

ISSN-1449-7751

# NEBULA

A Journal of Multidisciplinary Scholarship

December 2011

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VOLUME 8  
ISSUE 1

Online Quarterly Academic Periodical publishing from an international pool of contributors

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# Landmark Reform: An Examination of Support for the Healthcare Reform Bill among Minority Groups in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress.

By Kimberly S. Adams & Bernard Wesley Gibbs

## Abstract

This work explores the divide that existed among House Democrats over the issue of healthcare reform in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress. The healthcare debate proved to be a contentious debate within the Democratic Party that pitted Blue Dog Democrats against their more liberal counterparts, women against men and minorities against non-minorities. Using data gathered from the *Washington Post*, the Blue Dog Democrats website and the Congressional Black Caucus website, this paper explores whether or not there are significant differences in the support for (H.R. 3590) Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act among these groups. While our findings indicate that Blue Dog Democrats were less likely than their more Democratic colleagues to vote for this Bill, but the association was not statistically significant. Female legislators were significantly more likely than their male counterparts to support the healthcare measure and minority women were significantly more likely than their legislative colleagues to support the healthcare reform bill.

## Introduction

The Democratic Party in the United States is far from monolithic. The divide between liberal and conservative members of the Democratic Party became more apparent with the healthcare debate that took place in 2010. Many observers of the healthcare debate may have anticipated grave ideological differences between Democrats and Republicans over the appropriate strategy of how best to insure Americans, but

few could have predicted the strong divide that existed within the Democratic Party.

Although President Obama made healthcare a central part of his campaign and his domestic agenda during his first year in office, the healthcare debate proved to be contentious, yet bittersweet. Many groups within the Democratic Party expressed support for healthcare reform, but differed over the exact approach. Among the groups involved were the Congressional Black Caucus, the Hispanic Caucus, the Women's Caucus, the Progressive Caucus and the Blue Dog Democrats.<sup>1</sup>

In this paper we examine the ideological differences and support for H.R. 3590<sup>2</sup> among House Democrats in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress. Specifically, we examine Blue Dog Democrats, women, and minority women support for the historic healthcare legislation. We hypothesize that: 1). Blue Dog Democrats were significantly less likely than their Democratic legislative colleagues to support House Resolution 3950; 2). Women were significantly more likely than their male counterparts to support House Resolution 3950; and 3). Black and Hispanic women were significantly more likely than their legislative colleagues to support House Resolution 3950. In this paper, we will test these hypotheses empirically, using cross-tabulation analysis.

### **The Blue Dog Coalition and their Views of Healthcare Reform**

The Democratic Party is diverse economically, ideologically and socially. Blue Dog Democrats represent the moderate to conservative wing of the Democratic Party. The Coalition was founded in 1995 because its members believed that the Democratic Party was becoming too liberal. During the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress (2009-2010), the Blue Dog Coalition comprised of fifty-four members in the House of Representatives. They tend to represent southern Republican districts, which may explain their conservative stance on issues. Thus, the Blue Dog Coalition often clashes with the policy decisions of the Democratic Party. A large number of Blue Dog Democrats voted for several notable Bush policies including the invasion of Iraq and the warrantless wiretapping measures (Suddath, 2009). In addition, Blue Dog Democrats forced President Obama to include the "pay as you go" measure in the 2009 Stimulus Bill (Suddath, 2009). Because of their more conservative stances on issues, many of the more liberal members in the party dislike the Blue Dog Democrats.

The Blue Dogs supported President Obama's efforts to pursue healthcare reform. They readily acknowledged that if the healthcare system remained the same, without meaningful reform, it would "grow to one third of the budget and account for \$1.4 trillion in cost by 2020" (Blue Dogs Blueprint for Fiscal Reform, 2010). Despite their claims that healthcare reform could possibly improve the fiscal situation in America, Blue Dogs still had concerns about the proposed legislation.

The Blue Dog Coalition's major priority is fiscal responsibility. They advocate that the American government engage in responsible spending of the American people's tax dollars. Therefore, the Coalition's pivotal concern for the Healthcare legislation was the cost and they mandated in their proposal that

comprehensive healthcare reform must be deficit- neutral. Secondly, they advocated for an increased value of healthcare to citizens by arguing for financial incentives for Americans who sought prevention and wellness services. Finally, the Blue Dog Coalition lobbied for improved access to healthcare. Here, they advocated, among other things, that “individuals and small businesses receive targeted tax credits to use toward the cost of healthcare coverage” (Blue Dogs Blueprint for Fiscal Reform, 2010). The underlying premise of the Blue Dog Coalition’s plan was their belief that too much money was being wasted in the healthcare system. They argued that “up to one third of the \$2.3 trillion spent on healthcare each year is unnecessary or duplicative” (Blue Dogs Blueprint for Fiscal Reform, 2010).

Another issue that separated the liberal wing of the Democratic Party from the more conservative wing was the question of who should run the healthcare system? Many Democrats believed that the United States government was the best entity to run the healthcare system; members of the Blue Dog Coalition utterly disagreed. In fact, many conservatives in general, did not believe in a government run plan. Conservatives believed that “private health insurers should not compete with a federally funded plan” (Bendavid, 2009). Therefore, Blue Dogs took a more cautious approach in their support for the healthcare plan. Congressman Mike Ross, Democrat from Arkansas and chairman of the Blue Dog Coalition, originally raised concerns about support for the bill because the “legislation did not contain enough reforms to control the cost in the healthcare system” (Walsh, 2009). Congressman Ross stated that the “the bill did not do enough to fix healthcare cost for rural doctors and hospitals” (Walsh, 2009). The cost of healthcare reform was the pivotal concern for Blue Dog Democrats.

### **Women and the Healthcare Debate**

There has been a substantial amount of scholarship written about women being more likely than their male legislative counterparts to introduce legislation pertaining to children, families, healthcare and welfare. Hence, it is no surprise that women played a crucial role in the healthcare debate. Many women voiced their concerns regarding the healthcare reform bill on the floor of the House chamber. During the 111<sup>th</sup> Congressional session, Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Shultz (D-FL) introduced her private battle with breast cancer into the very public healthcare debate. Congresswoman Wasserman Shultz introduced an Amendment that sought to bring more public awareness to young women being treated for breast cancer.<sup>3</sup>

Then Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) also expressed strong support to pass H.R. 3590 in an effort to improve the quality of life for women. She and several female House Democrats spoke publically about specific issues women face in the healthcare system. Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) stated in the current system “older women can be charged up to 11% more in coverage,” while Representative Donna Edwards expressed that “in eight states one out of four women who are domestic abuse victims will have their injuries be considered a preexisting condition” (Grim, 2009). These women in Congress supported the President’s attempt to reform the system and they are fierce supporters of legislation aimed at helping

women.

### **Men and the Healthcare Debate**

Male Democratic members of the House of Representatives also vigorously expressed the need for healthcare reform. Congressman Alan Grayson (D-FL), one of many House Democrats who made public statements in support of healthcare reform, became famously known for criticizing Republican members in the House. Congressman Grayson expressed strong support for a Public Option<sup>4</sup> to be included into the final bill. In an attempt to place this measure (the public option) in the overall healthcare legislation, Grayson introduced the Medicare You Can Buy Act, which allowed any American the option of buying Medicare for themselves.

Congressman Anthony Weiner (D-NY) also exemplified great passion for reforming the healthcare system by advocating for a public option. Congressman Weiner called out his Republican colleagues and introduced legislation that would end Medicare. Representative Weiner's Amendment called on his Republican opponents to vote "no" in support of Medicare which is government run healthcare. The logic here is that if they voted "yes" then his opponents would face angry constituents who may have had their Medicare taken away.

Female and male members often differed in their style and approach in their support for the President's vision to reform America's healthcare system. The two female members of Congress, mentioned above, shared private stories of their battles with the healthcare system and invoked stories of other women who faced discrimination in the administering and access to healthcare. These women endeavored to show a more emotional and personal persuasion in their efforts to convince the American public and their legislative colleagues to support the measure. On the other hand, male colleagues often chose a more confrontational approach during the debates, by calling out possible Republican hypocrisy and making more polarized statements in order to rally their liberal base voters.

### **Minority Women and the Healthcare Debate**

Although healthcare is an issue that may impact everyone in some way, minority women often make healthcare a legislative priority. There were thirteen black women and five Hispanic women in House of Representative in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress. Representative Barbra Lee (D-CA), the then chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus, took a very active role in the healthcare debate. She introduced the Josephine Butler U.S. Universal Health Service Act (H.R.3000) to make high-quality preventive, acute and long-term care available to all regardless of demographics, employment status, or previous health status. The Josephine Butler legislation would also allocate health services to all communities in proportion to their

population, with additional funds and support for communities experiencing inequalities in health status and access to services, and for special needs such as epidemics (Lee, 2010).

Representative Donna Christensen of the U.S. Virgin Island, the first female physician in the history of the U.S. Congress, was also committed to healthcare reform. Representative Christensen is a fierce advocate for healthcare and the chair of the Congressional Black Caucus's (CBC) Health Braintrust, a coalition that promotes equal health rights for the disadvantaged and minorities. The CBC Health Braintrust is a Patient Bill of Rights that promotes healthcare reform primarily to benefit minorities and the underrepresented.

The Congressional Black Caucus Health Braintrust “has long advocated for the elimination of racial, ethnic, and geographic health disparities. Numerous studies confirm that these disparities leave racial and ethnic minority Americans in poorer health” (Christensen, 2010). According to the CBC Health Braintrust website, “ethnic minorities are less likely than their white counterparts to have access to needed healthcare services, and more likely to die prematurely, often from preventable conditions during their most productive life years” (Christensen, 2010).

### **Historical Challenges to Securing Universal Healthcare**

The first U.S. President to propose a healthcare plan was Democratic President Harry S. Truman. In 1945, just seven months into his presidential administration, President Truman explained to the American public the essential need for a fully functioning healthcare system. Truman maintained that “the health of American children, like their education, should be recognized as a definite public responsibility” (Truman Library & Museum, 2010). Truman’s vision of comprehensive healthcare included prepaid healthcare coverage for all communities, regardless of race or income through the Social Security system. Secondly, he sought to give more access to hospitals for urban and rural communities and, to create a national insurance exchange where all Americans would be covered (Truman Library & Museum, 2010). Additionally, medical insurance coverage for needy people would be financed using federal monies. Ultimately, President Truman “National Health Insurance Plan” failed. He was criticized for trying to create a “government run healthcare system” for the American people (Truman Library and Museum, 2010).

Twenty years after President Truman’s attempt to provide national healthcare for all Americans, Democratic President Lyndon Johnson sought to create the Medicare<sup>5</sup> system in America. With Democratic majorities in both the House and Senate, President Johnson saw a great opportunity to address legislative topics within his Great Society Plan. Those topics included civil rights, gender equality, housing reform, healthcare reform and poverty reduction (US History Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society, 2010). The critics of healthcare reform challenged President Johnson’s initiative. The American Medical Association (AMA) argued against a government run healthcare system (Koojima, 1999). They maintained that government run healthcare plans, when tried in other countries, failed each time (Koojima, 1999). The AMA feared that “government run healthcare would lead to a mountain of red tape and a shortage of doctors” (Koojima

1999). Despite the fierce opposition to the Medicare Bill, President Johnson urged Congress to pass the legislation. Subsequently, the Social Security Act of 1965<sup>6</sup> passed both the House of Representatives and the Senate and was signed into law on July 30<sup>th</sup> 1965. Former President Harry Truman and his wife Bess were at the side of President Johnson as he signed the historic piece of legislation.

During a campaign speech in the early 1990's, former Governor of Arkansas and presidential candidate Bill Clinton outlined his vision for healthcare reform in America. He stated that:

All workers and their families would receive health insurance through their jobs, with employers paying most of the premiums. Small businesses would receive direct subsidies to subsidize their cost....Networks of hospitals, physicians and other medical professionals would be organized in every community that would compete in the marketplace and charge a flat fee for a standard benefit package. States would organize health insurance packaging alliances through which small groups....The self-insured and others could buy a policy and the national government would set an overall budget

(Rushefsky, 1998).

In 1992 as President, Clinton took on the controversial issue and pursued healthcare reform during his first months in office. Led by former First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, a special healthcare taskforce was created to draft legislation that reflected much of Clinton's rhetoric in his campaign speech. The Health Security Act, also known as H.R. 3600, included: universal healthcare coverage; additions and revisions to health benefits; an extension of long-term care for the sick and disabled; a plan to reform Medicare and Medicaid; medical malpractice reform or Tort Reform, and many other health reforms vital to fixing the system (Kryzanek, 2011).

Special interest groups contributed millions of dollars in campaign ads to influence the outcome of the legislation's passage or failure (Kryzanek, 2011). The completion of the first draft of the Bill took longer than expected. Originally, President Clinton wanted the legislation introduced during the first 100 days of his Administration, however, the bill was finally drafted in September 1993 (Rushefsky, 1998). It took another two months before the White House gave the legislation to Congress.

Ultimately the opponents of the legislation had a greater impact in shaping the opinions of the American people to oppose the reform, and eventually H.R. 3600 was declared dead. Many critics blamed Hillary Clinton for the failure of the Health Security Act. They cite her inability to respond effectively to the interest groups and media attacks and her unwillingness to work effectively with Congress as a primary reason for its failure (Kryzanek, 2011: 62). However, other critics cite the "key to the defeat of the Clinton health care reform was the fact that the proposals were complex, bureaucratic and relied too heavily on government involvement" (Kryzanek, 2011: 62).

This attempt to reform the healthcare system proved to be very costly for Bill Clinton and his Democratic

majority. The failed attempt at healthcare reform left the Democratic Party politically wounded and vulnerable. The Party suffered substantial losses at the polls during the 1994 mid-term elections and the Republicans, after being in the minority for forty years, took control of the House in 1995 led by Speaker Newt Gingrich of Georgia. Comprehensive healthcare was never attempted again until 2009.

Barack Hussein Obama took the Oath of Office on January 20, 2009, as America's first African American president. Healthcare reform was one of his top priorities. President Obama expressed a moral responsibility for America to reform its healthcare system. During his campaign for the presidency, Obama enthusiastically spoke about the need to reform healthcare. He spoke of his mother fighting cancer and how she dealt with insurance companies that minimized the severity of her conditions. In the healthcare speech given before Congress on September 9, 2009, the President read a letter that the late Senator Ted Kennedy gave to Governor Duval Patrick of Massachusetts while suffering from a brain tumor. In the letter, Senator Kennedy stated healthcare reform "is the great unfinished business" and "is above all, a moral issue; at stake are not just the details of policy, but fundamental principles of social justice and the character of our country" (Beutler, 2009).

Over the past 30 years, healthcare spending skyrocketed for American families while the actual quality of care decreased. In 2009, approximately 45 million Americans did not have access to healthcare (Kryzanek, 2011). In a 2008 report released from the Kaiser Family Foundation showed that U.S. expenditures on healthcare surpassed \$2.3 trillion, this figure is more than three times the \$714 billion spent in 1990, and over eight times the \$253 billion spend in 1980 (Kaiser, 2010). The Report also indicated that in 2008, the U.S. healthcare spending was approximately \$7,681 per resident and accounted for 16.2 percent of the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP); this is among the highest of all industrialized countries (Kaiser, 2010). These important facts served as motivating factors for the White House and Democratic Leaders Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid to pursue healthcare reform in 2009. At a healthcare summit early in his administration, President Obama stated: "We cannot delay this discussion any longer. Health care reform is no longer just a moral imperative, it is a fiscal imperative. If we want to create jobs, rebuild the economy, and get our federal budget under control, then we must address the crushing cost of health care this year (Kryzanek, 2011: 62).

As in the past, Republicans in Congress criticized the healthcare bill, a skeptical public and lobbyists from insurance companies pumped millions of dollars into television ads and print media, opposing healthcare reform. However, unlike in the past, the outcome was much different. On March 21, 2010, the House of Representatives, by a razor thin margin of 216-212,<sup>7</sup> passed a phased-in version of healthcare reform. On March 23, 2010, President Barack Obama signed the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act into law, therefore, "achieving what presidents since Harry S. Truman had failed to accomplish---comprehensive healthcare reform" (Kryzanek, 2011: 76).

The purpose of this work is to examine the ideological differences and support for the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (H.R. 3590), among House Democrats in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress. Specifically, we examine if there were significant differences in legislative support among Blue Dog Democrats, women,

and minority women within the Democratic Party with regards to the historic healthcare legislation.

### **Women's Health Issues**

According to statistics from the Commonwealth Fund, women in America face much more hardships in the healthcare system than men. The statistics reveal that 52 percent of American women experienced problems getting needed healthcare due to cost, compared to 39 percent of men. Further, in 2007, women were more likely than men to skip tests and screenings. Almost half of women (45%) delayed or did not receive a cancer screening or dental care due to costs, compared to 36 percent of men (Commonwealth Fund, 2009). Given that women continue to earn less than their male counterparts, it is much harder for them to pay their medical bills. As a result of their financial burdens, some women fail to undergo important medical procedures and examinations to keep up their overall health.

American women often miss vital health procedures and compromise their own health in an effort to save some money. Despite women's attempt to save whatever remaining finances they have for their daily lives, healthcare premiums continue to rise, across the spectrum. According to the Commonwealth Fund, one third of women spent 10 percent of their incomes on premiums in 2007 (Commonwealth Fund, 2009). The Commonwealth Fund found that the out-of-pocket costs for women who earned \$40,000–\$60,000, who spent more than 10 percent of their income on premiums, increased from 21 to 41 percent between 2001 and 2007. Seventeen percent (17%) of women with income over \$60,000 had high out-of-pocket costs in 2007. About one-third (34%) of women with incomes of \$60,000 or more, reported experiencing problems getting needed care due to cost, as did 23 percent of men with similar incomes. Six in ten women with moderate incomes between \$20,000 and \$40,000 reported that their inability to pay medical bills led to them being contacted by collection agencies for unpaid medical bills and changing their way of life to pay medical bills. About 50 percent of men with moderate incomes and 32 percent with middle-incomes reported medical bill problems (Commonwealth Fund, 2009).

### **Legislative Support for “Women's Issues”**

Due to the significant gender disparities in the access to healthcare and the rising costs for women, female legislators usually champion such issues when elected to legislative bodies. Scholars of women and politics have found that female legislators are more attentive than their male legislative colleagues on issues pertaining to women. Women like other underrepresented group in America, once elected, often bring their personal life experiences to Washington in an effort to enhance the status of women and promote the policy preferences for women (Barrett, 1995; Smooth, 2001; Adams, 2003; 2007).

Swers and Larson (2005) interviewed several representatives and their staffers who served in 103<sup>rd</sup>

(1993-1995) and 104<sup>th</sup> (1995-1997) Congress to estimate how many members in the House supported legislation that prioritized women's issues. These issues included social welfare policies towards healthcare, education, and welfare. They found that conservative Democratic female representatives who reside in left leaning districts are less likely than their liberal female counterparts to sponsor social welfare legislation (Swers and Larson, 2005).

A significant amount of research has been done on the role of women in state legislatures and how they pursue policies compared to their male counterparts. Bratton and Haynie (1999) findings suggest that women and minorities do pursue different policy agendas that address their constituent's concerns. Thomas and Welch (2008) revisited their 1991 article where they conducted surveys with several state legislators to determine whether gender played a role in the passage of legislation. They found that women and men were equally active in legislative passage. Susan Carroll's findings in 2003 conclude that most women who enter legislator positions are supported by feminist groups therefore their legislation reflects the concerns of women issues.

Beth Reingold (2008) investigates how party/ideology, race and ethnicity and position in power impacts elected women's policy agendas. According to Reingold, party and ideology may cause female legislators either to support or to put aside their policy preferences. For example, social welfare policies may help women's causes, but these policies also expand government spending. Hence, these social policies may deter Republican women from pursuing feminist legislation and encourage Democratic women to engage in legislation that may empower women. Likewise, women of color may be more likely to pursue minority based interest legislation, but under- representation in political office could deter them once they realize that their legislation has little chance of passing. Finally, as women gain more positions in power, they can begin to frame the debate and determine which issues receive top priority. For example, Nancy Pelosi, since becoming Speaker in 2007, has made it a priority in Congress to increase the minimum wage and pursue healthcare reform (Reingold, 2008).

### **Minority Women's Health Issues**

Women of color continue to face discrimination due to gender and race. According to Liebert (2001), policy barriers and institutional racism has led to a racial divide between whites and minorities in terms of access to healthcare and medicine, access to doctors, and education regarding prevention of treatable diseases. The rising costs of healthcare remains a major policy barrier to quality, comprehensive, care for minority women (Liebert, 2001). Many women of color, who receive employer based insurance, tend to work in low skilled and low income jobs (Liebert, 2001). As a result, minority women, overall, are less likely to have employer- based insurance and more likely to be dropped from their plans. Thus, institutionalized barriers continue to play a major part in the disparities in healthcare for minority women.

In 2009, The National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health (NLIRA) conducted a study to determine

the number of Latina women that were uninsured in America. They concluded that approximately 38% are uninsured compared to 13% of white women. Due to these disparities in healthcare, minority female legislators are often more inclined to support healthcare reform. Latina women are often denied Medicaid due to their immigration status (NLIRA, 2009). The process is further complicated by the fact that in order to gain access to Medicaid, an immigrant must be a United States citizen for more than five years.

Black women too are affected by the racial gap that exists in access to affordable, quality, healthcare. According to the Black Women's Health Imperative, a black women's life span is shorter than their white counterparts. Black women have the highest rates of most major chronic conditions (hypertension, diabetes, stroke, most cancers, glaucoma, arthritis and lupus) and risk factors for poor health (obesity, sedentary lifestyles, drug dependence, tobacco use, depression, sexually transmitted diseases, low immunization rates and partner violence) (Black Women's Health Imperative, 2009).

In a 1989 study of legislative priorities among legislators, Gurin, Hatchett, and Jackson (1989) concluded that members of the black electorate are more supportive than are white voters of anti-discrimination legislation, economic initiatives targeting racial and ethnic minorities, and increased spending for social welfare and public education programs. African Americans have distinct health concerns (Kahn, 1994; Williams and Collins, 1996; Woods, 1996) and are more likely to face poverty, employment discrimination, housing discrimination and crime (Hacker, 1992; Massey and Denton, 1993; Adams 2007).

In 1995, Williams and Collins conducted a study on the social economic and racial differences in healthcare. According to their research, there are endless amount of factors that contribute to the growing gap in medical access between whites and people of color. Education, income and occupation status are usually the most common factors (Williams and Collins 1995). The authors conclude that societal and economic factors do contribute to the health status of people based on race and gender. Thus, women of color are often driven towards public office in order to address these disparities legislatively.

## **Double Disadvantage**

Women of color especially those who hold legislative, executive or judicial offices often face a double disadvantage. Scholars have argued that and others argue that the "double disadvantage" of being black and female in America has caused African American women to be oppressed by both racism and sexism to the point that they must produce a far greater effort to attain comparable status with white people or men (Githens and Prestage, 1977; Epstein, 1973; Baxter and Lansing, 1981; Gay and Tate, 1998; bell hooks, 1984, 1989; Adams, 2007).

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the double disadvantage can be extended to any woman of color. Women of color still make up a very small percentage of the legislative bodies at the state and federal levels in the United States. Hence, the concerns of minority interests require the collective actions of individual minority caucuses

such as the Congressional Black Caucus, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and the Congressional Asian and Pacific Caucus.

Kimberly S. Adams, in 2007, examined the double disadvantage theory and found that in the legislatures of Mississippi, Maryland and Georgia, African American legislators generally, and African American female legislators in particular, were less likely to achieve passage of their legislation, giving support to both the double disadvantage and social distance theories.<sup>8</sup> In 2006, Parry and Miller explored how the double disadvantage has hurt Black Women in addressing the policy concerns of their constituencies in Arkansas. They selected 27 policy proposals out of tens of thousands proposed in the House and Senate and concluded that because African American legislators, especially black women, lack the representation in both chambers black legislators are less successful in their legislative agendas and they are also too small of a group to kill legislation (Parry and Miller, 2006).

### **Expectations and Explanations of Current Research**

The underlying expectations of this study are that Blue Dog Democrats, women and, minority women each exhibit distinctive policy concerns and that those concerns manifested themselves in the support given to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA). It is expected that Blue Dog Democrats were significantly less likely than their Democratic counterparts to support PPACA. The basis for this expectation is that Blue Dog Democrats are primarily from the conservative South, where most of their constituents were not supportive of the bill.

Further, it is expected that women were significantly more likely than their male colleagues to support PPACA and that minority women were more likely than their legislative colleagues to support PPACA (Adams, 2007; Carroll, 2004; Carroll, 2001; Bratton and Haynie, 1999; Thomas, 1991). Ethnic minorities and women are likely to seek public office in order to address perceived policy shortcomings in the white male dominated status quo. Education, healthcare, children's issues, and welfare have traditionally been of lower priority to white men and a main priority for women and ethnic minorities.

Taken as a whole, these differences in legislative preferences are the likely result of the different social/cultural experiences and perspectives of the individual racial and gender groups. We expect that a certain amount of group cohesion is present within each gender and racial grouping.

### **Data and Methods**

To examine legislative support for the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act among groups in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress, we use data gathered from the *Congressional Directory*, the *Washington Post* and the

websites of the Blue Dog Coalition, the Congressional Black Caucus and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus. The dependent variable in this study is the **final vote** for the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (H.R. 3590) that was cast by members of the House of Representatives on March 21, 2010.<sup>9</sup>

Cross-tabulation analysis is used to test three hypotheses. Cross-tabulation analysis is used because the dependent and independent variables are all nominal-level data. If the dependent variable was an interval-level measure and the independent variables were categorical, mean comparison analysis would have been performed. To determine the level of statistical significance of the cross-tabulation findings, chi-square test of significance is employed.

## **Hypotheses**

Three hypotheses are examined in this research. The following hypotheses are tested:

- H1: Blue Dog Democrats will be less likely than their Democratic colleagues to support H.R.3590.
- H2: Women will be more likely than their male colleagues to support H.R. 3590.
- H3: Black and Hispanic/Minority women will be more likely than their legislative colleagues to support H.R. 3590.

## *Dependent Variable*

The independent variable in this analysis is the final vote of yes or no by House members in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress on the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. The variable is coded 1 if the member voted no, and 0 if the member voted yes.

## *Independent Variables*

**Blue Dogs.** This variable denotes whether a member of Congress identified as a Blue Dog Democrat or not, in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress. Blue Dog Democrats are coded 1, and non-Blue Dog Democrats are coded 0. The variable is included in the model to determine if there are significant differences between the more Conservative Blue Dog Democrats and their Democratic colleagues in support for H.R. 3590.

**Gender.** This variable represents the gender of the member of Congress. Female members are coded as 1 and male members are coded as 0. The variable **gender** is included in the model to determine if there are significant differences between male and female support of H.R. 3590. Since healthcare disparities are considerably higher for women than men, women may be significantly more likely to support healthcare reform.

**Minority Women.** This variable includes both African American and Hispanic women. It denotes whether a member of Congress is a minority woman. African American and Hispanic women are coded as 0, everyone else is coded as 1. This variable is included in the model to determine if there are significant differences between women of color and their legislative colleagues in support of H.R. 3590. “Minority women who receive employer- based insurance tend to work in low skilled low income jobs” (Liebert, 2001). As a result women of color, overall, are less likely to have employer- based insurance and more likely to be dropped from their plans. Therefore, healthcare is continuously among the top legislative priorities of minority female legislators.

## Findings

The findings from the current research tend to confirm previous findings. The results using cross-tabulation analysis and chi-square test of significant for the three hypotheses are found in Tables 1, 2, and 4. According to the findings in Table 1, Blue Dog Democrats were less likely to support the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) than their Democratic legislative colleagues. The results indicate that 59.3% of the Blue Dog Democrats voted yes for the bill, while 96.4% of their Democratic colleagues voted yes. Thus, 40.7% of Blue Dogs voted no, while 3.6% of their Democratic colleagues voted no. A possible explanation for this finding is that the Blue Dogs listened to their constituents when deciding whether to support PPACA. The majority of Blue Dog members reside in southern and rural districts where their constituents were more likely to oppose the legislation as compared to Democrats who resides in more liberal districts. Contrary to expectations, the difference in support for H.R. 3590 between Blue Dog Democrats and their legislative colleagues is not statistically significant according to the chi-square test of significance (see Table 1).

The results in Table 2 indicate that women were more likely than their male counterparts to vote yes for H.R. 3590. According to the findings, 47.4% percent of the men voted yes, while 72.2% of the women voted yes. Even though there are far more male legislators than female legislators in the House in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress, (83.3% men, to 16.7% women), female legislators overwhelmingly voted for the healthcare reform. As indicated earlier in the literature review, women legislators tend to support more social, health and education-based policies. These findings confirm prior research that women are more likely to support healthcare initiatives than their male colleagues (Adams, 2007; Carroll, 2004; Carroll, 2001; Bratton and Haynie, 1999). The chi-square results indicate that there is a statistically significant association between gender and for H.R. 3590 (see Table 2).

Table 4 reports the findings from hypothesis 3 which claims that minority women would be more likely than their legislative colleagues to support H.R. 3590. The chi-square test of significance shows that there is a statistically significant association between minority women and their support for healthcare bill (see Table 4). Out of the eighteen minority women in the U.S. House of Representatives in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress, seventeen voted in support of H.R. 3590. Table 4 shows that 94.4 % of the minority women supported the legislation, compared to 49.6 % of their legislative counterparts. This finding is particularly significant given their small numbers in the chamber. This finding corroborates prior research (Adams, 2007; Bratton and Haynie, 1999) that used more sophisticated statistical measures to determine the legislative priorities of minority women. While African American and Hispanic women are usually staunch supporters of anti-discrimination policies such as affirmative action, health policies and education policies, this is not always the case. Minority women who identify as Republicans often have different priorities (Reingold, 2008), usually more akin to their party's position. Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, the first Cuban-American in Congress, was the lone minority woman to vote against HR. 3590 (Wides-Munoz, 2010).

Table 3 represents a bar chart that includes the percentages of members who voted for or against H.R. 3590, separated by ethnicity and gender. According to Table 3, 100 % African American women in the United States House of Representatives in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress supported H.R. 3590, while 83.3 % of Hispanic women supported the measure. Further, 93.1% of the African American men supported the healthcare measure, while 85.1% Hispanic men supported the bill. The data in this research demonstrates ethnic minorities in the House of Representatives were more likely to vote for the PPACA than their white legislative colleagues. However, the differences may not be significant in a statistical analysis due to their small numbers within the legislative body.

## Discussion and Concluding Remarks

The findings of this research suggest that conservative Blue Dog Democrats were less supportive of H.R. 3590, but the difference is not statistically significant. A possible explanation is that many Blue Dog conservatives did vote "yes" on final version of the bill because they were satisfied with its cost cutting provisions that prove to be important to conservative Democrats. In the end, no Republicans in the House or the Senate voted for the final Bill and the majority of Democrats who voted "no" on H.R. 3590 were Blue Dog Democrats. Political philosophy, the overall cost of reform, and constituency preferences are some of the reasons why individual members, primarily Blue Dog Democrats, voted for or against H.R. 3590. The polarization of the final draft of the legislation made it hazardous for many Blue Dogs to vote "yes," if they were to seek reelection in their moderate to conservative leaning districts.

While healthcare reform affects all Americans, women and minorities have been deeply impacted by the rising costs and lack of access to quality care. The findings of this research show that minorities and women were significantly more likely than legislative colleagues to support the healthcare legislation. The disparities in the healthcare system is personal for some female and minority legislators and they feel that

it is their duty to fight for all women and minorities when pursuing health reform.

Blue Dog Democrats, women and minority women are included in this research to explore the role they may have played into determining the outcome of H.R. 3590. With every Republican voting against the measure, every Democratic vote became crucial. The House leadership had only a few votes to spare and if the legislation died in the House, then Democrats would have been as politically vulnerable as they were in the 1994 midterm election, after Clinton's failure to reform the healthcare system.

President Obama set the agenda for what the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress was going to tackle in their first year. With Nancy Pelosi serving as Speaker of the House, and with large majorities in the House and the Senate, Democratic leaders saw a unique opportunity to pass landmark healthcare reform. The historic number of Democratic seats in both the House and Senate in 2009 made it possible for each chamber to pass their own separate healthcare legislation, without interference from the minority party.

While there is no way to know if whether a male Speaker of the House would have agreed with the President to make healthcare reform a priority so early in his administration, one thing is certain, Speaker Nancy Pelosi's outreach and leadership served as a rallying call for women and minorities in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress, who proved to play a significant role in the successful passage of the historic legislation

**Table 1: Final Vote for H.R. 3590 among Blue Dog Democrats and their Democratic Colleagues within the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress**

<b><u>Final Vote</u></b>	<b>Blue Dog</b>	<b>Non-Blue Dog Dem</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>59.3%</b>	<b>96.4%</b>	<b>88.4%</b>
	<b>(32)</b>	<b>(189)</b>	<b>(221)</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>40.7%</b>	<b>3.6%</b>	<b>11.6%</b>
	<b>(22)</b>	<b>(7)</b>	<b>(29)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>21.6%</b>	<b>78.4%</b>	<b>100%</b>
	<b>(54)</b>	<b>(196)</b>	<b>(250)</b>

**N=250**

Chi-square= 1.48, P=.223 d.f.= 1

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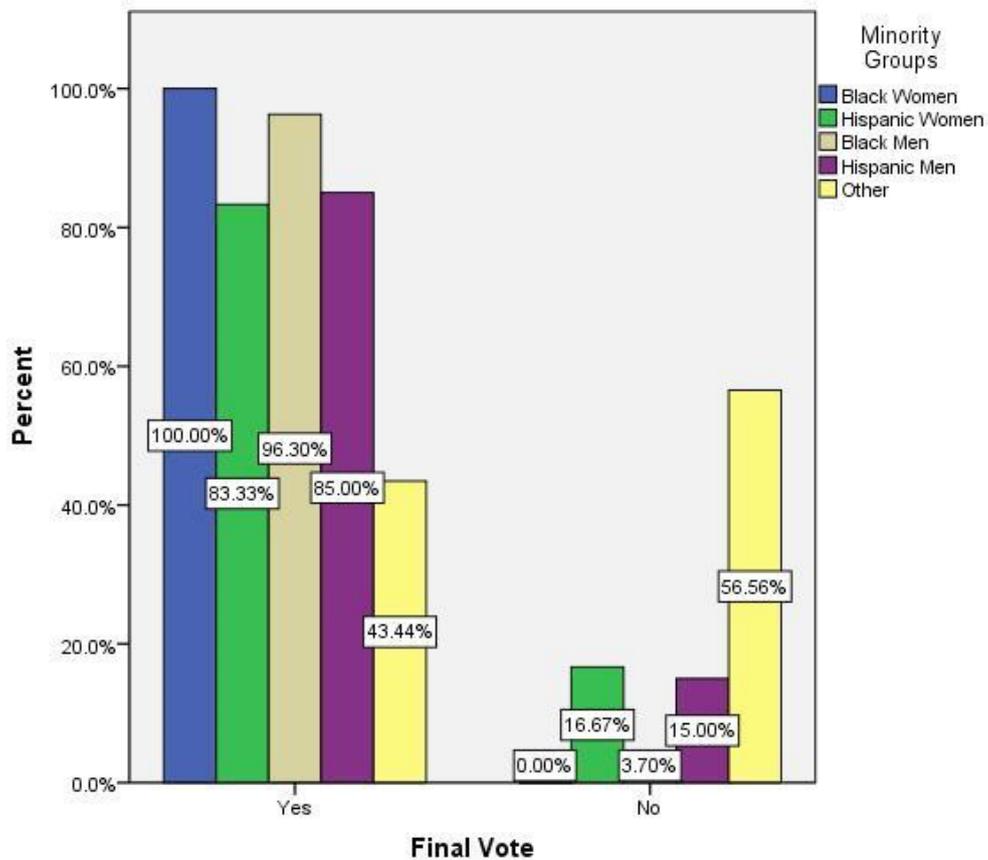
**Table 2: Final Vote for H.R. 3590 among Male and Female Members within the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress**

<b>Final Vote</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Yes</b>	47.4%	72.2%	51.5%
	(170)	(52)	(222)
<b>No</b>	52.6%	27.8%	48.5%
	(189)	(20)	(209)
<b>Total</b>	83.8%	16.7%	100%
	(359)	(72)	(431)

N=431<sup>10</sup>

Chi-square= 14.8, P= .000 d.f.= 1

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**Table 3: Final Vote for H.R. 3590 among Ethnic and Gender Groups****Table 4: Final Vote for H.R. 3590 among Minority Women and their Legislative Colleagues within the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress**

<b>Final Vote</b>	<b>Minority Women</b>	<b>Other Lawmakers</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>94.4%</b>	<b>49.6%</b>	<b>51.5%</b>
	<b>(17)</b>	<b>(205)</b>	<b>(222)</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>5.6%</b>	<b>50.4%</b>	<b>48.5%</b>
	<b>(1)</b>	<b>(208)</b>	<b>(209)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.2%</b>	<b>95.8%</b>	<b>100%</b>
	<b>(18)</b>	<b>(413)</b>	<b>(431)</b>

N=431

**Chi-square= 13.9, P= .000 d.f.= 1**

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The Blue Dog Democrats are fiscally conservative Southerners within the Democratic Party. This coalition was founded in 1995 to bring a “common sense , bridge building voice within the institution to forge middle ground bipartisan answers to challenges facing the country (Walsh, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> H.R.3590 – House Resolution 3590/ the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) introduced on September 16, 2009 by Representative Charles B. Rangel of New York. There were forty co-sponsors of this legislation.

<sup>3</sup> The amendment was signed into law as part of H.R. 3590 on March 23, 2010.

<sup>4</sup> A public insurance plan created by the federal government as an alternative to private plans (Herbert, 2009).

<sup>5</sup> Medicare is a federally sponsored health insurance program for persons of 65 or older.

<sup>6</sup> “The Social Security Act established both Medicare and Medicaid. Medicare was a responsibility of the Social Security Administration (SSA), while Federal assistance to the State Medicaid programs was administered by the Social and Rehabilitation Service (SRS).

<sup>7</sup> The total number of votes cast for PPACA in the U.S. House of Representatives at the time of the vote was 431. Normally, there are 435 voting members in the House, four seats were vacant at the time of the vote ( <http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2010/roll165.xml>).

<sup>8</sup> “Social distance” is defined as “feelings of unwillingness among members of a group to accept or approve a given degree of intimacy in interaction with a member of an outgroup” (Bratton and Haynie, 1999).

<sup>9</sup> This research only includes members of from the U.S. House of Representatives, not the U.S. Senate.

<sup>10</sup> Four seats were vacant in the U.S. House of Representatives on March 21, 2010, the day of the vote.

# A Theological Reflection on Mbiti's Conception of Salvation in African Christianity.

By Adewale J. Adalokun

## Abstract

In his book titled *Bible and Theology in African Christianity*, John Mbiti shares his beliefs about theological issues such as faith, prayer and salvation and how they are understood in African Christianity. He is able to prove that Africans have internalized Christian beliefs to the extent that Christianity is no more regarded as a foreign religion but a traditional religion. He opines that African traditional religion contributed to the spread of Christian beliefs in Africa. This paper attempts to reappraise his views on salvation from a theological point of view. The paper concludes that African Christians' understanding of salvation as total deliverance, not from sin alone, but from all misfortunes, is informed by the untoward socio-economic situation in the continent. The methodology adopted is intercultural hermeneutics.

## Introduction

John S. Mbiti is one of the doyens of Christian theology in Africa. His immense contributions to the formation of academic African theology and philosophy cannot be underestimated.<sup>1</sup> The interest of this paper is in his theological reflections on salvation in African Christianity as presented in one of his books on theology in Africa.<sup>2</sup> Most of what he writes on this subject is discussed by Kenneth Enang in his book on the understanding of salvation among the Annang people of southern Nigeria.<sup>3</sup>

Salvation is an indispensable element in all religions. It can be defined as “the deliverance of humankind by religious means from sin or evil, the restoration of human beings to their true state, and the attainment of eternal blessedness.”<sup>4</sup> It is the ultimate concern of all religions because, as the definition implies, all religions aim at restoring human beings to their true state. All religions also have a belief that people must be saved from something: it can be salvation from sin, hell, dangers, poverty and anything that is unpalatable

within life. The pages of the scriptures of religions such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam are full of messages on salvation. In fact, the thrust of their messages is salvation per se. For example, the message of the Bible is that “God actually has in concrete historical fact saved his people from destruction; and it proclaims that the historical salvation thus attested is but the foreshadowing or “type” of the salvation that is to come.”<sup>5</sup> Although salvation is a common feature in all religions, its meaning is different from one religion to another and from one people to another. This paper is of the view that the situation in which humans find themselves will determine their need for and understanding of salvation. The paper adopts intercultural hermeneutics, a methodology in theological studies, which is used to facilitate interpretation and the appropriation of the meaning of salvation in Christian theology into African culture.<sup>6</sup>

### **Biblical Concept of Salvation**

Salvation is a common theme in the Hebrew Bible. Etymologically, the principal Hebrew term translated as ‘salvation’ is *yash*’. *Yash*’ and its cognates basically mean “to be wide,” “roomy.”<sup>7</sup> It also means deliverance from factors which constrain and confine. It is used in the Old Testament (OT) to refer to deliverance from disease, trouble and enemies. Another important word that portrays vividly the idea of salvation in the OT is *ga’al* which means ‘to redeem.’ Redemption is conceived as deliverance from adversity, oppression, death, and captivity.<sup>8</sup> The Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, used *soteria* for salvation. In classical Greek *soteria* means ‘deliverance’ or ‘preservation’. It can be used for a man’s safe return to his own home or his own country after an absence and a journey. It can also mean a ‘guarantee of safety’ or a ‘security against danger.’<sup>9</sup> The New Testament (NT) writers incorporated both the word and its meanings in the OT into their writings. The verb *sozein* in the NT means both to save a man in the eternal sense, and to heal a man in the physical sense.<sup>10</sup> The verb *sozo* (I save) from which *sozein* (to save) is derived has three meanings in the NT. First, it means to rescue someone or something from danger and to restore the person or the thing to a former state of safety and well being. Second, in a therapeutic sense, it means to cause someone to become well again after having been sick. The third meaning which is the most popular is to cause someone to experience divine salvation.<sup>11</sup> This meaning has been over-emphasized to the neglect of the other two meanings.

Barclay summarizes the distinctive and characteristic NT usages of *soteria* and *sozein* as follows: first, *soteria* is the aim of God and the purpose of Jesus Christ. God’s intention from the beginning was to save men and it is always his will to save men. When Jesus Christ came his intention was to save sinners. Second, *soteria* may be refused by humans since God will not force anybody to come to salvation. Humans can neglect it. In addition, the place of Jesus in God’s *soteria* is central. Without him and his work, *soteria* is not possible. In no one else is *soteria*, and there is no other name in heaven or earth by which humans may be saved. Yet, he needs his human agents to achieve his purpose of saving the world. In other words, believers have a role to play in saving the sinners.<sup>12</sup>

Why does man need salvation? Man needs salvation because of sin. When God created “man” he entered

into a covenant with “him” in which obedience was required from the man. Obedience would lead to eternal life in communion with God, while disobedience would bring death and slavery to Satan. Man lost his communion with God when he disobeyed him (Genesis 3). Man also needs salvation because of his guilt which came as a result of his sin against God. Lastly, man needs salvation because of his estrangement. Due to his sin man’s predicament may be described as one in which he finds himself a victim of anxiety, dread, despair, frustration, alienation, absurdity, meaninglessness and estrangement.<sup>13</sup>

The Salvation in the NT, according to Barclay, is ‘total salvation’. It saves a man, body and soul. *Soteria* is salvation from ‘physical illness’ (Mat. 9:21; Luke 8:36, in both of which cases the verb is *sozein*). Jesus was concerned with men’s bodies as well as with men’s souls. However, Foerster and Fohrer have a different opinion. They are of the view that the NT *soteria* does not refer to earthly relationships. They write:

its contents, is not, as in the Greek understanding, well-being, health of body and soul. Nor is it the earthly liberation of the people of God from the heathen yoke, as in Judaism... It denotes neither healing in a religious sense, nor life, nor liberation from satanic or demonic power. It has to do solely with man’s relationship to God.<sup>14</sup>

By saying this, they clearly capture the general understanding of salvation in the Western world. Barclay notices that most Christians in the Western world no longer believe in salvation as wholeness when he says that it is significant that the Church rediscover the biblical meaning of salvation as a whole instead of the notion that salvation only affects the soul of man and not the body. Foerster and Fohrer, like many other scholars, do not see Jesus as the savior of the body and soul. Rather, Jesus is a restorer of the broken relationship between God and man; his work of atonement should be regarded as salvation from sin only and not from any other danger. In other words, “in Western traditions, both Catholic and Protestant, the main emphasis has been on overcoming the alienation created between God and humankind by sin.”<sup>15</sup> Salvation, to the Western traditions, does not encompass everything that *soteria* means from the OT point of view. It is “the rescue of fallen man through Christ from all that would ruin his soul in this life and in the life to come.”<sup>16</sup> This is so because their interpretation of the NT does not take the progressive revelation of the NT theology from the OT into consideration.

### **A Reflection on Mbiti’s Concept of Salvation in African Christianity**

Mbiti’s conception of salvation in African Christianity is that salvation is wholeness. Man is created as a physical and spiritual being. He needs to be saved both physically and spiritually. He notes that “The presentation of salvation in the hands of overseas missionaries has not always struck this balance, and in many places it has stressed the spiritual dimension to the neglect of the physical.”<sup>17</sup> As noted earlier, Mbiti makes use of Kenneth Enang’s book on understanding of salvation in the Annang Independent Churches. He uses the Annang’s concept of salvation as a case study of the understanding of salvation among African Christians. An excerpt copied by Mbiti from Enang’s book reads thus:

Perhaps more than elsewhere, the sharpest contrast to our form of Christianity is perceived in the liturgical life of the independents. Our liturgy in the mission churches is Western, cool and intellectual. There is no doubt that this appeals to the soul. But what about the body?... The independents have come to terms with this need.<sup>18</sup>

The point being made here is that that Western idea of salvation only addresses the soul and that some Africans, especially those who attend the mainline churches, hold the Western belief on salvation. Another cogent point he makes is that the independent churches in Annang hold salvation to be total, complete and all inclusive.<sup>19</sup> African Christians believe that if Jesus is the Savior he must be able to save both the soul and the body. Mbiti regards this belief as biblical. He writes that

The biblical message of salvation has landed on fertile soil in African societies. The biblical record is so broad that it easily encompasses the African world....when an African opens the Bible, he finds something which speaks directly to him. This is particularly so in the case of the biblical portrait of salvation which embraces several meanings that are readily applicable to the African world.<sup>20</sup>

He further asserts:

...certain varieties of missionaries from Europe and America have proclaimed a restrictive understanding of salvation from sin and largely for the soul. But with the reading of the Bible, African Christians have increasingly broadened their interpretation and application of biblical salvation beyond the question of sin and soul however important this is.<sup>21</sup>

Mbiti makes it clear here that Africans discovered for themselves from the Bible the true meaning of salvation which their white missionaries never told them. He is silent, however, on the reason why the missionaries preached a salvation which was not all inclusive. One can guess that the missionaries were so influenced by modernity and civilization to the extent that they did not see any reason for preaching deliverance from all evils. The missionaries built hospitals instead of preaching deliverance from sickness; they built schools so that the darkened minds of the Africans would be enlightened and would be freed from beliefs in witchcraft and magic.<sup>22</sup> They did not have problems like the ones Africans encountered every day. Hence, there was no need of preaching deliverance from the power of darkness as understood by Africans.

Mbiti is of the opinion that two worlds informed African Christians' understanding of salvation – the African world and the biblical world. Prior to the emergence of Christianity in Africa, the African world was full of dangers and threats to life. Life was seen as a struggle in the face of threats which were both physical and spiritual in nature. African Traditional Religion (ATR) was part of this world. However, he is silent on how ATR was part of the dangers and threats to life Africans suffered. In traditional African society, there was widespread belief in witchcraft and sorcery. The calamities in the society and a great number of infant mortality were arrogated to either the witches or the angry gods who needed to be pacified. A

vivid example of belief in witchcraft is given by Dzugba thus:

When a person died, in pre-colonial Tiv society, and the council of elders could not know the cause, the council of elders occasionally cut the person's chest open and inspected the heart, the liver and the lungs. If one of these organs was abnormal by being swollen or otherwise, the council of elders concluded that he had got indebted to other persons who had *tsav* in their chests and because he could not or refused to pay back debts, they had no other option, but to kill him to share his meat among them to settle the debt....A man who has *tsav* in his chest is known as *ormbatsan* which means "a man who has *tsav*." A woman who has *tsav* in her chest is called *Kwasembatsan* ("a woman who has *tsav*"). In English, they are known as a wizard and a witch respectively.<sup>23</sup>

More explanation on the belief in witchcraft and sorcery can be seen in the works of ATR scholars such as Bolaji Idowu,<sup>24</sup> Awolalu,<sup>25</sup> and Adegbola.<sup>26</sup> Witches and wizards were parts of the world Mbiti describes. If Christianity will make sense and have impact, it must enter the African world-view. Mbiti opines further

This biblical salvation comes where people are, and they open the doors of their world to it. It is inevitable; therefore, that this traditional background colors the way salvation is interpreted and applied.<sup>27</sup>

The impression given here by Mbiti is too negative even though one cannot deny the existence of evil in traditional African society. The picture of Africa he paints here is that of hopelessness. It is to be noted, however, that Africans enjoyed themselves even with various problems that bedeviled them because they had solutions to every problem that arose against them. In other words, they had the concept of salvation in Africa before the arrival of Christianity and Islam. For example, the Yoruba word for salvation is *igbala*. The word was neither coined by the white missionaries who came to evangelize in Yorubaland nor borrowed from any language. It is a pure Yoruba word which implies that the concept of salvation is not alien to the Yoruba.

The second world, which is the biblical world, is full of stories of people who struggled with one problem or the other. A good example of such problems is the situation in Palestine during the time Jesus announced his program of deliverance in Luke 4:18. Writing on the situation in Palestine at the time of Jesus Christ, Abogunrin explains that

Palestine at the time Jesus was born between 6-4 B.C. was undergoing the pains of Herod the Great's thirty years rule. He was called Herod the Great because of his personal abilities and the success of his political policies. Though great, he was also a tyrant. Herod, like several African leaders, had embarked on massive spending both at home and abroad. Herod financed his ambitious building projects which were of no benefits to the common people through heavy taxation. Ruthless means were employed to collect the various taxes. The exorbitant taxes paid, further impoverished the majority of the citizens who were already very poor.<sup>28</sup>

It was in this situation that Jesus proclaimed his message of salvation for all. He was seen as the friend of sinners and the outcasts in the society. He did not only restore the broken relationships between man and God, he also ministered to their physical needs by healing them, saving them from perils, providing food for them and teaching them how they could live together in their communities. This shows that the biblical world was not different from the African world today. Thus, it is right to say that the problems described in the NT are both physical and spiritual. Mbiti reiterates this point further thus:

The biblical presentation of salvation is cast against the background of this struggle. We cannot isolate one item alone and restrict the application of salvation only to that. Salvation is a very wide and open concept in the bible. So African Christians see the concept of salvation against this broad biblical background, and try to pursue their understanding and application of salvation in the light of biblical record.... The message of salvation which is applicable in the Bible must also inevitably find ready application among African peoples, since they face similar threats to their life.<sup>29</sup>

In addition, Mbiti notes that salvation is proclaimed in the name of Jesus. Jesus is seen as the savior who can save one from all dangers. Some Christians put great emphasis on the physical healings of Jesus to show that he is a savior indeed. Another important point he enumerates is the geography of salvation. There are certain places African Christians designate as sacred places where people can run to for salvation. It can be the village of the founder of a church or a church location.<sup>30</sup> Another important characteristic of the understanding of salvation among African Christians is the ritualization of their salvation experience. Mbiti notes that “this gives them the opportunity for pouring out their tears and concerns as they struggle to maintain salvation life.”<sup>31</sup>

Looking closely at what is happening in Africa today there are other reasons which are responsible for the understanding of salvation as wholeness among African Christians, which Mbiti does not mention. It is worth noting that African Christians understand salvation as wholeness because they understand life itself as wholeness.<sup>32</sup> Life is not departmentalized and all aspects of life are influenced by religion. No aspect of life can be separated from religion. Hence it will be very strange for an African to understand salvation as deliverance of the soul alone. Moreover, socio-economic and political crises have become the banes of most African countries. This is made worse by insecurity and the high rate of poverty. African countries top the list of the poor nations in the world.<sup>33</sup> This has caused many people to find solace in religion and to be more religious than ever before. It has led to proliferation of Prayer Mountains and churches that offer solutions to all problems. Religious programs on the various media houses in the country are embellished with messages on deliverance from problems. Hardly will one hear anything about salvation from sin or salvation of the soul; the overwhelming emphasis now is on salvation or deliverance from problems such as financial problems, joblessness, marital problem, barrenness, spiritual attacks, deliverance from powers of darkness, just to mention a few. Little or no emphasis is laid on salvation of the soul from sin. This is more rampant among the *Aladura*, Pentecostal and Charismatic movements than in the mainline Protestant churches. Ojo aptly describes the practice in the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches by saying that “their sermons centering on healing and miracles, breakthrough programs, Holy Ghost Night services, and

advertisements of conventions and special programs provide utopian escape from deteriorating socio-economic and political conditions.”<sup>34</sup>

This does not mean that African Christians, especially, the members of *Aladura*, Pentecostal and Charismatic movements, do not understand salvation like their counterparts in the Western world. Various socioeconomic and political problems have made them to lay more emphasis on one aspect of salvation than others. In addition to the belief that Jesus can save people from their sins, African Christians see Jesus’ healing and other miracles as part of his salvation works. This makes the Christian message to be complete and relevant to Africans. It is also to be noted at this juncture that the message of salvation as wholeness is not peculiar to the independent and charismatic churches alone. Realizing that there is an exodus of youths to charismatic churches, mainline Protestant churches have also adjusted their messages to address all social problems that their church members are facing.<sup>35</sup>

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> His book, *African Religions and Philosophy* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1980), is a small compendium on the meaning of life in traditional and modern African society.

<sup>2</sup> John S. Mbiti, *Bible and Theology in African Christianity*, (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1986), 134-175.

<sup>3</sup> Kenneth Enang, *Salvation in a Nigerian Background: Its Concepts and Articulation in the Annang Independent Churches*, (Berlin: Verlag von Reimer, 1979).

<sup>4</sup> Rosemary Goring, ed. “Salvation” in *The Wordsworth Dictionary of Beliefs and Religions*, (Herefordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 1995), 455.

<sup>5</sup> Alan Richardson, “Salvation” in *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. George A. Buttrick, vol 4, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), 168.

<sup>6</sup> See Ukachukwu C. Manus, *Intercultural Hermeneutics*, (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2003), 32-33.

<sup>7</sup> C.M. Horne, “Salvation” in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, ed. Merrill C. Tenney, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1980), 221.

<sup>8</sup> (Horne, “Salvation”, 1980, 222).

<sup>9</sup> (Horne, “Salvation”, 1980, 222).

<sup>10</sup> William Barclay, *New Testament Word*, (London: SCM, 1964), 270.

<sup>11</sup> I.H. Marshall, "Salvation" in *The IVP Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Daniel G. Reid, (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 998.

<sup>12</sup> (Barclay, 1964, 270-272).

<sup>13</sup> (Barclay, 1964, 271)

<sup>14</sup> Werner Foerster, Georg Fohrer, "Sozo, Soteria, Soter, Soterios" in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich, Vol. VII, (Grand Rapids: WM. B. Eerdmans, 1971), 1002.

<sup>15</sup> (Rosemary Goring, 1995, 455)

<sup>16</sup> (Horne, 1980, 222).

<sup>17</sup> (Mbiti, 1986, 159).

<sup>18</sup> (Mbiti, 1986, 154).

<sup>19</sup> (Mbiti, 1986, 159).

<sup>20</sup> (Mbiti, 1986, 159).

<sup>21</sup> (Mbiti, 1986, 159).

<sup>22</sup> For further reading on the missionary activities see E.A. Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria (1842-1914): A Political and Social Analysis*, (London: Longman, 1966).

<sup>23</sup> Akpenpuun Dzugba, "A Theological Reflection on Tiv Religion", *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*, xxxvii, 2005, 88.

<sup>24</sup> E. Bolaji Idowu, *African Traditional Religion: A Definition*, (Ibadan: Fountain Publications, 1999), 175-179.

<sup>25</sup> J. Omosade Awolalu, *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*, (Essex: Longman, 1981), 79- 89.

<sup>26</sup> E.A. Ade. Adegbola, *Traditional Religion in West Africa*, (Ibadan: Sefer, 1998), 317.

<sup>27</sup> (Mbiti, 1986, 156).

<sup>28</sup> S. Oyin Abogunrin, “Re-branding Nigeria from Biblical-theological Perspective,” (a paper presented at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Biannual Conference of the Western Zone of Nigerian Association for Biblical Studies (NABIS), Igbaja, March 13-15, 2010).

<sup>29</sup> (Mbiti, 1986, 157).

<sup>30</sup> (Mbiti, 1986, 169).

<sup>31</sup> (Mbiti, 1986, 171)

<sup>32</sup> Manas Buthelezi, “Salvation as Wholeness” in *A Reader in African Christian Theology*, ed. John Parratt, (London: SPCK 1997), 85.

<sup>33</sup> “Hunger and World Poverty” curled from <http://www.poverty.com> accessed on 30/03/09.

<sup>34</sup> Matthews A. Ojo, *Of Saints and Sinners: Pentecostalism and the Paradox of Social Transformation in Modern Nigeria*, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife Inaugural Lecture Series 227, (Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University Press, 2010), 3.

<sup>35</sup> The author is a member of one of the leading mainline denominations in Nigeria. The denomination, even at its national convention, has various messages that address the problems the delegates to the convention may be encountering – be they spiritual, social, economic, political or physical.

# Conflicting Values, Priority Disputes, and Scientific Discovery: A Cognitive-Historical Approach.

By Douglas I. O. Anele

## Abstract

In the history of science, there have been heated controversies about which scientist was the first to discover a natural law, formulate a particular theory or observe a natural phenomenon, a state of affairs clearly indicative of the penumbra of conflicting emotions and values inherent in science as a social institution. Before the historical turn in the philosophy of science, philosophers tended to believe that, because discovery is an act it is always possible to identify with exactitude the scientist who first made a discovery and the particular time the feat was accomplished, if all the relevant facts were available. Logical positivists and falsificationists (the rationalists) maintain that analysis of scientific discovery is outside the purview of the philosophy of science. According to them, the cognitive processes involved in episodes of discovery are too mysterious and, therefore, not amenable to formal ratiocinative scrutiny. This view appears to be supported by different accounts of scientific discovery made through flashes of insight or intuition embodied in Archimedean eureka-experiences. The central theories of the positivists and falsificationists on discovery (and other aspects of science) were later challenged by philosophers who felt that the two mainstream traditions, in their excessive preoccupation with technical problems of “the logic of science,” have lost contact with real science. The present study reconsiders some of the themes hitherto excluded by the rationalists from the philosophy of science, considering the fact that developments in the subject have demonstrated the relevance of these topics to philosophical understanding of science as a knowledge-producing endeavour undertaken by fallible human beings. It traces the origins of the rebellion against rationalism, and identifies some directions it has taken over the years. Some conflicting values or norms shared by members of scientific communities are critically discussed. A novel analysis, within the framework of cognitive-historical method, of Ernest Rutherford’s discovery of the large mass of atomic nucleus which revolutionised pre-twentieth century concept of matter and set in motion the nuclear age is presented. Finally, the paper argues that knowledge of the complex motivations and cognitive processes which lead to priority disputes and scientific discoveries provides valuable insights on how to place actual discovery processes within a philosophical framework of human representational and problem-solving

capabilities.

**Keywords:** priority dispute, conflicting norms, scientific discovery, alpha particles, cognitive- historical analysis.

### 1.1 Background Analysis: Challenges to the Rationalist Tradition in the Philosophy of Science

One of the leitmotifs in scientific literature, especially standard textbooks recommended for the teaching and learning of science, is the claim that a law of nature or natural phenomenon was discovered by so-and-so scientist at a particular point in time. Logical positivists and falsificationist philosophers of science (the self-styled rationalists) in general, distanced themselves from analysing the “context of discovery” to determine whether epistemologically germane insights or conclusions can be drawn from actual discovery accounts in the history of science. Indeed, the rationalists insist that the process of scientific discovery does not fall within the domain of the philosophy of science proper, on the ground that it involves intuition or insight which is not amenable to logical analysis. Now, although logical positivism and falsificationism disagree on key methodological and foundational issues such as demarcation between science and non-science, the meaning of scientific terms, induction and probability, their leading proponents tended to see the philosophy of science as a discipline in which the quest to elucidate the relatively stable and formalisable logical cum epistemological principles of scientific research is preeminent. (Ayer, 1959; Popper, 1959; Shapere, 1992) However, after the historical turn in the philosophy of science had gained traction from the 1960s onwards, critics of rationalism trenchantly challenged not only the specific theories of the two schools of thought in the philosophy of science concerning demarcation, scientific explanation, the nature of scientific revolution, objectivity and theory choice etc, but also faulted the strategy of approaching the issues and problems of the subject as if they were problems of logic simpliciter. This development was inspired by the works of R. Palter, (1956), M. Polanyi (1958), N. R. Hanson (1958), S. Toulmin (1961), P. Feyerabend (1962), and most importantly T. S. Kuhn (1962, enlarged ed, 1970). Over the years, positivists and falsificationists have considerably elaborated some of their doctrines to meet these criticisms. But many philosophers felt, correctly in our view, that a different approach to the problems of the philosophy of science is a desideratum.

