. The question of whether the received email(s) are legit is replaced by the question of whether the reader likes the sender or not. Due to the limited communication, the basis on which the reader has to decide is relatively small and solely controlled by the fraudster. Especially with regard to the likability nudge, information about the target group is the key as scammers try to create an in-group feeling and/or in-group mentality (cf. Sagarin/Mitnick 2012, 33). The psychological basis for this approach can be found in the observation that human beings tend to evaluate others based on similarities; the more similarities two people share, the more positive they will evaluate each other. Such in-group mentality can be created by hinting at shared spiritual/religious beliefs, the belonging to a certain group of people (*i.e.* bereaved people), or struggling with a specific problem (*i.e.* the loss of a relative). Recorded cases of direct attempts to victimize religiously engaged people, 9/11 victims' relatives, or relatives of deceased soldiers (cf. Dyrud 2005, 6) illustrate that scammers are well-aware of the in-group feeling's potency to create social proximity and thereby likability. However, likability cannot just be created by social proximity and likeliness but also by an appeal to the potential victim's self-image. An insight from marketing says that humans do not buy items based on who they are but based on who they would like to be (cf. Landon Jr. 1974). The same can be said about the Nigerian Scam. Most people (want to) think of themselves as helpful, cooperative, and good-hearted – a positive self-image can be considered a basic human desire (cf. Hobson 2012, 170). The scammers try to exploit this

tendency by presenting themselves as ill-fated, out of luck, and struck by destiny. (In)Famous realizations of these attempts are severe illnesses (of relatives or the scammer him-/herself), unforeseeable accidents, or other strokes of fate (cf. Dyrud 2005, 7). These narratives try to appeal to the potential victim's concept of self by providing him/her the chance to act in a way which would underline his/her self-image.

This section highlighted the four main nudges used by advance fee scammers in the first stage of the scam. The four principles the fraudsters try to exploit in this phase of the scam are authority, scarcity, reciprocity, and likability. The main purpose of this phase – in this chapter conceptualized as the *book* phase – is the transfer of money. As the following section will show, the initial amount is secondary as the follow-up phase, the *line* phase, has mechanisms installed which make it more likely that victims repeatedly transfer money and, over time, also increase the sum they are transferring – a steady cost/damage escalation. As the analysis of typical scam mail and the underlying psychological implications could show, the scammers employ the concepts of authority, scarcity, reciprocity, and likability as they are – even if differently pronounced in varying individuals – universals of human behaviour. These universals have a long-standing history as they were partially produced by basic human cognition and brain physiology, in part by culture, and in some cases by both.

The line phase begins after the first monetary transfer has taken place. This phase aims at the prolonging and escalation of money transfers. From a narratological standpoint, the scammers justify this on-going cost escalation with sudden and unforeseeable extra fees they have to pay. This phase makes use of three nudge-related scenarios, namely the consistency nudge, cognitive dissonance, and modified perception of risk. All three of these effects prolong and exacerbate the scam, often with detrimental effects.

Research has shown that people generally try to be consistent in their thinking, actions, and attitudes (cf. Guadagno/Cialdini 2010, 152/153). The desire to act in accordance with decisions made prior

is a relatively stable trait which can be found across cultures (cf. Petrova/Cialdini/Sills 2007). It seems to be the case that the initial decision – *i.e.* to transfer money to scammers or not – requires a relatively huge amount of mental resources. After that decision has been made, similar decisions or repetitions of the initial decisions require less mental effort; an on-going migration of the decision from System 2 to System 1. Also, it does not seem to be the case that, in the escalation of costs, the amount seems to be a factor. Once a decision has been made and the mental threshold has been passed, the probability to repeat the action becomes more likely. Therefore, the scammers apply all nudges outlined in the prior section trying to convince the victim to transfer a relatively moderate amount. After the initial threshold has been overcome and the decision steadily migrates from Systems 2 to System 1, the amounts steadily escalate. The consistency nudge highlights the importance of the temporal dimension – when to ask for which amounts – of the scam and aligns it with existing knowledge on decision-making in singular and repetitive decision scenarios.

The effect of *cognitive dissonance* hints at a phenomenon related to the consistency nudge; however, it plays a different role in the scam. Cognitive dissonance (cf. Festinger 1957) describes the difference between people’s ideas about the world and the actual world. Festinger argues that humans are not well-equipped in case of major difference or dissonance between the two. While lower-level deviance between the two can be accommodated, dissonance reduction of more key elements works differently. One of Festinger’s key insights is that, sometimes, if humans are really attached to a thought or concept, they do not change the concept if it collides with reality but rather alter (their perception of) reality (cf. *ibid*). For the Nigerian Scam, this means that victims, after they have convinced themselves that their online contact is a trustworthy person, show the tendency to rather alter their mental image of reality instead of changing their mental concept about their contact. This allows the scammers to perpetrate the fraud even longer and in part explains the potency of the consistency nudge as well.

From a rational choice perspective, it could be assumed that the accounting of losses and gains is similar in nature. The utility of a monetary unit gained is numerically the same as the negative utility of a unit lost. However, empirical research has shown that this is not the case. Losses are accounted at roughly twice the rate as gains (cf. Tversky/Kahneman 1991), a concept which should later be known as *loss aversion*. Loss aversion likely has its roots in evolution as losses threatened the survival of an individual or group much more than gains could guarantee future survival. As the current population is the descendants of the surviving populations of the past – a population which acted loss averse – this trait can be found deeply ingrained in almost all of us (cf. Kahneman 2012, 435). Loss aversion alone would speak against the success of the Nigerian Scam. However, depending on whether humans situate themselves rather in the loss or gain spectrum, their sensitivity towards risk-taking changes as well. Kahneman and Tversky (cf. 1981, 453) tested this risk aversion by confronting two groups of participants with the same decision, yet differently framed. Participants were confronted with the scenario of a pandemic which infected 600 people and could end lethally. In scenario one, participants could choose between (A) the sure survival of 200 people or (B) a 33.3% probability that all 600 survive (and a 66.6% probability that all 600 die). The majority of participants (72%) choose option A. In a second trial, Kahneman and Tversky reversed the odds and confronted participants with either option (C) 400 people die or (D) a 33% probability that nobody dies and a 67% that all 600 debase – 78% choose option (D) over option (C), a complete reversal of the observations from the first trial. While this study underlines the potency of the framing effect, it also hints at another trait in human behaviour. Generally, humans are rather loss and risk averse; however, when confronted with certain losses, the willingness to engage in high-risk scenarios increases (cf. Tversky/Kahneman 1992) – one explanation for high-stakes and high-risk gambling behaviour after initial losses. For the Nigerian Scam, this means that after the initial losses have been caused for the victim, its willingness

to invest in riskier endeavours increases. Just as a gambler who invests high stakes to win back his/her initial losses, the victims of the Nigerian Scam continue to pay higher and higher sums hoping to eventually get back the money they initially invested. Alongside the consistency nudge and the cognitive dissonance phenomenon, this change in risk aversiveness – caused by the victim’s self-evaluation and situating in the loss or gain spectrum – reinforces the longevity and damages the Nigerian Scam can cause for victims.

The concepts presented in this section – the consistency nudge, cognitive dissonance, and modified risk aversion – partly overlap and partly cause each other. However, all four hint in the same direction: the continuation and escalation of the scam. The exploitation of repetitive and unreflective behaviour leads already victimized people into an even darker path of future victimization causing tremendous damages for individuals through the payment of multiple instalments. With regard to the initial observation of this paper – the procedure of target group optimization – a similar pattern can be recognized here. The majority of all victims gets away with moderate damages; however, few victims – led by the above-outlined effects and mechanisms – respond to the con financially and psychologically more potently and stack up tremendous amounts of damages.

The Sinker Phase: As outlined in the prior section, the victim and the fraudster continue the conversation as well as monetary transfers. They both participate in the same communication/signalling game; however, they play on different playing fields. While the victim tries to remain a good relationship with the fraudster – the victim still assumes that s/he will eventually be rewarded – the fraudster has a more realistic look at the game as s/he can opt-out and disappear with the money whenever the situation demands it. As only incorrect, stolen, or forged information and documents were shared with the victim, there is no chance that reimbursement or prosecution will ever take place. This asymmetrical power balance is contrasted by the illusion the fraudster has consciously and carefully constructed; while the

scammer emphasizes that s/he is dependent on the victim's goodwill, the tables have turned after multiple payments have been conducted. Often, scammers stop responding once unnegotiable problems arise. The naïve victim starts to research the presented narratives and finds out that s/he has been conned. Due to the feeling of shame, many of these frauds go unnoticed and do not appear in official statistics. Thereby, it can be assumed that the actual damage exceeds the official numbers by a substantial amount – a fact which again highlights the potency of the presented nudges and mechanisms. The sinker phase is characterized by the fact that the victim's illusion is disrupted by something (*i.e.* a piece of information, fact etc.) which causes the victim to eventually abandon their theories about their conversational partners – the end of the cognitive dissonance and often a tremendous shock.

3. CONCLUSION

As this paper could show, scammers apply a plethora of powerful nudges to persuade their potential victims. These communicative nudges are transferable to other areas of life and it is highly likely that they would – depending on the context – unfold their force there as well. Especially the nudges from the first section (authority, likability, scarcity, and reciprocity) are, at least in part, already used by marketers and advertisement specialists. Considering the expansion of information technology and the availability of texts as well as distribution channels, the potential to nudge audiences into a certain direction seems to be almost limitless. Thereby, it can be assumed that the modification of decision architecture will gain in importance in the future. Simultaneously, the Nigerian Scam also highlighted the advantages of applied Nudge theory for other settings: it is cheap, effective, and requires quasi no change in settings and/or procedures.

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TEMPLE'S RAPE IN WILLIAM FAULKNER'S "SANCTUARY":
WILFUL VICTIM OR POWERFUL VICTIMIZER?

Mourad Romdhani

Faculty of Arts and Humanities,
University of Sousse,
Tunisia

mourad.romdhani@yahoo.com

Abstract. In this paper, I intend to show that Temple Drake, a well-bred girl who is abducted and raped, does not participate in her own debasement - as many critics argue, since her metamorphosis from innocence to promiscuity is the outcome of patriarchal manipulation. Temple's physical and psychological abuse and her transformation from "a blank-faced baby" to a "doll-faced slut" reverberate in feminist arguments about masculine "subjectivism" constructed upon female "objectification." Either with her father and brothers or with Popeye, Temple Drake is depicted as a puppet controlled in a way that reflects her objectification by a masculine-biased culture. Nevertheless, the doll-faced Temple still shows signs of power in her weakest moments, turning into a stereotypical picture of the new woman who wordlessly claims agency and emasculates the patriarch despite repression and sexual exploitation.

Keywords: female identity, object, subject, repression, victimized, victimizer, agency

The character of Temple Drake in William Faulkner's *Sanctuary* (1931) has been a main issue of debate among critics. Oscillating between innocence and culpability, the female character adds to the complexity of the novel and leaves the reader with contradictory impressions of sympathy and incomprehension. Creating Temple's character upon a controversy, Faulkner ironically mimics a sociocultural system that valorizes yet violates such notions as female virginity and innocence. Throughout the text, Temple undergoes a metamorphosis process in which she is physically and psychologically manipulated by the residues of a patriarchal culture

that celebrates the "doll" in her. Yet she tries to obscure her "slut" face. Thus, Temple turns to a culturally brain-washed object upon which the masculine subject is erected.

Temple is a well-bred college girl who is abducted and violently raped by Popeye - a criminal with an ignominious reputation and past. The (wilful) victim question surrounding Temple has preoccupied Faulkner critics for decades, ever since the novel's publication. Many critics have misplaced Temple as an evil woman who is responsible for her own subjugation while others see her as a victim and object of masculine oppression. In an article entitled "Desire and Despair: Temple Drake's Self-Victimization," Robert Moore argues that Temple is a willing participant in her own debasement (124). Joanne V. Creighton, in "Self-Destructive Evil in *Sanctuary*," goes in the same tandem, stating that Temple's seductive behaviour undoubtedly leads Popeye to violate her (263). James R. Cypher, in "The Tangled Sexuality of Temple Drake," approaches Temple's case from a psychoanalytical point of view, believing that "subconsciously, she desires to be raped at Goodwin's place" (249). Cypher goes a step further to reverse roles in Temple's and Popeye's relationship, pointing out that Popeye is the victim while Temple is the actual aggressor. According to Cypher, Popeye is a surrogate father who tried to escape from Temple's seductive behaviour, yet he failed in front of her seductive skills.

Besides, in *The Novels of William Faulkner*, Olga Vickery sees that Temple does not leave Goodwin's house in the Old Frenchmen Place since she is "fascinated by the idea of her own rape" (107) while Albert J. Guerard, in "*Sanctuary* and Faulkner's Misogyny," describes Temple as hot and animalistic fearing yet waiting to be abused (67). Guerard adds that Gowan Stevens and the Old Frenchmen place simply prompt the girl's already developed sexual drives. Likewise, in "Isaac McCaslin and Temple Drake: The Fall of New World Man," Lewis P. Simpson argues that Temple is "proud" to be raped, for she shows a fervent interest in living in Miss Rebba's whorehouse (100). Similarly, Dianne Luce Cox, in "A Measure of Innocence: *Sanctuary's* Temple Drake," blames the girl for deceiving

the courtroom with a kind of fake innocence and therefore should be accused (301).

In the same way, Edmond L. Volpe, in *A Reader's Guide to William Faulkner*, accuses Temple of her own subjugation, explaining that she

does not deteriorate morally, she responds to the evil of her nature [...]. Her horrible corn cob rape by Popeye does not initiate her moral collapse; it merely releases her from the restrictive conventions which society has imposed upon her [...]. Her continual, obsessive absorption with the possibility of rape indicates her desire for violation. (144)

Volpe considers rape as a kind of violence which does not victimize Temple but rather frees her desires. The same view is reiterated by Karen Aubrey Ellstrom who states that the girl not only initiates her own rape but “consistently heightens the intensity and increases the variety of her sexual encounters” (63). Other critics, like John B. Sherrill, argue for Temple’s nymphomania as she lures male characters and drives them to her web of desire. Sherrill describes the impotent Popeye as “a tragic hero [...] who possesses an unbending set of values that lends him [...] dignity” (119-20) and who is victimized by Temple’s voracious sexuality.

These views clearly emphasize Temple’s guilt and responsibility for her own fall in promiscuity, referring to the young woman’s seductive means like her mode of dress and coquettish manners when dealing with the male characters she encounters. This old scholarship, dating from the 1930s to the 1980s, starts from a dominant patriarchal belief in the danger of female sexuality and its threat to masculinity which is typical of earlier generations of Faulkner’s critics who depict Temple Drake as a monstrous feminine that should be reduced into a sexual commodity and should necessarily be contained.

These views exemplify, in fact, the time’s most widespread myth about rape voiced by Julie Allison and Lawrence Wrightsman: “Only bad girls get raped” (98). These myths create a climate hostile to rape victims, portraying them as often-willing participants in or even

instigators of furtive sexual encounters, (99) explain Allison and Wrightsman. Portraying Temple as a willing victim of rape and an accomplice in her own debasement, these views objectify Temple and exploit her as "other" within masculine authority and subjectivism.

Interestingly, however, in Temple Drake's case, Faulkner weaves an unresolved plot and raises many questions which readers are compelled to answer. In *Intimate Violence*, Laura E. Tanner talks about textual blank in *Sanctuary*, seeing it as an "invitation to the reader to participate not only in the viewing but the marking of the novelistic universe" (561). She describes the textual blank created through the abundant use of punctuation as signifying silence and characterizing Temple's rape scene as an instrument that jolts the reader and compels him/her to become the author of the crime. In view of these textual gaps, other critics see the character of Temple Drake from a different perspective.

In "Reading and Rape in *Sanctuary*," Homer B. Pettey comments on the overwhelming silence during the rape scene, arguing that it lures the reader to imagine and write Temple's rape: "The critic, aroused by a desire to know, performs an onslaught upon the text, an apparent rape, in order to discover the hidden meaning within this cryptic temple" (71). Pettey concludes that, like Popeye who dominates the woman and physically abuses her, views that accuse Temple of seduction and promiscuity suppress the female character and abuse her textually. Thus, Temple should not be regarded from misogynistic lenses, for her rape and victimization story still contains an unvoiced plot of virtuousness, power and agency.

Robert Dale Parker, in *Faulkner and Novelistic Imagination*, and Judith Wood Angelius, in "Temple Provocative Quest," equally see that there is no evidence in *Sanctuary* of Temple's evil character. They defend the girl's innocence, arguing that her mind is shaped by the male characters around her. Parker argues that Temple does not want to be what she gets (63) while Angelius believes that the young woman does not consciously intend to be seductive (78). Indeed, Temple is a victim of a patriarchal system that controls her

and obscures her own identity until she becomes a brainwashed and disempowered female character. In so doing, patriarchal culture robs Temple her willpower and turns her into an object through which the male fulfils his masculine subject. Through Temple, Faulkner seems to reject the myth of the willing victim by persistently depicting Temple as a lifeless marionette. During the night before her rape, Temple is already portrayed like a puppet:

Temple's head began to move. It turned slowly, as if she were following the passage of someone beyond the wall. It turned on to an excruciating degree, though no other muscle moved, like one of those Papier-mâché, Easter toys filled with candy, and became motionless in that reverted position. (69)

Faulkner's depiction of Temple as a marionette can be a good argument that resists the classification of Temple as a willing victim and invites the reexamination of a patriarchal culture that exerts violence on female body and identity. By understanding Temple's subdued reactions as her complicity in her own debasement, one fails to account for the patriarchal structures that underline the myth of the willing victim.

In "Temple Drake: Faulkner's Mirror for Social Order," Donald A. Petesch sees in Temple's defenselessness during the rape scene an emblem of an absence of the self rather than a sign of willful victimization. Petesch's argument is relevant insofar as the young woman's powerlessness constructs her as a vulnerable object of masculine violence and a victim of mental and physical desecration.

In *Sanctuary*, Temple Drake is portrayed as an object of masculine subjectivism conditioned to submit to male authority and control. She is seen as an object of desire to the town boys outside the college, as a consumable body to Popeye and as a presumably victimized daughter to the courtroom jury, yet "she is never allowed to represent herself" (Urigo 79). In her family, Temple is depicted as a puppet controlled by a father and four brothers. Likewise, in the trial scene, she is described in a way that reflects her objectification by a masculine culture:

From beneath her black hat, her hair escaped in tight red curls like clots of resin. The hat bore a rhinestone ornament. Upon her black satin lap lay a platinum bag. Her pale tan coat was open upon a shoulder knot of purple. Her hands lay motionless, palm-up on her lap. Her long blonde legs slanted, lax-ankled, her two motionless slippers with their glittering buckles lay on their sides as though empty. (284)

Describing the young woman's appearance through different physical items of ornamentation, Temple's identity is lost as the main focus is placed on external garments without reference to the girl's feelings or personality. Being referred to by her garments, the young woman is turned into an object whose physical appearance obscures an inner identity.

In the same trial scene, Temple appears utterly controlled and manipulated by her father and brothers:

The old man touched her arm. She turned her head toward him, her eyes blank and all pupil above the three savage spots of rouge. She put her hand in his and rose [...]. Halfway down the aisle, the girl stopped again, slender in her smart open coat, her blank face rigid, then she moved on, her hand in the old man's. They returned down the aisle, the old man erects beside her, looking to neither side [...]. Four young men were standing stiffly erect near the exit. They stood like soldiers, staring straight ahead until the old man and the girl reached them. Then they moved and surrounded the other two, and in a close body, the girl hidden among them, they moved toward the door [...]. The girl could be seen shrunk against the wall just inside the door, her body arched again [...] the five bodies hid her again and again in a close body. (289-90)

The masculine domination is well-established in the girl's exit from the courtroom entirely overwhelmed by the shadows of her brothers. Manipulated by an "erect" father and four "stiffly erect" brothers, Temple "is immediately submerged within the strong male bodies that surround her and carry her away, visually erasing her presence and occluding her opportunity for agency" (Hinrichsen168). Seeing that Temple's father is a judge and her two brothers are lawyers, the father's and brothers' authoritarian social statures testify to sociocultural violence against femininity.

As she proceeds down the walkway with her father, Temple drops her “platinum bag” and her father kicks it to the corner of the courtroom with “the toe of his small gleaming shoe” (*Sanctuary* 289), positioning it like wasted refuse. Like her garment, Temple herself “becomes a wasted fantasy object, an objectified “something” upon which the trial’s interpretative machinery churns, judges, and fixates” (Hinrichsen 168).

Interestingly, Temple’s presence in the trial scene is characterized by a failure to use words:

The District Attorney stood before her. “What is your name?” She did not answer. She moved her hair slightly, as though he had obstructed her view, gazing at something in the back of the room. “What is your name?” he repeated, moving also, into the line of her vision again. Her mouth moved. “Louder,” he said. “Speak out. No one will hurt you. Let these good men, these fathers and husbands, hear what you have to say and right your wrong for you.” (285)

Temple’s silence during the trial scene highlights women’s experience under the authority of a masculine-biased discourse that influences the female ability to find expression and subsequently turns women into a muted group¹. Women are muted insofar as their voices are not heard or “may not be heard at the authoritative ‘speech-making’ level of society” (Brenner 135). Accordingly, the American feminist Mab Segrest writes about the *psyche* of the oppressor unveiling the subject’s longing for the domination and separation of the other through voice. She concludes that patriarchal culture is obsessed with speaking since the will to voice is what establishes masculine visibility. “To tell the story of hegemony, to tell stories of belonging, requires voice” (15). Yet, the subject’s visibility and voice are constructed upon the other’s invisibility and voicelessness as is the case of silent Temple and the fluent male voices around her.

However, women’s culture forms an invisible silent background to the dominant culture and since “they are also part of the dominant culture that marginalizes them, the language that they

speak or write is often double-voiced, containing a dominant and muted story" (266), as Showalter puts it in "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness." In this context, Temple Drake's voiced story is one of guilt and accountability while her muted story is one of subjugation and objectification. More importantly, Temple's muted narrative still conveys signs of power and agency that cannot be heard by the male representatives of the Law of the Father during the trial scene. A muted story of power, agency and resilience is wordlessly voiced by Temple in the courtroom. In this light, the text can be read, as constructed upon a "surface" and a "symbol" plot (Freedman 17).

Many critics, relying on the "surface", describe Temple Drake as one of the most marginalized and powerless characters in *Sanctuary*. However, the "symbol" in Temple's story will turn any reductive reading of her character meaningless. In "Faulkner's Dirty Little Secret," Julianna Leachman studies Temple's name as indicative of a sense of duality governing her characterization and her experiences in the novel². The sense of binarism in the female character's name is equally extended to her experiences in the novel as her female identity, dictated by a patriarchal system, is revised and reformulated though wordlessly.

Many scenes in the novel convey this sense of binarism characterizing Temple's character development and shift from a state of subjugation to a state of power and agency. In "Open Spaces, Open Secrets," Linda Hinrichsen draws an analogy between the rape and the courtroom scene, arguing that in both scenes, Temple is a victim. Nonetheless, in her wordless gaze, Temple is still triumphant over a culture that violated her. Hinrichsen explains that the trial scene "fails to provide justice for the violations Temple suffered, leaving her sexual trauma as unspoken "something" that everyone knows but refuses to directly—and legally—acknowledge" (163).

During the rape scene, Temple was unable to speak and articulate herself. "Something is happening to me!" (102). The use of "something" here implies the speaker's under-lexicalization strategy

in avoiding the most common and most efficient term, namely rape. Resorting to the term “something” signals the speaker’s lack of familiarity with the concept in question or difficulty of access to it (Fowler 152). In Temple’s case, the use of the vague “something” signals her incomprehension and total detachment from the experience she is undergoing. Temple’s repetitive exclamations emphasize her silent pain. Furthermore, her elliptical emphasis, “I told you it was...I told you! I told you all the time!” (102) involves the reader into the text through references to the second-person pronoun “you”. However, Temple’s repetitive and elliptical statements do not help the readers understand the events, forcing them to experience the same state of apprehension and lack of certainty experienced by the girl. In this vein, John Matthews states that ellipsis is a kind of silence that evokes a world before the prohibitions established by language (251). More than this, the use of ellipsis and repetition constitutes a silent structure of the narrative through which Temple resists the reader and prohibits him from having access to her body and privacy.

Likewise, in the courtroom, Temple willingly loses articulation. Hinrichsen describes the courtroom scene as a replay of the rape itself, for “Temple cannot speak as her mouth is stuck to this “something” (164). Faulkner describes Temple bow-shaped mouth “like something both symbolical and cryptic cut carefully from purple paper and pasted there” (*Sanctuary* 284), emphasizing the cultural burden placed on the female character, making her mouth papered over and pasted closed. Hinrichsen adds that Temple’s reluctance to articulate herself is meant to show that liability rests with anyone and everyone, for the community itself, is complicit in the swirl of drunkenness, violence, and fraught desire that chase Temple throughout the novel (164). Hinrichsen argues that accountability has to be thrown on the patriarchal socio-cultural system or the collective consciousness of the modern society that paves the ground to violence exerted on females. This is illustrated through the collective breath of relief (*Sanctuary* 286) that filled the courtroom after Temple failed to speak, revealing “how the culture

of a dominant white male masculinity depends upon the unspoken dynamics of shame, blame, and violence" (Hinrichsen 166).

Despite her traumatic silence, Temple manages to evoke "something" meaningful, namely the social sphere's deeming rape as an unspeakable and invisible crime.