Aside from these developments in philosophy, research findings generated by the history of science revealed important facts which were incompatible with the rationalist conception of science and its historical development. (Wightman, 1950; Butterfield, 1957; Kuhn, 1957; Gillispie, 1960; Dijksterhuis, 1961) For example, as Kuhn realised while grappling with Aristotle’s physics in the late 1940s, available historical data refuted the positivist belief that the history of science is mainly a record of systematic abandonment of ignorance, superstition, prejudice and other obstacles to science on the basis of increasing accumulation and expansion of verifiable knowledge – a belief described by Kuhn as “the concept

of development-by-accumulation.” (Kuhn, 1970:2) Consequently, several older theories that were supposedly overthrown and superseded – Aristotelian and medieval mechanics, geocentric, phlogiston and caloric theories, and so on – were discovered to contain far more than the simple-minded error and superstition usually attributed to them by earlier, less scholarly and more positivistic historians of science. (Shapere, 1992: 33) In a paper entitled “The History and the Philosophy of Science,” Kuhn recommended active discourse between historians and philosophers of science. His fundamental work, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, is an important contribution to the increasing tendency towards historical approach in the philosophical investigation of science, an orientation that has yielded fascinating results which further exposed the loopholes in rationalist research programmes. It also justifies extension of the boundaries of the philosophy of science to accommodate some topics occluded from it in the heydays of positivism. (See Kuhn, 1977; Neimeyer & Shadish, 1987; Giere, 1989; Nickles, 1989 & 1998, Hoyningen-Huene, 1993; Tiles & Tiles, 1993; Mayo, 1996 for relevant discussion and bibliography)

With the benefit of hindsight, exponents of logic-dominated research programmes in the philosophy of science emasculated the scientific enterprise by excluding important features of scientific research which conflicted with logic-informed, epistemologically rigid foundational paradigms. (Kuhn, 1970, Feyerabend, 1977; Margolis, 1987; Nercessian: 1992). Again, they erroneously downplayed the fact that science is ineradicably a social institution sustained by values and norms which the philosopher of science ought to dissect. But, probably misled by what Richard Bernstein called “Cartesian Anxiety” (the alleged epistemological disjunction between complete objectivity and complete relativism), positivists and falsificationists thought that any approach in philosophical analysis of science which legitimises principles that lie outside the purview of “logic of science” will jeopardise the rationality of science – rationality defined from the perspective of formal logic. (Ayer, 3-28; Popper, 1959; Carnap, 1962; Bernstein, 1983: 16-25)

A relatively recent post-positivist school of thought in science studies called social constructivism has emerged whose proponents engage in “boundary work” aimed at mapping the fuzzy boundaries between science and other disciplines. Naturally, social constructivists display strong sociological orientations in their work, and adopt a more holistic approach in handling specific problems relevant to the philosophy of science. (Barnes, 1982; Bohme & Stehr, eds., 1986; Fuller, 1988; Pickering, ed., 1992; Shapin, 1992; Gieryn, 1997) Thomas Nickles, for instance, has called for integrated accounts of the sciences which are naturalised, historicised, and socialised. (Nickles, 1989: 242) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* by Kuhn is a good example of the strengths and weaknesses of the type of integrative research programme envisaged by Nickles.

The main threads that emerge from social constructivism are: (a) that scientific research is a complex activity whose outcome is determined by the dynamic interaction of reason and emotion within congeries of specialists; (b) that conflicting norms and values inherent in the social institution or organisation of science generate ambivalent attitudes in scientists with respect to how they understand their work in relation to the work of their colleagues.

From a different perspective, M. DeMey (1982), Margolis, (1987), R. Giere (1988), and N. Nercessian

(2003) have produced research findings which demonstrate how cognitive- historical analysis or C-HA (which consists of a blend of cognitive science with the history of science) can serve as an empirically corroborable basis for rigorous philosophical reconstruction of science and provides a more balanced and realistic account of science which brings together within a single philosophical framework the “internal” and “external” aspects of science. (Kuhn, 1977: 105-120; Shapin, 333-369) It is not surprising that although Kuhn did not refer explicitly to the methodology in his major writings, rudiments of the approach can easily be found there. (Kuhn, 1970 & 1977) Principles of cognitive science (a loose confederation of cognitive psychology, artificial intelligence, cognitive neurology, linguistics and philosophy) are integral to C-HA. (Margolis, 1987; Nickles, 1989; Nercessian, 1992) The discipline offers analytic techniques which, if used appropriately with a keen eye on their scope and limitations, can help philosophers develop and test models of how new knowledge in a scientific specialty is created and consolidated through painstaking research.

The question may be asked: what relevant epistemological insights(s) can be arrived at by investigating the set of shared conflicting values and actual processes of scientific discovery which form the focus of the present study? Karl Popper, a staunch falsificationist, maintains that the philosopher has little to learn from the history or sociology of science (and cognitive science) because these disciplines are spurious sciences without developed, generally accepted, standards for problem-selection and problem-solutions. (Popper, 1970:57-58) But Popper’s view is obviously untenable, for the disciplines he was referring to have developed high standards of scholarship and professionalism that compare favourably with what obtains in the natural and biological sciences. In cognitive psychology, for instance, experts in the field have formulated powerful falsifiable theories and precise experimental protocols which meet the standards of rigour and objectivity required in science. (Fuller *et al*; 1989; Sternberg, 2003; Gleitman *et al*, 2004) Therefore, it is not surprising that interesting ideas on the general nature of concept formation and learning, representation, perception, and conceptual change among others have emerged from the so-called “spurious” sciences. (Margolis, 1987; Fetzer, 1991; Chen et al 1998; Nercessian, 2003) For example, Kuhn, in a paper entitled “Second Thoughts on Paradigms” argues that pattern-recognition or perception of similarity/dissimilarity relationships between new problems and exemplars (that is, research puzzles already encountered and solved by members of a scientific community), rather than application of correspondence rules and algorithms as suggested by Carnap, Popper and others, plays a fundamental role in the acquisition of scientific knowledge. (Kuhn, 1977: 293-319)

## 1.2 Conflicting Norms in the Social Organisation of Science

As already indicated, mainstream logistic traditions in the philosophy of science did not investigate critically the conflicting values that shape science as a knowledge-producing enterprise undertaken by communities of scientists. Consequently, they contributed very little to elucidation of the epistemological significance of conflicting values shared by scientists. One of the main tasks of philosophy since its inception in antiquity is the critical evaluation of norms or values of all kinds. (Bonevac, 2006; Soccio, 2007) It

follows that the values shared by members of scientific communities are legitimate topics for philosophical analysis. R. K. Merton has carried out detailed, philosophically relevant, research on how conflicting values or norms affect the conduct of scientists, especially with regard to priority disputes. (Merton, 1973 & 1976. See also Mullins, 1972; Woolgar, 1976; Mulkay, 1980) These norms can be formulated and juxtaposed as pairs of contradictions or sub-contraries. One of the pairs stipulate that a scientist must be ready to make her new found knowledge available to her colleagues as soon as possible, but must avoid undue tendency to publish her work too soon; another pair enjoin her to esteem new knowledge, but should work without regard for the recognition of others. A checklist of some conflicting pairs of norms or values which generate ambivalent attitudes in scientists is tabulated below (Merton, 1976: 434-435):

Conflicting Pairs of Norms in Science as a Social Institution	
A1. The scientist should be willing to make his new-found knowledge available to his colleagues promptly.	A2. The scientist should not be in a haste to publish his research result.
B1. The scientist should not be too eager to abandon an old theory, or adopt intellectual fads which come and go.	B2. The scientist should be flexible and receptive to fruitful new ideas, and avoid being fixated on maintaining established traditions.
C1. The scientist should pay serious attention to details.	C2. The scientist must avoid fastidiousness with minutiae usually associated with pedants.
D1. Scientific knowledge is universal and trans-national.	D2. Scientific discoveries bring prestige to the countries that promoted them.
E1. It is recommended that young scientists should learn from more experienced eminent colleagues.	E2. It is important for young scientists to be independent-minded and endeavour to stand on their own feet.
F1. Scientists should recognize the critical importance of producing new generation of scientists.	F2. A scientist must not allow teaching to take up all her energy at the expense of research.
G1. A scientist should endeavour to know the work of her predecessors and contemporaries in her specialty.	G2. A scientist should avoid omnivorous reading which will hamper her creativity.
H1. Scientists should put premium on new discoveries and inventions.	H2. The scientist should concentrate on research without craving for respect or priority from colleagues.
I1. The scientist should not claim any new knowledge until it is well corroborated.	I2. A scientist should defend his new theories and findings, even in the face of criticisms from others

The list is not exhaustive, but is a fair sample of norms culled from the literature of science. Clearly, tension-generating potentials of these norms which give rise to divergent attitudes and decisions by scientists are demonstrated in the careers of great scientists like Isaac Newton, Joseph Priestley, Charles Darwin Michael Faraday, and Albert Einstein among others. (Mason, 1962; Fine, 1976: 145-158; Cohen, 1985) In the case of Priestley (1733-1804) for instance, aside from the priority dispute about whether he or the French chemist, Antoine Lavoisier, was the first to discover oxygen, Priestley till he died espoused the phlogiston theory of combustion, despite contributing significantly to researches that eventually led to its eventual overthrow. (McKenzie, 1973: 98-104; Kuhn, 1977: 167-171) Therefore, by fixating on the phlogiston paradigm, Priestley failed to reconcile appropriately in practice norms B1 and B2 which, respectively, prescribe that the scientist should not to be too eager to abandon an old theory but at the same time should be receptive to new and fruitful ideas.

Again, consider the pairs of values H1 and H2, which respectively recommend that a scientist should work towards making original contribution to knowledge, but should not be preoccupied with claiming priority for a discovery or with earning respect from colleagues. Generally speaking, scientists respond negatively and defensively to accusations of plagiarism; also they are usually disappointed when presented with evidence that their research findings had been anticipated by, or is a replication of, earlier work by another scientist, especially if the latter is a relatively unknown researcher. (Merton, 1976; Boorstin, 1983, Hawking, 1988) Studies of priority disputes in science establish the “competitive dimension’ of science” within the social context of research in which each scientist works feverishly to be first to discover an unknown phenomenon or postulate a revolutionary theory that resolves a stubborn anomaly and opens up a novel fruitful line of investigation. In extreme cases, some go to extreme lengths to prove their priority and bully rivals, as it happened in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century when Newton misused his prestige and domination of the Royal Society of London to humiliate Gottfried Leibniz in a row over the discovery of calculus. (Boorstin, 413-419; Hawking, 181-182)

Scientists want their priority in discovery or invention to be acknowledged for several reasons. (Reif, 1961: 1957-1962; Watson, 1980) Number one, standard textbooks for pedagogy in science, as we already indicated, usually attribute discoveries to particular scientists that made them. This helps prospective scientists to be grounded in the historical evolution of science and, perhaps, inspires them to emulate the great personages in their various specialties. Thus, to be recognised as the discoverer of a new and important phenomenon or inventor of a revolutionary theory is almost like a property right for the scientist so recognised. Two, innovators in science are respected both within the scientific community and in the wider society, which is directly proportional to the impact the discovery makes in terms of explanatory power and technological application. Finally, especially in highly industrialised societies, substantial financial rewards and prestigious awards (Nobel Prize etc.) are often closely tied to fundamental scientific discoveries. Such awards increase the prestige of the awardees, and motivate others to work harder to enhance their chances of being rewarded in due course.

R. K. Merton identifies recurrent features of priority disputes, such as the essential tension between co-operation and competition in the production of scientific knowledge which is necessary as one of the

strongest motivations for research. (Merton, 1976: 437-446) Sometimes, according to Merton, scientists are reluctant to engage in priority claims, an attitude which suggests awareness of the impropriety of such disputations. Yet, on several occasions, they are genuinely interested in establishing priority for a particular discovery. Typical examples highlighted by Merton include Newton, John Flamsteed, Priestley, Darwin, and Sigmund Freud. Scholars usually feel uneasy that dispassionate methodic investigation of priority disputes will sully the otherwise heroic, awe-inspiring, image associated with great scientists. (Merton, 1963; 272-282) Such uneasiness, though understandable, is uncalled for and unnecessary. Upon close analysis, it would be discovered that responses of scientists to the imperatives of their profession, like other human behaviours, are not actuated by a single motive which can be unequivocally pigeonholed with positive or negative ethical categories, as the case may be. Rather, desire to be the first to make a discovery and to be recognised as such is the surface presentation, like the part of an iceberg above water, of the deep-seated need for assurance among peers that one has made a significant contribution to the corpus of established knowledge, or produced a result which will be of immense benefit to humanity. Partly on the strength of such considerations, the scientist can pursue his research diligently, encouraged by the belief that his work will be justified by the quality of his contribution to knowledge. To bolster scientific productivity, science as a knowledge-producing social institution must be managed in such a way to promote symbiotic relationship between the cognitive imperatives of research and the self-interests of individual scientists. Creating and sustaining such relationship is always a work-in-progress, not the least because of the difficult challenge of reconciling diverse and sometimes conflicting personalities and motivations of scientists. The problem is exacerbated when, for a particular scientist, desire for honour and reward displaces concern for advancing knowledge, which might negatively affect his work. It must be observed that an institutionalised reward system which lays emphasis on mere number of publications promotes mediocrity in the quality of scientific output. (Popper, 1992: 96) In the universities and research institutes, therefore, it is important to set benchmarks for identifying and rewarding researchers who make profound contribution to the growth of scientific knowledge. That said, since every scientist cannot be a Newton, Lavoisier, Darwin or an Einstein, the work of less talented scientists should be recognised also - for example, by including their contributions in prestigious journals and other publication outlets. (Garfield, 1964; Price, 1965)

In contemporary times, the social character of scientific knowledge has come to the forefront with the increasing tendency towards collaborative research. (Hagstrom, 1965; Price & Beaver, 1966: 1011-1018; Crane, 1969: 335-352; Mullins, 1972: 51-82) In many areas of scientific research specialists are actively encouraged to collaborate due to the growing sophistication of research problems and methods which in many cases necessitates teams of researchers from different scientific and engineering disciplines working together using very expensive equipment. (Weinberg, (1961: 161-164; Rescher, 1978: 175-178) In collaborative work, it is sometimes difficult to determine the input of each scientist, as more and more scientific publications have several authors rather than only one and there is simply no mechanical way of deciding precisely the part played by each contributor in solving a particular difficult equation or conducting a complex experiment. (Price, 1963: 87-90; Merton, 1976: 451-452) Hence, although collaborative research does not completely eliminate priority disputes by shifting the focus of scientists away from establishing priority to concern about how their contributions can be identified after collaborating, it has reduced the

frequency of such disputations. The revolution in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has the same effect as well. Secrecy in research has reduced considerably: scientists are now more willing to brainstorm concerning their researches with colleagues especially through the Internet. And with rapid increase in the number of specialist conferences and publications, the tempo of interaction among scientists is higher than ever before, thereby encouraging collaboration which, as we claimed a moment ago, tends to bring down the frequency of priority disputes.

The question that rears up at this point is: what is the epistemological significance of conflicting norms or values in science? It can be rephrased more usefully as: how will a specific set of values shared by members of a scientific community affect their group behaviour as researchers? In handling that question, rationalists postulate rules or algorithms of choice that would ensure complete objectivity particularly when scientists have to choose among competing theories in the same domain. (Carnap, 1962; Popper, 1959) Now, if there is an exhaustive list of methodological rules or algorithms that can be applied in the same way by each and every scientist to arrive at the same decision, then science will not only lose much of its empirical character and become more like mathematics, it might stagnate or even retard. (Musgrave, 1976: 480) Kuhn argues that no such rules exist. That explains why scientists differ in their understanding and interpretation of the norms of research. To die-hard positivists and falsificationists, this variability is a weakness, but to Kuhn it is a sign of strength, an index of the social nature of scientific knowledge. According to Kuhn:

If decisions must be made under circumstances in which even the most deliberate and considered judgment may be wrong, it may be vitally important that different [scientists] decide in different ways. How else will the group hedge its bets? (Kuhn, 1970a: 241. See also 238)

To sum up: conflicting norms in science serve as the essential flexible platform or matrix of factors which prevents wholesale persistence with a degenerating tradition of normal science or premature mass-conversion to a fledgling one, both of which would have to be accounted for on purely social-psychological grounds. (Musgrave, 480) This implies that since scientific research is conducted within specialist groups, practices that would indeed be irrational if adopted by those groups as a whole or by a majority of them need not necessarily be irrational when geniuses like Priestley or Einstein engages in them.

### **1.3 Rutherford's Revolutionary Discovery of the Atomic Nucleus: A Cognitive-Historical Approach**

In subsection 1.2, we underscored some conflicting norms which determine the pattern of behaviour of scientists as they carry on the difficult and challenging task of acquiring, consolidating, and improving the corpus of established knowledge. In doing so we highlighted one of the recurrent issues in the historical development of science which orthodox philosophers of science simply refused to countenance as a fit subject for philosophical inquiry – priority disputes. Now, although the question of priority is not identical with the problem of determining the date when a particular discovery was made, both are related in the

sense that establishing when a given discovery was accomplished for the first time can help settle any priority dispute that may arise from it. Even so, all scientific discoveries are accomplished within an epistemological ecology partly constituted by the conflicting sets of shared norms or values within scientific communities which we discussed earlier. This explains why whenever heated debate about priority ensues, it always occurs in the backdrop of conflicting values probably because the precise date when the discovery was completed is uncertain. At all events, many interesting and important scientific discoveries are not easily amenable to the questions of “Where?”, “When?”, and “Who did it first?” (Kuhn, 1977: 171) Such questions recur because both scientists and nonscientists erroneously believe that discovery is a singular, almost instantaneous event which, although it may have preconditions and definitely has consequences, is very similar to perceiving something at a specifiable time. A discovery, according to this conception, is a mysterious, philosophically opaque, event that happens when a particular scientist encounters a hitherto unknown phenomenon or object at a particular time and place. The major source of this inaccurate view of scientific discovery is the nature of the scientific community and the kind of education engendered by it. As already noted, recommended science textbooks report that so-and-so scientist was the first to discover a particular phenomenon or relation between apparently unconnected phenomena which may be named after him or her (for example, Boyle’s law, Planck’s Constant, Curie point, Zeeman Effect, Compton Effect, etc). Given the premium which the social institution of science, sometimes obsessively, places on originality and contribution to knowledge through genuine discovery, many scientists focus their minds on it. Prestige within and outside the professional circle of science accrues to scientists that make important discoveries, as the case of Nobel Prize winners in the sciences, particularly physics, amply demonstrates. (Watson, 1980)

Generally, scientific discoveries can be classified into two broad types, namely (a) discoveries that were predicted from accepted theory in advance and (b) discoveries which were not, and could not have been, predicted beforehand from current theory. A typical example of type-a discovery is the discovery of gallium, a soft silvery metallic element by Paul Lecoq de Boisbaudran in 1875, four years after the Russian chemist, Dimitri Mendeleev, had predicted the existence of an unknown element (subsequently named gallium) and specified some of its properties. (Chang, 2003) Because the existence of gallium was already predicted from the Periodic Table of elements, its discoverer knew from the start what to look for. This does not necessarily imply that the discovery was neither demanding nor interesting. Rather, prediction of the existence of gallium before it was confirmed provided scientists with parameters for determining when the discovery had been accomplished. Hence, on a general note, it is relatively easy to ascertain the time and date a specific type-a discovery was made and the scientist(s) who did so. Naturally, there have been relatively few priority disputes pertaining to discoveries already anticipated by existing theory, which suggests that only paucity of information can prevent identification of the scientists involved and the date and place such discoveries were made. (Kuhn, 1977: 166-167)

But consider the discovery of radioactivity, electron, cosmic rays, the atomic nucleus and others which were not predicted from accepted theory beforehand and which, therefore, were not anticipated by scientists. They belong to the class of troublesome discoveries for which there were no unambiguous benchmarks to inform scientists when the task of discovery has been accomplished. It should be observed that not all

discoveries can be easily classified into any of the two categories identified above: for example, although Paul Dirac's equations entailed the existence of "positive electrons" or positrons, no physicist really understood what the particles were until their existence was confirmed experimentally by C. D. Anderson. (Hey & Walters, 2003: 228-233; Crease & Mann, 1991: 89-90)

We have already made the point that the positivists and falsificationists were mistaken in thinking that "the context of discovery" is not a legitimate subject-matter for philosophical investigation of science. But although Kuhn improved upon entrenched positivist ideas about discovery by acknowledging that it is an extended creative process, and as a historian of science has provided detailed analyses of selected revolutionary discoveries which elucidate different structural elements of the process, he still erroneously overemphasised the gestalt character of discovery – that is, by construing it as the last act when "the pieces fall together." (Kuhn, 1987) This widespread misconception can be avoided by using a cognitive-historical methodology in studying discovery episodes. Cognitive-historical analysis (C-HA) is a fruitful approach for exploring scientific discoveries to yield philosophically germane insights into cognitive mechanisms at work when scientists engage in the creative processes of inventing new concepts and representations of already known or novel phenomena. Fundamentally, it is an interdisciplinary approach forged from the nexus between several disciplines, as indicated earlier. The particular mix of insights from among the disciplines required for analysing any topic depends crucially on the nature of the topic itself. For example, adequate analysis of the relation between scientific theories and the evidence in their support will depend largely on concepts that feature prominently in philosophical theories of induction and probability, whereas theories of perception and information storage and retrieval distilled mostly from cognitive psychology and artificial intelligence will be needed for a realistic philosophical account of knowledge encoded in perception and representation in science. As a research tool in the philosophy of science, C-HA uses information culled from the history of science to identify, dissect and evaluate generalisable representational and problem-solving activities through which scientists create new theories. (Woolgar, 1976; Margolis, 1987; Giere, 1988 & 1989; Nercessian, 1992) Thus, C-HA also enriches what historians of science do in their fine-structure investigations of science by interpreting results of their work in the context of corroborated conclusions drawn from studies of ordinary human representational and problem-solving activities. Moreover C-HA, as a tool for empirically-grounded philosophy of science, enhances fruitful "active discourse" that Kuhn recommended for historians and philosophers of science.

The underlying assumption of the method is the "continuum hypothesis," which asserts that the problem-solving strategies invented by scientists and the representational practices they have developed over time are sophisticated and refined extensions or variants of the cognitive practices used by human beings in solving the problems they encounter in their life-world. (Kuhn, 1977; Margolis, 1987; Hoyningen-Huene, 1993; Nercessian, 2003) The cognitive dimension of C-HA is anchored on the idea that a robust philosophical understanding of scientific knowledge should be psychologically realistic, in that it must reckon with the fact that scientists are not merely human beings who systematically apply rational thought to discover the laws of nature; they are also trained researchers that share with the rest of humanity some biological and social attributes. Thus, C-HA allows the philosopher to properly identify and explain adequately how scientific research is constrained by human cognitive capabilities and limitations, because

science is a fascinating product of the interaction of human minds with one another and with the world. This point is not totally alien to philosophy, for it fits into what might be called a tradition of psychological epistemology adumbrated in the works of the British empiricists, notably John Locke, David Hume and J. S. Mill. (Mill, 1843; Grayling, 2000: 484-544) More recently, attempts have been made to formulate what V. W. Quine described as “naturalized epistemology.” (Quine, 1969; see also Harmon, 1973; Goldman, 1986; Bird, 2005) The main thrust of contemporary naturalised epistemology is that the best theories of scientific knowledge, that is, theories which provide the most detailed general account of how and why scientists combine their human cognitive abilities with the conceptual resources available to them as members of scientific communities and broader social contexts to construct and communicate new scientific representations in a research field, must be based on a systematic analysis of the language-mediated cognitive mechanisms deployed by scientists in their research. These mechanisms, obviously, can only be known a posteriori, although rigorous analysis can distill some quasi-logical or methodological canons that justify them. In spite of differences in the articulation of their views, proponents of naturalised epistemology assign a highly specialized but relatively minor role to the construction of axiomatic systems by scientists. Additionally, they emphasize the representational character of theories which encode the world in sets of “schemata” or “paradigms”. Margolis, 63-187; Fuller *et al*, 1989; Fetzer, 1991)

A major weakness of a priorist or logistic stance in the philosophy of science is that it conceives scientific discovery and conceptual change as static and ahistorical, whereas both are creative dynamic processes extended in time. C-HA avoids the error by drawing attention to scientists in terms of their representations of nature and the research activities that generate those representations. Hence, contrary to Imre Lakatos’ recommendation that the philosopher should ignore or distort historical facts to fit methodological theory developed a priori (Lakatos, 1970: 138), philosophical analysis of any component of scientific knowledge must be informed by the actual representational practices scientists employ in articulating and changing conceptual frameworks. To reiterate again, C-HA is the appropriate method in this regard, because it provides a realistic descriptive and explanatory account of scientific practice.

In order to illustrate how C-HA illuminates the interconnected cognitive mechanisms involved in scientific discovery, we shall analyse Ernest Rutherford’s discovery of the nucleus of atom along the lines suggested by Nercessian’s cognitive-historical discussion of Clerk Maxwell’s efforts to construct the theory of electromagnetic field. (Nercessian, 1992) Naturally, like all scientists, Rutherford was working within the theoretical and experimental traditions of his research field - radioactivity. Right from ancient times, the nature of the ultimate constitutive element or substratum of the universe had elicited the thoughtful attention of philosophers and scientists. According to the ancient Greek philosopher, Democritus, atoms were the smallest indivisible components of matter. In 1803, John Dalton, a British chemist, enlarged on the idea of atoms in his theory of chemical combination, but he lacked well-founded experimental findings to make solid progress. Real advance in scientific understanding of atomic structure began in 1897 when J. J. Thomson, in a paper on cathode rays, announced the existence of extremely small, negatively charged, electrons (or corpuscles, as such tiny particles were called then). (Shamos, 1987: 219) Around the same period, Wilhelm Konrad Roentgen, Henri Becquerel and Marie and Pierre Curie were exploring the newly discovered phenomenon of radioactivity, for which satisfactory explanation was unavailable

at the time. Thomson proposed a new model of the atom which depicted it as a positively charged sphere on which electrons were scattered around (the plum pudding model). As a unit, the atom, he argued, is stable and electrically neutral, because the negatively charged electrons were counterbalanced and held in place by positively charged electrostatic forces. Thomson attempted to account for the observed spectra of elements with his model by proposing that the electron, being a charged particle, would radiate energy in accordance with the classical theory of electromagnetism if it vibrates in its equilibrium state, and the frequency of radiation would be the same as that of the electron. For instance, hydrogen, having only one electron, should give a single spectral line. But experiments showed that hydrogen spectrum consists of a number of series, each having many lines. Consequently, Thomson's model could not explain the spectrum of even the simplest atom, hydrogen. (Lal & Ahmad, 1997: 135)

Meanwhile, Rutherford (who later became one of Thomson's protégés at Cavendish laboratory) was researching alpha particles at McGill University, Montreal, Canada. He measured the charge-to-mass ratio of alpha particles, just as Thomson had done for electrons. After four years of research on the particles which began in 1898, Rutherford was convinced that they were positively charged helium atoms, that is, helium atoms without their two electrons. (McKenzie, 292-293; Crease & Mann, 16) The series of experiments that led to Rutherford's discovery of atomic nucleus were launched by his research assistants, Hans Geiger and Ernest Marsden, after he had moved to Manchester University, England, in 1907. Geiger and Marsden tried to measure precisely the paths of alpha rays. They noticed that as the particles from a radioactive source sped outwards, a significant number of them were deflected by the air and the walls of the tube such that it was difficult to determine precisely the actual path of each particle. (Rutherford, 1913: 537; Shamos, 253-264) However, using the newly developed Geiger counter, they discovered that most of the alpha particles hardly changed direction, or were deflected a little. But occasionally some were scattered through very large angles, that is, angles greater than  $90^\circ$ . In fact, one in about eight thousand alpha particles would actually hit a thin sheet of gold leaf and rebound backwards. (Beiser, 1995: 119-120) These large scatterings surprised Rutherford, because if Thomson's atomic theory was correct, the alpha particles passing through a metal foil should experience only weak electric forces: they should be able to penetrate the foil with their initial momenta undergoing only a negligible deflection from their original paths. Rutherford described his consternation about the scattering effects he observed with the following words: "It was quite the most incredible event that ever happened to me in my life. It was as incredible as if you fired a 15-inch shell at a piece of tissue paper and it came back and hit you!" (Quoted in Hey & Walters, 48) The following diagram is a simplified illustration of Rutherford's experiment.

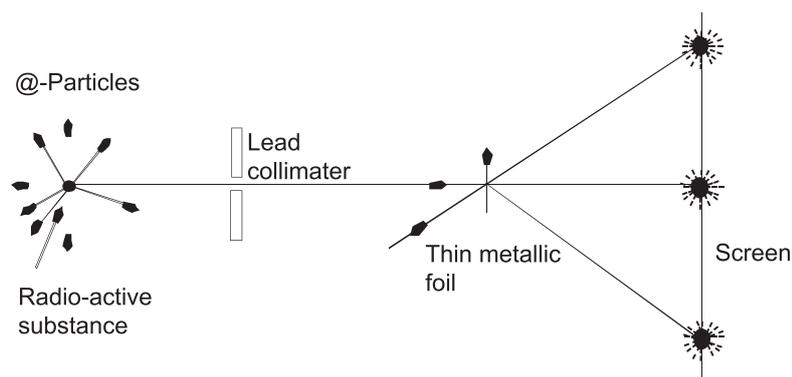


Fig. 1 A schematic representation of Rutherford's scattering experiment. (Culled from Lal & Ahmad (1997), *A Textbook of Modern Physics*)

Rutherford explained the unexpected large scattering of the alpha rays with analogical and imagistic reasoning by transforming the problem of tracing the paths of individual alpha particles into that of analysing the very nature of the electrical forces that determine their spin and momenta after collision with metallic foils still within the schemata provided by classical electrodynamics. The role of analogy in cognition has been explored by M. Hesse (1966), W. Sellars (1985), and H. Brown (1986), Margolis, 1987). In general, analogical reasoning links existing conceptual framework to a new one through the mapping of relational structures from the old to the new. (Nercessian, 1992: 13) As an aid to his imagination, Rutherford was fond of constructing a clear pictorial image in his mind of what was going on when he performed an experiment. On this occasion, unable to break away completely from the “plum pudding” model invented by Thomson, his theoretical calculations nevertheless pointed in a different direction to a new representation of the atom. Rutherford imagined an alpha particle ricocheting off an atom. He conjectured that if almost all the atomic mass was tightly packed into an ultra-tiny charged node in the centre, the latter could possibly deflect an alpha particle. In Rutherford's own words:

On consideration I soon realized that this scattering backwards must be the result of a single collision, and when I made the calculations I saw it was impossible to get anything of that order of magnitude unless you took a system in which the greater part of the mass of the atom was concentrated in a minute nucleus. It was then that I had the idea of an atom with a minute massive centre carrying a charge. I worked out mathematically what laws the scattering should obey, and I found that the number of particles scattered through a given angle should be proportional to the thickness of the foil, the square of the nuclear charge, and inversely proportional to the fourth power of the velocity. These deductions were later verified by Geiger and Marsden in a series of beautiful experiments. (Quoted in Chandrasehkar, 1990: 3)

The image of the atom as a miniature solar system started forming in his mind as he grappled with the question whether the charged centre was positively or negatively charged – that is, whether it kicked

away the alpha particles or whipped them round and round in circles like a swirling object tied to a string. The opposite charge to the nucleus, he thought, had to be some sort of thin gaseous sphere surrounding the middle of the atom. On the basis of the large scattering of alpha particles by very thin metallic foils, Rutherford concluded that the atom is virtually empty. Rutherford first presented his discovery on March 7, 1912, at a session of Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society. Initially, it elicited little attention from his colleagues, but he continued to work to perfect the theory. The unenthusiastic reception was because the theory clashed with one of the most enduring concepts in science and philosophy – the idea of substance. Furthermore, although the nuclear atom model explained the large deflections observed in experiments with alpha particles, it still needed to be interpreted within the paradigm of quantum theory to make it work. This was accomplished by Niels Bohr, one of the earliest physicists to take Rutherford's theory of the atom seriously. Bohr introduced Planck's constant or elementary quantum of action into the model and, thus, was able to explain the spectral lines of hydrogen which, as we observed earlier, could not be explained by Thomson's theory. (Lal & Ahmad, 147-162)

The quest to consolidate his ideas led Rutherford to articulate further his image of the atom. His researches received a boost from the work of H. G. Moseley, who studied x-ray spectra of as many elements as possible. (McKenzie, 294) Moseley showed that, beginning with hydrogen, each element can be assigned a unique number, 1, 2, 3 and so on, which is proportional to the square root of the frequency of the spectral lines. This number is called the atomic number, and it is equal to the positive charge in the atomic nucleus and also to the number of electrons in the atom. In his Bakerian lecture entitled "Nuclear Constitution of Atoms" (1920), eight years after he had announced his discovery, Rutherford suggested that the positively charged nucleus is surrounded by a distribution of negative electrons equal in number to the resultant positive charge on the nucleus. He worked out the relations linking the number of alpha particles scattered through any angle to both the charge on atomic nuclei and energy of the alpha particle. Meanwhile, C. G. Darwin had calculated the deflection of alpha particles by the nucleus, taking into account the mass of the latter. He demonstrated that under the influence of electrostatic forces, an alpha particle describes a hyperbolic orbit round the nucleus, and the magnitude of the deflection is a function of its distance to the nucleus. (McKenzie, 511)

Rutherford's picture of an atom as a miniature solar system functioned as a modifiable representation or mental model which enabled him to draw inferences relevant to solving the problem at hand – an explanation of the observed large scattering of alpha particles by thin metal foils. In other words, the model functioned heuristically as a physical analogy through which Rutherford exploited the powerful representational capabilities implicit in his theoretical constructions. This is at odds with the positivist overemphasis on knowledge encoded in propositions and rules. Therefore, the creative heuristic power of analogical reasoning and pattern-recognition mechanisms that feature so prominently whenever scientists are constructing new representations of reality is a modelling process through which relational structures are abstracted from existing paradigm and fitted to the constraints of a new problem situation and schemata. In line with this, Rutherford invented, for the new model of the atom he was proposing, equivalents of gravitational forces that, according to Newton's theory, keep the planets in orbits around the sun. Accordingly, he posited that electrons associated with an atom must continuously rotate around

the nucleus, because an attractive force exists between the positively charged nucleus and the negatively charged electrons – if the electrons were stationary, they would plunge into the nucleus. The charge on the nucleus was calculated to be about  $^{1/2}Ae$ , where  $A$  is the atomic weight and  $e$  the fundamental unit of charge. Since the atom is electrically neutral, the positive electric charge of the nucleus must be exactly balanced by the negative charge of the electrons orbiting it. (Hey & Walters, 49) C. G Barkla's work on the scattering of x-rays by light elements convinced Rutherford that the number of electrons was equal to about half the atomic weight. He also assumed an inverse square law between the nucleus and an alpha particle, by which the probability of scattering through various angles could be calculated mathematically. Rutherford then predicted that eight times as many particles should be scattered between  $60^\circ$  and  $120^\circ$  as between  $120^\circ$  and  $180^\circ$ . (McKenzie, 293) His predictions were confirmed experimentally by Geiger and Marsden. Keep in mind that it was the ratio of alpha particles that rebounded or were deflected through wide angles to those that were deflected slightly or not at all which finally convinced Rutherford that the atom was virtually empty.

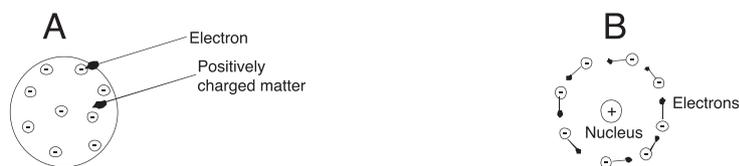


Fig. 2 A diagrammatic comparison of Thomson's and Rutherford's models of the atom. Notice that Rutherford's model (B) is closer to the contemporary model than Thomson's

#### 1.4 Comments

Debates about what to include or exclude from the philosophy of science, and about the the proper relation between the philosophy of science and other science studies disciplines have not been completely settled. (Giere, 1973; Burian, 1977; Caldin, 2000, Pinnick & Gale 2000) Logical positivists and falsificationists focused exclusively on the features of science that are amenable to analysis with the tools of formal logic. Philosophers with a more inter-disciplinary research orientation argue that although logical analysis of science has yielded important insights into the nature of scientific knowledge, it has unduly neglected significant features of research which make science a living enterprise undertaken by human beings.

Now, historicised philosophy of science connects to the historico-empirical world in a way that other sub-disciplines in philosophy typically do not imitate, because irrespective of her methodological orientation and preferences the philosopher of science ought to articulate a theory of science realistic enough to explain recurrent features of scientific practice. Since the historical turn, logical coherence and formalisability alone are no longer considered the sole, or even the most important, criteria for assessing philosophical interpretations of science. (Polanyi, 1964; Feyerabend, 1975; Kuhn, 1977; Gieryn, 1997,

Nickles, 2003) This attitude reflects dissatisfaction by post-positivist philosophers of science towards orthodox conceptions of what an acceptable philosophical interpretation of science should be and what it should accomplish. There is, therefore, a paradigm-shift from the static a priorist models of logistic philosophies of science to more dynamic, empirically grounded, representations of science which are in tune with actual scientific practice and still retain some degree of generality usually expected in philosophical analyses. On this basis, one can understand why philosophers of science, such as Kuhn, Margolis, and Nancy Nercessian recommended that their theories of science should be read as descriptive and explanatory accounts of science all at once. The recommendation seems paradoxical, but a close study of their works amply demonstrates its suitability and fruitfulness. (Kuhn, 1970b; Margolis, 1987; Nercessian, 2003)

The analytic possibility and desirability of using knowledge practices such as the ones disclosed in discovery accounts to construct a naturalised epistemology is central to cognitive-historical research programme. C-HA provides techniques for interpreting different phases in discovery processes within a realistic epistemological template as changeable and changing forms of problem-solving abilities. In addition, it distils from case studies of actual scientific practices a comprehensive theory of how and why conceptual structures are constructed and changed in science, and increases understanding of how scientists build on existing paradigms while creating genuine novelty. The outcome of such analysis, as contained in the works of Kuhn and others, is a nuanced, defeasible, and epistemologically informative account of scientific discovery that undermines the view that discovery processes are too mysterious to be rationally accounted for. Creativity in science, as in other human endeavors, is a goal-directed process consisting of several interconnected stages. Again, cognitive processes which culminate in scientific discovery are extensions of processes observed in simpler problem-solving situations. From our analysis of Rutherford's discovery of the atomic nucleus, one can identify epistemologically relevant modelling activities in the form of pattern-recognition, imagistic and analogical reasoning which are crucial in scientific discovery. The road to that discovery began with the perception of a problem – the unexpected large deflections of alpha particles. The analogies, images and mathematical equations he constructed were integral to the cognitive processes that led to the solution he proposed eventually. Of particular interest is the fact that Rutherford did not take an existing atomic structure and plug the parameters of his solar system model to arrive at a solution. Instead, he applied the idea that large deflections of alpha particles must be due to “a central electric charge concentrated at a point” to create a model which explained better than Thomson's model the phenomenon under investigation.

The solar system image allowed Rutherford to visualize certain structural relationships contained in his mathematical calculations. By clustering together in perceptual space and making visual a nexus of interconnected inferences, the imagistic representations he created were compatible with a variety of perceptual inferences. To pick out the most appropriate one by articulating further the (mathematical) representations and physical analogies he formulated on paper, he had to present them in a form that already focuses on, and abstracts specific aspects of, the phenomenon being investigated. Nercessian (1992: 24-26) provides an account of the cognitive functions which physical analogies like the ones Rutherford employed in interpreting the result of his alpha ray experiments serve in discovery. Briefly stated, the mathematical

information implicit in such representations embody structural relations that determine the outcome of experiments and facilitates access to quantifiable aspects of phenomena. As a result, physical analogies provide an intermediate level of abstraction between phenomena and mathematical forms of representation (formulae and equations). They provide also a stable image for the researcher and make various versions of it accessible for direct inspection, thereby assisting the memory in problem-solving. Furthermore, by making available a stable objective embodiment, imagistic representations make it easier for scientists to grasp other relevant aspects of a new representation than text and formulae alone. Applying Nercessian's ideas to our case study, it is evident that at first Rutherford did not understand fully all the subtleties of the solar system model of the atom he was proposing; but he grasped the spatial configurations of the powerful electric charge at the centre which deflected alpha particles. With further research, he was able to link his experimental results with equations embodying abstract structural features of the alpha ray scattering phenomenon. Hence, he succeeded in working out mathematically some testable consequences of the interplay of forces he considered necessary for explaining the observed behavior of scattered alpha particles. Finally, in order to communicate the new atomic representation he invented to his colleagues, Rutherford had to present it in the form of a physical (visually concrete) analogy along with the theoretical calculations that led him to it.

## 1.5 Conclusion

It must be pointed out that although the historical and cognitive turns in the philosophy of science exposed the weaknesses of positivism, it is important that the philosopher of science should seek out components in historical case studies which can be used to formulate a robust epistemology of science capable of withstanding those weaknesses. CHA, by focusing as it does on scientists and on the historically changing practices through which they create and change representations in a scientific specialty, rather than on static linguistic representations that change radically from time to time, enhances the articulation of empirically-grounded theoretical models of how science actually works and why it works the way it does. Thus although episodes of discovery, from the perspectives of positivism and falsificationism, seem irrelevant to the prescriptive concerns of the philosopher, C-HA enables realistic and normative conclusions about scientific practice to be drawn from such events. One such conclusion is that scientists, in order to ground their theoretical constructions in empirically testable form, must think in terms of concrete images embedded in conceptual frameworks or schemata. More to the point, cognitive analysis allows the philosopher of science to make some sense out of certain perplexing ideas proposed by Kuhn – for instance, the notion that scientists before and after a scientific revolution invariably operate in different worlds. As Nercessian intimates, “if [scientists] do negotiate the world by constructing mental models, prerevolutionary and postrevolutionary scientists would construct different mental models and would, thus, truly have different experiences of the world.” (Nercessian, 1992:36)

The central motivation of this paper is to support the growing tendency in philosophical interpretation of science that employs concepts and ideas from other science studies disciplines to analyse selected aspects

of science which traditional logistic philosophers of science rejected as irrelevant to the subject. Fixation with the technical problems encapsulated in the epithet “logic of scientific discovery” prevents philosophers from articulating theories that capture the richness and dynamism of science as a living enterprise undertaken by fallible communities of researchers. To avoid the excesses of logical positivism and kindred philosophies, the philosopher of science should go beyond arbitrary logistic borders by construing the history of science as a legitimate source of problems and of data that can be used to assess philosophical reconstructions of science. Needless to say, while still keeping the normative concerns of philosophy in the foreground, she can extrapolate from theories and insights developed from other science studies disciplines to enrich her work. The interdisciplinary approach here recommended stimulates systematic investigation and normative evaluation of the intellectual processes (and their emotional corollaries) involved in rigorous scientific research. More specifically, it provides avenue for philosophically fruitful investigation of scientific discoveries. Cognitive-historical methodology offers a conceptual tool-kit which can be effectively used to reconstruct episodes of discovery in science within the context of the norms implicit in the social organization of research.

In this paper, we have raised doubts about the appropriateness of construing scientific discovery as something that happens to a scientist at an instant in time, an event without a structure. The outcome of rigorous researches in the history of science has demonstrated clearly the inadequacies in earlier positivistic accounts of scientific development, of which discoveries constitute an important part. Therefore, there is no overarching reason for philosophers to tie themselves down intellectually with the apron-strings of positivism, or maintain that the “context of discovery” cannot be handled in a philosophically intelligible manner. As Kuhn rightly pointed out, “considerations relevant to the context of discovery are...relevant to justification as well...,” which means that both are legitimate topics for philosophical inquiry. (Kuhn, 1977: 328) (Merton, 1963; Reif, 1961; Kuhn, 1977, 165-177; Boorstin, 413-417; Cohen, 1985; Nercessian, 1992) After all, the main tasks of the philosophy of science, we must add, are *to enhance comprehensive understanding of science and improve scientific practice*, not to *logicise* it.

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# Swan Valley Sideways: Economic Development Through Taste and Tourism in Western Australia.

By Tara Brabazon

## Abstract

This article enacts the first cultural mapping of Perth's urban wine industry, showing the potential and challenges to future economic development. It is argued that local and state government initiatives have disconnected from entrepreneurial event management. Innovative links between music, food, wine and tourism have been created in the Swan Valley yet are unrecognized in governmental strategic plans and vision statements. To begin this new project that aligns top-down and bottom-up initiatives requires investment and infrastructure in tourism and transportation. To develop an understanding of tourism consumption and practice, the film *Sideways* is used as a trigger, model and mode of development. The often unexpected relationship between popular culture and wine marketing shown by *Sideways* is particularly appropriate for the Swan Valley in Western Australia. Instead of a film providing the basis of a marketing campaign, popular music is a key to future development of wine tourism. The Swan Valley offers an innovative location to consider wine tourism, wine media and the challenges of managing difference and specificity within the international creative industries literature.

## Keywords

Wine tourism, wine media, creative industries, Perth, *Sideways*, popular music

Problems attend the development of Perth's creative industries and city imaging. A lack of vision, money and expertise are three barriers blocking the development of an overarching and horizontally integrated strategy between diverse economic and social sectors. However, another key weakness is the excessive

policy attention to Perth's Central Business District. It is – as with many modern cities – a dead centre.



The impact of this dead centre is that the suburbs become more important to economic development, social cohesion and the building of identity. The majority of Perth's population hugs the coast and creates clusters of community from Mandurah to Mindarie Keys. The water is blue. The shopping is adequate for both the weekly grocery shop and the occasionally extravagant purchase. Most employees are drawn from local or nearby suburbs. The more that urban planners, report writers and taskforces stress the need to enliven the CBD, the more likely it is that residents open another bottle of wine, sizzle up a cutlet of salmon and enjoy the suburbs.

This article enacts a cultural mapping of Perth's urban wine industry, showing the potential and challenges to future economic development. It is argued that local and state government initiatives have disconnected from industry-based, entrepreneurial event management. Innovative links between music, food, wine and tourism have been created in the Swan Valley and are unrecognized in governmental strategic plans and vision statements. To begin this new project that connects top-down and bottom-up initiatives requires investment and infrastructure in tourism and transportation. The film *Sideways* is used as a trigger, model and mode of development. The often unexpected relationship between popular culture and wine marketing shown by *Sideways* is particularly appropriate for the Swan Valley in Western Australia. Instead of a film creating the basis of growth in the wine industry, in Perth it is popular music that is providing the innovative engine for development. The Swan Valley is an evocative location to consider wine tourism, wine media and the challenges of managing difference and specificity within the international creative industries literature.

## Sub/urban development

Wave after wave of theorists, planners and consultants label Perth as behind the times, pre-urban, dated and most significantly (cold shiver) suburban. For example, Charles Landry was brought in by Form, the Perth-based not for profit organization, for a two year consultancy. He presented one cultural mapping of the city.

Last weekend I criss-crossed over 350 kilometres of Perth from the Eastern suburbs to the Western in search of a speck of urbanity. I do not denigrate the delights of suburbia, but Perth has 98% of it. The suburban washes over metro Perth like an endless patina as the swathes of asphalt covered to get there dull the senses. How about 80% suburbia and 20% of the truly urban to start with? You see a touch in Subiaco, East Perth, Fremantle, Mount Lawley. But where else?<sup>1</sup>

Charles Landry moved from east to west looking for urbanity. What he missed was a wine territory within half an hour of a capital city and, neighbouring to its west, one of the most pristine stretches of public beaches in the world. In looking for a particular form of urbanity, the distinctiveness and diversity of landscape was missed.

In Perth, recent summits and talkfests have attempted to create a new vision for Perth. LandCorp 2030 featured Richard Weller, Professor of Architecture at the University of Western Australia, who argued that, “Perth had to look around the world at other thriving cities, decide what type of metropolis it wanted to be, and follow a design to make it happen.”<sup>2</sup> While architects and planners are waiting for city modelling to take place, perhaps it already has. It may not feature the steel and chrome of Manchester’s lofts or the bohemian chic of North Beach in San Francisco. But the landscape – let alone the population - is speaking to planners, architects and designers. The problem is that they are not listening to the local dialect, attempting to impose a version of modernity over a city with distinct indigenous and migrant histories and different engagements with sport, leisure, food and the outdoor environment.

At times, the creative industries literature can be positively pathological against ‘the suburbs.’ The repercussion of such analytical attacks is that it perpetuates classism and inequality. Over the last decade, the poorest of citizens have moved to the extremities of cities. The affluent have clustered in the suburbs within a twenty minute car trip to the CBD and the inner city is composed of “students, singles, couples, dinks, gays, expats, corporates, divorcees and the most important of all, the professional and entrepreneurial classes ... the entertainment, information and media glitterati.”<sup>3</sup> The affluent and educated affirm the value of urbanity, while the majority of the population occupies the middle and outer suburbs. Bernard Salt stated that “the problem I have is that city planning, and more often Australian culture, appears to be determined by those whose lives are based in the inner city, and not by the silent majority of average Australians who live in the suburban heartland. Perhaps it’s time to listen to what the latter have to say about the kind

of lifestyle they want to lead in suburbia.”<sup>4</sup> The problem confronting Perth planners in particular is that denizens like living in the suburbs and have no great need to travel to ‘the centre.’ Like a living antipodal version of Barthes’s description of Tokyo,<sup>5</sup> the empty centre masks interest, difference, defiance, awkwardness and energy in its otherness and periphery. SunnyCheeks84 expressed her frustration with such judgements, but offered a clear message to the planners. Indeed – and continuing the Barthesian metaphor – when the periphery speaks, it is loud, but often in a language not understood by those in power.

Every week there is something in the newspaper making reference to Perth being “Dullsville” and it really annoys me. Not only because I am sick of hearing this phrase, but also because its just not true! The thing is with Perth, the life of the city isnt actually IN the city... its in the areas around it. In general, people just need to get out more, and actually try things that are out of their normal routines. There has been so much happening down here over the last few months, its just a case of finding out whats on and ACTUALLY DOING IT! For a start, there have been an enless amount of art and music fesivals, not only in Perth, but also in areas like Joondalup, Fremantle, Margeret River, Busselton and even Wave Rock. Aside from those, I have also enjoyed the outdoor cinemas in Kings Park, Burswood and Joondalup, friday night markets in Joondalup, canoeing out to Penguin Island, fishing at Two Rocks, 4WD in Lancelin, reef snorkelling at Beaumaris, sunday markets at Freo, the Tri nations beach cricket at Scarborough, crabbing in Mandurah, the Hopman Cup, the Red Bull Air Race and the other day played “Super golf” (which is golf, but with a giant golfball). When there’s “nothing on,” I spend my weekends down at the beach, having BBQs with friends, or down at “The Boat” in Mindarie Quays, where you can enjoy fish n chips and a cold beer on the waters edge, while listening to live bands. My point is that there is ALWAYS something to do and you dont need to be rich to do it. There is more to a city than night clubs and 24/7 trading hours! Too many people want Perth to be like Sydney or Melbourne and I honestly dont know why! ... No, we are a better, cleaner and more relaxed city because we are NOT like them. But that DOESNT make Perth Dullsville!!!!<sup>6</sup> (spelling and grammatical errors are retained from the original extract)

This paper offers a hypothesis or, more precisely, a premise to consider. If Perth – ‘Dullsville’<sup>7</sup> or the most isolated capital city in the world<sup>8</sup> – is to develop creative industries, then this development will be different and defiantly so. The more that Charles Landry,<sup>9</sup> Richard Florida<sup>10</sup> or Charles Leadbeater<sup>11</sup> come to the city to lecture and impose a top down model of development, the more likely residents will continue to enjoy the sparkling ocean, great bands playing on a Saturday afternoon in Joondalup, a football match in Mandurah or handbag house music in a Northbridge club. Most importantly, while trying to impose a modelling of urbanity onto Perth, one great advantage of the city is overlooked.

This paper stops the car and parks the vehicle rather than continuing Landry’s drive across Perth’s metropolis. It takes a particular industry and location and shows how – using a different model of creative industries outside of the well cited examples of Manchester, Sheffield, San Francisco or Seattle - Perth can provide some unexpected examples of development. If we as researchers and planners look carefully

at what already exists and has emerged from the context and conditions, then a better social and economic environment can be developed that has the support of the population. A carefully considered tourist and transportation policy is required. To commence this study of Perth, I discuss another wine industry that built a tourist explosion. What is unusual is that this development was based on a film. The first section of this article explores *Sideways*, providing a framework for Perth's unusual and emerging relationship between the wine industry and popular culture, particularly music.

## The Sideways Effect

It is difficult to predict which film, television programme or pop performer will generate cross-media, cross-platform influence, facilitating the horizontal development and integration with other creative industries like fashion, sport or tourism.<sup>12</sup> Not every film will initiate the success of *The Lord of the Rings*. The film *Australia* was a clear example where the attempt to align screen cultures and the tourist industry failed. Often, there are bolts not so much from the blue, but the multiplex or – more precisely – the DVD. The film *Sideways* was not only a surprise success, but led to a range of tourism operators capitalizing on wine tours of central California.<sup>13</sup> It offered a slice of difference and separation from the more famous Napa Valley. Like Perth, Santa Ynez Valley tends to be displaced or marginalized in comparison to the more famous cities and regions. Kimberly Edds described the marketing and branding of this region.

Nestled between rich green hills swathed in yellow and purple wildflowers, the wine country of the Santa Ynez Valley has long played the forgotten stepsister to Northern California's Napa Valley and Sonoma. A 45-minute drive north of Santa Barbara, it was a spot locals prided themselves on but few others were aware of.<sup>14</sup>

To publicize that region, the Santa Barbara Conference and Visitors Bureau published 10,000 *Sideways* tourist maps. Within a month, this first printing was exhausted. Then 30,000 more were printed, with the map also being downloaded from the Bureau's website.<sup>15</sup> A range of websites promoted the alignment in branding between *Sideways* and Santa Ynez. Indeed, Barbara.com commences with a popular cultural affirmation.

Welcome to Santa Barbara Wine Country, home of the movie *Sideways*. Currently there are over two hundred wineries, vineyards and tasting rooms in the county and the number grows each month.<sup>16</sup>

Napa Valley has been well served by the wine industry media. As one example, the writer Mick Winter has built the link between wineries, publishing and community organizations. *The Napa Valley Book* is a fine example of how a tourist guide can be constructed and published with thoroughness, professionalism and fine writing.<sup>17</sup> It is witty, careful, intelligent and stylish. A successful winery that is able to create a sustainable tourism industry requires an effective and creative development of wine industry media. The

Napa Valley has high quality guide books to enact this function. Santa Ynez Valley has *Sideways*.

New Zealand's filmic and touristic success summoned hobbits rather than pinot noir. Certainly, the New Zealand wine industry has moved through the same process of trade liberalization and neoliberalism that has impacted on the other creative industries.<sup>18</sup> But the lesson from their success is clear. Popular cultural tourism is increasingly common. From Concord, the site of Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*, through to the Manchester of *24 Hour Party People*, popular cultural spaces and narratives inform and inflect the modern and the urban to create marketable tourist locations.<sup>19</sup> The success of Wellington in refashioning itself into a creative hub was built on the long-term building of a New Zealand wine industry, fine dining and Te Papa. These successes then fed back into the branding of a modern and urban gateway into the filmic locations of Middle Earth.<sup>20</sup> Publications such as *Off the Menu* and Wellington's *Modern Dining Magazine*,<sup>21</sup> reinforced this reputation. While Auckland is known for its Fashion Week and sports tourism, Creative New Zealand<sup>22</sup> created a whole-of-government approach to creative industries development that aligns the specific industries and cities of Auckland and Wellington with their attendant regions and adventure tourism in the South Island.

This cultural and policy environment also offered an opportunity for scholars to consider the positioning of the arts and humanities in Creative Industries initiatives.<sup>23</sup> Alignments of film, music, fashion, food production, education and tourism increased the branding and visibility of the city of Wellington through the regional development of adjacent areas. Tickets for the 2006 Toast Martinborough event, a festival of food and wine, sold out in less than two hours. Although based in the Wairarapa, 65 percent of the festival-goers originated from Wellington and only 13 percent from the home region. The remaining visitors came from Auckland and other areas of the country. This is affluent tourism: half of all the surveyed participants earned an annual household income of over \$100,000. This connection between tourism, food and wine adds NZ\$500,000 to the Wairarapa economy.<sup>24</sup> The Napa Valley also has another example of such thoughtful economic and social interventions. The Mustard Festival<sup>25</sup> was introduced each February and March as a way to increase the tourists visiting restaurants and accommodation during the 'slow' months for the wine industry.<sup>26</sup>

Such food tourism is a clear example of the horizontal integration of industries. Hall, Sharples, Mitchell, Macionis and Cambourne took this topic as a research focus, exploring how food can be developed, managed and marketed.<sup>27</sup> C.M. Hall and Liz Sharples explored the consequences of marketing experiences with food, developing a "tourism of taste."<sup>28</sup> They realized that,

Food is one of the essential elements of the tourist experience. Yet it is such an integral part of the experience that it is only in recent years that it has become a subject of study in its own right ... Food, just like tourism, was for many years a fringe academic discipline, and was frowned upon as an area of research by students of more 'serious' disciplines.<sup>29</sup>

Food media has increased in its profile, with cookery programmes proliferating on radio and podcasts, television and other screen-based platforms. Travelling and sourcing ingredients have become part of the

media narrative. Authentic experiences are marketed as part of the production and consumption of food.

For Perth, the lesson is clear from such strategies, alignments and examples. While there are many summits, taskforces and strategic collaborations about the future of Perth, too often the future of the entire city is collapsed into the future of the CBD. There is one industry that is providing an unexpected, important and dynamic case study of creative industries in action. Significantly, this unusual example of bottom up strategic partnerships is from an industry that rarely features in the international creative industries literature: wine. While *Sideways*' success started with the film and followed into tourism, Perth's wine industry – based in the Swan Valley – has provided the impetus for other, unexpected cultural and creative successes.

### Urban wine

There are very few wine regions around the world that are within a thirty minute drive of a CBD. Perth is one of those cities. For example, the Barossa Valley is comprised of a series of country towns situated eighty kilometres north west of Adelaide. The Swan Valley is part of the metropolitan area and is twenty kilometres from the city centre. What makes this unusual and seemingly attractive geography of urban wine difficult to market is that there are a range of more famous vine growing and wine making towns and regions in the south west of the state. Margaret River wines are the most famous, but other areas include Pemberton, Denmark, Geographe, Peel, Pemberton, Porongurup and Mt. Barker. To align these regions and towns, a branding strategy and logo was designed and used to unify western and particularly south-western wine. A deep red coloured logo assumes the appearance of spilled wine in the shape of the continent of Australia, but features a mark over the south west region of W.A. The logo reads “Australia – west – dominion of wine.”<sup>30</sup>

australia west  
*dominion of wine*



*Wine Industry Association of Western Australia. Used with Permission*

This branding is unusual, but historically and geographically descriptive and resonant. Distinctiveness matters. Wine is “a saturated market.”<sup>31</sup> Certainly this region is part of a nation known for winemaking. However the two other words – ‘west’ and ‘dominion’ – capture a history of difference, separation and

colonization. The choice of ‘dominion’ seems to summon a sanitized colonial heritage rather than a critical historiography.<sup>32</sup> It also connotes a secondary status, a place on its way to independence but disconnected from it. Such a label conveys the ambivalent histories of the indigenous peoples, settler communities and migrant communities in Western Australia, particularly from Croatia and Italy. What is absent is recognition of an Indian Ocean or Asian-strategy. The labelling is colonial rather than postcolonial.

Sue Vidovich, CEO with the Wine Industry Association of Western Australia, affirmed that the logo is “enhancing unity within the West Australian wine industry and the promotion of Wine Brand WA are fundamental to the success and longevity of our industry. This brand not only gives our association an enormous footing with its marketing, it also gives it a much needed adrenaline rush.”<sup>33</sup> WIAWA is the key organization for the State’s wine producers, with a role in building trade links, quality control and lobbying.<sup>34</sup>

Besides this logo, there are further changes being made to marketing and branding. The state government department responsible for the industry, Tourism Western Australia, is confronting challenges in creating sustainable economic models amidst a global downturn. Their report, *A Better Future for Tourism in WA*, released in May 2010, revealed the scale of these challenges. The level and rate of interstate visitors is low.<sup>35</sup> Western Australians are travelling overseas rather than within WA.<sup>36</sup> Considering these challenges, the staff in the industry critiqued Tourism WA for not developing infrastructure and fragmenting the marketing goals.<sup>37</sup> In response to these critiques, the developmental priorities from the state government formalized to include the Margaret River Wine Region, Broome, eco-tourism in the Kimberley and Ningaloo, and Perth’s waterfront with attention to the city’s hotels.<sup>38</sup> The Swan Valley was excluded.

The disconnection between the state government, local government and tourist businesses is mentioned (indirectly) as an ongoing challenge in the industry’s official documentation, noting that what is required is, “a strong industry that works in partnership with Government and relies less on Government funding.”<sup>39</sup> Western Australia however does not have the history of such Quangos (Quasi non governmental organizations) such as the Regional Development Agencies in the United Kingdom. These mediate between government and industry and are ideally suited to assisting small and medium sized enterprises which dominate tourist organizations and businesses. While Regional Development Commissions exist, they have no specialist expertise in tourism development.<sup>40</sup> To understand this dissonance between state, city and regional government, an historical understanding of both Swan Valley geography and governance are required.

The Swan Valley was integral to the first white settlement of the Swan River Colony. The coastal strip adjacent to the newly founded Perth was dry and sandy. The arable agricultural land was in the Swan Valley. In 1829, the first year of colonial settlement, livestock was farmed in this region. The potential for viticulture was realized by the botanist Thomas Waters. He thought that the climate in the Swan Valley could produce similar wines to France or Italy. He brought root stock from South Africa and planted it at Olive Farm in South Guildford. This site is now known as Water’s Edge Winery.<sup>41</sup> While the early Swan Valley took on a culture of large estates, based on the British gentry, it was the Croatian farmers who

arrived after the First World War that make the Swan Valley an area of vineyards rather than more traditional agricultural produce.<sup>42</sup> Such an immigration history has been important to Australian wine making. The Barossa Valley would not have been successful without the German immigrants.<sup>43</sup> Italian migrants established the vast grape-growing and wine production region of the Riverland.<sup>44</sup> Migrant populations in Western Australia brought new labour practices and processes for pruning, picking, storage and drying. However a special pathway through Western Australian colonial history, based around Guildford, can be revealed in its buildings and streets. While Fremantle was the colonial port and Perth an administrative hub, Guildford was the market town.<sup>45</sup>

The grape vine creates a very specific form of agricultural production. Distinct climate and geological conditions are necessary for the vines to grow and thrive. There is an historical geography to viticulture.<sup>46</sup> The focus on developing a regional branding strategy for Western Australian wines – part of Australia, part of a dominion, but western – was and is necessary. Because of the international success of Margaret River in particular, the wine region within the capital city (and in other regional areas) maintains secondary or displaced status.

While marginal in branding terms, the Swan Valley was one of the earliest grape-growing regions in Australia. Unlike the *Sideways*' protagonist and his fixation on Pinot Noir, the Swan Valley is known for Verdelho and Shiraz,<sup>47</sup> with a select range of regional vintage fortified wines.<sup>48</sup> Besides grape growing for wine production, table grapes and dried produce, the vineyards have diversified, transforming the land into multi-use production, including olives, stone fruit and slow food staples such as chocolate and nougat, along with accommodation and tour operators. There is a range of restaurants, cafes, breweries, distilleries<sup>49</sup> and a wildlife park. While never proclaiming or celebrating a horizontally integrated creative industries strategy, there is a developing "Partnership Project" between the City of Swan and the Swan Valley Tourism Council.<sup>50</sup> There is also adjacent commercial support from Midland Brick and Midland Redevelopment Authority.<sup>51</sup> An emerging local strategy that aligns nature, wildlife and primary production is starting to coalesce and develop. The goal has been to find a branding strategy that binds together a region that is close to a capital city, an airport and is a site of primary production. The phrase "Swan Valley – Perth's Valley of Taste"<sup>52</sup> has been successful in creating this cultural alignment, providing a way to align a 32 kilometre strip of businesses into a "Food and Wine Trail"<sup>53</sup> that includes wineries, breweries, distilleries, restaurants, cafes, accommodation and road-side stalls. There is also a strategy to incorporate art and event tourism, with the Wadjuk community<sup>54</sup> offering indigenous tours through the valley.