What stands at the centre of the trial is therefore not only the unspoken sexual trauma but the blindness it induces. In nodding toward and exposing judicial blindness, Faulkner underlines how the court's verdict actually ratifies the inherent cultural invisibility of culture's complicity with this violence, marking the relation between patriarchy and violence. (169)

Temple's wordlessness during the trial scene can be understood as her way of telling "something" the community refuses to know. Temple's wordless gaze at the blank space at the back of the courtroom tells about a conspiracy of silence within the patriarchal system.

In the courtroom scene, the audience and the jurors alike react as one unified voice: "The room sighed, a long hissing breath" (*Sanctuary* 288). In this collective sighing breath one can hear a deliberate refusal to know. The trial scene is thus a moment when the law of the father "fails to provide justice for the violations Temple suffered, leaving her sexual trauma as an unspoken 'something' that everyone knows but refuses to directly—and legally—acknowledge" (Hinrichsen 168). The silence in the courtroom can further be described as the patriarchal culture's suppression of female sexuality as the embodiment of "the disruptive eros" and as a result of this suppression complete bodily knowledge cannot be available to males (Urgo 80). Thus, the "something" unspoken here is the female body becoming uncontainable by male discourse despite being physically violated.

In patriarchal presence, Temple becomes an obedient shadow easily controlled and manipulated. She turns into a speechless and defenceless girl as well as a fetishized object to be ornamented and showed around by the patriarch. Judge Drake tries to obscure his daughter's emotional life, being worried mainly about Southern

patriarchal principles of chastity and virginity that allow him to secure his masculine subject as a dominant patriarch. The patriarchal principles of Temple's father are further reinforced by her four brothers. In her talk to Ruby Lamar, Temple uncovers the violence she was subjected to with her father and four brothers. She informs Ruby that her youngest brother, Hubert, constantly warned that "if he ever caught [her] with a drunk man, he'd beat the hell out of [her]" (55). In this sense, Temple is subjected to the patriarchal concern to achieve the subject status which requires for its achievement supremacy over the other, or the object upon which one's sense power and selfhood can be exerted.

Temple is not only exposed but also tamed to masculine power in her patriarchal family. In this vein, Kevin A. Boon remarks that Temple is "preconditioned to acquiesce to dominance before Gowan's lust for alcohol puts her in Popeye's path" (39). Accordingly, Temple Drake is psychologically raped in her patriarchal home and thus prepared to be physically raped by Popeye.

Through Temple's talk, the reader can deduce similarities between her father and Popeye. In addition to raping her psychologically and physically, both men see Temple in terms of her sexuality. Ruby informs Temple that when her father caught her with a townsman called Frank, he "shot him and said 'get down there and sup your dirt, your whore'" (58). Temple whispers "I have been called that," (58) meaning that she heard the same denigrating words that classify her in terms of her sexual identity. Popeye uses the same term to refer to Temple when he talks about her to Gowan: "Make your whore lay off me, Jack" (49). By using the same demeaning term stressing the girl's sexuality, both men turn Temple into a dehumanized sexual object. Kevin A. Boon says in this respect: "What Faulkner implies about Temple's father, he explicitly states for Popeye. Though their motives are different, both the judge's privileged class and Popeye's criminal underworld are shaped by the same doctrine of patriarchal ideology" (40). This ideology openly allows the physical and psychological manipulation

of women by objectifying them to ensure the dominance of the male subject. In the same context, Laura Brown states that "all women live in a culture where sexual abuse not only takes the form of violent physical assault, but also more insidious verbal and psychological forms" (105). A victim of the culture that endorses masculine violence, Temple suffers intense verbal and psychological abuse.

With Popeye, Temple is the object of masculine domination. Besides raping her, Popeye humiliates the woman and even controls her physical needs:

It started as a wail, rising, cut suddenly off Popeye's hand. With her hands lying on her lap, sitting erect she screamed, tasting the gritty acidity of his fingers [...] and feeling her secret blood. Then, he gripped her by the back of the neck and she sat motionless, her mouth round and open, like a small empty cave. He shook her head. 'Shut it,' he said. 'Shut it,' gripping her silent. (138)

Popeye's attempts to silence Temple confirms what Susan Griffin terms as the "silencing of eros" by culture (vii) and holding the female captive to male powers.

In addition to physically abusing her, Popeye becomes a father figure who haunts Temple Drake's mind and rapes her psychologically. Popeye's control of the girl after her rape is a kind of another psychological rape that precedes another physical rape by Red. In her essay, Kevin A. Boon believes that Temple Drake's victimization is a masculine responsibility and guilt. According to her, "responsibility lies not only with Popeye but with all the men in the novel" (48). Boon adds that not only Popeye but also Temple's father is liable for Temple's victimization since both treat women as either promiscuous or "dress-up" puppets. However, through the portrayal of violent males subjugating and humiliating females, Faulkner may have intended to place more liability on a cultural system that allows female objectification and tolerates a dominant male discourse constructing femininity as an instrument of masculine subjectivism; a practice that has been referred to in American legal and sociological scholarship as "rape culture".

In *Sanctuary*, male subject construction at the expense of female objectification is well summarized in Miss Myrtle's statement:

Men just can't seem to take us and leave us for what we are. They make us what we are, then they expect us to be different. Expect us not to never look at another man, while they come and go as they please. (254)

Ironically, at the end of the novel, Temple appears in the Luxembourg Gardens listening to music with her father. Although she finds sanctuary in Paris and escapes from her physical violator, Temple cannot escape a patriarchal tradition which favours masculinity and allows it physical and psychological manipulation of the female.

Temple's physical and psychological abuse and her transformation from "a blank-faced baby" to a "doll-faced slut" reverberate in Simone De Beauvoir's and Luce Irigaray's ideas of masculine "subjectivism" constructed upon female "objectification." In *Speculum of the Other Woman*, Irigaray reveals the ways through which a mainstream Western discourse is constructed upon female absence. She exposes the dominant culture's objectification of woman as a vital condition in the establishment of the male subject:

Woman, for her part, remains an unrealized potentially unrealizable, at least by/for herself. Is she, by nature, a being that exists for/by another? [...] Is she unnecessary in and of herself, but essential as the non-subjective subjectum? As that which can never achieve the status of subject, at least for/by herself? [...]. This 'lack of qualities' that makes the female truly female ensures that the male can achieve his qualifications [...]. Theoretically, there would be no such thing as woman. She would not exist. The best that can be said is that she does not exist yet. (165-66)

Irigaray asserts that the negation of women or their elimination from the cultural and historical discourse is fundamental to the construction and preservation of Western dominant culture. In such a culture, Simone de Beauvoir states in *The Second Sex*, the relationship between sexes is one of exclusion and subjugation,

constituting a strongly gendered system that seeks to banish maternal origins and create the illusion of the masculine subject.

Popeye's and Horace Benbow's exertion of violence on Temple's body is indeed an attempt to assert their masculine subject. Though impotent, Popeye violently rapes Temple using a corncob to fulfil masculine subjecthood and to veil his physical failure and pervert behaviour. Horace Benbow similarly uses Temple's body to affirm his superior position as a successful lawyer. Donald Kartiganer points out in this respect that if Benbow fails Temple's defence, "he loses a certain male authoritative position as both defender of justice and hero of public good" (153). With both male characters, Temple remains the container of male violence and the object upon which masculinity is constructed. However, masculinity can bring its own vulnerabilities, which Temple might learn to take advantage throughout the novel.

In the rape scene, Temple seems to accept the idea of male subjectivism at the expense of female objectification, for she makes use of a cross-gender image of bisexuality when she tries to defend herself against her male aggressor:

That was when I got to thinking a funny thing. You know how do you do when you're scared. I was looking at my leg and I'd try to make like I was a boy. I was thinking about if I just was a boy and then I tried to make myself into one by thinking [...] and as soon as I thought it, it happened [...]. I could feel the jerking going on inside my knickers ahead of his hand and me lying there trying not to laugh about how surprised and mad he was going to be in about a minute. (216-17)

During this scene, Temple fantasizes about becoming a male and thereby being protected from masculine violence. Such a fantasy of becoming a biological male is an ironic reproduction of Irigaray's postulation of masculine subjectivism by means of female objectification. Being vulnerable in front of masculine violence, Temple paradoxically uses the guise of masculinity to protect herself against such a sense of hostility and abuse. Temple's cross-gender disguise is meant to implicitly uncover masculine concerns of

mastery over the female body or the object that ensures the male subject.

Nonetheless, the scene implies a sense of power and agency of the female character as she imagines inflicting such violence on Popeye when she fantasizes about a chastity belt with a spike on it (217). Temple's fantasy about acquiring a phallus is "imitation, subversion and recirculation of phantasmic privilege" (Stringer 30). It is a reaction to the constraints imposed on female identity in a social order constructed upon violence and rape, both material and metaphoric. Fantasizing about having a phallus is metaphorically opposed to Popeye's impotency and castration. In this sense, although the phallus fantasy is the outcome of the pain experienced by the female body, it still contains marks of defiance to the conventional patriarchal discourse that expose declining masculinity and emasculate the abuser.

Popeye continues to project his desires on Temple's body even after raping her. Inviting Red, a Memphis criminal, to Temple's room and compelling her to lie with him while he watches, Popeye attempts to recuperate a lost sense of masculinity. In an article entitled "A Measure of Innocence," Dianne Luce Cox comments on the scene, claiming that "Popeye's desire to bring Red to Temple is motivated by his hope that he can visually learn the potency to act out his hostility" (315). According to Cox, Popeye's violence against Temple is his instrument of becoming potent and thereby asserting his masculine subject. In the same context, in "Faulkner's *Sanctuary* as a Psychosexual Text," James Polchin argues that "Temple Drake provides both Popeye and Horace with a means to be both masculine through each man's outward roles and internal silent imaginings" (156). In both cases, Temple's body acts as the silent and marginalized container of masculine violence, physical and psychological. Nevertheless, through her wordless gaze and her refusal to give testimony in the trial scene, Temple ultimately takes back what she offers, and entraps the men within the canons of her gender identity, which is a form of revenge, agency and power.

In *Women and Sacrifice: Male Narcissism and the Psychology of Religion*,

William Beers psychoanalytically approaches the issue of male violence towards females, explaining that, during their maturation process, males reject the feminine aspect in them, classify it as "not-me" (143), and project it on the sacrificed other. "The sacrificial victim is a marginal being on which is focused the [feminine] 'not-me' parts, which are then destroyed or violently cut off from the group's culture" (145). Thus, in Beers view, female objectification not only enables the regeneration of the masculine subject but also ensures the transformation of the male subject into a dominator and predator as it is the case of Popeye who projects his feelings of frustration and impotence onto Temple's body and turns them into acts of violence and cruelty.

The association of femininity with the sacrificed victim is clearly established in Temple's case. William Beers points out that "the complex ritual violence performed by men is an ancient way for men to identify with each other, as men, and to separate from women" (144-45). Beers' argument is constructed upon Carl Jung's theory of "matricidal sacrifice" where the male rejects his maternal connections during the maturation process and projects his latent feminine feelings onto a sacrificed victim to conform to stereotypes of masculinity. As a kind of internal metamorphosis, the process essentially involves "narcissistic injury" (144) and "mourning" (185-86). However, since mourning is not conventionally accepted to be a male attribute, it is repressed and turned into "narcissistic rage" and aggression projected and acted out onto a female sacrificial victim (144). Beers' postulation is relevant to Popeye's case in *Sanctuary*. Emotionally hurt by his impotency, Popeye transforms his "mourning" and "narcissistic injury" into a kind of "narcissistic rage," projects it onto Temple's body, and rapes her using a corn cob. Such an act of violence is meant to hide Popeye's shameful feelings of loss and regenerate the masculine traits in him while using Temple's body as a scapegoat.

In "*Sanctuary*, Marriage, and the Status of Women in 1920s America," Terrell Tebbetts argues that Faulkner's *Sanctuary* is his most "feminine" novel, for it is filled with active female characters

as there is no “runaway Caddy,” as in *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), and no “coffined Addie,” as in *As I Lay Dying*” (1930). In *Sanctuary*, Faulkner creates women who try to be “self-owning individuals, assuming responsibility for their own lives and making decisions accordingly” (47). Tebbetts adds that, in contrast to female characters, the novel’s main male characters, Popeye and Horace, are different yet significantly impotent. According to Tebbetts, “the prominence and strength of *Sanctuary*’s female characters and the weakness of its males present a world in which patriarchy seems to be collapsing as gender equality arises, with its promise of female self-ownership” (48). Accordingly, Temple’s rebellion is connected to her rejection of her objectification by masculine agency.

Lawrence S. Kubie argues that Temple’s rebellious acts are the outcomes of the oppression of fatherly and brotherly forces. Kubie states that

this paradoxical and perverted impulse to revenge herself on those who have not harmed her, but who are essentially normal in their masculinity, fits the whole history of her defiant, rebellious and provocative attitude toward boys and men. Her career seemed to shape itself out of her hate of her father and her four stalwart brothers. (142)

Temple’s acts of sedition are openly voiced in *Sanctuary* when the narrator describes her actions as deliberately opposing her father’s and brothers’ will, for “all she had to do was, do the one thing which she knew they would forbid her to do if she had a chance” (123).

Tebbett’s optimistic vision about female subversive identity in *Sanctuary* may be refuted at the end of the novel when Temple Drake fails in asserting her identity throughout a journey full of masculine obstacles and hardships. She eventually appears overwhelmed by her father’s silhouette. Sitting in the Luxembourg Gardens under the vigilant authority of her patriarch, she turns into a lifeless object:

Beside her, her father sat, his hands crossed on the head of his stick, the rigid bar of his moustache beaded with moisture like frosted silver. [...] She seemed to follow with her eyes the waves of music [...] across the pool and the opposite semicircle of trees where at sombre intervals the dead tranquil

queens in stained marble mused, and on into the sky lying prone and vanquished in the embrace of the season of rain and death. (317)

Temple's struggle to claim a free identity and voice turns into a failure or what Philip Weinstein terms in, *What Else but Love?* "radically failed self-ownership" (92). Temple's failure in her attempt to claim "self-ownership" is due to a patriarchal culture that dooms femininity to objectification as a way of constructing the masculine subject.

Interestingly, however, through female characters like Temple Drake, Faulkner silently conveys the message that masculine attempts to objectify the female subject indeed strengthen the resistive impulses of the repressed female. Although Temple shows a sense of rebellion against the masculine subject, she cannot fully free herself from her father's overwhelming shadow and repeatedly refers to the sexually lifeless Popeye as "Daddy." Explicitly, seeing her dad in Popeye demonstrates the girl's failure to get away from the dominance of the patriarch. Implicitly, however, referring to the sexually lifeless Popeye as "Daddy," Temple symbolically kills the patriarch and denies him the power and control he constantly claimed against her. Thus, desiring to kill the patriarch, Temple tries to turn from a fetishized object of sexual desire into full "self-ownership" and full subjecthood. Likewise, projecting the patriarchal image on Popeye is a strategy for re-appropriating the symbolism of the patriarch and turning it against Popeye, whom she well knows cannot live up to the sexual and reproductive demands of the father's role. To call Popeye "Daddy" actually dishonours both him and her father.

At the end of the novel, the voiced story tells that although she escapes the reach of Popeye, Temple cannot overcome the violence of patriarchal tradition incarnated in Judge Drake's straddled silhouette. The patriarch's "hands crossed on the head of his stick" and "the rigid bar of his moustache beaded with moisture like frosted silver" (*Sanctuary* 317) ironically stand for a sociocultural system that establishes masculine-biased stereotypes and declines

any attempt to question them. The patriarch's stick has for its target a daughter compelled to succumb to the dominance of a father who imprisons her and deprives her of voicing out her femininity. Temple's state of confinement in the Luxembourg Gardens ironically echoes her confinement as a female in a patriarchal society and culture. Indeed, her socioculturally established identity as a woman is a burden which she cannot overcome.

Describing Judge Drake as a dominant figure while portraying Temple as a nearly lifeless body "yawn[ing] behind her hand" and having "a face in miniature sullen and discontented and sad" (317) is indicative of male dominance over her life. The image of the patriarch in the final scene signifies a patriarchal sprawling shadow which spreads out, invading the female character's life and establishing the masculine subject at the expense of the female identity. Temple's portrayal as "a miniature" passively positioned behind male authority uncovers a patriarchal culture that sees in women's dependence on men a vital condition for constructing the masculine subject.

From another perspective, an unworded symbolic narrative can actually be read in the final scene. Indeed, Temple's presence in the Luxembourg Gardens can be empowering since it "marks, a new beginning, a rebirth of sorts. Temple mounts her escape from the patriarchal Southern order through playing by the very rules of that order" (Leachman 20). In the Luxembourg Gardens Temple no longer stands passively in front of the mirror. She holds it in her hands, controlling what she and others see in it. Temple's true identity remains hidden somewhere behind the "face in miniature sullen and discontented and sad" (*Sanctuary* 317), which is reflected to readers through this compact mirror. She certainly comes to destabilize the masculine authority, identity, and power of many of the male characters around her, whether deliberately or not: Horace, Lee, Gowan, Red, even arguably Popeye, whose manhood she ridicules at the Grotto. By the novel's end, Temple is in effect the last (wo)man standing; while all the men in her life are either dead or defeated or otherwise emasculated. Even her father seems old

and decrepit sitting motionless with his cane in the Luxembourg Gardens.

In *Sanctuary*, Faulkner uncovers the psychological and physical manipulation of the female character and exposes the strategies that patriarchal culture implements in shaping female identity. Though many critics condemn Temple of being involved in her own abuse, a reader cannot help identifying with a female character who is not only conditioned to acquiesce to male power and assume the role of a scapegoat but also able to rise against a patriarchal system, claim power, resilience and agency and symbolically rape the law of the father.

NOTES

1. In their anthropological studies, Shirley and Edwin Ardener suggest the term "muted groups" to uncover a dominant culture's predilection toward the white male and the "drowning" of minorities under the dominant group. Ardeners explain that dominant groups occupy a privileged position as far as language is concerned as it is their voice which is raised in the spoken and written word while dominated and minor groups are compelled to either "translate" their experiences and beliefs in the dominant groups' language or remain silent as their experiences find no expression within the dominant language. Therefore, being a denied voice in dominant cultures, dominated groups become "inarticulate," for the language of the dominant does not take into account the voices of the non-dominant groups. As a result, minor groups become silenced and mute as their experiences are seen as insignificant and unworthy of linguistic representation.
2. Temple as a first name suggests a place of divine worship and protection, while her last name evokes that age-old enemy of the divine—a dragon or serpent (Leachman7). Rather than grant Temple Drake any form of divine agency, the second name "Drake" destabilizes her affiliation with divinity while the multiple meanings of "Temple" subvert her associations with evil.

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THE “EVERYDAY FORMS OF RESISTANCE” IN BEN OKRI’S “THE FAMISHED ROAD” TRILOGY

Abdelkader Ben Rhit

Assistant Professor,
Arab Open University,
Oman

benrhit.abdelkader79@gmail.com

Abstract. This paper aims to study resistance in Ben Okri’s *The Famished Road* Trilogy. It analyses diverse forms of resistance, especially those inscribed by the ordinary people to challenge the authority of the dominant structures and to transform the given order in historically specific ways. The dialectic of oppression and resistance shapes the world of Okri’s trilogy. What is of particular interest to the purposes of this paper is not the organized resistance movements but what James C. Scott has called the “everyday forms of resistance.” (Weapons of the Weak 1985, 36) Scott theorises resistance as a spontaneous act that is neither organized nor politically charged. The dialectic of oppression and resistance shapes the world of Okri’s trilogy. The paper perceives resistance as a “spontaneous overflow”, to borrow Wordsworth’s phrase, that is governed by self-interest. The “spontaneous overflow” in this context means that resistance is the expression of deep feelings of dissatisfaction and discontent with injustice, inequity, and the various forms of oppression found in a society. Resistance provides the platform to the oppressed people to express their refusal and their standing against colonialist, post-colonialist and neo-colonialist exploitation. It is a resistance to all oppressors whether they are Western colonizers or local rulers. Resistance against injustice is not calculated or planned but it may transform into an organized politically charged act that has the potential to dislodge the oppressive structures, if not eradicate them. What are the various forms of oppression Okri’s protagonists have faced? How do they respond to these forms of oppression? Does their resistance achieve its intended outcome(s)? If resistance falls short of achieving its intended outcomes, what conditions does Okri advocate for its success?

Keywords: The Famished Road Trilogy, everyday resistance, power, post-independence, oppression

1. THE EVERYDAY FORMS OF RESISTANCE

To start with, the word resistance “is derived from the Latin root word *resisté re*, meaning *to stand against*, which denotes a slow but insistent, often invisible but enduring strategy that has the potential to dislodge the dominant structures, if not dismantle them.” (Multani 2) Resistance aims to bring the oppressed people from the periphery into the centre, it opposes and challenges the oppressive forces. Jocelyn Hollander and Rachel Einwohner identify two “core elements of resistance: action and opposition.” (“Conceptualizing Resistance” 2004, 538) James Scott argues that “resistance refers to a form of insurgency denoted by the refusal of people to cooperate actively with, or express support for, the current regime or authority figures; even when this may appear passive, it is an activity, an ‘action.’” (Scott 1985)

Resistance lays bare the unjust practices, destabilizes the power of the oppressive structures in order to establish an equal place for the marginalized people. This paper explores one form of resistance: what Scott calls “everyday resistance” which “is about how people act in their everyday lives in ways that might undermine power.” It is individual and not politically articulated. Scott argues that the everyday resistance of the oppressed shows that they have not consented to dominance. He suggests that resistance is “any act” by a subordinate class that is “intended” to “mitigate or deny claims [...] by superordinate classes” “or to advance its own claims.” (*Weapons of the Weak* 1985, 290) Scott’s resistance theory is important for this paper because of the firm attention it gives to equality and justice.

Scott argues that the actions of ordinary people who intend to resist should be defined as resistance irrespective of their actions’ outcome. The outcome, for Scott, is less relevant than the intention since the resistance acts may fall short on achieving their intended results. Moreover, in “Everyday Resistance: Exploration of a Concept and its Theories,” Stellan Vinthagen and Anna Johansson understand “everyday resistance” as resistance that is done “by individuals or small groupings without a formal leadership or

organization in a non-recognized way that (has the potential to) undermine some power.” (2013, 37) Therefore, everyday resistance is a different form of resistance than the more politically organized and sustained resistance. Resistance in Okri’s trilogy is done by individuals like Dad, Mum, Azaro and the photographer or small groupings like the compound women and men without a formal leadership or organization. Okri’s characters are figures of resistance. The spontaneity of their responses to given situations is never naive, as they tend to be coherent in their overall rejection of some unjust practices.

2. COMPOUND PEOPLE: THE “SPONTANEOUS OVERFLOW” OF RESISTANCE

Ben Okri represents the political tension and conflicts between the Party of the Rich and the Party of the Poor and, for this reason, he shifts the central conflict of decolonisation from the opposition between coloniser and colonised to one between the domestic neo-colonialists represented by Madam Koto, the blind old man and the subaltern represented by Azaro’s family and the compound people. The failure of the Nigerian nationalists/neo-colonialist to integrate the demands of the marginalised into their nationalist agendas sowed the seeds of a catastrophic postcoloniality. Azaro, his parents, and the compound people struggle against and attempt to resist the new post-independence oppressive powers.

The compound people are generally non-gendered since they are referred to as the ‘inhabitants’ and sometimes the ‘crowd’. Their spontaneity does not preclude their sharp sense of awareness about the situation of what is called the city but, in fact, it should be called the village seeing the narrow horizon of the geographical perspective of the setting. Taken as a compact group, they are referred to in gendered terms as the women like in what the narrator came to consider as the “way of the women”: “The ways of women: I learned a lot about what was happening in the country through them. I learned about the talk of Independence, about how the white men treated us, about political parties and tribal divisions.”

(*TFR* 1992, 76) Everything about this situation is briefly summed up. They know the whole of it, in details. They know what the situation entails from change to implications to the rotten state of their nation.

Elsewhere, the compact group returns as made up of inhabitants englobing males and females, mature and young, independent of their differences. What unites them is their common hunger and misery and their common enemy, the politicians, especially the representatives of the party of the Rich as in the narrator's summary: "The inhabitants of the street crowded round the van, hunger on their faces. Their children were in tattered clothes, had big stomachs, and were barefoot." (*TFR* 1992, 123) Their common condition is the source of their unison and their refusal of politicians and their empty promises. The following is explicit about their spontaneous sense of awareness. There are the crude facts, the explanations, and a sense of common resolutions as to declining the politicians' offers:

'What is it?' someone asked.

'Politicians.' 'They want votes.'

'They want our money.'

'They have come to tax us.' (*TFR* 1992, 123)

The short statements are supposed to be made by different inhabitants. They are complementary, coherent and cohesive and list whatever the compound people have gathered from facts they have lived through. This is further exemplified by the following exchanges, which is meant to reproduce reflections that have matured long enough to become wise comments shared by the masses: 'I saw them when I went hawking. They keep giving reasons why we should vote for them.' 'They only remember us when they want our votes.' The man in the van spoke for himself. 'The poor have no friends,' someone in the crowd said. 'Only rats.' (*TFR* 1992, 123). The reactions point to a sense of unified vision the inhabitants have come to possess. They reflect indirect forms of resistance to politicians' lies and promises they will never keep.