There are international models for this development. C. Michael Hall and Richard Mitchell constructed *Wine Marketing: A Practical Guide*<sup>55</sup>. They confirm that wine industry marketing is incredibly diverse, not only in terms of the many types of wine businesses and growers, but the myriad meanings wine holds for consumers. They describe wine as "a complex, almost enigmatic product."<sup>56</sup> Of most relevance to the Swan Valley, they stated that,

premium wines provide greater aesthetic outcomes (rather than sustenance or lubrication), they are a marker of social status and social capital and they tend to come from cooler climate

regions (while bulk wines come almost is exclusive (sic) from hot regions where growing conditions allow for higher yields.)<sup>57</sup>

While weather is a determinant of quality, it is also important to recognized that ‘taste’ is not only constructed through climate, but a range of policy makers, activists and critics.<sup>58</sup> Obviously, the Swan Valley shares a Mediterranean climate with Perth. But while it may not claim to be home to the labels of ‘premium’ wine, there is a great advantage in the development of wine tours. The Swan Valley has many natural attributes that facilitates tourism. Most importantly, it is a site of primary production.



*Sandalford Vines at the Swan Valley Winery. Photograph by Tara Brabazon*

Significantly, like the south-west of the state, the weather is constant and temperate through much of the year. Such an environment facilitates cellar door sales and the horizontal integration with boat tours and on-site restaurants. Also a key advantage for tourism is located in the title of the region. The Swan Valley is a valley, with the Swan River fringing many vineyards. Such positioning also enables wine and beer cruises to travel along the Swan and visitors may disembark for wine-tasting and meals.<sup>59</sup>



*Sandalford Dock. Photographs by Tara Brabazon*

Besides the boat cruises, there are also a range of bus tours that service the Valley. Three such companies are Swan Valley Pink Bus Tours, Out & About Wine Tours and Swan Valley Wine Tours & Cruises. They

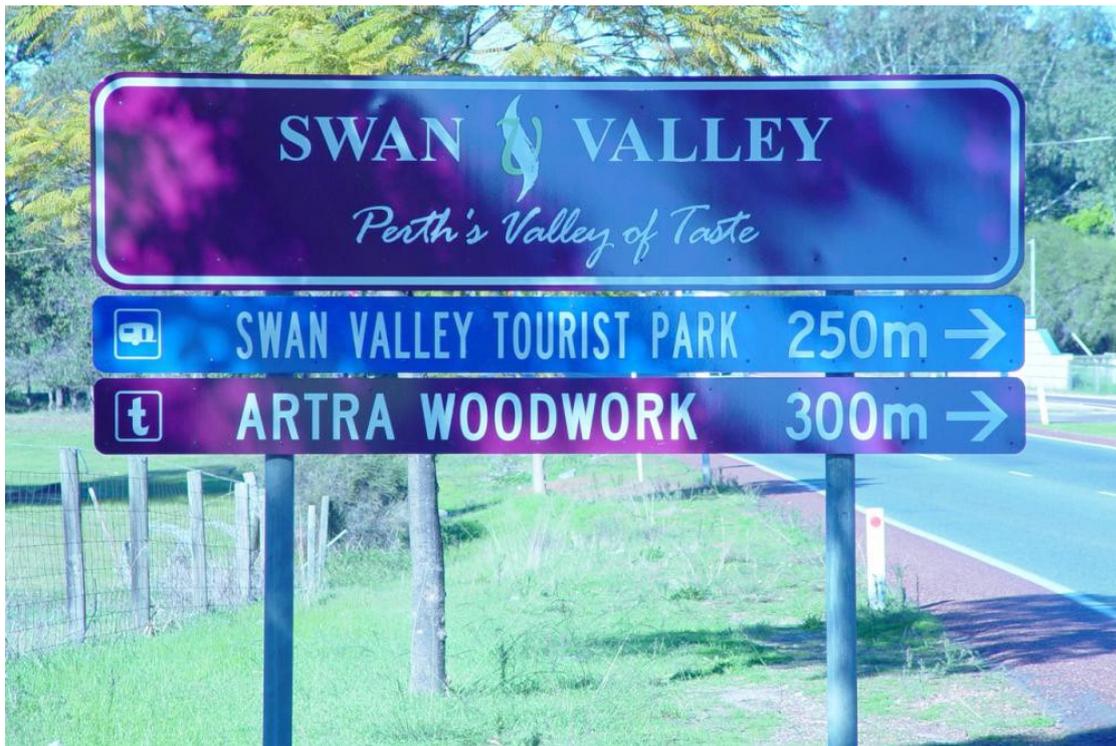
are award winning businesses. The Out & About Wine Tours won a Silver Medal at the 2006 WA Tourism Awards, a Gold Medal at the 2007 Awards and the Tour Guide of the Year for 2006. The Swan Valley Wine Tours & Cruises won a Gold Medal in 2007 and The Hanson Swan Business Award for Tourism in 2007. They have an impact beyond a narrowly defined ‘wine tourism’ and are enhancing the city branding of Perth.

These services are necessary as public transportation is limited. Even with the successful creation of the north to south railway system, extending from the suburbs of Clarkson to Mandurah, it is difficult to travel from east to west by public transportation. Indeed the local tourism guides specify the difficulty of moving around the region without a car. While such a limitation may be a disadvantage for some tourist enterprises, for a wine industry it is a major barrier to growth and success. At present, the train link from the city centre has a station at Guildford, leaving the 150 wineries and restaurants, spread over a 32 kilometre ‘trail,’ remote and under-serviced. A paper written at the Perth-based Murdoch University by Coelho, D’Orazio, Durkin and Mobbs, addressed this concern.

This [lack of public transport] often leaves tourists that were told how to get to Guildford stranded and there are few other options than to drive. This is seen as one of the Valleys major pitfalls, as with a destination whose market relies so heavily on alcohol; there definitely needs to be a duty of care to its patrons.<sup>60</sup>

They log the differences to the Barossa Valley, where the wineries are located over a much smaller region, making cycling an option.<sup>61</sup> The Napa Valley is mentioned with its “Green Flat Limousines,”<sup>62</sup> that can be tailored for tourism but are also environmentally sustainable. The potential of hybrid vehicles and the provision of walking and cycling pathways in some of the Napa are also cited as options for the Swan.

Transportation is the key disadvantage in the region, hampering economic development. Obviously, this is an unusual problem in international terms, with a region within half an hour of a CBD being unserved by a streamlined, planned public transportation system. However, taking the necessity to drive into consideration, the slogan used to brand the region has potential, incorporation both wine and other modes of primary production is the “Valley of Taste.”



*Perth's Valley of Taste, Photographs by Tara Brabazon*

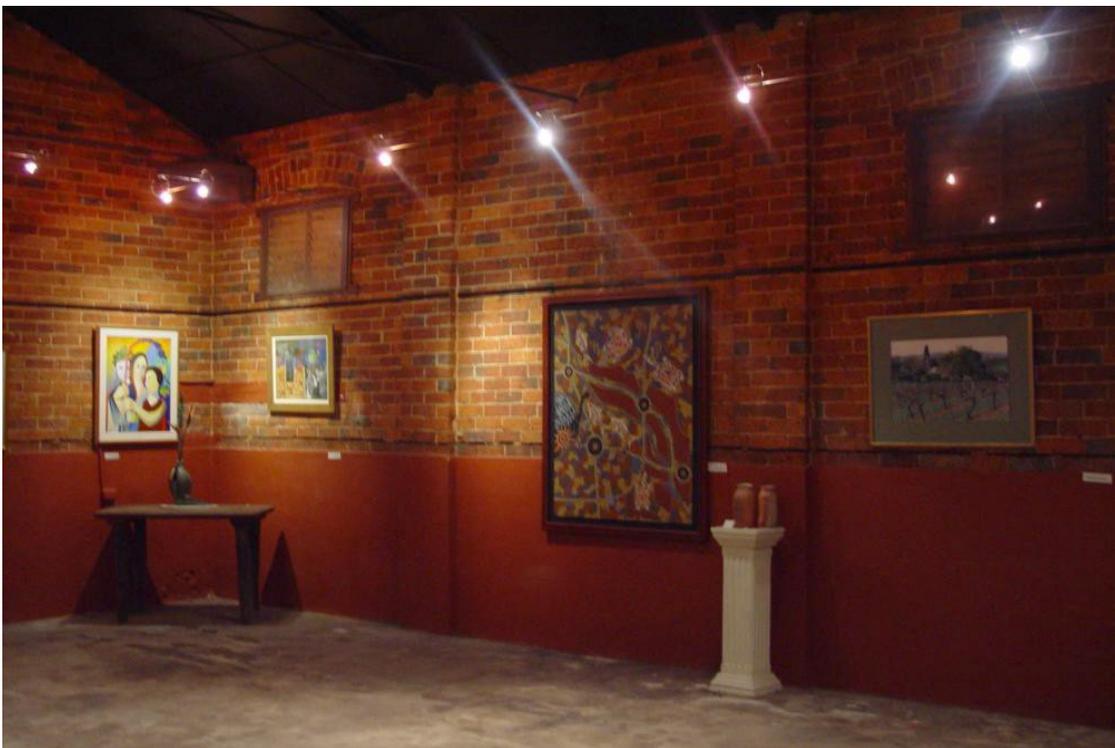
A range of small businesses, many involving cellar door sales of wine, are clustered as the “Swan Valley Food and Wine Trail.”<sup>63</sup> Aligning and branding these geographically-dispersed locations is starting to address the transportation concern with the Swan Valley Heritage Cycle Trail<sup>64</sup> and the Vineyard Walk Trail.<sup>65</sup>

Currently, the boundaries of this wine and food trail are too wide. While bus tours predominate, the trail is (only) driveable. Instead of encompassing the entire valley, a productive and walkable hub is being created for the businesses around West Swan Road. The key part of the road features both a wide footpath and cycleway. Although accessible walkways along the West Swan Road are yet to be developed and further cooperation between businesses is necessary, there is a potential for branding and tourism to develop around this urban infrastructure.

Perhaps the most successful touristic development has been the emergence of festivals and events in the Swan Valley.<sup>66</sup> This is where popular culture, particularly music, is providing profound opportunities. Spring in the Valley is the centrepiece. Having existed in various forms over the last twenty years, it now includes thirty eight venues, combining tastings and entertainment. Held in the second weekend in October, it is one of the largest specialist food and wine festivals in Australia. A smaller festival is Taste of the Valley, held in April each year. It includes food, wine, music and art. A third, specialist gathering is the Seafood and Shiraz event during July, where the wineries combine produce to create a winter focus for the Valley. There are also many sporting events highlighted by the viewing of the Avon Descent, a long distant river event for motorboats and kayaking. This brings thousands of spectators to the region. There

are also regular weekend markets and live music venues.<sup>67</sup>

A range of accommodation has been made available from the most basic of farm stays, where conventional vineyards have value added to their business, through to caravan parks, spa retreats, bed and breakfasts. There is also the Swan Valley Oasis Resort on West Swan Road and the Vines Resort on Verdelho Drive with a 36-hole golf course.<sup>68</sup> The connection between tourism, food, wine and sport<sup>69</sup> is arching to arts and craft, with Houghton Wines developing their own art gallery and museum. The Houghton winery was founded in 1836, with the first vintage for commercial purposes released in 1859. It is the third oldest winery in Australia. Its primary winemaking facilities are based in the Swan Valley, with a further winery in Nannup in the south west of Western Australia. Their “Spring in the Valley Art Collection” is part of the week-long festival that celebrates wine, food and art. But Houghton’s have instigated a yearly commemoration to mark this festival by unveiling a new piece of artwork given to the collection by an artist for free public display.



*Houghton's Art Gallery. Photographs by Tara Brabazon*

The addition of a museum at Houghton winery increases the range of activities available, confirming the history of the region and also provides the basis for future productive developments that align art, culture and wine. New international initiatives and policies are aligning GLAMs – galleries, libraries, archives and museums. Significantly, even wineries are recognizing the potential of knowledge generating and knowledge preserving initiatives.



*Houghton Museum. Photograph by Tara Brabazon*

Besides the wineries, there are also independent art and craft facilities including Gomboc Gallery Sculpture Park, Maalinup Aboriginal Gallery, Taylor's Art and Coffee House and Valley View Gallery. Most are based around either West Swan Road or Great Northern Highway. The Maalinup Aboriginal Gallery is significant because it not only houses and sells indigenous art, ceramics, woodware and painted glass, but is also owned and operated by indigenous people.<sup>70</sup>

Productive relationships are being formed with the adjacent regions of Guildford and Midland. Guildford, as one of the first settlements in Western Australia, maintains national trust status.<sup>71</sup> It is accessible through walking trails and also features pubs, restaurants and antique shops. For more modern commerce, Midland features conventional department stores. Therefore, the key is to connect the shopping of Midland with the heritage of Guildford with the food and wine of the Swan Valley. A tourist-styled bus service circuit, covering these three locations at weekends would be an imaginative solution to the serious transportation issue.

## Fast wine, slow food

One of the strengths in food and wine industries can seem a weakness in terms of branding. One of the major retail sources of slow food in the Swan Valley is the Margaret River Chocolate company. Based in both the Swan Valley and Margaret River, the retail store offers free entry and tastings from 9am until 5pm every day of the year, except Christmas Day. This accessibility enables other businesses and tour operators to create their schedules in response. Based at 5123 West Swan Road in the Swan Valley and also at its headquarters in Harman's Mill Road, Metricup, the company sells the "world of chocolate."

The Margaret River Chocolate Company specializes in the high end of the chocolate market, presenting to customers a European-style of produce, listing ingredients and the couverture process. In keeping with the slow food movement, the value of chocolate to taste and nutrition is proclaimed, as a source of Vitamins A, B2, C, D and E as well as magnesium.



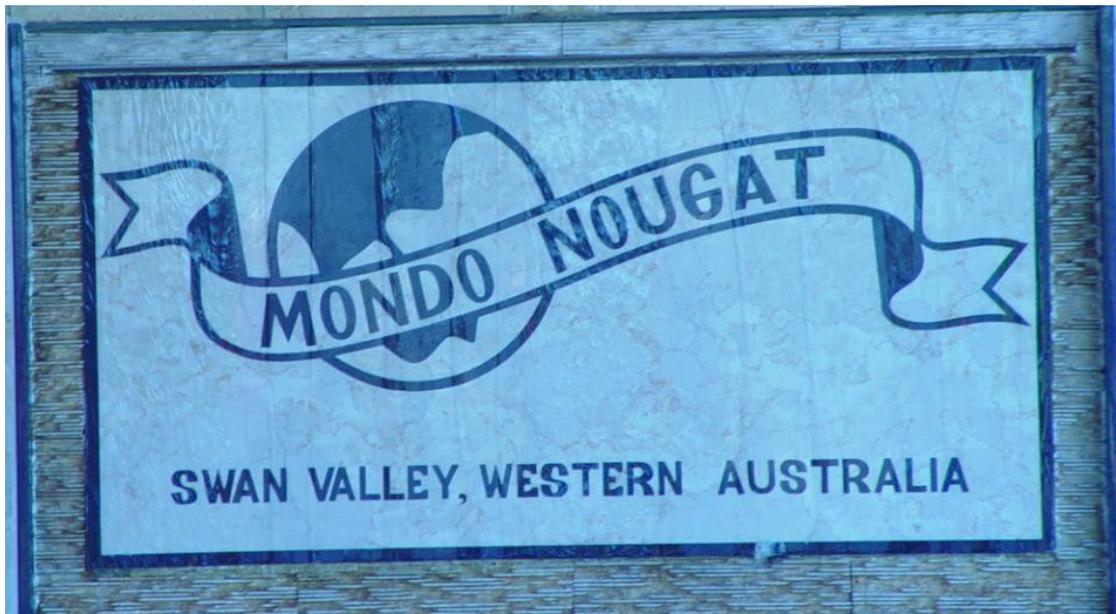






*The Margaret River Chocolate Company – Swan Valley. Photographs by Tara Brabazon*

Another key slow food staple is nougat. On Great Northern Highway, the Mondo Nougat Factory includes a coffee shop along with retail sales of nougat, gelati, biscotti and cakes.





However the weakness of such enterprises is clear. Although present in the Swan Valley, the branding spills into the south-west of the state. The specificity of an urban wine industry is lost. Therefore the key is to find an industry that creates innovative alignments between taste and urbanity.

### **Drinking and dancing**

The inadequacies with public transport will remain a structural inhibitor of growth in this urban wine industry. Other industries in Western Australia's creative industries suite confront similar problems. Yet significantly these trans-industry difficulties can be solved by understanding what the Swan Valley can offer to popular music, sport, fashion, craft and a range of art-based practice. What the Swan Valley possesses – space, parking, large venues and closeness to the CBD – provides great solutions for other creative industries.

For example, a profound problem confronting Perth's popular music industry is a lack of venues. As the city has gentrified, clubs and pubs are closing and managing noise restrictions, while apartments and lofts are built. Instead of building designated venues for popular music, the State's Department of Culture and the Arts continues to fund interstate tours and – bizarrely in a Web 2.0 downloading age – compact disc production. In the May 2009 round of funding, The Preytells and Project Mayhem received A\$18,000 to record and release debut albums. Minister John Day stated that,

It is difficult for local bands with limited resources to record, release and market full-length

albums and this is one of the areas where the Contemporary Music Grants are making a tangible difference.<sup>72</sup>

It is difficult to record, release and market full-length albums as the industry is no longer based around full length physical albums. The government is funding a redundant platform and an historically-lapsed marketing plan. Business models in the music industry must incorporate live performance in an age of proliferating illegal downloading of MP3s. Because a ‘whole of government’ approach to creative industries and popular music was not instigated, there remains a separation of urban planning and economic development. Such a disconnection is particularly ironic considering that the current Minister for Culture and the Arts holds another portfolio: planning.

While the ‘top down’ integration of portfolios has not been successful and venues have continued to be closed and/or silenced, the Swan Valley has again provided a ‘bottom up’ creative industries solution to the lack of locations for live music. Using the capacity of event management, the Swan Valley-based wineries have created musical events. For example, Houghton Winery runs “Lounge in the Valley”<sup>73</sup> as part of the Spring in the Valley festival, annually held on an October weekend each year. In 2009, the event featured three Western Australian bands and performers. To include the Generation X audience, the Hoodoo Gurus lead the bill, backed by Bob Evans, a re-booted Jebediah, and DJ Roger Smart. Selling the tickets for \$99, the fee includes entertainment and markets featuring local produce, lunch and wine tasting. Another example of such an event is in February and March each year at Sandalford Winery. Titled A Day on the Green, international acts are brought to Western Australia, matched with some local performers. The 2010 featured performers such as Rob Thomas, lead singer of Matchbox 20, a Motown Event and Tom Jones. While in the United Kingdom, music festivals are self standing events such as Green Man and Glastonbury, the Perth-based model is incorporating bands and performers to accompany food, wine and event management.

### **Choice, strategies and suburbia**

The Swan Valley’s entrepreneurship is solving structural problems in the creative industries. Yet such innovations are being ignored in the ‘serious’ planning documents. In August 2009, *The West Weekend Magazine* featured the headline “Future Perth,” asking “what would you change about our capital city if you had the choice? Some of WA’s creative thinkers reveal their radical ideas to improve Perth.”<sup>74</sup> Mayor Lisa Scaffidi wants “more exciting and unique projects which attract people to the city.” Professor Peter Newman, who has based a career on developing public transport and creating sustainable cities, argued, “if we’re just suburban I think we’ll be a very nice place to retire to and we’ll lose our young people.” David Ravine argued for replanting of native woodlands down to the Swan River foreshore. Lynda Dorrington argued for affordable housing, street trees and fruit and flower sellers. Ben Juniper wanted public art.<sup>75</sup> While there is intense interest and desire for intervention in the CBD and the neighbouring affluent suburbs of Leederville, Subiaco, Nedlands and Mount Lawley, the reality of Perth is that most people do not

choose to live in these locations. At the very point that there are summits and strategies to discuss Perth in 2030, with a desire to create a night-time economy in the CBD, the NightRider bus service from the hub of the night-time economy, Northbridge, was cancelled from July 26, 2009. It was no longer possible to travel from Northbridge to Scarborough Beach and Northbridge to Fremantle via Canning Highway. Similarly, the Fremantle NightRider no longer services Northbridge. Therefore, while all the money, attention and expertise are focused on planning, the transportation infrastructure that enhanced the night-time economy has crumbled.

It is easy to abuse and undermine suburbia. It is more complex to understand the communities and cultures emerging from these spaces. The Swan Valley creates links between food, wine and music to create both an audience and event. It is tourism in practice, rather than planning. Like *Sideways*, popular culture becomes the foundation for development. There is much to celebrate and recognize. However there are two issues to address for future development. Firstly, the website – [www.swanvalley.com.au](http://www.swanvalley.com.au) – is a Web 1.0 portal with little interactivity or the capacity of mixed-media content through podcasts, vodcasts, blogs or e-commerce enabled opportunities. It is a solid presentation of material, but could be improved at little cost to generate maximal brand exposure. The second concern is more difficult to manage. As the tourist brochures proclaim: “regular train services operate to/from Guildford and Midland. Public transport into the Swan Valley is limited. It is recommended that transport arrangements are made prior to arrival.”<sup>76</sup> While such a lack of infrastructure is always problematic, when trying to promote a wine industry, it is a serious problem. With the success of the Mandurah train line, that is incredibly well utilized, there may be political will in the future for trains from the coastal suburbs to service the Swan Valley and extend through to the foothills beyond Midland.

The problems remain vast. In May 2010, *A Better Future for Tourism in WA* Report created a new business model. Neoliberal in imperative, it affirmed the need to develop and market major events and develop tourist infrastructure, but “must be achieved with no extra Treasury funding.”<sup>77</sup> Indeed, by the 2010-2014 budget projections, Eventscorp’s funding has decreased. All three areas of the budget – marketing, Eventscorp and investment & infrastructure – show a decline between the 2010/11 budget and the 2013/14 budget.<sup>78</sup> This real loss of state government support was “not a reflection on the quality or the commitment of Tourism WA’s employees ... nor are they are [a] reflection of Tourism WA’s commitment to regional tourism or international market.”<sup>79</sup> Instead, the Report confirmed that “Tourism WA has been trying to do too many things for too many people in too many places ... We need to focus on the big ticket items – marketing, events & major tourism developments – to drive significant growth of tourism in WA.”<sup>80</sup> In this document, the innovative links between music, food and wine in the Swan Valley remain unmentioned. Without building these relationships, the Experience Perth Tourism Development Priorities 2010-2015 still recognized the Swan Valley as a key attraction for city tourism. However they also revealed that the state government must negotiate with a range of institutions, including the City of Swan, the Town of Bassendean and the Shire of Chittering.<sup>81</sup>

The consequences of such infrastructural complexity is rarely revealed in the data or triangulated in the research. Jacinta Bristow-Baohm released a “Research Presentation” on the Swan Valley in June 23, 2009,

focussing on day visitors who were Western Australian residents over 18 years of age. However the representative nature of this research is questionable. Face-to-face recruitment at 48 Swan Valley locations then triggered telephone interviews with 201 people. The results showed that the primary attraction was the Chocolate Company, with three brewers following – Elmars, Feral and Duckstein. Lancaster Wines were fourth, with Houghton finishing eighth and Sandalford ninth.<sup>82</sup> Yet there is an oddity in this list, a dissonance between the wine research and this small-scale tourist survey. Lancaster Wines did not even warrant a mention in Ray Jordan’s *Wine: Western Australia’s Best*.<sup>83</sup> However Lancaster’s location explains this statistical anomaly: they are located across the street from the Chocolate Factory. In other words, the location-specific selection of telephone informants skewed the results. This small study should not be noted as representative or definitive, but what it confirms is that the branding between the Swan Valley and wine tourism has problems. The important node of future research from this study is that 90% of day trippers are repeat visitors.<sup>84</sup> This suggests that earlier tourists return, but that the marketing is failing to bring new people to the area. Also, in this survey, over half of the tourists only visited one or two locations. Therefore the area of development is adding one or two more places to the itinerary of day visitors.

In 2007, a film was released about Perth’s music industry. It was titled *Something in the Water*. The documentary’s talking heads all probed, questioned, complained and ridiculed the state of the city’s music, culture and suburban environment. Yet somehow this odd location created and sustained a popular music industry. Through the negativity, there needed to be recognition that maybe – just maybe – the affluence, great weather, diverse landscape and large student population offers advantages rather than problems. A strange silence in the documentary was that – while conventional rock venues are closing – the much demeaned suburbs are rescuing Perth’s music industry with festivals, concerts and events. The Swan Valley is much more than a Valley of Taste. It is a series of businesses that are aligning and enabling other creative industries such as music, tourism, sport, food and crafts. From the metaphoric wine bottle pours other opportunities. While *Sideways* increased the profile of a wine industry through film, perhaps the wine industry in Perth will create space and possibilities for the other creative industries, particularly music. First, there must be recognition of the value in – and the value adding – of a sub/urban wine industry.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> C. Landry, “City thinking can develop the full picture of Perth,” *The West Australian*, February 24, 2007

<sup>2</sup> R. Weller, in J. Catanzaro, “Monorail, better roads a part of vision for Perth,” *The West Australian*, August 1, 2009, p. 15

<sup>3</sup> B. Salt, “It’s time for the burbs to be heard,” *The Australia*, August 13, 2009, p. 27

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, p. 28

- <sup>5</sup> Roland Barthes stated that, “The city I am talking about [Tokyo] offers this precious paradox: it does possess a center, but this center is empty,” *Empire of Signs*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), p. 31
- <sup>6</sup> Sunnycheeks84, “Perth is not Dullsville,” January 30, 2010, <http://au.messages.yahoo.com/news/localnews-wa/1791/>
- <sup>7</sup> “Why is Perth described as boring or dullsville?” *City Data*, December 8, 2009, <http://www.city-data.com/forum/australia-new-zealand/731926-why-perth-classed-boring-dullsville.html>
- <sup>8</sup> “Perth, Western Australia,” Economic Expert.com, <http://www.economicexpert.com/a/Perth:Australia.htm>
- <sup>9</sup> C. Landry, *The creative city*, (London: Comedia, 2000)
- <sup>10</sup> R. Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, (New York: Basic Books, 2002), R. Florida, *Cities and the Creative Class*, (New York: Routledge, 2005), R. Florida, *The Flight of the Creative Class*, (New York: Harper Collins, 2005), R. Florida, *Who’s your City?*, (New York: Basic Books, 2008)
- <sup>11</sup> C. Leadbeater, *Living on thin air*, (London: Penguin, 1999), C. Leadbeater and K Oakley, *The independents*, (London: Demos, 1999), C. Leadbeater, *Up The Down Escalator: Why The Global Pessimists Are Wrong*, (Viking, London, 2002), C. Leadbeater, “Welcome To The Knowledge Economy,” in Ian Hargreaves and Ian Christie (eds), *Tomorrow’s Politics: The Third Way and Beyond*, (London: Demos, 1998).
- <sup>12</sup> S. Beeton, *Film-induced tourism*, (Clevedon: Channel View Publications, 2004) and D. Clarke, (ed.) *The Cinematic City*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1997)
- <sup>13</sup> G. Risling, “Tourism is going ‘Sideways’ in Southern California wine country,” *The Seattle Times*, February 18, 2005, <http://community.seattletimes.nwsourc.com/archive/?date=20050218&slug=sideways20>
- <sup>14</sup> K. Edds, “In Santa Ynez Valley, A Toast to ‘Sideways,’” *Washington Post*, February 27, 2005, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A53363-2005Feb25.html#>
- <sup>15</sup> “Get *Sideways* in Santa Barbara,” <http://www.santabarbaraca.com/articles/index.cfm?action=View&ArticleID=23>
- <sup>16</sup> J. Dickson, *Barbara.com*, <http://www.santabarbara.com/winecountry/>
- <sup>17</sup> M. Winter, *The Napa Valley Book*, (Napa: Westsong, 2007)
- <sup>18</sup> J. Barker, N. Lewis and W. Moran, “Reregulation and the development of the New Zealand Wine

Industry,” *Journal of Wine Research*, Vol. 12, No. 3, 2001, pp. 199-221. This article demonstrates the long-term growth and transformation into WINZ, Winegrowers of New Zealand.

<sup>19</sup> Mark Shiel and Tony Fitzmaurice (eds.), *Screening the City*, (London: Verso, 2003)

<sup>20</sup> To review a full study of the changing city imaging of Wellington, please refer to T. Brabazon, “Brand Wellington,” *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, Vol. 5, No. 4, 2009, <http://www.palgrave-journals.com/pb/journal/v5/n4/abs/pb200922a.html>

<sup>21</sup> Off the Menu also has a website, [www.offthemenue.co.nz](http://www.offthemenue.co.nz)

<sup>22</sup> Please refer to *Creative New Zealand*, [www.creativenz.govt.nz](http://www.creativenz.govt.nz), [www.industrytaskforces.govt.nz](http://www.industrytaskforces.govt.nz), and [www.thebigidea.co.nz](http://www.thebigidea.co.nz), [www.nzte.govt.nz](http://www.nzte.govt.nz).

<sup>23</sup> I note Elizabeth Grierson’s prescient paper “The Arts and Creative Industries: new alliances in the Humanities” delivered at the Hawaii International Conference on Arts & Humanities in Hawaii from 12-15 January 2003, [www.pesa.org.au/html/documents/2004-papers/Educationand%20Values%20Identity%20and%20development%20of%20Human%20persons%20db04.doc](http://www.pesa.org.au/html/documents/2004-papers/Educationand%20Values%20Identity%20and%20development%20of%20Human%20persons%20db04.doc)

<sup>24</sup> These figures are derived from Tanya Katterns’ “Wine festival tickets sell out in two hours,” *The Dominion Post*, October 12, 2006, p. 3

<sup>25</sup> The Mustard Festival, [www.mustardfestival.org](http://www.mustardfestival.org)

<sup>26</sup> M. Winter, *The Napa Valley Book*, (Napa: Westsong Publications, 2007), p. 18

<sup>27</sup> C.M. Hall, L. Sharples, R. Mitchell, N. Macionis, B. Cambourne (eds.), *Food Tourism around the World: Development, Management and Markets*, (Amsterdam: Butterworth Heinemann, 2003), Kindle Edition.

<sup>28</sup> C. M. Hall and L. Sharples, “The consumption of experiences or the experience of consumption? An introduction to the tourism of taste,” in *ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*, locations 87-91

<sup>30</sup> For a discussion of how this branding configuration was created, please refer to REB Design, *e’ssence*, Vol. 6, March 2005, <http://www.rebdesign.com.au/pdf/essence6.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> P. Wagner, J. Olsen and L. Thach, *Wine marketing and sales: success strategies for a saturated market*, (San Francisco: The Wine Appreciation Guild, 2007)

<sup>32</sup> This scholarly connotation to heritage logs the early and influential edited collection by J. Corner and

S. Harvey, *Enterprise and heritage: Crosscurrents of national culture*, (London: Routledge, 1991). The bulk of this collection investigated the British context and in particular the consequences of Margaret Thatcher's government. However there was a significant chapter investigating heritage and colonialism: Yasmin Ali's "Echoes of empire: towards a politics of representation," pp. 194-211. The impact of heritage from a geographical rather than historical perspective – and with a greater array of international examples, was K. Anderson and F. Gale (eds.) *Inventing places*, (Melbourne: Longman, 1992). These important books were part of the burgeoning development of cultural policy that not only investigated national economic development through media, but community arts as a way to rejuvenate localism. However, moving forward fifteen years, the reconfiguration of heritage away from a politically conservative rewriting of national history can be observed. Two examples of books that collate heritage, law and economic development are Kate Fitz Gibbon (ed.) *Who owns the past?* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2005) and Barbara Hoffman (ed.) *Art and cultural heritage*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)

<sup>33</sup> S. Vidovich, REB Design, *e'ssence*, Vol. 6, March 2005, <http://www.rebdesign.com.au/pdf/essence6.pdf>

<sup>34</sup> The WIAWA website is <http://www.winewa.asn.au/10393.htm>

<sup>35</sup> *A Better Future for Tourism in WA*, Tourism Western Australia, May 2010, p. 4.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*, 5

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*, p. 6

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*, p. 8

<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*, p. 9

<sup>40</sup> Tourism Western Australia Media Release, May 21, 2010, p. 2

<sup>41</sup> Water's Edge Winery, <http://www.watersedgewinery.com.au/>

<sup>42</sup> For example, please refer to the history of Windy Creek Estate, <http://www.windycreekestate.com.au/>

<sup>43</sup> Jan Schmorte, "Attitudes towards German immigration in South Australia in the post-second world war period, 1947-60," *The Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol. 51, 2005.

<sup>44</sup> S. King, and D. O'Connor, "Building blocks of settlement: Italians in the Riverland, South Australia," *Italian Historical Society Journal*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 2003, pp. 24-29. It is also important to note Richard Rosano's *Wine Heritage: the story of Italian-American Vintners*, (San Francisco: The Wine Appreciation Guild, 2000)

- <sup>45</sup> Guildford Heritage Walks Trail, <http://www.swanvalley.com.au/NR/rdonlyres/CB7D544D-9DC2-4973-81A2-8D83D202C802/0/30913COSGuildfordHeritageWalkTrailsbrochure.pdf>
- <sup>46</sup> T. Unwin, *An historical geography of viticulture and the wine trade*, (London: Routledge, 1991)
- <sup>47</sup> *Vintage Blue: Western Australia*, [http://www.vintageblue.com.au/products/wine\\_regions/#wa](http://www.vintageblue.com.au/products/wine_regions/#wa)
- <sup>48</sup> Swan Valley.Com, Wine Varieties, <http://www.swanvalley.com.au/en/Food+and+Wine/Wine/Wine+Varieties.htm>
- <sup>49</sup> The distilleries, while a minor part of the Swan Valley region are distinctive. The Great Northern Distillery specializes in Canefire Rum and the Wild Swan Distilling Company specializes in Chilli Vodka.
- <sup>50</sup> M. Foley, *From the desk of the CEO*, December 5, 2008 [http://www.swan.wa.gov.au/docs/documents/4475/From\\_the\\_desk\\_of\\_the\\_CEO-December\\_5\\_2008\\_794337.pdf](http://www.swan.wa.gov.au/docs/documents/4475/From_the_desk_of_the_CEO-December_5_2008_794337.pdf)
- <sup>51</sup> *Swan Valley Wine Show 2009 – Results Catalogue, 2009*, [http://www.swanvalley.com.au/NR/rdonlyres/E3C37557-E4E1-42A8-B4F9-4B9ACAEA18D8/0/Swan\\_Valley\\_Wine\\_Show\\_Results\\_Catalogue.pdf](http://www.swanvalley.com.au/NR/rdonlyres/E3C37557-E4E1-42A8-B4F9-4B9ACAEA18D8/0/Swan_Valley_Wine_Show_Results_Catalogue.pdf)
- <sup>52</sup> *Swan Valley – Perth’s Valley of Taste*, <http://www.swanvalley.com.au/en/default.htm>
- <sup>53</sup> *Swan Valley Food and Wine Trail*, <http://www.swanvalley.com.au/en/Food+and+Wine/Food/Swan+Valley+Food+and+Wine+Trail.htm>
- <sup>54</sup> While noting the alternative spellings of the Wadjuk indigenous community, the mobilization of this spelling is deployed in “The Wadjuk: guardians of the link between land and sea,” Indigenouswa.com, <http://www.indigenouswa.com/heritage.htm>. This spelling and regional affiliation is also utilized by the Department of Education, “About the Fremantle-Peel Region,” <http://www.det.wa.edu.au/education/abled/apac/districts/fremantle/about.html>
- <sup>55</sup> C.M. Hall and R. Mitchell, *Wine marketing: a practical guide*, (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2008)
- <sup>56</sup> *ibid.*, locations 93-96
- <sup>57</sup> *ibid.*, locations 109-117
- <sup>58</sup> T. Colman, *Wine Politics: how governments, environmentalists, mobsters, and critics influence the wine we drink*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008)
- <sup>59</sup> Captain Cook Cruises run a series of Swan River Scenic Cruises, including trips from both Perth and Fremantle.

<sup>60</sup> A. Coelho, J. D’Orazio, K. Durkin and M. Mobbs, “Transport Issues of the Swan Valley,” Murdoch University, 2008, <http://tourism.murdoch.edu.au/reports/SwanValleyTransport2008.pdf>, p. 3

<sup>61</sup> *ibid.*, p. 10

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10

<sup>63</sup> *Swan Valley Perth’s Valley of Taste: Guide and Map*, 2009, [www.swanvalley.com.au](http://www.swanvalley.com.au)

<sup>64</sup> *Swan Valley Heritage Cycle Trail*, [http://www.toptrails.com.au/index.php/trails/trail/swan-valley-heritage-cycle-trail?s\\_kwcid=TC|9883|swan%20valley%20heritage%20cycle%20trail|S|b|5073871263&gclid=CO7G96GHuJ8CFcpb4wodNHnJzg](http://www.toptrails.com.au/index.php/trails/trail/swan-valley-heritage-cycle-trail?s_kwcid=TC|9883|swan%20valley%20heritage%20cycle%20trail|S|b|5073871263&gclid=CO7G96GHuJ8CFcpb4wodNHnJzg)

<sup>65</sup> *Walking Trails in the Swan Valley*, <http://www.swanvalley.com.au/en/Must+See+and+Do/Walking+Cycling+and+Driving+Trails/Walking+Trails.htm>

<sup>66</sup> The key book on food and wine festivals is C. Michael Hall and Liz Sharples’s *Food and wine festivals and events around the world: development, management and markets*, (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2008)

<sup>67</sup> There are strong international examples linking arts and crafts to wine. In Aotearoa/New Zealand there is Nelson’s World of Wearable Art festival, Marlborough’s Seafood Festival and Mission Estate Winery’s annual music festival in Napier.

<sup>68</sup> The Vines Resort, [www.vines.com.au](http://www.vines.com.au)

<sup>69</sup> Although cancelled in the 2008/9 cricket season, Lilac Hill besides being the home of Lilac Hill Estate Wines also host a cricket match between a selected Australian 11 and touring sides. It is often an opener to a WACA test match.

<sup>70</sup> Maalinup Aboriginal Gallery, [www.maalinup.com.au](http://www.maalinup.com.au)

<sup>71</sup> “Guildford,” *Australian Explorer*, <http://www.australianexplorer.com/guildford.htm>

<sup>72</sup> J. Day, “Government Media Office: Ministerial Media Statements,” May 5, 2009, <http://www.media-statements.wa.gov.au/Pages/WACabinetMinistersSearch.aspx?>

<sup>73</sup> *Lounge in the Valley*, [www.loungeinthevalley.com.au](http://www.loungeinthevalley.com.au)

<sup>74</sup> “Future Perth,” *West Weekend Magazine*, August 1, 2009, cover

<sup>75</sup> M. Irving, “City of our dreams,” *West Weekend Magazine*, August 1, 2009, pp. 8-10

<sup>76</sup> *Swan Valley: Perth's Valley of Taste*, Swan Valley Tourism Council, 2009

<sup>77</sup> *A Better Future for Tourism in WA*, Tourism Western Australia, May 2010, p. 11

<sup>78</sup> *ibid.*, p. 13

<sup>79</sup> *ibid.*, p. 36

<sup>80</sup> *ibid.*, p. 37

<sup>81</sup> *Experience Perth: Tourism Development Priorities 2010-2015*, March, 2010, p.6

<sup>82</sup> J. Bristow-Baohm, *Swan Valley Better Business Blitz Research Presentation*, June 23, 2009, p. 14

<sup>83</sup> R. Jordan, *Wine: Western Australia's Best*, (Perth: Western Australian Press, 2002)

<sup>84</sup> J. Bristow-Baohm, *Swan Valley Better Business Blitz Research Presentation*, June 23, 2009, p. 30

# Harold Pinter the Wordsmith: *Celebration.*

By Dilek Inan

## Abstract

Nobel Laureate for Literature (2005), Harold Pinter, has established himself as one of the greatest writers in a body of literary work that consists of thirty-two plays, twenty-one film scripts, one novel, and numerous poems. Besides being a prolific writer, he has been a director, an actor, and a political activist in the second half of the twentieth century. As Brigitte Gauthier writes in her preface to *Viva Pinter*, ‘Harold Pinter was the Shakespeare of our century’<sup>1</sup>. The language in his work, which designedly unlocks the tremendous power of words, is usually concise, fragmented and humorous with a political insight. His study of the structures of language is indeed strikingly present in his very last output *Celebration* (2000), a play whose production coincides with Pinter’s 70<sup>th</sup> birthday and the new millennium. As the characters exchange stories in a luxurious restaurant in London, they find themselves in a battle of words in order to gain superiority, if not recognition, in a subtle power struggle which bears both concealed and noticeable hostility. While the play proposes a sense of lost culture and bygone morals in a milieu of celebration, the characters’ initiatives are misplaced in a world of mystery in the new millennium.

## Introduction

Pinter has been regarded as one of the most influential English playwrights of the twentieth century. His innovative and influential theatrical style has created such terms as Pinteresque, the Pinter pause, the Pinter moment, and Pinterland. He has contributed greatly to the Theatre of the Absurd and pioneered the ‘angry young man’ movement by staging plays that treat working-class social realism. In his fifty years of prolific writing career he has produced plays to explore power struggles and hostile relationships among people, futile attempts at communication, emotional cruelty, and the nature of memory. On the surface his dialogue consists of pauses, silences and civilized manner, but underneath manners there lies a strong sense of menace. His most renowned plays *The Caretaker* (1960), *The Homecoming* (1965), *Betrayal* (1978), *A Kind of Alaska* (1982), *Celebration* (1999) and his most highly praised screen adaptations *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* (1981), *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1990), and *Lolita* (1997) are tour de force which evidence Pinter’s mastery in exploring the anatomy and power of words.

While his early plays such as *The Room* (1957), *The Dumb Waiter* (1959), *The Caretaker* (1960) are characterized by untailed, colloquial, working-class speech, his later plays such as *Betrayal* (1978), *Party Time* (1991), and *New World Order* (1991) portray a more refined class of people's language expressive of a more subtle use of speech that bears sinister tone underneath an urbane surface. Indeed in *Celebration* we can investigate into verbal abuse buried under a civilized language. The elegant characters in a milieu of classiness employ psychological cruelty, and their only aim is to survive in a battlefield where their means of endurance depends on how ingeniously they manipulate words. The strong sense of menace and cruelty in the plays is accompanied by an element of humour as a result of Pinter's exceptional, inventive, and highly powerful theatrical style. His dialogue employs a realistic reproduction of the beat of everyday speech in a mode of evasiveness which is actually common in daily conversation. Indeed, British Drama Professor Roger Copeland has acclaimed Pinter's dialogue for this matter by asserting that 'No playwright has ever possessed a better ear for the way people actually speak than Harold Pinter.'<sup>2</sup>

*Celebration*, with its comical attitude, is a change in mood and character after the severe outlook of political plays that Pinter wrote between 1985 and 2000. The play was produced in March 2000 in a double bill with Pinter's first play, *The Room*, at London's Almeida Theatre. It is set in 'the best restaurant in Europe' and hosts high-profile characters at two separate tables. At Table One, Lambert and his brother Matt dine with their wives, Julie and her sister Prue, celebrating the anniversary of Julie and Lambert. At Table Two, a younger couple, Suki and Russell chat with each other. Their talks not only reveal previous betrayals and distorted memories but also they find themselves in a battle of wits. As the owners of the restaurant Richard and Sonia, and the entertaining Waiter meander between tables, the drama reflects on today's society within an enigmatically comic mode.

## Analysis

Pinter gives voice to a group of characters who have come to dine at a restaurant after a gig which is a rather common act for the majority of middle-class Londoners. Although the play is peopled by upscale characters, the coarse vulgarity of the lower-class characters in Pinter's previous plays is even more present in *Celebration*. As the play progresses, the characters enter a world of verbal and emotional abuse. They are at an expensive restaurant following an evening at the theatres which is indeed rather commonplace among middle class English people. In this case the setting of a classy restaurant is highly apt in order to examine metropolitan manners thoroughly. However, as Michael Billington argues 'No one ever gets a Pinter play on a single viewing or reading'.<sup>3</sup> *Celebration* is no exception. On the surface Pinter depicts six Londoners who go out to enjoy themselves in a restaurant; however, it soon becomes clear that other than sheer entertainment there is another level which reflects a sinister air to the meaning of the play. The brothers at Table One introduce themselves as 'strategy consultants' and thus reveal ambiguous and precarious backgrounds. Pinter audiences may easily predict that 'strategy consultants' is evocative of hostility and threat, which is portrayed in an earlier play *Precisely* where two strategy consultants discuss in a highly refined manner the precise number of civilian deaths following a nuclear bombing. The

brothers are also reminiscent of peacekeepers in *Party Time*. Indeed, the brothers Lambert and Matt in *Celebration* emphasize that as peaceful strategy consultants they keep the peace worldwide without guns, which in the Pinteresque sense is rather rhetorical and ironical.

The characters' trivial conversation just before they start dinner, in fact, builds up the play's punch peace-meal. Almost every exchange suggests more than what it really pronounces. When Lambert raises his glass to his wife and to his anniversary, he impolitely stops his wife from making a speech to which Julie responds by implying a sense of cruelty layered under a genteel conduct: 'But darling, that's naked aggression. He doesn't normally go in for naked aggression. He usually disguises it under honeyed words.' (42).<sup>4</sup> It is clear that Julie suffers under her husband's hostility. Lambert expresses rudely: 'We've been married for more bloody years than I can remember' (43). Although it is Julie and Lambert's anniversary there is no sign of love between them. On the contrary, they display an intense dislike and show their abhorrence of each other in a battle of wits. While Lambert ignores his wife and makes fun of her by saying that she is a loyal wife under the table, Julie suggests him to buy a new car and drive it into a brick wall. (11).

A similar wordplay, which bears mockery, insult and menace, takes place between the younger couple at Table Two. Russell and Suki tease each other cruelly. When they talk about Russell's character with empty rhetoric, Suki tells her husband: 'Yes, the thing is you haven't really got any character at all, have you? As such. Au fond. But I wouldn't worry about it. For example look at me. I don't have any character either. I'm just a reed. I'm just a reed in the wind. Aren't I? You know I am. I'm just a reed in the wind.' (13). Russell's respond is awful: 'You are a whore'. In order to keep up appearances Suki answers back by merging Russell's own words, or rather by defending herself with her husband's tactics: 'A whore in the wind' (13). As in the earlier plays like Ruth in *The Homecoming*, and Anna in *Old Times* Suki is cunning enough to hide her displeasure and plays the game of words rather competitively. For Pinter's female characters, anything goes to smash the enemy. And indeed, Suki appears to accept her husband's insults and control her temper only to fight back in a stronger manner than him and hold the power to conquer his husband's vanity in this war of nerves. Suki continues to play the game calmly. While her husband continues to pester her by imagining her 'with the wind blowing up (her) skirt', Suki never loses her sense of calmness and in a cool manner she carries on with this talk in which she has found herself trapped. However, in Pinter's dialogues there is no hard distinction between the victim and the victimizer. She twists the power balance by lecturing him about men and sensation: 'How did you know the sensation? I didn't know that men could possibly know about that kind of thing. I mean men don't wear skirts. So I didn't think men could possibly know what it was like when the wind blows up a girl's skirt' (14). In other words, Suki always defends herself by the power of words and becomes triumphant over her husband by controlling her serenity, whereas the husband suffers defeat because of his inability to control his temper. He becomes paralysed by his wife's past life, which involves infidelity, and hence trapped in Suki's enigma.

Pinter details the superficial lives of middle-class professionals as he has portrayed in *Betrayal* where every character betrays one another in a world of vacuum and pretension. Almost in every dialogue polite and rude manners are juxtaposed with each other. While the characters at Table One talk about how lovely it is to be at the restaurant, in essence their conversations emphasize a sense of the horrid psyche. By using

offensive language they make each other uncomfortable. When Prue, Julie's sister, reminisces a memory from their childhood home, she intentionally distorts the civilized atmosphere of the elegant restaurant: '...when we were babies, when we used to lie in the nursery and hear mummy beating the shit out of daddy. We saw the blood on the sheets the next day.' (21). However, the feeling of abhorrence is ignored and veiled under the repeated rhetoric of how 'lovely' it is to be at the first-class diner. The characters' stream of language in fact reveals their inherent insecurities.

The sisters' chat becomes ridiculous when they both want to kiss Richard, the Chef, on the mouth. The characters' illogical and irrelevant statements emphasize an intricate sense of anxiety, uncertainty and aggression. Lambert emphasizes the fact that 'the standards are maintained with the utmost rigour' in the restaurant. In order to reflect the parallelism between maintaining 'the very highest fucking standards' and 'rigour', which is a precise word to suggest a sense of forceful strict obedience, Lambert's choice of words here is striking. At Table Two, Suki and Russell also tease each other by playing word games. They use foul language in order to give each other embarrassment and discomfort. Suki talks about Russell's colleagues: '...when you introduce me to them, they'll treat me with respect, won't they? They won't want to fuck me behind a filing cabinet?' (26). Each deplorable moment created by the use of offensive words is followed by an instant of refined conduct in order to highlight the deceitful aspect of language. Pinter depicts how language can be illusory and misleading when employed by insincere people. The characters' attitudes to each other and the language they exploit, in fact, underline any banal everyday circumstance when words are used to distort facts. Indeed the characters' constant juxtaposition of refined and vulgar expressions concurrently suggests Pinter's disapproval of the insincere use of language. He comments on the nature of language: 'A language, where under what is said, another thing is being said'.<sup>5</sup> Again in an interview, Pinter states clearly that he remains passionately political. Apart from his overtly political plays which he has written in the 1980s and 1990s, almost all of his plays communicate political concerns indirectly. Pinter is not only contemptuous of the abusers of power but he also censures people who ignore the atrocities happening in their immediate environment: 'There's a very low anger that resides in any respectable, intelligent person in this society about what goes on, and how impotent we seem to be to correct what goes on, and how we give power to people who don't deserve to possess power because they abuse it, and manipulate it, and treat people with contempt'. In a way Pinter is criticizing the brothers' manners in their misuse of power and their implementation of psychological oppression on their wives.<sup>6</sup>

Sheridan Morley claims that *Celebration* is Pinter's 'funniest and also perhaps his most accessible script' (Morley, 2000). Ironically, the couples are not in the mood for celebration. As the evening proceeds they find themselves revealing some distasteful truths from their past lives. Lambert recalls an earlier lover in an idyllic environment where he used to take her girl for walks along the river, which is reminiscent of a pleasant romantic relationship between Bates and his girl in Pinter's much earlier play *Silence* (1969). Upon learning that the girl was not herself but someone else, Julie recounts her first meeting with Lambert in an episode where two memories overlap. Her sister, Prue, focuses on Julie's account in which she talks about the day when Lambert falls in love with her on the top of a bus:

PRUE I'll never forget what you said. You sat on my bed. Didn't you? Do you remember?

LAMBERT This girl was in love with me — I'm trying to tell you.

PRUE Do you remember what you said? (36–37)

There are other moments in the play where the characters' memories overlap each other. Pinter's earlier memory plays also deal with how memory works. In such plays as *Old Times*, *Silence*, *Landscape* and *No Man's Land* the characters retreat into their own realms of memory, perhaps to reflect a sense of loss, regret or a desire to live in a fantasy world because the reality of present time is unbearably oppressive. In order to survive in a setting where the character is faced with the naked truth, Pinter's characters usually withdraw into the realm of memory instead of responding to the immediate question as a tactic. This in itself creates a drama of distress and desperation which is part of everyday life. Lambert and Julie immerse into different memories which reflects their lack of connection.

In parallel terms, at Table Two, Russell confesses to his wife Suki that he has betrayed her with a secretary in the past and he likens secretaries to politicians who love power: 'She just twisted me round her little finger' (7). However, to Russell's surprise Suki knows everything about secretaries because she has worked as a secretary once: 'In my time. When I was a plump young secretary. I know what the back of a filing cabinets looks like' (8). She becomes superior to Russell as she recounts her own sexual liaisons as a secretary: 'I could hardly walk from one filing cabinet to another I was so exited [...] men simply couldn't keep their hands off me, their demands were outrageous, but coming back to more important things, they're right to believe in you, why shouldn't they believe in you?' (9). As Russell fails to take control of the interaction, Pinter, indeed, displays re-remembering extramarital affairs and their effect on all parties involved, which have also been a recurring theme in such earlier plays as *Old Times* and *Betrayal*. While the characters mainly talk about sex and power, their exchanges of insults continue at separate tables.

Ben Brantley is also fascinated by Pinter's use of dialogues in which the characters are forced to 'talk their way through separate mazes'<sup>7</sup> Although they are couples and relatives, in reality each character is lonely, scared of each other and they can be rather cruel and impolite in order to survive in a continual war of words. In that sense, the play's ritzy title, glamorous characters and elegant setting, is deceptive where in reality the playwright is actually presenting a world of predators and victims, 'of intimate strangers and hateful love-making'.<sup>8</sup>

As Pinter continues to portray a slice of victims' and victimizers' lives with their instable and mysterious accounts, the restaurant has become a shelter for them even for a brief moment. The playwright depicts an urgent need for accord and sanctuary amongst chaos and cruelty. For example, Russell describes himself as a 'disordered personality' whom some people would describe as a 'psychopath' (39). However, when he is in this restaurant he has a sense of 'equilibrium and harmony'. He admits that normally he feels 'malice and hatred towards everyone', but here he feels 'love'. It is because of the intangible ambience which surrounds the characters in the restaurant. The owner, Richard, connects the indefinable ambience of the restaurant to the public house of his childhood that he used to go with his father. He declares that the restaurant is inspired by the pub in his childhood.

Michael Billington emphasizes Pinter's continual fascination with 'hermetic, insulated figures who suddenly find their space invaded and their territory threatened'.<sup>9</sup> In a satirical manner, Pinter reveals lives of arrogant and impolite people. These smart characters are reminiscent of the group of characters in *Party Time* who are similarly cut from the outside world. Accordingly, the restaurant has become a haven for the diners in which they can retreat themselves. Outside of the restaurant there is a world in which the two brothers work as strategy consultants 'enforcing peace'. Pamela Fisher, too, underlines the fact that the outside world is threatening and it is 'held at bay while the restaurant sanctuary caters to every mood and whim'.<sup>10</sup>

The Waiter is also one of the characters who finds solace and refuge in the restaurant. He feels himself at loss in a world of mystery and despair. The Waiter's introjections into the couples' speeches consist of irrelevant narrations, related to some cultural or historical events. The Waiter's fantastical reminiscences of his grandfather establish a sheer contrast to the couples' empty speeches. He introjects absurdly by telling the couples at Table One and Two: 'It's just that I heard you talking about T. S. Eliot a little bit earlier this evening' (31), or 'It's just a little bit earlier I heard you saying something about the Hollywood studio system in the thirties' (49), or 'Well, it's just that I heard all these people talking about the Austro-Hungarian Empire a while ago and I wondered if they'd ever heard about my grandfather' (65). His Grandfather's acquaintance with T.S. Eliot, D. H. Lawrence, Thomas Hardy and James Joyce is symbolic in a sense that Pinter underlines the great British literary tradition which is an unfamiliar subject in the empty surrounding of the restaurant. Here the Waiter's phantasmagoria of grand literary names and the British heritage in fact romanticizes Englishness and reminds the audience of lost values at the dawn of a new millennium. After a series of bizarre and fantastic combinations, repeated at various times in the play, it becomes clear that the restaurant is 'like a womb' (33) to the Waiter as it is to all the other characters. As Burkman denotes in Pinter's *Celebration* and in his previous plays that revolve around celebrations such as *The Birthday Party*, *A Kind of Alaska* and *The Homecoming*, 'there is a pre-oedipal desire to return to the womb or to hide out from life, as well as a terrible fear of death, which is as fearful as life'.<sup>11</sup>

A sense of nostalgia and lost values is emphasized in the Waiter's final moving speech. Indeed a phantasmagoric world is magnified by the Waiter's telescope that he received as a gift from his grandfather. He imagines that he could watch life on a boat on the sea through the telescope: 'My grandfather introduced me to the mystery of life and I'm still in the middle of it. I can't find the door to get out.' (72). He respects his grandfather and he finds himself as a lesser man than his grandfather, because while the grandfather has found that door, the Waiter himself is weak and desperate in a world of mystery and dead end. Although he feels himself in a loophole like Andy who is on his deathbed in Pinter's *Moonlight* (1993), his last words 'And I'd like to make one further introjection' (72), is in fact one more effort to continue. The tragic mood at the end of the play where the Waiter waits in vain is very much a reflection of the human condition where we are mostly inefficient and helpless when faced with life's mysteries. In retrospect, the audience comes to realize that the play does not only ridicule the three couples' empty and cruel interactions but also visualizes the tragedy that is inevitable and deplorable.

Although the Waiter's accounts about his grandfather's eventful life are simultaneously laughable and

sad, Sheridan Morley identifies a strong sense of undeclared menace and mystery juxtaposed to the young waiter's 'extraordinary false-memory fantasies'<sup>12</sup> In addition to the menacing tone, the Waiter's comic fantasies about his grandfather, argues Katherine Burkman, suggest a lost culture and lost values that he longs to recapture. At the play's end the Waiter occupies the stage alone. He is lost as ever, and is left cut off in complete silence. The Waiter's final words are addressed to the audience as he confesses that he is in the middle of a mysterious life which was introduced to him by his grandfather and how he yearns for an escape from the pain of everyday life.

As Suki asserts, 'The past is never the past', all the characters in the play are haunted by their past, and the present moment is very much under the influence of old times. For example, Lambert recognizes Suki from old times. He remembers being lovers and having a relationship with her by the banks of the river. This remembrance is symbolic of a fantasy of lost love, a desire for anything that is lost in the past really, whether it is a long gone exemplary grandfather, an idyllic past life, a bucolic English lifestyle or past literary traditions. After all, Pinter depicts nostalgic memories in a touching mode veiled under hostile conversations. As the old couples, and indeed Pinter himself as an old man, approach the inevitable end, the playwright illustrates an almost certain presence of pensive mood, nostalgia and lament. While Julie utters that she would not like another go around with life, Lambert opposes and announces that he would like to live again. He insists that 'I'm going to make it my job to live again. I'm going to come back as a better person, a more civilized person, a gentler person, a nicer person.' (56). Lambert romanticizes a different kind of life which might include love.

In a way, the characters compete to exist in a setting where past and present merge and where they are forced to face up to their memories and plan to act cleverly according to their immediate circumstances. For the characters the stage, which is a total challenge with sudden twists, can be both amusing and anarchic. In Pinter's ingenuity, everyday clichéd speech shifts into realms of aggression and insult.

Pinter admits that he has mixed feelings about words; one of which is related to delight and fascination and the other is related to nausea. As he derives a considerable pleasure from tackling with words, he also finds them such a burden and 'a stale, dead terminology' which pushes one into 'paralysis'.<sup>13</sup> Thus Katherine H. Burkman deservedly identifies *Celebration* as a 'cautionary play for the new millennium' which anatomizes the empty lives of three couples dining at an elegant restaurant in London. Indeed, Pinter's characters instruct the audience against the use/abuse and exploitation of language in a series of exchanges where the characters both cherish words but at the same time are paralyzed by words. Therefore the characters' mundane responses actually build up the forthcoming tension where they talk about various subjects from incest to betrayals. Thus the ordinary interchanges bear a strategy which causes a sense of threat and hostility.

## Conclusion

Typically Pinter's characters use words as weapons and their exchanges have become a power struggle in a war of words. Although there is no action in *Celebration*, there is a merciless struggle among wits and words. Under the characters' ordinary celebratory language exists a complex sinister set of themes about love and hate relationships. Ben Brantley, too, underlines the fact that Pinter's cryptic and unutterably British dialogue, 'the vulgarity of the nouveau riche knows no culture barriers'.<sup>14</sup> In this context, it is not surprising that the setting of a restaurant which is the place for public behaviour does not establish contrast to the characters' continuous insults and offences. In this struggle of maneuvering among words, and a series of non sequitur, Pinter evokes a life of fantasy, facts and lies and thus creates an atmosphere of complexity, and demands from the audience to appreciate this complexity. In David Morley's words, 'complexity is what writers pass through to gain simplicity and clarity'.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, Pinter's play represents a kind of journey where complex and fragmented matters unfold with the clear image of the Waiter imposing a speech that indicates how vulnerable and intricate emotional connections are.

<sup>1</sup> Brigitte Gauthier, 'Preface to *Viva Pinter*'. The International Symposium, 22-24 March 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Roger Copeland, 'A Room of his Own'. The Theatre Communications Group. 2006. <http://www.tcg.org/publications/at/2001/room.cfm>)

<sup>3</sup> Michael Billington, 'We are catching up with this man's creative talent at last'. *The Guardian*, 1 March 2007.

<sup>4</sup> All references are to this edition of *Celebration: Harold Pinter, Celebration & The Room*. London: Faber and Faber, 2000.

<sup>5</sup> Harold Pinter, 'The echoing silence'. *The Guardian*. 31 December 2008. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/culture/2008/dec/31/harold-pinter-early-essay-writing>.

<sup>6</sup> Louise Jury, 'Harold Pinter: Not a Word Out of Place'. 22 February 2007.

<sup>7</sup> Ben Brantley, 'Pinter's Silences, Richly Eloquent'. *The New York Times*. 27<sup>th</sup> July 2001.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

<sup>9</sup> Michael Billington, 'Space Invaders'. *The Guardian*. March 2000.

<sup>10</sup> Pamela Fisher, '*Celebration and The Room*'. *San Francisco Examiner*. 21 September 2001.

<sup>11</sup> Katherine H. Burkman, 'Desperation in Harold Pinter's *Celebration*'. Paru dans *Cycnos*. Volume 18 n°1, mis en ligne le 16 juillet 2008.

<sup>12</sup> Sheridan Morley, 'Pinter Double'. *The Spectator*. 1 April 2000

<sup>13</sup> Harold Pinter, 'The echoing silence'. *The Guardian*. 31 December 2008. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/culture/2008/dec/31/harold-pinter-early-essay-writing>.

<sup>14</sup> Ben Brantley, 'Lifting the Art of Name-Dropping to a Cosmic Level'. *The New York Times*. 6 December 2005.

<sup>15</sup> David Morley, 'Warwick Writing: Complexity'. 2011. [http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/newsandevents/warwickbooks/complexity/david\\_morley/](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/newsandevents/warwickbooks/complexity/david_morley/)

# Filming Palestinian “Banality.”

By Elaine Drainville & Amir Saeed

The so called Palestinian question comes to media spotlight usually when something ‘extraordinary’ happens. Recent years have seen the Israeli invasion into Lebanon 2006, the brutal siege and onslaught on Gaza and more recently the attacks on the Gaza aid ships. However, even the *ordinary* in Palestine is far from mundane and banal. Underneath the Israeli occupation and out-with the organised resistance a far more ‘normal’ life of ordinary Palestinians exists. These people have remarkable stories that deserve to be told and they have articulate voices that need to be heard.

This paper discusses and describes original footage shot and recorded over 21 days in and around Al Aroub refugee camp in the West Bank in March/April 2005. It attempts to document Palestinian everyday life through sequences of images and sound that illustrate how ordinary Palestinians were living in the Al Aroub refugee camp. The film was shot by an all female crew of three as part of money raised by Art Council UK, providing source material for a variety of outputs that include a multimedia ceramic installation, short documentaries for pod casting, web site and written papers analysing the material in a more academic format.

Whilst the whole premise of this work is looking for sameness, points of contact, empathy and the ability to embrace difference, what cannot be denied is that we - Western film-makers who shot the footage - are coming from a *different perspective*.

In short we are filming and mediating the experiences of the ordinary Palestinians for a wider audience who wish to understand the humanity of this complex situation. We suggest that we are trying to embrace this difference and inform a change in perception that may not occur if traditional forms of representation are not challenged. These mainstream representations clearly create a *vacuum* in our understanding and feelings of *affection* towards the Palestinian people.

Fundamental to the project and instigated on this trip was the planning and development of a production team, based at the refugee camp, so that the women and girls could continue to record the ‘ordinary and the everyday’ aspects of their lives.

## The Al Aroub Project: Collected Stories from Palestine

Thus the starting point for this project is the premise, that due to the prevalent modes of representation:

the sound bite, the short cut, lazy journalism and censorship to name but a few, our understanding of Palestinians is limited. It has been suggested that we (The West) see the Palestinians in certain contexts such as suicide bombers, angry stone throwing 'youths', inconsolable mothers crying over the body of their dead child, chanting crowds carrying a martyr's corpse above the heads of a packed, jostling throng of fervent, crazed Arab men. Previous discussion has noted that the majority of these images are hand held, each shot very rarely lasting longer than 2 seconds. News stories are short and isolated; they are not placed in an historical context.

What seem to be missing in the forms of Western representation of Palestinians is the ordinary and the everyday, aspects of the day-to-day lives of this community.

## Method

An all women team consisting of Palestinians and Westerners managed, arranged and recorded footage of life in the Al Aroub Camp. The Al Aroub refugee camp was set up in 1948 to hold Palestinian families that had been forcibly removed from their homes from the surrounding areas. What should be noted is that the Al Aroub camp is not an extraordinary circumstance for the Palestinian people.

Palestinian refugees constitute 37% of the population of the West Bank. In 1997, 542,642 refugees were living in the West Bank of whom 26% were living in the nineteen camps and 74% were living outside the camps (PCBS census 1997, UNRWA 1997). Nearly half the population (45%) is under 15 years of age - 17.5% are between 0-4 years of age and 27.5% are between 5-14 years of age. The fieldwork was carried out in the Hebron area. [www.forcedmigration.org/guides/llreport/llreport-6.htm](http://www.forcedmigration.org/guides/llreport/llreport-6.htm)

Working closely with Palestinian women and children from the Al Aroub Camp allowed access to their daily domestic routine that becomes extraordinary due to the circumstances of the Israeli occupation. This resulted in 14 hours of footage, covering many different stories from a wide group of contributors. Footage was shot over 21 days initially focusing on daily chores like cooking, sewing and the so called 'banality' of daily life.

This 'banality' was supervised by Israeli watch towers, concrete blocks and checkpoints. In short freedom of movement is severely restricted. Many people of the camp have not seen relatives in Gaza for years. The biggest shock to the crew, however, was to see the Wall being built by the Israeli authority, partitioning off large areas of land and giving greater control to the Israelis. We soon realised that we could not limit the recordings to the women in the camp but needed to try and capture a wider view of what was happening in the area for all Palestinians. Documenting the ordinary and the everyday detail over a protracted period of time, with the camera set on a tripod and shots held for a very long time is one of the constituent elements of our approach for this research.

## Background on the Subjects

Over the course of filming a variety of subjects were recorded. However for the purposes of this paper we are going to concentrate on two examples.

The first example is a group of young male teenagers from the Aida refugee camp in Bethlehem. This group consisted of approximately 15 males aged between 12-16 whose residence was divided by the building of the “security wall.” This meant that for these teenagers, Israeli “security measures”, further disrupted their everyday existence. It should be noted that filming that day was scheduled to record cut-aways of the Wall or security fence currently been constructed by the Israeli state ([www.guardian.co.uk/israel/Story/0,2763,916222,00.html](http://www.guardian.co.uk/israel/Story/0,2763,916222,00.html) - 43k).

Figure 1 The Wall at Aida Refugee Camp : The Palestinian boys walking away after interview. (Notice graffiti on wall: “Wake Up to your Humanity”)



The decision to record the group of teenagers was spontaneous, the group out of curiosity collected around the camera.

Here the crew employed a static camera on a tripod with a fixed steady frame. This allowed the viewer to listen and look at these subjects speaking in Arabic over a protracted period of time with the voice of a female Palestinian translator (off camera).

One of the enlightening aspects of using this approach is that it allows subjects to share their experiences in a more personal manner. Very quickly the groups told of a friend who had just been shot in the neck hours earlier. The blood of their friend was still visible on their clothes. The group were quick to denounce the Wall.

Boy 1 name: Speaks in Arabic?

Translator: This wall - the Israelis had no right to build this wall.

Boy 1 name: Speaks in Arabic

Translator: This land is for people - - - for Palestinian people and it's not an Israeli one.

Boy 1 name: Speaks in Arabic

Translator: and this land was the only place where the people of the camp can come for a kind of stress relief.

Boy 1 name: Speaks in Arabic

Translator: Usually children and youth of the camp are coming here, used to come here, because there were two playground here.

Boy 1 name: Speaks in Arabic

Translator: and suddenly the Israelis came and put this wall.

Boy 1 name: Speaks in Arabic

Translator: Also this was the only road or path or exit the - the people, the Palestinian people were able to come and be able to go to Jerusalem. Walking free or sneaking to Jerusalem, which is their right.

Boy 1 name: Speaks in Arabic

Translator: As children in this camp, the only thing they can do to resist this (undecipherable word) as a result of seeing the Israelis coming and building this wall, is coming and throwing stones.

Question: What happens when they throw stones?

(from me in English)

Translator: Question repeated in Arabic

Boy 1 name: Speaks in Arabic

Translator: Sometimes they are having this err – teargas.

Boy 1 name: Speaks in Arabic

Translator: Sometimes err – sound bombs

Boy 1 name: Speaks in Arabic

Translator: Sometimes they are raiding the camp and coming inside the camp

Boy 1 name: Speaks in Arabic

Translator: and of course they will injure – injure people.

#### GENERAL CHATTER

Question: Where do they go now to play?

(from video crew in English)

Translator: Question repeated in Arabic

Boy 2 name: Speaks in Arabic

Translator: Now they don't play at all, they just sit at home.

Previous research argues that male Palestinians are normally represented in a negative manner (Said, 1978: Philo and Berry, 2004). As previously stated mainstream representation is usually focused with erratic shots allowing little room for empathy.

Previously these individuals could easily have been represented or written off as stone throwing youths, militants or terrorists. However the footage shows long clips of the kids talking, showing wounds and just passively gazing at the camera. The purpose of this style is to develop empathy with these kids. In short

they are like teenagers everywhere but they are “playing” in a militarised zone.

The final footage of this sequence shows armed Wall security guards running towards us (the crew and the boys) and the sounds of the kids fleeing.

### Example 2 “Fatima”

The second example shows a Palestinian woman wearing a hijab standing outside her home. This interview was pre-arranged by another Palestinian woman who was part of the crew. Once again a static camera was employed recording long takes with little interruption. “Fatima” spoke perfect English and needed little prompting to articulate and contextualise her story. She spoke for half an hour revealing personal experience of the occupation furthermore she linked this with wider social and political circumstances. Fatima addresses the audience with questions attempting to engage the viewer with her sense of exasperation.

Figure 2 “Fatima” Outside her home that may be taken by the Israelis to continue building the Wall.



F in English:

I might lose my house because I’m not allowed in anymore. I have a Blue ID ---- and Blue IDs are not

allowed within, within, within the walls and this will be applied only from June off, June on, sorry. And from June I will have to apply for a permit to be able to visit my house or I have to live somewhere else – because I'm not allowed in.

Break in talk

F in English:

And of course all these mountains will be gone because the wall will just take the mountains out and if you see the villages there, there will be another wall for them so the wall, the mountains, this space, this area, what you see here is gonna be between two walls. One for us and one for them and the wall is outside for the Israeli's to use. Of course they didn't confiscate it but it's out of use, so officially it's ours but practically we can't get there ---so (F shrugs)

Question from crew In English:

So you're cut off from everything on this side of the mountain (out of picture, points to mountain) and what about your sheep and

F: in English

nothing, it will be dead, the people will be dead not just the sheep, everything will be dead. This is the idea, the idea is American. If you know the reservations of the Red Indians? This is where it comes from, they put them in reservations, Through the, the – times go through, they vanish.

BREAK FROM TALKING

Either they leave which happens to many people because they, they want to live or they just kill each other or they just die from diseases, from whatever reason, they just vanish and this is the plan, to lock Palestinian within reservations and or ghettos or whatever it is and they will vanish by themselves and they will come back to the original Zionist idea 'a land without people to a people without land'. They just make it happen.

BREAK FROM TALKING

F: in English:

and unfortunately America is supporting them fully, Europe is silent and no one speaks until someone bomb himself up and I don't really know what this guy should do. I mean, ok, so he shouldn't bomb himself, what else?

What should he do? ---

Fatima challenges stereotypical representation of the Muslim women. The hijab that she wears is often seen in the West as a symbol of her oppression and proof of her cultures "backwardness." Her arguments are presented in an articulated, clear and passionate yet controlled manner. Within her argument she

manages to contextualise her own plight to the wider Palestinian cause. Women wearing headscarves have come to embody a dangerous other. Media representations of Muslim women have portrayed the binary positions of either hijab clad victim or perpetrator. The hijab or veil has come to signify the oppression of Muslim women in Western media, where she remains ‘a woman without a voice’.

Too often the Palestinian voice has been represented *as male, militant and terrorist*. This silences the everyday experiences of ordinary Palestinians who are already living in a subjugated manner.

Being an all women crew enabled us to meet women and girls more easily than if men had been present in the crew. Personal histories were told in a relaxed easy environment, which enabled candid recollections of the women’s experiences and provided the space for jokes and general banter. Not that dissimilar to the crews experiences of family and friends gatherings here in the UK, in fact we would often find ourselves drawing comparisons in look, and humour to our own family members back in the UK.

The local women in the crew were invaluable, organising, facilitating and interpreting the stories, creating a sensitive and supportive environment, for the women to be interviewed and cutaways to be recorded. We would definitely not have got the material we did, if it had just been a crew of Western women with an interpreter from outside the area.

Many of the Palestinians we met and filmed had an indefatigable belief that talking about the unjust treatment they received, the detail of the day to day reality of their plight, to the ‘outside’ world, will eventually expand awareness and consciousness on a global scale, bringing about an end to their oppression, with a just and peaceful solution.

The pernicious daily oppression the Palestinians experience in all its forms, is difficult to bear witness to. The Palestinians we met told their truths with humility, (the seriousness of their stories did not lend itself to an over dramatisation of the situation). To listen to their stories, to witness and experience some of the same aggression from the Israeli authorities was at times, for the UK members of the crew, very overwhelming. We felt sadness and compassion but also fear, frustration and anger at the unjust and inhumane treatment meted out to us all as we filmed over these 21 days. It was quite a traumatising experience and took 3 to 4 weeks to gain any sense of stability on our return. The crew was united in their view that ‘the ordinary and everyday’ culture of this West Bank community should be presented to the ‘outside’ world.

In terms of the post-production stage and the various outputs the material will be used for, the Western team members are in the position of being the mediators of this story. The team is trying to strike a balance between the desire and need of the Palestinians to have their stories ‘heard’ and effective story telling for a Western audience taking into account the lack of knowledge of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, levels of acceptance and willingness to embrace a different perspective than orientalist/mainstream news and current affairs representation.

# Re-defining The Image of Beirut in Modern Arabic Literature.

By Saddik M. Gohar

## Abstract

Subverting the conspiracy theory advocated by some Arab critics who claim that the establishment of modern Arab cities was threatening to the Euro-American project of cultural, political, economic and military colonization in the Middle East, the paper explores the image of Beirut in contemporary Arabic literature – particularly in the poetry of Khalil Hawi, Nizar Qabbani and Mahmoud Darwish – in order to investigate several issues of trans-cultural and geo-political significance. The paper argues that there is no similarity between the Arab city and its western counterpart, where human relationships are disrupted by the intervention of the machine and where the poet witnesses the collapse of human relationships. It is obvious that the Arab city does not have the complicated technology or industrial infrastructure which would dehumanize the poet or put pressure on his psyche and consciousness as in the West. Therefore, it is significant to argue that in Arabic literature, there are no city poets in the western sense because Arab cities unfortunately failed to create poets like Eliot, Baudelaire, Pound, Whitman, Ginsberg, and others. However, the Arab city has other oppression mechanisms such as persecution, torture and denial of human rights. These elements are sufficient to generate hostility on the part of the poet toward the city and its dwellers.

## Introduction

In *The Culture of Cities*, Lewis Mumford states that “cities cause men and women to behave in various patterns, not always to their betterment” (Mumford 1969: 34<sup>1</sup>). For this reason, people, for a time long, have been suspicious of the city. Moreover, Gerald Leinward argues:

It was on the farm and in the joys of rural life that the good life, and good men, were to be

found. Yet it was in search of the good life that men, almost without willing it, built cities, and from cities – at least as often as from farms – great men have risen. (Leinward 1981: 28<sup>2</sup>)

Apparently, the city / village dialectics is a diverse controversial theme in western and Arabic literature and culture. For example, the positive attitude toward the village in Arabic literature, prior to the twentieth-century, does not lead to hostility toward the city. In the poetry of Ahmed Shawqi and the neo-classicists, the city was still an ideal place, a paradise of God on earth even when the poor suffer from starvation in its streets. The deplorable circumstances of the Iraqi women in Baghdad does not urge Ma'ruf Al-Rusafi (1877 – 1945), an Iraqi poet, to attack the city. In his narrative poems, he depicts the miserable conditions of children and orphans as well as the distress and the plight of widows and women in Baghdad. Despite their poverty and suffering, the poet does not condemn the city. In spite of the indifference of the urban society of Baghdad to its poor community, the poem ends in a naïve manner, with the poet preaching the readers to provide charity and relief for the poor of the city<sup>3</sup>.

Explicitly, the difference between city and country life in Arabic culture, goes back to the pre-Islamic era. At that time, there was distinction between the urban and the Bedouin way of existence. In pre-Islamic Bedouin poetry, there was an attitude to praise the simple / traditional way of life advocated by the Arab desert communities affirming the wisdom, intelligence and superiority of the Bedouins. In this kind of poetry, the superiority of the Arab Bedouin's gifts of eloquence are emphasized. The Bedouin was portrayed as a liberal / egalitarian person antagonistic to the urban standards of hierarchy and status. However, the urban or anti-Bedouin poetry, in the early Islamic era, viewed the Bedouin as wild and savage (even ignorant, vicious and evil) unable to be assimilated in the luxurious way of living available in urban communities.

Thus, the Arab Bedouin is delineated in this kind of poetry as a boorish person who should be redeemed and civilized by urban life. This anti-Bedouin trend reached a culmination in the poetry of the Abbasid poet of Persian origin, Abu-Nuwas who ridiculed the pre-Islamic / Bedouin culture in the Arabian Peninsula exalting the Persian and South Arabian / Qahtani urban civilization. On this basis, Abu-Nuwas denounces the Bedouin way of living as backward and obsolete praising the city life in Baghdad which is associated with entertainment, drinking, slave-girls and taverns. With the process of urbanization and the gradual disappearance of Bedouin communities, the dichotomy between city and country life has become one of the basic motifs in Arabic poetry reflecting the conflict between the rural way of living and its urban counterpart.

Historically, the city is associated with social values, social structures and class references as well as racial and ethnic attitudes in addition to other issues of pressing contemporary immediacy. For example, the Lebanese city, Zahla, unlike Beirut, is depicted in a favorable way in the poetry of the neoclassical poet Ahmed Shawqi. In a poem entitled "Zahla", Shawqi, the prince of Arab poets, incorporates the metaphor of a beloved woman to describe the natural beauty of this resort city. The poet's passion for his beloved Zahla is virtuous: "I subdued all desires and forgot all reproof or complaint". Zahla, the city, is portrayed as a "beautiful bride", the cedar's bride, tenderly embraced by the twin mountains of Sinnin and Haramún,

which are themselves described as “the arms of nature” (Shawqi 2960: 226<sup>4</sup>). Shawqi’s marvelous image of Zahla stands in sharp contrast to the violent and sexual image of Baghdad in Abú Nuwas’s poetry as he describes an orchard of palms surrounding a palace.

To Abu-Nuwas, the Abbasid poet of Persian origin, this palm with its ripe dates, would be more delicious than “a bride in her underwear” if only he could kiss and hug her. The fruitful palm is a symbol of Baghdad or a symbol of the delightful life of the city as opposed to Abu Nuwas’s description in the following line of sterile Bedouin environment which he ridicules in his poetry. In order to reveal his criticism of the Bedouin way of living and of the Bedouin community where Bedouin poets shed tears on its ruins, Abu Nuwas uses symbolic images of sterility. While the city of Baghdad is depicted as “a bride in her underwear”, the Bedouin community is portrayed as a location where “a viper fucking a lizard in its hole in a barren abyss” (Abu-Nuwas 1979: 502<sup>5</sup>).

While the first urban image of the city as a bride is associated with sexual intercourse leading to pregnancy and fertility, the second image reveals a scene of sterile homosexuality peculiar to Abu Nuwas’s poetry<sup>6</sup>. This drawing of an image of nature to describe a beloved paves the way for the feminine personification of the city as a beloved or a bride or even a prostitute (in later poetry). In other words, the development of sexual imagery in Arabic poetry, in which the metaphor of the palm tree is applied to the beloved lady, then the palm tree bearing ripe dates applied to a bride, then the likening of figs to the breasts of a maiden (Shawqi) and finally the metaphor of woman applied to a city add a great impact on later Arab poets who depicted the modern, crowded and industrialized city (like Beirut) as a prostitute.

Historically, “the origins of cities go back to the very dawn of civilization. The word “city” itself comes from the Latin “civitas” from which the word civilization also stems. In ancient Greek and Roman civilizations citizens were the property owners and the tax payers of the city. The first cities known to western man began to appear in the river valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates in ancient Mesopotamia, of the Nile in ancient Egypt, of the Ganges in India, and the Yangtze in China. Mankind learned to live in established communities where the duties of food gathering and growing, hunting, and manufacturing tools and weapons were shared and structured to meet the needs of the entire community. These early communities became the first cities.

In every era, the city as a literary image has engaged one or another set of oppositions; bipolarity is, in fact, one of the city’s most consistent traits. Of course, evoking the image of the city can easily recall the city’s most obvious opposite and set it in contrast to the country. From this opposition, one easily extrapolates any number of thematic oppositions – the artificial opposes the natural, a heightened pace opposes a calm ritualistic progression of seasons, a creation of man opposes the creation of God and many of these come into play at different points in the development of the city myth. Yet, specially from the nineteenth century forward, one finds a complex of oppositions even within the image of the city itself, and these are particularly interesting because they create distinct paradoxes – paradoxes of particular importance for the twentieth century. These oppositions lead to a peculiarly modernist presentation of the city as a symbol of fragmentation.

The roots of the nineteenth century oppositions lie in an ancient dichotomy that reveals man's struggle to define the inherent nature of the city. The split can easily be seen in the symbolic cities of the Bible, for example, Holy Jerusalem and Dissolute Babylon. This ancient opposition reveals man's ambivalent assessment of his cities, another enduring feature in this context. As a representation of the Heavenly City (paradise), the earthly city could be seen as "city revered" (Jerusalem). Yet cities also represented man's civilization, and thus, the city might also be seen as "city reviled" (Babylon). While the city was first judged simply as either good or evil, the "Romantic" city is more often perceived as "city reviled," a location of vice not to be trusted.

Under the influence of Rousseau, the Romantics saw the city dweller as "isolated not only from his fellows, but from those forms of nature that might lead him to a transcendent sense of unity with the universe". It became increasingly common for writers and philosophers to feel that the city was locus of chaos, and therefore the city was often viewed with suspicion. Still, though the majority of Romantic thinking involved a rejection of the city, occasionally the Romantics perceived a seed of utopian hope in the city. As Burton Pike put it, "the city is inherently un-poetic to the Romantic (except when Wordsworth catches it off-guard)." In this way, Wordsworth was able to look at London at dawn and see beauty in the "sleeping giant" in "Written upon Westminster Bridge". In addition, the city was to some extent necessary in order for the romantic poet to underscore the sublime quality of nature. Thus, Wordsworth views the city itself as gloomy, dirty, and unnatural, but he often sees the city as a foil against which acts of truth or integrity or objects of beauty are more meaningful or inspiring.

As cities grew – not only in population and geographical size, but also in social complexity and topological variety – the city dweller experienced a greater and greater loss of individuality, underscoring the conflict between community and the individual, and emphasizing a rift between the city of the ideal, a "utopia" (and the city of real life) (a "dystopia".) Certainly "the Romantic fear of the masses", according to Burton Pike, also helped to undermine the original concept of "the city as a community"; the somewhat "neutral opposition of individual versus community becomes the semantically charged one of individual versus masses, isolating the individual even further" (Pike 1981: 116<sup>7</sup>). In addition, Georg Simmel argues that the growth of cities made it more difficult to conceptualize them as unified wholes, and this also caused the inhabitants' image of a city to become more and more fragmented. Not only was the ability for the city to maintain a cohesive community crumbling, but the converse was also true": Simmel believed that "the deepest problems of modern life derive from the claim of the individual to preserve the autonomy and individuality of his experience in the face of overwhelming social forces of historical change, or external culture, and the technique of life" (Simmel 1969: 47<sup>8</sup>).

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, there was a trend in Arabic city traditions which could be seen in literature dealing with the exploration of the naivety of the peasants visiting the big city for the first time. Moreover, the Arabic literature of the city elaborates on major themes such as the aberration of the individual in the city and other themes of dispossession / displacement, ethnic diversity, the grandeur of the city and visions of future cities. Great cities of the Arab world like Beirut, Cairo, Baghdad, Damascus and other urban / industrial centers are used by writers to provide historical background information about

the origin, development and function of the city and emphasize the creative and destructive forces of the city in literature and history. In Arabic literature, major cities are used as locations for cultural, political and economic diversity. Here, the city is manipulated to examine political conflicts such as the Arab – Israeli dispute, the Lebanese civil war, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and issues such as the problems of poverty and prostitution, corruption, oppression and tyranny.

### **The Representation of Beirut in Arabic Poetry**

Advocating the conspiracy theory, Saleh Al-Razzouk in “The Concept of Defeat in Contemporary Arabic Poetry” claims that the establishment of Arab cities such as Beirut, Cairo, Damascus and Baghdad was threatening to the western project of cultural, political, economic and military colonization in the Arab region because these cities are considered as bases for what he calls “an Arab civilization”. The Arab city, according to Al-Razzouk, “is the harbor of revolutionaries, intellectuals and the masses”. He illustrates that “the factories and the economy are associated with urbanization, thus, the existence of a modern industrialized city in the Arab world is considered as a threat to the colonial hegemony and the imperialistic policies in the region” (Cited in Gohar 1998: 77<sup>9</sup>).

Contrary to the preceding viewpoint, the Arab cities do not represent any threat to the western project of domination in the Middle East due to the wide industrial gap between the Arab city – where people are toiling day and night for the sake of earning their modest living - and its western counterpart. For example, the ordinary Arab citizen in Beirut is frequently depicted in Arabic literature as a Sisyphus figure, condemned by eternal suffering. In the same context, the city people of Beirut are destined to die slowly in the city’s taverns, brothels and bars: “In Beirut there is toiling and slow death / and an enchanted tavern, wine, beds of fragrance for / those who have been lost in the mazes of the desert / in the damned alleys and brothels of the city” (Hawi 1979: 24<sup>10</sup>).

Beirut was the first Arab capital to be occupied by the Israeli army. The occupation and devastation of Beirut has a tremendously damaging impact on Arab culture and literature. Therefore, Beirut is one of the most significant Arab cities that appears in the poetry of Arab poets in different shapes. The personification of Beirut city as fruitful woman is an ancient tradition in Arabic poetry whereas her impotence or barrenness is the corollary of a general state of civil distress. In the poetry of Khalid al-Khazraji, (a young Iraqi poet, traveling between Baghdad and Beirut and writing about both cities with compassion and insight) Beirut is figured out as a woman victimized by evil forces. During the Lebanese civil war in the 1970s, he exhorts the war-torn city to heal and regenerate itself alluding to oriental mythic figures associated with rebirth, fertility and resurrection like Tammuz.

The feminine mythic figure, expected to provide salvation to Beirut, is a counterpart of the savior-Tammuz who appears in al-Khazraji’s poetry as the sacrifice and hope of the city. In “Beirut My Love”, the poet expresses his sadness over the city which has been torn by civil war. The city of olive forests, orange

gardens and migrating seagulls has become a ghost city whose forests and shores are on fire while the moon disappears every night: "I ask the orange gardens / and the migrating seagulls / about my love, / I ask the olive forest – / Has my lover's shadow / passed over you soil? / I ask about a country / whose forests are on fire, / whose shores are on fire, / while the moon / disappears every night / and the trees wither. / I ask about the noble face / which vanished in the avenues of darkness, / about the young girl / who dreams every hour / of water and a loaf of bread" (Asfour 1988: 123<sup>11</sup>).

Personifying Beirut as a beautiful lady (the poet's beloved), the poet laments what happened to the city of poetry where young girls dream of water and bread: "Beirut, my love, / I know that your face, which greeted the light, / is pale / and blood washes the green windows / my love, / City of poetry and dreams: / death crouches in the gardens. / in the houses / and seas; / every drop of blood / is a star. / and every pulse repeats / that surely your noble face / will one day return" (Asfour 1988: 124<sup>12</sup>).

The poet adds that the city, like him, should resist all barbaric attempts to torn it apart rendering it into a heap of ruins: "You know that I / resist the winds / the pullets and the thieves / Rebellion explodes in my heart / like a flame, / and on the floor of the ocean / rests whatever the ocean hides" (Asfour 1988: 124<sup>13</sup>).

Finally, the poet reveals his desire to see the end of the civil war which will lead to the city's rebirth. He dreams of a savior, a Christ-figure who will return to the sinful city and bring resurrection and salvation to its injured churches and protect her children from death: "Beirut, / would the light awaken / over your barren doors, / would He who was crucified return / to your beseeched roads, / would you listen to the metal ringing in the soldiers' ditches / and the cries of the children in cribs – / would you listen, my love, would you / listen?" (Asfour 1988: 124<sup>14</sup>). In the post WWII era and prior to the civil war, Beirut suggested a symbolic spectrum of paradoxes to the Arab collective memory. Looking upon Beirut one could hear all the passionate voices of the city. Beirut's unique cultural triumphs make the city a symbol of the new nation's pride in its artistic accomplishments in the aftermath of WWII. The city also seemed appealing to men of creative imagination particularly artists, poets and novelists.

In the twentieth century, Pearce Roy Harvey argues that "the role of the poet has always been to reveal the quality and character of that which is human in his community" (Harvey 1961: 289<sup>15</sup>). During the Beirut Literary Renaissance – the post WWII era - the city owed its achievements in part to the work of poets like Khalil Hawi and Nizar Qabbani who affirmed life against death, art against artifice, man against the city and its diseases. Populist by faith and agrarian in sympathies, these poets add fascinating strains to the song of revolt against the city of beauty, corruption and vice. They not only celebrate individual freedom and social democracy but record the angst of the Romantic singer in Arab cities. The subject of their urban poetry is the search for the idealistic city, the possibility of order and well-being within a community that earns for man his legitimate place.

As poets, they concerned themselves with possibilities of achieving human life in the middle of war and racial scramble in the cursed city by nurturing their ideal city the set of principles whereby the idea of man might be made consonant with the idea of society. In different poems, these Arab poets describe the city

of Beirut as a prostitution house, “wicked” and “brutal ” rife with whores / “painted women” and “gun men who kill” and are “free to kill again” and hungry faces of women and children. The tension between the destructive and generative powers of the city in this kind of poetry reverberates throughout Arabic Literature as a whole. Another major paradox of the Beirut city is the fact that people may live in physical proximity, but be socially miles apart due to class and social distinctions.

Like the Iraqi poet Abdul-Wahhab Al-Bayyati whose city “is raped by the gypsies”, Hawi’s city – Beirut - is a whore who is engaged in sin and vice day and night. Beirut, in Hawi’s poetry is a city which takes “deception” as a profession. It is described as the city of opium, stones and caves which robs the poet of his innocence. Beirut is the city of sinners, taverns, brothels and moral corruption which must be eliminated like the Biblical city of “Sodom”. Hawi, the famous Lebanese poet, believes that the only way of dealing with the evils of the modern city – Beirut - is to destroy it completely because the poet has lost his innocence “in the deserts of its nights”.

Beirut is also described as a city which crushes human relationships and emotions because it turns into a jungle: “you could see jungles coming to the city / crossing its ancient walls / You could see stones drifting in its roads/ you could see crowds and multitudes of herds getting out of its caves / only destruction and fire would gratify their hunger and thirst” (Hawi1979: 238<sup>16</sup>). As a modern city, Beirut, according to Hawi, does not create civilization but it takes people back to the cave era, and to the laws of the jungle where the stronger hunts the weaker. In Hawi’s city, people turn into herds of animals and stones that have no feelings and no emotions.

Dealing with the city motif, most Arab poets – in the post WWII era – sought order, each according to his dire need and potency of vision. The modern city, they felt, stood out there: a thing to be wondered at rather than desired, its otherness maintained by conscious will, its strangeness reinforced by poetic fancy. Qabbani and Hawi were perhaps alone among the modern Arab poets to view the city – Beirut- from within. Full of ideals and dreams, Qabbani went to Beirut escaping from the suffocating atmosphere of Damascus, the city which he both loves and abhors. Qabbani alone seems to have made a reliant effort to perceive the modern city – Beirut - as an essentially democratic institution that is supposed to have a supreme and legitimate function in modern life. Humanizing the city without idealizing it, Qabbani claims that if women could be a proper subject his poetry of love and erotica, the city could as well be a subject of no less significance. The city of Qabbani’s early poetry lives as intensely as spiritedly as its prostitutes and fighting factions.

In his poem “Beirut: My Beloved”, written during the Lebanese civil war, Qabbani personifies Beirut city as a beautiful lady, victimized by a catastrophic war. He condemns the war and its tragic consequences in his address to the city: “Please forgive us because we let you die alone / We watched your blood running in rivers / and we remained silent / We were watching your body being raped and we did nothing / We had sold you in the prostitution market.” Furthermore, Hawi in “The Magi in Europe” says: “We are from Beirut / Don’t you know? We are born with borrowed faces. We are born with / borrowed minds / we are a tragedy / Thinking is born a whore in our markets / and spends its life inventing virginity” (Jayyusi 1987:

259<sup>17</sup>). Moreover, in the poetry of Hawi, Beirut, associated with famous western cities – London and Paris in particular – is a wasteland, a human mill and a great prison.

Like other modern Arab cities, Beirut is depicted as “the belly of a whale”, a dehumanized “enclave” dominated by tyrants and their stooges during the day and by pimps and whores at night. Moreover, Hawi’s criticism of the city is also an assault on Arab culture and western civilization. The city of Beirut simultaneously symbolizes the evils and horrible destiny of both civilizations. While western civilization suffers from greed and adventurism, Eastern civilization is associated with lethargy and dependency. To Hawi, both of these two civilizations have contributed to the downfall of modern humanity. Beirut, Hawi’s city is a false meeting place of East and West where everything including language is borrowed and adulterated. Hawi’s unique and sophisticated vision of the modern city has no equal in Arabic poetry. Unlike the Iraqi poet, Badr Shaker Al-Sayyab who is the ultimate victim of the city of impenetrable walls, Hawi refuses to become its victim stressing the stance of the hero and sage who suffers for humanity without himself being dragged into the gutter.

Furthermore, in “The Death of the Shoemaker”, Beirut is emblematic of violence, death and treason. In the poem, mentioned above, Ahmad Dahbur describes the death of his friend Najeeb Abu Rayya who was killed in an explosion which destroyed a nine-storey building in Beirut. Abu Rayya was killed along with his wife and eight children: “His eight children and their mother blew up together / He flew up with them to the second frontier, the sky / the stunned trees considered it the work of an unknown / while the stooges laughter echoed throughout the city” (Jayyusi 1987: 199<sup>18</sup>).

### **Narrating Beirut after the Israeli Invasion (1982)**

The victory of the Egyptian and Syrian armies in the Arab-Israeli war of October, 1973 and the successful attempt to cross the Suez Canal and the demolition of the Israeli army in Sinai gave new credibility to Arab rulers, particularly after the Gulf Countries’ initiative to stop sending oil supplies to pro-Israeli countries. The October victory evoked a sense of a unified Arab identity and momentarily renewed the hopes of Arabs to restore Palestine from the hands of colonizers. Nevertheless, the optimistic feelings born out of the October war victory in 1973 were lost after the failure of Arab rulers to put an end to the Lebanese Civil War.

Many Arab governments considered Beirut, the only democratic spot in the Arab world, as a threat to their existence. These oppressive and tyrannical regimes which have sold the false promises of Arab unity and nationalism to their people via misleading propaganda campaigns were afraid of the poetic voices coming out of Beirut that always say the truth about the misery and suffering of the Arab people. In this socio-political context, writing poetry in the Arab world becomes a dangerous task involving jeopardy and risk. Therefore, the fall of Beirut, after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 was a significantly dramatic event for all Arab poets because the city has been the center of Arab intellectual and cultural

activities for decades.

Historically, poets and artists from all over the Arab world seek refuge in Beirut where they could safely publish their revolutionary works without fear of censorship. Dictatorial Arab regimes have considered Beirut as a threat to their existence, thus, they ironically turned deaf ears to the Israeli invasion of the city, an invasion which was expected to lead to the murder of all revolutionary poets living there as tyrannical Arab rulers wish. Further, the Arab rulers also did not interfere to stop the Israeli invasion of Southern Lebanon which reached a climax after the occupation of the city of Beirut and the slaughter of thousands of Palestinian civilians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps massacre in 1982.

The Israeli occupation of Beirut led to the inevitable exodus of Palestinian refugees from their Lebanese exile. They went to another exile in Yemen, Tunisia, Cyprus and Greece. After the Palestinian leaders were forced to leave Lebanon as a result of the Israeli invasion, Mahmoud Darwish wrote some poems criticizing PLO leaders for selling false hopes to their people. The successful Israeli military operation in Beirut, according to Darwish revealed a lack of ideological direction and an absence of political agenda on the part of the Palestinian leadership and its militias. Explicitly, Darwish's Beirut poems are war poems, written under the shadow of a wasteful war. These poems take the readers around the city that harbors the beasts of war, the phantasmal figures that shuttle between different Arab cities trading death. In his poetry of the Beirut experience, Darwish uses the sea imagery to signify the temporary home of Palestinians in the Diaspora.

Many Arab poets lament the fall and destruction of Beirut blaming the Arab rulers, the United Nations and western Imperialistic countries for allowing the Zionist invaders to eliminate the beautiful and historical city of Beirut. Three patterns of imagery evolved out of the Beirut invasion poetry: the street image, the desert image and the sea image. While the Iraqi poet, Saadi Yusuf, describes the deserted streets of a city under siege, the Syrian poet Ali Ahmad Said (Adonis) describes a historic and modern city being turned into ashes. In his poem "The Desert", Adonis points out that the annihilation of the civilized city of Beirut results in the return of the desert which becomes within the symbolic structure of the poem, a signifier of the return to the Arab roots.

Lamenting the tragic consequences of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 and its dramatic consequences, represented by the destruction of its capital city, Beirut, the centre of Arab culture and art in addition to the slaughtering of thousands of Palestinian exiles living in Sabra and Shatila refugee camps by the Israeli army and its allies in Lebanon, Hawi says: "We were walls facing walls / It was painful to talk / It was painful to feel the distance / choked by the tragedy / It was painful to talk" (Al- Udhari 1986: 119<sup>19</sup>). In a related context, the great Palestinian poet, Mahmoud Darwish, in "Beirut", describes the city as a woman, who "smells of early mist", a flower, and a butterfly. He associates Beirut with other Islamic / Arabic cities "Beirut is built of gold and fatigue / of Andalusia and Damascus". Then he depicts Beirut as a place of Palestinian exile, of Palestinian refugee camps: "Beirut our tent / Beirut our star, Beirut shape of shade" (Jayyusi 1987: 205<sup>20</sup>). Then he compare between the heroic city of Beirut who confronts the brutal invaders with other defeated cities, governed by castrated kings and corrupted rulers.

To Darwish these Arab cities are made of papers and dominated by impotent armies. These cities opened their doors to foreign invaders while crucifying its free people: “I see armed cities of paper that bristle with kings and khaki / I see cities crowning their conquerors / I see cities that hang their lovers over branches of iron / and drive away the names at dawn”. Darwish denounces capital Arab cities which are transformed into a network of prisons and detention camps. The rulers of these cities have sold / exported the blood of the Arab martyrs in order to import whisky and prostitutes. In other words, the frustrated poet speaks of cities that have scaffolds and prisons. Further, “I see cities crowning their conquerors / Exporting martyrs in order to import whiskey / And the latest fashion in sex and torture” (Jayyusi 1987: 205<sup>21</sup>).

Furthermore, Mahmoud Darwish wrote a historical poem “Brief Reflections on an Ancient and Beautiful City on the Coast of the Mediterranean Sea” after the second exodus of the Palestinian refugees from Beirut in the aftermath of the Israeli invasion in 1982. In this great poem, he laments the fate of the Palestinian refugees in the city. In other words, Darwish speaks about the Palestinian experience in the city of Beirut during the Israeli invasion of the city resulting into the mass murder of Palestinian refugees in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps and the subsequent evacuation of the PLO forces from the city to a new exile. The poem is pervaded by a sense of wretchedness reflective of the Palestinian condition. Darwish attacks the Arab rulers and the leaders of the Palestinian Liberation Organization for their failure to stop the destruction of Beirut and the subsequent genocide of Palestinian refugees.

In the poem, Darwish uses both the city and the sea as symbols of the Palestinian experience in Diaspora: “Let this city be / The mother of this sea or the sea’s first cry / Let this city be / The grandmother of the world or whatever she likes / Let the one who named this city be / A knight, a lover or no one.” Displaced from their homeland, the Palestinian refugees have lived in exile in Lebanon since 1948. During the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, Palestinian refugees were forced to leave their camps in Lebanon and move to a new place of exile: “We have to sing for the sea’s defeat within us / or for our dead lying by the sea / and wear salt and revolt to every port / before oblivion sucks us dry”, writes Darwish (Al-Udhari 1986:130<sup>22</sup>).

In this long poem, the poet describes the Palestinian refugees, who were evacuated by sea, as follows: “We are the leaves of tree / the words of a shattered time we are the moon light sonata / we are the other river bank that lies / between the voice and the stone / we are what we produced / in the land that was ours / we are what’s left of us in exile / we are what’s left of us in exile / we are the plants of broken vase / we are what we are but who are we? (Al-Udhari 1986: 130<sup>23</sup>). Using the sea as an image of the Palestinian exile, Darwish continues: “Greetings oh ancient sea / You, sea that have saved us from the loneliness of the forests / you, sea of all beginnings (the sea disappears) our blue body, our happiness, / our soul tired of stretching from Jaffa to Carthage / our broken pitcher, tablets of lost stories, we looked for the legends of / civilizations but only could find the skull of man by the sea “ (Al-Udhari 1986: 134<sup>24</sup>).

In the same poem, Darwish highlights the duration of Palestinian suffering. Palestinians were forced to leave their country twice, in 1948 and in 1967, after the occupation of all the Palestinian territories. In their third exodus in 1982, the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon were subjected to more suffering: “The sea

cannot take another immigration / oh, the sea has no room for us". The remaining Palestinian refugees who survived the genocide of the camps and whom Darwish calls "the generation of the massacre" (Al-Udhari 1986: 136<sup>25</sup>) are doomed to move from one exile to another just to be killed: "Every land I long for as a bed / dangles as a gallows" (Al-Udhari 1986: 136<sup>26</sup>). Even in the Arab countries where Palestinians live in exile "a knight stabs his brother in the chest" and there "my dream leaves me only to make me laugh / or make people laugh at someone leading a dream like a camel in a market of whores" (Al-Udhari 1986: 136<sup>27</sup>).

In their exiles, located in neighboring Arab countries, the Palestinian refugees have been slaughtered by Arabs such as the Lebanese, the Syrians and the Jordanians, just as they were massacred by the Zionists in Israel: "We walk from one massacre to another massacre", says Darwish, (Al-Udhari 1986:138<sup>28</sup>). Thus, Darwish expresses his sympathy with the Palestinian people and he apologizes to what he calls "the land / victim", for all the atrocities inflicted upon the Palestinians and their homeland: "Whenever a prophet rises from our victims / we slaughter him with our own hands / I have the right to speak / and the priest has the right to kill / I have the right to dream / and the executioner must listen to me / or open the door to let my dream escape " (Al-Udhari 1986: 138<sup>29</sup>).

Explicitly, the Arab and the Palestinian leaderships react to the Beirut tragedy not with action but with empty rhetoric and lamentable statements: "we have a country of words. Speak, speak so we may know the end of this travel." The end of the Palestinian journey of suffering and pain cannot be predicted particularly after the destruction of Beirut, an emblem of Arab cultural unity. According to Darwish Beirut was not only the home of Palestinian refugees (kicked out of their land after the Israeli occupation of most of Palestinian land in 1948 and of the West bank and East Jerusalem in 1967) but it provided a sanctuary for Arab political refugees particularly poets and writers. Darwish attacks oppressive Arab governments that remained silent during the rape of Beirut. He refers to the hostile attitude of oppressive Arab regimes toward all the poets and artists exiled in Beirut, who revealed the political corruption and impotence of these regimes.

In a poem entitled "A River of Blood", collected in his anthology **Returning to Ancient Places / Al-awda Ela Al –Amaken Al-Qadima**, the Saudi poet, Ghazi Al-Qusaibi speaks about the city of Beirut after the Sabra and Shatila massacres during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. The poem is addressed to a submissive nation and its coward / impotent rulers: "walk and wash in the river of Palestinian blood and clean yourselves of impurity after having sex with the enemy / O shameless nation, O disgraceful rulers / You have lost your honor and dignity / Now look at the eyes of the dead bodies of Palestinian children as they curse you / Look at the eyes of the dead bodies of old people and burn with shame and disgrace" (Al-Qusaibi 1983: 76<sup>30</sup>). After the mass-murder of the Palestinian refugees in the Sabra and Shatila refugees camps in Beirut, the Arab nation, according to the poet, has become "the laughing stock of all nations". The Saudi poet attacks the impotent and castrated rulers of all Arab countries who did not interfere to save the armless Palestinian refugees in Beirut.

Al-Qusaibi illustrated that in every Arab country there is a ruler whose mission is to tyrannize his people, suffocate them and cut the throats of those who dare to oppose him or his policies. The poet also pokes fun

at the false concepts of heroism adopted by all Arab rulers. In spite of recurrent Arab defeats and catastrophes, “at every inch in the Arab world / there is a ruler raising a banner and a flag of his own claiming that / he is the only savior of the Arab nation.” The poet advises the Palestinians to depend on themselves and expect nothing from rulers who tyrannize their own people. The poet also laments the absence of democracy in the Arab world and the impossibility of removing any Arab ruler from his position – they leave their positions only when they die or get assassinated.

In Beirut, “the Sabra children / drink the smoke of the missiles”, says, Saadi Yusuf. In a poem, entitled “Guns”, Yusuf describes the city of Beirut during the Israeli invasions: “The guns roar at dawn / And the sea enfolds the city like smoke / The guns roar at dawn/ And the birds are frightened/ Have the planes come?” (Al-Udhari 1986: 123<sup>31</sup>). While birds are frightened, due to the havoc created by war planes, refugee children are victimized by the same war machine: “In an unlit hospital / A little boy died of thirst / They buried him quickly / And left confused”. Speaking of Al-Hamra district – in Beirut- during the Israeli offensive against the city, the poet presents an image of a chattered city deprived of electricity supplies as a result of war: “A candle for a woman doctor watching over patients / A candle for the wounded / A candle for a hotel packed with refugees / A candle for two lovers in a naked flat / A candle for the fallen sky / A candle for the last communiqué / A candle for conscience” (Al-Udhari 1986: 124<sup>32</sup>). The repetition of the word “candle” suggests the miserable conditions of citizens under military siege. They appeal to the conscience of the world and to God to rescue them from the hell of war. They are looking forward to reach light at the other end of the dark tunnel of the war in the crucified city of Beirut.

## Conclusion

Ignoring the wide industrial gap between the Arab cities and their western counterparts, modern Arab poets who built their image of the city on western models have created literary cities out of their imagination. In other words, there is a big difference between the Arab city in reality and its image in poetry. Ironically, most of the Arab poets who criticized the city during the (1950’s/1960’s) a period which witnessed the emergence of nationalistic independence movements became silent in the last quarter of the twentieth century when major Arab cities in Palestine and Lebanon were destroyed by the Israeli air forces. Surprisingly, most of the Arab city poets stop writing about the city at a time in which all the Iraqi cities are being brutally and viciously eradicated by the American war machine in 2003.

Nevertheless, the Arab poet’s response to the city of Beirut was an intensive one which would influence his entire life. It was also to be an ambivalent one. For example the Arab poet loved Beirut, walking its long streets, falling in love with its seductive ladies, however, he hated the city too – its suffering poor, its civil war, its brothels, its exploitation and its misery. At times, he could not accept the city’s brutal reality, so he romanticized its scenes or rejected them completely and vehemently. Yet this very rejection would be the energizing agent in his poetic works. The beautiful city, on the seaside, was the primary factor in the stimulation and nourishment of the poetic narratives of Beirut in Arabic literature.

Scrutinizing the Arab poet's response to his city experience, one slowly begins to realize that there are certain people or objects that tend to recur in his poetic limelight. Attention is focused on them so frequently that they become recurring refrains or leitmotifs. For example, the theme of the innocent girl, the victimized maiden / mother, fertility- sterility narratives and the deferred dream discourse are some of the more important motifs that could be isolated. One of these motifs is the recurring appearance of the innocent young girls in the city. At a particular point, the girl would lose her innocence and all its accompanying virtues because she would become a victim of the wicked and depraved city society that would destroy her goodness. The guilt for this fall from innocence stems not from the individual but from society, in this case, the city. In many of his poems, the Arab poet portrays the cruel and stifling city depriving the innocent girl of her innocence and virginity. For example, Qabbani, as an ardent socialist and idealist, believed that all the pathetic dilemmas in the city could be avoided and even eliminated via sufficient social legislation governing the living conditions.

Closely related to this motif of the innocent girl and stemming from the same romantic tradition, is the idea of the victimized maiden. In many poems, the Arab poet depicts the plight of the naïve Arab woman as she encounters the dazzling city. She soon finds herself in servitude to blind and uncontrollable forces which chatters her dreams and destroy her talents. She comes to the city full of expectations, but her ideals are destroyed as she is exploited and victimized. Some girls are fortunate but others are less fortunate and they become helpless victims of the city. In the city, there are other women who become completely victimized and yield not only their spirit, but also their bodies. For example Qabbani and other poets wrote many poems about prostitutes without moralizing or criticizing the women. They are usually portrayed sympathetically as helpless martyrs that have been beaten down by the evils of the city – Beirut - and its environment. The Arab poet feels that some women in the city are being forced into such a life style by the strictures of the environmental conditions, hence they are not guilty or responsible for their actions.

The women, in Qabbani's poetry for instance, become an object of pity, not of scorn. The city has sucked the entire fruit and left merely a shell behind. "Painted", "haunted" and "hungry" are the adjectives that describe Qabbani's prostitutes. They are hollow on the inside with a façade attempting to conceal that fact from the world. The formula of the basically innocent girl corrupted by the evils of the city or the society is frequently repeated in Qabbani's city poetry - never is the individual responsible for his own actions. Further, Qabbani believes that these conditions could be improved if the appropriate social actions were demanded by the people and undertaken by those in authority.

It is to be expected that such motifs as the innocent girl and the victimized maiden will at the same time be expressed in images of fertility and sterility, adapted by Arab poets from Eliot's *The Waste Land*. The same formula, as portrayed by the Arab city poet, is a simplistic one. The city is industrial, mechanical, commercial ignorant of and aloof to man's plight. Hence, it is a symbol of sterility and emptiness. Qabbani, Hawi and Darwish appear almost as prophets crying in the wilderness of chaotic city streets heavily infused with images of sterility and barrenness.

Apparently, the urban poetics of Hawi and Darwish reveal them as sympathetic witnesses to difficult times

(civil war and the Israeli invasion) and to a complex city struggling with its own bulk and teeming humanity. These fierce rejections of the city, were they verbal or actual, also invested the Arab poet with a special kind of moral energy that allowed him to continue in his search for aesthetic ideals and truth. He wanted to keep his romantic ideas alive and strong – he never yielded the hope of a better future. To be sure, the criticism he lashed out against the city of Beirut was a reverse energy – a kind of negative energy – but it gave him the strength to go on, at a time when it was depressing and difficult to do so. It persuaded him to continue to write poetry challenging him to attempt new possibilities in all areas at a time when many other poets were afraid to do so. For example, the city of Beirut offered Hawi variety, complexity and contradiction, options, and above all, the possibilities of growth and change.

Moreover, the attitude frequently expressed toward the city of Beirut – in Qabbani's poetry - is also indicative of the poet's attempt to achieve and adapt to the complexity of full maturity. Living in the beautiful metropolis – Beirut - acquainted him with an endless variety of social classes and different ethnic groups as well as with their values, customs and traditions. Further, the human misery and suffering he saw in the city compelled him to write about their plight. Actually, this was his main reason for writing at all. Finally, Beirut also taught him what it really meant to be a poet. Beirut showered its favorite poet with dreams, which, as it has been already discussed, are vital and necessary for artistic inspiration and stimulus. Beirut never faltered in its ability to attract him to fill him with awe. Occasionally, the city of Beirut beckoned with illusionary veils.

Scrutinizing the city discourse in Arabic history and culture, Arab critics – advocates of the conspiracy theory- claim that the West has indirectly participated in the formulation of an antagonistic Arab attitude toward the modern city by emphasizing the dominance of tribal and Bedouin values in Arab culture and literature. According to this critical perspective, the cultural machine in the West has sought to consolidate the image of the city as an evil thing in order to deter the Arabs from achieving progress and undermine the relentless spirit toward modernization which was emerging in the Arab cities in the 1950's and 1960'. Contrary to the preceding argument, it is clear that the city as a concept and motif exceeds such limited and chauvinistic perspectives.

## Notes

\* All citations / quotations from Arabic prose or poetry written by Arab poets are translated by the author of the paper unless names of other translators are mentioned in the text or / and the works cited.

<sup>1</sup> Mumford, Lewis. *The Culture of Cities*. London: Seeker, 1969. P.34.

<sup>2</sup> Leinward, Gerald, ed. *The City as a Community*. New York: Washington Square. 1981. P.28.

<sup>3</sup> See Shmuel Moreh. *Studies in Modern Arabic Prose and Poetry*. Leiden: Brill, 1988

<sup>4</sup> Shawqi, Ahmad. Al-Shawqiyyat. Cairo: Dar-Al-Ma'rif, 1960. P.226.

<sup>5</sup> Abu-Nuwas. Diwan Abu-Nuwas. Beirut: Dar Al-Adab, 1979. P.502

<sup>6</sup> For more details on this topic see Shmuel Moreh. Studies in Modern Arabic Prose and Poetry. Leiden: Brill, 1988.

<sup>7</sup> Pike, Burton. The Image of the City in Modern Literature. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981. P.116.

<sup>8</sup> Simmal, Georg. "The Metropolis and Modern Life". Classical Essays on the Culture of the Cities, ed. Richard Sennett. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1969. P.47.

<sup>9</sup> Gohar, Saddik. The Map of Modern Arabic Poetry And Western Influence: Oyun Press, 1998. P.77.

<sup>10</sup> Hawi, Khalil. The Complete Poetic Works. Beirut: Dar Alawda, 1979. P.24. The poem was originally translated by Shmuel Moreh.

<sup>11</sup> Asfour, John, ed. and Trans. When the Words Burn: An Anthology of Modern Arabic Poetry (1945-1987). Ontario: Cormorant Books, 1988. P.123.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p.124.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p.124.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p.124.

<sup>15</sup> Harvey, Roy. The Continuity of American Poetry. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1961. P.289.

<sup>16</sup> Hawi, Khalil. The Complete Poetic Works. Beirut: Dar Alawda, 1979. P.238. The poem was originally translated by Shmuel Moreh.

<sup>17</sup> Jayyusi, Salma, ed. An Anthology of Modern Arabic Poetry. New York: Columbia University Press, 1987. P.259.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p.199.

<sup>19</sup> Al-Udhari, Abdullah, ed. and trans. Modern Poetry of the Arab World. London: Penguin Books, 1986. P.119.

<sup>20</sup> Jayyusi, Salma, ed. An Anthology of Modern Arabic Poetry. New York: Columbia University Press,

1987. P.259.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p.205.

<sup>22</sup> Al-Udhari, Abdullah, ed. and trans. Modern Poetry of the Arab World. London: Penguin Books, 1986. P.130.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p.130.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p.134.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p.136.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p.136.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p.136.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p.138.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p.138.

<sup>30</sup> Al-Qusaibi, Ghazi. Al-Awda Lil Amaken Al-Qadima/Return to the Ancient Places. Manama: Dar Al-Saqr, 1983. P.76. The poems of this collection are translated by Saddik Gohar, author of the paper.

<sup>31</sup> Al-Udhari, Abdullah, ed. and trans. Modern Poetry of the Arab World. London: Penguin Books, 1986. P.123.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p.124.

# The Image of Cairo in Hejazi's *A City Without a Heart*

By Saddik M.Gohar

## Abstract

From a comparative perspective, this article critically investigates *A City Without Heart* by Ahmed Abdul-Muti Hejazi, in order to explore the image of Cairo in contemporary Egyptian poetry. The paper argues that in spite of the existence of some similarities between western and Arabic city poetry, which primarily results from the impact of major western poets on their counterparts in the Arab world, there are still wide cultural and ideological differences between these two poetic traditions. While the hostile attitude of the western poet toward the city is formulated through an existential crisis resulting from the loss of faith in the values of a mechanized / commercialized culture, the negative image of the city in Arabic poetry is attributed to the Romantic trend integrated into the Arabic poetic canon, distinguishing between city and country life and having its roots in pre-Islamic poetic traditions. In this context, the paper argues that due to the impact of the Romantic attitude toward the city, Hejazi fails to integrate / appropriate modern western city images, inspired by poets like Baudelaire and Eliot, to fit indigenous purposes. Attempting to imitate modernist Euro-American models while being influenced by the Romantic trend, Hejazi exaggerates the urbanization motif, particularly the negative consequences of the industrial process on the Arab city. Ignoring the wide technological gap between the Arab city and its western counterparts and constructing an image of Cairo that emulates western models, the poet creates a distorted literary city that does not exist either in the East or the West.

## Introduction

In his well-known essay, “**The City in Literature**”, Irving Howe attributes western hostility toward the city to the pastoral conventions dominating western culture for centuries:

We can assume that pastoral at its best represents a special, indeed a highly sophisticated version of a tradition of feeling in Western society that goes very far back and very deep down. The suspicion of artifice and cultivation, the belief in the superior moral and therapeutic uses of the “natural”, the fear that corruption must follow upon a high civilization – such motifs

appear to be strongly ingrained in Western Christianity and the civilization carrying it. There are Sodom and Gomorrah. There is the whore of Babylon. There is the story of Joseph and his brothers, charmingly anticipating a central motif within modern fiction: Joseph, who must leave the pastoral setting of his family because he is too smart to spend his life with sheep, prepares for a series of tests, ventures into the court of Egypt, and then, beyond temptation, returns to his fathers. And there is the story of Jesus, shepherd of his flock (Howe 1973: 40).

According to Howe, western culture and literature bear a deeply grounded tradition that sees the city as a place both inimical and threatening due to the dominance of pastoral conventions in western thought. Likewise, the hostile attitude toward the city in Arabic poetry may be traced back to the pre-Islamic era when the dichotomy between city and village was similar to the differences between the sedentary (urban) and the Bedouin (rural) way of existence. In the pro-Bedouin poetry of the pre-Islamic era, there was a tendency to praise the simple healthy, traditional way of life of the Arab Bedouins in the desert emphasizing their natural wisdom and their superiority to the sophisticated inhabitants of the sedentary / urban communities. Due to his natural environment, the Bedouin is depicted – in the pre-Islamic poetic tradition as liberal, free, intelligent and egalitarian who refuses to advocate the standards of hierarchy and status adopted in sedentary / urban communities.

Unlike the inhabitants of urbanized communities, the Arab Bedouin is portrayed as a brave and strong person who is able to challenge and withstand the pains and hardships of life. Moreover, in the early Islamic era, there was a feeling of uneasiness toward the city and urban life in general. For example, the Bedouin poetess, Maysoon Bent Bahdal, one of the wives of the Umayyad caliph, Moawiyya bin Abu Sofyan, migrated from her Bedouin community to live in the caliph's palace in the city of Damascus but she was not satisfied with her urban life. In her poetry, she expresses an antagonistic attitude toward life in the city. She longs for her hard life in the Arabian peninsula and she finds the barking dogs in her Bedouin environment and the howling wind in the surrounding desert more attractive than the sound of music and the singing of slave-girls in the caliph's palace: "A barking dog on the desert roads is closer to my heart than a domestic cat in the palace / and the sound of the howling wind in the desert is more attractive to my ears than the sound of music"<sup>1</sup>(Cited in Abu-Ghali 1995: 9).

Like Maysoon who prefers the simplicity of the desert community to the complications and sophistication of living in the caliph's palace in the city of Damascus, the capital of the Islamic empire during the Umayyad dynasty, Beshr bin al-Hareth, a famous Sufi in Arab history, escaped from Baghdad because he was astounded by the manifestations of urban life in the city. Beshr bin Al-Hareth, known as Abu Nasr al-Hafi came from the desert to the city of Baghdad during the reign of the Abbasid empire but he was astounded by the urban environment of the city, thus he took off his slippers, put them under his arm and ran back toward the desert and he never returned to Baghdad. Therefore, Beshr bin al-Hareth was given his nickname "al-Hafi" which means the one who walks barefooted.

Historically, the hostile attitude toward the city and what it represents reached a climax in the Romantic trend in Arabic poetry. Due to western influence, the Arab Romantic poets have emphasized the negative

aspects of the city in contrast with the village / countryside which remained the symbol of purity, harmony and blessing of nature. Like their European counterparts, the Arab Romantic poets escaped from the horrors of the modern city into a visionary utopia or through an imaginary return to nature associated with their villages. In a related context, Hannah Aboud argues that the attack against the city in western poetry is due to the fact that the city, in the West, is the center of industrialization which crushes human beings. To Aboud, Eliot's prostitutes and homosexuals - in **The Waste Land** - are victims of the city. Aboud points out that Eliot shares Baudelaire's vision about the city as a prostitute and W.H. Auden, like Eliot, criticizes the mechanical life in the modern metropolis. To Aboud, the Arab poets are nothing but imitators of western city poets like Eliot who hates the city and is interested in the rural community of the country (Aboud 1988: 156). In spite of the notion that both Arab and western poets express their feeling of nostalgia for the village and for a pre-urban past, there is a wide difference between the two kinds of nostalgia. For example, Eliot's nostalgia is the consequence of his condemnation of western industrial civilization that dehumanizes man, thus the poet calls for a return to a medieval, agricultural and agrarian society, an abandonment of a mechanized civilization and a return to the church and Christianity. Nevertheless, the Arab poets long for the country simply because many of the poets who write about the city have rural roots, thus the village, for them, is associated with their families, childhood and past memories.

Since the Arab city is still a big village and does not have the same complicated structures of modern Euro-American cities, it is relevant to argue that the hostile attitude toward the city in Arabic poetry is partly due to the fact that most of the city poets descend from rural communities. However Ali Al-Jerbawi, in "The Arabs and the Cultural Crisis", states that the "Arab people, including the intellectual elite, due to their failure in the fields of industry and economics, attempted to incorporate different manifestations of western civilization- represented by the industrial city - bringing it to their countries in an attempt to cope up with the new developments in the world" (Al-Jerbawi 1985: 5). In a counter argument, Ghali Shukri argues that the attitudes toward the city is universal not regional – there is no difference between Arab cities and western cities. He adds that though the city theme was initiated in western literature, Arab poets have developed it giving it new dimensions. Furthermore Saad Dabees points out that all the Egyptian poets who have dealt with the city motif are influenced by "Eliot's vision of the modern metropolis – in the West - as a locale for alienation, fear, industrialization, hollow civilization and materialistic squalor" (Dabees 1984: 153).

Nevertheless, the fear of the city and the hostile attitude toward modern machines and technology in Arabic poetry, is not always due to Eliot's influence or to feelings of alienation and frustration but it is an indication of escape from the social realities of the new era. By idealizing their villages and demonizing the city, Arab poets reveal - in their poems - an unrealistic image of the village born out of their morbid imagination. In spite of descending from primitive villages where life is dominated by illiteracy, ignorance and superstitions, some Arab poets deal with the city motif from one perspective. They amplify the negative aspects of the city affirming the existence of a one-sided subjective / romantic attitude in Arabic poetry toward the city.

With the rise of a new generation of poets who were influenced by the socialist ideologies such as Ahmad

Abdul-Muti Hejazi and others, the image of the city in Arabic literature began to acquire new philosophical and intellectual dimensions. However, the advocates of the Socialist / Realistic trend in Arabic poetry, in general, condemn both city and country as symbols of evil and ignorance. With the exception of few poets, particularly the Egyptian poet, Ahmed Abdul-Muti Hejazi, most Arab Socialist / Realistic poets dismissed the Arab village because of the backwardness and taboos inherent in its feudal life. In the post-feudal era, Arab poets started to express their attitudes toward the city / village dialectics from different perspectives. For example, Hejazi, in his first anthology **A City without a Heart**, is shocked by the city's lights and noise. He suffers from the glimmering lights of its shops. One night the poet was attracted by the lights of a barbecue shop and he was very hungry but unfortunately he did not have money to afford a meal.

The poet is also annoyed by the noise of the city cars, trains and trams. Criticizing the ecological pollution of the city, the poet expresses his anger because he is suffocated in the crowded streets of the city where he cannot breathe because of the hot weather and the car waste. Hejazi is also annoyed by the indifference of the city people who do not have time to speak with strangers or outcasts. Surprisingly the attitude of Hejazi toward the city will be changed once he is settled in Cairo. He criticized the city simply because he was passing through a transitional period and a crisis of cultural adjustment with the city life. Hejazi's concept of time as applied to the city people is over-exaggerated because people in the Arab city are not "running like ghosts between the city buildings" to catch up the train on their way to their work. However, Hejazi says the truth when he speaks about people in the Arab city as "numbers" because human beings in the Arab world are considered as objects without souls or opinions.