Serious and tragic as the post-colonial situation may seem, Okri employs the technique of playfulness and punto ridicule the colonial experience and its neo-colonial and post-colonial fallouts, as well as the displaced and eternally wandering post-colonial man. For instance, there is an element of playfulness in the way the people react to the political campaigns of The Party of the Rich. This is seen in the mocking comments that are made following each of the amplified utterances of the Campaign Manager. The stylistic device used by the writer is drawn from drama as a statement is made, is interrupted and commented upon in the manner of a repartee. A repartee is “a quick and witty reply, a succession or interchange of clever retorts: amusing and usually light sparring with words and adroitness and cleverness in reply.” (Merriam- Webster online dictionary) Indeed, all the ingredients of the concept delineated by the Meriam Webster Dictionary are there: amusement, lightness, and skill or wit as in the following excerpt:

‘IF You VOTE FOR US...’
‘... we are finished,’ someone added.
‘... WE WILL FEED YOUR CHILDREN...’
‘... lies.’ ‘... AND WE WILL BRING YOU GOOD ROADS...’
‘... which the rain will turn into gutters...’
‘... AND WE WILL BRING ELECTRICITY...’
‘... so, you can see better how to rob us!’ ‘... AND WE WILL BUILD SCHOOLS...’
‘... to teach illiteracy!’ (TFR 1992, 123 emphasis in original)

Here, the mocking voices of the people that count the promises of politicians suggest the insincerity of the promises given. What the excerpt conveys is a determination on the part of the inhabitants never to take what politicians say for granted, experience has shown them the truth and they will stick to it. Their scepticism is not just expressed verbally as they tend to fight back if they are provoked physically. There is a first case in point where they react to aggression by defending themselves. One is reported by the photographer about how women in the market are capable of

fighting back assault. The photographer immortalizes that moment of instinctive everyday resistance when he recounts his artistic exploits to Azaro saying that he “took photographs of women at the market being attacked by thugs.” (TFR 1992, 232) The thugs in question are the mercenaries hired by the politicians to subdue the population.

The second instance occurs when a woman among the crowd is knocked over by the politicians’ van. The spontaneous reaction of the crowd is immediate as they started to throw stones and got ready to punish the doers in a collective movement that displays human instinct and a common unplanned reaction as the following passage clearly demonstrates:

The crowd surged to the front of the van, preventing it from moving. The thugs jumped down and whipped the people, the photographer frenziedly took pictures, and the people went on stoning the side windows till they gave completely and then they threw rocks at the men handing out garri. The men shouted; blood appeared on their faces; the politician appealed for calm; someone in the crowd cried;

‘Stone them! Another said:

‘BURN THE VAN!’ (TFR 1992, 154 emphasis in original)

Another instance of playfulness and pun is seen in the chants of the political thugs who unleashed mayhem on the neighbourhood at night:

‘Kill the photographer’

‘Beat the photographs out of him!’ ‘Finish him off!’

‘Bind him.’

‘Blind our enemies!’ ‘Destroy them!’ ‘Teach them a lesson.’ ‘Show them power!’ ‘Break their fingers.’ ‘Crack their heads!’

‘Crush the photographer.’

‘And leave his body in the street.’ ‘For mocking our party.’

‘Our power!’

‘Our Leader!’ (TFR 1992, 179)

The counter-chant and the attack of people are also very humorous:

'Fight them back!'
'Fight for your freedom!' 'Stone them!'
'They poisoned us with milk.' 'And words'
'And promises!'
'And they want to rule our country!' 'Our lives!' 'And now they attack us!' 'On
our own street!'
'Fight them without fear!' (180-181)

Though one is prompted to laugh at the comic way it is related, the seriousness of the incident is, nevertheless, foregrounded. To a large extent, it reflects the neo-colonial domination tendency of African leaders who practice leadership by force, and the revolutionary tendency of the masses of postcolonial societies. What the passages quoted above further show is the unrelenting will of the crowd to refuse subjugation and therefore to display a courageous form of physical resistance that remains instinctive and an example of a common destiny. The van is destroyed we are told, burned down completely by the inhabitants. Beyond their victory over the politicians and their intimidation, there is the ultimate regaining of the self and the territory. This is expressed poetically in the narrator's concluding remark on the sense of ending of the bloody episode when he says, "[t]he inhabitants of the street regained the night." (*TFR* 1992, 182) The regaining of the night is symbolically the regaining of their voice, the voice of the people, or as the narrator says elsewhere, the inhabitants of the compound.

The burning of the politicians' van has become a symbol of resistance as it is watched, scrutinized, weighed by the people. It has become their badge of resistance and the token of a gained tenacity, one that has been built up instinctively, in unison rather than by planning.

For the first time in our lives *we as a people* had appeared in the newspapers. We were *heroes in our own drama*, heroes of our *own protest*. There were pictures of us, *men and women and children*, standing helplessly round heaps of the politicians' milk. There were pictures of us *raging, attacking the van, rioting against the cheap methods of politicians, humiliating the thugs of politics, burning their lies*. The photographer's pictures had been given great prominence on the pages of the

newspaper and it was even possible to recognize our squashed and poverty-ridden faces on the grainy newsprint. There were news stories about the bad milk and an editorial about *our rage*. We were astonished that something we did with such *absence of planning*, something that we had done in such a small corner of the great globe, could gain such prominence. Many of us spent the evening identifying ourselves amongst the welter of rough faces. (TFR 1992, 156 - *emphasis added*)

Okri's people act as one in times of crisis with no prior planning. Men, women and children of the compound, with "such absence of planning" have gained prominence because of their fierce resistance against "the cheap methods of politicians." What has to be emphasized in this instance is the sense of resistance, resilience, fortitude and the sense of humour and positivity while facing life's calamities.

In "The Famished Road After Postmodernism: African Modernism and The Politics of Subalternity" Mark Mathuray focuses on the unplanned riots Okri presents in the first two books of the *Famished Road*; riots, which he argues "in Fanon's terms, represent the manifestation of the spontaneous rebellion of the lumpenproletariat." (Mathuray 2015, 1114) The lumpenproletariat refers to "that horde of starving men, uprooted from their tribe and from their clan, [which] constitutes one of the most spontaneous and the most radically revolutionary forces of a colonized people." (*The Wretched of the Earth* 2001, 129) Fanon also argued that the lumpenproletariat could not be excluded by the revolutionary movements in colonized countries, because it constitutes both a "counterrevolutionary" and a "revolutionary potential." However, being ignorant and desperate class, the lumpenproletariat is liable to be co-opted by counterrevolutionary forces. Therefore, he argued, education is "a historic necessity" for the dispossessed masses and it is central to revolutionary strategy. "Now the political education of the masses is seen to be a historic necessity." "To hold a responsible position in an underdeveloped country is to know that, in the end, everything depends on the education of the masses, on the raising of the level of thought, and on what we are too quick to

call ‘political teaching’.” (*The Wretched of the Earth* 2001, 137;196)

In one of the riots, the landlord, who represents the Party of the Rich, “like a magician” hands out bowls of milk “to the great surging mass of people” of the semi-urban slums. The action quickly descends into complete chaos: [T]he crowd converged round the van, arms outstretched, and the rush for free milk broke into a frenetic cacophony. The crowd shook the van, voices clashed in the air, children cried out under the crush, hands clawed at the sacks, and the frenzy became [...] alarming. (*TFR* 1992, 146) The object of Okri’s narrative is “the wretched of the earth” to borrow from Fanon or the ordinary people, how they suffer, what they do to survive, and how they inscribe their resistances are the major concerns of his trilogy. Like Azaro’s mother and father, the *lumpenproletariat*, are, as Fanon claims in “Spontaneity: Its Strength and Weakness,” “landless peasants [...] who leave the country districts, [...] rush toward the towns, crowd into tin-shack settlements, and try to make their way into the ports and cities founded by the colonial domination,” and it is “within this mass of humanity, this people of the shanty towns, [...], that the rebellion will find its urban spearhead.” (*The Wretched of the Earth* 2001, 110, 128) Mathuray argues that Okri attempts “to find another source for the potential realization of the dreams of decolonization, *i.e.* in the spontaneous rebellions of the subaltern, the only form of political intervention available to them.” (Mathuray 2015, 1116) Although the politics of nationalism and the hopes embedded in the compound people’s spontaneous rebellion, collapse, their collapse is not permanent, there is always light at the end of the tunnel. Eventually, Okri, through Dad’s visions, seems to opt for the utopian promises of justice, beauty and truth. In Book Eight, we are told that a great transformation is going to take place and “that new forces were being born to match the demands of the age.” (*TFR* 1992, 496) The compound people should not lose hope, they should “[r]esume [their] struggle” (*TFR* 1992, 500) and fight the oppressive forces so that they can change their harsh reality and carve out space for themselves.

3. MUM: FROM OBEDIENCE TO RESISTANCE

Mum has transformed from an obedient and subservient to a resistant and protesting character. She plays a central role in her small family. She is constantly seen as working at home and the market. She makes unrelenting efforts to comfort her husband and son and to help provide them with whatever they need. The fact that she is portrayed as a calm, self-confident character implies that she has principles and abides by them. Her resistance turns around the vicissitudes of life, a self-conscious and firm belief in the potential of the individual to clear a space for him/ herself in the turbulent moments of the various stages the nation has gone through. Her attitude towards politics is mixed with carelessness and wise interaction. Her silence is indicative of her sense of indifference vis-à-vis what her city is going through as when the landlord threatens to throw off tenants who do not share his political bias. “I have told this to all my tenants. Anybody who wants to live in my house, under this roof that I built with my own hands, should vote for my party. Did you hear me?” (*TFR* 1992, 198) The reader is told that “Mum did not nod. She stared grimly at the twitching candle.” (*TFR* 1992, 198) Her coldness and irresponsiveness do not betray her fear. In fact, they may be interpreted as a self-contained indifference akin to refusal rather than acceptance of the diktat of the landlord.

Mum is the wisest character in the trilogy. Her measured actions and words single her out as a pragmatic strong and wise character much needed in the tumultuous events the trilogy is representing. When in front of the landlord’s threats of using his guys to intimidate them and even put their lives in danger, Azaro urges Mum to run away, first she laughs. Her laughter sums up a whole attitude culminating in her serenity and resilience. She sees the futility of their enterprise and sarcastically says “The worst they can do is kill us.” (*TFR* 1992, 228) Come what may she seems to be saying as one cannot run from ones’ destiny. Her readiness to die is in no way synonymous with despair. It is rather her wise preparedness for the worst rather than blind submission to the

whims of corrupt politicians. Resistance is not a matter of words that oppose the enemy. It is a way of life.

The sense of resistance displayed by Mum and the compound women is subtle and seemingly simple, but it is what Scott has termed the ‘everyday’ form of resistance, one that does not rest on abstract thoughts. It is everyday ordinary forms of asserting the will to live, which is the greatest form of resistance to despair and subjugation. In *Ben Okri: Towards the Invisible City*, Fraser observes the significance change Mum has gone through from “subservient and maternal in volume one” she turns into “the mainstay of the family.” (Fraser 2002, 75) Her development is followed along with several episodes in *The Famished Road* and *Songs of Enchantment*. Ben Okri marks the apex of her existence: the strike for Independence that she organizes soon after Dad is released from prison.

I hear of Mum leading an organization of women, gathering them from the streets. The women drew other women, all of them lean with undernourishment, their children ill, their husbands listless under the pressures of the days. I heard that Mum led the women from one police station to another, with newspaper photographs following them everywhere they went. At bus stops and market-places Mum called on the women of the unborn nation to stage a mighty strike, and to protest for Independence. (IR 1998, 34)

Mum assumes the legendary status by fighting the police in a clash between them and the slum dwellers. Azaro’s mother’s violence is directed at an oppressive system.

Mum’s photograph is paraded in the newspapers as an enemy of the postcolonial powers. For this reason, she is constantly harassed by thugs. But she puts up a bold resistance. In one instance, she beats up three thugs. She was ejected from her stall in the market because of harassment. Mum and the women of the compound are poor but honest, fighting against corruption and injustice. Their spiritual integrity is not affected by their economic circumstance.

Mum’s has mixed feelings towards the beggars: she pities them for their wretched lives and is willing to help them somehow but

she is disgusted by their filth, do not prevent her from taking a firm stand in Helen's favour when Madame Koto accuses the girl of being a thief and has her flogged:

Mum went to [Madame Koto] and said:

'Tell them to stop. You don't know who that girl is.' 'She is a thief.'

'She is not a thief.'

Anca Maier argues that "Mum's courage to confront Madame Koto, and through her, the ruling class that she represents directly shows the resourcefulness that lies in the marginal." (*Ben Okri: Between Reality and Fantasy* 2013, 141) Mary Rogers claims that our identity "comprises inconsistencies and paradoxes. Such lapses of consistency, inevitable in the selves we fashion, are the stuff of resistance. In those inconsistencies are the resources for choosing marginality." (*Contemporary Feminist Theory* 1998, 372) Maier argues that "Mum's marginality means her refusal to conform to the requirements of a Centre, whether that Centre is the colonial power, the ruling class or a corrupt regime." (*Ben Okri: Between Reality and Fantasy* 2013, 142) She goes on to argue that through her protest and resistance, Mum, the marginal, brings marginality to life. "By throwing away the wig and the blue glasses that she wears at Madame Koto's party, the signs that place her within the circle controlled by Madame Koto (the Centre), Mum deliberately disobeys the rules of the Centre. Now, she is free to make her own choice." (Maier 2013, 143) This reflects Mum's way of leaving behind her dependence on a regime that oppresses her and ventures towards autonomy that "concerns self-governance; it requires getting clear about what one wants and then acting on that clarity." (*Contemporary Feminist Theory* 1998, 365) This episode reflects Mum's resistance in words and action. Okri, through Mum, Dad, and Azaro, denounces the corruption of politicians and reinforces the idea that it can be fought back despite the risks by those who are honest and hope that, one day, justice will triumph.

4. DAD: THE CHAMPION OF THE PEOPLE

Dad has tremendous importance in Okri's trilogy as the champion of the people. His new boxing profession has a symbolic meaning. "He is literally the champion of the people, fighting against all the forces of corruption, exploitation and evil." (Emenyonu 2011, 16) Dad is very articulate about the sense of resistance to all sorts of things. He says no to poverty, humiliation and passivity. At times, he is represented as a bully, a "trouble-maker" when he is exasperated by some people's attitudes. Overall, his sense of resistance stretches over almost everything in his life. When the Landlord comes, with his three muscular men, to take rent from Dad, he described Dad as a "trouble-maker" but Mum defending her husband responds "[m]y husband is strong, but he is not a troublemaker." (*TFR* 1992, 198) To the landlord who wants to impose the subjugation of every tenant in the compound, he is the one who does refuse any form of despotism and he is adamant about affirming his opposition. In a conversation between him and Mum, Azaro tells about Dad's position. He does not only have a clear position, but he also wants to declare it bluntly saying that he is not a "coward." When his wife tries to reason with him over keeping what he thinks for himself, he curses the landlord and his spies repeating that "there is nothing to fear" (*TFR* 1992, 203) from anyone.

His most articulate pronouncement in relation to the threats of the landlord is faced by a clear-cut stance: "What right has the landlord to bully us, to tell us who we vote for, eh? Is he God? Even God can't tell us who to vote for. Don't be afraid. We may be poor, but we are not slaves." (*TFR* 1992, 203) the issue is not just about the political question of who to vote for. It is more about resisting views, ideas, suggestions, advice, and diktats in the boldest manner. Dad follows a logic that is special to his character and which consists of obeying only what he thinks is right and resisting and rejecting that which he sees as wrong. His resistance finds its origins in his dignity and courage.

Dad often uses force either to make a point or to defend his principles and interests. He is ready to fight the police over the payment of the rent and to cause a riot in the opening page of the trilogy. He is behind the fight that grew into a riot as the compound inhabitants had to face the police, fought them fiercely with Dad as the deliberate non-appointed leader of the pack. We are told that he “was such a dervish of fury that it took six policemen to subdue him.” (TFR 1992, 10) Dad will be often seen fighting to survive. He fights thugs, the landlord, Madame Koto’s girls, politicians, would be boxers, and members of his own family. One may argue that Dad is the symbol of physical and material resistance or it may rather signify armed resistance.

He is inclined to wrestle and to punch, to bully and to look for trouble. Dad uses force to enforce a worldview where fairness and the sense of justice prevail. For him, boxing is just not a sport, although he seems to enjoy it. He trains quite hard to win because to win is to secure a decent living for his family. Dad becomes the only man in the ghetto to openly oppose the Party of the Rich. This opposition angers his landlord and store owners affiliated with the Party of Rich.

In the third most important and deadly phase, and amidst these battles, Dad has already become a boxer and taken the symbolic name of Black Tyger; his first fight opposed him to the ghost of Yellow Jaguar, a famous boxer who died three years before. Dad defeated the Yellow Jaguar. The fame Black Tyger earns after defeating the Yellow Jaguar lifted him to the status of an old African hero who turned defeat into victory for the community. His fight against the Green Leopard is communal because the latter is a fearful thug used to spread terror in the streets of the ghetto and is said to be on the payroll of the Party of the Rich. Dad’s victory over the Green Leopard is celebrated as the victory of the poor and oppressed over the self-serving politicians. Dad goes through a psychological transformation in the final phase. He becomes aware of his aloneness; he realizes that an individual alone cannot defeat the corrupt and greedy politicians of postcolonial Africa: “But it was

when people took to bringing their problems to him, when they asked him for money, for advice on everything from how to get their children admitted to hospital to how to get books for their youngsters, that Dad realized he couldn't be a visible or an invisible Head of State just by himself." (*TFR* 1992, 411) Through Dad's awareness of the inability of an individual to change the conditions of people, Okri is appealing to all the oppressed people to rise and unite against their oppressors, because the *status quo* will not end on its own. For him, no oppression ends unless the oppressed rises against his oppressor.

5. AZARO'S RESISTANCE TO THE VOICES FROM THE SPIRIT WORLD

In the trilogy, we see Azaro actively resisting the voices from the spirit world that would summon him back. Eustace Palmer shows the importance of "demonstra(ing) the narrator/protagonist's (Azaro) gradual development, particularly as he struggles to resist the attempts of his spirit companions to entice him to return" when teaching Okri's trilogy. (*Teaching African Literature Today* 2011, 11) The father, mother, and spirit-child Azaro act as figures of resistance to the political and social oppression happening around them. The bonds between Dad and Mum and Azaro grow tighter—and in many ways, what follows in the rest of the trilogy is a concentrated and often successful act of resistance. Azaro is the embodiment of almost all types of resistance in the trilogy. He resists the wish of the spiritual world to snatch him back from the earthly life he is intent on living. He sometimes resists his family's wishes, Madame Koto's exploitation and the rest of the compound people whenever he does not feel they go along with his desires.

Everything is told from Azaro's perspective like the rotten politics in the city and the ensuing violence. The resistance of inhabitants is described through the measures they have taken to protect themselves and therefore to resist the invasion of the thugs:

We knew that the troubles were incomplete, that the reprisals had been deferred to another night, when we would have forgotten. The inhabitants of the street, frightened and angry, set up vigilantes. They were armed with knives, clubs, and dane guns. We waited for new forms of iron to fall on us. We waited for a long time. Nothing happened the way we expected. (TFR 1992, 182)

The passage may be read as a form of organized resistance, but it is one without leadership. It is a small compound with some families whose main drive is to protect themselves against invaders. It is a collective social instinct of survival and remains part of what Scott has called “the everyday forms of resistance.”

Azaro cannot separate himself from the rest of the community or the photographer. His description of the violence puts him in the middle of all of it as when he recounts those moments of confrontation:

And words.’ ‘And promises.’ ‘And they want to rule our country!’ ‘Our lives!’ ‘And now they attack us!’ ‘On our own Street!’ ‘Fight them without fear!’ Machetes burst into flame. Chants were reversed in syllables. Spells were broken on the jagged teeth of night. The antagonists attempted a last desperate rally. ‘Pour petrol on the house!’ ‘Burn it down!’ ‘Burn out the photographer!’ ‘Burn out Azaro!’ (TFR 1992, 181)

The confrontation is unavoidable between the forces of evil and the courageous people of the compound. Azaro’s narrative does not strive for objectivity as much as it points to the question of what is right (people defending their compound) vs what is ugly because it is wrong: the burning of the photographer’s dwelling and even of Azaro himself). Resistance is legitimized by self-defence as in someone’s rallying cry “‘Fight them back!’” “‘Fight for your freedom!’” “‘Stone them!’” “‘They poisoned us with milk.’” (181) Self-defence is mingled with the right to be free which elevates such acts to the status of noble ones.

The greatest form of resistance on the part of Azaro remains his stubborn rejection of going to live in the spiritual world. He calls it rebellion which rebellion implies transgression of authority: “I was

a spirit- child rebelling against the spirits, wanting to live the earth's life and contradictions... I wanted the liberty of limitations.” (TFR 1992, 487) On the one hand, the very act of rebelling against superior powers is an act of courage that sends the reader to the deeds of great rebels. On the other hand, the stature of Azaro as a rebel can only match that of a mythical figure like Prometheus. In the two cases, there is a war between the world of the superior spiritual powers (Greek Gods and Zeus,) and the world of the mortals. Keywords turn around defiance, love of humanity, suffering, life and death, and endurance. Azaro is the child “who didn't want to be born, but who will fight with death.” (TFR 1992, 8) Like Prometheus, he made a choice.

Azaro's choice has led him into trouble as the spirits played several tricks on him trying to kill him. We are told that one day they called him using his mother's voice and when he crossed the street he was almost killed as a car was next to running him over. They also caused him to fall in a gutter and was lucky to be saved by a bicyclist passing by. Despite all this, he persisted till the end defying death which he calls the dread as when he says, “the visitation of the dread didn't change our lives in any particular way.” (TFR 1992, 187) Azaro explains the nature of spirit children. The first quality is their resistance to being born and their capacity to will their own death. This is especially clear with Ade whose slow death is witnessed throughout *The Famished Road* and is finally completed in *Songs of Enchantment*.

Azaro explains the reasons for choosing to stay on in the world of the living despite the suffering that awaits him. After being shown images of the dread and suffering that awaits him in the earthly world, Azaro remains adamant: “Then they showed me images which I couldn't understand. They showed me a prison, a woman covered with golden boils, a long road, pitiless sunlight, a flood, an earthquake, death. ‘Come back to us,’ they said. ‘We miss you by the river. You have deserted us. If you don't come back, we will make your life unbearable.’” (TFR 1992, 7) However, Azaro starts to shout daring his companions to do their worst. Indeed, he remains

resilient in most of his encounters with his spirit companions who try their utmost to lure him back to the spirit world.

6. ADE: THE EPITOME OF ARMED RESISTANCE

Ade seems to advocate armed resistance. The conflict between good and evil is declared through Ade, who dares to challenge Madam Koto and her voracious powers alone. His resistance to Madam Koto's evil powers is best manifested in his constant refusal to ride in her car. Moreover, Ade is the only child who schemes and dares to stab Madam Koto with a knife in an attempt to kill her and her wicked abiku triplet, which, as it has been stated previously, represent Nigeria's self-division. Ade's stabbing of Koto's belly with a knife is an act that symbolizes armed resistance.

At this historical moment, which can be considered as a turning point in Okri's trilogy and an epiphany, Azaro realizes Ade's patriotism and sees it as "large and brilliant, distinct in the effulgent shape of a diamond lion." (*SOE* 1993, 193) Although Ade failed to kill Madam Koto and her abnormal "abiku trinity", he can still be considered an icon of armed resistance of various forms of oppression. Trying for Ade is half the battle or maybe as he says, "my destiny was not to be an assassin, but a catalyst. The tears of a child dying of hunger in a remote part of the country can start a civil war. I am the tears of a child. I am the country crying for what is going to happen in the future. My new life is calling me. I will always be your friend and helper, but you won't recognise me." (*SOE* 1993, 196) his "destiny was not to be an assassin, but a catalyst." (*SOE* 1993, 195) A catalyst is a person that triggers an event and stimulates people to act. Later, we learn that Ade was run over and killed by Madam Koto's car. Ade's death can be explained as an act of resistance in the Living world but as a return to the world of spirits and a reunion with his spirit companions. Ade's scheme to assassinate Madam Koto is an unprecedented act of resistance and bravery because the ghetto people have been traumatized by Madam

Koto who keeps haunting them in their dreams and nightmares. Ade, through his valiant act of resistance, was able to bring change to his oppressed people by assaulting the epitome of evil, Madam Koto.

7. JEREMIAH: PHOTOGRAPHY AND RESISTANCE

Jeremiah, the photographer, is the embodiment of a complex form of resistance and opposition. He is rather a form of artistic affirmation of the self and the rejection of injustice by the constant search for truth through documentation. Jeremiah's role in Okri's trilogy is significant because of his recording of historical reality through the eyes of a first-hand witness. He is a "complex and challenging figure who shares with radical postcolonial the perception of oppression and a commitment to resisting it." (Cooper 1998, 98) When he was beaten up by the politicians' thugs, he wisely reacts to Azaro's enquiry about his condition when he says, "nothing that a man cannot bear." (*TFR* 1992, 189) He also affirms that he will continue to fight for truth and justice. Truth is conveyed to the eyes of the beholder of the photographs he takes which documents the inhabitants' resistance to the unmerciful assaults of the politicians.