Moreover, Hejazi does not tackle the conflict between the city and the village as a topic to be discussed merely in terms of differences in traditions and customs. He does not deal with the problems of the city inhabitants as specific, individual ones, isolated from the rest of human existence. But Hejazi explores the urban / moral / existential problems of the city as being humanistic and universal in scope and eternal in character. He was influenced by Baudelaire's urban poetry as well as T.S. Eliot's criticism of the city, pointing to its spiritual emptiness, cruelty and loneliness, directly describing the ugly realities of modern life.

In the late fifties, Hejazi came to Cairo as a rural stranger seeking assimilation in the city. This aspect of his life is of crucial importance to a study of his early poems in **A City Without Heart** which are characterized by the appearance of provisional figures who resemble the poet himself – lonely and exiled in the city. Hejazi's **A City without a Heart** is basically concerned with the experience of a young man from rural roots confronting the sinful city (Cairo) for the first time - The poet himself comes from a poor village – called Tala – located in the Nile Delta. In touching and poignant terms, Hejazi's book depicts the young poet's anguish at his loneliness and alienation in Cairo during the sixties. The young intellectual was astounded by the nature of city life where the rural traditions, associated with his village, are disregarded and abandoned.

Obviously, this sense of disinheritance has contributed to Hejazi's growing realization of the unreality of cities. This sense of disinheritance certainly meant to the poet something more disabling than a mere loss

of his one-time pastoral abode. It surely meant estrangement from his present abode – the city – wherein his citizenship, as it seemed to him, was no more than dubious. The unreal city, in other words, made the poet an unreal citizen, “an alien resident” who exists on the urban periphery but does not legitimately belong to the urban core. This forlorn attitude disappears momentarily, but it reappears again in a subsequent collection of poems - **Beings of the Kingdom of Night** - where Hejazi is still a stranger, an alien resident living in Paris. Like other European cities, Paris manifests itself to the Egyptian poet as a place where a mercantile and mechanized way of life seals the fate of millions and imposes on them the same dilemma which has always frightened him – alienation, loneliness and anonymity within a vast and heartless city.

### **The Tortured Souls in the Hejazi's City and the Impact of the West**

Irving Howe, in “**The City in Literature**”, identifies two trends in the American poetry of the city: The first trend is traced to Walt Whitman and the second one is initiated by Eliot and his followers (Howe 1973: 52). Howe claims that while Whitman's city poems “do not capture the terrible newness of the industrial city” because “Whitman's city flourished in harmony with surrounding forests and green” (Howe 1973: 51), Eliot's city poems are an appropriation of Baudelaire's vision of the city [Paris] which “embodies the fear of a life reduced from evil to the merely sordid, a life sinking into the triviality of nihilism” (Howe 1973: 52). Howe adds that in spite of appropriating Baudelaire's city in **The Waste Land**, “Eliot lacks Baudelaire's capacity for surrendering himself to the quotidian pleasures of a great city”. Howe claims that Eliot narrows the poetic vision of Baudelaire into something of enormous power. Howe elaborates on this issue as follows:

Eliot's idea of the city has become assimilated to that of the great 19<sup>th</sup> century writers, though it is imperative to insist on the difference between madhouse and wasteland, even prison and wasteland. Eliot's vision is then taken up, more and more slackly, by the writers of the last half-century, charting, mourning, and then – it is unavoidable – delectating in the wasteland. Life in the city is shackled to images of sickness and sterility, with a repugnance authentic or adorned; and what seems finally at the base of this tradition is a world view we might designate as remorse over civilization (Howe 1973: 53).

Scrutinizing contemporary American poetry on the theme of the city, it becomes obvious that the city as an image, a symbol and a text seems to be more complicated than what Irving Howe discusses in his essay. In this context, it is important to argue that one of the basic characteristics integral to American literary modernism has been the American poet's growing recognition of the city as the most compelling paradigm of his nation's industrial power. As a sensitive chronicle of his own age, the American poet has responded to the vast transformations that overwhelmed America at the turn of the century. To the poets of the 1920's and the 1930's, a peaceful adjustment with the nation's urban-industrial developments was hard to achieve. The poets developed a new rhetoric of outrage and alarm, new modes of feeling and form

peculiar to the American poetic tradition. However, the American avant-garde poetic tradition was rooted in the city – it was in the city that the modern American poet has found his / her voice. The emergence of industrial cities in America was coupled with the development of significant poetic voices that enriched the American literary scene. Eliot, Pound, Crane, Carl Sandburg, Vachel Lindsay, and Edgar Lee Masters were perceptive of the phenomenon of urban-industrialization. They criticized the modern morality associated with the city culture and broke with a civilization that as sought to dehumanize people.

These poets possess an urge to confront the social realities of the age. To them, the destiny of man is inseparable from the realities of his age and his life in the modern city. They envision the fate of the modern man within the confines of the city. They compare the gloomy conditions of modern cities with ideal communities in history legends and myths. Thus, we have Eliot's city of God, Pound's city of Dioce, Crane's Atlantis / Belle Isle, Sandburg's city of the people, Lindsay's mythical Springfield and Masters' Spoon River. While Eliot, Pound and Crane are leading examples of the poetry of urban-industrialism, Sandburg, Lindsay and Masters belong to another school. They are voices of protest and revolt who belong to the Chicago school of poets who are famous for their populist concerns and revolt against the city. Thus, their poetry mirrors the anguish of the provincial poet in urban-industrial America. The poetry of these populist poets is marked by nostalgia and revolt against the policy of the American urban-industrial expansion. While the poems of the Chicago poets are characterized by the appearance of male/female figures, victimized by the modern metropolis, Eliot's city people are alien residents, cut off and lost in the labyrinth of the city world. For example, Eliot's city man is a lonely walker who is desperate because the "unreal city" makes him an unreal citizen.

Like Eliot, Hejazi, in **A City without a Heart**, chooses to project the image of the central persona, in his anthology "as an unreal citizen", an alien resident, the lonely singer (poet / artist / sensitive soul) pitted against the hostile environment of the city. The consciousness that moves throughout the poems comprising **A City Without Heart** and the voice that speaks, yet stays disembodied, belong to the alien resident. He is either the single persona of "I Once Had a Heart" and "Lemon Basket" or the composite persona of other poems. In other words, the alien resident is a figure who grows, matures and dissolves its identity from time to time in many voices that enliven the poet's personas. Such personas, the desolated characters in Eliot's poetry living in the desolating urban / commercial / industrial environment, treading the city from Cairo's downtown to its popular suburbs are the victims of cultural dispossession. Existing on the periphery of the unreal city, they often fail to seek transcendence beyond what they might perceive to be unreal.

This archetypal image of the city dweller in Hejazi's poetry is apparently due to western influence. "All art begins in physical discontent (or torture) of loneliness and partiality", noted Ezra Pound in his "San Trovaso Notebook" (Cited in Pound 1976: 14). The lonely speaker in Pound's early poetry takes the shape of the victim-self "sojourning in alien Venice". The image of the victim-self "is one which rows continually in Pound's early poetry and matures into an identity associated with the poet himself. Wylie Sypher traces the history of this "type" of the victim-self to the nineteenth century "when the Romantic ideals of selfhood were being continually affected by the law of collectivity and large numbers" (Sypher 1962: 36).

Furthermore, many important writers of the nineteenth century, Flaubert and Baudelaire in particular, popularized this post-romantic self. Sypher standardized this “type” in the figure of the “dandy” who takes different shapes in the poetry of the western city. This figure, who appears roving the city in Baudelaire’s poetry or Eliot’s figurative variants of the “métoikos” or the lonely speaker in the poetry of Pound and Crane are alien residents moving amidst urban blight and squalor. This type has enjoyed great popularity not only in poetry but among many modern and contemporary novelists such as Joyce, Dos Passos, Kafka, Borges, Bellow and others who have borne the impress of the literature of Baudelaire and Flaubert. The dandy, observes Sypher, “is one of the most ambiguous figures in Romantic and post-Romantic literature”. The dandy is a middle-class aristocrat, a “figure who had lost caste, a figure who could make his entrance only in the cities that were becoming the milieu of the bourgeoisie” (Sypher 1962: 36).

The poets of the industrial city in the West were apt to find the figure of the “dandy” quite useful for their impersonal art. For while affirming “the offensively real and the sordidly fantastic”, the poet’s mask of the dandy could safe-guard his anonymity and distance. The “assurance that the world exists is one result of the city”, remarks Sypher; and when “the city closes in dismally upon the dandy”, poets like Eliot compose rhapsodies and love songs, and Pound writes his ripostes and satiric sketches. Figurative variants of the dandy are easy to identify in the city poetry: Eliot’s Prufrock, Burbank, the young man in “Portrait of a Lady”, the lonely walker in poems like “Rhapsody on a Windy Night”, “Preludes” and others. Explicitly, different versions of the dandy appear in the poetry of Pound (The Cantos), Crane (The Bridge) and other modernist poets.

For example, Lindsay, among the Chicago school of poets, shares with Eliot, Pound and Crane the same kind of disorientation as a result of his confrontation with the city dominated by arrant commercialists and atheists. Lindsay’s image-parody of his own self, the tramp, is a masterful blend of the various images discussed above. Lindsay’s tramp is a blend of both the lonely singer and the dandy. This eternal tramp / evangelist preaching “the Gospel of Beauty” has much in common with Eliot’s métoikos, Pound’s aesthete Mauberly and Crane’s Porphyro condemned to live in Akron in addition to Crane’s Chaplinesque self. Given the poet’s extremely refined sensibility and the city’s crudities of life and manners, the rift between the singer and his city is almost pre-ordained. Reviewing the artists’ relationships to their world-wide public, Nigel Abercrombie rationalizes this rift in sociological terms:

Sociologically, the modern conurbation consists of producers and consumers. There is, in strict theory as well as in practice, precisely no place in that world for the creative artist except the rebel camp (or the concentration camp, if he is unlucky); he is ineluctably at odds with both the constitutive elements of society (Abercrombie 1975: 30).

Like the alien strangers in the city poetry of Eliot, Cane and Pound, the central persona of Hejazi’s **A City Without a Heart** is cut off from his roots. The experience of Hejazi’s central persona / narrator, in Cairo, reveals the shock of a country young man as he encounters the city world for the first time. The tragedy of Hejazi’s persona - the speaking consciousness of the poet - is expressed in the title of his first anthology **A City Without a Heart**. In a poem entitled “I Once Had a Heart”, Hejazi expresses the feelings of

alienation and frustration of a disappointed village lover deserting his birthplace and coming to live in Cairo. In the big city he feels lonely and isolated.

The city is cruel and brutal to strangers who are lost among the crowds and multitudes of people in the city - (who do not have any kind of communication between each other: "I live my miserable nights without love or compassion / I envy all city lovers/ I continue my life in sadness, suffering from emotional emptiness / living in exile, coldness and loneliness like all the other strangers in the city/ I live in a city which devours its strangers and outcasts" (Hejazi 1978: 110). Hejazi's rustic persona adds: "walking in an extremely cold and deserted vacuum / an alien visitor in a land devouring the strangers". The village persona who reflects the poet's consciousness, feels abandoned in the fearful streets of the city, lined with luxurious houses and palaces on both sides. In Cairo, Hejazi's speaker suffers from hunger, humiliation and loneliness. Depicting the city as a sinful woman, he says in agony: "I am a young man abandoned by a prostitute / and the passers-by have no mercy on me" (cited in Gohar 1998: 31).

The persona's feelings of inferiority and alienation are emphasized when he walks along the streets of Cairo with a bundle of clothing in his hands while other young men in the city walk along confidently, hand in hand with their pretty/seductive girlfriends. In his frustration and despair, he calls on his village beloved to join him in order to ease his loneliness in the bastard city. As a villager he is horrified by the scene of the tram: "every stranger here fears the tram". The people of the city themselves are frightening – they look like machines. This image is an echo of Eliot's "**The Waste Land**":

at the violent hour, when the eyes and back turn upward from the desk, when the human engine waits like a taxi throbbing, waiting at the violent hour, the evening hour that strives homeward and brings the sailor home from sea the typist home at teatime, clears her breakfast, lights her stove, and lays out food in tins (Eliot 1980: 44).

Unlike the warm, friendly environment of his village, the people of the city look austere and they are indifferent to one another. In his agony and despair Hejazi's central speaker attacks Cairo calling it "the city of infidels" and "heretical minarets".

In the eyes of Hejazi, Cairo is the city of stones, dust and eternal summer which whips people with its heat. In Cairo the poet finds no spring, no autumn, no winter and no gardens. Its people are always busy running from one place to another. In their endless and morbid state of motion, the city people do not have time to talk to each other: "I have anchored in the city of glass and stone/ The city which has only one season – its permanent summer/ there is no other season in the city/ I looked for a garden but I did not find a trace of any gardens." The people in Hejazi's city suffer from moral barrenness and sterility and the lack of genuine human feelings of love and compassion. The city, in Hejazi's poetry, turns into a kind of hell where human beings are transformed into machines and robots. Feelings of alienation are not limited to the city people but are extended to include its streets, its days and nights and its weather turns into flames that burn its inhabitants. Suffering from lack of moral guidance and religious support, people in Hejazi's city, like Sisyphus, in the Greek myth, are inflicted with eternal pains as they seek to earn their daily living.

In his poem “Goodbye”, Hejazi in an Eliotic manner describes Cairo as a barren city, a wasteland. The barrenness motif adds a new dimension to life in the big city. In Cairo, the roads are described as riverbeds of fire, a kind of hell, reminiscent of a Dante’s Inferno. The alien stranger encounters only sun, buildings, fences, squares, triangles and glass. There is no human life in the city of Cairo. Describing the night life of the city, he states that its nights are short feasts of light, song, reckless youth, crazy speed and drink, but soon the flowers droop and sadness penetrates the soul. In his misery, the poet’s persona yearns for his village and its simple inhabitants crying out: “I love you who are there in the faraway village” (cited in Gohar 1998: 68). Apparently the poet’s persona is alienated in the city because he is originally a village boy “a son of the village” who can not forget his family house or his father’s grave which surrounded by Indian fig trees.

In **Aspects of Modern Arabic Poetry**, Ihsan Abbas argues that city poets like Ahmad Abdul Muti Hejazi are shocked by the city not because of the city’s complicated civilization but because they were not familiar with the new environment (Abbas 1980: 112). Moreover, Abbas argues that Hejazi’s volume **A City without a Heart** is “an assault on modern cities which kill human relationships and ethics” (Abbas 1980: 124). The hostile attitude of Hejazi - the rural poet - toward the city which results from his feeling of aberration, loneliness and confusion constitutes a major motif in Hejazi’s early works particularly **A City without a Heart**. He vividly reflects the feelings of a country boy as he encounters a city crowded with busy, indifferent, indignant inhabitants who rush along neither greeting each other nor caring for the warm social relations he is familiar with in his village. For example, in “Lemon Basket”, he describes the brutality and indifference of the city “Cairo” which gives no attention to the village, represented by a rural boy who sells lemons in the streets of the crowded city. The poet’s persona recalls his village memories as he confronts a village boy selling lemons in the city. The journey of the lemons basket from the village to the city reminds him of his own journey to the city where he is overwhelmed with misery and frustration: “Lemon basket! / Under the sharp ray of sun / And the boy hawking in a sad voice / “Twenty per piaster / Per one piaster twenty!” (Cited in Gohar 1998: 165).

Using the lemon basket as an objective correlative signifying how the simplicity of the village is being humiliated in the streets of the city, the poet seeks to affirm his own dispossession as well as that of the lemons because both of them come from the village. The village in the poem is associated with freedom/innocence and purity while the city people in the train are exhausted and tired due to the psychological pressures of the city. Apparently “A Basket of Lemons” aims to depict the cruel city’s indifference toward the village. The lemons, which were picked in the village, remind the poet of his rural community. The fresh lemons, picked in the village, were brought to the city with its “suffocating streets, the crowded places where feet never stop running, where cars race along on fuel, and where a dark country child runs after them selling lemons at a cheap price, but nobody cares. The poet expresses his sadness at the hostile attitude of the industrial city toward the lemons, a product of the village: “Lemon basket left the village at dawn / It was until this damned time, / Green moistened with dew / Swimming in waves of shed / It was in its green nap the birds’ bride / Oh! Ah! / Who frightened it? / Which hand got hungry, picked it this dawn! / Carried it at twilight / To narrow, crowded streets, / None stop feet, cars? / Going on by burning patrol! / Poor!” (Cited in Gohar 1998: 155).

The people of the city, overwhelmed with their daily problems, do not know the value of lemons which, like the poet's persona, is lost in the city. The speaker identifies himself with the lemons because both of them come from the village: "No one smells you / Oh lemon! / And the sun dries your dew, oh lemon! / And the tanned boy runs, doesn't catch the cars! / Twenty per piaster / "per one piaster twenty!" / Lemon Basket / Under the sharp ray of the sun / My eyes fell upon it, / So I remembered the village!" (Younis 1999: 130).

In **A City without a Heart**, Cairo is delineated as a hostile city where the poet's persona starves because he has no money. The city people in Cairo train station are described as "immigrants running toward a ship", "wounded soldiers coming from the battlefield", "smoke coming from their noses like the waste that gets out of the train chimneys". Those exhausted people are victims of the city which "crushes their nervous systems" on its "gambling tables". Hejazi visualizes an image of the inhabitants of Cairo which personifies the pressures and suffering one may face in the big city: "its inhabitants are silent under the blaze in the dust / They are constantly on the move / If they were to speak to you, they could ask: 'What is the time?'" (Cited in Gohar 1998: 55).

In this city – Cairo - the poet feels that he is a mere "leaf moving in the wind". Hejazi's speaker adds: "I am evicted from my room / I am lost, without name / This is me / And this is my town" (Cited in Gohar 1998: 57). Surprisingly, when the poet recalls his love with "his beloved who came from the village", the lights of the city become more friendly and cheerful. Consequently, he feels as if "the city enters his heart" and he is no longer lonely or desperate. In spite of emphasizing that life in the city is a kind of slow death, Hejazi like other Arab poets, stays in the city and never goes back to his village to live near "the tomb of his father".

Criticizing the materialistic aspects of life in Cairo, Hejazi reveals how the city is indifferent to the suffering of the poor. Unlike his village where one can knock the door of anyone and ask for food, Cairo is a city without a heart: "I walked at night in the streets of the city / dragging my aching legs / on my way toward Al-Sayyeda suburb / I was hungry and had no money / I wished I had few money in my pockets / I will not come back without money to Cairo" (Hejazi 1978: 117). Unfortunately, this is a superficial way of dealing with the city motif. The problem the poet faces in the city is not philosophical or existential or ethical but it has to do with money and shelter. Obviously, Hejazi does not find in the city life a personal predicament. Unlike Badr Shaker Al-Sayyab's complex vision of the city, the lack of money and shelter are the reasons for Hejazi's feelings of alienation and hostility toward the city. Once this problem is settled, there is no more alienation on the part of the poet. The distinguished Egyptian critic, Raja'a Al-Naqqash, in his introduction to Hejazi's anthology **A City without a Heart**, justifies the poet's suffering attributing it to the lack of love and intimate relationships associated with the village, not to technological and industrial complications in the city community.

The same city motif is explored in Hejazi's poem "Death of a Boy". Narrating the tragic story of a village boy killed in an accident, in the streets of Cairo, the poet reveals the ugly face of the city. To him, Cairo is a city which crushes the innocent and victimizes the weak. Only in Cairo, a city without a heart, will

nobody mourn the tragic death of a boy killed in a car accident: “They said: Whose son is he? Nobody answers/ Nobody knows his name/ ‘Poor boy’/ Someone said in sadness and disappeared/ Eyes meet each other/ Nobody answers/ people in the big city are just a number/ A boy was born/ A boy has died” (cited in Gohar 1998: 33). In those moments of aberration and despair, the poet recalls the image of his rural community. In order to overcome the indifference of the city toward the death of the boy, the poet alludes to the village: “A greenfly came from the sad country graveyards/ It flutters its wings on a boy who died in the city” (Cited in Gohar 1998: 34).

The reference to the greenfly invokes the image of the village which is symbolized, in Hejazi’s poetry, by trees, lemons, birds, animals, palm trees, sky, sun, fields and the dawn while the city is symbolized by streets, palaces, lamps, doorkeepers, fences, buildings, massive walls, glass, squares, haste, crowds, drunken men, curtained rooms, fatigue, loneliness speeding cars, trams, trains and other machines. Wearing the mask of the poet of urban-industrialism Hejazi, in general, opposes the machine with the same fear and outrage as he opposes the city. To him, the city – Cairo - suggests itself as the abode of mechanics and machinery, the vast storehouse of energy that keeps the automatons in order. Either word, the “city” or the “machine” would serve as a metonymy for the other which is an exaggeration because Cairo in the sixties – when **A City without a Heart** was published - still an under-developing city.

Furthermore, the city – in Hejazi’s poetry - stands for things such as vice and prostitution. In “The lonely Woman’s Room”, Hejazi is engaged in a dialogue with an urban girl who meets him in her humble flat in the city. Hejazi’s girl recalls to one’s mind Eliot’s London girls of “**The Waste Land**” who suffer from boredom and exile. The girl in the poem is a typical city type, alien and lonely: “Casting the city off her shoulders/ Closing the door behind her/ she draws the curtains/ and turns on her light in broad day”. Then the poet continues to describe her small flat which turns into a prison cell: “Those are her things/ A gas stove, sink/ and shelves for groceries/ A small exile/ a bed and night table/ books to bring on drowsiness/ an ashtray and small candles”. The boredom which shrouds the girl’s life is part of the city’s environment that she has been accustomed to: “she has the feel of a body familiar with loneliness”. The poet’s meeting with her ends in frustration: “It was not me / she was talking to, but someone else/ observing his borrowed face” (Asfour 1988: 121).

Explicitly, Hejazi, like most of contemporary Arab poets, does not develop a consistent philosophy toward the city. Unlike western Romantic poets, he does not seek to escape the city by returning to his rural roots and to the harmony, love and warmth of nature. Although there are some indications in his poetry which point to the poet’s desire to return to his rural community, it is obvious that Hejazi’s yearning for his village is essentially a longing for his birth-place. Once he has a friend in Cairo and a beloved to ease his loneliness, the poet is quite happy to live in the city. He does not want to leave the city, thus he asks his village sweetheart to join him there instead of encouraging her to stay in the village. Ironically, the poet himself prefers to stay in the capital city rather than return to his home, his relatives, his mother and his father’s grave.

In **A City without a Heart**, Hejazi exaggerates the feelings of exile experienced by his rustic persona

who migrates to Cairo. As a peasant coming from the village of Tala in the Nile Delta, the poet / persona is shocked by the type of life advocated by the inhabitants of the capital city who are depicted as “ghosts”. While Eliot’s alien residents – in **The Waste Land** - fail to cope up with the perverted morality of an industrialized / technologized metropolis, Hejazi’s city dwellers are scared of trains and trams running in the streets of Cairo. Both of Eliot’s alien residents and Hejazi’s city inhabitants suffer from alienation and frustration because their moral values contradict with those advocated by a mechanized civilization. However, there is a wide difference between Hejazi’s city people who are afraid of the monstrous vehicles running in the streets of the city and Eliot’s “human engines” who behave like machines even during sex and who are represented by some figures in “**The Waste Land**” and other poems. In Hejazi’s Cairo, strangers and peasants are those who express fear of the machine because they are not city people: “But I am afraid of the train / Every stranger here fears the train” (Hejazi 1978: 116). Like the train, the car is another symbol of the city that represents a threat to the rural poet who does not have one. To him, the car is more powerful than man and it is able to reach the suburb of Al-Sayyeda Zeinab – in ancient Cairo - within a short period of time while the rustic persona, tired and bankrupt, is forced to reach his destination on foot: “The passengers in the car are laughing / The car disappeared, it is supposed to be very close to Al-Sayyeda region / while I am walking slowing / dragging my tired feet in the streets of the city” (Cited in Gohar 1998: 98).

Hejazi is interested in staying in the city in spite of the nonexistence of relationships that bind people together. The city people in his poems are exhausted, gloomy and indifferent to strangers, outcasts and even to children killed under the wheels of the city vehicles. The poet suffers from alienation and psychological fragmentation in a city that kills children. Hejazi’s Romantic approach to the city recalls the poetry of William Blake and William Wordsworth which is concerned with the impact of the industrial city on the poor and the downtrodden. However, the complicated cultural and technological factors associated with the modern western metropolis which paved the way for the collapse of human relationships and the alienation / exile of its inhabitants could no be applied to modern Arab cities because these cities lack the sophisticated scientific / industrial conditions that may be considered as prerequisites to the failure of human relationships which in its turn leads to an existential crisis on the part of the poet. Due to the impact of western poetic traditions on Hejazi and other Arab free verse poets, he over-exaggerates the phenomenon of urbanization and its consequences on the city inhabitants in the Arab world.

Nevertheless, in some of his city poems, Hejazi presents the city motif in a simple way attributing his exile in the city to lack of friends and money. Life in the city has cut him off from his rural roots and family. Suffering from nostalgia for his home in the village, Hejazi feels loneliness in the roads of the city. He is crushed by its walls and buildings. Addressing his rural girlfriend he says: “two years after our separation, I knocked the doors of friends but none answered / the doors and the doormen dismissed me out to the street/ even the pale deserted streets have rejected me, knocking me down / the gigantic walls of the city crushed me, suffocated me” (Cited in Gohar 1998: 83).

Moreover it is relevant to argue that Hejazi, like other poets in the free verse movement, exaggerates the impact of the machine on life in the city. The failure of human communication and the lack of human

relationships in the city are also magnified in Hejazi's poetry. For example, he claims that time "is a crucial issue for people in the Arab metropolis which is a myth: "If the city people speak with you / they only ask you about time" (Hejazi 1978: 223). Hejazi expresses his feelings of alienation in the big city which is an abode of moral stagnation, political corruption and police oppression. In Hejazi's city, the naïve rustic poet is afraid of cars, trains, trams, lights and electricity, a notion which reveals the big difference between the western metropolis and the Arab city.

Regardless of the drawbacks in Hejazi's approach toward the Arab city, there are some interesting points that deserve critical attention. For example, Jaber Asfour in his study, **The Memory of Poetry** speaks about the political dimension which Hejazi gives to the city affirming the importance of the city as a political symbol in Hejazi's poetry (Asfour 2002: 340). He refers to Hejazi's poem "**The Prison**" which signifies a mysterious confrontation between the poet and the secret police in the streets of Cairo. Moreover, Hejazi in "**Song of a Dead Pilot**" speaks of a worn-out city, a rotten city which is suffering from stagnation: "In your evenings, I smell rottenness, O my city/ where does it come from?/ Your face in the desert wind is as pure as rain/ your arms in the Nile waters as clouds and trees". Then the poet asks a question: "where, my city, does the rottenness come from?" (Boullata 1976: 83). Apparently, the rottenness of Cairo comes from the political regime which dominates the city, it comes from the city's prisons full of victims and it comes from a whole decadent system of worn-out laws that regulate life in the big city.

## Conclusion

While being in Spain, Ahmed Shawqi, the prince of Arabic poetry, expressed his yearning for Egypt revealing his deep love of the city of Cairo. To him, "Cairo is a spring of paradise", it is benevolent like the vine, "which provides both fruits / grapes and wine" (Shawki 1960 :128). Unlike the famous neoclassical Egyptian poet, Hejazi depicts Cairo as a prostitute, a city which crushes innocence suffocating its strangers. This inhospitable image of Cairo is inspired by western poetry. In this context, it is noteworthy to argue that Hejazi's 's city is, at once, an anarchic profusion of streets, railways, trams, motors, buildings and palaces and a compulsive paradigm of Egypt's urban development. In Hejazi's poetry, the satiric depiction of the Cairo community rife with the dismal patterns of the metropolis – filth, ugliness, squalid death, desolation, deceit, bondage and exploitation – reveals his dissatisfaction with the city. There is no doubt that Hejazi, expresses his convulsion at the complex world of the city revealing his sense of alienation in Cairo.

Hejazi's unreal city with its alienated inhabitants appears in **A City Without Heart**, a collection of poems comprising sharply drawn sketches of the urban scene: The roving consciousness in these poems is that of a resident alien. **A City Without Heart** includes samples of dispossessed individuals who personify metropolitan life. Hejazi's city is a location where only aliens and strangers live in poverty among ruin and plight. What happens in the city of Cairo is that its inhabitants and the speaker meet across a gulf of boredom. The city dwellers are presented via portraits of spiritual vacancy, associated with the middle

class Cairo society. Their behavior signifies a contemptuous disregard of village conservative values and lack of respect for country tradition.

Contemporary Cairo is unmistakably Hejazi's 's private focus in **A City Without Heart** poetic sequences that portray the cityscape. During his early days in Cairo, the city seemed alien to the young poet. The poet's knowledge of the city particularly the ancient part where he lives affects his vision. He was interested in the city's ancient monuments and its glorious traditions but he was appalled by its present, affected by a mercantile culture which repelled the young poet. To him, Cairo was drifting hopelessly further from grace. **A City Without Heart**, in one context, is not merely an elegy for the historic city, but more significantly, for a lost community of human values. The Cairo scenes viewed in **A City Without Heart** are informed with such a profound feeling of deprivation as cited the poems. Like Eliot's wasteland, the Cairo of Hejazi's poetry is "unreal" and its people are phantasmal gnomes. The "unreal city" lives in the awareness of an alien resident, a rustic who mourns the lost horizons of the "real".

Fear dominates the life of the inhabitants of Hejazi's 's waste land. The rustic narrator is afraid of the machines stretching in the streets of the city. Hejazi borrows the idea of fear from Eliot's "**The Waste Land**". In Eliot's poem, Marie is "frightened" on the sled, the "son of man" is afraid of his shadow and the lover in the hyacinth garden utters no word of love due to the fear of his dubious existence: "I was neither living nor dead". Madame Sosostriis warns the speaker to "fear death by water". She is herself afraid of interception: "Tell her I bring the horoscope myself: / One must be so careful these days". Fear also haunts the crowd on the London Bridge. The speaker accosting Stetson down King William Street, fears "sudden frost" that might disturb the corpse's bed. In "**The Waste Land**", one must take care to keep the truth – seeking dog far hence, lest it dig up the corpse.

Furthermore, Hejazi attacks the city because of its indifference to the suffering of the poor and the down-trodden: The poet confessed that during his early years in Cairo, he was dismissed out of his room because he had not enough money to pay for the rent. Due to the curse of exile and alienation in the city, Hejazi was looking for a way out of the limbo world of the city. Thus, he recalls memories of a pre-city past in order to overcome his feelings of loneliness in the city. Like other Arab poets who tackled the city motif, he expressed a sense nostalgia for his rural past revealing his desire to return to his village, depicted as a kind of paradise. These feelings, in a matter of fact, are not genuine but incorporated in his poetry for aesthetic purposes. Ironically, no Arab poet including Hejazi returned to his village in reality and like his fellow poets, Hejazi insisted on staying in the city.

Contrary to the vision of the Romantic poets, in England, who escaped from the city to the country, Arab poets in the twentieth century manifested their fantasies about the village as a paradise which only existed in their imagination. Unlike western poets who left the industrial city and stayed in the country, the Arab poet never escaped from the urban metropolis because he did not confront a complicated urban civilization that would force him to escape from the city. The Arab poets, particularly the advocates of the free verse movement came to the city to pursue their careers and to settle forever, never to return to the village. Hejazi, for example, expresses a superficial desire to escape from the city and return to his village where

his father was buried but he never did this. Further, the Iraqi poet, Abdul-Wahhab Al-Bayati, spent his life moving from one city to another, the Syrian poets, Adonis (Ali Ahmed Said) as well as Nizar Qabbani left Damascus to settle in the city of Beirut and the Kurdish-Iraqi poet Buland Al-Haydari prefers to settle in the city of Baghdad claiming that his village has been transformed into a city as well.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> All citations from Arabic poetry and prose are translated into English by the writer of this article unless names of other translators are mentioned in the text of the paper and the “Works Cited”.

<sup>2</sup> Like Hejazi who speaks about the murder of a boy under the wheels of the train in the city, the Egyptian poet, Mohamed Ibrahim Abu-Sinna refers to a similar event: the murder of a female child under the wheels of the city tram because she is not aware of the meaning of the traffic lights. Like Hejazi’s boy who is killed by a vehicle in the streets of the city, the girl in Abu Sinna’s poem is also a victim of the machines which run in the city streets: “Yesterday I went out to the streets of the city to read the sorrows and woes in the eyes of those who were crossing the sad street of the city/ red light means “stop”/ green light means “go”, get out of here/ Suddenly the tram stops and a crowd of people surrounds the corpse of a girl lying in a pool of blood” (cited in Abu-Ghali, 25).

# Injustice Abhors a Vacuum: Habeas, Extraterritoriality, and Guantanamo Bay.

By Robert Hull

## Winding the Clock

In response to the terror attack of September 11<sup>th</sup>, the Defense Department established Combatant Status Review Tribunals (hereafter CSRTs) at Guantanamo Bay. CSRTs consisted of military officers who would determine whether individual prisoners are enemy combatants. Under this system of detention prisoners could be held indefinitely at the pleasure of the Executive without facing charges, without access to lawyers, and without knowledge of specific claims, and the evidentiary basis of claims, the government was making against them. Critics of the prison at Guantanamo alleged that the status of prisoners held as alien enemy combatants doomed them to legal limbo. In *Rasul v. Bush*<sup>1</sup> the Executive argued that the prisoners had no rights whatsoever to vindicate—whether implied by the Constitution or by international treaty-- because the United States does not maintain de jure sovereignty over Guantanamo. For this reason the habeas protections of the Constitution did not reach them; of course, no other Constitution protected them either. But in *Rasul* a bare majority of the Court ruled that, since Guantanamo is under de facto sovereignty of the United States, and since the provisions in the Constitution for suspending habeas had not been invoked by Congress, the prisoners at the base were entitled to the protections of the Great Writ. The majority argued that the jurisdictional standard for determining the reach of habeas is not de jure sovereignty but complete practical control and “plenary and exclusive jurisdiction,”<sup>2</sup> or de facto sovereignty. The Pentagon had contended that the CSRTs afforded the prisoners due process rights equivalent to habeas. In 2005 Congress passed the Detainee Treatment Act (hereafter DTA) which would deprive prisoners held at Guantanamo of habeas rights while assigning exclusive jurisdiction to review CSRT decisions to the D. C. Court of Appeals. In *Hamdi v. Rumsfeld*<sup>3</sup> the Court ruled the DTA inapplicable to detainees already held when the DTA was enacted. In 2006 Congress responded with the Military Commission Act (hereafter MCA), which would deny habeas to any detainees determined to be enemy combatants and would apply to any enemy combatant held since September 11, 2001. In 2007, in response to the actions taken by the political branches, the Court agreed to hear *Boumediene*.<sup>4</sup>

## **Boumediene**

In *Boumediene* the essential questions before the Court were: Are nonresident alien “enemy combatants” held at Guantanamo entitled to the habeas protections in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights? Do the CSRTs fail as an acceptable equivalent to habeas? Are there practical considerations in this case that make the habeas privilege anomalous? A five member majority answered in the affirmative while two of four Justices who disagreed wrote emphatic dissents. Writing for the majority, Justice Kennedy noted that “the protection for the habeas privilege was one of the few safeguards of liberty specified in a Constitution that, at the outset, had no Bill of Rights.”<sup>5</sup> The Suspension Clause, Kennedy argued, was written to prevent cynical manipulation of habeas by the political branches. According to Kennedy, reserving habeas review in this case as an essential function of the Judiciary is of a piece with the essential design of the Constitution as a political instrument that balances governmental power, protects individual liberty, and sustains the rule of law. Kennedy conceded that the unique situ of the petitioners’ confinement meant that the Court would look in vain for founding-era precedents that accounted definitively for the geographical reach of habeas. But according to Kennedy the common thread uniting precedents from the *Insular Cases* through *Johnson v Eisentrager* and *Reid v Covert* was that the geographical reach of the Constitution in extraterritorial cases “turned on objective factors and practical concerns, not formalism.”<sup>6</sup> In cases where habeas provisions were found inapplicable in extraterritorial cases the determining factors involved logistics and implementation, not abstract definitions of sovereignty. The Executive, Kennedy was suggesting, was maintaining a prison over which it exercised total and indefinite control and exclusive jurisdiction while (in concert with Congress) manipulating the definition of sovereignty to evade providing the Constitutional protections owed to people whose lives are held in that power. While the Constitution grants the political branches power to acquire and govern territory it does not allow them “the power to decide when and where its terms apply.”<sup>7</sup> For Kennedy, the attempt by the political branches to define away the Constitutional protections concomitant with the rule of law violated the balance of powers principle that is itself a fundamental protection of liberty in the American system. In essence, the Executive and Congress sought to replace effective judicial review with a sophisticated definition of sovereignty.

Kennedy argued that the CSRTs fail to provide an adequate substitute for habeas because they do not provide a “meaningful opportunity”<sup>8</sup> for prisoners to rebut charges. In his Opinion Kennedy maintained that prisoners do not have legal counsel, are given little opportunity to produce exculpatory evidence or to contest the factual basis of the charges against them, face charges based on hearsay, and sometimes are denied, on national security grounds, any knowledge of the allegations that justify their detention. Finally, the CSRTs do not have authority to release prisoners determined to have been unjustly detained. These infirmities heighten the risk of judicial error and, since the prisoners face detention until the end of hostilities in the “war on terror,” unjust detention for life.

### **Dissents: Justice in a “Foreign Land”**

In his dissent, Chief Justice Roberts claimed that any claims regarding the adequacy of the CSRTs are “entirely speculative.”<sup>9</sup> Since the Supreme Court preempted the D.C. Court of Appeals by deciding this case, the system established by the political branches was not permitted to follow its natural legal course. Roberts claimed that had appeals proceeded through the D. C. Court of Appeals, the unfolding legal process itself would have assessed the constitutionality of the actions taken by Congress and the Executive branch. Roberts was nevertheless prepared to concede the propriety of the system, claiming that “Today the Court strikes down as inadequate the most generous set of procedural protections ever afforded aliens detained by this country as enemy combatants.”<sup>10</sup> Using previous military tribunals holding enemy combatants abroad as the appropriate juridical threshold, Roberts claimed that the provisions of the DTA are an adequate substitute for habeas because the CSRTs do afford detainees a meaningful opportunity to contest charges. For Roberts the most noteworthy source of due process protection is the Personal Representative (sic) detainees are assigned. The Personal Representative is given to access to classified intelligence and is permitted to summarize it for the detainee, can assist the detainee in arrange for witnesses, and can help the detainee present evidence to the tribunal. As Roberts points out, under the Geneva Convention prisoners of war are not allowed access to classified information, and in any event CSRT verdicts are reviewed by the D. C. Court of Appeals.<sup>11</sup>

Assessing the adequacy of the CSRTs by comparing them to military tribunals abroad is a compelling strategy only if United States authority at Guantanamo is not sovereign: only if Guantanamo is “a foreign land,” as Justice Scalia called it. Dismissing as dictum the majority’s claim in *Rasul* that the Writ extends to the prisoners at Guantanamo, Scalia argued that the history of common law as well as precedents from the *Insular* cases through *Eisentrager* conclusively establish that the Constitution does not extend habeas to aliens held abroad by the military wherever the United States is not sovereign. Consequently, the practical and functional considerations that the Court’s majority deemed constitutive of the relevant notion of sovereignty in this case are irrelevant. The test for “sovereignty” here is *de jure* sovereignty, and Guantanamo is formally within Cuban, not American, territory, according to the lease agreement signed by Cuba and the United States. Scalia argued that he political branches got this right and designed the DTA and the CSRTs to balance carefully a proper regard for the jurisdictional history of habeas and the grave national security threat the nation faces in its war with Islamist terror. By intruding illegitimately and clumsily into a function of government about which it has no expertise the Court’s decision undermines a balance of power that would otherwise more effectively keep the nation safe. The Supreme Court’s action is an ill-conceived and likely disastrous overreaching of its jurisdiction: “The nation will live to regret what the Court did today,”<sup>12</sup> Scalia ominously concludes.

### **Analysis: Injustice Abhors a Vacuum**

The question of how far the geographical scope of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights extends

geographically is a profound one with a history leading back to the founding generation. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, an expansionist foreign policy led to newly “acquired” territories like the Philippines, Guam, and Puerto Rico. In the so-called Insular cases (and beyond) the Supreme Court attempted to determine the relation between the Constitution and people living in new territories. The Insular cases often have since been interpreted as establishing constitution-free zones in territories where the United States maintained political and practical hegemony, thus establishing a precedent for the use of power unrestrained by constitutional protections ordinarily reserved for the people governed by that power. According to this interpretation, territories on track for incorporation into the United States were “integral to” the United States and the people living in them enjoyed the rights and protections of the Constitution. “Unincorporated” territories belonged to but were not part of the United States, and the people living in them were accorded only those fundamental rights that applied *ex proprio vigore*.<sup>13</sup>

But this is a truncated reading of these cases. In *Boumediene* Justice Kennedy is closer to the truth when he points out that a survey of relevant precedents through *Reid v. Covert* reveals that the “the Constitution had independent force in the territories that was not contingent upon acts of legislative grace.”<sup>14</sup> To support his position Kennedy could cite Justice White, who in *Dowes v. Bidwell* argued that “In the case of the territories, as in every other instance, when a provision of the Constitution is invoked, the question which arises is not whether the Constitution is operative, for that is self evident, but whether the provision relied upon is applicable.”<sup>15</sup> The nature of that force, according to Kennedy, depended largely on practical considerations: for example, the differences between the legal traditions in colonies once held by Spain and those of the Anglo system limited the adoption of legal provisions normally found in the latter system. This strategy for determining the application of the Constitution to new territories eventually gives rise to the “impracticable and anomalous” test; where the application of a constitutional provision is impractical or anomalous on pragmatic grounds the extension of the provision is held in abeyance. The overarching juridical and historical thrust of the Insular cases was that the Constitution did “follow the flag” (in the vernacular of the Insular cases). Kennedy’s point is that formalistic or definitional considerations have not been juridical destiny in assessing the geographical scope of the Constitution, and that the majority Opinion’s functionalist approach reflects fealty to relevant precedent cases.<sup>16</sup>

The United States government has indefinite, exclusive, plenary control and jurisdiction at Guantanamo, and has maintained such control for over one hundred years. This constitutes *de facto* sovereignty, and it is also true that formal or *de jure* sovereignty is maintained by Cuba, according to the political instrument signed by both countries. But what does it mean to say that Cuba, and not the United States, maintains *de jure* sovereignty at Guantanamo, *and* that *de jure* sovereignty should determine the jurisdictional reach of habeas in this case? What can the word “sovereignty” mean here? That the intense legal dispute over the meaning of sovereignty for Guantanamo, and with it the actual rules and policies that are enforced there, occurs without any input whatsoever on the part of Cuba itself belies the minority court’s claims regarding “sovereignty” at Guantanamo. The only practical significance, the only *potential* perlocutionary force of “*de jure* sovereignty” for Guantanamo derives utterly from the construction ultimately placed on it by the United States Supreme Court and the political branches of our government, the very government the minority Court is claiming has no legally meaningful jurisdictional sovereignty. In an absurdity truly

worthy of Orwell, in this context the term “sovereignty” is the worst kind of juridical manipulation: a vacuity of meaning used as judicial legerdemain for enforcing policies that transcend the reach of *any* sovereign’s judicial branch. The minority Court would permit the political branches to disavow sovereignty in order for the government to have complete unilateral practical authority. Only by disavowing sovereignty would the political branches have a free hand. Cynically availing itself of the vocabulary of the American political values, the Executive established at Guantanamo a rights-free constitutional dead zone, aptly described by a British court as a “legal black hole.”<sup>17</sup> For its part a complicit Congress attempted to run legal interference by legislating away constitutional objections to the prison at Guantanamo

The Executive and Congress have a grave responsibility to protect national security, and Justice Scalia is right to address these concerns in his dissent. Scalia correctly notes that prisoners released from Guantanamo have since committed acts of terror against the United States and its allies. However, his argument fails to take into account the damage done to the reputation of the United States abroad, particularly in countries that have a predominantly Muslim population, by our maintaining a facility like Guantanamo. When making a case for American foreign policy, our representatives invoke traditional American political values: freedom, justice, personal autonomy, and the rule of law. In the battle for the hearts and minds of people who might be recruited to become terrorists, these words are likely to be construed as cynical hypocritical posturing when coming from representatives of a country maintaining a facility like Guantanamo. While it is difficult to quantify the effect of the damage to American prestige by the use enemies of the United States make of this damage, it isn’t obvious that a utility calculus would favor Scalia’s position.

Consequentialist considerations will always have a limited role in assessing the normative legitimacy of Opinions like *Boumediene*. The fundamental moral question is whether the decision embodies and makes manifest the aspirant values constitutive of the Constitution. The nature of rights and the justification of political authority were issues firmly held in mind by the founding generation when it established the Constitution. The terse statement of natural rights in the second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence tracks closely John Locke’s argument for rights in the *Second Treatise of Government*: Our shared, equal humanity makes each person the rightful owner of her own life, liberty, and property, and the primary justification for and responsibility of government is to protect rights and thereby correct the injustice of the State of Nature. In the social contract tradition interference with an individual’s life and property requires justification, whether a private individual or government is responsible for that interference, because humans possess natural rights. Early American political thinkers were acutely aware of the potential of any political system for tyranny, and some of the most intense debates among the Framers concerned identifying and implementing political structures and institutions that would prevent government from violating rights. Federalists like Madison believed that a Constitution creating representative government with such now familiar features as republican separation and balancing of powers, with limitations built into the political and judicial branches and regular elections, needed no Bill of Rights. Furthermore, habeas rights are among a very narrow range of privileges specified explicitly before the addition of the Bill of Rights.

As Kermit Roosevelt III has observed, “The United States government is not a Principal”<sup>18</sup>: neither is the Constitution that authorizes all of its institutions and actions. The Constitution is a written political instrument establishing rights and privileges while furnishing a system of government that protects those rights and discharges the responsibilities that normally accrue to any government. As the normative creation of the natural law, natural rights, and social contract traditions of early modern political philosophy, the moral legitimacy of the Constitution and the government it creates rests on the presumptive rational consent produced by the lawful performance of its responsibilities. The Constitution was created “to establish *Justice*,” a project the founders did not qualify geographically or on a ‘members only’ basis<sup>19</sup>. When government, in the name of the People, reaches out to control or to punish, the force it exerts must be guided by its constitutive values or it acts as the arbitrary Leviathan the founding generation considered anathema to its central projects. The due process rights Boumediene promises to restore to the prisoners at Guantanamo are an essential appendant to lawful governmental force. United States sovereignty and the Constitution that is its normative soil and substance can never be legitimately sundered: where the United States exerts sovereignty no extraconstitutional space can be legitimate. The majority opinion in Boumediene restores a measure of honor to a tradition of government that sometimes exhausts all too many lamentable alternatives before doing the right thing.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> *Rasul v. Bush* 124 S. Ct. 2686 (2004).

<sup>2</sup> *See Rasul*, 124 S. Ct. at

<sup>3</sup> *Hamdi v. Rumsfeld* 124 S. Ct. 2633 (2004).

<sup>4</sup> *Boumediene v. Bush*, 128 S. Ct. 2229, 2240 (2008).

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* at 2244.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* at 2258.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* at 2264.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* at 2270.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.* at 2298 (Roberts, C. J., dissenting).

<sup>10</sup> *Id.* 2286.

<sup>11</sup> Id. 2290.

<sup>12</sup> Id. 2296 (Scalia, dissenting).

<sup>13</sup> For an excellent review of the Insular cases see Gerald Neuman, “Whose Constitution? *Yale Law Journal*, Vol. 100, No. 4 (Jan., 1991), pp. 976-981. Neuman’s work on extraterritoriality, particularly his arguments supporting “mutuality” as a cogent normative model for legitimizing the coercive power of democratic institutions, has influenced my view of the geographical scope of the Constitution.

<sup>14</sup> Id. 2267 (Kennedy).

<sup>15</sup> Justice White, *Downes v. Bidwell*, 182 U.S. 244, 292 (1901). While I concede that Kennedy’s reading of the Insular cases correctly reflects their ultimate influence in Constitutional law, his gloss fails to account underplays sharp disagreements in the Opinions. For example Justice Brown argued in *Bidwell* in his Opinion for the Court that (contra White) the Constitution does not apply in the territories unless extended to them by Congress. Nevertheless, that a given provision does not apply to a territory or a State (as in the case of the right to grand jury indictment) does not mean that the Constitution is not fully in force if the provision is withheld because of a supererogatory imperative in the Constitution itself.

<sup>16</sup> For an excellent argument supporting Justice Kennedy’s interpretation of the Insular cases see Christina Duffey Bennett “A Convenient Constitution? Extraterritoriality after *Boumediene*,” *Columbia Law Review*, June 2009, pp.1-57. While my view of the Insular cases is influenced by Duffey’s argument I disagree with her claim that functionalism (as found in *Boumediene*, for example)) is an inevitably consequentialist and thus fatally flawed approach to extraterritoriality. As long as functionalist criteria are anchored in constitutionally sound normative imperatives they need not devolve into crass consequentialism.

<sup>17</sup> Johan Steyn, 27<sup>th</sup> F. A. Mann Lecture, November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2003.

<sup>18</sup> Kermit Roosevelt III “Application Of The Constitution To Guantanamo Bay,” *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*, Vol. 153 p. 2068.

<sup>19</sup> These have often been aspirant ideals, of course: important exceptions to this observation include the United States’s original sins—slavery, the treatment of native peoples, and gender based political and social discrimination.

# Athlete Activism and Peace Education: Bridging the Social Inequality Gap through Sports.

By Irene Kamberidou

## ABSTRACT

This paper examines the collaborative-intergenerational efforts, conflict resolution curricula, projects and training activities of non-profit organizations and NGOs— that reflect the values of Olympism—striving to eliminate racism and xenophobia as well as promote gender equity in sports. In this transitional stage of the postmodernist period, practices of social exclusion or underrepresentation due to gender, race, class, religion, sexual orientation, and so forth are socially problematic and theoretically inconsistent. The promotion of new role models and mentors in sports is vital in view of the systematic misinterpretation, or rather, misuse of Olympic values, such as obsessive competitiveness and the increase of violence and racism linked to sport events. Moreover, focusing on commercialization and consumerism are not incentives that reactivate Olympic values. A critical issue addressed, among others, is the democratization of the IOC structures. This paper argues that Peace Education—Olympism adapted into today's globalized world—be incorporated into future reforms, educational policies and teaching practices in order to raise awareness concerning the core values of peace: pro-social attitudes, reducing ethnic prejudices, respect for diversity, promoting reconciliation, gender equality, non-violent conflict resolution and democratic decision- making.

**Keywords:** peace education-conflict resolution skills, Olympism, racism, xenophobia, gender equity, glass ceiling, glass escalator, tokenism.

*No other social activity has the same potential and power as ethnically-diverse team sports for kids in reducing ethnic prejudices and tensions, promoting reconciliation and maintaining*

*peace (Monroe, 2009).*

## **Introduction: Teaching youth pro-social attitudes and values through peace education**

This paper argues that Peace Education be integrated into all school subjects, future reforms, educational policies and practices. Documented experiences in many countries show the impact of peace education on the societies where it has been applied (Brion-Meisels 2010, Monro 2009, Kamberidou 2008, Brion & Corcoran 2006, Peace Games 2006). Peace education, in simple terms, is learning the skills, behaviour and attitudes to live together successfully, regardless of race, class, religion, gender, etc. Diversity is just one part of a more fundamental equation, that is to enable everyone to realise their potential. In view of today's increasing racial violence in public schools throughout the world, also vital are cross-cultural collaborations, research and partnerships with the leaders in the field of conflict resolution curricula and training. Namely, the NGOs and non-profit organizations and institutions that have been successfully inspiring a new generation of educators, students, athletes and volunteers to become activists (peacemakers) through age-appropriate school curriculum, sports, service-learning activities, social action and civic engagement. Specifically, through education, research and advocacy, NGOs such as PeaceFirst<sup>1</sup>, formerly Peace Games, Sport in Society,<sup>2</sup> the Canadian Centres for Teaching Peace<sup>3</sup>, the Peace Education Foundation,<sup>4</sup> the International Sport for Development and Peace Association (ISDPA)<sup>5</sup>, the Power of Peace Network (PPN),<sup>6</sup> and many more, have been successfully implementing peace education programs, projects and activities. What is required, however, is an all-encompassing framework to pull together all these efforts, the diverse peace education projects and activities, and in particular those that offer both leadership programs as well as a foundation for new ones. Moreover, providing a hub of information for teachers, parents, guidance counsellors, administrators, school boards, community members, government officials and members of the Olympic movement could prove invaluable. Such an effort, partnered with universities, education ministries and policymakers could ensure that peace education is mainstreamed throughout the system. Specifically, non-governmental organizations and stakeholders working together for the promotion of lasting peace through thinking globally and acting locally via peace education school programs, annual peace education conferences, peacemaker projects and workshops, school peace camps, online resources and so forth. The 'globalization of peace' through Peace Education requires allies and networks, especially in light of the alarming impact of globalization on racism and xenophobia today.

## **Racism and Xenophobia**

A survey conducted by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) and the RAcism and XEnophobia Network (RAXEN) reveals that one in two Europeans is xenophobic and one in three is racist.<sup>7</sup> Additionally disturbing are the results of a recent EU survey concerning perceptions of migrants and migration in Europe. The survey, carried out as part of the EU funded *Femage project*,<sup>8</sup>

“Needs for female immigrants and their integration in ageing societies” (Cordis 2007), examined the views of 21,000 native citizens in eight European countries: Austria, Germany, Finland, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary and Slovenia. In all countries, respondents were found to have more negative views and attitudes towards immigrants than positive ones. In eastern Germany, Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic, over half of those questioned believed that “foreigners” take away jobs from the native population. In the Czech Republic and in Estonia only 30% of respondents aligned themselves with the statement that “the presence of foreigners is positive because it allows an exchange with other cultures.” (Cordis, 2007:13) The study also showed that respondents with a lower level of education and lower income brackets were more likely to have negative views of migrants and migration: “People with weaker educational capital or economic situation are more prone to fears of the economic competition that comes from foreigners,” states the Femage report (Cordis, 2007:13). Additionally, the survey found a correlation between conservative views on gender roles and migration. Namely, “the more individuals advocated the traditional position of women in the family, the more they expressed negative attitudes towards immigrants in all countries studied,” reads the report (Cordis, 2007:13).

Inevitably, the sport expression has not remained unaffected. Sport federations, academics, politicians and NGOs alike are sounding the alarm over the increase in violence and racism linked with sport events. In recent years we have seen many manifestations of racial intolerance and violence at football matches, converted into stages for regional and identity conflicts: (1) In Spain, racist right-wing supporters mocked and taunted black players. (2) In Greece, an Albanian fan was stabbed to death by a Greek at a qualifying match for the World Cup. (3) A referee was slashed by a missile at the Champions League match between Roma and Dynamo Kiev. (4) In the Netherlands, Dutch fans threw a smoke bomb into the Portuguese goal and firecrackers on the pitch, hitting one of the players at the UEFA Cup match between Feyenoord of Rotterdam and Sporting Lisbon of Portugal. (5) With regard to race discrimination in Ecuador,<sup>9</sup> spectator fury of physical and verbal abuse erupted when Ecuador played Uruguay and lost 2:1 on October 10, 2009, and the list goes on! (Patsantaras, Kamperidou, Panagiotopoulos, 2009). Even at friendly matches many black players have been racially abused, such as at the friendly match between Spain and England, at which black England players such as Shaun Wright-Phillips and Ashley Cole endured monkey chants from Spain supporters.<sup>10</sup> Not to mention racially motivated football hooliganism or ethnic rivalry. Football hooliganism—unruly and destructive behaviour such as brawls, vandalism and intimidation by association football club fans—can range from shouts and small-scale fistfights and disturbances to huge riots where fans attack each other with deadly weapons such as knives, bats, rocks and bottles.

Inevitably, the EU ministers responsible for sport as well as NGOs such as PeaceFirst (Peace Games) and Sport in Society (SIS), are closely studying the issue of violence and racism in sports.<sup>11</sup> The EU is promoting international research and projects related to sport as a means to social integration, while highlighting the concept that sport knows no language barriers. In 2007 the Federal Minister of the Interior, Dr Wolfgang Schäuble<sup>12</sup> opened an informal meeting of EU sport ministers in Stuttgart under Germany’s EU Council Presidency at which delegations and ministers from 26 member states participated to discuss violence in sports. Subsequently, the Council of Europe, in the framework of its campaign ‘All Different, All Equal,’ organised an international conference in France on ‘Sports, Violence and Racism in Europe,’

from 2 to 5 April, 2007, at which the workshops and round-table discussions focused on the role of sport in eliminating racism, violence and gender discrimination (Patsantaras et al. 2009). Such efforts—and not only—are absolutely necessary to address this systematic disregard for Olympic values (Olympism).

## **Olympism and the Olympic movement**

The incentives for Olympic performance, in a society dominated by economic priorities and values, commercialization and consumerism, are not the incentives that can reactivate or revive Pierre de Coubertin's 19<sup>th</sup> century "Olympism" and "Olympic pedagogy" (peace education). Coubertin's Olympism—cultivated and promoted through Olympic pedagogy—embodies the very essence of education and the critical role of the young to challenge social stereotypes and prejudices and transform cultures of violence into cultures of peace. However, the Olympic movement is not in a position to accomplish this alone. It has failed to adapt Coubertin's Olympism into today's Olympic reality. The exploitation, or rather, misuse of athletic activity and Olympic values has been common practice as observed in the history of the athletic phenomenon (Patsantaras 2007).

Olympic education (peace pedagogy) is an educational process that operates on the basis of prototypes-role models. Unquestionably, today's Olympic athletes (role models) and members of the Olympic movement seem to be in dire need of Olympic education since they themselves do not reflect or represent Olympic values, if we take into account the systematic use of substances, obsessive competitiveness that leads to violence, the under-representation of women in sport governing bodies and so forth. Undeniably, we have been witnessing a notable increase in violent behaviour in stadiums, dehumanizing, racist and xenophobic attitudes, hooliganism, not to mention doping, corruption, cheating, wheeling-and-dealing, political interference as well as the influence of big business, the media, sponsors, etc. Furthermore, studies indicate that youth involved in organized competitive sports show less sportsmanship than those who are not involved, and they value victory—believe that winning is everything—more than non-participants who place more emphasis on fair play.<sup>13</sup>

Undeniably, new role models and mentors are needed to teach pro-social attitudes and values through sports. The time has come for the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to put into practice the ideals of the Olympic Charter and Olympism/Olympic Education, especially in view of the fact that the Olympic Games capture the attention of over one-third of the world's population, and could be used for something more than global marketing and the political agendas of wealthy nations that can afford to produce medal-winning athletes. Although the Olympic movement advocates that one of its central missions is to promote world peace, it seems to have deviated from this direction. For example, among the indicators that determine a state of peace is the battle against starvation. Consequently, if the greatest percentage of the profits of the Olympic movement went primarily to countries such as Africa and Asia, where thousands of children die from starvation, this would mean the active social presence of Olympic values (Olympism), as opposed to the rhetorical and abstract speeches and lectures of sport officials and

IOC members (Patsantaras 2007).

In other words it would be useless and ineffective to incorporate Pierre de Coubertin's 19<sup>th</sup> century "Olympism" (Olympic values) and "Olympic Education (peace education) into today's educational systems, into today's public schools, without first taking adapting them into today's sport reality, namely taking into consideration the complex social processes of change and transformation. Undeniably the Olympic movement cannot do this alone but needs to work with the leaders in the field of conflict resolution, curricula and training (peace education), such as PeaceFirst and Sport in Society (SIS), to teach youth pro-social attitudes and values through sports. For example, a decade of progress reveals that the American organization PeaceFirst (Peace Games) has been acknowledged as a key contributor in the national reduction of school violence (Paulson 2006). Its holistic school-change model has successfully reduced school violence and promoted gender equity and respect for ethnic diversity in the communities and public schools it has worked with (Brion-Meisels, 2010). Studies indicate that after eighteen months of training at a partner school, verbal altercations between students were reduced by 41 percent, disruptive incidents in the classrooms, lunchroom, and playground went down by 59 percent and episodes of abuse directed at teachers ceased entirely (Feldscher 2006).

### **PeaceFirst -Peace Games**

PeaceFirst—a holistic school change model adopted in Boston, Chicago, New York, Los Angeles and Fairbanks, Alaska, now becoming international—has taught over 40,000 students critical conflict resolution skills. It has created over 2,500 peacemaker projects that improved communities and instilled a sense of civic engagement in students. It has trained 2,500 teachers in conflict resolution and classroom management skills and recruited over 4,000 volunteers who provided 400,000 hours of volunteer teaching service (PeaceFirst 2010). Additionally, PeaceFirst offers training to institutions of higher learning, colleges and universities, non-profit agencies, clubs and corporations, providing a spectrum of services from their one-time trainings to their full model of a three-year partnership. Student volunteers are offered course credits to participate in the program. Incontestably, having university students work for the program provides excellent role models and mentors for school pupils (Feldscher 2006).

PeaceFirst athletes, staff, student volunteers and activists have been working directly with entire communities, empowering children, students and parents in creating their own safe classrooms, in societies inflicted with many forms of violence. For example, 7 in 10 Americans in recent surveys said they believed that a shooting was likely in their school. Every day in the United States 10 children are murdered, 186 children are arrested for violent crimes, and approximately 160,000 students miss school because they fear physical harm. Moreover, invisible forms of violence, such as racism, sexism, homophobia and bullying, are not measured in most crime statistics (Peace Games 2006).

Remarkable results have been documented in the PeaceFirst partner schools (Brion-Meisels, 2010), such

as a 60 percent reduction in violence but more importantly, a 70-80 percent increase in instances of children breaking up fights as well as in helping one another. PeaceFirst has a proven track record of building safe and productive school climates as indicated in the data that follows. During the 2008-2009 school year, PeaceFirst worked with 14 schools in Boston, Los Angeles, and New York and with the help of 408 volunteers who provided approximately 15,940 hours of direct service, worked with 3,575 students who received the weekly PeaceFirst curriculum and executed 135 original Community Service Learning projects. The long-term positive effects of Peace First are clearly shown in the data for the 2008-2009 school year:

- 87 percent of students reported they rarely tease others
- 77 percent reported that they are rarely teased, pushed or threatened by others
- 81 percent reported that they can walk away from a fight without feeling like a coward

At the same time, students reported that PeaceFirst helped them improve their peacemaking behavior as well as their commitment to school in general. They reported that Peace First helped them:

- Understand how other people feel (95%)
- Cooperate and share with others (97%)
- Include other students in games or groups (94%)
- Improve their school work (95%)
- Want to come to school more (84%)

A study at the University of Southern California (USC) also found a dramatic drop in incident reports:<sup>14</sup>

- 41 percent fewer verbal altercations
- 70 percent reduction in racial/ethnic tensions
- 50 percent fewer weapons being brought to school.