One of the rallying cries against the photographer calls for blinding him: "Kill the photographer!" "Beat his photographs out of him!" "Finish him off!" "Blind him." "Blind our enemies!" (*TFR* 199, 179) He is the enemy because he stands witness to their atrocities. The call for blinding him expresses the wish to eradicate a dark page of the history of the nation and the photographer is that embarrassing truth-teller that corrupt unmerciful politicians want to eradicate. One is tempted to see the historian in him, one who fills in the gaps in the national narratives of post-independence. His testimonies are recuperated by national newspapers, we are told, and his fame has grown well beyond the compound. He is one of his own people, a symbol of their resistance and a son who finds refuge

in the narrator's home. Jeremiah's resistance to the forces of evil is endorsed, shared, and finds recompense in the friendly hospitable manner of welcome he is offered. His resistance is recognized as their "everyday" form of resistance the ordinary people are displaying on common everyday occasions.

8. CONCLUSION

To conclude, this paper has explored the everyday forms of resistance in Ben Okri's *The Famished Road* trilogy. It is found that the tradition of resistance is carried by the ordinary people, Okri's protagonists like Dad, Mum, Azaro, and the photographer. Their resistance is best shown in their persistent struggle against all oppressive forces and their refusal to conform to the requirements of a centre, whether that centre is the colonial power, the ruling class or a corrupt regime. Their resistance is what James Scott calls the "everyday forms of resistance", which means that the characters themselves are not necessarily regarding it as "resistance" at all, rather a normal part and way of their life and personality. These acts of resistance, in action and words, are part of the characters' ordinary everyday life – in the sense of being integrated into their way of life. Therefore, the paper has analysed everyday resistance as being part of the everyday, and that part as being an expression of resistance to power. Although these everyday acts of resistance fall short on achieving their intended outcome, for Scott the intent is a more relevant indicator than the outcome. The protagonists' lack of education, the fact that their acts of everyday resistance lack organization and planning and that they are not politically articulated can be reasons why they failed to achieve their intended outcome. This is evident, in Dad's thoughts, about the future country, which might reflect Okri's own imaginations about Nigeria. Although some of them sound too idealistic, the Nigerians should consider what Okri offers seriously. In Dad's conjured Nigeria of which he is the "invisible ruler", everyone would have

the highest education, [...] everyone must learn music and mathematics and at least five world languages, [...] every citizen must be completely aware of what is going on in the world, be versed in tribal, national, continental, and international events, history, poetry, and science; [a country] in which delegations from all the poor people would have regular meetings with the Head of State; and in which there would be elections when there were more than five spontaneous riots in any given year.” (TFR 1992, 409)

Such meditations send the reader to what the colonial period has denied to Nigerians and which the latter seems to be bent on reclaiming. Okri advocates the idea that successful resistance must be led by educated people, it should be well organized and politically articulated. He declares these ideas in an interview with Priyanka Dasgupta by saying “It doesn’t take much to give someone education. I was thinking about what is it that society needs most to transform itself. I would say that every single person should know how to read, write and think logically. They should understand their history, geography, basic biology and mathematics. Everyone should have education to a certain acceptable standard. Then, it is possible to raise people up to become decent citizens. (*Times of India* n.p.n) Like Okri, Dad talks about “becoming a politician and bringing freedom and prosperity to the world and free education to the poor” (TFR 199, 467). Although Dad’s achievements are meagre, he demonstrates some progress within a limited period.

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SITES OF CINEMATOGRAPHIC MEMORY:
“BLACK’47” AS A CONSTRUCTION OF THE IRISH PAST

Mohamed Salah Harzallah

Associate Professor of Irish and British Studies,
University of Sousse,
Tunisia

harzallah@hotmail.com

Abstract. This article deals with how the history of the Great Irish Famine of the 1840s is reconstructed and presented to the global viewers of the film *Black’47* (2018). It shows that the film’s narrative reflected a Nationalist perception of the Irish past which condemns the role of the British politicians of the time. It also concludes that the film provides an opportunity for the Irish in Ireland and abroad with a site of cinematographic memory that transcends the national borders of Ireland and engages the public in the process of remembering and reconstructing the history of this calamity.

Keywords: Irish film, Great Irish Famine, memory, public history, Black 47, Irish history

The Great Irish Famine is a watershed event in Ireland, the memory of which has survived in the Irish collective memory until the present day. In the last two decades, a plethora of publications dealt with the Famine events from different perspectives while dividing scholars into three major groups. Nationalist, Revisionist and Post-Revisionist historians provided divergent views about what happened in Ireland in the 1840s. Apart from professional historians, the filmmaker Lance Daly contributed to the construction of the Famine events in his film *Black’47* (2018). He attempted to show how the Irish lived under British rule in the year 1847 - the peak of Famine.

Traditional historians, who show commitment to method and training, have shown a rejection of films as a source of information

as filmmakers often sacrifice truth to an emotional and subjective construction of the events. They argue that films lack historical accuracy while providing the viewers with a distorted version of the events¹. The impact of films is undoubtedly overwhelming compared to academic publications. While films could reach millions of viewers, academic books and articles do not generally go beyond the confines of the academic circles. Despite the digitization of books, the appeal of films still has a wider reach.

In Ireland, scholars are divided over the adequacy of the use of films as a historical source. In 2014, the historian Diarmaid Ferriter proves to be highly critical of the Irish government's video "Ireland Inspires", which was used in preparation for the 2016 commemorations. Ferriter dismisses the video as being "embarrassing unhistorical shit". However, the historians Thomas Cauvin and Ciaran O'Neill do not object to historical videos since they outline the importance of the Irish public in producing public history². They also argue that the Irish government has been actively involved in sponsoring public history events such as commemorations, since the 1940s³.

According to David Dean, Public History is not only about the way the past is presented to the public but also about the involvement of the public in the construction and representation of past events⁴. Though the audience of mainstream historians is specialist scholars in their field of research, public historians embrace a different form of historical practice at the core of which is the contribution of the public to the understanding and construction of past events. While mainstream scholars share their findings in conferences organized by learned societies to specialists and students training to be historians, public history practitioners seek to study the shared understanding of the past by the public. More importantly, the Irish in Ireland and abroad have shown active involvement in public history since the early days of the emergence of social media. In the early 2000s, Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, internet blogs and other forms of digital media have been used to discuss historical events and to engage in a public debate on how

the Irish past should be understood. In fact, social media has made it possible to make historical content available for the wider public. It is worth noting that academics also use social media and websites to share historical content.

This article studies the way in which the film *Black'47* represents a form of public history of the Great Irish Famine. It deals with how the history of the calamity is reconstructed and presented to the global viewers of the film. It attempts to show how the screening the Great Irish Famine, which engages the public in forging an understanding of past events, provides an alternative view of the events. Despite the subjectivity of Public History, this article tries to examine the extent to which the representation of the Great Irish Famine in this film contributes to the debate on the contested understanding of what happened. It is worth noting that the study of historical fiction is under-researched in Irish Studies. Accordingly, this article provides a contribution to the field of Public History through the study of a non-researched subject which is the representation of the Great Irish Famine in the historical film.

BLACK'47'S STORY

The film tells the story of an Irish ranger, Martin Feeney, who deserted the British army in 1847 to join his family in Ireland. On his arrival to Connemara, Feeney found out that his mother had died of starvation and that his brother was hung as he stubbed a bailiff during the eviction of his family. Shortly after meeting his brother's family, he witnessed their eviction during which his nephew was shot dead and he was arrested. In the constabulary office, he defeated the officers and run away. When he went back to the roofless house of his brother, he found his sister-in-law and niece dead of hunger and cold. The rest of the film's events are about Feeney taking revenge from all those who caused harm and suffering to his family.

Feeney took revenge from the rent collector, a judge, a Protestant priest and a landlord. After Feeney's flight from the Constabulary, the task of arresting him was assigned to a snobbish British officer who was helped by an experienced Ranger, Hannah. The latter was Feeney's fellow in the war in Afghanistan.

It is worth noting that the film received funding from different institutions such as the Irish Film Board, the Council of Europe's Eurimages and the Film Fund Luxembourg. The fact that the film was produced in the context of international co-productions involving the Irish Film Board ensured that the film contributed to the globalization of the Irish identity.

THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF *BLACK'47*

Although the film is historical fiction, it has attempted to reconstruct the events of the Great Irish Famine. Though it ignored some important issues related to the Famine period, such as the Public Works scheme and the role of the Irish Poor Law in providing assistance to the paupers, it reconstructed the context of Anglo-Irish relations in the nineteenth century and referred to the major events of the Famine years.

The film undoubtedly refers to the mass evictions of the Irish paupers whose dwellings were made roofless or destroyed by the bailiffs in order to force them outside the landlords' properties. Central to *Black'47*'s story is the eviction of Feeney's family members and their subsequent death either from the cold or at the hands of the constabulary.

Historical records show that the evictions were made legal by the Quarter Acre Clause or the Gregory clause, which was introduced in 1847 by William Henry Gregory with the support of 119 members of the British Parliament⁵. During the Famine years, the clause enabled the landlords not only to evict the tenants who did not pay the rent but also to disqualify them from the relief lists. To become eligible for public assistance, the tenants holding more than

a quarter of an acre of land had to surrender their lands and dwellings to the landlords.

The staunchest supporters of clearances wanted to bring the land under culture into a more profitable system of cultivation. To this end, they wanted to enforce the consolidation of small holdings into larger farms and the conversion of tenants into labourers earning daily wages. The British Foreign Secretary, Lord Palmerston, openly declared that systematic and extensive ejections were the key elements for the required change in Ireland. He stated in a memorandum, dated 31 March 1848, that any remedial measure should preserve "*the right of ejection*"⁶. In response to the criticism that the clause might wipe out the class of smallholders of land, Gregory asserted that "*he did not see of what use such small farmers could possibly be*"⁷. He regarded the tenants as an obstacle to economic progress and called for the protection of the landlords from "*bankruptcy*" and "*extinction*"⁸.

Despite the fact that the film focused on the hostility of the English ruling class against the Irish tenants through the introduction of the system of evictions, it did not mention some politicians who defended the Irish paupers. In fact, the historical records of the time show that there were English politicians who were critical of the British governments' policies. The Radical MP for Rochdale, Sharman Crawford, for example, criticised the Quarter-Acre clause on the ground that it was introduced in the interest of the landlords and at the expense of the paupers⁹. Moreover, the nationalist MP for Cork City, W. Fagan, condemned the government's claim that the evictions of the tenants would protect them from starvation as they would be made eligible for the indoor relief in the Irish workhouses. He argued that the system of evictions and dispossessions of the paupers would endanger the already precarious living conditions of the smallholders of land:

It should be remembered that for six weeks in every year a great portion of the people of Ireland were in a state of destitution; and it had been shown that

95,000 families, consisting of about 300,000 individuals, were existing upon holdings of less than a quarter of an acre¹⁰.

Additionally, Fagan drew attention to the fact that all the landholders subject to evictions were to be made permanent applicants for relief since their residence was to be demolished after the reception of indoor assistance. Accordingly, he concluded that the system of eviction left the smallholders at the mercy of the landlords.

In *Black'47*, the scene of eviction of Feeney's family was ruthless as it provided an opportunity for the constabulary and the landlord's agent to take revenge from the family members by destroying the roof of their house and shooting Feeney's nephew in a cold-blooded way. What mattered most for the land agent was the destruction of the roof of the house in order to evict its inhabitants who were perceived as a burden on the land. Feeney's offer to pay the debts of his family was rejected.

Though the film *Black 47* did not mention the extent to which the Irish suffered in the workhouses, it made reference to one of the most stigmatising relief measures which was the soup kitchens. The latter existed under the form of public and private soup kitchens funded by religious groups or individuals. The government's scheme of soup kitchens came into operation after the introduction of the Temporary Relief Act or the Soup Kitchen Act in February 1847. The Act stipulated that soup kitchens had to be established in the poorest areas to provide free soups to the paupers¹¹. Since the scheme emphasised the principle of local responsibility, the British government's contribution to the funding of the soup kitchens was equal to the funds collected by the Local Relief Committees which were in charge of the distribution of relief at the local level.

The New Poor Law introduced a fundamental change in the financing of relief. The government wanted the expenditure on the alleviation of destitution in Ireland to fall completely upon the taxpayers. Though the cost of relief under the soup system had reduced the expenditure of the government to a minimum, the major

officials engaged in the management of Irish relief proved to be increasingly committed to the principles of political economy. The undersecretary to the Treasury, Charles Trevelyan, stated: "There is only one way in which the relief of the destitute ever has been, or ever will be, conducted consistently with the general welfare, and that is by making it a local charge"¹². At this stage, the officials of the government appeared to overestimate the resources of the Irish property and to ignore the fact that the Famine extended to the third year. To provide a rationale for the financial disengagement of the government, Trevelyan asserted that the new duties of the landlords would be restricted to the granting of relief to the really destitute¹³. However, the government decided that an exception should be made for a number of twenty-two unions along the western coast. These unions, which were declared as distressed, received external assistance as their local resources were too limited to support the paupers¹⁴.

It is worth noting that private charity played a key role in the provision of relief in 1847. In point of fact, large sums of money were collected abroad and sent to Ireland for the mitigation of destitution. One of the big private organisations which was engaged in the mitigation of destitution in Ireland was the British Relief Association. While other organisations acted independently from the government's agencies of relief, the British Relief Association operated its action through the already established Local Relief Committees. The Whig government made use of the funds of this organisation to implement the distribution of soup in the most affected localities. For example, in order to establish a soup-kitchen in Swineford and Crossmolina, which were in the county of Mayo, the Chairman of the Relief Commission proposed to the Treasury to draw on the funds of the British Relief Association¹⁵.

The Society of Friends, which established the precedent of the soup kitchens before the British government, collected funds from abroad for the purpose of providing food gratuitously to the distressed class in Ireland.

Even though many private parties from different religious denominations proved to be highly engaged in the alleviation of Irish destitution, a group of proselytisers assisted only the people who accepted to be converted to the Protestant faith. These people who offered food in return for conversion were known as soupers. A Protestant missionary group was established on Achill Island in order to convert as many people as possible. The group chose this Island because of the severity of destitution of its inhabitants. It was the intention of the proselytisers to make use of the economic situation so that they could work out their influence upon the people:

It was impossible not to appreciate the magnanimity of the poor, miserable, utterly destitute and absolutely starving inhabitants of Achill, who were at the time of our visit enduring privations at which humanity shudders, and to know that by walking a couple of miles and professing to change their religion they would have been instantly supplied with food, clothes and lodging¹⁶.

It is worth noting that the Protestant proselytising efforts were met with strong opposition among the Catholic clergy. A Catholic curate in Co. Galway, William Flannelly, described Protestant proselytism as an “impious crusade”¹⁷. He indicated that Protestantism gained grounds due to the dilapidated economic conditions. Protestant priests offered food and clothes to the “naked and starved”¹⁸ in return for changing their religion. The opposition to souperism also came from an influential member of the Protestant group in Ireland. Dr Richard Whately, the Protestant Archbishop of Dublin, highly condemned the way in which food was used as a means of converting the paupers¹⁹.

The scene of the soup kitchen in the film provided a good description of the act of souperism and its context. It showed a group of proselytisers urging the paupers to renounce to Catholicism in return for a bowl of free soup. It also showed a group of Catholics standing in front of the soup kitchen in order to prevent the paupers from accepting to be converted to Protestantism. Feeney was portrayed as an intruder who disturbed

the conversion process since the paupers were impatiently waiting for the end of the conversion ritual to be allowed to eat. Unlike the rest of Irish, Feeney broke the rules and started eating before the end of the conversion service. He also angrily threw the proselytisers outside the soup kitchen to allow paupers to eat the soup without having to be converted to Catholicism.

Additionally, the film *Black'47* made reference to the Young Ireland movement which preached violence in its opposition to the Act of Union of 1800. The film started with Hannah, an investigator at the Irish Constabulary, asking questions to one of the members of the Young Ireland movement. The scene showed the extent to which the Young Ireland members were hated by the British authorities. Being very angry at the refusal of the Young Irelander to cooperate, Hannah got carried away and strangled him to death.

It is worth noting that the Young Ireland movement was not the only nationalist group that existed in the Famine years. The key leaders of the movement withdrew from the Repeal Association of Daniel O'Connell in 1845 to found a new organisation which called for a rebellion against the English. While the Repeal Association defended the Catholic interests, the Young Ireland movement was an inclusive organisation that was able to mobilise people from different backgrounds including Catholics and Protestants²⁰.

In 1847, the Young Ireland movement leaders made significant efforts to arm the different clubs throughout the country to prepare for the rebellion of 1848. More importantly, the British government of the time was aware of the threat that Young Ireland represented. A year later, the British PM, Lord John Russell, informed the MPs in the British parliament about the extent of the Young Ireland's preparations for a rebellion. Though Russell severely condemned the preparations for a rebellion, he acknowledged the fact that the failure of the system of public charity helped the Young Irelanders to strengthen their movement:

the imperfections of which naturally belong to any plan of endeavouring by artificial means to feed those who are deprived of their ordinary subsistence-

afforded to those who were looking to the separation of Ireland from this country the means of furthering their objects, and of exciting the passions of the people against this country²¹.

Despite Russell's awareness of the need to feed the Irish paupers, he responded to the Young Ireland's preparations by presenting a bill in the parliament enabling the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland to arrest all those who were suspected of conspiring against the government and the monarch²². In fact, the interrogation of the Young Ireland member in the film reflected the atmosphere of violence which was prevalent in the Famine years. Although Hannah was jailed as he strangled to death the Young Ireland member, hazardous arrests were made legal in order to suppress the revolutionaries against the British government. The atmosphere of violence was outlined from the very start of the film as the narrator stated: "the country continued to choke under the rule of the British Empire".

The film referred to one of the highly debated issues related to the Famine years which is food exports. While trying to find Feeney, Pope, Hannah and the English private Hobson accompanied with the Irish translator Conneely went to Lord Kilmichael's estate as they reasoned that Feeney might kill the landlord who evicted his family. Kilmichael was guarded by a group of policemen headed by Sergeant Fitzgibbon.

When the starving paupers overcrowded in front of the gate of Lord Kilmichael's estate, Hobson threatened a policeman while ordering him to open the gate for them. However, his attempt to let the paupers in through the guarded gate cost him his life as he was shot dead by Fitzgibbon and the police. After that, the landlord insisted on accompanying his crop to the railway station to be shipped abroad.

Scholarly research and the archives of the period show that food exports continued at the height of the Famine. The failure of the potato crop for the third consecutive year in 1847 combined with the inadequate relief policy of the British government resulted in the

mass starvation of the Irish. Though thousands of paupers died of starvation, the British government continued to import food from Ireland. Irish exports to England fed about two million people while the Irish were left to die of starvation.

Irish contemporaries condemned the government's policy of political economy which ascribed importance to the principle of non-interference over the urgent need to feed the Irish people. John Mitchel, a political prisoner and a radical member of Young Ireland, stated in his books *Jail Journal of Five Years in British Prison and The Last Conquest of Ireland (Perhaps)* that the British government deliberately wanted to get rid of the Irish by depriving them of the agricultural produce of their country while there was an urgent need for it. He also ascribed the policy of non-interference to the fact that British politicians believed that Ireland was overpopulated. He also argued that the Famine helped the staunchest supporters of the principle of non-interference to achieve their objective of population reduction in Ireland:

But the potato blight, and consequent famine, placed in the hands of the British government an engine of State by which they were eventually enabled to clear off, not a million, but two million and a half, of the "surplus population"—to "preserve law and order" in Ireland (what they call law and order), and to maintain the "integrity of the Empire" for this time. It was in the winter of 1846-47 that proceedings began to be taken in a business-like manner—and in a business-like manner I shall relate them—for the Last Conquest of Ireland, (Perhaps).²³

The statement above shows the extent to which the Malthusian population thesis largely influenced the British politicians of the time. In Fact, Thomas Malthus argued that the unchecked population growth would inevitably lead to a Famine as food would not be available to everyone.

In *Black'47*, the conversation between the captain and the correspondent of *The Oxford Independent* in the train showed that the English blamed the backwardness of the economy and the Famine on the overdependence of the Irish on a single item of food, the

potatoes. Though the journalist ascribed the Famine to the successive crop failures, the captain stated that the Irish starved because of their overdependence on the potato crop and the fecklessness of their character. Accordingly, the film reconstructed the debate over the issue of accountability which was prevalent in the Famine years. The fact that the British politicians of the time blamed the Famine mostly on the character of the Irish people provided an excuse for inaction.

More importantly, food exports represented the main argument of nationalist historians. Cecil Woodham-Smith's book, *The Great Hunger*, was the best-seller of Irish history books in the 1990s due to the fact that it holds the British government of the time accountable for the mass mortality of the Irish. Woodham-Smith also condemns the decision of the British government to carry on the importation of food from Ireland during the Famine years:

In the long and troubled history of England and Ireland no issue has provoked so much anger or so embittered relations between the two countries as the indisputable fact that huge quantities of food were exported from Ireland to England throughout the period when the people of Ireland were dying of starvation.²⁴

Apart from criticizing the British government's decision to keep exports from Ireland, Woodham-Smith ascribes the deaths from starvation of the Irish to both the landlords and the British politicians of the time. Though she argues that the prevention of food exports could not have provided a radical solution to the Famine as the exported food items were not part of the Irish diet, she argues that the Irish could have benefitted from their homegrown food if there had been a political will for that²⁵.

Additionally, the film shed light on the hegemonic nature of Anglo-Irish relations in the nineteenth-century. Indeed, many English contemporaries viewed the Irish Celts as being inferior to the Anglo-Saxon race. Lord Kilmichael called the Gaelic "aboriginal gibberish" and stated that he dreamt of a time when the Irish people would be "as rare a sight as a Red Indian in Manhattan".

Kilmichael's attitude towards the Irish reflected the predominant prejudice against the Irish who were perceived as subhuman beings. Despite the fact that Ireland became part of the UK after signing the Act of Union in 1800, the Irish were perceived as inferior partners whose race and way of life were inferior to the Anglo-Saxon race and English way of life. The fate of the Irish in Ireland was exactly like one of the Indians in America. Both of them had a legitimate right for the land and a shared oppressor who perceived Protestantism as being superior to all forms of religious practices. Moreover, both of them were perceived as obstacles to progress.

Lord Kilmichael's hate of the Irish was echoed in the English magazines of the time such as *The Punch* whose cartoons showed an intentional portrayal of the Irish as being animal-like beings in need of the English civilising principles. The image of the Irish in *The Punch* evolved from as inoffensive peasants dependent upon alcohol to dangerous apes²⁶.

Part of the English cultural hegemony that the film exposed was the marginalization of the Irish language. In their handling of Irish affairs, English officials denied the Irish the right to speak their mother tongue. The English judge, Bolten, stated to the Irish convict that the language of the court was English. There were also other instances when the Irish paupers were asked by the English officials to speak English instead of Irish. The film also outlined the idea that the Gaelic language was associated in the 1840s with backwardness and low social status. The Irish peasants were perceived as being culturally inferior as they were unable to speak English.

The film also outlined the need for translators in the instances of communication between the English officials and the Irish. This meant that there was a divide between the central administration in London and the real conditions of Ireland. In fact, the divide led to the deterioration of the conditions in Ireland during the Famine years. While the Famine resulted in the death of a massive number of people who were buried in mass graves as it is shown in the film,

English politicians pursued their ideological objectives believing that they would undertake radical reforms in Ireland.

The Famine years had a significant impact on the Irish linguistic identity since Ireland witnessed radical changes in terms of the Gaelic Irish speaking people. While moderate statistical data provided by the economic historian Cormac O'Grada show that the number of the Irish speaking people was about three million people in the 1840s²⁷, other studies state that the same number dropped gradually in the post-famine years. It reached 19% of the Irish population a decade after the Famine and 15% in 1871²⁸. The decline in the number of the Irish speaking people could be explained by the drop of the Irish population due to the mass flight of the Irish to many destinations including the USA and Britain. The loss of Irish linguistic identity reflected the triumph of Anglo-Saxon culture which dominated all aspects of the British state at that time. The English language gradually gained grounds over the Irish language throughout the nineteenth-century.

FILM'S RECEPTION

The reception of *Black'47* reflected the response of the global viewers to the reconstruction of the Famine events in the year 1847. Given the fact that subject of the Great Irish Famine usually represented a space of ideological struggle between those who held an apologetic attitude towards the role of the British politicians of the time and those who outlined the issue of accountability by holding British politicians responsible for the mass starvation of the Irish, the response to the film was also marked by a divergence of views. Though the reception of the film represented a form of public history, it largely echoed the academic debate over the interpretation of the Irish past.

The Edinburgh head-quartered newspaper, *The Scotsman*, criticized *Black'47* on the ground that it provided a distorted version of the Irish past. It argued that the film's narrative lacked objectivity

as the tragic events of the Irish past have been used to construct a biased version of what happened. It also condemned the overuse of action at the expense of historical accuracy:

Black 47 on the other hand wants to be the Irish Braveheart. Set against the backdrop of the potato famine and featuring Australian leads and an unashamedly biased view of history, the film manages to turn human tragedy into a gnarly action film²⁹.

The fact that *The Scotsman* designated the events of the 1840s as being a “potato famine” reflected an ideological attitude towards the role of the British governments of the time. It supported the view that the Great Irish Famine was mainly caused by the failure of the potato crop while avoiding the issue of the British politicians' accountability for the loss of human life during the calamity. *The Scotsman* also took the argument of revisionist historians who dismissed the nationalist narrative as being purely subjective and populist.