Peace First, formerly called *Peace Games*, was initially established by college students in 1996 to promote a culture of peacemaking (Brion & Corcoran 2006). It emerged from the vision of Dr. Francelia Butler, who brought together the power of play with the power of peace. Butler had established a festival that provided the opportunity for children to share games, sport activities, laughter, communication, friendship and conflict resolution—the building blocks for a peaceful future. In 1992, Butler chose Harvard

University's centre for social service (Phillips Brooks House Association) as a long-term sponsor for her work, and as a result students ran *Peace Games* until 1996 when it became an independent non-profit organization. In 2000, Peace Games opened its second office in Los Angeles, and by 2005 became a national organization, doubling its size through partnerships with schools in New York City and Chicago, growing into today's holistic school change model (peace education).

The PeaceFirst curriculum and peacemaker projects at many elementary schools and high schools focus on reducing (and eventually eliminating) violence, ethnic prejudices, tensions and stereotypes, promoting reconciliation and cultivating a culture of peace. Trained teaching teams help pupils and students plan and implement age-appropriate community service-learning activities called peacemaker projects, and full-time PeaceFirst coordinators spend years working with students, teachers and families. The age-appropriate curriculum focuses on collaborative games, the power of play, teamwork, democratic discipline, multicultural awareness, communication, non-violent conflict resolution skills, combating hate-filled dialogue and respect for cultural diversity. It is an effective part of a holistic academic model that builds self-esteem, courage and an ability to create social change through civic engagement and service-learning projects (Brion & Corcoran 2005). Peacemaking is more than violence prevention. Peacemaking is civic engagement and service-learning which offers children and adult partners real and meaningful connections in addressing important community issues through a range of activities that invite reflection and conversation about complex subjects such as human rights, cultural violence, homelessness and ecological policies. These intergenerational activities connect three or four generations. They link community volunteers with students, schools, families, high school alumnae and young adults (Kamberidou 2008).

Before introducing students to peacemaker projects, teachers and volunteers learn the theory and the practice of service-learning. They then research the school community, connect with local organizations, meet with school staff and gather materials, thereby laying the foundation for successful projects. The age-appropriate curriculum emphasizes Team and Trust (collaborative games, sport activities, etc.), community service projects and conflict resolution (Kamberidou 2008). For example, in Boston, in Fairbanks, Alaska, and in Los Angeles, classes combined civics, community service, and lessons on combating hate-filled dialogue (Paulson 2006).

### **Sport in Society (SIS): athletes as mentors in violence prevention**

Sport in Society (SIS) has also been active in formulating peace education curricula and social activities to promote respect for ethnic diversity and non-violent conflict resolution programs in public schools, as well as providing athletes as mentors of peace and role models. For example, the SIS program that empowers student athletes to combat bullying and harrassment in their schools and communities<sup>15</sup> and the leadership program that focuses on gender equality due to the lack of female role models, leaders, coaches, etc. The SIS racially diverse and mixed-gender programs have been cited as the National Crime Prevention Council's "50 Best Strategies to Prevent Violent Domestic Crimes"<sup>16</sup>.

Sport in Society (SIS), a leading social justice organization founded in 1984, has been using sport to create social change both nationally and internationally. Through research, education, and advocacy SIS promotes physical activity, health, violence prevention, gender equality and respect for racial diversity among young people and college and professional athletes. For example, on July 28, 2010, in partnership with the Urban Soccer Collaborative, SIS hosted a screening of *Fair Play* at its annual Youth Leadership Institute (YLI). High school students from communities throughout the United States participated to learn about the pivotal role that sport played in ending apartheid and discuss what opportunities exist today to use sport to create a more just world.<sup>17</sup>

With the goal of drawing attention to the values of human rights and social justice inherent in Olympism, SIS has been active in promoting athletes as mentors of peace and hosting a series of workshops and seminars, partnering with other organizations. An example of this is its *Mentors In Violence Prevention Program (MVP)*—a mixed- gender and racially diverse leadership program composed of former professional and college athletes. Namely, men and women working together in preventing gender violence, solving problems that historically have been considered “women’s issues,” such as sexual harassment and rape. The MVP program has successfully facilitated training sessions with 15,000 high school students and administrators at over a hundred Massachusetts schools. It has developed original teaching materials, including MVP Playbooks for high school and college students, professional athletes and adult professionals, along with accompanying trainers’ guides and a variety of supplemental exercises that utilize media excerpts from popular culture. It has conducted sessions with thousands of student athletes and administrators at over 100 colleges nationwide, and the list goes on (Kamberidou, 2008).

After decades of work and research contributing to peace education, including gender equality programs in public schools and a diversity of social activities that promote social justice (Kamberidou, 2008; Patsantaras, et al 2009), SIS launched its *Olympism and Social Justice Institute* in 2009, marking its official recognition as one of the IOC’s Olympic Studies Centres (OSCs). As such, SIS has recently become one of ten OSCs worldwide, and the only OSC in the United States.<sup>18</sup>

Not only SIS and PeaceFirst, but many other NGOs such as the Canadian Centres for Teaching Peace, the Peace Education Foundation, the International Sport for Development and Peace Association (ISDPA), the Power of Peace Network (PPN), to mention a few, have been successfully implementing peace education programs or attempting a revival of Olympism in today’s societies. However, one need to reiterate that what is required to ensure that peace education is mainstreamed throughout the system is an all-encompassing framework to pull together the various existing peace projects and activities. In other words, providing a hub of information for teachers, parents, guidance counsellors, administrators, school boards, community members, government officials and members of the Olympic movement that will facilitate cross-cultural collaborations, research and partnerships with schools, universities, education ministries and policymakers.

### Sport as a human right: Tokenism or getting gender back on the agenda

“The IOC strongly encourages, by appropriate means, the promotion of women in sport at all levels and in all structures, particularly in the executive bodies of national and international sports organizations with a view to the strict application of the principle of equality of men and women.”<sup>19</sup>

Undeniably we’ve come a long way since the 1952 Olympic Games in Helsinki, where women represented only 10 percent of the Olympic athletes. In Sydney in the year 2000, the percentage of female athletes was 38.2%. In the Athens 2004 Olympics it rose to 40.7% and at the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, women represented approximately 43 percent of the total athlete delegation, the largest participation record to date! However, despite the comparatively accelerated integration of women in Olympic competitive sports, women are still under-represented in all sport governing bodies, in executive bodies of national and international sport organizations and institutions, such as the IOC. The gendered nature of sport, the lack of female leadership, role models, coaches, etc. persists today, despite the Magglingen Declaration which defines sport as a human right.<sup>20</sup> The “*glass escalator*” (Kamberidou 2010) is not yet gender inclusive, namely women do not ride up the sport hierarchy. It was not until 1981, following the initiative of IOC President Samaranch, that two women were elected to the IOC. Since 1981 only a total of 21 women have served as IOC members and today there are only 14 women who represent 14.1% of the total of 113 IOC members, a clear contradiction to the Olympic Charter.<sup>21</sup>

#### *Tokenism: women’s representation in the Olympic movement*<sup>22</sup>

<b>November 2006</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
Executive Board	1	14	15	<b>6.6</b>
IOC members	14	99	113	<b>14.1</b>
Commissions	34	209	243	<b>13.9</b>

<b>January 2005</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
Executive Board	1	14	15	<b>6.6</b>
IOC members	12	103	115	<b>10.4</b>
Commissions	35	200	235	<b>14.9</b>

January 2004	Women	Men	Total	%
Executive Board	1	14	15	6.6
IOC members	12	113	125	9.6
Commissions	28	210	238	11.8

Women's integration into Olympic sports has no linear relation to their representation or rather under-representation as observed in the institutional realities of the IOC. Undeniably women are perceived as tokens, namely *symbols* or *representatives* of a marginal social group.

Tokens are people who are hired, appointed or accepted into an institution, organization or a company because of their minority status. Tokens are usually women (as are the female members of the IOC), ethnic minorities, the aged or individuals with special needs. (Kamberidou 2010). Inevitably this focus on *difference*, as opposed to respect for diversity, reproduces social inequalities, stereotypes and specifically the 'gender order.' Tokens do not usually ride up the "glass escalator" (Kamberidou 2010) but instead they hit the glass ceiling. That is not to say that men who enter the so-called female dominated fields do not also experience "tokenism" (Kanter 1977). Both men and women can experience tokenism, however, their experiences as tokens are quite different.

Research reveals strikingly different experiences when women are tokens in male dominated workplaces or institutions and when men are "tokens" in predominantly female fields (Williams 1992). Men do not confront the glass ceiling or "the sticky floor" (Kimmel 2004: 195) when they enter female dominated professions but instead they experience positive discrimination (Kimmel 2004, Hultin 2003). They ride up—on what sociologist Christine Williams (1992:296) was the first to call—the "glass escalator." That is to say, they are encouraged, supported, retained, reproduced and promoted up the ladder much faster than their female counterparts. Following interviews with seventy-six men and twenty-three women in four professions considered "female fields"—social work, librarianship, nursing and elementary education—Williams concluded that men experienced positive discrimination. Specifically, they were welcomed into the workplace, received higher salaries and were promoted up the ladder, in the managerial ranks, more frequently and much faster than their female counterparts, and not only! They were overrepresented in the upper hierarchies. Undeniably "the glass escalator" takes underrepresented men on an upwardly mobile internal career path at a speed that their female colleagues can hardly enjoy" (Hultin 2003).

This seems to be the case in competitive sports as well. That is to say, men who participate in women's sports experience positive discrimination from their female counterparts, as opposed to men who had not been so supportive when women were demanding participation in the 'male sport preserve.' For example, a recent case study shows that women athletes (rhythmic gymnasts) are in favor of men's official participation in the female Olympic sport of rhythmic gymnastics. Specifically, during the 20<sup>th</sup> Rhythmic Gymnastics World Championship in Budapest in 2003—where *Men's Group Rhythmic Gymnastics* were

presented for the first time with the approval of the international gymnastics federation (FIG)—a total of 299 participants, the majority female, responded to a closed questionnaire concerning men's official participation in rhythmic gymnastic. Specifically, 69 female rhythmic gymnasts, 33 female coaches, 100 female judges, 28 female members of the technical committee of rhythmic gymnastics (MTCRG), as well as 41 journalists, 11 parents and 17 members of the audience of both genders. According to the results, the overwhelming majority of the respondents—mostly women—support the official recognition of men's rhythmic gymnastics. Additionally, 60.5% of the respondents were in favor of the participation of men in mixed group and in mixed pair competitions (Kamberidou, Tsopani, Dallas, Patsantaras 2009).

Rhythmic gymnastics for men may sound atypical or peculiar to many—as did wrestling, hockey, body-building, football and ice-hockey for women in the past—but it has become a reality. In February 2009 the President of the Spanish Gymnastics Federation, Antonio Esteban Cerdán, announced the organization of the 1<sup>st</sup> National Championship of Men's Rhythmic Gymnastics and the Spanish government supported the federation's initiative. This is a ground-breaking venture since it is the first federation that recognizes men's rhythmic gymnastics (Kamberidou et al 2009). Despite gender stereotypes that depict this Olympic sport as unacceptable for the image of masculinity, the male body aesthetic, including masculine gender role identity, the rising involvement of boys and men in this sport throughout the globe can no longer be ignored. Getting gender back on the agenda in sports does not only include re-examining women's under-representation in sport governing bodies, like the IOC, it also requires formulating best-practices that will break the glass ceiling and get women to ride up the glass escalator. Getting gender back on the agenda in sports and respect for gender equality also means re-examining changing attitudes and social stereotypes with regard to men and boys, namely their participation in the so-called female sports. Inevitably as traditional social categories diversify, sport identity diversifies and is challenged, despite gender stereotypes that depict the Olympic sport of rhythmic gymnastics as unacceptable for the image of masculinity. The socially constructed and historically specific nature of physicality, corporeality and sport identity need to be renegotiated since exclusions based on genetic characteristics are a contradiction to the value system of sport (Olympic Charter, rule2 par. 5, 7/7/2007). Respect for diversity part of a more fundamental equation that entails increasing the talent pool, ensuring a gender balance and enabling everyone to realize their potential.

## **Recommendations**

1. The institutionalization of Peace Education, as an integral part of the curricula in public schools, beginning in pre-school or kindergarten, namely getting them while they are young before they formulate social prejudices and stereotypes.
2. To ensure that peace education is mainstreamed throughout the system, what is initially required is an all-encompassing framework to pull together today's diverse peace education programs and projects.

3. The establishment of an international, multicultural network of researchers—from the social sciences, the humanities, sport sciences, gender studies, etc., in order to: (a) explore the ways that an ethos of peacemaking can be reproduced and sustained, (b) discuss the values of a holistic approach to peacemaking, (c) examine complex patterns rather than isolated behaviours so as to identify measures to assist teachers and policymakers in formulating practices central to peacemaking, (d) prepare and promote a widespread campaign to change attitudes and stereotypes: inform, introduce, sensitize, expose and familiarize all stakeholders of the necessity for integrating peace education into school curricula and in all classrooms.
4. In order to revive Olympism (Olympic values), teach youth pro-social attitudes and values through sports—instead of obsessive competitiveness that leads to violence and racial conflicts—the Olympic movement requires allies and networks, specifically collaborations and partnerships with the various NGOs, peace education programs, including joint efforts in order to: (a) examine complex patterns so as to identify measures to assist coaches, sport officials, federations, clubs, parents, and athletes in non-violent conflict resolution practices, (b) formulate a *conduct code* to be signed by coaches, athletes, sport officials, etc. with repercussions/punishments when violations are cited, (c) promote new sport heroes and heroines, new role models and mentors in sport, (d) re-evaluate the gender agenda in sports, focusing on changing attitudes and social stereotypes and in particular formulate policies and best-practices that will break the glass ceiling and get women to ride up the glass escalator in sport governing bodies.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> See details in *PeaceFirst News and Events* (PeaceFirst home page) <http://www.peacefirst.org/site/>

(retrieved August 9, 2010). Also see Peace Games Report (Brion-Meisels 2010).

<sup>2</sup> For further information about the activities and peace education programs of “Sport in Society, a Northeastern University Center” see their website: <http://www.northeastern.edu/sportinsociety/> (last accessed April 7, 2011)

<sup>3</sup> See “Engaging peace education at the personal, local, and global levels”, *Canadian Center for Teaching Peace*, <http://www.peace.ca/> (Retrieved April 6, 2011).

<sup>4</sup> See “Educating children and adults in the dynamics of conflict and promoting peacemaking skills” in new website of the Peace Education Foundation: <http://www.peace-ed.org/> (retrieved April 6, 2011).

<sup>5</sup> “The International Sport for Development and Peace Association (ISDPA) brings together scholars, educators, practitioners, policymakers and advocates to advance scientific knowledge and practice with respect to the interdisciplinary field of sport for development and peace. The field addresses the role of sport as a vehicle for social change, with a particular focus on youth, health, peace, disability, gender, human rights, and monitoring and evaluation.” In ISDPA website <http://isdpaonline.ning.com/> (Retrieved April 6, 2011).

<sup>6</sup> The Power of Peace Network (PPN), is an UNESCO inspired initiative. For details about the PPN, including its recent activities see: [www.thepowerofpeacenetwork.com](http://www.thepowerofpeacenetwork.com) (retrieved April 6, 2011).

<sup>7</sup> The EUMC was established by Council Regulation (EC) no 1035/9 of 2 June 1997 which was amended by Council Regulation (EC) no. 1652/2003 of 18 June 2003. The primary task of the EUMC is to provide reliable and comparable information and data on racism, xenophobia, islamophobia and anti-Semitism at the European level in order to help the EU and its Member States to establish measures or formulate courses-actions against racism and xenophobia. The very core of the EUMC’s activities is the European Information Network on Racism and Xenophobia (RAXEN), designed to collect data and information at national and European levels. (See EUMC websites: [www.eumc.eu.int/index.php](http://www.eumc.eu.int/index.php)), EUMC-RAXEN-DATABASE and the EUMC Annual Report, 2005 in [www.eumc.eu.int](http://www.eumc.eu.int)

<sup>8</sup> Funded under the ‘Research for policy support’ section of FP6 (Cordis 2007).

<sup>9</sup> On October 10, 2009, Ecuador played Uruguay and lost 2:1, sparking a spectator fury of physical and verbal abuse. See article “Football and Racial Discrimination in Ecuador: Racism in the Game” by Sandra Gross, Feb. 11, 2010, in: <http://www.suite101.com/content/football-and-racial-discrimination-in-ecuador-a200997> (retrieved April 6, 2011).

<sup>10</sup> Keeley, Graham (2006-01-29). “‘Monkey chants’ force clampdown on Spain’s racist football fans - Europe, World”. London: The Independent. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/monkey-chants-force-clampdown-on-spains-racist-football-fans-525020.html> (retrieved March 24, 2010).

<sup>11</sup> The Council of Europe, in the framework of its campaign ‘All Different, All Equal’, organised an international conference on ‘Sports, Violence and Racism in Europe’ on 2-5 April 2007. See commentary on conference entitled “Sport, violence and racism in Europe” Rennes (France), 2-5 April 2007, in Council of Europe website [http://www.coe.int/t/dc/files/events/2007\\_sportconf/default\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dc/files/events/2007_sportconf/default_en.asp) (last accessed April 6, 2011).

<sup>12</sup> See Press Release dated 12.03.2007 “Interior Minister Schäuble opens the informal meeting of EU sport ministers” ([http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/Press\\_Releases/March/0312BMIEroeffnung.htm](http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/Press_Releases/March/0312BMIEroeffnung.htm) (retrieved April, 6 2011). Press release also available in [http://www.eu2007.bmi.bund.de/cln\\_028/nn\\_1059824/EU2007/EN/ServiceNavigation/PressReleases/content\\_\\_Pressemitteilungen/Sportministertreffen\\_en.html](http://www.eu2007.bmi.bund.de/cln_028/nn_1059824/EU2007/EN/ServiceNavigation/PressReleases/content__Pressemitteilungen/Sportministertreffen_en.html) (retrieved April 6, 2011). Additionally see announcement “Informal Meeting of EU Ministers Responsible for Sport in Stuttgart on 12-13 March 2007“, in website *Living Europe Safely*, [http://www.eu2007.bmi.bund.de/cln\\_028/nn\\_1059824/EU2007/EN/DomesticPolicyGoals/News/Content\\_\\_News/Sportministertreffen\\_Zusammenfassung\\_en.html](http://www.eu2007.bmi.bund.de/cln_028/nn_1059824/EU2007/EN/DomesticPolicyGoals/News/Content__News/Sportministertreffen_Zusammenfassung_en.html) (retrieved April 6, 2011).

<sup>13</sup> Canadian Centres for Teaching Peace (2007). “Sports: When winning is the only thing, can violence be far away?” In: <http://www.peace.ca/sports.htm#Athletes%20as%20Role%20Models> (retrieved June 2, 2007).

<sup>14</sup> “Our Impact: Results/Return on Investment”, *PeaceFirst*, p.p.1-2, in: [http://www.peacefirst.org/site/?page\\_id=74&page=2](http://www.peacefirst.org/site/?page_id=74&page=2) (retrieved April 6, 2011)

<sup>15</sup> See news report “Empowering Student Athletes to Combat Bullying” Franklin, MA (3-29-11), *SIS*, <http://www.northeastern.edu/sportinsociety/news/2011/248.html> (retrieved April 7, 2011): “On March 23-24, a team of over 30 student athlete ambassadors from across Massachusetts gathered at the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) headquarters to collectively take on the problem of bullying in their schools and communities with help and guidance from Sport in Society. ”

<sup>16</sup> “Sport in Society’s innovative programs are all staffed by former college or professional athletes and have been awarded America’s most successful violence prevention program by Lou Harris, the Peter F. Drucker Award as the most innovative non-profit program in the social sector, and have been cited as the National Crime Prevention Council’s 50 Best Strategies to Prevent Violent Domestic Crimes.” In *SIS* webpage entitled “Double Dutch Season in Full Swing, About Sport in Society”, <http://www.northeastern.edu/sportinsociety/news/2009/174.html> (retrieved April 6, 2011).

<sup>17</sup> More analytically see news report entitled “A screening of *Fair Play*” in *SIS* website : <http://www.northeastern.edu/sportinsociety/news/2010/234.html> (last accessed April 7, 2011).

<sup>18</sup> See webpage entitled ‘Olympism and Social Justice Institute’ (12-2-09), *SIS*, Boston, Mass. in: [http://www.northeastern.edu/sportinsociety/research/published/research\\_initiatives/3.html](http://www.northeastern.edu/sportinsociety/research/published/research_initiatives/3.html) (retrieved 9/3/09) and in <http://www.northeastern.edu/sportinsociety/research/olympism.html> (last accessed April 6, 2011)

: “The Olympic Studies Centres (OSCs) collaborate and exchange information in order to encourage research and disseminate knowledge on the Olympic phenomenon. Sport in Society, by becoming an IOC Olympic Studies Centre, will further contribute to the documentation and circulation of the ideals of Olympism, with a particular emphasis upon social justice and human rights.”

<sup>19</sup> Olympic Charter, rule 2, paragraph 5, 18/07/1996.

<sup>20</sup> Following the Magglingen Conference, an international platform for Sport and Development was established—and the Magglingen Declaration on the Role of Sport in Development was signed in Switzerland in 2003—bringing together representatives from the UN, international and national sports federations, NGOs and other sports bodies. (“Magglingen Declaration”, *Sport and Development International Conference*, Magglingen Switzerland, 16-18 February 2003, in: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/universitas/download/events/maggldecl.pdf> (retrieved April 7, 2011).

<sup>21</sup> Olympic Charter, rule 2, paragraph 5, 18/07/1996.

<sup>22</sup> See International Olympic Committee “Women in the Olympic Movement- Women’s Representation in the IOC”, IOC, p.1/1. ([http://multimedia.olympic.org/pdf/en\\_report\\_992.pdf](http://multimedia.olympic.org/pdf/en_report_992.pdf)) (retrieved Sept. 29, 2009).

# Making Sense of Spiritual Media: An Audience Study of “The Secret” DVD, book and website.

By Sharon Lauricella

## Abstract

This paper considers *The Secret* DVD, together with the accompanying book and website, by means of analyzing an active audience seeking spiritual meaning and results. This study hypothesizes that many of those who have adopted *The Secret*'s spiritual framework have done so by adhering to beliefs and practices just as one would when they commit to an organized religion. Evidence of individuals adopting the set of beliefs as outlined in *The Secret* is analyzed by means of audience members' narratives published on the DVD and the book's complimentary website ([www.theseecret.tv](http://www.theseecret.tv)). This investigation considers the audience – or believers – of *The Secret* by means of a uses-and-gratifications theoretical framework. A “grounded” theoretical approach (Charmaz, 2006) is employed to analyze the audience and its narratives. Finally, particular attention is paid to how the audience/believers “use” *The Secret*, as well as references to traditional spiritual practices such as prayer, belief, and references to God.

## Introduction

Released in 2006, *The Secret* (Byrne, 2006a) was first made available as a web-based, pay-per-view film. A feature-length presentation with no paid advertising or release in theatres, the film made a call to its viewers to “ask [for what they want], believe [that it will come] and receive [their desires]” (Byrne, 2006a). Audience appeal was positive, for following the viral success of the film, creator and producer Rhonda Byrne released the film in DVD format and wrote an accompanying book (Byrne, 2006b), which, at the end of February 2007, reached #1 on the *New York Times* best-seller list in the hardcover advice category. Success for this suite of spiritual media continued, as an audiobook was also released (Byrne, 2006c), as well as development of an accompanying website ([www.theseecret.tv](http://www.theseecret.tv)) and additional materials (Byrne, 2007a, 2007b, 2008) to help viewers and readers to reach their desires and “live a life of joy”

([www.theseecret.tv/behind-the-secret.html](http://www.theseecret.tv/behind-the-secret.html)). It is the purpose of this paper to consider the audience of this markedly successful media, and to explore how audience members test, adopt, and commit to the principles in this media suite.

### ***What is the secret?***

The remarkable success of *The Secret*<sup>1</sup> is indicative of an audience which is interested in a spiritual message intended to help them to achieve their goals. The media is part self-help, for it focuses on self-improvement, intention setting and the ability to release limits such that one can “have, do or be anything you want” (p. 1). *The Secret* is also spiritual in nature, for without preaching in a traditional “religious” sense, the DVD, book, audiobook and website all use the word “God” (Byrne, 2006, p. 164) and/or “Universe” (for example, Byrne, 2006b, p. 63) to refer to a Divine Being with which one can work in harmony.

Despite its marked success and appeal, the principles as outlined in *The Secret* are hardly new messages. All products branded with *The Secret* focus upon the Law of Attraction, which stated simply, focuses on positive thinking. Byrne recounts in the film that when her life was at a low point, her daughter presented her with a copy of Wattles’s *The Science of Getting Rich* (1910). This was the impetus for Byrne’s discovery of “the secret,” for she continued by reading similar works including Hill (2003/1937), Haanel (2008/1916) and Collier (2007/1925). In her quest to learn more about how to achieve success, Byrne recognized a common theme, which she identified as “the secret”: one must be clear about one’s desires and firmly believe that they will come to fruition. Although the overwhelming success of *The Secret* may imply that Byrne’s message is an innovative one, there have been plenty of publications identifying the Law of Attraction - either by name or indirectly - as early as Mulford (2010/1889) and some published just before Byrne’s highly successful interpretation (Dooley, 2001; Walsch, 1996). In wishing to popularize the message, however, Byrne packaged her publication in a way that appealed to the masses like none of those knowing “the secret” before her had done. The multimedia approach to communicating a spiritual, self-help message that an audience was ready to receive was a markedly successful one.

### ***A new wave in self-help literature***

Self-help literature is a noteworthy part of popular culture, for advice in personal development has been present since the beginnings of American culture and continues to be evident in society and culture today (Effing, 2009). Common categories in modern self-help literature include advice on financial wellbeing (Covey, 2004), psychological wellness and happiness (Dalai Lama, 1998; Schuller, 1987; Frankl, 2006, Burns, 1980), health (Myss, 1997; Northrup, 2010), relationships (McGraw, 2005) and overall positive thinking (Gillett, 1992; Murphy, 1963; Peale, 2003/1952). Effing (2009) suggests that while the overall

tone of self-help literature has changed since the eighteenth century, modern self-help literature is characterized by a spiritual approach to wellbeing. *The Secret* and its popular success lends support to Effing's claim. Recent self-help publications have taken a spiritual approach to financial wellbeing (Canfield, 2005; Vitale, 2005; Proctor, 1997; Doyle, 2003; Eker, 2005), a spiritual take on psychological wellness and health (Hay, 1999), the spiritual approach to relationships (Hicks, 2009; Gray, 2004) and publications on the Law of Attraction itself are also gaining attention (Losier, 2003). *The Secret* is inclusive of each of these categories, for the audience can apply *The Secret's* teachings and principles to gain an improvement to many areas including (but not limited to) finance, health, relationships and spiritual development. It could be argued that for those who do not affiliate with an organized religion, turning to the prolific self-help literature focusing on spiritual development could be a way of fulfilling spiritual needs.

### **Theoretical framework**

The conceptual framework for this paper employs uses and gratifications (U&G) theory. U&G theory posits that media audiences are active by means of consciously choosing the medium that fulfills their needs, and that audience members can recognize their reasons for making specific media choices (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974). According to this theory, gratifications that individuals experience from media use can be both psychological and social (Blumler & Katz, 1974). This theoretical approach is markedly different from cultivation theory (Gerbner & Gross, 1976; Gerbner, Gross, Morgan & Signorelli, 1994), which assumes a more homogeneous audience in which individuals are receptive to messages in the viewing process. Thus the U&G approach shifts the research focus from what the media does to people to what people do with the media (Rubin, 1993). Based on U&G theory, individuals actively seek out certain forms of media in a goal-directed and rational way, with the objective that the media will provide them with the gratifications that they seek.

Uses & gratifications theory has been used as a framework for examining traditional media such as newspapers (Elliott & Rosenberg, 1987), television (Conway & Rubin, 1991; Babrow, 1987), and radio (Mendelsohn, 1964) with prolific literature on the issue of violent programming (for example, Slater, 2003; Conway & Rubin, 1991; Greene & Krcmar, 2005; Krcmar & Greene, 1999). McQuail's contributions to U&G theory (1984, 1987) suggest that four major categories categorize individual media use: information (such as finding out about relevant events, satisfying curiosity); personal identity (including finding reinforcement for personal values and finding models of behaviour); integration and social interaction (such as identifying with others, gaining a sense of belonging and connection); and entertainment (for example escaping from problems, filling time). U&G theory continues to have appeal given its applicability to new research areas in communication such as internet use (Ko, Cho & Roberts, 2005; Larose & Eastin, 2004; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000) email (Dimmick, Kline & Stafford, 2000), blog use (Chung & Kim, 2007; Li, 2007) and user-generated media (Guosong, 2009). This theory is particularly suitable to the present study because it provides a framework to consider an active audience which reads, watches, and/or purchases a specific type of spiritual self-help media. This paper, therefore, assumes that the audience of *The Secret*

actively consumes whichever version of the product they choose. The audience of *The Secret*, then, has specific needs for this media, and uses it in ways which can help to fulfil their personal goals and desires.

### ***Hypothesis***

At May, 2011, *The Secret* has been in the top 100 bestsellers in Religion & Spirituality on amazon.com for over 1630 days, or about 4.5 years. Byrne and other contributors to her work have been featured on mainstream television, including The Oprah Show (Winfrey, 2007), Larry King (King, 2006), Ellen DeGeneres (DeGeneres, 2006) and Montel Williams (Williams, 2007). The marked success of this spiritual media, together with the theoretical framework (uses & gratifications theory) for this research contribute to the formulation of the following hypothesis:

H1: The audience is drawn to *The Secret* because the principles – like a religion – help to provide a framework of beliefs, practices, and motivation for living one’s life.

### ***Religion “defined”***

It is not the purpose of this paper to provide a conclusive definition of “religion,” though a working definition is required in order to provide a framework for understanding the audience of spiritual media. Theoretical scholars in psychology (Freud, 1961/1928; Otto, 2010/1923), sociology (Durkheim, 2001/1912; Yinger, 1970), theology (Tillich, 1987), and anthropology (Geertz, 1966; Spiro, 1966; Tylor, 1958/1871) have provided a variety of definitions. Each field of study, in creating its own definition of religion, is by nature influenced by the discipline in which the definer studies. Thus each academic area emphasizes the importance of specific aspects of its own definition (Jones, 2006). Those engaging in empirical research seeking to define religion are continually taken with the diversity of replies when individuals are asked to define “religion” (Clark, 1958; Pargament, et al, 1995). In synthesizing the body of literature seeking to define religion, one may only conclude that “religion” has different meanings to different people, whether scholars or everyday citizens.

The myriad potential definitions of religion is perhaps summed up by James (1902): “...the very fact that [religions] are so many and so different from one another is enough to prove that the word ‘religion’ cannot stand for any single principle or essence, but is rather a collective name” (p. 27). Or, as Rumi eloquently writes, “The lamps are different/ But the light is the same.” We must therefore, as scholars, give ourselves the flexibility to work with, redefine and continuously evaluate suggested definitions of this elusive term, particularly as the definitions relate to our own areas of study.

Of particular interest to the issue addressed in this paper is the concept of religion as a tool in everyday life.

In formulating his definition of religion for the purposes of considering religion and coping, Pargament (1997) stresses the delineation between the substantive definition of religion from the functional. Substantive definitions of religion focus upon beliefs, practices and feelings in relation to a greater Being (Pargament, 1997, p. 25). Thus the substantive definition of religion focuses upon what a religion *is*. Rather, the functional definition of religion focuses upon what a religion *does* – this definition addresses the beliefs, practices, and feelings as they help us to deal with issues of how and why we live. Clearly the best definitions of “religion,” regardless of discipline, will span the gap between substantive and functional, addressing not only what religion is, but also what religion does.

Common – though not exhaustive – elements in the definition of religion include the notion of a deity (James, 1902; Kant, 1976/1788; Schleiermacher, 1963/1830-1831; Tillich, 1987), beliefs that individuals hold (Durkheim, 2001; Livingston, 1989; Tylor, 1958/1871; Yinger, 1970) and the quest for people to find meaning or significance in life (Tillich, 1987; Swidler & Mojzes, 2000). Clearly there are caveats in including any defining element; for example, including the notion of a deity in the definition of religion then eliminates Atheism, Agnosticism or Humanism from the set of suitable worldviews, and no one definition will please all scholars or religious adherents. Stewart Hoover (2006) agrees that there is no one unequivocal definition of “religion,” though Hoover adopts Geertz’s framework as the working definition of religion in his extensive study on media and religion.<sup>2</sup>

According to Hoover (2006, p. 23), Geertz’s definition allows for researchers to consider how people describe not only themselves, but also their practices. The definition provides the opportunity to consider the interplay between religion and media, and also the opportunity to consider how religion and religious experiences have evolved in a contemporary sense. While Geertz has been criticized for framing a definition that allows for nearly anything to be “religious” so long as the believer professes it as such, this definition is of particular importance to this study, for the study considers the *practices* of religion, rather than the sheer act of one *declaring* their practices as religious. It is within the context of Geertz and Hoover’s definition, together with the uses and gratifications framework, that we may examine why and how the audience engages with the principles in *The Secret*.

## Method

*The Secret* website offers visitors the opportunity to post their personal stories relative to their interactions with, thoughts about, and success with the principles outlined in *The Secret* (<http://www.theseecret.tv/living-the-secret.html>). Individuals may post their narratives in one of 17 thematic categories, including family, friends, pets, health, wealth, and faith. The 7 categories with the most narratives posted on the site are Life (12.7%), Finances (12.6%), Inspiration (8.6%), Job (7.5%), Inner (7.1%), Goals (7%) and Faith (6.9%). As this research was being conducted, the Faith category hosted 518 narratives. Data for this research included 50 stories in the Faith category (stories posted from December 2009 – February 2010). The Faith category was the chosen theme of examination as it was deemed the most likely area to provide

insight into the religiousness of narrative authors. Narratives taken from a 3-month period were chosen as a means of analyzing a period which would be reflective of the cultural, religious, and spiritual makeup of the audience during a particular timeframe.

Narratives from the website were transcribed, and in keeping with grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006), initial coding was performed by the author and a trained student. The initial coding was conducted on a line-by-line basis (Charmaz, p. 50-51). Following discussion between the author and the other coder, focused codes (Charmaz, 2006, p. 57-60) were developed and a coding guide was developed which consisted of 14 categories. This focused coding process involved identifying the most significant and frequent initial codes, and determining the adequacy of such codes in order to code the data as completely and concisely as possible. Once focused coding was completed by both coders, Phi coefficient (Scott, 1955) was calculated in order to determine inter-rater reliability, and yielded an acceptable result at .85. The results section includes selections from the original online stories to demonstrate the content of the focused categories.

## Results

H1 was addressed by performing frequency counts of details in the narratives. The prediction that individuals use *The Secret* as they would a religion, was supported. Counts of categories and subcategories were performed to address the notion of belief, references to God/Divine/Universe/Source, how the narrative writers on *The Secret*'s website used the media and principles therein, and how the principles brought meaning to individuals' lives. The U&G theory expects that individuals have specific reasons for interacting with media. Those posting stories or narratives in the online forum expressed identifiable reasons for interacting with the book, DVD, and practices described in *The Secret*. Table 1 outlines the most common categories identified in the analysis, together with the proportion of narratives coded for each category.

Table 1

Common themes in online narratives

Theme	% of narratives coded for theme
Success stories	98
Commitment	66
Doubt	54
Belief	48

God	46
Recommitment	32
“Using” The Secret	26

Those posting stories in the Faith category described their strong belief in the principles outlined in *The Secret*. Data in the focused category labelled “Belief” included reports in 48% (n=24) narratives. Individuals reported that they “believed and believed,” “believed that there is truth to the ideas,” and “no doubts, no questions, no fears. Just Faith.” Although the notion of faith and belief was frequent, individuals also reported that such belief or faith was reached only after a period of doubt. Twenty-seven stories (54%) included references to having initial doubts about the principles in *The Secret* (“I was skeptical about this sort of thing”), not being ready to work with the principles in the book or DVD at a particular point (“I never... gave any thought to reading *The Secret*”), and testing out the principles in *The Secret* to see if they worked on a personal level (“After reading a few pages of *The Secret*... I decided to try it out,” “I decided to see if this law of attraction really worked,” and “I told the universe that I was going to ask for one last “proof” that this [the principles in the book/Law of Attraction] was real...”). One hundred percent of narratives describing doubt, scepticism or testing of the principles outlined in *The Secret* concluded with a confirmation of belief or positive “proof” that the principles “work” (“It works. NO EXCEPTIONS,” “I have seen *The Secret* in action in a number of ways now, and there is no doubt in my mind that this is real”).

Individuals posting stories in the Faith category described the development of their devotion to the principles in *The Secret*; 66% (n=33) of the stories represented the theme of “commitment.” Twelve stories made specific mention of adhering to the principles as outlined in *The Secret* (“today I guide my life and follow these teachings without questioning,” “I am so convinced that there is no way that I cannot accept these teachings and adopt them as my philosophy to live,” and, “now that my life’s motto revolves around, ‘Thoughts become things,’ the evidence has become drastically apparent”). The theme of commitment also includes the subcategory of recommitment. Sixteen stories (32%) recounted how the website visitor “fell off the wagon” and then re-consulted the media in order to inspire faith again (“Yes I have had moments where I fell off the wagon because I forgot to remind myself of the beauty of life and the Power of the universe!!” “I listened to *The Secret* audio book to refresh my skills on getting in the right mind-frame to attract it back to me,” and, “once I got to reading the wonderful stories on your Secret Website, it started to come back to me”).

References to God/Divine Being(s) were referenced in 23 stories, or 46% of all narratives in the Faith category. The term “Universe” is used in the book and DVD, and was referenced interchangeably with the term “God” in the narratives (“Thank you Universe, G-d, or whatever Higher Spirit there is,” “I know the power of God, myself and the universe!” and “[I]quietly verbalised to the universe, “My child will be a healthy, happy, and loving child, perfectly made by God”).

The term, “use” or “using” *The Secret* was notable in the data, as 13 narratives (26%) specifically used the term “use” or “using” or “apply/application” (“Using the Secret, I prevailed,” “Now I am using the Secret on a day-to-day basis,” “I applied the Secret...”). Twenty narratives (40%) described “using” the tools including visualization (“So I visualized”), making “vision boards” (“I did my vision board”), and using affirmations (“I listened and repeated in my mind my positive affirmations”).

Of the 50 stories posted in the faith category online, 98% (n=49) described personal experiences illustrating the law of attraction at work in one’s life (the remaining narrative was a plea to visitors to the site to think positively in the midst of the current economic downturn). Such success stories constituted the focused category “success stories.” Included in such success stories are narratives of *The Secret* viewers attaining a new job (“I got an excellent job in the safest, most loving government organization on the planet”), a new car (“situations kept attracting me to the luxurious car I wanted, and I finally bought it”), relationships (“*The Secret* has touched my life in so many ways. My relationships are better with my two sons, my relationship is better with my boyfriend”), better health (“I was thrilled... I kept losing weight and started to eat more healthily once again”), or more mundane items such as a quarter or guitar pick (“I found my quarter. :) Actually, my quarter found me”).

## Discussion

Fifty narratives posted online which described individuals’ experiences with the highly successful media suite *The Secret* were analyzed. Nearly all narratives (98%) described evidence of the Law of Attraction, the main principle in *The Secret*, at work. Hypothesis 1, predicting that individuals use the principles outlined in *The Secret* as they would a religion, was supported. The data was examined relative to the working definition of “religion,” and provides evidence that *The Secret* functions as a set of beliefs considered in relation to the Divine that people use to gain meaning and significance in their lives.

Over half (66%) of all narratives posted in the Faith category addressed commitment to the principles in *The Secret*, and 48% of all narratives specifically addressed an affirmative belief in the ideas and philosophy as outlined in the DVD and/or book. The frequency of references to belief and commitment is notable, for it gives relevance to the notion that individuals consider *The Secret* to represent a set of beliefs that are worthy of commitment. While it may appear surprising that such a great proportion of the audience represented in this data expressed firm “belief” in the principles in *The Secret*, it is notable that two narratives directly expressed that *The Secret* was compatible with their own religions (“I’ve discovered that *The Secret* ain’t no secret! It is simply what the Bible teaches put into easier terms to understand. I think The Law of attraction works because it’s God’s Law!!!” and, “I love my church, and it brings me happiness and peace. *The Secret* works with it completely.”). There is controversy surrounding the compatibility of *The Secret* with some Christian religions (Ankerberg Theological Research Institute, 2007; Velarde, 2007). A future opportunity for research exists in exploring specifically how Christians are able or not able to integrate the Law of Attraction into their faith.

The idea that the Law of Attraction, as depicted in *The Secret*, could be integrated into one's current religious framework is suggested by the data. References to God/Universe/Divine are made in The Secret DVD and book, and such references are reflected in the online audience narratives; 46% of all narratives mentioned "God" or "Universe." It is therefore possible that individuals adhering to *The Secret* are augmenting their current religious beliefs with the Law of Attraction, or perhaps such individuals are currently without an identifiable faith, and that their discovery of *The Secret* provides them with a religious agenda. It would be of particular interest to examine whether individuals enthusiastic about *The Secret* and its principles are currently practising a religion, or if they are without such a framework. This exploration could lend further understanding of the notion that *The Secret* functions as a religious framework if further research indicates that individuals "following" or "adhering to" *The Secret* do so without any other stated religious background.

Of particular note is the concept of "using" *The Secret*. Over a quarter of all narratives analyzed included the notion of "using" or "use" of the principles in *The Secret*, and all had positive results ("I've only been using it for a little while, but it has made me a lot of [sic] a better person!!!!"). For 40% of online authors in the Faith category, tools relative to "using" the secret were mentioned, including visualization and affirmations. In this case, 100% of all narratives indicated success or materialization of their desires ("It was all as I wanted and planned," and, "I verbalised these sentiments daily... and God has blessed me with just that [my desire].") or hope for attainment of one's goals in future ("I'm going for the gold. Tonight I'm writing them up and will wait on the results." "[I] am waiting for everything to be materialised by THE SECRET!"). While it does appear impressive that all of the stories in the sample of narratives analyzed concluded with success or attainment of a goal, it should be noted that those posting online are likely limited to those with successful experiences; it is unlikely that someone who did not meet with success or someone who disagreed with the principles in *The Secret* would be compelled to write and post a story. Nevertheless, it is the select group of those who choose associate with these principles who are of greatest interest to the present analysis.

Explicit use of the media is of particular interest in the context of U&G theory. Audience members considered in this research clearly articulated their incorporation of the media into their lives. The media was "used" the media to help them to attain material goods, achieve relationship success, or achieve a particular goal such as grades or a job. The media is, overall, used by the audience to create a religious framework as laid out by Geertz and Hoover. The media is used as a system which is powerful, pervasive, and also feels real and factual to the audience. This gratifies the audience by meeting one's need for a spiritual or religious framework. The explicit notion that the audience "uses" *The Secret* lends clear support to the U&G theory that individuals use media for specific purposes.

The notion of meaning and significance is the final aspect of *The Secret*'s ability to function as would a religion. Frankl argues that "man's search for meaning is the primary motivation in his life" (p. 99). Some individuals find meaning and significance in material goods (such as cars, jobs, or concert tickets, as described in the data) and others find significance in more spiritual desires ("I [asked] God to give me something that I too could keep with me at all times as a reminder that everything I desire in life will come

and to never stop believing”). Given that 98% of all narratives in this research addressed the manifestation of something significant to the individual, and that many individuals referenced a Divine Being, it can be concluded, within a uses and gratifications framework, that individuals working with the principles in *The Secret* are doing so within a newly defined religious framework. Many authors of narratives analyzed in this research may not have self-identified themselves as “religious” in reference to *The Secret*. However, based on the proposed definition of religion, it is reasonable to suggest that *The Secret* functions, as Geertz and Hoover propose, as a system which establishes powerful, realistic motivation and feels significant to those who believe in it. Further, the online posting of stories may help people feel a sense of connection with others that they may not get from a more traditional form of religion that meets face-to-face or on a regular basis. Indeed, even amongst the sample of posts examined for this study, references to the online community are made, for example, “And so I kept coming back to this site to read all the stories... and they all helped me...”

## Conclusion

In summary, data suggests that those posting narratives or stories in the Faith category on *The Secret*'s website are enthusiastic about the principles and philosophy outlined in the media suite. Analysis of the narratives suggests that the audience of this media who embrace the principles do so in the context of a religious framework. This framework is attractive to the audience because it provides the opportunity to apply a set of beliefs to one's life. The spiritual aspect of the media may also be one of the more significant means of attraction for the audience; the book and DVD both make reference to God/The Universe, and audience members refer to such a Divine entity in their narratives. Given that 92% of Americans report that they believe in God (Pew Forum, 2008, Q. 30), the opportunity to incorporate a non-dogmatic yet spiritual framework to one's life may be of specific importance. Finally, the teachings in *The Secret* provide support for individuals as they seek meaning and significance in their lives, primarily by providing a clear outline for attaining goals. This media, then, can function as a religion, for the majority of those analyzed in this sample use it as a system which feels real, powerful, pervasive, and motivating.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> To avoid confusion, *The Secret* (in italics and capitalized) refers to the book and DVD of the same title. The secret (neither italics nor capitalized) refers to the teachings and principles outlined in the book, DVD and accompanying materials.

<sup>2</sup> Geertz's description of religion is: (1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish a powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic. (Geertz, in Hoover, 2006, p. 23).

# Chaucer's Religious Skepticism.

By Mahameed Mohammed<sup>1</sup> & Al-Quran Raji

## Abstract

Among the many issues raised in Chaucer's literary works, religious skepticism in particular is dominant. This skepticism seems to be enhanced by an overwhelming sense of uncertainty, mutability, and doubt leading to currents of thought that question theist assumptions, particularly skepticism, and naturalism. Being a "mirror to his age" Chaucer's skepticism could be easily traced through an extensive utilization of astrology, astronomy, and mythological figures as decisive forces and possible controllers of this world. This becomes so important when Christianity assigns total control of the universe to God. We may then assume that Chaucer deliberately exposes his doubt through a frequent questioning of man's destiny and free will with a heavy articulation on paganism which was not totally off the scene in Chaucer's England. His treatment of these issues provides a testimonial evidence to a widening split in the theologian doctrine among the public, and within his own mind. *The Canterbury Tales*, *Troilus and Criseyde*, and *Book of The Duchesse* are only examples that provide ample evidence to his religious skepticism.

**Keywords:** Chaucer, skepticism, Christianity, Universe, Canterbury Tales

The second half of the Fourteenth Century which covers the whole life span of Chaucer was a time of economic and social upheaval. It witnessed four great events in the history of England: The Black Death of 1348-9, the issuance of The Statute of Laborers, The Statute of Servants in 1349, and The Peasants Revolt in 1381. The Black Death is said to have reduced the population by as much as a third, and inscribed a death-haunt on the consciousness of the survivors. Chaucer tells us of the "Reeve" in *The General Prologue* that men were "adrad of hym like deeth" (1.605). Moreover, the Black Death is said to have infused doubt into the religious doctrine hastening the transition of the "Age of faith" into an age of religious skepticism and doubt. In fact, the plague, the harshness of life, and the oppressive measures of authorities, contributed much to this skepticism as G. Gardner argues:

“It was an age that we would have hated much had we been living in. We would have hated its opinions, customs, superstitions, cruelty, and its disfigured intellect...England’s great poet of gentleness and compassion walked everyday in a city where the fly bitten, bird scarred corpses of hanged criminals—men and women, even children—draped their shadows across crowded public squares.... All medieval religious doctrine was unbelievable; in fact, and though we find no evidence that skepticism to say nothing of atheism was ever seriously argued in the late middle ages. Thousands were baffled and helpless”<sup>1</sup>

Thus, the once firmly established foundations of faith began to be shaken and people looked outside the Bible for satisfying interpretations to their aggravating miseries. It would stand to reason then to suspect a split in the religious mind of the public to which Chaucer is a true representative. To this effect, T. Whittock asserts “. . . but we need not look outside Chaucer for evidence of religious skepticism and doubt.”<sup>2</sup> A close investigation of *Book of The Duchesse, Troilus and Criseyde*, and *The Knight’s Tale*, will testify to Whittock’s notion. Nevertheless, the recurrence of this skepticism contrasts with the general opinion about Chaucer as “a comfortable optimist, serene, and full of faith.”<sup>3</sup>

Curiously enough, the paganism of the past was not totally off the scene in Chaucer’s England. It actually contributed a great deal to the full development of this skepticism. One commentator sees paganism in Chaucer as a sign of religious doubt that continued to pervade his mind. A mind that must be indeed strong to rise above juvenile credulity, and maintain a wise infidelity against the authority of the pervading religious doctrine. However, he was able to make room for the synthesis in his mind and literature.<sup>4</sup>

P. G. Ruggiers too affirms that “The Middle Ages managed to salvage the ancient gods by accommodating them into their own customs and beliefs.”<sup>5</sup> Amazingly enough, this dualism was not denied by the Church.<sup>6</sup> In fact, “Chaucer’s age accepted all the Bible as literal truth, and there is no reason to suspect that Chaucer himself did not do likewise. Yet, in spite of the Biblical authority, there existed a gnawing doubt in his mind.”<sup>7</sup>

In *The Legend of Good Women*, “The Prologue” Chaucer explicitly expresses his confusion and doubt about what theologians consider as literally true.

*A thousand tymes have I herd men telle  
That ther ys joy in hevene and peyne in helle,  
And I acorde wel that it ys so;  
But, natheless, yet wot I wel also  
That ther nis noon dwellyng in this contree,  
[That eyther hath in hevene or helle ybe. [1-6]*

A thousand times I have heard it said that in heaven is joy and in hell pain; and I grant well that it is so. Nevertheless, I know this well, that there is no person dwelling in this land who has been in either hell or heaven, or who can know of them in any other way than as he has heard tell or found it written, for no

person can put his knowledge to the test. (Modern English Translation)

Moreover, he “believed for a time in the reality of astral influence, and, in God’s use of to bring about his effects in the world.”<sup>8</sup> In the *Knight’s Tale*, Saturn conveys his role of bringing disasters and catastrophes and even the plague:

*My deere doghter Venus,” quod Saturne,  
 “My cours, that hath so wyde for to turne,  
 Hath moore power than woot any man.  
 Myn is the drenchyng in the see so wan;  
 Myn is the prison in the derke cote;  
 Myn is the stanglyng and hangyng by the throte; [2453-58]*

“My dear daughter Venus,” he said, “my course which circles so widely has more power than any mortal comprehends. Mine is the drowning in the pale sea, mine the imprisoning in the dark cell, mine the strangling and the hanging by the throat; the murmurs, the groaning, the churls’ rebellion, the secret poisoning. I make vengeance and full chastisement when I dwell in the sign of the Lion. Mine is the ruin of high mansions, the falling of towers and walls on the miner and the carpenter. When Samson shook the pillar, it was I who slew him. And mine are the cold maladies, the ancient plots; my aspect begets the plague.” (Modern English Translation)

Nevertheless, Chaucer’s religious views are not easy to judge as he writes “little that can be recognized as ostensibly religious in material or impulse.”<sup>9</sup> But we may be certain that “there persisted a gnawing doubt in his mind.”<sup>10</sup> A doubt that has long occupied writers of the middle ages, from St. Thomas Aquinas and Boethius onwards. These writers have shown a great interest in a variety of religious issues, especially the controversial ones of predestination and freedom of the will. Apparently, such controversy stemmed from a joint belief in the oneness of God, and in a multitude of gods as well. According to J. Gardner; “except among the well educated, Christianity and the old pagan religion were interlocked like two tree trunks grown together.”<sup>11</sup> P. G. Ruggiers affirms that “the middle ages managed to salvage the ancient gods by accomodating them into their customs and beliefs.”<sup>12</sup> Naturally, Chaucer is no exception.

Similarly, Chaucer seems confused at times and unable to decide whether or not man should be held responsible for his actions as Christianity maintains. His treatment of both issues conforms to the general atmosphere of uncertainty and skepticism prevalent in his time. His frustration at the complexity of them is well noticed throughout many works of his.

The narrator of *The Nun’s Priest’s Tale*, explicitly admits his inability to solve the matter in light of the fact that greater without authorities than him have long debated the question ever settling it one way or another.

*Witnesse on hym that any parfit clerk is  
 That in scole is greet altercacioun*

*In this mateere, and greet disputisoun,  
And hath been of an hundred thousand men  
But I ne kan nat bulte it to the bren,  
As kan the hooly doctour Augustyn  
Or Boece, or the bisshop Bradwardyn. [3236-42]*

You may witness it from any perfect scholar that there is great difference of opinion in the schools and great disputation about this matter, and there always has been among a hundred thousand people. But I cannot sift the wheat from the chaff, as can the holy doctor Augustine or Boethius or Bishop Bradwardine. (Modern English Translation)

The narrator, who is probably a persona for the author behind him, goes out of his way to safeguard against such a lapse when he assertively warns his audience that the moral and intellectual issues involved ought not to be taken lightly:

*But ye that holden this tale a folye  
As of a fox, or of a cock and a hen  
Taketh the moralite, goode men  
For Seint Paul seith that althat written is,  
To our doctrine it is yewrite, ywis;  
Taketh the fruyt, and lat the chaf be stille. [3438]*

But you who maintain this tale to be foolishness, about nothing but a fox and a cock and a hen, take the moral, good sirs. For St. Paul says that all that is written is written for our learning, in truth. Take the fruit and leave the chaff. And now may the good God, if His will be so, as says my lord, make us all good Christians and bring us to His heavenly bliss. Amen 3446 (A Modern English Translation)

Chaucer's audience, then, are meant to take to heart what the Nun's Priest suggests throughout his tale especially, destiny that may "nat beenn eschewed!" [3338]. If that be so, we may venture to say that such a view of Destiny can only reflect a deep sense of pessimism and a resignation, even fatalism on the part of the author. This view which Chaucer's audience are encouraged to adopt, seems to throw shadows of skepticism and confusion over his readiness or ability to accept as unquestionable the theologians' assertion that man is free and morally responsible, a creature. Thus, one tends to agree with the observation that Chaucer's obvious concern with the issue of predestination versus free will stems from an urge on his part "to point out the difficulty of reconciling God's foreknowledge of events as controller of man with man's free will."<sup>13</sup> Moreover, he seems to intentionally cast shadows of skepticism over his readers or listeners. In fact, he appears to have no ready answers for the relationships between the powers affecting the life of humans, human desire, free will, the stars, Fortune, Destiny, and Providence, nor did his books, sources, or the harsh details of daily life around afford him any.

He even expresses his scorn for the inadequacies of all scholarly theological analysis of the problem.<sup>14</sup> His

skeptical mind looked beyond what the emotional religious devotion could offer. Moreover, he demonstrates his deep dissatisfaction with the apparently “baseless speculations of theology.”<sup>15</sup>

In *The Knight's Tale*, Palamon explicitly admits his inability to comprehend the issue. He even decides to leave it for the theologians assuming that they have a better understanding.

*The answer of this lete I to dyvynys,  
But wel I woot that in this world greet pyne ys. [1323-4]*

The answer to all this I leave to theologians, but well I know that on this earth there is great sorrow! (A Modern English Translation)

Chaucer's religious skepticism initially starts with the first of *The Canterbury Tales* as Theseus' victory is assigned to Fortune not to God:

*Lord, to whom Fortune hath yiven  
Victorie, and as a conqueror to lyven, [915-16]*

Lord, to whom Fortune has granted victory and to live as a conqueror, your glory and honor grieves us not. (A Modern English Translation)

However, this doesn't go without a warning to the fickle nature of Fortune and her false wheel:

*Thanked be Fortune and hire false wheel  
That noon estaat assureth to be weel. [924-6]*

Thanks to Fortune and her false wheel that does not ensure prosperity to any estate. (A Modern English Translation)

Continually, Chaucer asserts his religious doubt in many instances and utilises dieties,

Fortune, and the stars extensively as controllers of man. In *The Knight's Tale*, while being prisoners, Arcite emphasises their roles and even pledges his cousin Palamon to submit to their wills.

*Fortune hath yeven us this adversitee.  
Som wikke aspect or disposicioun  
Of Saturne, by som constellacioun,  
Hath yeven us this, although we hadde it sworn  
So stood the hevене whan that we were born.  
We moste endure it; this is the short and playn. [1086-91]*

This adversity was given to us by Fortune. Some evil aspect or disposition of Saturn by some constellation has given us this, though we had vowed it should not be. So stood the heavens when we were born, and we must endure it; this is all.” (A Modern English Translation)

However, Chaucer recounts God as a controller when Arcite says:

*God helpe me so, me list ful yvele Pleye* [269]

“So God help me, I have very little stomach for sport!” (Modern English Translation)

The final moments of the pilgrimage to Canterbury end by an allegorical setting to *The Parson’s Tale*.

*I meene Libra, always gan ascende,  
As we were entryng at thropes ende.  
For which our Hoost, as he was wont to gye,  
As in this caas, oure joly compaignye,* [11-14]

I mean the sign of Libra, did ascend, as we were entering a village-end; whereat our host, since went to guide was he, as in this case, our jolly company. (Modern English Translation)

In fact, this very indicative setting bears strong evidence to the running dispute between religious doctrines and religious doubt in Chaucer’s mind.<sup>16</sup> Libra -the scale- strongly indicates the day of judgement. This becomes so important when we know that the pilgrimage is at an end by the setting sun and the unknown village which the pilgrims are near at. In fact, the name of the village remains unknown forever, as when we depart this world. E. T. Donaldson maintains:

“To the medieval mind, the allegorical implications of a pilgrimage were obvious, so medieval literature encounters the common place that this life is but a pilgrimage-from birth to death, from earth to heaven, the Celestial City to which every Christian soul aspires.”<sup>17</sup>

This conception was earlier stressed in the first of the “Tales” by Chaucer’s Knight saying:

*This world nys but a thurghfare ful of wo,  
And we been pilgrymes, passing to and fro.* [2847-8]

This world is but a thoroughfare of woe, and we are pilgrims passing to and fro; (Modern English Translation)

As attributed to Chaucer, this skepticism was enhanced by an overwhelming sense of uncertainty and mutability which marked the middle ages. M. Bowden argues “in the Middle Ages, what one believed in on Monday was not necessarily the same as what one believed in and acted upon on Tuesday”<sup>18</sup>. The

Church too with the worldliness of its members added much to the aggravating situation on the social, political, and religious levels.<sup>19</sup> A closer look into Chaucer's religious characters as portrayed and satirized in *The Canterbury Tales* will undoubtedly prove this worldliness, and wantonness in the very members of the Church. However, he conservatively expresses his discontent by writing "little that can be recognized as ostensibly religious in material or impulse"<sup>20</sup>

Chaucer's own confusion and religious doubt is reasserted in the final moments of the last day of pilgrimage. At this crucial point, Chaucer assigns the last of his tales to the Parson who is actually the last to see for a dying person. Chaucer's own doubt is clearly evinced in keeping the nearby village unknown forever. The allegorical interpretation behind this intention bears strong evidence to the running dispute between religious doctrines and religious doubt in Chaucer's mind. This is especially true when we come closer to Chaucer questioning how the world is run.<sup>21</sup>

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Alquraan, Raji. MA Thesis, Yarmouk University-unpublished- 1994. 6

<sup>2</sup> Whittock, T. A Reading of The Canterbury Tales, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968, 115

<sup>3</sup> Bennett, H. S. Chaucer and the Fifteenth Century, New York: In Oxford Companion to Chaucer. Oxford University Press, 1970. 72

<sup>4</sup> French, D. A Chaucer Handbook, New York: Appleton, Century Crofts, 1947. 3

<sup>5</sup> Bowden. M. A Reader's Guide to Geoffrey Chaucer, The New Noonday Press, 1964; Howard, E. Geoffrey Chaucer, London: Twayne, 1976. 33

<sup>6</sup> Gardner, J. The Life and Times of Geoffrey Chaucer, New York: Vintage Books, 1977 (pp, 7, 4)

<sup>7</sup> Whittock, T. A Reading of The Canterbury Tales, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968, 115

<sup>8</sup> Gardner, J. The Life and Times of Geoffrey Chaucer, New York: Vintage Books, 1977. 18 8- G. Shepherd. 275 ff

<sup>9</sup> Ruggiers, P. G. The Art of The Canterbury Tales, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985. 156

<sup>10</sup> Spearing, A. C. The Knight's Tale, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965. 56

<sup>11</sup> Gardner, J.

<sup>12</sup> Ruggiers,

<sup>13</sup> Bennett, 72

Howard, E. *Geoffrey Chaucer*, London: Twayne, 1976. 76

<sup>14</sup> Hussey, M. Spearing, A. C, and Winny, J. *An Introduction to Chaucer*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965, 63, and, Spearing, A. C. *The Knight's Tale*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965. 56, 57

<sup>15</sup> Donaldson. Page 1112

<sup>16</sup> Alquraan Raji. 78

<sup>17</sup> Brewer, D, ed. *Writers and their Background: Chaucer*, London: G. Bell and Sons, 1974. 87

<sup>18</sup> Alquraan Raji. 65-69

<sup>19</sup> Bowden. M. *A Reader's Guide to Geoffrey Chaucer*, The New Noontday Press, 1964. 4

<sup>20</sup> French. 35. and (Bowden, 1964. 2)

<sup>21</sup> Brewer, D, ed. 1974. 270

<sup>22</sup> Howard, E. 176

<sup>23</sup> Spearing, 1965. 79, and (Brewer, 1984 25)

<sup>24</sup> Alquraan Raji. 65-69.

<sup>25</sup> Alquraan Raji. 65-69.

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# Ending the Silence: Representing Women's Reproductive Lives in Irish Chick Lit.

By Mary Ryan

'Courtship and marriage, servants and children, these are the great objects of a woman's thoughts, and they necessarily form the stable topics of their writings and their conversation. We have no right to expect anything else in a woman's book' (*New York Times* extract, Fern: 1857, 1748). This statement from the 1800s sums up the difficulties which women writers have experienced in terms of gaining respect and recognition for their work. Women's writing has long been considered unimportant and inferior to "male" literature. Women's novels were ridiculed or ignored; women's issues were silenced.

Chick lit is the latest genre of women's writing to be ridiculed and criticised. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, not much has changed in terms of the reception of women's novels; many of the same criticisms are used today regarding chick lit as in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in relation to female writers. The phrase "chick lit" is often viewed as a derogatory term to dismiss any possible literary worth in a genre which many – mistakenly – believe deals with nothing more than shoe-shopping and finding Mr. Right. However, defenders of the genre insist that a 'serious consideration of chick lit brings into focus many of the issues facing contemporary women and contemporary culture' (Ferriss: 2006, 2-3). If chick lit is aiming to be placed as a positive, potentially feminist, form of contemporary fiction, it must discuss all aspects of women's lives. So, as well as romantic relationships, which many claim are the central focus of much chick lit, the novels must also include issues concerning career, family, friends, and the body. Related to this issue of the body, this paper will specifically examine the genre's discussion of women's reproductive lives – from female sexual freedom to menstruation to childbirth. Using examples from the novels of Irish chick lit authors, including Marian Keyes, Kate Thompson and Colette Caddle, this paper will explore how these novels tackle issues that many genres shy away from as they are considered 'taboo' by societal standards.