Additionally, the journalist of *The Guardian*, Simran Hans, described the film *Black'47* as “a weak revenge” while claiming that its impact on the viewers was limited. She stated that the “caricatured villains lessen the impact of the film’s upward punch”³⁰. However, 55 out of the 62 online responses to her article disliked its content. Simran’s assessment of the film could be better understood in the context of *The Guardian’s* editorial line which defends the Unionists in Northern Ireland. Since the film could revive nationalist feelings and pave the ground for the spread of the New IRA, Simran gave the film 2 out of 5 stars. Two other journalists of *The Guardian*, Rory Carroll and Lisa O'Carroll, worried about the likelihood of a United Ireland. They argued that the Post-Brexit era could be marked by land grabs of Protestant owners in the style of Zimbabwe seizures. They fueled fears among the Northern Irish Unionists in order to beg the interference of the central government in London³¹.

Contrary to *The Guardian*, the North American website, *Irish Central*, held a positive response to *Black'47*. Niall O'Dowd argued

that the film informed the Irish about their own heritage and history. He also stated that the events of the 1840s in Ireland along with the British response to the calamity largely contributed to the globalized nature of the Irish identity:

It is a must-see movie for those who value their heritage and history. In that dreadful genocide was the seed of the Irish nation that would spread worldwide. By exacting such a price on starving people the British unwittingly ensured their survival as a worldwide diaspora. That is the ultimate irony³².

O'Dowd's review of the film undoubtedly showed his condemnation of the role of the British politicians of the time who were held responsible for the loss of human life. He also provided a traumatic understanding of the Great Irish Famine which is regarded as one of the major markers of the Irish American identity. Accordingly, he supported a nationalist perception of the Irish past at the core of which was the issue of the British politicians' accountability for what happened in the Famine years. O'Dowd's attitude reflected the views of the *Irish Central* visitors as the film review was shared by 7000 persons³³.

More importantly, *Black'47* brought about an academic response to the reconstruction of the Famine events. In a short article reviewing the film, Emily Mark-FitzGerald argued that *Black'47* combined "the mythic narrative of the Western genre with a nationalist revenge fantasy to satisfying, if not always sophisticated, effect"³⁴. Mark-FitzGerald also stated that the film provided an "imagined form of justice" for the "atrocities" of the Famine years. Despite the fact that Young Ireland was founded in 1845, Mark-FitzGerald argued that there was a historical inaccuracy in the film as she believed that the Young Irelanders did not resort to violence until the rebellion of 1848. She stated that the scene of interrogation of the Young Ireland member should not have been included in the film. An examination of the historical records of the time shows that since its foundation the Young Ireland movement was perceived as being radical not only by the standards of the British politicians of the time but also by the standards of Irish nationalists of the Repeal

movement of Daniel O'Connell. Accordingly, the interrogation of the Young Ireland member could fit very well in the context of 1847, which was marked by the preparations of the Young Irelanders for the rebellion a year later.

The journalist and writer Geoffrey Macnab also raised questions on the accuracy of the events presented in the film. He described the film as being an Irish revenge western exactly like Clint Eastwood films. He also stated that the film suffered from many limitations such as the fact that it did not ascribe much importance to the political struggle and economic conditions of the Famine years while focusing on "the lone avenger Feeney and his determination to mete out justice to his family's tormentors"³⁵. Instead of focusing on the different forms of injustice inflicted upon the Irish such as forced conversion to Protestantism and the continuation of food exports, the filmmaker, Macnab argued, focused on the heroic journey of Feeney³⁶.

Regardless of the way in which the film was received by journalists and film critics, Lance Daly and the film producers consulted a wide range of specialists in different fields. Daly even read several books to reach a deep understanding of the context of the 1840s:

From the time I signed on till when we started shooting, I read maybe seven or eight books on the Famine, but I also had an assistant who was reading, we had a military historian, a political historian, an art historian, and we had the Quinnipiac Famine Museum in Canada, which is the biggest visual archive - they have every newspaper cutting from the time, they've every image, all the paintings. So we had all that and I think we did everything we conceivably could. The historians have been very positive about it.³⁷

Though Daly sought to provide a historically correct account of what happened in Ireland during the Famine years, the film engaged the viewers in a debate on how the Famine period should be understood. Undoubtedly, it supported a nationalist understanding of Anglo-Irish relations which held the British government of the

time accountable for the injustice inflicted upon the Irish and the loss of human life from starvation.

Due to the fact that the film portrayed the level of injustice inflicted on the Irish during the Famine years, its reception was associated with Republican thought. One of the film's actors, Stephen Rea, stated at the Berlin premiere that the film caused a sense of shame "We all live with it. We feel a sense of shame about it"³⁸. The film certainly supported the view that the history of Anglo-Irish relations was marked by the subjugation of the Irish to the English oppressors. Though Rea was born in a Protestant family, he showed a rejection of unionism. In September 2019, he stated in an RTÉ Radio discussing Brexit that Northern Ireland should join the South instead of being part of the UK. He also showed criticism of the English role in Northern Ireland³⁹. He argued that the English never really cared about the Irish. Instead of showing a real interest in Irish affairs, he stated that English politicians only cared about the Irish votes during elections.

Undoubtedly, the film has tried to frame the public understanding of the events of the 1840s through the cultivation of a nationalist historical consciousness that defied the English narrative of Irish history. The nationalist ideological frame of the film ensured exposure of the viewers to an understanding of Anglo-Irish relations in the nineteenth-century as being a period of suffering and oppression inflicted on the Irish by the English colonisers. The film's events of evictions, the murder of those who resisted evictions, the killing of the member of the Young Ireland activist, the deprivation of the paupers of food, the dog eating the flesh of a human bone and the continuation of food exports to England under police protection while the Irish starved represented a cumulative process that sought to guide the viewer's understanding of the past and internalize the nationalist construct of historical consciousness.

Moreover, the gloomy setting of the film of starvation, suffering, barren landscape, dim light, the sight of paupers wearing rags acted as a primary framework that supported the nationalist agenda-

setting. Though Erving Goffman argued that “natural frameworks identify occurrences seen as undirected, unoriented, unanimated, unguided,” purely physical”⁴⁰, the primary framework of the film *Black’47* was ideologically driven by a nationalist agenda. All the physical surrounding suggested that the Irish were deliberately left to starve by the English. In fact, the narrator stated, at the beginning of the film, that the history of Anglo-Irish was a history of “death” and “destruction”.

Apart from the study of the significance of the film in reinforcing the nationalist narrative of the past which owes its roots to the early nationalist radicals of the 1840s such as John Mitchel, Lance Daly’s attempt to leave an alternative narrative of the same period outside the frame of the film seems to be worth studying. The focus on the scars of the past and the traumatic experience of the Irish Famine discards the revisionist narrative which attempts to forge a different understanding of the Famine years. Unlike the nationalist narrative, revisionists do not hold the British politicians of the time accountable for the mass starvation of the Irish people. They claim to provide an objective version of what happened. The frame constructed by the film director represents one of the alternative forms of understanding and remembering the tragic events of the 1840s in Ireland.

Black’47 has undoubtedly contributed to the debate on an important period in Irish history which is the Great Famine. The way in which the film director, Lance Daly, dealt with the events of 1847 reflected a Nationalist perception of the Irish past which condemned the role of the British politicians of the time. Since the film supported a Nationalist and anti-British version of the past in the post-Brexit context, it supported the Republican view of uniting the North with the South. *Black’47* as a form of public history engaged the global viewers in discovering one of the darkest chapters of Irish history which is the Great Irish Famine. It also provided an opportunity for the Irish in Ireland and abroad with a site of cinematographic memory that transcended the national

borders of Ireland and engaged the public in the process of remembering and reconstructing the history of the calamity.

NOTES

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³ *Ibid.*, 815.

⁴ David Dean, *A Companion to Public History* (USA: Wiley Blackwell, 2018), 2.

⁵ John Canon O’Rourke, *The Great Irish Famine* (Dublin: Veritas, a reprint of 1874 edition, 1989), 171.

⁶ G.P. Gooch, *The Later Correspondence of Lord John Russell 1840-1878* (London and New York: Longmans, 1925), 224.

⁷ O’Rourke, *The Great Irish Famine*, 171.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ British Parliament, *Hansard’s Parliamentary Debates, Third Series* (Vol XCVII, 9 March 1848), 338.

¹⁰ British Parliament, *Third Series* (Vol XCVII, 9 March 1848), 343.

¹¹ Mohamed Salah Harzallah, “Accountability and Administrative efficiency: The Administration of the Soup Kitchen Act in Ireland (1847)”, *The Historian* 8, no.2 (2010), 91.

¹² Charles Trevelyan, *The Irish Crisis* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, 1848), 136.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Christine Kinealy, *The Great Irish Famine* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 177. The unions officially declared *distressed* were Ballina, Ballinrobe, Bantry, Cahirciveen, Carrick-on-Shannon, Castlebar, Castlerea, Clifden, Dingle, Ennistymon, Galway, Glenties, Gort, Kenmare, Kilrush, Mohill, Roscommon, Scariff, Sligo, Swinford, Tuam, Westport.

¹⁵ Commissariat, “Sir R Routh to Mr Trevelyan”, *Correspondence Relating to the Measures Adopted for the Relief of Distress in Ireland (Commissariat Series) Second Part 1847(796), vol LII* (16 January 1847), 6.

¹⁶ Mr and Mrs Hall, *Ireland: Its Scenery and Character, Vol II* (London: How and Parsons, 1841), 43.

¹⁷ Noel Kissane, *The Irish Famine: A Documentary History* (Dublin: National Library of Ireland, 1995), 86.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Quoted in Helen E. Hatton, *The Largest Amount of Good Quaker Relief in Ireland 1654-1921* (London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), 147.

²⁰ S. J. Connolly, "The Great Famine and Irish Politics", in *The Great Irish Famine*, ed. Cathal Poiteir, (Dublin, Mercier Press, 1995), 43.

²¹ British Parliament, *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Third Series* (Vol C, 22 July 1848), 699.

²² Ibid

²³ John Mitchel, *The Last Conquest of Ireland (Perhaps)* (Glasgow: Wasbourne, 1861), 82-83.

²⁴ Cecil Woodha-Smith, *The Great Hunger* (Great Britain: Hamish Hamilton, 1962), 70.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Mohamed Salah Harzallah. "Cross-Cultural dialogue: The Case of Anglo-Irish Relations in the Victorian Period", *English Studies Series* (2010), 181.

²⁷ Cormac Ó Grada, *Black '47 and Beyond: The Great Irish Famine in History, Economy, and Memory* (Princeton University Press, 2000), 216.

²⁸ Erick Falc'Her-Poyroux, "The Great Famine in Ireland" in *La Grande Famine en Irlande 1845-1850*, ed. Yann Bévant (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Renne, 2014), 225-242.

²⁹ "Film reviews: The Wife | Redcon-1 | Black 47 | Skate Kitchen The Scotsman", *The Scotsman*, 27 September 2019, <https://www.scotsman.com/arts-and-culture/film-reviews-wife-redcon-1-black-47-skate-kitchen-572632>

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³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Emily Mark-FitzGerald, "Black'47," *History Ireland* 26, no. 3 (May /June 2018): 50

³⁵ Geoffrey Macnab, "Black '47 review: A rousing, blood-spattered drama set against the Irish famine," *Independent*, September 26, 2018, <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/films/reviews/black-47-film-review-irish-famine-barry-keogh-hugo-weaving-a8556141.html>

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Donald Clarke, “Black ’47: Brain-twitching Great Irish Famine revenge thriller,” *The Irish Times*, September 5, 2018, <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/film/black-47-brain-twitching-great-irish-famine-revenge-thriller-1.3618023>

³⁹ Mairead Holland, “Belfast-born actor Stephen Rea 'would like to see north joining the Republic,’” *The Irish News*, September 9, 2019, <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2019/09/09/news/belfast-born-actor-would-like-to-see-north-joining-the-republic--1706875/>

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IN THE BEGINNING WAS VIOLENCE:
NOTES TOWARD AN EARLY SOVIET GOVERNMENTALITY

Lasha Matiashvili

Associate Professor,
Free University of Tbilisi,
Georgia

lasha.matiashvili@gmail.com

Abstract. In this article, I will address the following theoretical and historical problems. I would assume that Lenin, during the pre-revolutionary period, thought that \ violence was necessary for seizing the state power but later on, after taking it, his utopian ideals about the temporal exercise of violence has been disappeared. Lenin's idea about the necessary and temporal application of violence as an element of revolutionary constituent power was far from realization because, in his first decrees, he attempted to vindicate the terror and violence within the legal body of the state. One of the most provocative hypotheses would be that Carl Schmitt, despite his negative attitude towards both liberalism and bolshevism could have been the perfect theoretical ally for Lenin. Lenin's dream about the abolition of violence and the state has become fiction in itself. If there is certain parallelism or convergence between the messianic deactivation of the law and the revolutionary effacement of the old order, one has to ask the question "What kind of law can be installed and exercised in the post-revolutionary state?" "What becomes the law after the revolutionary fulfilment and how is it possible to conceive the law without the state?" In addition, in the second part of the article, I will argue that Lenin's political strategy was a certain form of Foucault's theory of the governmental paradigm of power and, in fact, this was the foundation of the Soviet biopolitical machine.

Keywords: violence, state, governmentality, revolution, Carl Schmitt, Lenin

REVOLUTION AS THE GREAT SEPARATION

The Soviet Union was a realization of utopia, the accomplishment of the Marxian dream, who could say if he were witnessed the revolution that it would be the final stage of historical development,

the end of history and the beginning of the post-historical era. Marx was wrong about history. There is no universal and necessary chain of events in it, and rather it is the horizon of pure contingencies, unintended and unforeseen consequences, where everything could happen. The triad of the divine nexus of God, man and the world has been replaced by another trinity, not the Christian one, but by revolution, state and the new man.

The early church historian and exegete, Eusebius of Caesarea, thought that the time before Christ was a preparation for the gospel¹. The Messianic event radically transformed the sense of the Judaic law for the fellows of Christ. The coming of the Messiah, his self-donation and accomplishment of the history of redemption already happened in Christianity, while in Judaism the arrival of a Messiah is always projected onto the future. However, the hope for the final redemption and expectation of the Messiah is still the same in both religions. One is waiting for the second coming of the Redeemer, another still anticipates His first and ultimate arrival. Anyway, the post-messianic world signifies the radical renewal and break-up with past. The revolution, too, despite its violence, marks the new beginning and radical overcoming of an old social and political order. The XXth century was the century of revolutions and the time span of the dark kingdom of the Soviet Union, which lays between the two revolutions: the October revolution of 1917 was the foundation and the beginning of that darkness, while in 1989 the so-called “velvet revolutions” broke that hermetic totalitarian world, after which the former Soviet Republics, especially in Caucasus region, have been engulfed by conflicts, chaos, internal political struggles and by civil wars. The post-Soviet era was the collapse of the order, which was based on the coercive and violent governmental machine of the Red State. Like all revolutions, the socialistic revolution of the proletariat could not be possible without radical transformations, first of all, within the complex set of ideas. Marx conceived history in teleological form as a necessary and gradual development towards the end, which ultimately should have to culminate in a classless communist society.

There is nothing new in this project because it repeats an eschatological logic of Christian theology. Karl Löwith, somewhat in Schmittian way, suggests that an idea of progress is the secularized version of eschatology². The progress does not necessarily lead towards the redeemed world, devoid from any oppression, coercion and social injustices, rather, if it is a secularized form of eschatology, it ushers us into the apocalyptic end. The real history does not start with the October revolution, as Marx anticipated it, rather it signals towards the end of history, or some kind of plethora of time, its fullness and excess. However, the end of time did not come abruptly, during the very first moments of the post-revolutionary world, when there was a time before the end. This end was deferred as the Jewish hope for Messianic arrival on earth; however, this end was much near. The post-revolutionary time was contracted, here and now, without future but for the future. The Russian poet Aleksandr Blok, in his poem “The Twelve”, expressed the radical spirit of revolution, full with the call for violence, blood and world fire in which old bourgeoisie has to be wrapped:

To smoke the nobs out of their holes
we'll light a fire through all the world,
a bloody fire through all the world
Lord, bless our souls (Synyavsky 1990, 4).³

Here, for Blok, the success of revolution is impossible without god's blessing, therefore, radical political transformation through violent collective action still needs to rely on God, who is no longer remote and transcendent, but became an immanent and latent force of revolution. That revolution developed into the state of exception for God, where his power has been debased. For Carl Schmitt, in the state of exception, the sovereign decision replaces the norm⁴, same happened to post-revolutionary God, who was suspended and replaced by the mortal figure of a secularized god, like the place of divine providence has been taken by the party. The Russian

dissident novelist and scholar, Andrei Sinyavsky, grasping this secret alliance between religion and revolutionary spirit wrote:

“All Power to the Soviets!" "Land to the Peasants!" "Peace to the Peoples!" Scanning these truly great slogans, however, one can see that they are mostly biblical and evangelical formulas transposed into the revolutionary vernacular. Minus the name of God, but in the name of man who will become God (Sinyavsky 1990, 5).

The spirit of revolution promising an absolute break with the past, exemption from the oppressed social condition and the realization of heaven-like political and economic order, repeated an apocalyptic narrative of the Bible, claiming the total renewal and the new beginning. Let me compare the famous biblical promise of Matthew that “so the last will be first and the first will be last” (Matthew 20:16) with communist liturgical acclamation:

No more tradition's chains shall bind us,
Arise, ye slaves, no more in thrall!
The earth shall rise on new foundations,
We have been nought, we shall be all! (Sinyavsky 1990, 5).

This verse demonstrates the transient rhythm of reversals when the old order is directly associated with violence, which has to be eradicated by revolution and, then, a new world has to be built. This enthusiastic dictum repeating biblical narrative realized later in the Soviet Union, when, who was nothing became everything. When Walter Benjamin analyzed capitalism in terms of religion, the same could have been done to communism which, despite the refutation and attack on religion, bore all characteristics of it.

VIOLENCE BETWEEN REVOLUTION AND THE STATE

The Revolution is a violent act steeped in blood. Soviet red mythology started with violence. The revolutionary violence, as a constitutive power, laid the foundation of the red state which transformed and maintained itself in the form of constituted power. For this purpose, it has to unremittingly reactivate and reproduce its

initial founding act. Walter Benjamin in his essay “Zur Kritik der Gewalt,” differentiated two forms of violence: mythical and divine, or pure violence. Mythical violence can be described by its relation to natural or positive law, in the context of means and ends, whereas divine violence is absolute self-manifestation and exists outside of the juridical system. Benjamin argues that the divine is not lawmaking or law-preserving violence, but it just deposes the law (Entzetzung des Rechts)⁵. In the sphere of a profane order, it has a revolutionary force or revolution itself is the embodiment of the pure form of violence.

The French philosopher Jacque Derrida thought, about that mysterious text of Benjamin, that these two forms of violence are genuinely contaminated with each other. Constituent violence is not a singular event. By achieving the desired goal, it does not cease to function, rather it is maintained and represented in the body of constituted power. Law-making violence keeps itself as a remnant or potentiality in the legal system, which was created by it. The pure violence disguised itself in the state monopoly, which is the only legal representation of it. Something that had no legal form continues its existence in the body of law. However, as potentiality, it keeps and maintains its own primordial extra-judicial form. This kind of violence is, at the same time, inside and outside the legal structure. In addition, it seems like to be that Law is a pre-condition of phenomena, which turns out to be an existential threat or destructive force for it. It bears in itself the self-destructive element.

Having begun by distinguishing between two sorts of violence, founding violence and preserving violence, Benjamin must concede at one moment that the one cannot be so radically heterogeneous to the other since the violence called the founding violence is sometimes “represented”, and necessarily repeated, in the strong sense of that word, by the preserving violence (Derrida 2002, 260).

As Derrida suggests, Benjamin’s text has a specific character. It is auto-hetero-deconstructive. It operates within the double strategy of externality and internality, meaning that Benjamin himself revised and reexamined the possibilities and conditions of his thought.

Considering Benjamin's thinking style through deconstructive lenses, he turns out to be like a Pharmakon, with its ambivalence and oscillations between Marxism at one hand and Jewish mysticism at another. What is the purity of violence, what does it mean, purity in itself? In the letter to Ernst Schoen Benjamin explained his own understanding of purity. It is noteworthy that this letter was written in 1919, before two years of the "critique of violence". Benjamin writes:

The purity of essence is never unconditional or absolute: it is always the subject to a condition. This condition varies according to the essence whose purity is at issue; but this condition never inheres in the essence itself. In other words, the purity of every (finite) essence is not dependent on it (Agamben 2005, 61).

In the case of pure violence, what has to be its condition if purity is not self-sufficient and autonomous and has only a predicative force which, in turn, needs some ground or condition? Purity is always contaminated because it needs something external, something that can determine it. However, if purity is conditional, therefore it is not purity at all. Agamben evokes the words of Benjamin from an essay on Kraus that "at the origin of creature does not stand purity (*Reinheit*) but purification (*Reinigung*)" (Agamben 2005, 61). Agamben proceeds and says that "the difference between pure violence and mythic-juridical does not lie in the violence itself, but in its relation to something external" (Agamben 2005, 61).

What can be the precondition of purity of violence, something that is external for it? Maybe the Law? At the origin of the new creature, whose name is Leviathan, is the revolution as a purification. What does it purify? The old regime, from the revolutionary perspective, did not have the right to be named as the sacred; rather it was overloaded with sins, without any hope and chance for repentance. Thus, at the beginning of the new monster stands the messianic force of revolution with its bloody violence, aiming at radical transformation and purification of life. However, the purification of an old, the undesired order and system of values

does not mean a radical break with it. The purified body continues its existence in a different, now purified form. One oppressive total state has been violently replaced by another, which, in contrast to the former, has an ambition of universal emancipatory revolution. In this context, one has to read the call for the unification from the end of *The Communist Manifesto* - “Workingmen of all countries unite” (Marx and Engels 1988, 243), which later on became an official motto of the Soviets. This unity, the promised heaven on earth, was not based on common blood or on the idea of nationhood but rather on a quasi-cosmopolitan dream about the universal proletarian solidarity. Carl Schmitt, during the Weimar Republic, in the same 1921 year, when Walter Benjamin published his “Critique of Violence”, wrote the book about “Dictatorship”, in which he made the distinction between the commissary and sovereign dictatorship and one year later, published his “political theology” which, according to Giorgio Agamben’s assumption, was a response to Benjamin’s critique of violence. It may sound bizarre, but Schmitt, despite his scorn of both, liberalism and bolshevism, could have been a perfect theoretical ally of Lenin. Now, first, let me discuss Lenin’s views about the state, violence and dictatorship and then explicate the strange familiarity of his ideas with Carl Schmitt, for whom the commissary dictatorship was a temporal technique of governmental functioning as a mean for restoring and reestablishing the suspended order. However, I think that Lenin’s ideas about dictatorship are structurally similar not to Schmitt’s commissary dictatorship but to its sovereign counterpart. In his “Contribution to the History of Dictatorship”, Lenin wrote:

The organs of authority that we have described represented a dictatorship in embryo, for they recognized no other authority, no law and no standards, no matter by whom established. Authority—unlimited, outside the law, and based on force in the most direct sense of the word—is dictatorship...The scientific term ‘dictatorship’ means nothing more nor less than authority untrammelled by any laws, absolutely unrestricted by any rules whatever, and based directly on force (Lenin 2012 351, 353).

The sense of Schmitt's commissary dictatorship is nearly the same, but as I have mentioned above, the conception of sovereign power is almost identical to the dictatorship described by Lenin. Commissary dictatorship suspends the constitution for the sake of its protection. Temporal suspension of constitutional order does not mean its final abolition, in contrast to its sovereign counterpart, which constitutes the zero degree of constitutional order, that is to say, the vacuum of the law for creating the possibility for the constitution still to come. According to Schmitt, the commissary dictatorship can be defined as follows:

In practice [in concreto] the commissary dictatorship suspends the constitution in order to protect it – the very same one – in its concrete form. The argument has been repeated ever since – first and foremost by Abraham Lincoln: when the body of the constitution is under threat, it must be safeguarded through a temporary suspension of the constitution. Dictatorship protects a specific constitution against an attack that threatens to abolish this constitution (Schmitt 2014, 118).

Sovereign dictatorship does not exercise its power with the right given to him by the constitution; rather, deciding on the state of exception, eliminates it. Commissary dictatorship cannot last permanently; it acts temporarily within the framework of an already existing constitution, as the technical governmental instrument provided by the constituted power itself. For Schmitt, “the dictatorship cannot be a regular office; and it cannot be a *munus perpetuum* [permanent office], either” (Schmitt 2014, 31). In contrast to commissary dictatorship, sovereign dictatorship holds an absolute and unrestricted constituent power over the law; it abolishes the old order for creating the new one. Sovereign dictatorship is the typical form of government in a post-revolutionary period when the new political body deliberately creates anomic conditions not for the reorganization, but for establishing the new order. Therefore, revolutionary power is law establishing, aiming at the radical renewal of the world and the eradication of the State, as Lenin deemed it. If Frederick Engels in

his “Anti-Dühring” thought that socialism established through revolution is “humanity’s leap from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom” (Engels 1975, 270), Lenin, in contrast to the figure of his theoretical and practical inspiration, demonstrated that the much-awaited revolution does not bring freedom. Instead, it ushers the agents of that historical process into the unrestricted field of violence, which has been practised by State government out of the name of proletariat dictatorship. Someone may argue that Post-revolutionary violence was the temporal measure after which all revolutionary ideals could be realized. However, the Soviet power itself was violent. The entire governmental body of the state exercised unrestrictedly violence over their opponents and without juridical procedures. The right for self-defence against accusations was abolished and, in that situation, perpetrators slaughtered a myriad of victims. Lenin, in 1922, in the letter written to the minister of justice Kursky, shared his plans on the legalization of terror and violence. “Jurisprudence must not eliminate terror; to promise this would be to deceive oneself or to deceive others. It must vindicate and legalize it”. (Sinyavsky 1990, 63).