Some theorists would argue issues of body and image are *really* the main focus of the chick lit novel:

chick lit might seem at first to be a category of novels primarily concerned with finding a mate [...] And although this is a controlling feature of the genre, I maintain that in many of the

books this quest for a partner is entirely secondary to the ongoing battle chick lit's heroines are engaging with themselves – particularly with regard to weight. (Umminger: 2006, 240)

It has been said that 'it's difficult for a woman to tell her story without reference to her experience of the body' (Freitas: 2005, 38). The woman's body – 'what we eat, how we dress, the rituals through which we attend to the body – is a medium of culture' (Bordo: 1993, 2362). Some feminist theorists have found there to be 'an essential connection between the woman's body, whose sexual pleasure has been repressed and denied expression, and women's writing' (Peterson: 1992, 332). Other theorists have similarly observed several recurring themes to be found in women's writing, such as clothing and the body (Peterson: 1992, 333). These trends in specifically *women's* writing are evident because fashion and body image have long been concerns and issues typically associated with women:

As women, we care about our bodies, care about beauty, and often use fashion to express who we are in the moment, transforming ourselves from one image to another by putting on an outfit, much as if we are putting on a new self. (Freitas: 2005, 48)

It is decidedly ironic that, while the image of "bra-burning" has long been firmly connected to feminism, the image of the naked breast, on the other hand, is firmly placed in men's territory, such as "lad's mags" and pornography; women, strangely, have long felt uncomfortable at the sight of another naked female form:

It appears that only the pneumatically uplifted breast is an object fit to be looked at, whereas the glimpse of a naked breast underlines how uncomfortable we remain with the 'naturalness' of nudity, as well as showing how far removed we are from the contours of the real female form. Naked breasts proliferate in tabloid newspapers, lad mags and soft porn, yet the breast of, for example, a prince's consort can unleash the wrath of a nation, seen as it is to symbolically compromise her virtue. (Whelehan: 2000, 3)

Because of this, while men feel free to view the female breast 'as plaything and chief erotic curiosity, women will continue to have a faintly bewildered relationship to their breasts and, as a result, their body as a whole' (Whelehan: 2000, 2). Partly because of this, the issue of women's image thus continues to be a focus of feminist theory simply because women's preoccupation with their image has not waned.

In much feminist theory, it has been demonstrated how men's values and interests are recognised as worthwhile, while women's interests are dismissed as meaningless. As Virginia Woolf observed:

But it is obvious that the values of women differ very often from the values which have been made by the other sex; naturally, this is so. Yet it is the masculine values that prevail. Speaking crudely, football and sport are 'important'; the worship of fashion, the buying of clothes 'trivial'. (Woolf: 2000, 74)

Feminists have urged women to refuse to allow their interests, of which fashion and image are very much a part, to be belittled, and that the way to do this is by writing about them and expressing them. Feminism's early focus on images of women was based around 'a description of the stereotypical representations of women and how these stereotypes limited women's options and possibilities in the "real world"' (Walters: 1995, 42). This largely stems from the fact that, while women's images may indeed be *represented*, women themselves rarely have any say in how these representations are formed. This means that, more often than not, these images of women 'that stare at us from the glossy pages of the women's magazines or from the glowing eye of the television screen are not of our own creation. They are, in more senses than one, truly "man-made"' (Walters: 1995, 22-23). Feminist theory expressed concern that these, largely male-constructed, representations of women would become 'stereotypes which damage women's self-perceptions and limit their social roles' (Thornham: 1998, 213). In such media representations, feminists observed how:

women's bodies are often fragmented, shown as discrete body parts that are meant to represent the whole woman. Women are urged to think of their bodies as 'things' that need to be molded, shaped, and remade into a male conception of female perfection. The fragmentation of the female body into parts that should be 'improved' or 'worked on' often results in women having a self-hating relationship with their bodies. (Walters: 1995, 56)

The media has virtually *brainwashed* women that the images they portray are society's "ideal", to the point where "real" women are now 'often apologetic about their bodies, considered in relation to that plastic object of desire whose image is radiated throughout the media' (Greer: 2006, 292). The fact that these images are constructed as male fantasy, rather than "real women", appears forgotten as more and more women strive to conform to these non-existent ideals.

The way that women relate to these cultural ideals, and the reason that so many women continually strive to obtain 'a match to the "perfect" standard of an image' (Weissman: 1999, 35), stems from the notion of The Stereotype. The stereotype 'is the dominant image of femininity which rules our culture and to which all women aspire' (Greer: 2006, 18). Additionally, 'men welcome the stereotype because it directs their taste into the commonly recognized areas of value' (Greer: 2006, 67). Nevertheless, the notion of the female stereotype has been criticised by feminist theorists due to the demands it is seen to place upon women 'to contour their bodies in order to please the eyes of others' (Greer: 2006, 40).

Directly related to the stereotype is the idea of The Beauty Myth, made famous by Naomi Wolf's 1991 book of the same name, which has since become one of the most well-known critiques of the beauty industry. The beauty myth is centred around how any 'woman who desires to be beautiful is trapped in the confines of the structured definition of what beauty should comprise' (Weissman: 1999, 24). It comes into action as the 'facade between the outward visual presence and the inner destruction that is created and reinforced by the culture and the media' (Weissman: 1999, 24). Naomi Wolf describes how the beauty myth works in the following extract:

The beauty myth tells a story: The quality called ‘beauty’ objectively and universally exists. Women must want to embody it and men must want to possess women who embody it. This embodiment is an imperative for women and not for men, which situation is necessary and natural because it is biological, sexual, and evolutionary: Strong men battle for beautiful women, and beautiful women are more reproductively successful. Women’s beauty must correlate to their fertility, and since this system is based on sexual selection, it is inevitable and changeless.

None of this is true. (Wolf: 1991, 12)

Wolf is critical of a society that, because of the influence of the beauty myth, feels ‘the need to defend itself by evading the fact of real women, our faces and voices and bodies, and reducing the meaning of women to these formulaic and endlessly reproduced “beautiful” images’ (Wolf: 1991, 18). She views the modern woman’s preoccupation with beauty as merely a new way of oppressing women. The emphasis on women’s beauty, she believes, is simply saying that what ‘women look like is considered important because what we say is not’ (Wolf: 1991, 106). Wolf argues that, since the sexual revolution provided women with more freedom than ever before, patriarchal society needed to find another way to “control” women. An emphasis on beauty and image filled this need:

Sex within marriage, for procreation, was acceptable, while sex for pleasure was a sin; women make the same distinction today between eating to sustain life and eating for pleasure. The double standard that gave men and not women sexual license has become a double standard in which men have greater oral license. (Wolf: 1991, 97-98)

The further implications of such an emphasis on maintaining an “ideal” image should be clear. Women’s self-image and, thus, their confidence, are drastically affected, as women become more and more critical of their own appearance. At best, this results in women constantly trying to adapt their natural appearance in the attempt of meeting the, largely unattainable, cultural ideal:

It is a commonplace observation that women are forever trying to straighten their hair if it is curly and curl it if it is straight, bind their breasts if they are large and pad them if they are small, darken their hair if it is light and lighten it if it is dark. Not all these measures are dictated by the phantom of fashion. They all reflect dissatisfaction with the body as it is, and an insistent desire that it be otherwise, not natural but controlled, fabricated. Many of the devices adopted by women are not cosmetic or ornamental, but disguise of the actual, arising from fear and distaste. (Greer: 2006, 293)

A strong emphasis on outward appearance can also be a lot more dangerous than encouraging women to colour their hair, or wear padded bras. Feminist theorists who focus on the beauty industry have expressed concerns at ‘the way the slimming and beauty industry have caused women to do acts of violence to their own bodies’ (Whelehan: 1995, 217). In the opening pages of *The Beauty Myth*, Naomi Wolf comments on how, ‘inside the majority of the West’s controlled, attractive, successful working women, there is a secret

“underlife” poisoning our freedom; infused with notions of beauty, it is a dark vein of self-hatred, physical obsessions, terror of aging, and dread of lost control’ (Wolf: 1991, 10). Wolf refers particularly to dieting and ‘fashionable thinness’ as having an extremely debilitating and harmful effect on women (Wolf: 1991, 196). In discussing the potential risks of a weight obsession, she claims that, at ‘a certain point inside the cult of “beauty”, dieting becomes anorexia or compulsive eating or bulimia’ (Wolf: 1991, 127). Wolf continues on to describe how, in such an instance, the beauty myth works at oppressing women and, thus, sustaining patriarchy:

The anorexic may begin her journey defiant, but from the point of view of a male-dominated society, she ends up as the perfect woman. She is weak, sexless, and voiceless, and can only with difficulty focus on a world beyond her plate. The woman has been killed off in her. (Wolf: 1991, 197)

The beauty myth is detrimental to women’s well-being in that it controls women and sustains patriarchal values. One way it does this is by encouraging women to remain silent about certain aspects of their body – their pleasure and desire for sexual experiences, menstruation, and childbirth, for instance. All of these aspects are specifically related to the female body; men’s sexual pleasure was always allowed while women were supposed to remain silent on the subject, while women are the only gender to experience menstruation and childbirth and, as such, it is only women’s bodies which fall under the control of a patriarchal society and are shamed into silence. Theorists such as Naomi Wolf are concerned that women will continue to damage their bodies and destroy their self-confidence until ‘our culture tells young girls that they are welcome in any shape – that women are valuable to it with or without the excuse of “beauty”’ (Wolf: 1991, 205). This paper will demonstrate how Irish chick lit novels are aiming to show women that their bodies are valuable *in their entirety*, and not just as a fantasy for men, by openly discussing the issues which women are so often encouraged to remain silent about.

### **Mr Right – For a Night! Sexuality and Sexual Experience in Chick Lit**

Historically, women’s sexual desire has been denied or ignored by a society ‘that tells them they should leave the topic of sex for men to discuss’ (Goodrich: 2001, <http://www.msu.edu/~goodri32/eng310/eng-310paper.htm>, par. 3). Not only was the topic of sex left for men to discuss, but sex scenes in novels – even those by and about women – were described from a solely male viewpoint. *Mary Lavelle* (1936), a novel by Irish writer Kate O’Brien, received criticism for this very occurrence:

[...] the passage describing Mary and Juanito’s lovemaking is not focalised through Mary, which is what a reading of the book as a rehearsal of feminine self-liberation might lead one to expect, but is narrated from Juanito’s perspective; and the description dwells in an undeniably sado-masochistic way on images of Mary’s specifically feminine vulnerability and pain *as themselves erotic* and constitutive of Juanito’s pleasure. (Coughlan: 1993, 69)

Similarly, ‘female sexuality has been masked and deformed [...] Her sexuality is both denied and misrepresented by being identified as passivity’ (Greer: 2006, 17). This notion of ‘passivity’ has long been linked to the prototype of the ideal woman, and, from it, evolved the double standard which said that sex ‘was edifying for a man, immoral for a woman’ (Levy: 2005, 59). Traditionally, women could only be categorized in two distinct ways – as angels or as monsters. The so-called “angelic” women were those who abided by this idea of passivity, and, without question, allowed themselves to be treated as objects by men. All others were “monsters” and, as such, had to be punished for refusing to conform to societal expectations. For Irish women, in particular, this confirmed ‘the impossibility of escaping the Irish puritan morality that pervades everything’ (Barros del Río: 2000, <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/humanities/research/perspectives/i1-2/EdnaO'Brien.html>!, par. 19).

Opinions differ regarding who is to blame for this ignorance and refusal of female sexuality. Some blame men’s apparent fear of female sexuality for their attempts to hide its existence altogether. Adrienne Rich discusses this perception in her 1980 text, ‘Compulsory Sexuality and Lesbian Existence’:

It seems more probable that men really fear not that they will have women’s sexual appetites forced on them or that women will want to smother and devour them, but that women could be indifferent to them altogether, that men could be allowed sexual and emotional – therefore economic – access to women *only* on women’s terms, otherwise being left on the periphery of the matrix. (Rich: 1980, 1770)

Surprisingly, feminism itself has also been blamed for the rejection of a female sexuality. It has been argued that, for all its good intentions, feminism’s aim to stop women being objectified unfortunately seemed to mean that ‘talking about sex in feminist terms meant talking about anything but the dread act itself; simply to address the “problem” of sex might risk reaffirming the status of women in Western society as primarily “sex objects”, defined by lack of a penis/power’ (Whelehan: 1995, 164-165). For many women, feminism was viewed, in this sense, as spoiling women’s fun.

From a specifically Irish context, Irish writer Nuala O’Faolain has described Irish communities as being ‘savagely punitive’ and, for many years, ‘was fully in the grip of an institutionalized fear of women; that is, of sexuality’ (O’Faolain: 2006, 294). How, then, would such a community react to the publication of material which contains content not deemed ‘suitable’? Up until relatively recently, Ireland’s answer was for the material to be banned by the Irish Censorship Board. Edna O’Brien was one such writer whose ‘early work was banned by the Irish government and vilified by her local community’ (Moloney and Thompson: 2003, 197). In particular, all three books in her *Country Girls* trilogy were banned – the third book, *Girls in their Married Bliss*, was banned specifically because of an apparently explicit sex scene, which today’s readers would probably find decidedly tame! (Imhof: 2002, 73) One would wonder whether Ireland was ready for any amount of openness regarding sexuality.

Chick lit did not wait for Ireland to be ready. Chick lit burst onto the scene with its ‘girly gab about shoes, shagging, and shedding pounds’ (Rogers, in Freitas: 2005, i) and, in doing so, it has worked wonders

towards positively voicing issues of female sexuality and sexual desire. Instead of ‘presenting their protagonists as subordinate to male advances, chick-lit authors present women as sexual agents’ (Ferriss: 2006, 10). As another sign of positive development in terms of representations of female desire, ‘contemporary [and, in this case, Irish] chick lit often presents the heroine in sexual relationships with men other than the narratives’ intended hero, but without “punishing” her or questioning her actions’ (Mabry: 2006, 201).

Chick lit is successful in portraying how society is radically changing in terms of women’s new-found sexual freedom. Until very recently, ‘the rule was that you had to hold off sleeping with a man for as long as possible. But now the rule seemed to be that if you wanted to hold on to him you’d better deliver the goods asap’ (Keyes: 2007, 228). Indeed, waiting until the wedding night has become such a rarity that women tend to wonder if something is drastically wrong if a man tries to be a gentleman and does not expect them to sleep with him straight away. As Anna, in *Anybody Out There?*, recalls:

At this stage I’d seen Aidan about seven or eight times and not once had he tried to jump me. Every date we’d gone on, we’d had just one kiss. It had improved from quick and firm, to slower and more tender, but one kiss was as good as it got.

Had I wanted more? Yes. Was I curious about his restraint? Yes. But I kept it all under control and something had held me back from getting Jacqui in a headlock every time I came home from an unjumped-on night out and tearfully agonizing: What’s his problem? Doesn’t he fancy me? Is he gay? Christian? One of those True Love Waits gobshites? (Keyes: 2006, 108-109)

Unusually for popular fiction, chick lit may be celebrated for its recognition of the risks – as well as the freedoms – brought about by the Sexual Revolution, most notably the HIV/AIDS epidemic. It brings our awareness to such a topic without preaching or using scare tactics, but also reminds us that the risks are very real and, contrary to what was once popular opinion, we can all be affected by it if precautions are not taken, instead of solely linking the disease to homosexuality.

*Forever FM* tackles the topic in the form of a guest speaker on the radio talk show that the novel revolves around. The speaker, a young woman, describes how she contracted HIV as a child when she pierced her skin on a needle belonging to her drug-addict mother. She discusses the potential implications of this accident that she now faces every day, such as rejections by her friends, and the need to always ensure proper precautions are used when sleeping with her boyfriend (see Caddle: 2002, 282-292). Keyes’ *Lucy Sullivan is Getting Married*, alternatively, presents a kind of utopian visions for HIV-awareness, in the form of it being so embedded in people’s minds that proper care is automatically exercised by sexually-active adults, without the need for discussion:

We hadn’t mentioned birth control, but when the time came we were both responsible adults living in the HIV positive nineties. (Keyes: 2003a, 731).

While women may indeed have more sexual freedom nowadays, it is still not without its problems, and these problems are also discussed in chick lit. A large part of this problem is that, now that women have been allowed more sexual freedom than ever before, it is now taken for granted that *every* woman wants wild and inventive sex, and that they are ready and willing to go to bed with whoever is convenient. Ariel Levy describes this situation best in saying:

Because we have determined that all empowered women must be overtly and publicly sexual, and because the only sign of sexuality we seem to be able to recognize is a direct allusion to red-light entertainment, we have laced the sleazy energy and aesthetic of a topless club or a *Penthouse* shoot throughout our entire culture [...] We skipped over the part where we just accept and respect that *some* women like to seem exhibitionist and lickerish, and decided instead that *everyone* who is sexually liberated ought to be imitating strippers and porn stars. (Levy: 2005, 26-27)

Far from wanting to partake in sexual gymnastics every night of the week, Claire Walsh in *Watermelon* could well be speaking for the Everywoman when she makes this “shocking” revelation:

While we’re on the subject of sexual shenanigans I’ve got a confession to make.

Wait for it.

Here it comes.

I enjoy the missionary position.

There! I’ve said it.

I’m made to feel so *ashamed* of myself for feeling that way.

As if I’m terribly boring and repressed.

But I’m not. Honestly.

I’m not saying that it’s the *only* position that I like.

But, really, I have no objection to it whatsoever. (Keyes: 2003b, 363)

Equally shocking is that many women, given the option, would probably quite happily cherish an element of innocence in their relationships:

We sat quietly and still, Chris’s arm tight around me. I closed my eyes and, for a few moments, let myself pretend it was a perfect world and he was my boyfriend.

It reminded me of an earlier, more innocent age, when the most a boyfriend did was put his arm around you and – if your luck was in – kissed you. The enforced decorum demanded by the Cloisters was sweet and romantic. It touched, rather than frustrated me. (Keyes: 1998, 358)

As many women have realised, the problem is no longer about winning the right to sexual freedom. As feminists spent so long fighting for women to have the same sexual rights as men, many women now feel

a sense of hypocrisy when they would prefer to choose to say “no” to sexual advances – the freedom to choose being, ironically, what feminism was fighting for all along. The title character of *Lucy Sullivan is Getting Married* identifies with these feelings:

In theory, I knew that it was my right not to go to bed with anyone I didn't want to and to change my mind at any stage in the proceedings, but the reality was that I would be far too embarrassed to say no. (Keyes: 2003a, 187)

One thing that chick lit does – and does well – is describe its sex scenes from the woman's perspective. In Kate Thompson's novel, *Sex, Lies and Fairytales* (2006), one of the characters is a chick lit writer who cheekily declares that her “sex scenes should be prescribed reading for men” (Thompson: 2006, 402), alluding to the idea that sex has traditionally been on men's terms and to men's preferences, and so men now need to be “taught” how to please a woman.

Sex scenes are not always easy to write – or to read, for that matter. I again turn to Claire Walsh in *Watermelon* to explain it clearly:

It's very difficult to discuss having sex without being so crude that I sound like a pornographic book or without being so discreet that I sound like a repressed, uptight Victorian novelist who suffers regularly from Vaginismus and still calls her husband Mr Clements after twenty-seven years of marriage. (Keyes: 2003b, 378)

Chick lit strikes the ideal balance here. Its sex scenes – far from being overly graphic, crude, or erotic past the point of believable – are realistic, witty, matter-of-fact, and – above all – easy for every modern woman to identify with.

### **Nothing to Hide: Chick Lit as Fully Representative of the Female Body**

An analysis of the female body is not limited to only fashion and image. To be fully complete, it must also include *all* aspects related to the female body, particularly areas that have traditionally been repressed.

Many feminist theorists have commented on how patriarchal society does not like ‘the true texts of women – female-sexed texts. That kind scares them.’ (Cixous: 1975, 348). Thus, when it comes to any question of specifically female experience, particularly in relation to the body:

men are unable to penetrate her special experience through any working of sympathy: they are condemned to ignorance of the quality of woman's erotic pleasure, the discomfort of menstruation, and the pains of childbirth. (de Beauvoir: 1949, 1409)

Naturally, this resulted in the repression of specifically female experiences. In terms of the body, this included the silencing of, for example, the female genital organs, menstruation, and even childbirth, all deemed to be of 'less importance' because they directly affected only women.

In *The Beauty Myth*, Naomi Wolf discusses how real and complete representations of the female body are in fact heavily censored, despite the variety of female images we regularly witness:

Because we see many versions of the naked Iron Maiden, we are asked to believe that our culture promotes the display of female sexuality. It actually shows almost none. It censors representations of women's bodies, so that only the official versions are visible [...] In the United States and Great Britain, which have no tradition of public nakedness, women rarely – and almost never outside a competitive context – see what other *women* look like naked; we see only identical humanoid products based loosely on women's bodies. (Wolf: 1991, 135- 136)

As a shocking example of this situation, Wolf continues on to describe how a woman's magazine named '*Spare Rib*' was banned in Ireland because it showed women how to examine their breasts' (Wolf: 1991, 138). As a result, women felt ashamed of their own bodies, as they were 'shamefully taught to ignore them, to strike them with that stupid sexual modesty' (Cixous: 1975, 355).

This silencing of women's issues has been frequently targeted in feminist theory. Feminists, such as Hélène Cixous, for example, have encouraged women to 'break out of the snare of silence' (Cixous: 1975, 351). Feminists have argued that one of the best ways for women to begin to fully represent themselves is to begin with discussions of the female body:

if women are to discover and express who they are, to bring to the surface what masculine history has repressed in them, they must begin with their sexuality. And their sexuality begins with their bodies, with their genital and libidinal difference from men. (Jones: 1981, 374)

Traditional chick lit has been criticised for inadvertently helping to continue the repression of certain aspects of women's existence, by keeping silent on specifically female issues:

it is more surprising that one thing women in chick lit novels never do is menstruate. While pregnancy scares (and now more frequently pregnancies) abound, periods, like bad sex, abortions, and sexually transmitted diseases, remain absent. (Whelehan: 2005, 219)

This paper argues, however, that Irish chick lit not only recognises that certain aspects of the female body have been ignored or censored, but it also gives a voice to these aspects by discussing them in their novels. Take, for example, the 'marked revulsion for menstruation, principally evinced by our efforts to keep it secret' (Greer: 2006, 56). Feminists have long expressed outrage that both 'the Victorian and the modern medical systems reclassify aspects of healthy femaleness into grotesque abnormality' (Wolf: 1991, 222). Nowhere is this revulsion for an aspect of 'healthy femaleness' seen more clearly than regarding

menstruation:

The contradiction in the attitude that regards menstruation as divinely ordained and yet unmentionable leads to the intensification of the female revolt against it, which can be traced in all the common words for it, like the *curse*, and male disgust expressed in terms like *having the rags on*. (Greer: 2006, 58)

While it has been noted that there ‘have been some moves to bring menstruation out into the open in an unprejudiced way’ (Greer: 2006, 58), these attempts have still been controlled and censored. A clear example of this is shown in Marian Keyes’ *Last Chance Saloon* (1999), in which one of the main characters, Katherine, explains the ‘rules’ of creating an advertisement for tampons:

Two hard and fast rules existed for tampon ads: the product is only ever referred to euphemistically; and the colour red must *never* appear. (Keyes: 1999, 59)

Irish chick lit not only *acknowledges* the censorship of menstruation, but also refers directly to it:

The flash of red caught me by surprise. Blood. My period. (Keyes: 2006, 300)

Despite the simplicity of the reference, the very fact of its inclusion in a chick lit novel is startling, but also a positive indicator of how Irish chick lit is helping to provide an outlet for the discussion of women’s experiences.

A further area which has traditionally resulted in the repression of the female body is seen in ‘the taboo of the pregnant woman’ (Cixous: 1975, 359). It has been noted how ‘accounts of women giving birth are rare until the twentieth century and are usually depicted from the spectator’s point of view rather than the mother’s, perhaps from the father’s or someone in attendance’ (Joannou: 2000, 45). Feminists have argued that:

all too often the story has been taken away from the mother and that childbirth needs to be made visible from a woman’s point of view. The experiences of pregnancy, childbirth and motherhood, on which the fictional representations depend, are, of course, the *only* major areas in which women have exclusive first-hand knowledge which is not available to men. (Joannou: 2000, 45)

Irish chick lit novels, such as Keyes’ *Watermelon*, not only describe pregnancy and childbirth from the *woman’s* point of view, but also present a no-holds-barred account of the affects that they have on the female body:

In fact, it was only a week since I started wearing normal knickers again.

Let me explain.

Maybe you don't know it but you don't return to normal living and, more importantly, normal clothes the moment you give birth.

No indeed!

It's a long time before certain bodily processes stop. I don't want to sound unnecessarily gory here but can I just say that I could have given Lady Macbeth a run for her money.

Don't talk to *me* about blood being everywhere, Missus! (Keyes: 2003b, 276-277)

Excluding aspects solely related to the female body, such as menstruation and childbirth, 'pinpoints the extent to which a mode of writing which has been claimed as universal has historically functioned as an expression of men's descriptions of men's lives' (Joannou: 2000, 45). Irish chick lit's open references to such aspects shows how chick lit is gaining strength as being fully representative of female existence.

### **Towards the End of the Beauty Myth?**

Despite the difficulties historically faced by women writers, today's chick lit writers are beginning to develop new forms of writing in which the female body is finally honestly represented. The chick lit heroine, in her aim to become a positive role model for women, is one who real women can easily relate to:

She is Everywoman, with quirks and problems that are believable yet larger than life. She's confident yet insecure. Smart but naive. Lovable yet flawed. (Mlynowski: 2006, 64)

In being 'lovable yet flawed', the chick lit heroine can become a positive, healthier role model for contemporary women. She tells women that it is okay if they are not 'perfect', as this ideal level of perfection does not actually exist. The beauty myth had fooled us all, but chick lit heroines are here to tell the truth.

Naomi Wolf described her vision of what a society free of the beauty myth will look like:

Women will be able thoughtlessly to adorn ourselves with pretty objects when there is no question that *we* are not objects. Women will be free of the beauty myth when we can choose to use our faces and clothes and bodies as simply one form of self-expression out of a full range of others. We can dress up for our pleasure, but we must speak up for our rights. (Wolf: 1991, 273-274)

When chick lit breaks patriarchal tradition by repressing and discussing *all* aspects of the female body, even those experiences which have typically been censored, we are freeing ourselves from the beauty myth.

A generation ago, Germaine Greer wondered about women: ‘What *will* you do?’ What women did brought about a quarter century of cataclysmic social revolution. The next phase of our movement forward as individual women, as women together, and as tenants of our bodies and this planet, depends now on what we decide to see when we look in the mirror.

What *will* we see? (Wolf: 1991, 291)

If Irish chick lit is any indication, we will see a future in which women’s bodies will finally be represented as they should be.

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# Patriarchy and War in Liana's Badr's *The Eye of the Mirror*.

By Isam Shihada

*The truth sometimes shocks, or shakes the tranquility of set ideas. But sometimes a good shake can awaken minds that rest in slumber, and open eyes to see what is really happening around them. (El Saadawi: 1980: 3)*

This paper examines, through women's literature, the impact of patriarchy and war on women, their traumatic experiences, their roles during the war, and how war can blur the gender-specific boundaries by creating a space for women to negotiate their survival and participate more actively in society. In Liana Badr's *The Eye of the Mirror*, the heroine is victimized by both patriarchy and war. Badr's novel can be read as a deconstruction of the dominant national male narrative by rendering a counter discourse which empowers women and chronicles their experiences during war which would, otherwise, have been forgotten. In other words, by inscribing their experiences and roles in war into a war story, women writers counter those who try to marginalize their war experiences (Cooke: 1994).

In *The Eye of the Mirror*, we find Aisha struggling to assert her own identity by negating her own body as a form of resistance against the social traditions and oppressive mores which tend to suppress her as a woman. Simultaneously she strives to survive and preserve her own life and the lives of others around her during the Lebanese civil war (1975-1990),<sup>1</sup> where her husband, Hassan, is killed and her home is shelled during the siege of camp Tal Ezza'tar.<sup>2</sup> According to Claire Buck, Liana Badr's fictional works revolve around "women and war, women and exile and the plight of women facing not only the national enemy but a massed weight of inhuman traditions and a heritage of male oppression." (1992: 311). Put differently, Badr's literary corpus is concerned with the mutual struggles of Palestinian women and men in exile for survival against the ravages of war portraying how fighting for survival bolsters not only their unity but also transforms gender relationships (Shaaban: 1988). Here, one may say that Badr has been keen to situate women's experiences at the centre of the nationalist struggle not only to record and chronicle the survival of Palestinian people but to keep their identity from disintegration.

However, Liana Badr's *The Eye of the Mirror* specifically sheds light on the plight of thousands of Palestinian women living in exile in refugee camps in Lebanon after being expelled from their historical homeland, in pre-1948 Palestine (Pappe: 2006).<sup>3</sup> For example, Aisha symbolizes the trauma of Palestinian women living in exile marginalized by society and displaced nationally. Within this context, Fadia Faqir

states in her introduction to Badr's *The Eye of the Mirror* that Aisha is marginalized as a young girl in a society "with very fixed definitions of what womanhood entails, and also as a Palestinian who is homeless and whose entire nation has been displaced." (1994: 7)<sup>4</sup>

Since early childhood, Aisha has been confined to a Christian convent where she receives her education in return for working as a servant there and later on in her father's house where she is not allowed to move freely due to patriarchal social restrictions imposed by her obsessive and abusive father, Assayed. Nevertheless, we see Aisha develop a kind of self control mechanism to resist patriarchal and political submission. She creates an imaginative space for herself where she can protect herself from her own dual social and political alienation. Her own self protection is motivated by divorcing reality from the imaginative world where she seeks for her own self a protective shelter.

As long as suppressive patriarchal culture and social mores remain in place, the transformed individual woman will be alienated. (Cooke: 1994). This can be noticed in Aisha's emotional tension and bodily reactions in her endeavor to survive her own dual alienation in a patriarchal society which tends to erase her own identity and rob her of her human freedom, patriarchal attitudes and practices "which privilege men, continue to permeate African societies from the level of the family up to the state" (Gordon 1996: 7)<sup>5</sup>, and a political situation which perceives her as a Palestinian refugee who may pose a political threat to the sectarian political system in Lebanon, a threat which has to be confined and finally eliminated.<sup>6</sup>

Being a daughter of a Palestinian refugee who belongs to the working class, Aisha, consequently, does not enjoy similar rights like her other Lebanese sisters who are considered to be natural citizens of Lebanon. For instance, her work as a child in the convent in exchange for her education sheds the light on the dilemma of child labor and class discrimination motivated by political and economic reasons.<sup>7</sup> Hence, she must earn her education through hard work, "she would take the cleaning implements and roam the rooms and corners." (Badr: 1994: 6)<sup>8</sup> to compensate for her status of being the "Other," since the convent doesn't give Aisha a social space where she can enjoy equal human rights of sisterhood but adopts the policy of confinement and racial segregation through silencing and intimidation. "The nuns had taught her that it was best for her not to talk and not to try to mix with the daughters of the influential families" (6). This intimidating policy prompts Aisha to distance herself from the others, making sure that she doesn't talk to anyone during her seven year schooling at the convent where she has become used to her surroundings.

Furthermore, Aisha's work as a child deprives her even of the opportunity to live and enjoy her innocent childhood by playing with the other girls. "Over there, games would stretch across the red arc of the aurora at sunset, running with the sound of the girls' laughter in the playground. There she would do her chores" (5). Aisha's classmates at the convent would wonder how she could "sweep lightly and daintily without twisting the discs in her back as she bent. Oh! How could she touch the ice-cold water that could cut like a saw without shivering?" (6). Here, one may contend that Aisha's labor reflects on the hard working conditions of Palestinian women in Lebanon as the only means left for them to survive after the loss of their homeland, and their will to live in spite of all odds, supporting themselves and sustaining their own communities.

But Aisha's work and her hopes of becoming a teacher are dashed by the incident of the bus where many Palestinians are killed while going back to Tal Ezza'tar camp, signaling the beginning of the Lebanese civil war.<sup>9</sup> Consequently, her mother, Um Jalal, has to take her out of the convent expressing panic at the extent of the catastrophe which will befall the lives of the Palestinians. "We have become refugees, without a country, without dignity, without a home. Our honor was lost long ago and now our children are dying. The bus. The bus. Woe is me. We have such ill- fortune" (8). Consequently, Aisha has to go back to camp Tal Ezza'tar where she used to visit home "only three times a year" (8) but this time she is confined at home and struck by the miserable conditions of the lives of the people and their stark poverty aggravated by the blow of the bus incident and its political consequences.

She heard the moaning of women and the crying of children as she walked along the roads. She saw the faces of women who had not caught her attention before, struggling under the burden of a heavy blow which had changed their features and mutilated their bones. Their misshapen faces overflowed with grief and anger. (9)

However, at home, Aisha falls in love silently with George, a Palestinian fighter and a family friend. Fighters have been a source of attraction for girls and that sheds the light on the image of the Palestinian fighters respected and adored among their people who view them as freedom fighters (Petet: 1991), defending their lives and honor during the inhuman siege of Tal Ezza'tar camp. "Old men considered him as an heir to their wisdom, women treated him as the most intelligent son, and men looked up to him as their ideal because he was a fighter" (75). For instance, Aisha's adoration for George can be observed in her physical reaction when she sees him, forgetting everything around her, "she sees nothing but him. She hears him only, and feels him alone" (21), though, on the other hand, he fails to reciprocate these emotions.

Aisha's spiritual love for George cannot be expressed because of the limitations placed by patriarchal culture which leaves her in a state of mute longing: "All she had left was the longing alone, manifesting itself in long mute waiting" (49). Here, longing and silence for Aisha become means of silent forms of communication which has left its painful psychological and physical toll on her body as she walks, "the pain moves from her heels to her spine, and she is unable to lift her body, as though her joints are being pulverized by stone weights" (47). Aisha's silent love cannot only be construed as a resisting act to survive in a destructive warring situation which denies life but also as a rejection of suppressive patriarchal traditions, in the guise of societal and parental authority, imposed on women where they are not allowed to speak, feel, act and dream like human beings. In other words, this is a male dominated culture which promotes submission and identity nullification for the sake of pleasing societal expectations, at the expense of one's own individuality. Within this context, Sherifa Zuhur states that the Arab society clings to "a patriarchal system in which women's position within and duties toward the family precede their rights as individuals" (2003: 17).

War and national dispossession have also contributed to the patriarchal imperative to impose social restrictions on women in the face of communal displacement where women have been looked upon with high esteem when they keep their chastity intact. One can observe the connection between the concept of

female virginity and national dispossession which facilitates the migration of large groups of Palestinian refugees and the consequent territorial occupation of their lands by Israel. In this regard, Halim Barakt shows how Israel took advantage of the ‘sexual sensitivities’ of traditional Palestinian Arabs to stir up the waves of emigration during the successive wars, 1948 and 1967 and their desire to protect the “honor” of their womenfolk. (El Saadawi: 1980).<sup>10</sup> Hence, chastity is considered essential for women where family and community honor is associated with female virtue which, henceforth, leads the patriarchal society to resort to different means from gossip to honor killing to enforce the honor code to avoid the collective communal and national shame (Rubenberg 2001).

The patriarchal emphasis on the honor code is reflected through Aisha’s embarrassing reaction to her bodily changes by hating her own body and seeing it as an embarrassing burden.

Her body spoke, and she became agitated. She shivered before her mother’s inquisitive gaze as it searched her body inch by inch, and the intrusive stare of her father, who would never stop gaping at her. She was forced to hunch her back when she walked to hide her growing bosom. (14).

Aisha’s self-loathing of her body can be seen as an internalization of how patriarchal society looks down upon female sexuality as a threat and a source of *fitna* (a religious concept denoting social disorder or chaos). According to Nawal El Saadawi, woman was considered by the Arabs as “a menace to man and society, and the only way to avoid the harm she could do was to isolate her in the home, where she could have no contact with either one or the other” (1980: 136). Her self-loathing also portrays Aisha’s consciousness of her new heavy responsibility to keep her virtue from being violated. In this regard, Fatima Mernissi argues that the preoccupation with female virginity and chastity becomes a major obsession for men who do not hesitate to subject women to violence and abuse in an attempt to keep them in their place.

Like honor, virginity is the manifestation of a purely male preoccupation in societies where inequality, scarcity, and the degrading subjection of some people to others deprive the community as a whole of the only true human strength: self confidence. The concept of honor and virginity locate the prestige of a man between the legs of a woman (1992: 183).

To control female sexuality, the male menacing gaze is used by Aisha’s father, Assayed, whose threatening gaze is meant to control the movement of Aisha’s body while she is sweeping the house, cleaning the dishes, and serving tea: “he follows her with his eyes, casting an invisible chord that traces her movement between the kitchen, the room and the roof” (21). Her father’s abusive behavior persists when he asks her:

“Why are you always wearing that pink dress?”

“That’s my dress, Yaba... I haven’t got another one.”

“Why d’you say Yaba the way spoilt kids do?”

“...”

“You think you’re one of the nuns’ girls, don’t you.?”

“...”

“What a catastrophe this is. What am I to do with you in future.” (22)

This statement highlights how keeping female sexuality under surveillance constrains women to certain social roles, drawing well articulated spatial boundaries which women cannot trespass out of fear that they will bring shame to the family and the community, respectively. For Cheryl Rubenberg, familial patriarchy, with its discourse of honor and shame, its relations of domination and subordination, and its myriad punishments, controls women’s bodies, minds and behaviors and their entire lives (Rubenberg: 2001). What make things worse is when Assayed vents his own sufferings and loss as a humiliated Palestinian refugee on Aisha when he calls her one day and she replies, “What is it, Papi?” (23). Her answer provokes him to scold and taunt her angrily, “You, shame on you. We’re Palestinians,” (23) as though he has nothing to do but to look for any flimsy excuse “to humiliate her.” (23)

For patriarchy to survive as an oppressive system its ideology must be instilled in society and force must be used when that ideology has not fully been imbibed. For example, Aisha has to flee to the kitchen fearing that Assayed would pull the belt and beat her as he did before when he took the golden chain given to her as a gift from the nuns at the convent, (“A small shining chain with a small cross on it. It had caused her enough kicks and slaps from her father to last her for a lifetime”) to sell it in order to buy “more bottles of *arak*, of which he couldn’t drink enough.” (23).<sup>11</sup> Within this context, Brinda Mehta contends that “the father’s abusive behavior shows his political emasculation and helplessness as a castrated patriarch who loses his authority in the process of migration” (2007: 45).

However Badr’s deconstruction of patriarchy continues by exposing how the concept of arranged marriage is seen as one of the salient manifestations of patriarchy where women become economic goods for exchange in a way that consolidates patriarchal control over women. This can be evidently observed in the marriage contract concluded between parents on behalf of their children where control is transferred from father to the new husband. For instance, Assayed has concluded the marriage of Aisha without her consent and even slight knowledge. “He called to his wife in his usual noisy manner: ‘Prepare her, Um Jalal. Prepare your daughter because her fiancé is coming tonight!’” (83). A patriarchal action which propels Aisha to resist by fighting for her own rights, speaking to her mother angrily, “What is up? What is going on? Has that husband of yours gone mad? Who told him I want to get married?” (84). In return, her mother, Um Jalal, acting as patriarchal agent, tries to persuade her by reinforcing the patriarchal suppressive culture that it is a wish for every woman to get married, “All young girls wish for marriage.... and that will make your father happy, Let him experience one happy day in his life. He has not had the pleasure of marrying off his son... so let him have the pleasure of marrying you off.” (84, 85). Here, we find women are discouraged from expressing their own ideas that contradict parents’ admonitions where

parents decide for them what they should do depriving them from the basic human right to decide and choose for themselves.<sup>12</sup>

Marriage for women is the only means of acceptance in the community and if they remain unmarried, “they are, socially viewed, so much wastage. This is why mothers have always eagerly sought to arrange marriages for them” (Beauvoir 1989: 427). This may explain the behavior of Aisha’s mother, Um Jalal, in her confrontation with Aisha’s resistance. Um Jalal has sometimes tried to frustrate Aisha psychologically by telling her that the ultimate goal of any woman’s life is marriage, “what else would you do then, my dear? ... Become a university professor? or a teacher of French?” (84), or in other times by warning her that being unmarried will be a social stigma to the family and society: “I hope you are not intending to become an old maid and remain at home so that people will say my daughter could not get a husband” (84).

One can notice the painful psychological struggle women have to go through, either asserting their own subjectivities or living to meet the expected social roles imposed on them by a male-dominated society. “Aisha imagined that the whole thing was a punishment for her, while the others saw it as an honor and cause for joy” (85). We also see the role of the mother, Um Jalal, who upholds the patriarchal image of women and plays the role of the victimizer through reinforcing an oppressive male culture on her daughter, Aisha, who just wants to have a proper education and enjoy the right to choose her future husband as an equal human being.

Failing to convince her mother, Aisha tries to speak to her father, Assayed, who in return, throws her back a threatening look which makes her speechless and shiver in fear.

With his honey-brown eyes, he looks like a wolf ready to pounce on its prey. He put out his cigarette as he watched her. He crushed the burning stub on the floor as he looked into her face. He began to undo his belt. He pulled it off and laid it on the floor next to him, determined to show her the hiding that she might get with the leather belt... Actually, she did not forget. It was her tongue that was unable to speak. Did one speak to a monster? And if she spoke. What would she tell him? Would she tell him that she did not wish it? But he did wish it. Her knees felt loose and her leg joints became shaky and unable to support her. Her vision clouds over, and she runs up to the roof. (85-6)

Feeling helpless after seeing that the option of escape where she can work as a servant on the western side of Beirut is impossible due to the fact that “the camp’s exits and entrances are blocked by barriers and fortifications” (90), and because there is “blood, war and clashes.” (90). Yet she wishes that “the clashes would end so that she could leave the Tal and take charge of her life” (87). To face injustice imposed on her, Aisha resorts to her own self mechanism of silence and indifference, alienating herself from all suppressive elements which try to rob her of her own will. “All of them had frightened her, and she could do nothing more than bow her head and say yes to her funeral.” (96)

On the wedding night, Aisha resists by refusing to let her body be painted by *Henna*<sup>13</sup> as fingers “stretched out at her, making a sugary lemon paste, examining her body, intruding between her organs as though she were a doll made of dough available to every hand to sculpt and remodel her into something different.” (99) Painting the body with henna is a cultural ritual meant to decorate the female enhancing her sexual desirability to the male, perpetuating patriarchal social conventions that women are sexual objects who can be manipulated and penetrated. In an act of resistance and revolt against social conventions which degrade women and place them in an inferior position, Aisha hides in the bathroom inflicting pain on her body by making herself ugly, cutting her hair on her wedding night.<sup>14</sup>

In the bathroom... Her eyes fell on a pair of scissors that had been left on the window sill. She picked them up and began cutting off her hair in front of the broken mirror... She cut off her hair in terror as her sobbing rose, drowning out the ululating and chanting outside. (101)

We may argue that the scene of Aisha cutting her hair can be construed as a subversive act against patriarchal customs imposed on her in an attempt to assert her own identity, while, on the other hand, it is an act painfully viewed by her mother as an act of madness “her insanity had prompted her to do” (102).

Being married now, Aisha has to face the ugly face of patriarchy represented by males and senior females where she is expected to obey them, especially her mother in law, Um Hassan. For Suad Joseph, the structure of patriarchal familial culture means the privileging of the assertions of desire by males and female elders and the responsibility of girls to comply accordingly (Joseph 2005). Furthermore, it is only through the birth of a male heir that Aisha can gain respect in her own community. The need for children is strongly reinforced by the national loss and death of many males fighting defending their communities. For instance, Um Hassan’s son, Fayeze, was killed during a raid of the Lebanese army on the camp.<sup>15</sup> “Two years ago in May, the army came and began shelling the people in all the camps. Fayeze was martyred.” (110). Since Fayeze’s death, Um Hassan has been so keen to get her only remaining son, Hassan, married, and have children to compensate her loss of her late son, Fayeze. This is manifested in Um Hassan’s speech to Aisha:

“If one is ruined, broken-hearted and homeless, away from one’s brothers and sisters, can one be happy? I have put one young man under the ground. We were dragged around and made homeless. We’ve become nothing more than some flour and a bit of water that never runs out. Yes... those who are dead are dead. Things will inevitably calm down and you will have children. One’s grandchild gives more pleasure than one’s child.” (111)

This statement reflects on the culturally expected role of women during war to be productive mothers of the nation and preservers of cultural identity which unfortunately situates women in a passive position linked with childbirth (Shabban: 1988).<sup>16</sup> It also portrays the extent of how essential issues like pregnancy and mothering are for the Palestinian community to survive nationally and politically, and how essential reproduction is as a means of compensation for the loss of the people and land.

However, Aisha's political consciousness reaches its climax after the death of her husband, Hassan. "The news seeped through her being. It reached her consciousness. Breathing became difficult, and she leant back onto the floor where she had been sitting. Then she collapsed in a faint." (177) Later, we find her reflect on her personal tragedy of losing her husband, Hassan, who has been killed during the war on the camp.

So what was left to her? All that was left her was the black dress she would wear for the rest of her life, and those weak pulses against the wall of her abdomen of a foetus which meant nothing to her now that its father was dead. (182)

Her initial indifference to what is going around her has been transformed by her ultimate acceptance of an unwanted pregnancy and her role in helping her community during the days of war. "Despite the difficult circumstances, she accepted her condition with an indifferent resignation akin to the resignation with which the people of the camp faced the successive disasters befalling them." (154) The death of Aisha's husband can be seen as a moment of realization that her struggle for her own identity cannot be separated from the national struggle of her own people who are seeking to survive and live freely as human beings too.

The camp was being turned upside down. People were being forced to leave their homes, cramming themselves into already overcrowded shelters. The hospital was unable to cope with the phenomenal pressure of causalities. There was almost no water to be had. The medical centre was unable to offer first aid unless patients brought water from their own houses. No anti-tetnus vaccines were available. Nothing was available. (155)

We find Aisha think of "the flimsiness of the tile-covered metal roof of her parents' house. She had only become aware of this as the clashes had escalated." (115) In this regard, Brinda Mehta argues that "Aisha's survival locates itself within the politics of the home front represented by the search for more dynamic roles for women within restrictive patriarchal codes of conduct" (2007: 54).

Aisha's role during the war is manifested through helping her community, taking care of children living in bomb shelters and looking for sources of survival like food and water for her family during the siege, thus exposing her life to danger. "The thrifty women, who had cooked the frozen meat and preserved it in glass jars for bad times, had roamed around in groups looking for new sources of food." (138)

Commenting on how war affects women and temporarily suspends patriarchal structures, Nadine Puechguirbal argues that "between 60 and 80 percent of women are single heads of households. Shortages of food, wood, water, and health care have created great burdens for them. Women and girls often have to travel long distances to find resources" (2003: 1273). This can be seen through the words of Amneh revealing the great dangers she faces every time she goes to fetch water under the shelling and sniping:

She would ask herself at length, every time she had to go and get water, whether or not she

would complete the mission. One died a thousand deaths in seconds. Every time would pass that spot, she would stop there for more than twenty minutes and think: would she be able to finish her journey without dying. (151)

Furthermore, for Julie Peteet, war and nationalist struggle may operate as “catalysts for change, breaking down traditional barriers between men and women” and “undermining the operation of extant asymmetrical gender relations and exposing them to scrutiny” (1991, 6). One may also argue that war suspends and destroys the patriarchal structures of society that confine and degrade women. “In the very breakdown of morals, traditions, customs, and community, war also opens up and creates new beginnings” (Turshen 1998: 20). For instance, it has been a shock for Aisha to see the deconstructive impact of war on her father, Assayed, whose abusive and patriarchal role has receded into the background. “The overpowering, capable man had turned into a rag.... He resembled a blind man, and the grand awesomeness based on his physical strength and cruelty had disappeared from his features... It was hard to believe that this man was Assayed” (181). Within this context, war has created a space for women like Aisha, helping people in bomb shelters, “Aisha, who had never before visited a shelter, experienced everything imaginable and unimaginable” (155). While Um Jalal sold candles, “During that period, Um Jalal began making candles at home to augment her livelihood” (144) and Hana worked as a wireless operator and Um Hassan, baked bread: “Her work for the young men, baking tens of bread loaves for them, helped her to forget half her problems and to ignore the sound of half of the shells raining down on the camp as she worked.” (149). Meanwhile Khazneh nursed with the Red Cross. We may contend here that women are seeking work outside home as a means to survive and simultaneously assert their own identities taking into account that many Palestinian men are not allowed to work, in some cases, they are either jailed or killed during the war which has created a new situation where women take the responsibility to feed their families and help them sustain themselves during hard times.<sup>17</sup>

For example, we find Aisha helping Georgette, a Lebanese woman married to a Palestinian fighter, give birth and take care of her newly born child, who suffers from weakness and dehydration due to lack of milk during their stay in the bomb shelter with other women and children protecting themselves from the deadly daily shelling. “Aisha tried as hard as she could with the child, who had calmed down, and was no longer screaming as he had been during his first days... His mouth remained closed, his eyelashes hanging over his eyes as though he had gone into a coma” (187). The child’s worsening health condition makes Aisha’s pray to God for help.

“She would not have asked that God give her a long life and bring back her husband, Hassan. She would just have asked for one moment to go out onto the beach with this baby, expose him to some fresh air, put him in the breeze, and offer him a dose of the air which was so absent in this place.” (188)

Watching the torturous slow death of Georgette’s infant, “the baby was frozen, his limbs rigid, keeping a silence that none but the dead knew...” (195) and the ensuing madness of Georgette after losing her son brings Aisha closer to finding her own place within the struggle to resist the siege imposed on the camp

(Rastegar: 2006).

Witnessing the death of Georgette's child and the massacres which are committed by the phalangists against women, children and the elderly after the camp's fall<sup>18</sup> makes her reject the painful logic of war: "Rancid smells were still rising from the piles of corpses she had passed on the road behind her" (259), and wonder why all this takes place. "Why are we here? Why death? Why don't we live normally like other people? Why won't they leave us alone?" (260). For Julie Peteet, the logic behind this gruesome strategy is "to sow panic in the refugee community and precipitate a Palestinian flight to neighboring Arab countries, as well as to demoralize men ...by revealing in stark grotesqueness their inability to protect their families and homes" (1991: 37).

Here, Aisha's reflections on the cruelty of war pose serious questions about the futility of war.<sup>19</sup> Aisha's feelings towards the child's death can, furthermore, be viewed as a symbol of her solidarity and collective political consciousness of her Palestinian community as she thinks of the unabated sufferings of her own people.

If death were death, why had her parents not accepted dying there, and why had they not committed suicide where they were? Why had they been driven by their fear to what they had imagined would be life outside? Why had they not known that they would face what they were facing now, at the end of the bitter, wearying journey. They had destroyed their lives to build the lives of their children. And now it had caught up with them! (258)

After Tal Ezza'tar's fall to the Phalangists, Aisha is driven along with her people out of the camp. "Everyone fleeing like prey. Everyone? No. Only the women. The only men left were a few old men. The only boys left are a few children. Out of each family, only half or less is left." (257) As Aisha looks at the families, mainly women, gathered, she remembers what Um Hassan told her once:

My child, we shall all become strong women. Have they left us any other choice? They take everything from us. Marriage, children, homes, stories, old people...everything. So, all of the time, we defend ourselves as though we were not women, but standing in the trenches. (260)

This statement deconstructs the concept that war is only a male story and suggests that women also have their own stories of participation, sufferings and survival too. Put differently, Aisha's story gives voice to the voiceless majority of women whose stories are either ignored or neglected and also personalizes the suffering and trauma of her own Palestinian people in exile. Aisha accepts her dual role as a mother and as a participant in the national struggles of her Palestinian community for survival and freedom. "Her hand touched her belly in a movement of spontaneous recognition. Staring at her mother with an unaccustomed boldness, she said: 'That is my responsibility ...I don't want any one else to take it instead of me.'" (264). The boldness of these final words marks Aisha's potential for a transformed community with herself having a new role. The trauma of suppressive male culture, war and dispossession, narrated by Aisha, results in a liberating potential for Aisha to rethink her relationship to her world and accept the

challenge of changing it. Though her life is represented through sufferings and resistance to patriarchal social restrictions symbolized by feelings of alienation, her pregnancy can be viewed as an assertion of the continuation of life and her own will to survive despite the destructive war. “She owned nothing anymore, except for what was within her.” (259) Aisha’s pregnancy, under siege, is not only defiance of death but also a political testimony for the rights of human beings for creation and self-preservation. “The siege had destroyed her confidence in everyone around her except for herself.” (261)

## Conclusion

To conclude, Aisha is victimized by both patriarchy and war and is left with no option except resisting the patriarchal oppressive male culture which seeks to erase her own identity and simultaneously fighting for her own survival as a human being who has the right to live in dignity and peace. Yet, *The Eye of the Mirror* ends with a sense of empowerment and hope for women who survive the painful and horrific terrors of the siege and ensuing massacre. This is seen with Aisha’s eventual acceptance of her role as a mother which the coming birth of her daughter symbolizes - a promising hope for a creation of a Palestinian society where women and men can have equal roles, rights and opportunities based on respect and understanding. It also deconstructs the male war narrative by giving the platform for women to share their own experiences, feelings and roles during the war, an important role which gives a voice to the voiceless majority. The traumatic experience of war and destruction can be, furthermore, seen as a warning bell that societies cannot be built by excluding women and survival has no meaning without the active participation of women. For example, Aisha, Hana, Um Jalal, Um Hassan, Amneh, and Khazenh respectively have shown their effective leading roles in the processes of survival and self-preservation in their defense of their community, children and lives in spite of all haunting destructive forces in the guise of patriarchal domination, the misuse of religion and blind nationalism. Within this context, Liana Badr states “my struggle for emancipation as a Palestinian is inseparable from my struggle for genuine liberation as a woman; neither of them is valid without the other.” (Shaaban 1988, 164).<sup>20</sup>

## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> For more about the Lebanese civil war, please see Fisk, Robert. *Pity the Nation of Lebanon*. New York: Atheneum, 1990; Petran, Tabitha. *The Struggle over Lebanon*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1987.

<sup>2</sup> According to Fadia Faqir, Tal Ezza’tar, a huge refugee camp sheltering 50,000 Palestinians and Shi’ites from the south and situated in the eastern Christian sector of Beirut became the site of the bloodiest incident of the civil war, with 4000 casualties; 12000 Palestinians were driven out, mostly into Muslim west Beirut. (1994: 5). Please see the introduction by Faqir to Badr, Liana. *The Eye of the Mirror*. UK: Garnet Publishing, 1994. For Rosemary Sayigh, Tel al-Zaatar (1975-76) is a testament to the Palestinians’ will to

survive against overwhelming odds. By giving life to the “ordinary people who sustain the cause and suffer its setbacks.” (1994: 9). Please see Sayigh, Rosemary. *Too Many Enemies: The Palestinian Experience in Lebanon*. London: Zed Books, 1994; Shaaban, Bouthaina. *Both Right and Left Handed: Arab women Talk about Their Lives*. London: The Women’s Press, 1988; Brynen, Rex. *Sanctuary and survival: The PLO in Lebanon*. London: Westview Press Boulder & San Francisco Pinter Publishers, 1990.

<sup>3</sup> Driven from their homeland in 1948 by Israeli forces, 800,000 Palestinians settled in neighboring Arab countries. After the 1976 war, they were joined by another 400,000 refugees from the West bank. See Pappé, Ilan. *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*. One world: Oxford, 2006; Sayigh, Rosemary. *Too Many Enemies: The Palestinian Experience in Lebanon*. London: Zed Books, 1994; Fisk, Robert. *Pity the Nation of Lebanon*. New York: Atheneum, 1990; Petran, Tabitha. *The Struggle over Lebanon*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1987; Peteet, Julie M. *Gender in Crisis: Women and the Palestinian Resistance Movement*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.

<sup>4</sup> Please see the introduction by Fadia Faqir to Badr, Liana. *The Eye of the Mirror*. UK: Garnet Publishing, 1994.

<sup>5</sup> In *Sexual Politics*, Kate Millett establishes that patriarchy is a system where male domination is achieved through ideological means. She argues that it is the patriarchal system characterized by power and dominance that oppresses women. Please see Millett, Kate. *Sexual Politics*. New York: Doubleday, 1970. For El Saadawi, “the patriarchal family, therefore, came into existence mainly for economic reasons.” Please see El Saadawi, Nawal. *The Hidden Face of Eve: Women in the Arab world*. Trans. Sherif Hetata. London: Zed Books, 1980, p 41; Mann, Michael. “A crisis in stratification theory.” In *Gender and Stratification*. eds. Crompton, Rosemary and Michael Mann. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986.40-56; Zuhur, Sherifa. “Women and Empowerment in the Arab World.” *Arab Studies Quarterly*.25.4. (2003): 17; Kandiyoti, Deniz. “Bargaining with Patriarchy.” *Gender and Society*. 2. (1988): 274-90; Rubenberg. A. Cheryl. *Palestinian women: Patriarchy and resistance in the West bank*. USA: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001.

<sup>6</sup> Palestinians were perceived by the Lebanese Phlanagists (a rightist Christian group founded by Camille Chamoun and the Guradians of the Cedars) as a threat to the political and demographic sectarian system of Lebanon. The Palestinians “‘have ruined our country’ was a charge often leveled against the Palestinians, despite their relative weakness within the power asymmetry in Lebanon and elsewhere” (Sayigh 1988: 25). Please see Sayigh, Rosemary. “Palestinians in Lebanon: Status, Ambiguity, Insecurity, and Flux.” *Race & Class*, 30: 1 (1988): 13-32; *Palestinians: from peasants to revolutionaries: a people’s history*. London: Zed, 1979. *Too Many Enemies: The Palestinian Experience in Lebanon*. London: Zed Books, 1994; “Palestinians in Lebanon: Harsh Present, Uncertain Future.” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 25: 1 (Autumn, 1995): 37-53.

<sup>7</sup> Barred from being citizens, “most Palestinians couldn’t get work permits and were reduced to working illegally and at substandard wages in low-grade jobs. All Palestinians were barred from trade–union membership and the protection provided by the social security system inaugurated in the mid-1960s.” (73-74).

Please see Petran, Tabitha. *The Struggle over Lebanon*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1987; Rynen, Rex. *Sanctuary and survival: The PLO in Lebanon*. London: Westview Press Boulder & San Francisco Pinter Publishers, 1990. "Tel al-Zaatar was the source of cheap labor to Lebanese capitalists who located their industries nearby. UNRWA, under pressure from the Christian bourgeoisie, acted to secure a plentiful supply of cheap labor by transferring refugees from other parts of Lebanon to Tel al-Zaatar in 1951 and again in 1955" (1987: 74). Please see Petran, Tabitha. *The Struggle over Lebanon*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1987.

<sup>8</sup> All references will be henceforth taken from Badr, Liana. *The Eye of the Mirror*. UK: Garnet Publishing, 1994.

<sup>9</sup> In April 1975, Phalangists attacked a bus carrying Palestinian passengers across a Christian neighborhood, killing about twenty-six of the occupants in retaliation for a failed attempt on Pierre Jumayyil's life, leader of the Phalangists, an incident which sparked the beginning of the Lebanese civil war in 1975-1990. For more information please see Fisk, Robert. *Pity the Nation of Lebanon*. New York: Atheneum, 1990; Petran, Tabitha. *The Struggle over Lebanon*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1987; Sayigh, Rosemary. *Too Many Enemies: The Palestinian Experience in Lebanon*. London: Zed Books, 1994; Brynen, Rex. *Sanctuary and survival: The PLO in Lebanon*. London: Westview Press Boulder & San Francisco Pinter Publishers, 1990.

<sup>10</sup> Concerning national dispossession and female honor, Bouthaina Shaaban argues that men "were obsessed with protecting their honor (women) from the Israelis. Even when they fought they fought to protect their women rather than their land; land did not matter to them at all. It was all a plot meticulously woven by the Israelis who understood the Arab way of thinking and made terrible use of it." (1988: 152). See Shaaban, Bouthaina. *Both Right and Left Handed: Arab women Talk about Their Lives*. London: The Women's Press, 1988. For Peteet, honor was lost because the community was unable to defend itself, lost autonomy, and ended up dependent on International charity and as strangers in a foreign country, women were exposed to strangers. Peteet, Julie M. *Gender in Crisis: Women and the Palestinian Resistance Movement*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.

<sup>11</sup> *Arak* is an alcoholic drink made out of Anise.

<sup>12</sup> For Rubenberg "women are not encouraged to think independently." Parents rather decide for them what "they will eat, when they will eat, what they will wear, how they can plan" (2001: 82). Please see Rubenberg, Cheryl A. *Palestinian women: Patriarchy and resistance in the West bank*. USA: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc, 2001; El Saadawi, Nawal. *The Hidden Face of Eve: Women in the Arab world*. Trans. Sherif Hetata. London: Zed Books, 1980.

<sup>13</sup> *Henna* is the oldest and most widely used vegetable dye utilized in hair and hand coloring.

<sup>14</sup> Aisha's cutting her hair at the wedding night making herself ugly can be seen as an act of resistance

against patriarchal concepts of female beauty. Please see Wolf, Naomi *The Beauty Myth*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1990.

<sup>15</sup> On the behavior of the Lebanese Army and the Lebanese internal secret service department towards the Palestinian refugees from 1948 to 1970, please see Petran, Tabitha. *The Struggle over Lebanon*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1987; also see Sayigh, Roesemary. *Too Many Enemies: The Palestinian Experience in Lebanon*. London: Zed Books, 1994.

<sup>16</sup> In regard to gender and nationalism, Benedict Anderson argues that “in so many contemporary political movements, women are assigned the role of bearers of cultural values, carriers of traditions, and symbols of the community. If the nation is an extended family, then women’s role is to carry out the task of nurturance and reproduction” (1983: 15). Please see Benedict, Anderson. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1983. “The tendency of anti-colonialist nationalisms to construct an “inner level” or “inner domain” as sanctuary against alien domination has implications for women, identifying them with home and cultural authenticity.” (Sayigh 1988: 166). Please see Sayigh, Rosemary. “Gender, Sexuality, and Class in National Narrations: Palestinian Camp Women Tell Their Lives.” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*. 19: 2 (1998): 166-185. The conflict and resulting polarization encourage a return to traditional values. Women are thus relegated to the role of “mother of the nation” (King: 2002, Yuval-Davis: 1997). Moghadam, Valentine. ed. *Gender and National Identity: Women and Politics in Muslim Societies*. UK: Zed Books Ltd, 1994; Kumari, Jayawadana. *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World*. London: Zed Books, 1986; Chatterjee, Partha. *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse*. London: Zed Press, 1986.

<sup>17</sup> Commenting on the emerging roles of women during war, Abdo says that there is no doubt that war creates spatial re mappings which can provide “a space for women’s emancipation by unsettling existing power structures” (1991: 22). Please see Abdo, Nahla. “Women of the Intifada: Gender, Class and National Liberation.” *Race and Class*. 32: 4(1991): 19-34.