Revolutionary violence did not have the legal form as it was constituent power. However, as Derrida suggested, it has to live in an already constituted power. Therefore, violence, which was outside of the law, became inseparable or undistinguished from it. The inclusion of violence into the juridical order, as Giorgio Agamben interpreted it, was also the main battlefield between Walter Benjamin and Carl Schmitt: “While Schmitt attempts every time to reinscribe violence within a juridical context, Benjamin responds to this gesture by seeking every time to assure it—as pure violence—an existence outside of the law” (Agamben 2005, 59).

According to Andrey Sinyavsky, Lenin, during the pre-revolutionary period, thought that violence was necessary for seizing the state power, but later on, after taking it, his utopian ideals about the temporal exercise of violence has been disappeared. Lenin, in *State and Revolution*, following his utopian predisposition wrote: “The proletarian state will begin to wither away immediately after its

victory because the state is unnecessary and cannot exist in a society in which there are no class antagonisms” (Lenin 2014, 65).

However, as I have already stressed, his dream about the abolition of violence and the state has become fiction itself. If there is certain parallelism or convergence between the messianic deactivation of the law and revolutionary effacement of the old order, one has to ask the question “What kind of law can be installed and exercised in the post-revolutionary state?” Giorgio Agamben, in his remarkable contribution in the debate of Benjamin and Schmitt, asks a similar question: “And what becomes the law in a society without classes”? (Agamben 2005, 63). In this context, Lenin’s discourse anti-state reverberates. What becomes the law after the revolutionary fulfilment and how is it possible to conceive the law without the state? Here, again, I have to recall Carl Schmitt, who defines an essence of sovereignty through the concept of “decision” on the state of exception⁶. The sovereign, in the state of exception, suspends the force of law and stands above the legal order. The paradox of sovereignty consists in this strange interdependence of the law and decision because the sovereign decides on the state of exception due to the right giving to him by the constitution. What is this paradox? The legal order contains the self-destructive element, which can be reactivated by sovereign decision. The state of exception, according to the constitutional theorist Clinton Rossiter, can be finally reduced to two categories-*temporality* and *necessity*⁷. However, in Schmitt’s version, the God-like sovereign, who transcends the law and, at the same time, is included in it in the state of exception, replaces the norm by his decision. The theo-political image of one of the founding fathers of the Soviet Union is similar to Schmitt’s conception of the sovereign, who renders the law inoperative and unleashes violence. In the Soviet Union, the state of exception became the rule in which even the constitution was the representation of sovereign decision. As I have already underlined, Lenin wanted to reincorporate terror and violence in legislature, while Walter Benjamin aimed at the critique and deposition of state violence⁸. Benjamin shows that the law is

not alternative to violence; rather the state apparatus exerts its violence through the legal state organizations. One can interpret the role of the police in Benjamin's essay as having the structure of the Platonic *khora*, the so-called *third genus* (*triton genus*), which aporetically takes the part in the intelligible world of ideas as well as in the sensuous world of shadows. Police, like the *khora*, occupies the middle position between the law-making and law-preserving violence. Here's what Judith Butler wrote about the ambivalence of military power:

The fact that the military is the example of an institution that both makes and preserves law suggests that it provides a model for understanding the internal link between these two forms of violence. For a law to be preserved is for its binding status to be reasserted. That reassertion binds the law again and so repeats the founding act in a regulated way... This site of law's collapse would be the military, since the military seems to be the institution that is exemplary at once of preserving and enforcing law and thus the site where law might be arrested, cease to work, even become subject to destruction (Butler 2012, 72).

Benjamin's divine violence seems to be the messianic event abolishing the dialectics of mythical violence. Judith Butler, commenting upon Derrida's trenchant reading of the *Critique of Violence*, wrote that Derrida thought about Benjamin's text as a stimulus or wave against *anti-parliamentarian democracy* (Butler 2012, 77), which could not anticipate the same tendency in Fascism. Hannah Arendt also made some critical remarks about Benjamin's conception of divine violence. She thought that Benjamin underestimated the positive function of law as a binding force of the community. According to Butler: "She maintains that he failed to understand that the founding of a state can and should be an uncoerced beginning and, in that sense, nonviolent in its origins" (Butler 2012, 77).

Therefore, if we go back to our initial intention to find the common ground of two radically different thinkers, it turns out to be that Benjamin conceived the extra-judicial divine violence as a

revolutionary messianic power, which allies him with Lenin's conception of necessary and temporal violence during the revolutionary time. Within the context of mythical violence, this line of arguments seems to be similar to Lenin's effort to incorporate and legalize violence. Andrey Sinyavsky thought that Soviet power, as it was conceived at the beginning of the revolutionary movement, has become fiction:

Since it wasn't the soviets - the elected councils- that were running the country but the Party apparatus, gone the way of unlimited violence. So far, in fact, that Lenin's socialism was nothing other than a dictatorship plus technology (Sinyavsky 1990, 64).

The Communist party was something like divine community undertaking the governmental function of the state. The party was an all-encompassing body and there was nothing above it. The member of the party had to sacrifice himself for the commands of the party, which demanded unconditional loyalty and obedience. Giorgio Agamben, by distinguishing *Bios* as politically qualified life and *Zoe*⁹ - which is the life common for every creature, including the human being, did not examine the totalitarian ruling organization. *Zoe* or bare life represents the zero degree of the legal order, in which there is not legally guaranteed protection and the concept of human rights is absent. Exclusion from the party would signify transmission from *bios* to *Zoe*, in which life became desacralized and exposed to the threat of existential negation. The life outside of party means to live like an archaic figure of Roman Law - *Homo Sacer* - who was excluded from the bios and whose life was reduced to the bare life of *Zoe*, in which everyone could kill him without the fear of punishment¹⁰. In the Soviet configuration of power, those excluded from or just living outside of the party can be treated like *Homo Sacer*, whose production was dependent on the decision of the Soviet sovereign. However, at first glance, sacred remoteness and the transcendence of the party are delusional because it was not a homogenous, autonomic and egalitarian structure of governmental apparatus. The disenchantment of the world proclaimed by Max

Weber partially took place in the Soviet Union. The demythologization of the world and establishing the rational order fell under the spell of a new mythology. Violence was an intrinsic operative strategy for subjugation and control of the population. Without it, Lenin would not be able to find the place for socialism.

THE COUNTERREVOLUTIONARY SMILE AND THE SPIRIT OF GOVERNMENTAL UNFREEDOM

An early Soviet governmental power for preventing resistance and counterrevolutionary movements took absolute control over the public sphere which, eventually, has been turned into a chimaera. Zygmunt Baumann, in one of his lectures¹¹ regarding privacy and publicity, said that during the totalitarian regime, people were dreaming on publicity, while today, in the world of global capitalism and quasi-transparency of social and political institutions, we are dreaming about our own privacy, as someone constantly watches over us. The centre of power is empty as if we are the prisoners of a panoptic prison, who does not know whether someone watches upon us or not. Michel Foucault wrote that inmate of the prison is always an object of information and never the subject of communication. It was typical for the Soviet governmental logic aiming at the total control of people through surveillance and extracting *suspicious* information from them. However, Baumann's analysis is one-sided, because during an entire period of the Soviet dictatorship, apart from the removal of the open spheres of public interaction, private life too existed autonomously only at some degree. The freedom of both, public and private spheres, hinges on the fundamental assumption of individual human rights and private property, which the Soviet authorities eliminated. On October 27, 1917, Lenin – at that time Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars - issued a special decree for the closing of the bourgeois' newspapers, blaming them of preparing a counterrevolution.

Everyone knows that the bourgeois press is one of the most powerful weapons of the bourgeoisie. Especially at the crucial moment when the new power, the power of workers and peasants, is only affirming itself, it was impossible to leave this weapon wholly in the hands of the enemy, for in such moments it is no less dangerous than bombs and machine-guns... As soon as the new order becomes consolidated, all administrative pressure on the press will be terminated and it will be granted complete freedom within the bounds of legal responsibility, in keeping with a law that will be broadest and most progressive in this respect... The present ordinance is of a temporary nature and will be repealed by a special decree as soon as normal conditions of social life set in (Matthews 1989, 130-131).

Here, the ideological battle exhibits itself in its pure form. It is not enough to control an editorial board and the content of the bourgeois newspapers. Instead of editing the written text, the easiest way to solve the problem is to take control over the means of mass information. But this control implies its total annihilation. This decree was the first practical sign of the totalitarian regime in which the reduction of complexities and the creation of homogenous, docile society was the main goal. The Newspaper was for Lenin a more dangerous weapon than the real guns and bombs because the new order could not be established, primarily, without the creation of *Homo Sovieticus*. This anthropological experiment was for controlling and transforming attitudes and for reducing the possibilities of getting alternative information. It took the form of the monotheistic religion, in which one has to acknowledge and worship the transcendent God and believe the stories written in Holy Scriptures. The Soviet people had to read and believe in the only party-controlled newspapers. The most important in this decree is the reference to the *necessity* and *temporality* of these strict measures, which had to be cancelled after the founding of the normal social life. It is obvious that post-revolutionary Soviet social and political reality was far from normal, as well as decades following it. Michel Foucault would argue against that usage of the

term “normal”. Who defines normality? Only those in powers occupying the privileged positions on the top draw the line between normality and abnormality. The Soviet conception of normality was not a contingent theoretical formation; rather, this kind of normality meant the removal of differences and the construction of the homogeneous society. From this perspective, the revolution was the watershed between abnormal bourgeois past and the normal socialistic future. If temporality and necessity are inherent characteristics of the state of exception, yearly days of the newborn Soviet State was an exceptional situation, which has been prolonged until the very last moment of its existence. Here, again, in this decree, there is a strange interconnection of law and freedom. In the state of exception as a zero degree of law, there is a certain order, but this order does not have any connection with the law because it was an old one, now suspended. The post-revolutionary state of exception is the womb of the new law. Carl Schmitt aporetically formulated: “Because the state of exception is always something different from anarchy and chaos, in a juridical sense, an order still exists in it, even if it is not a juridical order” (Agamben 2005, 33).

How is it possible to assume “in a juridical sense” that in the state of exception there is an order, which is not juridical? Lenin, in his decree, skillfully eliminated the freedom of the press. The temporal suppression of “suspicious” newspapers corresponds to the state of exception which, after constituting the new law, will be inscribed in it. Lenin creates an illusion of “complete freedom”. In reality, it may sound weird, but the promised restoration of freedom was allowed only within the ultimate prohibition of it. It is obvious that Lenin did not intend to give back the most dangerous weapon in the hands of the enemy. It was freedom within the boundaries of “progressive” law. It was freedom without freedom, without choice and alternatives. Carl Schmitt’s sovereign deciding on the state of exception is identical to God, it functions analogous to him, but within the confines of time. The law is the weapon of the sovereign, who has become undistinguished from his decisions. Walter Benjamin, in his work *On the Concept of History*, wrote: “The tradition

of the oppressed teaches us that the "state of emergency" in which we live is not the exception but the rule". (Benjamin 2006, 392). The state of exception as the condition of anomie and the zero degrees of law became the rule. To put it differently, in the figure of the sovereign, in that case, Lenin, the state of exception is the rule and the rule is the state of exception.

It has always been a certain apparatus which stood outside society and consisted of a group of people engaged solely, or almost solely, or mainly, in ruling. People are divided into the ruled, and into specialists in the ruling, those who rise above society and are called rulers, statesmen (Lenin 1965, 477-478).

After reading this passage through Foucauldian lenses, the state would appear as a particular form of the art of government, which separates itself with its bureaucratic machinery from the entire society, as if it is a sacred community of governors standing above the people. Nothing remains from the idea of "proletarian democracy", which promised equality and eradication of coercion. This dialectics of equality and freedom leads towards the standstill, out of which there is no chance to constitute the balanced social order with maximum freedom and less inequality. The ideal social organization of utopic spirit of the Soviet ideology had to be the complete equality of all. In a society without private property and individual liberty, where the State owns absolutely everything, freedom could not exist. There was not a dialectical dilemma of equality and freedom, rather monopolization of state power by the sovereign, who planted the seeds of the red terror and made this vast land unlivable. There is a genuine and inevitable fracture within the governmental structure and the technique of Soviet power. The impossibility of proletarian democracy, as weird these words may sound, lies in the need of a master, whose main function would have been the management of the population. The revolutionary dream about the demise of the coercive power of Tsar (sovereign) and establishing classless society turned into a disguised form of slavery. Michel Foucault linked the birth of biopolitics to the paradigm of the pastorate, who takes care of the souls of individuals. Lenin was

a pastor, or something like *deus absconditus*, who governed the Soviet world like God, through constituting universal divine laws of providence. In this case, the theological concepts of *ordinatio* and *executio*¹² have been replaced by Lenin's decrees. Revolutionary hope for self-regulating and self-determining Soviet society turned out to be the new form of serfdom. In the Soviet Union, there was no place for an autonomous subject, with its hopes and dreams, anxiety and sorrow, who could have decided on his own. Autonomous subjects were a huge threat for the creators and governors of the red state. Instead of that conceptual remnant of the bourgeois world, there were only subjugated people. Neglecting freedom in favour of equality brings forth the delusive and quasi-egalitarian social order, out of which the "the group of people", specialized in the art of governing, detached themselves from the society.

These two notions can be mutually exclusive: in a society where all men are equal, freedom isn't possible. Because freedom elevates certain people over others and allows for differences between them. But equality without freedom makes everyone the same (Sinyavsky 1990, 78-79).

Michel Foucault, investigating the genealogy of governmentality, made an unusual point regarding the strategic importance of freedom for the state apparatus or sovereign. The governmental matrix of power activates itself by creating the delusional sense of freedom as a horizon of multiple potentialities. Why the governmental body needs freedom, which turns out to be just an illusion of it? Power cannot realize itself as a coercive and punitive instrument without making room for freedom, but this is not the pure and ideal form of even positively defined freedom because it is already set up in the context of the governmental plan. So, one is free to some extent within the limits of governmental providence. This is a transcendental illusion of freedom as if one's freedom of speech, expression and choice of alternative strategies of action is ultimately assumed. Without making this delusional impression of freedom, governmental power would remain idle. Such freedom is

necessary for totalizing unfreedom and the effective management and control of the population.

This explains, finally, the insertion of freedom within governmentality, not only as the right of individuals legitimately opposed to the power, usurpations, and abuses of the sovereign or the government, but as an element that has become indispensable to governmentality itself...The integration of freedom, and the specific limits to this freedom within the field of governmental practice has now become an imperative (Foucault 2007, 353).

I do not think that Foucault's original thesis about freedom is relevant for the early Soviet dictatorship. The existential category of subjective freedom could not find its realization in objective social unfreedom. Lenin's governmental apparatus did not make even an illusion of minimal freedom for making itself operative punitive power. In the wake of the October revolution, on December 7, 1917, Lenin created the special governmental structure known as *Cheka* for coping with possible counterrevolutionary threats. The main function of this special police force was the detection and prevention of potentially dangerous organizations. Living under the constant fear of being blamed as a suspicious counterrevolutionary person may have produced a self-regulatory mechanism of action and social prudence. The old Cartesian formula of *cogito ergo sum* has been replaced by *incognito ergo sum*. Self-concealment is the justification of one's existence. This fundamental desire of withdrawal from the outer space of appearance into the unobservable and uncontrolled inward dimension of existence constitutes the figure of contracted and oppressed subjectivity. Living in this self-contraction, in the mode of *as if*, reveals the genuine fracture within the subject itself. People, reduced to what Giorgio Agamben calls the bare life, ought to control even their facial expressions in order to reproduce the biological life, undistinguished from creaturely life. Andrey Sinyavsky recalled a popular anecdote at that time:

There's more than a grain of truth in the old expression that so-and-so was

arrested or shot because he "smiled counterrevolutionary." The merest hint of scepticism, of doubt, of irony, of humour, had become a crime (Sinyavsky 1990, 74).

The Soviet regime installed such a strong sense of fear that one had to measure every action in advance. Usual, daily routine and interactions became dangerous. This all-mighty state power, controlling every aspect of public life, including mass means of communication, surprisingly allowed a few ideologically suspicious authors to publish. The historian of Soviet Union, Peter Kenez, underlined that alleged weakness of yearly Soviet government and, on this basis, explained the leak in the public press of texts of undesired authors:

During the beginning stages of NEP, authors such as D. S. Merezhkovskii, N. A. Berdiaev, S. L. Frank and V. Loskii were published in Soviet Russia. In retrospect, it is clear, however, that such liberalism was born of weakness and an inability to control rather than any respect for freedom of speech (Kenez 2006, 70).

The inability of control is itself weakness; however, this gave the chance to these authors to publish their texts. Such kind of exceptions took place during the last years of Lenin's life, while in the Stalinist era publishing something without matching the standards of socialistic realism could not be possible without subsequent sanctions. As a result, all four authors (Merezhkovskii, Berdiaev, Frank and Loskii) ended their lives in migration. This era, following the interregnum after Lenin's death, was the age of unprecedented crime and the total editing of the new communist world, with the main editor in chief, Joseph Stalin.

NOTES

¹ See: Eusebius of Caesarea: *Praeparatio Evangelica* (The Preparation of the Gospel), Translated by E. H. Gifford (1903)

² See: Karl Löwith, *Meaning in History*, Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 1949. P; 2.

³ «Мы на горе всем буржуям/Мировой пожар раздуем, /Мировой пожар в крови — Господи, благослови”. I quote Aleksandr Blok’s “The Twelve” from the following source: Андрей Синявский, Основы Советской Цивилизации, Издательство «Аграф». 2001. P. 9. In addition, rely on its English translation indicated in references.

⁴ See: Schmitt Carl, *Politische Theologie: Vier kapitel zur Lehre von der Souveränität*. Berlin: Duncker & Humblot. 2009.

⁵ See: Agamben Giorgio, *State of Exception*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 2005.

⁶ For Schmitt “Souverän ist, wer über den Ausnahmezustand entscheidet (Schmitt 2009, 13).

⁷ I am relying upon Giorgio Agamben’s discussion of this theory in his “state of exception”.

⁸ See: Benjamin W. *Gesammelte Schriften. II.I. Zur Kritik der Gewalt*, Frankfurt am Main. Suhrkamp. 1991

⁹ See: Agamben G. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Stanford California: Stanford University Press. 1998

¹⁰ See: Agamben G. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Stanford California: Stanford University Press. 1998

¹¹ Zygmunt Bauman, “From Privacy to Publicity: the changing mode of being-in-the-world”.

¹² Discussion of executio (execution) and ordinatio (ordaring) within the context of theological genealogy of power in Giorgio Agamben’s philosophy can be found in following source: Matiashvili, Lasha. 2018. “The Mystery of Power in the Philosophy of Giorgio Agamben”. *Brolly* 1 (2), 56.

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EMPOWERING SILENCE:
THE OTHER'S AGENCY AS A SITE OF RESISTANCE IN
J. M. COETZEE'S EARLY FICTION

Kamel Abdaoui

English Department,
Faculty of Arts and Humanities,
University of Sousse,
Tunisia

kamal.38@hotmail.com

Abstract. This paper examines the problem of *the Other's agency* as a space of tension and contention between, on the one hand, a dominant discourse that tends to subjugate the Other's voice through either modulation or obliteration and, on the other, silence as a strategy of resistance to the hegemonic discourse of apartheid in J. M. Coetzee's early novels. The authority's stratagem of using violence, whether it be corporeal or discursive, to coerce its (ex)colonial subjects to speak, confess, and even consent to the authorized versions of truth is impugned by the Other's provocative reticence to communicate with the Self. To achieve its autonomy in the face of such a totalizing authority, which relentlessly seeks to suppress any disrupt voice of alterity, the Other resorts to silence as an act of evasion and possibly liberation. The speechlessness of the Other in Coetzee's early novels, then, is not presented as a mere act of relinquishment the agency; it is rather eloquently staged as an aporetic state of incommensurability that disarticulates colonial and imperialist modes of representation tending to normalize and assimilate the colonized within its cognitive framework.

Keywords: (post)-colonial discourse, silence, resistance, otherness, agency, hegemony, incommensurability

Discourses are not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it, any more than silences are [...]. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it. In like manner, silence and secrecy are a shelter for power, anchoring its prohibitions; but they also loosen its holds and provide for relatively obscure areas of tolerance.

(Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* 100-101)

INTRODUCTION

In most of his early fiction, Coetzee advocates silence as an act of resistance to the “epistemic violence”²¹ of colonial language. The Other’s silence, in this regard, could be seen not so much a prone or lethargic response to persecution as it is an unspoken but audacious articulation of dissension. Instead of creating a counterforce by investing the Other with a voice to challenge the Self, Coetzee deliberately imposes silence on some of his characters to contravene the hegemonic mechanisms of representation underpinning the discourse of apartheid. Presented as victims of persecution in his fiction, Friday in *Foe*, the barbarian girl in *Waiting for the Barbarians*, and Mrs Curren in *Age of Iron*, inhabit marginal and ambiguous spaces where the employment of language with its intricate ideological affiliations is actually an unavailing and unproductive contestation of power over agency. Those characters voluntarily, or sometimes involuntarily, refuse to be dragged into any communicative grid that would only accentuate and aggravate their position as an oppressed Other against whom the Self attempts to inscribe its narrative of power and dominion.

Drawing on Foucauldian poststructuralist conception of silence as a counterpart to coercive discourse(s), as the above epigraph suggests, this paper argues that since the Other’s agency is framed by power structures encapsulated in dominant discourse(s), most of the figures of alterity in J. M. Coetzee’s early fiction recourse to speechlessness as a strategy of resistance to and subversion of the representational language of the Self. This resonates with the postcolonial conceptualization of the colonized agency, which contains a fundamental critique of colonial rhetoric. The Other’s silence, accordingly, stands as a deliberate absence of meaning or a disjunction that not only interrupts and suspends the teleological course of colonial history working towards significant and meaningful self-fulfilment, but it also disrupts the dominant position of the Self as enunciator of discourse by rendering it apocryphal.

I. AGENCY IN THE MARGIN: MAPPING THE OTHER'S VOICE IN THE POSTCOLONIAL DISCOURSE

Along with its encounter with the Other, the Self risks the disruption of its authority in the enunciation of discourse as a result of the emergence of heterogeneous voices of alterity, which bear at their core the threat of subverting the presumable homogeneity of that discourse. In his examination of the forms of resistance undertaken by colonized peoples along the process of decolonization, Edward Said contends that, while facing “an active Western intruder against a supine or non-Western native; there was always some form of active resistance” (Said 1994, xii). For Said, the colonized resistance comes as a contrapuntal reaction to power and hegemony. It comprises a twofold process: a political resistance that aims at decolonizing the land and thus achieving territorial independence; a cultural resistance that strives to develop a “revitalized independent culture to resist the West” (Said 1994, 252). Said’s theorization of resistance aims to foreground the potential of the colonized to produce a counter-narrative to colonial discourse. He attempts to present the colonized as an active agent that has a deliberate political and cultural decolonizing project capable of recuperating the agency of self-representation by deconstructing and reconstructing the history of colonialism from the colonized perspective.

While Said attempts to extricate from the colonizer/colonized encounter an authentic and independent agency of the colonized, Homi Bhabha’s study of agency is disposed to represent the colonial encounter as an intersubjective implication rather than an antagonistic confrontation. In his postulation of the notion of mimicry, Bhabha reinscribes the colonized agency as a form of subversion of the colonizer’s monopoly on discourse articulation. While operating within the boundaries of the epistemological and linguistic structures of colonial discourse, Bhabha maintains, mimicry bears the potential of disruption and division of that discourse: “The menace of mimicry is its double vision which in

disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority” (Bhabha 1994, 88). Mimicry presupposes that the colonial subject’s position within discourse deviates from an “authorized versions of the otherness” that implies the familiarization and inclusion of a whole category of native interpreters and civil servants within the boundaries of colonial discourse,² to unruly or “inappropriate” (Bhabha 1994, 88) colonial subjects that impinge on the colonizer’s presence. In colonial contexts, mimicry adopted by the colonial subject engenders a shift in agency appropriation. Besides potentially establishing a space of political and cultural uncertainty and ambivalence in the structure of colonial power, which is concealed through the anxious repetitions of stereotypes, mimicry also daunts the colonizer’s contingent discursive unity and resolution. The acquisition of the colonizer’s language, which is originally intended to domesticate the natives, is paradoxically used to debilitate the assumptions, clichés, and images misrepresenting them. The colonized resistance, therefore, conduces to the relocation of colonial discourse, which is predicated on an either/or logic, into an interactive and dynamic cultural space of hybridity where marginal and repressed voices are enabled to articulate their own statements.

Notwithstanding Bhabha’s development of the notions of mimicry, ambivalence, and hybridity to question the integrity and coherence of colonial discourse, Gayatri Shakravorty Spivak interrogates the possibility of engendering a counter-discourse in order to subvert the colonial and imperialist representations encapsulated in colonial discourse. The logocentric discursive hegemony exerted upon the colonized native, she holds, dispossesses the latter of any kind of agency in the enunciation of discourse. The ultimate aim of othering is to erase the very otherness of the ‘subaltern’ through shaping it “as the Self’s shadow [...]. The clearest example of such epistemic violence is the remotely orchestrated [...] project [which is] the asymmetrical obliteration of the trace of that Other in its precarious Subjectivity” (Spivak 1988, 280-81). Spivak underlines the way marginalized groups, especially

in a colonial situation, are disappropriated by their own agency because they cannot escape the labyrinth of colonial forms of stereotyping that systematically construct them as a refracted and, thus, distorted image of the Self. In the same vein, the colonized agency, as Roberts Young puts it, is already contained by the dominant imperialist discourse. For him, any attempt to recuperate the lost subaltern agency is “a blind-spot,” where the subaltern can hardly articulate an authentic voice “once more out of the imposed silence of history,” because it is already “constituted as a subject through the positions that have been permitted” (Young 2004, 207). Since the Other’s self-representation is rendered more or less impossible due to the structural failure of such a voice emanating from the margin, silence, therefore, becomes an adroit evasion of the hegemonic framework of the colonial linguistic system. It could be regarded as a deliberate relinquishment— instead of appropriation— of agency that would permit the Other to acquire a provisional and fluid form of identity capable of thwarting the rigid and fixed frames of power imposed by colonial discourse.

II. SILENCE VS COERCION TO SPEAK IN *WAITING FOR THE BARBARIANS*

Silence characterizes the untold story of agony and suffering of the speechless barbarians in Coetzee’s *Waiting for the Barbarians*. Under the colonial rule of the Empire, the indigenous people, called ‘barbarians’ throughout the narrative, are not allowed to use their indigenous vernaculars. They are forced to either use the language of the colonizer, which is pervaded by the colonial racist and ethnocentric ideologies or just succumb to a state of speechlessness as their cultural identity can hardly be conveyed through the colonial language. Therefore, it becomes apprehensible to observe that most of the barbarians in Coetzee’s novel exist outside the linguistic performance of the novel as they are barely seen speak or perform full exchanges. Benita Parry argues that the so-called barbarians in Coetzee’s novel are indeed “muted by those who have the power to

name and depict them. [...] [T]he dominated are situated as objects of representations and meditations which offer them no place from which to resist the modes that have constituted them” (Parry 1998, 151). In a situation where the relationship is between the Empire and its marginalized colonial subjects, the breakdown in linguistic communication helps the latter to resist the Empire’s controlling and subjugating demeanours.

The silence of the Other in Coetzee’s text is far from being a mere muteness; rather, it can be regarded as a deliberate and self-imposed mode of resistance. In this respect, the reticence to speak and sometimes the utter silence which marks the barbarian girl, the main character representing the Other in the novel, should not be taken for its face validity as a sign of acquiescence or conformity to the dominant colonial discourse of the Empire. Rather, it could be read as a form elusiveness, or as Mike Marais puts it, “a potent political tool through which the other escapes” (Marais 1996, 75). Using the colonizer’s language as a medium to express the voice of the Other is an already lost game of power for the colonized, as his/her voice is either utterly eclipsed or, at its best, modulated by the colonial system of representation. The Barbarians’ silence, in this respect, is not so much an inert backlash as it is an assertive invalidation of the Empire’s linguistic coercion. Instead of empowering the Other with a counter-voice to challenge the Empire’s physical and verbal violence, Coetzee subtly encapsulates silence in the text as a contrapuntal interruption in the narrative that creates a gap or a total absence of meaning at the heart of the Empire’s authorial and authoritative statement. Such a linguistic void is rather filled with the signifying presence of the Other’s tortured body as a substitute to language.

The speechlessness of the barbarians could impart a human story from the Other’s perspective that cannot be articulated through words. Actually, the barbarian story is never explicitly told in the novel; it is left to the reader to lend an attentive ear to the unuttered story of pain and torture. Namely, the reader has to infer meaning from the tortured and mutilated bodies of the barbarians. After the

first military expedition undertaken by Col. Joll, who is sent by the 'Third Bureau' (an intelligence military division) to investigate and capture some alleged barbarian insurgents, the Magistrate pays a curious visit to the granary where the first barbarian captives, an old man and his son, are incarcerated for interrogation. The Magistrate is highly shocked at the sight of terrible traces of torture on the dead body of the old man, "[t]he grey beard was caked with blood. The lips are crushed and drawn back, the teeth are broken. One eye is rolled back, the other eye-socket is a bloody hole" (Coetzee 1980, 7). Like his father, the little boy is not spared torture either. The Magistrate observes "his belly and both groins are pocked with little scabs and bruises and cuts, some marked by trickles of blood" (Coetzee 1980, 10). These horrific scenes of torture seem to dash any hope to reach out or establish any truth. The Magistrate's growing scepticism towards the men of the Third bureau is reflected in his sarcastic undertone when he refers to them as, "specialists in the obscurer motions of sedition, devotees of truth, doctors of interrogation" (Coetzee 1980, 9). The assumption that "pain is truth" (Coetzee 1980, 5), which the Magistrate has mistakenly regarded as an efficient tool to reach the truth, loses ground when he discovers later that Colonel Joll, actually, uses horrible forms of torture so as not to get reliable information concerning the barbarians' assumed rebellion, but rather to suppress both the voice and ego of the Other.

The emphasis on the tortured body of the Other is so intense that it becomes the most distinguishing marker of the barbarians' silent presence in the narrative. The abominable act of torture reaches its climax at the scene in which Col. Joll "rubs a handful of dust into [each prisoner] naked back and writes a word with a stick of charcoal, [...] ENEMY" (Coetzee 1980, 115). The body of the Other is metaphorically transformed into a contentious space in which the separating lines between the barbarian identity and that of the Empire are violently set. Therefore, the torturing and the maiming of the barbarian body can be interpreted as an inscription that reflects the Empire's strong desire to impose and prolong its

position as a subject in the enunciation of discourse. In this respect, writing the word ‘enemy’ on the barbarians’ backs implies that the Empire as a colonial power presumably maintains the agency to inscribe its colonial text on the colonized. Nevertheless, marking the barbarians as the enemy of Empire exposes the ambivalence and contradiction of its colonial discourse. The Empire seems to create its own enemy only to destroy it. The acts of suppressing the barbarian voice and foregrounding their bodily presence make the Empire fall into a state of circularity and self-erasure. On the one hand, the Empire needs the exigent presence of the barbarians to validate its rule and maintain its dominion. On the other, it tries to undermine this presence by reducing the barbarians into voiceless bodies so as not to testify against the Empire’s dark history of colonialism, referred to in the novel as “black flower of civilization” (Coetzee 1980, 86).

One of the captured and tortured barbarians is a nameless girl, upon whom the Magistrate stumbles while dealing with the prisoners. Showing a great fascination with the marks of torture on her eye and ankle, the Magistrate takes it upon himself to read and interpret her as an encrypted text, "until the marks on this girl's body are deciphered and understood I cannot let go of her" (Coetzee 1980, 33). In defiance of such an obsessive glorification of extracting the truth from the Other, the barbarian girl systematically resorts to silence as a kind of a protective shield to resist the Magistrate’s process of interrogation. It has become a recurrent pattern that reflects a sort of causality in the relationship between the Magistrate and the barbarian girl. Whenever the girl is forced to tell the truth, she resorts to silence as an act of resistance to the violent process of interrogation in which she is coerced to speak. Therefore, what explains her silence is that whatever truth she might tell can hardly contradict or even disparage the official version of truth condoned by the Empire.

Instead of endeavouring to understand the totality of her being, as a whole human being entrusted with personal traits as well as an individual identity, the Magistrate deals with the girl in a fragmented

and detached way. He treats her alternately as an object of benevolence, a pet animal (he once compared her to a fox cub), and an encrypted text. For him, it is as if the girl's body is "only a surface across which [he] hunt[s] back and forth seeking entry" (Coetzee 1980, 46). The Magistrate's failure to approach her interior and bring out her story emanates from his blindness to the Other. He cannot see her anything more than a mutilated body, a corporeal chronicle of the terrific marks of torture to be explored and examined as a mere object of study.

For the Magistrate, the surface of the body hides the human interior, the intrinsic traits that constitute the true essence of the Other; here lies the failure of his approach. In fact, the presupposition of the existence of a pre-given essence, an origin, validates colonial modes of representation which seek to categorize and downgrade the colonized in its formation of knowledge. However, the barbarian girl's body is not presented as a transparent medium through which an interpreter, such as the Magistrate, or an interrogator, such as Colonel Joll, can successfully access the consciousness and inner feelings of the Other. Rather and regardless of the different procedures which the representatives of the Empire have deployed to unveil the girl's true story, she remains inaccessible, incommensurable, "like caressing an urn or a ball, something which is all surface" (Coetzee 1980, 52). Like Susan Barton in *Foe*, the Magistrate, in *Waiting for the Barbarians*, also misses the opportunity to establish a meaningful exchange with the barbarian girl, who remains silent, a surface "without aperture, without entry" (Coetzee 1980, 45) unwilling to reciprocate communication. The Magistrate is disheartened by the absence of communication with the Other and fails to find any way to circumvent it. Contemplating his relationship with the barbarian girl, he confesses: "I must ask myself whether, when I lay head to foot with her, fondling and kissing those broken ankles, I was not in my heart of hearts regretting that I could not engrave myself on her so deeply" (Coetzee 1980, 148). Her otherness remains closed without an opening, refusing to cooperate or succumb to the

colonial process of subordination which incessantly seeks to engulf and confine the Other within the boundaries of its power grid.

III. THE FAILURE OF LANGUAGE IN *FOE*

Unlike other characters, such as Col. Joll and Mandel in *Waiting for the Barbarians*, whose solipsistic view of the world leads them to shut themselves off from any real communication with the Other, Susan Barton, the main protagonist in *Foe*, seeks out to build a mutual and constructive exchange with Friday, the racially and culturally different Other in the narrative. Nevertheless, despite her recurrent and ardent attempts at communicating with him, she falls short of retrieving a true and conclusive meaning from the ‘tongueless’ Friday. Such a failure of communication in the novel sheds doubt on the viability of language to move outside the single-minded and monolithic dialogue of colonialism. The presentation of a one-sided pattern of the colonial conversation imparts the idea that mutual communication between the colonizer and the colonized may be ultimately impossible. There is a clear sense of ambiguities and difficulties pertaining to Eurocentric discourse, especially, the difficulty of representing the Other.³ In this regard, Benita Parry describes the silence imposed on the Other as a narrative “where only the European possesses the word and the ability to enunciate” (Parry 1998, 150-51). Silence, accordingly, is deployed in the novel as a symbolic reproduction of a failed model of language exchange where the Self is liable to monopolize the enunciation of discourse through suppressing emerging voices of alterity.

Stranded on an unknown island, Susan Barton encounters Cruso, a white man, and Friday, a black slave. Among the things that have intrigued her attention on the island is Cruso’s attempts at teaching Friday some words and expressions, which take the form of commands and instructions about how things to be done on the island. Cruso as an archetype of white European colonists is presented teaching and civilizing Friday, the emblem of non-white

indigenes in the story. Such a mission is implicitly passed on to Susan after Cruso's death. This role of educating the Other, which is successively enacted by Cruso and then Susan Barton, evokes 'the white man's burden' paradigm embodied in the story. Friday with his tongue cut is voiceless. He is denied the ability to express himself or to articulate his identity. Therefore, since all that is linked to Friday is obliterated and rendered blank, it becomes the duty of Cruso and Susan to rewrite his history from a western standpoint.⁴

From the outset, the dynamic of the relationship between Susan Barton and Friday is played out in linguistic terms. At first, she does not know that Friday's tongue is cut. She thinks that he has only some sort of speech difficulties. After learning about the mutilation incident, Susan Barton becomes keen to know who cut his tongue and for what reason. What she learns from Cruso is that Friday is mute because his tongue was cut by his unknown enslavers or by the cannibals. Therefore, the past or the history of Friday is the missed episode in the novel that first intrigues Susan's interest in his mutilation, and then it grows into an obsession with his unfathomable story. It subsequently becomes the concern of Susan Barton to excavate the buried truth of Friday's muteness. However, Friday remains an enigma; nothing is unfolded about his past or even his feelings; nothing events from his mouth. Epitomizing the colonized in the novel, Friday's silence hinders any form of communication with the colonizer and, thus, it stands as an albatross that prevents colonial epistemological processes of knowing and understanding from converting the Other into an intelligible entity amenable to control and subjection.

Even after leaving the island, and throughout almost the rest of the story, Susan Barton keeps questioning Friday about those who cut his tongue. She could barely surpass the racial and cultural barriers because of his silence. She often wonders about the identity of Friday, his story, and his past; a myriad of questions left without answers or any possibility to reach the truth. She resorts to both semiotic and body language such as miming, painting, and even dancing to elicit a meaningful response from Friday, but all her

attempts have ended in vain. Still unabashed by his speechlessness, she even attempts to provide him with means of communication, “a slate.” Friday draws an image of “walking eyes” (147), and then he refuses to show her the picture. Friday refuses to join in the dialogue or to enter into an exchange; he resists disclosing or exposing his drawings to Susan’s gaze—the gaze of the colonizer—as an attempt to evade what Foucault designates as the panoptical surveillance imposed by authority.

On many occasions, Susan Barton is depicted trying to enact Friday’s mutilation through gestures, pictures, and sketches, but she ends up frustrated when she realizes that Friday is never going to give a real response, and that “[t]he story of Friday’s tongue is a story unable to be told” (118). This one-sided relationship urges her to admit that all her endeavours to probe into Friday’s past are actually “a time of being wasted by time” (70). Susan Barton becomes aware that she is the only voice that breaks the silence around her and, by that, she gives up on the idea that there would be any kind of reciprocation from Friday. For her, the fact that Friday’s tongue is cut out and that “the only tongue that can tell Friday’s secret is the tongue he has lost” (67) endorses the idea that the Other in Coetzee’s novel, and probably in most of his fiction, is presented as an incommensurable entity just like Friday’s story which stands as a blank page in the narrative of Susan Barton. In her scrutiny of the figure of otherness, she desperately determines that being “silent on Friday’s tongue is no better than offering a book for sale with pages in it quietly left empty” (67). Eventually, she abandons the idea of writing a book as she acknowledges that Friday’s muteness inhibits her capacity to write about her adventure with Crusoe and Friday on the island.

At the end of the narrative, there is an abrupt shift to the third person narrative point of view. Susan Barton’s narrative voice unexpectedly disappears. She eventually recognizes that her position as a story-teller—an enunciator of discourse—is, in fact, that of an oppressor. The only way for her to establish a plausible communication with the Other is through conceding her voice, her

subject position, and then metaphorically joining Friday at the bottom of the sea to occupy the position of the oppressed. The failure of representational language as a valid and tenable vehicle of communication is heightened at the last scene of the novel: “But this is not a place of words. Each syllable, as it comes out, is caught and filled with water and diffused. This is a place where bodies are their own signs. It is the home of Friday” (157). It is only at the last scene that Friday, the muted Other in the story, is disentangled from the colonizer’s linguistic strains as he becomes more capable of vocalizing certain unknown words by releasing a stream of air bubbles.

IV. BREAKING SILENCE: ETHICS OF DISSENSION IN *AGE OF IRON*

Having left her peaceful and safe place in the white suburbs of Cape Town, Mrs Curren, a white retired classics teacher, undertakes a perilous journey to eyewitness the nefarious crimes committed by apartheid regime during the mid-eighties’ state of emergency in South Africa. The climax in Mrs Curren’s trip to ‘Guguletu,’ a ghetto for black people in the west of Cape Town, is her encounter with Mr Thabane, a black intellectual counterpart. After a gunfire scene, Mrs Curren is overcome by fear and she asks Mr Thabane, who has so far been so courteous towards her, to take her home. His reply comes both unexpected and shocking for her: “‘You have seen enough?’ said Mr Thabane, sounding more distant than before. ‘Yes, I have seen enough. I didn’t come here to see sights.’” (Coetzee 1990, 90). Mr Thabane wants Mrs Curren to open her eyes to see the whole picture and witness the real situation of black people. He attempts to show the ugly truth so far censored and camouflaged by propaganda:

‘But what of the people who live here? When they want to go home, this is where they must go. What do you think of that?’ ‘I have no answer,’ I said. ‘It is terrible.’ ‘It is not just terrible,’ he said, ‘it is a crime. When you see a crime being committed in front of your eyes, what do you say? [...] What sort of

crime is it that you see? What is its name?' [...]. 'There are many things I am sure I could say, Mr Thabane,' I said. 'But then they must truly come from me. When one speaks under duress—you should know this—one rarely speaks the truth' [...]. 'To speak of this' [...] 'you would need the tongue of a god.' (Coetzee 1990, 90-91)

At the above scene, the pattern of the subject/object position is reversed. As a narrator, Mrs Curren has been occupying a subject position until her trip to Guguletu. Now that she is facing the awful side of the apartheid oppressive regime, she loses both her voice and her subject position and consequently becomes an object of public trial guided by Mr Thabane, who appears to be too inquisitive in the above scene. He makes use of the public presence of the angry and violent black mob to exert psychological pressure on the frail and physically exhausted Mrs Curren in order to make her recognize the crime committed by the white authorities against the black population. He wants to grasp the opportunity to have her as an eyewitness, probably not for the sake of law courts whether national or international, but rather for the sake of history. Mr. Thabane, as a teacher, seems to be pedagogical in his public interrogation of Mrs Curren. He attempts to elicit the 'name' of the crime from her. Being a member belonging to the white community, her naming of the crime can probably be taken as an acknowledgement and perhaps a trustworthy record of the apartheid oppressive criminal history against blacks.

Nevertheless, Mrs Curren is not ready yet to denounce the crime publicly; not because she is still sceptical of the justness of the blacks' cause in South Africa, but rather because after opening her eyes and repudiating the misinformation and propaganda maintained by mass media, she loses her voice and agency while confronting the unspeakable terrible crimes committed by the regime.

Despite her linguistic and academic prowess, Mrs Curren stands helpless in front of the unleashed racial violence perpetrated in the name of nationalism in South Africa. She appeals to metaphysical power, "the tongue of a god," to challenge the earthly power of

apartheid despotic regime. Her need for self-reformation necessitates real involvement in the events to reveal the truth she herself witnesses in order to subvert the officially propagated image of South Africa as the country “of smiling neighbours” (Coetzee 1990, 49). The truth unveiled to Mrs Curren is not simply limited to the absence of infrastructure and governmental facilities; it rather extends to include the high toll of violence she has so far been through. Mr Thabane informs Mrs Curren that the riots described earlier were not inter-racial, but rather intra-racial which reinforces the idea that the ghettos and cantons are closed and crowded spaces in which the black people are dehumanized. Forced to be relocated in such prison-like districts, away from white suburbs in Cape Town, blacks are aversively treated as captured animals that fight for survival because of limited resources. After being enlightened by the truth that has so long been concealed from her, or she has just been contented in believing the ‘truth’ presented by mass media, Mrs Curren decides to completely dissent from the mainstream racist ideology.

Like the Magistrate in *Waiting for the Barbarians* who witnesses a torture scene in which the soldiers write with charcoal the word “ENEMY” on the naked backs of the native captives, Mrs Curren is appalled by the sight of “five dead bodies” (Coetzee 1980, 96) of young blacks shot down by pro-governmental paramilitary militia. She realizes the fact that dead bodies are more than mere flesh; they are rather turned into a parchment upon which apartheid inscribes its dominion. She understands that it is her ethical duty to decipher this corporeal space, to dig out for the truth not only through eye-witnessing but also through the process of writing. The impact of the presence of the dead bodies is so heavy, so blatant that Mrs Curren decides to take an active role in this conflict: “Now my eyes are open and I can never close them again” (Coetzee 1990, 95). Mrs Curren has to take a definite position within the polarity between the two races. There is no middle or neutral ground, no compromising or pacifying role for her. She expresses her hope that when she returns home she would openly denounce this crime

through recuperating her subject position, disrupted earlier during her journey to Guguletu.

Mrs Curren, as a ‘storyteller,’ shows a great tendency to articulate the painful experience that she has endured during her trip to the black ghetto. Yet, she recognizes the frustration of using language as an appropriate vehicle to convey the experience of what she is forced to witness. Instead, she is caught in a state of stupor as her efforts to tell the story of the five dead bodies are curtailed by their “massive, solid presence” (Coetzee 1990, 96) which blocks any possibility of retrieving any significance through language.

The journey to Guguletu can be regarded as a pivotal factor in accelerating Mrs Curren’s moral transformation initially triggered by her unexpected encounters with Vercueil, the main figure of otherness in the story, and then with Bheki and his comrades, the representatives of the young black resistance to the oppressive regime. After putting her own physical safety at risk by moving to the ghetto to eyewitness the violent events, Mrs Curren comes back home morally awakened and more resolute to re-examine her old self. As a sign of her moral transformation, Mrs Curren starts retrospectively questioning her identity as an Afrikaner belonging to the ruling oligarchy by designating her generation as “ugly” (Coetzee 1990, 121). She regards her backdrop as an iron-like and autochthonous mode of existence that leaves no room for dissenters like her. She eventually renounces her political affiliation as well as her ethnic filiation and its disgraceful colonial legacy when she lamentably expects the collapse of apartheid by likening it to a “sinking” (Coetzee 1990, 117) ship. Through resorting to writing, Mrs Curren seeks not to recuperate her lost agency belonging to her ‘doll’ identity. Rather, she wants to translate her experience in Guguletu into a written testimony as an alternative account that might dismantle the official version of history propagated by mass media. Although Mrs Curren recognizes her weakness and ‘confusion’ in the face of the invincible power of the prevailing system, she looks more determined to write her personal confession not only to save herself from the “madness” (Coetzee 1990, 107)

that invades the country but also to exonerate herself from the shame and disgrace of belonging to apartheid.

CONCLUSION

The Other's silence in the examined Coetzee's select novels is more than being just a mere renunciation of agency. Rather, it is adopted as a strategy of resistance to escape the authoritative and hegemonic process of subjectification that tends to thematize and interpret the Other's agency according to its epistemological framework. In *Waiting for the Barbarians*, the Other's story is hardly told by speech as much as by silence. The barbarian girl's systematic recourse to silence occludes the Empire's representatives' attempts at deciphering her. In *Foe*, the possibility that only Friday's tongue can tell his story reveals that the Other in Coetzee's fiction remains impenetrable and incommensurable. However, it is only in *Age of Iron* that silence acquires ethical empowerment that leads Mrs Curren to question her belonging to the South African oligarchy and to disavow the colonial language of apartheid, which fails to establish an authentic and constructive dialogue between different cultures and races. In the above-studied texts, Coetzee orchestrates silence as a modality of subversion and resistance that potentially enables the oppressed figures of otherness to perpetuate and defend their autonomy and difference against the totalizing and homogenizing discourse of the Self.

NOTES

1. The Foucauldian term is used by Gayatri Spivak in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (283).
2. In order to support his theory of colonial mimicry, Bhabha uses as a sample excerpted from Thomas Babington Macaulay's "Minute on Indian Education" (1835), in which the latter suggests creating "a class of interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern--a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in

- morals and intellect” (qtd. in *The Location of Culture* 87) so that they serve as a medium between the colonial authority and the colonized natives.
3. This idea of representing the other essentially predicated on Jean-François Lyotard’s postmodern view of alterity as “the unrepresentable in presentation” (*The Postmodern Condition* 81), For Lyotard, representational language, or what he refers to as “the principle of homology” (61), fails to establish a real dialogue between counterparts because its ultimate aim is to “legitimate the system-power” (61) through homogenizing and assimilating discourses of otherness for the sake achieving a purported consensus.
 4. In his book *On Postcolonial Futures*, Bill Ashcroft proposes that the image of the child and that of the primitive are inextricably intertwined in the Western philosophy especially that of the English philosopher, John Locke, whose notion of ‘Tabula Rasa’ invokes an innate blankness on which the imperial power can inscribe. The child, Ashcroft points out, signifies “a subject of exotic possibility and moral instruction, as well as a barbarous and unsettling primitive, [which] suggests [...] capacity for inscription and meaning” (41-42).

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THE IMAGE OF THE NEW MAN IN POST-WAR SHORT STORIES:
“THE MAN WHO LOVED ISLANDS” BY D. H. LAWRENCE AND
“THE WHITE ROSE” BY HANNA MINA

Cyrine Kortas

The Higher Institute of Languages,
Gabes, Tunisia

kortascyrine@gmail.com

Abstract. Much has been said about men’s sense of disillusionment, decentralization and loss caused by the great wars of the twentieth century that brought them to question inherited notions of self-identity and masculinity. Interestingly, the found literature explored the Western man’s experience and overlooked other stories, such as that of the Arab man who was similarly tormented by the war. The paper in hand seeks to argue that both the Western man and the Arab one were in search of a new self-definition in the eve of the world wars as made clear when comparing two defining short stories “The Man Who Loved Islands” by D. H. Lawrence and “The White Rose” by Hanna Mina. Throughout this paper, I will examine the various ways via which these two war authors responded to the urgent need of asserting a new self-image and identity for post-war men. Following the findings of masculine studies that developed during the 1990s, it becomes clear that the New Man embraced a new masculine identity that reflected an awareness that a person was not born a man, but became one when abiding by the rules of patriarchy.

Keywords: new man, masculinity, war, island

INTRODUCTION

Human history is a history of wars depicted in conjunction with art in societies’ heritage books. The English as well as Arabs, as descendants of empires, followed the rhythm of battles in their poems and stories that celebrated the heroic deeds of warriors, presenting them as legendary, divine figures. However, these “dark times” came to question and tumble down all certainties associated

with manliness and masculinity. This paper proposes a comparative study of emerging masculinity that came to shape patriarchy in the aftermath of the 20th-century world wars, putting under scrutiny patriarchy's male domination, centrality, and hegemony as envisioned by both Lawrence and Mina in "The Man Who Loved Islands" and "The White Rose," respectively.

1. THE NEW MAN

A shared belief among historians is that the two world wars broke down deeply rooted codes and long-cherished expectations of manliness and masculinity, which explains the academic endeavour in the field of gender studies to fathom the outcomes of the war on concepts as society, culture, and sexuality. Masculine studies, at first, "structured [. . .] gender in the popular images of soldier hero," writes Coyne (2015), but little was done in relation to the emotional and psychological outcomes of the war. In other words, much of the work on war has involved an interest in gender representations mainly that of heroic soldiers, but this has been peripheral to the actual crisis generating from the war. The most relevant of the types of masculinity this paper is concerned with are the ones specified by Spicer (1997), being the traumatized and damaged everyman as a prevailing representation of masculinity in the aftermath of the wars.

Such representation echoes the rise of the New Man, a descendant of the war who embraced a masculine identity that reflected the modern man's uneasiness with the inherited images of bravery and heroism that came under question, asserting that they limited his potential and estranged him. The development of such a character can be traced in the late D. H. Lawrence's work as he first hand experienced war, but we can also find echoes in some Arabic colonized countries such as Syria, as they unwillingly participated in the war, a fact made clear in the early writing of Hanna Mina who witnessed the war as a young boy and explored its lingering consequences in his first short stories collection *The White Rose*.

The development of masculine studies was tacitly associated with the 1990s as a tumultuous period that met the field's scope of interest being the configuration of manhood "as established hegemony [. . .] the process of what would seem to be a troublesome period of transition" (Mackinnon 150). However, if we relate hegemony to tumultuous times, I believe that the period in the aftermath of the Great war was a "troublesome period of transition," that falls within Mackinnon's classification and definition of masculinity as "the status (...) accorded to males (...) under capitalism" (150-79). While masculinity is clearly a construction embedded within power relations - a social experience deeply-rooted in the social, cultural, economic, and political organizations of a society, it is justifiable to understand the rise of the New Man as a reaction to the resulting hegemony during the post-war modern era. It is what Lois Bibbings tried to show in *Telling Tales about Men* (2010), while exploring the hegemony of the soldier masculinity that persisted even after the war, asserting that there was nothing "more effeminate and cowardly than a man willing to stand up for his beliefs when the nation was mobilized [. . .] and behind the very essentialized construct of the citizen soldier's masculinity"(20).

The impact of the war was endlessly encompassing. The Middle East, colonized at that time, was deeply affected by the rising debate over the issue of the war and its forging of the New Man as emerging masculinity that refused to live in the shadow of patriarchy and yield to its demands of hegemonic, heroic manhood. Similarly, young, educated Arab men were questioning dominant notions of traditional Arab masculinity that the war brought under scrutiny. Enjoying a rebellious spirit, these youngs refused to live in the shadow of their fathers. "Emergent masculinities in the Arab world," writes Inhorn, "foregrounds new forms of male agency" (39). With the most devastating conflict facing the world, it is fair to say that all parts of the world, including the Arab region, were not immune to and faced the same challenges and changes issuing from the war. Inhorn further explains the conditions of the war, saying

that “Arab men, women, and children who remained in [...] tumultuous home countries often faced disappearing labour opportunities, high unemployment rates, rampant corruption, military rule, and increasing [...] rage against governing forces” (Inhorn 40). Having said this, Inhorn shows that to surmount these conditions, Arab men had to face considerable stress from war, impoverishment, colonization, and lack. She further insists on the fact that “Arab men [...] are changing their personal lives, interjecting new notions of manhood, gender relations, and intimate subjectivities into their ways of being” (45). Seeking the change, “[...] most ordinary Middle Eastern men bear little resembles to (...) vilifying caricatures,” that used to present them as “terrorists, religious zealots, and brutal oppressors of women” (Inhorn 46). Inhorn’s study of the Arab men’s myriad struggles under the most tiring of circumstances sheds light on the complex negotiations of gender that put under scrutiny patriarchal paradigms of gender construction and definition.

Additionally, Inhorn asserts that her theory of “Emergent Masculinities” differs from Raewyn Connell’s theory of “hegemonic masculinity” which has influenced the field of gender studies. She understands hegemonic masculinity as often concentrating on attributes such as wealth, professional success, and the power to control others, including marginalized masculine forms (63). This view of masculinity renders it a constant, limited thing, whereas Inhorn views masculinity as an ever-in-progress process, enacted in different ways as men evolve, live, and develop. Her understanding of masculinity as an act falls within the influence of Judith Butler’s contribution to gender studies. In *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990), Butler questions the essence of gender roles and identity as being determined by physical and biological factors. She understands gender as a performance or construction made up of behaviours and roles, assigned to either man or woman. She explains: “Performativity must be understood not as a singular or deliberate ‘act’, but rather as the reiterative and citational practise by which discourse produces the effects that it names”(Gender 2).

For Butler, the categories women and men are outcomes of “a sedimentation of gender norms” (*Gender* 178) in that they are “tenuously constituted in time, [...] through a *stylized repetition of acts*” (*Gender* 179, emphasis in original). In this vein, “emergent masculinities” as developed by Inhorn entails change over the course of life as men age, mature, love, and think.

Inhorn’s development of the concept was highly shaped by the work of the Marxist scholar Raymond William who, in his essay “Dominant, Residual, Emergent” (1977), defines emergence as “new meanings and values, new practices, new relationships and kinds of relationship [that] are continually being created” (122). It becomes clear that in a changing world, traditional masculinities fail to persist as new forms of masculine practices are needed to grasp these sweeping changes.

2. “THE MAN WHO LOVED ISLANDS” AND “THE WHITE ROSE”: A CASE STUDY OF THE NEW MASCULINITY

In the aftermath of the war, the world was resetting itself with the fall of the classical leading countries and the rise of other countries from the fetters of colonization. This condition of being on the verge of change occupied and influenced the works of two authors who experienced the war that influenced and stimulated their art.

For whatever reason, it is clear that Lawrence influenced Arab writers such as Hanna Mina. Given the iconic stance of his works, it can be argued that Lawrence’s ideas reached out to a young generation of Syrian authors who were in search of their voice, muse, and style. As a modernist novelist and thinker Lawrence put forth a presentation of the modern man when exploring one of his recurrent themes: the individual’s existential problem and search for a voice. The havoc destruction of the war can be easily traced in Lawrence’s work when shedding light on the inner emptiness the modern man came to experience and his questioning of inherited values and ideologies. It is in this vein that we can trace Lawrence’s

fascination with Frederick Nietzsche's philosophy. Like Nietzsche, Lawrence tries to dig into the depth of history to find out the curse of the modern man, what went wrong and rendered the world "a tragic one" (*Lady Chatterley's Lover* 5). Such tragedy is understood by Nietzsche as the delusion of reason when writing "One also finds a profound delusion which first appeared in the person of Socrates, namely the imperturbable belief that, as it follows the thread of casualty, reaches down into the deepest abysses of being, and that it is capable, not simply of understanding existence, but even of correcting it" (1997, 73). In his work *Fantasia of the Unconscious* (1921), Lawrence perceives old civilizations as the carriers of deeper knowledge that has unfortunately been lost to mankind who succumbed body and soul into the dictations of the mind, reason, and conventions, losing, therefore, his authentic self.

Drawing from the modern debate over the New Man, Mina rises as the spokesperson of a generation of young Arab writers who lived the wars and started dreaming of ending colonization and rebuilding their countries. His work raises questions about identity, love and power, and truth. The emphasis on the modern man's dilemma is indicative of an attempt to rebel against the linguistic, economic, and gender exchanges the Arab world experienced in the aftermath of the war. Coming to age in the period between the two world wars and participating in the war for independence, Mina found his muse in the misery of the common man who seems to slip from the very consciousness of the country.

It is this congruence that brings both authors along. It is this common interest in understanding the forces that forge the New Man's self-identity, expressing a sense of disillusionment with the inherited notions of identity, masculinity and manhood. These images prove to be a limiting constraint as they lead to the absence of the individual who falls prey to conformity and convention that further accentuate his alienation.

2.1. THE ISLAND

New men appropriated diverse styles of masculinity to conceive their manhood as echoed in two iconic texts that call for our attention, namely “The Man Who Loved Islands” by D. H. Lawrence and “The White Rose” by Hanna Mina. Though written at different periods, they express a common desire for fleeing the wretchedness following the massive damages caused by the war. Actually, the main characters in the novellas are in search of a perfect place, a utopia. “In literary tradition,” comments Stefania Michelucci “Utopia, which is etymological ‘a no man’s land’ (*ou-topos*), a ‘no place,’ and also a ‘happy place’ (*eu-topos*), finds its ideal setting in remote islands usually ignored by maps, off the known routes, and is mostly identified with idyllic environments or virgin nature” (2015). By the end of his life, Lawrence chose to isolate himself and flee the destroyed London that brought him further despair and added to his illness. In the search for a suitable alternative, Lawrence travelled the world looking for a place that would give him a special tint to time and space and to start considering his lifetime project Rananim, the perfect land. Meanwhile, the author developed a liking for islands, as a heavenly place untouched by decay and chaos.

In the midst of extreme poverty, in Lattakia, Syria, Hanna Mina was born in 1924, in a family that had to migrate to the city of Iskenderun, fleeing the Othman and French. The family kept moving from the countryside, then back to Iskenderun, where he spent his teenage years in the “quagmire” district and found a job in the nearby harbour after dropping out of school. Moving from one place to another led him to dream of a distant place where he can settle, be happy and write. His writing stemmed from the life he knew best, a life of misery and lack. With looming death and a growing sense of alienation and dehumanization, Mina found refuge in the big blue sea that was his muse and inspired his work, including “The White Rose”. Though the short story was written during the war for independence, it was only published in 1990 in a short story

collection under the same title. It is about a painter who accidentally meets a young man and a woman who seem lost, searching their way out of the wood, so he offers to help them. Written in a simple, staccato, short sentences, the short story depicts a casual encounter that turns into a philosophical dialogue questing for the self. As the character converse on love, society, and culture, they drift far away from the way out of the forest and find themselves in a cabin-like tavern on a distant beach, where the painter informs his companions that he is leaving them to start his new kingdom, Solomon's kingdom as he calls it.

The two contexts may seem different at first glance; nevertheless, they express a longing for a happy place and an eternal time where man can restore his humanity and heal his manhood destroyed by the calamities of the war. This metaphysical mode, at instances even mythical, indicates a desire to gain control over time and place. "This unconscious drive to control the pace of our given temporal life can be disguised by way of certain spatial and transcendental moves" (Ragachewskaya 2019). These moves are evoked through the selective choice of the island as the locus of the new man's rebirth. In this vein, Jill Franks, *in Islands and the Modernists: The Allure of Isolation in Art, Literature and Science*, comments that:

Islands exert a unique appeal because they are contained spaces, and therefore, theoretically at least, controllable. [. . .] In science the concept of containment is more concrete. [. . .] In social science, the idea of island as controllable space is more problematic. The human psyche projects its desires as well as its hostility on islands, and finds that it cannot control its environment in the way scientist controls his or hers. (Franks 7)

The small size and the mystical dimension associated with the island render it an appealing place where the modern man can find solace and redemption. Driven by a desire to seek tranquillity and peace, the male protagonists in both novellas demonstrate an awareness of the conflicting nature of life in the city and the demands and fetters imposed on them, as a warring cite. The narrative pace in both texts is enlivened with a sensory description of a distant, fairytale-like

island: “There was a man who loved islands,” writes Lawrence (“Man Who Loved Islands” 151), while Mina describes “The sea was at its roots, giving rise to a muffled roar and elongated waves on its shores” (“The White Rose” 10). The use of the simple past marks narration and grants the texts a mythical, outlandish dimension. The search for the island is referred to as being restless in “The Man Who Loved Islands” as Mr Cathcart is in constant search for his own Paradise, like that of the painter who, once finding his paradise, urges his friends to feel “themselves alone (...) forg[e]t the cities (...) fe[e]l that they [are] not what they used to be, (...) g[e]t rid of their dark memories and (...) the ticking of the clock” (The White Rose 21). Through the characters’ eagerness to escape memories and ties that confine them, Lawrence and Mina develop a desire for transcendence, emptiness and void. Such a void carries a deeper wish for rebirth.

The longing for rebirth grants the journey to the island a religious connotation of a pilgrimage. This quest is what Erick Fromn refers to as positive freedom that sets men free since it “is based upon the [revival of the] uniqueness and individuality of man” (viii), derived from the belief that “each man is generally precious in God’s sight” regardless of any social or cultural constraints imposed by society (Novak 7). As we can trace the Romantic influence in both authors’ works with the journey back to nature, this pilgrimage is referred to as savage pilgrimage because the individual is in “search for an image authentic” (Freeman 8) that does not answer the predicaments of culture. This authenticity is evoked in “The White Rose” through a succession of verbs of action that foregrounds primitivism “hunt, tell stories, make love in the wild”. Abandoning the manners and the veneer of society, the dwellers of the painter’s island are depicted in “continuum with the entire universe” (Widmer 609). Similarly, Lawrence envisioned the dwellers of his Rananim in a letter to Koteliansky: “In my island, I wanted people to come without class or money, sacrificing nothing, but each coming with all their desires, yet knowing that his life is but a tiny section of a whole so that he shall fulfil his life in relation to the whole” (qtd. in Burack 219). Both

quotes accentuate the epistemologically utopian quality of the island as it frees men from the social, cultural, and institutionalized hindrances imposed by society and which rendered his existence tragic.

2.2. THE DREAM THAT FALLS APART

Following the plot of tragedy, Lawrence's novella witnesses a reversal of fortune, announced by "heavy malevolence" (*The Man Who Loved Islands* 159). Life on the first island drifts into gloominess: animals start dying, the housekeeper deceives the master, and so the other dwellers who seek control over the land, and the danger of bankruptcy becomes more and more evident. The earlier mentioned perfection, "everything perfect and everybody happy" (*The Man Who Loved Islands* 154), seems to have ceased place for corruption and doom "Out of the very air came a stony, heavy malevolence" insists Lawrence (*Ibid.* 159). This swift reversal is evoked through a gap in the pace of narration, further reinforced when Mr Cathcart decides to shift to another second island, depicted as "lonely and untouched", surrounded by rocks and stones (*Ibid.* 163). The rocky nature of the second island and the smallness of its size reflect a stillness in spirit:

He didn't want anything. His soul at least was still in him, his spirit was like a dim-lit cave underwater, where strange sea-foliage expands upon the watery atmosphere, and scarcely sways, and a mute fish shadowily slips and slips away again. All still and soft and uncrying, yet alive as rooted sea-weed is alive. (163)

The stillness that characterizes the second island puts forth a death wish, a desire for motionlessness, emptiness, and shadowiness. Furthermore, he shines away both of his wife Flora and their newborn daughter and moves to another even smaller island. In John J. Clayton's words: "Lawrence examines schizoid withdrawal and longing for regression that ends in the annihilation of real contact with the world and therefore annihilation of the self" (187).

This annihilation is what renders the utopia a dystopia. What initially started as an opportunity for happiness soon turns into a moment of loss. “These (...) realms of time” soon reveal themselves to be a long cold winter as the seasons cease to replace one another and the protagonist Mr Cathcart loses hope in controlling time as he dies lonely covered by snow on frozen land. The process was not however sudden and unprepared for but rather foreshadowed by the protagonist’s gradual alienation of and estrangement to body and language.

Mr Cathcart planned to invite to his first island only perfect people with accomplishment, dreaming of creating “a minute world of pure perfection” (*The Man Who Loved Islands* 153). But, these people came with their inherited ideas and ideologies and sought to impose and implement them on the new land. Actually, the dwellers of the first island failed Mr Cathcart’s vision as they imported their rules and customs from the imperfect world they came from. This world they come from is torn by the Great War, a war that put into question their political, economic and social ideas. In this vein, the first island may stand for England against which the author is levelling a harsh criticism as she succumbed into this war. Similarly, the engineer in “*The White Rose*” refuses to let go of the city as he keeps urging the painter to find their way out of the forest and holding tight to his car to carry on the journey.

Both stories investigate the influence the city is exercising on the individual. It is a vivid example of the deeply rooted indoctrination that blinds the individual to the beauty of the pristine and natural. Throughout this “savage pilgrimage”, the painter calls out for the engineer “to leave your floors and your cares [and] to follow me in the woods” (*The White Rose* 27). The engineer, however, refuses to follow, claiming that this “is a crazy place” (*Ibid.* 29), unsecure as neither gate nor a fence protects it from outside invasion. “Sharks have appeared in our waters” (*Ibid.* 43), he warns the painter urging him back to the safe city. The animal imagery is a metaphor of colonization that Mina harshly criticizes in his work, blaming it for “defil[ing] the temple, [selling] it, it is my father’s house and you

made of it a cave for thieves” (Ibid. 28). It seems that in both texts, men are unable to transcend the social and political paradigms that have been shaping them in their cities. Both Lawrence and Mina look back to these paradigms as corrupt and rotten, enchainning man and restraining his development as he cannot transcend the temporal as well as cultural conditions of his existence. Man fails to set himself free from the world he grew in.

As both texts advance, the uncontrollable laws that stand against the protagonists’ dream of self-fulfilment are further revealed through the love relationships experienced by Mr Cathcart and the engineer in the selected texts. In “The Man Who Loved Islands,” the protagonist shifts to a second island as he fails to create his perfect world in the first island, hence announcing a shift in focus “from the realm of political and social activities to the relationship between the protagonist’s interaction with a girl from he gets a child” (Michelucci 2015). Similarly, in “The White Rose”, the painter reveals an unspoken love affair between the engineer and the lady. He refers to this love as that of Soloman and the queen of Sheba (The White Rose 18). The painter comments that this is not a story of two hearts, but that of two arrogant monarchs. In a poetic style, he reports their love: “Solomon called, Bilqīs remained among the infidels. Bilqīs called, Solomon abode in his kingdom They exchanged gifts and met, yet a distance between them stood. Love controlled by the mind” (Ibid. 18). The use of mythology to understand the engineer’s love for the lady asserts that man’s love is doomed as it is controlled by reason, a recurrent idea in Lawrence’s work who understood such love as the tragedy of the modern man.

Comparably, Lawrence uses a mythical figure to refer to Mr Cathcart’s love for Flora; it is “saxifrage” a flower that is thought to grow among stones. Both figures accentuate the self-centeredness of the male protagonists and the futility of their experiences that remain untouched and unchanged. Thinking he will reach extreme perfection as both love and ideology fail him, Mr Cathcart chooses a third, even smaller island to set in. the third island is marked by a denial of the self through a rejection of the needs of the body, this

is suggested in the novella through the prevalence of winter to evoke a denial of the body's desires and the loss of language. "The Master", comments Michelucci "is disturbed, annoyed and exasperated by the sound of his own voice" (8). The loss of language suggests a dissolving of the protagonist as he becomes consumed by the island. As for the engineer, the latter refuses the unconditional invitation of the painter to remain on his island and chooses, instead, to go back to the city. When bidding farewell, the painter asserts that "It is known that the son of Man remains alone" (41). Both novellas assert the defeat of man in controlling time and space. Mr Cathcart loses control over his island, while Nature fulfils its revenge as he dies covered by snow. The engineer, on the other hand, surrenders and gives up on change when he cowardly chooses to return to the city as he fears the painter's island.

3. THE POLITICS OF NEW MASCULINITY

It seems that Lawrentian protagonists are inevitably defeated as they are unable to come to terms with what Lawrence coins in *Studies in Classic American Literature* "the spirit of place". It corresponds to the idea of virgin land, suited for the creation of Rananim, yet turns out to be hostile by either pushing the characters to escape or by sucking the marrow of their vital strength. This hostility can be explained by man's inability to adjust himself in nature as he always seeks to dominate it. Such a depiction of male characters finds echos in Mina's engineer as he fails to feel the spirit of place.

Both Mr Cathcart and the engineer fail to connect with the island as they remain staunch to the life they left behind. Novak refers to such a life as the "Father's Law". He explains that "Western consciousness rested [...] upon [...] fundamental images that each man is generally precious in God's sight" (Novak 7). However, being in God's sight entails a limiting understanding of one's self and asserts that man's definition of himself is not his own but rather imposed on him. Both novellas shed light on the prevention and

limitation of these impositions exercise on man to achieve self-identity. He remains therefore at the threshold of self-realization, which explains why the characters fail to reach an authentic sense of themselves.

As man is restricted by such a deeply rooted constraint, being haunted by the law of the father, Mina and Lawrence turn to history and recreate its stories, deconstructing meanwhile the inherited expectations that used to define manhood. Interestingly, both authors believed that the primary image that restricted man is the image of the dying Jesus Christ, which pinpoints another common ground that brought these two authors closer. It is the notion of sacrifice that the authors visited, claiming that man has been sacrificing himself to meet the expectations of the Father. Placed directly after “The Man who Loved Island”, “The Man Who Died” recounts Christ’s reversed journey back to life. “Lawrence (...) tried to revive old myths as means of revitalizing what he considered to be sterile and misdirected Christian religion” explains Cowan (241). The short story retells Christ’s journey back to life, bringing the “dead white face” to the land of the sun. While Mr Cathcart dies in a frozen land, this unknown man is brought back to life and migrates to the land of the sun, indicating as such the possibility that this man can be Mr Cathcart brought to life and that he is to be healed in the land of Iris, where he gets “in touch with men” (The Man who Died 181), replacing the biblical, original text “ascended to my father” (John 20.11.8), the touch advocates Lawrence’s bodily religion that glorifies the virtue of life, body and desire as expressed by the narrator when referring to Christ’s new journey back to life as being on a “mission [. . .] [of] intimate warm [touch]” (The Man who Died 194). It is this touch, this connection with the other and the self that will revive the innate in man and allow him to assert his self-definition. It is in this respect that we can read “The Man who Died” as it comes to find an answer to Mr Cathcart’s failure to grasp “the spirit of the place” and to provide the new man with an alternative, authentic self-image.

It is the painter in “The White Rose” who stands for the new

man. Similar to Lawrence, Mina's saviour chooses a different path than the original story and, instead of carrying the cross and sacrificing himself for the sake of mankind, he chooses to abandon them and remain by the sea alone. As a matter of fact, this very choice is important when referring to Mina's writing, who seems to gain the reputation of the godfather of the literature of the sea in the Arab world, according to Mansour Jamil (2018). Jamil asserts that unlike American literature of the sea, the sea in Mina's work is not a mere setting as actions do not take place in the sea, but "(...) take place mainly on the periphery of the sea (...)" (2018); it is instead a mirror to the psychological turmoil his characters survive. The vastness of the sea and the depth of its waters, even experienced from far, permits Mina to pinpoint the main concerns of the new man in the eve of the war for independence. "The White Rose" has therefore set the tone for the sea to be Mina's first source of inspiration and muse as all his following novels "are dipped in the tumultuous waves of the sea", writes Suzan Seif Eddine (2018).

Being a mirror to the character's psychological status, the narrator uses a particular language to describe the sea as "roaring like a lion", "the sea is a vast, blue agitated pool" (The White Rose 10) that reveals the painter's initial turmoil, fear, sadness and loss of control that soon fade away when he decides to remain in his island. It redeems his soul. Being a remedy, the sea is "the best way [that] confirms the depth of the gap that exists in the attachment to the unknown for the sea is life and freedom," reports Suzan when quoting Mina (2018). Additionally, Mina's association between his characters and the sea "has a creative energy that [grants them] the ability to revive the universe" (Suzan 2018). This explains Mina's choice of characters that are larger than time and that carry in them a legendary attribute to restore life torn by poverty, colonization and imperialistic agendas.

CONCLUSION

As he becomes aware of the limitations smothering his existence in the eve of the great wars marking the first half of the 20th century,

the New Man embarked on a spiritual, pilgrimage-like journey to explore his own self-consciousness, refusing to live in the shadow of the hegemonic Father. Both Lawrence and Mina envisioned an escape to a distant island as a possible *locus* for rediscovering the self. It is amid the natural that the dialectical opposition between self-destructive life and the creative experience of the self, prophet-like characters develop and mythical stories unfold. By revisiting history and religion through a blending of the sacred with the pagan, the selected narratives provided us with an alternative based on a hailing of the physical and natural in man.

Many similarities can be drawn when reading these two war narratives, mainly the authors' common interest in the New Man's quest for self-definition and realization. Healing the male self-proved to be a universal concern that brought these two authors on common ground, despite their ideological and political stands.

When Lawrence aspired for a new milieu that would redeem his modern man who lost his soul to the industrial and mechanical, Mina was setting his political theory into practice through the character of the painter. While Lawrence's New Man does not manage to establish a clear political agenda, due probably to the fact that the author himself did not position himself within any clear political, "The White Rose" can be read not only as a political allegory but as an exercise for Mina to bring his political system altogether, accentuating the need for man to free himself from the fetters of the old, colonial systems. As framed by the painter, it is a system based on comradeship, self-valuing and love.

What this paper sought to establish was mainly a bridge that would transcend time, geography and mainly ideology to prove that the human experience was one and the same. In a post-colonial world, this paper attempted to argue in favour of world literature where differences became enriching and concerns became one. It is the first step into seeing the marriage of ideas and thoughts that can take place when we invest in the universal human experience.

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