<sup>18</sup> In 1976 during the Lebanese civil war, “the Phalangist militia launched a military campaign to clear East Beirut of Muslim-inhabited slums and Palestinian refugee camps. During the ensuing nine-month siege of Tal Ezza’ar camp, hundreds of women were killed attempting to bring water to their dehydrated children under heavy artillery fire and sniping. Hundreds more were indiscriminately slaughtered when the camp was overrun.” (Petet: 1991: 37). Please see Petet, Julie M. *Gender in Crisis: Women and the Palestinian Resistance Movement*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991. The camp fell on August 12 ... Entire families were killed. There was hardly a male between the ages of ten and fifty among those who managed to reach West Beirut. Boys of eight and ten were summarily executed. Girls no older than that were raped before being dispatched. All sixty camp nurses, women and men were lined up two by two, marched out, and machine-gunned (Tabitha: 1987). see Petran, Tabitha. *The Struggle over Lebanon*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1987.

<sup>19</sup> In her protest against war, Virginia Woolf says, “(w)e daughters of educated men are between the devil

and the deep sea... The question we put to you, lives of the dead, is how can we enter the professions and yet remain civilized human beings; human beings that is, who wish to prevent war?" (1966: 39). Please see Woolf, Virginia. *Three Guineas*. London, New York and San Diego: Harcourt, 1966.

<sup>20</sup> On the dilemmas facing Palestinian women's efforts to develop a feminist agenda in the context of national struggle, see Giacaman, Rita and Penny Johnson. "Palestinian Women: Building Barricades and Breaking Barriers," in Lochman, Zachary and Beinin, Joel. eds. *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising Against Israeli Occupation*. Boston: South End Press, 1989; Jad, Islah. "From Salons to the Popular Committees: Palestinian Women, 1919-1989." in Nassar, Jamal and Heacock, Roger. eds. *Intifada: Palestine at the Crossroads*. New York: Praeger, 1990; Amireh, Amal. "Between Complicity and Subversion: Body Politics in Palestinian National Narrative." *The South Atlantic Quarterly*. 102: 4 (2003): 747-72.

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# South African Violence: looking further than the government's explanation.

By Yashar Taheri-Keramati

The purpose of this essay is to shed a very dim light on a very vast issue: violence in South Africa. The light shed will be dim partly for the fact that it is rooted in the author's personal experience, and if nothing else, begs the question: of how much relevance is the perspective of one privileged 'outsider' when trying to understand a social ill which, by and far, worst devastates the least privileged and most impoverished of South Africans? At the same time, the issue is a vast one because it informs many fundamental facets of life in South Africa, and it informs these different facets differently for different people. Violence means something completely different for someone who has grown up near the University of Cape Town in Rondebosch, compared to another human being who may live 30 minutes away in Overcome: one of the countless ghetto-like 'squatter areas' in South Africa, located by the dumping grounds of the opulent Muizenberg beach in Cape Town. Violence in such communities is difficult to explain, and nation-wide violence is even more difficult to unravel. No one has an answer. The government of South Africa, however, feels obligated to find an all encompassing explanation for the unique suffering their country plays host to. As such, in 2007, it's Minister of Safety and Security, Mr. Nathi Mthethwa, hired the Centre for Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) to produce an explanation for the ruling government. The report, released in 2010, would be called "Why does South Africa have such high rates of violent crime?" The commissioned writing would be produced in accordance with the "terms of an agreement, entered into by the Minister on behalf of the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security (JCPS) cluster of cabinet"<sup>1</sup> and released in 2010 upon the Minister's inspection and approval<sup>2</sup>. However, the truth of the matter remains that the politicians who order reports to be made about the nature of violence, similar to the students of politics who read or write the pre-approved publications, don't usually rest their heads within the violent communities that the report concerns. As such, this paper will try to make use of the dim light which is the experience of one person who has lived in such communities in order to perhaps provide a different perspective to that which is the common understanding of the nature of violence in South Africa, as championed by the government, the Centre for Violence and Reconciliation, and their mutually supported report.

## What Violence?

The common understanding of violence within South Africa, as pushed by the government and as articulated by the CSV, is one premised by the belief that the violence in South Africa is not unique. Within the commissioned report itself, statistics are skewed in order to push this view, using low estimates for South African murder rates, and high estimates for countries such as Venezuela. But even after such ambiguity, South Africa statistically trumps others in that category too; however, murder rates are hardly a just indicator of the violence which plagues this country. Shaky and highly irrelevant antidotes follow, such as “During the last 100 years several other countries such as Rwanda, Cambodia, and Germany, have engaged in forms of mass violence or other systematic human rights violations, such as campaigns of genocide, in which rates of killing have far exceeded those in South Africa.”<sup>3</sup> This is both derogatory to those who suffer from violence in South Africa, as it merely dismisses their suffering as yet another chapter of injustice in history, while it is also disingenuous to reality because it fails to acknowledge that South Africa’s relationship with violence is a unique one in that violence defines essentially every major facet of life for the most impoverished of South Africans, nurturing generational suffering, and entrenching violence as life’s corner stone for the worst off in the so called ‘Rainbow Nation’. Thus, one goal this essay seeks to accomplish is to demonstrate the unique nature of violence in South Africa, highlighting some major facets of an entrenched culture violence, challenging the very foundation of the government commissioned report.

There is another claim that this essay will challenge: that the violent nature of crime in South Africa is due to apartheid. According to the report, so responsible is apartheid for today’s violence that one section of the report goes as far to claim that ‘white South African culture legitimised the ownership of personal firearms’<sup>4</sup>. No mention was made to the current President’s far more recent championing of the song ‘Umshini-Wami’ or ‘Bring me my Machine Gun’, perhaps due to the unique relationship the government and the CSV. Other justifications come off as more elitist, such as those which go on to claim that the violence is rooted in black South African’s lack of self-esteem due to historical racism. Even when contemporary inequality is acknowledged as playing part in the violence, the inequality itself is blamed once again on apartheid policies, effectively relinquishing the current government of any liability or responsibility for the existing state of violence<sup>5</sup>. Partial blame is then put on consumerism, alluding to the idea that ‘the styling and packaging of all kinds of consumer goods’ incites people to commit violent acts for materials. However, as this paper will try to explain, what perpetuates contemporary violence is not simply a legacy apartheid, nor a materially-motivated interiority complex amongst the poor; the issue is much deeper, and beyond a simple explanation.

While the report repeatedly blames the historical wrongdoings of apartheid for contemporary suffering today, and while it would be difficult for anyone who is familiar with South African history to deny that apartheid policies were instrumental in introducing certain types of violence to South African society, it would be even more difficult for anyone who has lives in the county’s violent communities to simply hold

the legacy of apartheid responsible for the suffering they experience almost two decades on. In order to be able understand the predominance of violent crime in South Africa, one has to understand the nature of violence in South Africa itself; the commissioned report seems to be completely unaware of this basic necessity, failing to demonstrate that it truly engaged with the violent realities of those within South Africa who regularly utilise violence, or are victimized by it. By demonstrating how life for many poor South Africans is defined by violence, as the following will seek to do, perhaps one can then understand that today's violent crimes are only one externality resulting from a general life of violence; the report would have been more useful if it acknowledged this reality. As such, the sections that follow will explain how the relationships, interactions, and living conditions which define life for many of South Africa's poor contribute in the habitual perpetrations of violence. This may help bringing to light the all-encompassing nature of violence within the lives of some of South Africa's most marginalized communities, and the impact this violence has on these communities' inhabitants and their own posterity towards violent behaviour.

### **Childhood Impressions**

No group is more affected by violence than young children; they are first victimized by the violence, after which they become more prone to victimizing others themselves, or at least becoming more accepting of aggression from others. They are routinely exposed to violence in different ways, with each encounter shaping that person's relationship with violence. The all too typical public exchange which took place in Overcome one November night in 2010 speaks volumes about this reality. On a typical evening, around the time when the poor return to the gang-dominated shack-lands from the rich economic hubs where most work, a woman, in her 30s, lays on the ground with her son standing a few feet away, crying in fear. It's a windy night, as it always is, and there are hundreds of people walking past her. They are not concerned: her situation is average to them. A man is standing over her. After unloading a barrage of vulgar words at him from the ground, she eventually stands and staggers away, jerking her distressed child along with her. The man walks the opposite way. He still hasn't said a word. She turns abruptly and begins her verbal assault again, more relentless than last time; she has no other weapon. About 6 tin shacks away, he halts, turns, faces her, and points his finger at her, maintaining it there, along with a look of anger that says "be careful, or you'll get it". She burns him with harsher words. Remaining silent, he continues to try and intimidate her. She becomes more vulgar. He continues to point, staring at her with anger. This too is ordinary, and those walking by still pay no attention to the hostile encounter; after all, they see or partake in such interactions daily. By now the child has gone from crying to weeping, and it is at this point that his mother lets go of his hand and pushes him towards the man threatening her. "Go with your father! You guys can go have a good time together! He doesn't want me to go out with him? Fine, then he can take you!" The child begins to cry so hard that he stumbles while attempting to walk back to her. If the mother has not been scared so far, it is clear that her young has taken on all of her fear, anxiety, and pain during this increasingly volatile human interaction. She pushes him some more towards the father. He cries more and more, but the woman keeps on pushing him to his father who is patiently waiting to snap. The child

finally drags his heavy feet away from his mother, and with tears gushing down his face walks towards his father. A few seconds later he arrives at the large man's feet, at which point the father begins to march forward, picking up the crying child with one arm, swinging him as to throw him to his right side, and continuing forward. He takes no more than 10 big steps by the time he has arrived by the woman's face. He released the distressed child and the child momentarily stopped crying to see what will happen next. The man doesn't hesitate: he extends his left arm out as he turns his torso for maximum momentum, swinging the extended arm as to send all his strength through the arm, and in to his large, tightly clinched fist which connects with the woman's face. With all of his strength, he drops her. The sound which came from her face was devastating, as was the thud of her drop. At the time, it was difficult to gauge who was hit harder in such a violent occurrence: the woman, or her child? It still is. It's also difficult to predict if the child will remember this violent exchange for the rest of his life, or if it will become but a faded memory amongst countless other memories of violence which will influence his disposition towards violence when he is old enough to be able, or forced, to utilize it.

By regularly being exposed to various forms of violence throughout different stages of early development, violence becomes ingrained in the child's mentality, effecting their thoughts and actions towards others, their communities, and their own lives. Younger children, even infants, come to be engulfed in violence too. On July 11<sup>th</sup>, the night that FIFA's show began in Johannesburg's multi-million dollar Soccer City stadium, life went on as usual in the violently impoverished community of Riverli located a 25 minute walk away. That night, at a backyard funeral, a female teenager abruptly yells at a man and accuses him of disrespecting her verbally. As she yells, she walks towards him and smashes him in the face with the big bottle of cheap beer she had been aggressively drinking. What ensued was a brawl involving about 20 people, with the teenager stuck in the middle of it. During this entire violent exchange, the teenager was holding her baby of a few months under her arm. Such South African realities leave deep impressions in the minds of the young who have no choice but to be witness, and at later ages often partake in, small and great acts of violence. As it is these youth who later come to be victims or victimizers, we must pay particular attention to such destructive realities in regard to their their personal development.

With more and more years of exposure, youth become increasingly prone to participation in violent crimes. Take the following real life example: at the age of 9, an impoverished youth had his bike stolen from him by the local slum bully. Any person who has had a bike as a child knows how special such a toy is, and it's an even more highly prized possession if you one is desperately poor. Later that day the bully returned with a badly damaged bike. The young owner of the bike, after 9 years of constant exposure to violence from his family of poor, career gangsters, and after a life time of exposure to countless instances of childhood violence in his community like those described in throughout this paper, reacted in kind. Filled with rage, he reached for a nearby axe and blitzed at the bully; the bully got away. However, this instinctive violent reaction for the youth had a long lasting effect. As violence is so normal in such communities, it is also often rewarded, especially in such 'underdog stories' where the weaker party is ill-treated. Those who witnessed the child's reaction applauded him for it. He remembers how his instinctive violent reaction to the situation, as well as the community's reaction to his behaviour, made him feel good about himself; for the first time, he felt powerful, acknowledged, and accepted. The violence which had been ingrained

in his daily life finally came to make him a perpetrator of it from that day forward. He began to act more and more violently in his regular interactions with his family, friends, and especially strangers, inflicting mental, verbal, and physical abuse on those who he wished to dominate. By the age of 13 he assassinated his first target as a child hit-man, working for the infamous prison gang called the 27s, not surprisingly known for specialising in the taking of blood. The youth, however, knew the gang as the one that both his mother and father's families belonged to. None of this, of course, is unordinary in such communities, nor is children's exposure to the nature of violence described in the sections below.

### **The Treatment of Women**

Another pivotal way violence is normalized and utilized in these impoverished communities is through the treatment of women. Due to the unique and important role of women within any society, this highly disenfranchised group's exposure to violence is pivotal in understanding the proliferation of violence in general, as well as the exceptional types of aggression they are forced to bear. It is distressing that the CSV's commissioned government report paid no attention to the unique situation of women, regardless of the fact that they are the most habitually victimized group. While women are victimized in a myriad of ways, one type of violent victimization that this paper will not discuss is rape. The simple reason for this is that it is already well known that poor South African women suffer from brutal sexual violence across all ages, and at the hands of both strangers and family. To restate and re-illustrate this devastating social ill would be redundant and void of value. There are, however, other dimensions of violence towards women which are seldom discussed.

Women are generally overlooked within the communities in question, typically receiving little to no respect from men, or sometimes even boys. Such poor communities, like essentially all other communities in the world, are highly patriarchal. The normality of violence in such communities, combined with the lack of respect for women, results in routine assaults of varying potency levels. Except for the odd woman who physically out powers her partner, heterosexual relationships are generally dominated by men. Disputes, disagreements, and general dissatisfaction within relationships are settled in favour of men who practice violence on their physically weaker female partners<sup>6</sup>. Far from unheard of, a routine slap, punch, or choke is to be expected; imagined masculine identities are validated through them. Husbands may also stab their wives; nothing is unordinary. Rarely is such violence reported to any government branch, and if it is, little is done about. The sights and sounds of women being beat down, in public or in private depending on where one decides to exercise violence are as normal as the sounds of fire trucks and ambulance in the rich nearby communities. The normality of such treatment is reinforced by the existing patriarchal order, with violence becoming an unanswerable question for the women who suffer by it. The violent dominance of men over women in such communities renders the police that the poor already regard as 'useless' as of having even less use. Even in the rare case that a woman lays charges for being the victim of a violent crime, she may be swiftly intimidated by her assailant to drop the charges. Due to government incompetence in addressing such realities, and in light of the fact that men possess a near exclusive monopoly over

violence, barring women from effectively fighting back, women remain generational victims of violence.

Beyond becoming perpetual victims though, the normalizing effect of violence on these women can also make them perpetrators themselves. This pattern is not unique; rather, it's focal to explaining the prevalence of violent crime in South Africa. When one is witness or victim to so much violence, there likelihood of becoming a participant in violence seems reasonable. Placed in a violent setting where there is, for all practical reasons and purposes, little to no rule of law, and where there is no effective body to ensure those who harm others are stopped if not punished, women often engage in violence with those who they can. Sometimes women dominate men violently. More often, women abuse each other over economic or romantic disputes. It is not extraordinary to witness women slash each other with glass pipes crafted out of the broken bottle which clutter busy dirt roads. These women are accustomed to violence, especially as a group with unique exposure to it.

## **Youth Violence**

In many ways, violence is most frequently practiced by youth. Youth everywhere strive to fit in with their peers, both in rich and poor communities. However, in an environment founded on violence, fitting in, or even surviving amongst other youth, often becomes defined by one's ability and willingness to practice violence. Take another normal exchange: one afternoon, a young man, speaking on his phone, walks past a group of 5 others. One of the young men in the group demands that the phone is handed over. This is refused rudely (as to politely say no is often viewed as a sign of weakness and an opening for attack). The man demanding the phone reacts aggressively to what he feels is disrespect. Should he not, he would look weak amongst his peers or like 'less of a man'. He then proceeds to stab the man with the phone, and they tussle until both are injured enough to stop without looking afraid in front of the community. In such environments, one must always be stern as even signs of weaknesses can be quickly and violently exploited.

Female youth are particularly vulnerable, and it is in their younger years that they learn that even their sexuality is to be informed by aggression. Common amongst young people, from those who may be 8 years old to those who may be in their mid-20s, is a certain kind of sexual flirting which is in itself based on domination. Street corners are commonly claimed by groups of young men who grab young women at will, or get behind them and choke them as a sign of sexual interest. Some boys and even some men flirt with females by throwing stones at them. Though their purpose is obviously not to seriously hurt the women, the act itself speaks volumes about the normality of violence, and the disposition of men towards women. When thinking about the frequency and quality of sexually violent crimes within South Africa, one can't be shocked by their prevalence when even acts of affection, flirtation, and relationships themselves are so naturally violent. And though sexual violence towards women is a global social ill, the acts themselves seem to be particularly violent in South Africa. Take 'ice-boxing' for example: a form of group rape which involves two people spreading the legs of a woman apart and towards the shoulders while the third person forces a 750ml beer bottle up the victim's vagina. There are many other such examples, there

use is not uncommon, but there is no need to illustrate them. Similarly, though men around the world may 'jock for position' with each other for women, such competition itself is drastically violent within such communities. Disagreements on ownership claims over the subjugated women are without hesitation dealt with violently. Causing fatality is not a fear, while showing fear can be fatal. A youth in one Cape Town squatter community got stabbed in October 2010 after another youth told him that his girlfriend is spreading rumours about him. No issue is too pity or too small to be dealt with violently in such communities, it seems.

### Televised Violence

Government television programming also has a very supportive roll in the nurturing of this culture of violence. The South African Broadcasting Company, a state owned and operated company, controls 3 television channels which broadcast throughout the country. There is satellite cable within South Africa, but such is a luxury meant for a small handful of privileged people in the country as the poor are far from unable to afford it. Due to a lack of opportunities within the squatter areas, many people find themselves watching state programming throughout the day. People do not have work, nor are their filthy squatter areas conducive to outdoor recreation. Given the violent nature of the communities, there is also a general element of danger associated with being outside of one's shelter. Combined with a complete lack of funds to engage in any sort of pass time or activity, be it buying a book to read, or buying materials to knit even, hungry groups often gather around the 3 channels to indulge in highly violent programming. It comes as no surprise that youth find particular enjoyment in watching television, as is the case with children globally. However, due to rampant unemployment amongst the traditional 'bread-winners', a significant portion of adult males also spend their days watching TV; women tend to spend less time doing so due to being obligated to tend to so called domestic work. With ample knowledge regarding the realities concerning violence in the poor communities, and knowing full well the demographic which watches these channels throughout the day, the government broadcasting company strategically schedules a constant, daily line up of hyper-masculine, violent programming. Primetime movie slots are usually reserved for motion-pictures filled with gore and violence. However, no program is more regularly aired and viewed within the poor communities more so than the WWE, or World Wrestling Entertainment. Such violent programming takes up many evening time-slots but even during the day it is often sandwiched between children's shows. For example, at 11:00 there may be a children show like Sesame Street on TV, followed by WWE from 11:30 to 12:30, followed by another children's show till 13:00. Given the aggressive nature of the show, and the far more aggressive nature of the communities, it resonates very well with all demographics, including many elders and women. Within such violent communities, there is an obvious attraction towards violent programming. People try to act like the violent characters they see on TV, becoming more and more attracted to the status violent behaviour can bring. Death scenes in movies are celebrated, and images of great suffering often induce laughter. This reinforces an important reality of life: that violence is normal. Given the high viewership of violent programming, and the acutely violent nature of some communities, the frequent exposure to violence in the media assists in informing many people's outlook on violence,

more often than not glorifying its use, attributing respect and status to those who can instil fear in other through it.

## State Violence

Beyond giving up on the police as a reliable source of protection from violence, the police themselves represent a massive and unparalleled threat of violence for the already vulnerable group of South African poor. Much like the dominance of men over women, the police often dominate over the poor, utilizing violence to achieve their ends. As the poor communities are usually seen as criminal waste lands by the police, the poor remain forever suspect. When not receiving the results they want, it is not unusual for the police to assault the poor, knowing full well that the poor have practically no voice or ability to fight back physically or legally. Children have even been tazered, while elders have been beaten in the same routine police raids. Of course, regardless of the often illegal and usually unnecessary use of violence by the police on the poor, neither the report nor the government ever acknowledges the destructive nature of the police's violent behaviour in informing violence in South Africa society.

The police's violent behaviours manifest themselves in more ways than just the inherently disrespectful relationship they usually have with the poor in these communities. Police are sometimes unleashed on mass into poor slums to enforce the agenda of the government, leaving yet another lasting impression on the minds of those victimized, shaping their disposition towards their own use of violence in the future. What happened in the mountain community of Gorachoqua, poor to the point that young girls still have to carry buckets of water up and down the mountain for life's daily needs, demonstrates the impact of state violence in the formation of violent behaviour amongst people. At 6 am on September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2010, some 300 police officers, accompanied by military like police vehicles move in on the Mountain. There are government orders to remove certain shack dwellers from their homes. Some argue that the reason was capitalistic, kicking the poor down the mountain to sell valuable real-estate being sought for years by the elite, already being bought sold-off in sections in nearby, while other in the government argue that the poor shack dwellers posed a fire hazard to the mountain. Regardless of the reason, that morning the police opened fire on the community, shooting rubber bullets at men and women, young and old. Shacks were attacked with stun-grenades and tear gas. Pregnant women as well as children spoke of being taken away and beaten before being returned to their mountain slum hours later when the violence had calmed down. Two people were shot in the eye and blinded. Another was shot in his genitals. Children were most impacted by the encounter as not only did they witness brutal violence at the hands of the government, but they also saw counter violence by members of the community who sought to defend themselves against state aggression. The youth look up to this violence, gaining yet another perspective towards violence which makes utilizing it more normal, if not celebrated. Such state violence legitimizes the use of violence by the poor for many reasons. For one, many come to see that even the government falls back on the use of violence in order to achieve ends supposedly for the good of the people. If the government utilizes violence so freely, those witness to it have less reason to hesitate in using it themselves. Such large and

violent encounters with the police are not uncommon in South Africa, with those hurt by it often nurturing a sense of resentment towards the state, more ready than before to react or act violently.

## Weapons

Alluding to the so called 'legacy of apartheid' again, the report puts a certain emphasis on firearms as being pivotal on the nature of violent crime in South Africa. The report reads:

“white South African culture legitimised the ownership of personal firearms and firearms were easily available to white South Africans who saw them as a personal safety measure. Intensifying violent conflict during the 1980s and 1990s was also associated with an increasing proliferation of firearms with many guns being imported from conflict areas in neighbouring countries and distributed both by the liberation movements and by the apartheid government as part of an agenda of arming their allies in African communities. After democratisation fire-arm proliferation further increased, through legally sanctioned and illegal means. Though the role of firearms in violent crime appears to be decreasing<sup>10</sup>, the easy availability of firearms nevertheless played a central role in the rapid growth of violent crime in South Africa.”<sup>7</sup>

True or not, the government's understanding of the relationship between weapons and violence in South Africa, as expressed in the passage above, is completely irrelevant. Firearms are by no means pivotal to violence within the poor communities. What is of far more importance, however, is home made weapons. Used in violent conflicts within marginalized communities, the suffering and quality of violence these weapons produce is often far more suffering than the swift firearms. Moreover, given the abstract poverty and the expensive price of guns, few can access them. However, given the violent nature of such communities, a combination of ingenuity and a lack of resources results in the utilization of easy to make or easy to use weapons. Amongst such weapons, for example, are bike chains. Widely available and highly dangerous when swung, they make potent medium-distance weapons. They can be found laying around shacks, ready for use. Bike spokes are also deadly stabbing devices that can be ripped off bikes easily in a moment of aggression. The weapon of choice, for those seasoned to community violence, are 'spades' or shovels with sharp, square edges.

Above and beyond the limitless amount of makeshift weapons that are produced and used daily within violent communities exist the obvious weapons such as a knives, pipes, chains, axes, and machetes. Most shacks are somehow equipped within at least one weapon, for violence can literally break through the thin metal wall at anytime. It is for this reason that many in these communities find rest hard to find, even when sleeping; the threat of violence is always lurking. Certain shacks are cluttered with easy to reach for weapons: saws, pipes, blades, and more in preparation for gang or police incursions, as well for group offensives on nearby neighbours who one may have violent conflict with. It is also not uncommon for people to carry small weapons as many on constantly edge for lurking violence. Sometimes, the weapon

is even carried visibly as to deliver a message of preparedness or intimidation to others in the community.

Another pivotal weapon utilized during times of violence, or during violent crimes within the poor areas, are dogs. This reality is overlooked by the report, but anytime spent within these communities in times of conflict will quickly reveal the role of these dogs within such societies is of great importance. Far from than companions, dogs are bred and trained from a young age to be aggressive attacks dogs. By being beaten or at least aggravated over years, sometimes starved, and always taught to act aggressively towards strangers, dogs are programmed for their part in community violence. This role is strategic, as dogs are utilized partly as defensive weapons against intruders. Walking with a loyal, mean dog brings provides real security. Some owners even feed the dogs dried scorpions and tarantulas believing that it makes the dogs crazy and extra violent. The dogs are then utilized to attack individuals in times of conflict, or to hunt them down when they try to escape. One night, after a youth was stabbed by another in the street over a verbal dispute, the stabbed individual gathered a group of 6 people, each armed by a different weapon found around the shack, and set out for the dark shack ground. They also had with them two canines, who are, for all practical reasons and purposes, killer dogs. In such typical night time conflicts, no weapon is more effective than attack dogs as they are able run between narrow shacks and see in conditions people cannot. Contrary to the report, when thinking about violent crime throughout South Africa, guns may be actually be one of the least frequently used weapons during instances of violent crime, though it is a weapon of choice amongst the police.

### **Prison and Gang Violence**

Violence within poor South African communities is also heavily linked to a seemingly unending rotation of individuals who move between the infamous prisons of the country and its impoverished communities. This has a myriad of effects of the nature of violent crime within these communities. The prisons in South Africa are controlled from within by very well organized and powerful gangsters whose dominance and survival depends on their very ability to command respect through their power. The prison gangs, regardless of what they may specialize in, be it the smuggling of food, or the selling of sex, are all highly volatile and well versed in aggressive behaviour. The most violent of the inmates possess the most power within cells, yards, or prisons, gaining status, power, and material goods through it. However, it must be understood here that the South African penitentiaries are not necessarily filled with individuals who were 'caught' for their crimes. Rather, it is commonly the case that the prisoners are there by their own conscious choice. This happens in two ways. This first way this happens is that many former prisoners, due to advancing on the gang hierarchy while inside, and due to a lack of opportunities outside, prefer a life in prison. There is violence in both environments, but in prison they many feel as if there is opportunity to advance; this speaks volumes on how despot the impoverished communities can be. Once back in prison, they will commit acts of violence, such as stabbing wardens or killing other inmates, in order to prolong their stay.

The second group which finds itself in prison deserves far more attention. Though the former group may have begun their prison lives due to the injustices of the apartheid years, the second group is comprised almost exclusively of youth who 'chose' to go to prison after 1994. Today, veteran gangsters who dominated the prison gangs during apartheid years profess that the current prison gangs are far more violent than those of their own years. Younger prison gangsters proudly agree. This group goes to prison for a significantly different reason. Though the older group returns to prison for they have come to feel at home there, the second group goes to prison to receive a certain kind of education. Known amongst many as the "College of Knowledge", prison is seen as a training ground for a life of violence by youth who are accustomed to violent settings. Countless individuals commit crimes to go and shake hands with high ranking gang leaders in prison, only to return to their community being more respected and feared for it. Prison is a testing ground: those with the highest grades return to rule over the poor communities they come from.

The disposition towards violence in these communities is such that returning criminals are often celebrated, honing greater respect within the violent communities after proving themselves in the notorious prisons. As such, there is a great appeal for youth in being violent outside prison, often striving to end up in prison due to the opportunity that they see in it. With work and school both practically inaccessible to these youth, the only visible path they see towards personal advancement is crime, and crime, like most other things in their lives, is violent. After returning from prison, they will strive to control certain areas or interests through violent means, often returning to prison periodically to advance in the power hierarchy both inside prison and in communities dominated on the outside.

So entrenched is this violent reality that children within these communities strive to learn prison language, codes, and laws: things kept highly secret until recent years. They do this in preparation for when they go to prison. By being able to show knowledge of gang life they hope to gain the respect of the prison gangsters whom they hope to earn their stripes from. It is beyond socially acceptable to pursue such a life; it is too often celebrated. Children as young as 8 will form gangs amongst themselves; no act of violence is unimaginable, and the greatest acts command the most respect. Where in other communities status amongst youth may be dependent on athletic or academic ability, here the young gangsters demand the acceptance of others through violence and aggression.

Not all end up going to prison, however. Many become gangsters outside prison. Another observation veteran gangsters make is that there has been an increasing number of non-prison gangs who have come to engulf poor South African communities after 1994. These gangs specialize today in the pushing of hard narcotics such as 'tik', a highly addictive and very cheap methamphetamine. Introduced in the mid 2000s, this chemical has eroded much of the moral fibre of communities, with addicts committing horrendous acts to find their next hit. These gangs propagate violence in two major ways. One way is the direct violence such gangs participate in, be it killings, theft, shootings, harassment, or fights. Violence accompanies these gangs' dominance over poor communities. Drive by shootings between gangs is common place, and wars over drug turfs plague the communities which are forced to play host to them. Innocent by standards are usually claimed in such attacks, and the cycle of violence is difficult to break given the volatile state the communities are in. There other destructive way these gangs spread violence is through the recruitment

of youth who are taught to sell drugs, and murder those who stand in the way of profits. Observing such gangs will once again show that lack of opportunities and a naturally violent environment, can often lead people down violent paths.

## Summary

What this paper strived to demonstrate is that the violence which plagues South Africa is not simply rooted in the legacy of apartheid as the report claims. 17 years after the retirement of the racial system of inequality that the report accuses of propagating contemporary violence, consecutive post-apartheid governments continue to implement similarly damaging policies, seeing violence continues to fester, grow, and boil to heightened level. It is difficult to claim that the violence within these communities is due to apartheid, especially if the post 1994 governments have persistently nurtured the same practices which breed the violence, such as the creation of far-off ghettos to expel the poor to, or maintaining a penitentiary system which consistently breeds violent, disciplined criminality. As diseases become difficult for the body to battle when lacking antibodies, violence too become difficult to avoid when lacking opportunities to overcome it, and the government has neglected to provide these for the poorest of people. While it is impossible to explain why there is so much violent crime within South Africa, it is only when acknowledging and understanding the violent nature of South Africa's poor communities, as well as the violent lives its inhabitants are forced to navigate their way through, that can we get a better understanding of this difficult reality.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> "Why does South Africa have such high rates of violent crime?" *The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation* (2009): 2.

<sup>2</sup> For the sake of clarity, the reader should be aware that the South African government is the sole customer of the CSVr, and has been for some years. On [www.csvr.org.za](http://www.csvr.org.za), under the section for Funding and Affiliation, the opening line reads: "The CSVr receives no financial support from the South African government." At the very end of the page, however, the reader will find this: "CSVr has received funding to do specific projects in partnership with government involving the following government departments: Department of Education (Northern Cape), Department of Education (Gauteng), Department of Community Safety (Gauteng), Department of Health (Gauteng), Department of Social Development (Gauteng), Department of Welfare (Gauteng), Gauteng Legislature Committee of Public Safety, South African Police Services - Crime Prevention Division, Umsobomvo Youth Fun, The Department of Safety and Security" Such obviously deeply vested interests and long standing relationships must be at the forefront of one's thoughts when analyzing the publication at hand. It is difficult to overlook the obvious

interests the government has in the findings of the report. One must also remember that the government has final say on what is and is not published by the CSVR in this report. The CSVR receives payment from the government for this paper, and the paper itself is governed by guidelines and agreements drafted by the paying party. Naturally, the CSVR must produce a report based on the framework demanded by the government in order to fulfill the work they were commissioned to do. One must also be wary of the possible effects such political/financial interests can have in the production of the hypothesis.

<sup>3</sup> “Why does South Africa have such high rates of violent crime?”: 4.

<sup>4</sup> “Why does South Africa have such high rates of violent crime?”: 7.

<sup>5</sup> “Why does South Africa have such high rates of violent crime?”: 8.

<sup>6</sup> Homosexual relationships too are no less violent than heterosexual relationships within these communities, however, homosexuals are often further exposed to violence from homophobic members of the community.

<sup>7</sup> “Why does South Africa have such high rates of violent crime?”: 7.

# Of Fools and Knaves: Rhetorical and Ethical Implications of Interpretations of *Fight Club* from the Left and Right.

By Matthew Wilsey-Cleveland

In a discussion that centers on the relationship between ethics and ideology, Jacques Lacan briefly outlines the opposition between the “fool” or left-wing intellectual and the “knave” or right-wing intellectual (*Ethics* 182-183). For Lacan, the left-wing intellectual is more or less an artless buffoon whose “truths” are “not simply tolerated but adopted” by many in the broader community (*Ethics* 182). In contrast, the right-wing intellectual is compared to Stendhal’s “unmitigated scoundrel”: one who appeals with the rhetoric of pragmatism but who, “when required, ... admits he’s a crook” (*Ethics* 183). In *The Plague of Fantasies* Slavoj Žižek elaborates upon this opposition with reference to what he identifies to be modern incarnations of the Left and Right:

... the right-wing intellectual is a knave, a conformist who refers to the mere existence of a given order as an argument for it, and mocks the Left on account of its utopian plans, which necessarily lead to catastrophe; while the left-wing intellectual is a fool, a court jester who publicly displays the lie of the existing order, but in a way which suspends the performative efficiency of his speech. Today, after the fall of Socialism, the knave is the neoconservative advocate of the free market who cruelly rejects all forms of social solidarity as counterproductive sentimentalism, while the fool is a deconstructionist cultural critic who, by means of his ludic procedures destined to ‘subvert’ the existing order, actually serves as its supplement. (45-46)

While it is possible to dismiss the fool-knave oppositional paradigm as a trivializing caricature of ideological identity and action, benefit lies in considering it an index of important (aporetic) truths. In the first instance, the derisive association of liberals with fools and conservatives with knaves exhibits a degree of

frustration and dissatisfaction towards the efficacy of both liberal and conservative incarnations of “politics as usual.” Needless to say this frustration is enduringly widespread. Moreover, the fool-knave paradigm illustrates the ease with which the ideological horizon can be so readily reduced to a dyadic rivalry; indeed, it reflects the prevalence in the popular imagination of conceiving political and ideological identity and action in terms of such a binary opposition. Subsequently, the fool-knave paradigm can serve as a useful starting point from which to demonstrate the utility and applicability of the fundamental precepts of Lacanian psychoanalytic ethics to rhetorical analyses. Indeed, Žižek’s assertion that psychoanalysis can help to break the “vicious cycle of the fool-knave” by exposing its “underlying libidinal economy,” is one that reflects an important reality about how foundational beliefs and symbols associated with particular ideological positions are structured in relation to dominant and dominating discourses (*Plague* 46).

Drawing from Lacanian and post-Lacanian theories, the present study will not only assess the validity of the fool-knave paradigm in relation to critical and popular responses to the cinematic (dir. David Fincher) and literary (Chuck Palahniuk) versions of *Fight Club*, but also establish the expediency of psychoanalytic ethics as a supplement to the methodology of rhetorical analysis. One important project of rhetorical analysis is to address complex ethical, ideological, and aesthetic questions conveyed by representations of images, ideas, events, and identities. The present paper asserts that Lacanian psychoanalysis can be used to supplement the project of rhetorical analysis by providing a deeper understanding of such questions. In more specific terms, it will be demonstrated that the divergent ways in which particular phenomena – or texts – are interpreted, can be examined in terms of the fool-knave paradigm and other Lacanian nosological heuristics to ascertain the implicit ethical coordinates of those interpretations; namely, precisely how each interpretation is determined by its relationship to power.

### **The Impact of *Fight Club*: Reactions from the Left and Right**

The present study engages in analyses of reactions to both the cinematic and literary versions of *Fight Club* qua the fool-knave paradigm because the remarkable popularity<sup>1</sup> of both texts continues to generate a preponderance of interpretations from scholarly and amateur critics of a wide range of political affiliations. It is also significant that most interpretations of either version engage with or respond to the subversive dimension of the text in question. Briefly, the subversive aspect of *Fight Club* involves not only the celebration of anti-capitalist domestic terrorism but also the irreverence with which religious symbols and tropes are appropriated. The story features an unnamed protagonist<sup>2</sup> – a hitherto conformist and corporate drone – who undergoes a psychotic split as a result of being disaffected by the false promise of the American Dream. His charismatic, nihilistic, and rebellious other half – Tyler Durden – institutes “fight club”; a weekly gathering where other bourgeois men disillusioned with the pointlessness of their materialistic lives come to brutalize each other in order to achieve a sense of cathartic release. The fight club idea evolves into “Project Mayhem”: an anarchistic terrorist army that resembles a religious cult. Led by Durden, this group targets recognizable symbols of capitalism.

With reference to the stated goal of assessing the validity of the fool-knave opposition as an index of the ethical and rhetorical character of prevalent ideological positionalities, our object of analysis will be precisely the ways in which the subversive aspect of each version of *Fight Club* is rhetorically framed and ideologically negotiated by critics from the Left and Right.

A relatively common construal of both literary and cinematic renderings of *Fight Club* is that it constitutes a parable of Christian suffering and redemption. One variant of reading *Fight Club* within a religious context is seen in “The Use Value of *Fight Club* in Teaching Theories of Religion” by William Smith. Smith begins his short essay with the following claim about the Fincher-directed film:

*Fight Club* (1999) is a religious film; or at least that was my contention [to my students] when I taught the course Religion and Culture during the fall 2007 semester. (87)

While Smith does not actually elaborate on *why* Fincher’s film constitutes a religious text, Smith discusses how, drawing from Daniel Pals’ *Eight Theories of Religion*, he employs theoretical frameworks from Sigmund Freud, Emile Durkheim, and Max Weber to ultimately locate for students “the presence of the religious in texts that do not center on any particular or overt religious tradition” (90).

With perhaps more convincing rhetoric and theological evidence, notable British scholar of contemporary religious symbolism Christopher Deacy posits of Fincher’s film that:

... the manner in which the anonymous protagonist (played by Edward Norton) endeavours to conquer his estranged and alienated condition is imbued with overt religious connotations. Upon coming into contact with the world of fight clubs, the protagonist no longer identifies himself as a slave to materialism ... Apprehending that “things you own end up owning you”, the physical nature of the fight club experience engenders a spiritual rebirth of not inconsiderable magnitude. (63)

Deacy goes on to identify various instances in Palahniuk’s novel and Fincher’s film in which the “notion of redemption through suffering” and “Christian vocabulary” occur (63). He also parallels depictions of the unnamed protagonist and the “nihilistic” Tyler Durden character with accounts of the life of Jesus Christ, identifies the “ecclesiastical dimension of the film” (64), and explicates the “sacramental quality” of the brutal fight club bouts (65). Deacy even argues that “notwithstanding the nihilistic ingredients that imbue the film [and novel], such as Tyler’s claims that ‘Without pain, without sacrifice, you have nothing’ and that ‘I don’t want to die without any scars’, *Fight Club* could ultimately be interpreted as a film about the rejection of nihilism” (65). For Deacy, it is precisely this “rejection of nihilism” that renders the story Christian.

On websites such as “Christian Spotlight on the Movies”<sup>3</sup> and hollywoodjesus.com, a great majority of amateur reviewers coincide with Deacy’s reading of Fincher’s film as a Christian parable. However, amongst these arguably less-studied critics, there appears to be two conflicting understandings with regards

to the meaningfulness of Durden's character and the fight club phenomenon. For example, David Smith from [hollywoodjesus.com](http://hollywoodjesus.com) contends that:

I believe that the [*sic*] "Fight Club" is a metaphor for sin ... Also, the alter-ego type [*sic*] character Tyler Durden [*sic*] (played by Brad Pitt) also represents every person's "Old Person" (Romans 6:6, Ephesians 4:22, Colossians 3:9) and/or sinful nature along with temptation and the influence of Satan, or "The Devil," in our mind [*sic*] and lives.<sup>4</sup>

In contrast, another commentator on the same website reads Durden's character as a "Messiah/Christ" figure and likens the violence of the fight clubs to "the violence of the Holy Spirit on our flesh [that] restores our humanity and makes us new people as God intended us to be."<sup>5</sup> In order to make sense of these seemingly disparate reactions to the film, it is firstly important to consider what they have in common.

Notwithstanding the differences in rhetorical context, interpretative acuity, and intended audience, Deacy's, William Smith's, and the Christian bloggers' respective interpretations of *Fight Club* reflect the same intent or argument. Namely, in each case, an unambiguous desire to codify *Fight Club* as a religious parable is conveyed by authors of the above-mentioned interpretations. William Smith concedes of his incorporation of the Fincher film in his "Religion and Culture" course that:

If it is not immediately evident how this violent, anarchistic, and anti-capitalist movie is religious or fits into an introductory course on religion, then one of my goals in teaching this film ... has already been exposed – drawing the student's eye from the obviously religious to the less so. But getting to the place in which the film reads religiously to a student is a bit tricky and requires a certain developmental arc. (87)

Similarly, Deacy clearly articulates his intention of demonstrating the way in which *Fight Club* amounts to a "potent" religious parable in the introduction of his article (61). Further, in his short bio positioned at the end of his article, Deacy describes that his current work "examines the extent in which the medium of film can raise vital questions about the location and relevance of religious values in the contemporary cultural landscape" (72). Regarding the third group discussed above, precisely insofar as the rhetorical context of blogs render contributions to be framed as both debate and discussion, the reviews posted by the Christian bloggers axiomatically signal a desire to persuade or argue. Moreover, regardless of whether Durden is construed to be "heavenly" or "evil," all the above-cited reviews present the idea of *Fight Club* being a Christian parable as self-evident. From a psychoanalytic perspective, what is most notable about the structural similarity between Deacy's, Smith's, and the Christian blogger texts is what is elided in their respective interpretations.

In the first instance, while it is certainly the case that, as Deacy argues, one of the underlying themes of *Fight Club* is the alienation and malaise of contemporary western society (72), this theme is not necessarily and only a Christian preoccupation. Indeed, if *Fight Club* constitutes a parable of Christian suffering based upon such criteria, then it would be just as valid to claim that any text with such a theme, from James

Joyce's *Ulysses* to Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* and F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, are essentially Christian parables. Secondly, aside from Christian references, *Fight Club* features many references to Buddhism.<sup>6</sup> Thirdly and most significantly, while it is undeniable that Christian references can be discerned in both the cinematic and literary versions of *Fight Club*, these references are *always* framed within a context of ironic irreverence and/or nihilism. William Smith's own concession that he encountered great difficulty in convincing his students that Fincher's film constitutes a religious text evidences how overdetermined such a reading is. Indeed, a few salient examples of the *sacrilegious* treatment of Christian imagery in the film's script and the novel include: the way in which the wild cheering on of bloodied combatants by the fight club audience of each bout is ironically compared by the protagonist to "hysterical shouting ... in tongues ... at a Pentecostal church"; the instance whereby Durden identifies himself as one of "God's unwanted children"; and, in perhaps the most blasphemous moment of *Fight Club*, when the protagonist travesties the well-known Christian dictum when he mockingly mutters, "In Tyler We Trust."<sup>7</sup> This pervasive sense of irreverence, which can be understood to be just one of the elements of subversion in both versions of *Fight Club*, ultimately problematizes any endeavor to read either text as a Christian parable. Curiously, however, not only is *Fight Club* construed to be a religious allegory by the above-cited commentators, but in each of their interpretations, an intense *enjoyment* of the film is averred. In structural terms, this is significant insofar as it suggests a certain homology about the way in which *jouissance* is negotiated for these commentators. In other words, what this means is that the unambiguous purpose of the reviews, coupled with their apparent denial or omission of the transgressive blasphemous dimension of *Fight Club*, suggests a distinctive discursive orientation with regards to power.

To return to the Lacanian fool-knave formulation, it can be argued that these interpretations of *Fight Club* reflect an essentially "conservative" disposition. This is, of course, not to claim that all facets of Christianity are conservative as such, but rather that – at least within this formulation – any reading of *Fight Club* as a specifically Christian parable is. Žižek argues that *jouissance* for the conservative knave "pertains to the subject's pain" insofar as a "concrete complaint [becomes an] abstract acceptance of the enigma of Fate" (*Plague* 46-48). With regards to the above-cited interpretations, the film is compelling for the authors not in spite of its subversive blasphemy, but precisely *because* of it. The blasphemous content of *Fight Club*, then, is the truth that must be *disavowed* in each interpretation so that its meaningfulness can be (re)configured according to each reviewer's personal paradigm of Christian doctrine. For William Smith, not only are his students enjoined to ignore "anarchistic" and sacrilegious elements of the film in order to apprehend *Fight Club* as a religious text, ideas from Marxist and psychoanalytic theories are selectively used to generate a Christian message. Indicating how contrived and belabored the task is of convincing students of the religiosity of Fincher's film, Smith admits: "There is a certain intended redundancy between the lectures and the readings, which attempts to direct the students' attention to how the most essential elements of the reading relate [to the argument that *Fight Club* is a religious film]" (88). In Deacy's case, the violent anti-capitalist hijinks of Project Mayhem become rearticulated as a Christian struggle for salvation in the face of decadent secularism. Similarly, the two contradictory interpretations of Durden by the Christian bloggers as Savior and Satan ultimately arrive at the same conclusion because each involve the process whereby a "concrete complaint" (the material conditions that give rise to the film's vision of societal dystopia) is recast as an abstract acceptance of Fate (these are the lamentable, but

inevitable, trials and tribulations of what it is to be a Christian today).

Via Lacanian nosology, this disavowal must be properly understood as fetishistic in nature: just as the fetish object is that feature by which the very place of the subject's castration is marked, the silently disavowed blasphemy that stains the cinematic and literary text constitutes the surplus enjoyment or paradoxical "pleasure in pain" that sets desire in motion for these reviewers. In this instance, the conservative knave's subjection to the Discourse of the Master is thus borne out in the following way: Christian doctrine emerges as the Master signifier for these reviewers inasmuch as it simultaneously structures their experience of the "reality" of the text in question (each reviewer is afforded his/her own interpretation of *Fight Club* as long as that interpretation is compatible with fundamental Christian tenets), whilst masking the division of the subject because the surplus – incarnated as *objet petit a* – of the signifying operation is disavowed (in this case, the blasphemous dimension of *Fight Club*).

In contrast to the putatively "conservative" disavowal of the blasphemous dimension of *Fight Club*, the attention both versions have received from pundits commonly associated with the Left demonstrates a more direct engagement with either text's subversive aspect. In praise of *Fight Club*, art house film critic Amy Taubin celebrates Fincher's film as a transgressive text that "expresses some pretty subversive, right-on-the-zeitgeist ideas about masculinity and our name-brand, bottom-line society" (16). Similarly favorable is the evaluation provided by Terry Lee in "*Virtual Violence in Fight Club: This Is What Transformation of Masculine Ego Feels Like*." Lee argues that the film "enacts a masculine role model that we can embrace, a model that lets men destroy harmful masculine gender roles" (419). A third laudatory account of *Fight Club* can be noted in English professor Alex Tuss's essay where he argues that, "*Fight Club*'s anonymous narrator and Tyler Durden, his alter ego, constitute critiques of ... conventional male models and their striving for success in America" (93).

A conventional rhetorical analysis might identify of these laudatory interpretations of *Fight Club* from the Left the bandwagon argument made by Taubin to her audience of *Fight Club* fans who subscribe to the popular film magazine her article is published in; or the hasty generalization made by Tuss and Lee about masculine identity in America. A psychoanalytic reading might add that such "revolutionary" sentiments, as expressed by critics such as Taubin, Lee, and Tuss, ultimately fail to coincide with the material and contextual *truth* of *Fight Club* as a product of mainstream corporate media industries. Moreover, as is the case with detractors of *Fight Club* from the Left, Taubin, Lee, and Tuss speak from a position that is sanctioned by the very same mainstream that they repudiate.

While disparaging interpretations of *Fight Club* from the Left vary in terms of specific ideological positioning as well as extent of disapproval, most seem to focus upon some way in which either version of *Fight Club* fails in its own critique of modern American culture and/or identity. For example, Stacy Thompson, in her article "Punk Cinema," argues that the conclusion of Fincher's film "radically forecloses the anarchist, social, and punk possibilities that its ideological positioning has forced open" (57). In comparison, in his essay "Liberalism and the Challenge of *Fight Club*," Christopher Duncan suggests that although Fincher's film demonstrates how the "bourgeoisification" of American culture has failed to

engender “the happiness of liberalism,” neither is it able to provide any meaningful solutions (137). In their neo-Marxian reading of Fincher’s film and Palahniuk’s novel, Bülent Diken and Carsten Lausten note that although *Fight Club* constitutes a kind of “Marxism for dummies” (367), it is ultimately “not subversive but supportive of capitalist desire” (363).

One particularly scathing account of the film can be observed in the *New Art Examiner* article “IKEA Boy and the Politics of Male Bonding: *Fight Club*, Consumerism, and Violence” by Henry Giroux and Imre Szeman. Here, *Fight Club* is denounced for its misogyny and heterosexism that culminate in “a highly stereotypical and limited sense of masculinity that is seen as wedded to the immediacy of pleasure sustained through violence and abuse” (61).

Giroux and Szeman further contend that the anti-capitalist anarchism featured in Fincher’s film ultimately fails to offer any real solutions to the “commodification and alienation of contemporary society” because it “largely ignores the real” (60). They lament that:

... *Fight Club* is ... dangerously seductive because it seems that its proto-fascist cells at least offer a possible vision of a collective oppositional or even revolutionary response to the crisis of the neoliberal order ... But even here, in its perverse imagination of an anti-consumerist skinhead army, *Fight Club* simply reinforces our sense of defeat in the face of contemporary capitalism by making a regressive, vicious, and obscene politics seem like the only possible alternative. (60)

As champions of political correctness, Giroux and Szeman maintain that a “real” solution to the problems of global capitalism and the so-called “neoliberal order”<sup>8</sup> can be achieved through debate, dialogue, and good old-fashioned resistance in the form of union halls and democratic social movements and clubs (60).

It is easy to discern, in the reading of *Fight Club* that Giroux and Szeman provide, a sense of triumph at having successfully exposed the politically incorrect nature of the film. However, in spite of their deconstructive rigor, a number of problems can be detected in the claims they make. To revisit the Lacanian opposition between the fool and the knave, Žižek elucidates that the impotence of the fool’s pronouncements is a function of the gap that exists between the *enunciated content* and the *position of enunciation* so that “what, on the level of the enunciated content, is the critical rejection of an ideological hegemony can well involve the full endorsement of this same hegemony on the level of the position of enunciation” (*Plague* 83, n.2). What Žižek is trying to argue here is that what often compromises the cogency of the left-wing critique is its dependence upon the aegis of that which it criticizes. In this instance, the position articulated in Giroux and Szeman’s essay – as well as the above-cited laudatory and unfavorable evaluations from the Left – can be related to Lacan’s nosological structure of hysteria because its relation to the Discourse of the Master – one of failed interpellation – can be expressed in terms of the following question addressed to the (big) Other: “Why am I that which you have designated me?”<sup>9</sup> This question denotes the trauma experienced as a result of the hysteric’s subject position and can be linked to the self-satisfied “enjoyment” in Giroux and Szeman’s disparaging critique of *Fight Club*. This gesture of resistance is thus

qualified because the place from which it issues continues to be determined by, and subject to, the signifying network of the dominant discourse that is opposed. In other words (and as noted above), the authority upon which the pronouncements made by the Left-wing critic rests is accorded by the very same “neo-liberal order” that is being condemned. Therefore to use Lacan’s provocative terminology: the “truths” presented by the left-wing fool ultimately serve to sustain the position of the Master because the fool’s subjection to the terms of the dominant discourse allows the otherwise inassimilable excess generated by the signifying process to be re-codified in a way that poses little threat to the *status quo*.<sup>10</sup>

In order to more clearly understand why the position taken by Giroux and Szeman lacks potency, a second limitation inherent to their reading of Fincher’s film needs to be considered. This limitation can be located in the fundamental misrecognition upon which the ideological polemic of their reading is based. In their call for a society whose members resist capitalism through debate, dialogue, and democratic mobilization, what Giroux and Szeman fail to recognize is that this idealized condition of egalitarian democracy is, in its basic content, already inherent to the material conditions of the society they revile. In *For They Know Not What They Do* Žižek postulates of the utopic enterprise via his Hegelian reading of the French Revolution that:

... utopias are “utopian” not because they depict an “impossible Ideal”, a dream not for this world, but they misrecognize the way their ideal state *is already realized* in its basic content ... [W]hat the Jacobins overlooked is the fact that the ideal after which they strove was, in its notional structure, *already realized* in the “dirty” acquisitive activity which appeared to them as the betrayal of their high ideals. Vulgar, egoistic bourgeois everyday life is the actuality of freedom, equality and brotherhood: freedom of free trade, formal equality in the eyes of the law, and so on ... (184-185, emphasis in original).

If we agree with Žižek’s reasoning, then it appears that, in their idealization of democratic possibility, it is in fact Giroux and Szeman who have “ignored the real.” Moreover, we have only to recall Hegel’s lesson in *Phenomenology of Spirit* about the “Topsy Turvy World” and the invertedness of inversion (or how inversion is always double) to see that far from advocating skinhead fascism as the only alternative to the hyper-capitalism of our times, *Fight Club* caricatures the left-wing project in order to demonstrate how human folly can so easily pervert the highest ideals.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, it should not be overlooked that, in both versions of *Fight Club*, the narrator-protagonist – with whom we are meant to identify – ultimately rejects Durden, his terrorist machinations, and his vision of a new world order.

A third variety of academic essay that can be assessed in relation to the fool-knave paradigm is the study that is neither laudatory nor reproachful of *Fight Club*. One such essay is Renee Lockwood’s “Cults, Consumerism, and the Construction of Self: Exploring the Religious within *Fight Club*,” in which the author “explores the manner in which the creation of new religious movements is depicted in the *Fight Club* narrative” (321). Unlike arguments respectively made by Deacy and William Smith, who ascribe the status of “religious parable” to *Fight Club*, Lockwood argues that “the narrative fits perfectly with the psychopathology model of cult recruitment as recapitulated by Stark and Bainbridge” (321). The key

structural difference between Lockwood's thesis and the contentions made by Deacy and William Smith is that Lockwood examines religious elements of *Fight Club* in relation to the socio-cultural or psychopathological implications of those elements, while Deacy and Smith see *Fight Club* as a text that conveys a religious message. It is therefore precisely this difference that allows Lockwood to avoid engendering a "knavish" account of the text. Lockwood's analysis also can be differentiated against the above-cited accounts of *Fight Club* from the Left because care is taken by Lockwood to neither celebrate nor disparage the textual "intent" of either version of *Fight Club*. Rather, Lockwood methodically reviews specific capacities in which both Palahniuk's novel and Fincher's film fulfills the Stark and Bainbridge criteria. For example, Lockwood demonstrates the way in which the key theme of "emasculatation crisis" resulting from consumerism in *Fight Club* accurately reflects the Stark and Bainbridge criterion that cults form in part as a result of personal and societal crises (323). She also correlates the portrayal of the protagonist's dissociative identity disorder in *Fight Club* with the Stark and Bainbridge postulation that cults are often headed by charismatic figures who suffer from mental illness (Lockwood 325-326). These and other elements of Lockwood's study serve to explore how rhetorical tropes in both versions of *Fight Club* can ultimately be used to more clearly understand "the potential religious crises facing the consumerist West" (321). Indeed, in her conclusion, Lockwood intimates that the value of her study lies in its ability to generate possible solutions to the threat posed by future fundamentalist cults:

While new religious movements are still emerging in contemporary Western society, ... [her analyses of *Fight Club*] present a preview of potential social concerns and fundamentalist perspectives that may arise in the form of yet unseen movements in the future. Thus the detailed exploration of cults, consumerism, and the construction of self within the *Fight Club* narrative make it an invaluable commentary on religion and modernity. (332)

In rhetorical analysis, it is commonly held that interpretations tend to reveal more about the interpreter rather than the object of interpretation. In contrast to the Leftist readings of *Fight Club* that belie a desire to circumscribe the textual intent of the object of analysis, Lockwood more cleanly reveals her own objective as to substantiate the utility of the Stark and Bainbridge model for understanding and possibly redressing the "religious crises facing the consumer West" (321). Here, however, although Lockwood does not avow a "revolutionary" subject position against the discursive aegis under which she espouses her claims, as an institutionalized academic her "position of enunciation" is yet sanctioned by a Master discourse; in this case what Lacan refers to as the Discourse of the University.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, in terms of Lacan's Fool-Knave heuristic, the political efficacy of Lockwood's espousals is ultimately tethered to a position deferential to the Master discourse. As Evans explains of the discourse of the university, precisely because the dominant position of enunciation is occupied by Knowledge, "... behind all attempts to impart an apparently 'neutral' knowledge to the other can always be located an attempt at mastery (mastery of knowledge, and domination of the other to whom this knowledge is imparted) (46).

In "For a Leftist Appropriation of the European Legacy," Žižek asks: "Are we then condemned to the debilitating alternative of choosing between a knave or a fool, or is there a *tertium datur*?" (73). According to Žižek, this "third way" involves a kind of "politics proper" in which "a particular demand is not simply

part of the negotiation of interests, but aims at something more, i.e. starts to function as the metaphoric condensation of the global restructuring of the entire social space” (74). Subsequently, because Žižek’s *tertium datur* necessarily involves a gesture that disturbs or transgresses the order of things, any interpretation of *Fight Club* from an “institutional” perspective – including this one – cannot meet this criterion of “politics proper.” This elusive “third way,” however, can be apprehended in Palahniuk’s text itself: in its specific difference from Fincher’s cinematic version.

In her analysis of the divergent conclusions of the cinematic and literary versions of *Fight Club*, Kirster Friday argues that Fincher’s film betrays the “Lacanian logic” of the novel in which “the construction of both personal and historical identity is an interminable process in a perpetual state of deferral or impossibility” (21). Indeed, Fincher’s film does seem to end rather too neatly: the protagonist and his Durden persona are locked in a final confrontation in which the former ends up shooting himself in the mouth. The protagonist survives this wound while his Durden dimension is effaced by it. The former is then reunited with Marla and they join hands as skyscrapers housing credit card companies are devastated across the cityscape horizon in a spectacular finale. While there exists a certain degree of undecidability about this ending – with the destruction of all the financial buildings in the city, will the slate indeed be wiped clean? – its subversive impact is limited because the focus of the cinematic gaze has shifted from the protagonist’s disidentification with Society to the prospect of his renewed romance with Marla. Palahniuk’s novel, in contrast, features a much more ambivalent conclusion which sees Durden withdraw as a function of Marla’s arrival. The protagonist shoots himself anyway but it appears that he survives this attempt at suicide and is subsequently installed in a mental institution. Here, he no longer appears agitated and restless but there exists a sense that Tyler Durden will return to wreak more havoc upon the world. Friday sees in this deferral a transgressive promise whereby the “impossibility” of civilization’s demise is transformed into possibility (22).

While Friday’s case is a persuasive one, I would like to argue that the subversive gesture contained in the ending of Palahniuk’s novel is in fact much more immediate. With regards to the ethical implications of the text, what is important in the present reading of *Fight Club* is not whether or not the protagonist biologically dies as a result of his attempted suicide; rather, what is at stake is that the protagonist’s suicide succeeds in effecting the protagonist’s death in Symbolical terms. When he declares at the outset of the final chapter, “Of course, when I pulled the trigger, I died,” this death must be understood as the culmination of the trajectory of subjective destitution. This is precisely why Joan Copjec in her account of the Lacanian ethical act maintains that:

... what is at issue in the intersection of freedom and death is not biological death, but the death drive. It is to the latter that we owe the possibility of an ethical act that does not alienate freedom or incur additional guilt. (19)

The protagonist’s suicide, then, breaks the deadlock between the left-wing fool and the conservative knave and eludes the dominating grasp of the Master-Signifier. Firstly, his Symbolical demise can be understood as the apex of the process of subjective destitution. In *The Metastases of Enjoyment*, Žižek refines this

point:

... it is the ‘subjective destitution’, the subject’s complete self-externalization, that makes the Master superfluous: a Master is a Master only in so far as I, his subject, am not completely externalized; only in so far as I contain somewhere deep in myself *agalma*, the secret treasure that accounts for the unique character of my personality – a Master becomes a Master by recognizing me in my uniqueness. (172)

In the epilogue of Palahniuk’s novel, the protagonist is, in psychoanalytic terms, at the “end” of analysis because through his complete externalization, he has irrevocably renounced the ineffable precious kernel that makes him a unique being. Indeed, in the concluding exchange between the protagonist and “God,” the latter is portrayed as a bureaucrat that no longer is able to exert a hold upon the former:

I’ve met God across his long walnut desk with his diplomas hanging on the wall behind him, and God asks me, “Why?”

Why did I cause so much pain?

Didn’t I realize that each of us is a sacred, unique snowflake of special unique specialness?

Can’t I see how we’re all manifestations of love?

I look at God behind his desk, taking notes on a pad, but God’s got this all wrong.

We are not special.

We are not crap or trash, either.

We just are....

And God says, “No that’s not right.”

Yeah. Well. Whatever. You can’t teach God anything. (Palahniuk 207)

This final exchange reveals the truly radical aspect of the protagonist’s evolution from the subject supposed to know to a subject who *knows*. This knowledge that the protagonist acquires is of the order of the Real because it consists in the realization that the Master (whether he is Durden, God, or some idiotic bureaucratic behind a large walnut desk) is entirely superfluous.

Obviously, neither the Left nor Right can simply be reduced to the handful of *Fight Club* reviews examined

in the present study. Moreover, there continues to exist the prospect that the fool- knave opposition might, in certain applications, yield generalizations more so than substantive clarification. Nevertheless, what is clear is the expediency of this paradigm as a heuristical starting point from which the ethical aporias inherent to specific ideologically oriented formulations and phenomena/texts can be identified and engaged. What also becomes apparent is that there are no easy ethical solutions to the interpretative process because of the persistence of the specter of ideological/hegemonic desire. Lacanian psychoanalysis, however, does provide conventional rhetorical analysis with the means of laying bare the ideological coordinates implicit in any representational or interpretative discursive gesture.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Palahniuk's novel continues to enjoy much more critical attention than any of his other works. Moreover,

it won the Pacific Northwest Booksellers Association Award for 1997 (<http://www.pnba.org/awards.htm>) as well as the Oregon Book Award for Best Novel in the same year ([http://www.literary-arts.org/awards/past\\_fiction.php](http://www.literary-arts.org/awards/past_fiction.php)). Fincher's adaptation generates significantly more commercial success as well as critical engagement. And although the film's highest all time ranking listed on [boxofficemojo.com](http://www.boxofficemojo.com) is 777<sup>th</sup> in 2002, DVD sales of the film continue to rank in the top 100. For example, in November 2009, after 494 weeks in release, *Fight Club* was still the 22<sup>nd</sup> most purchased film worldwide selling just under 50 000 copies a week ([www.the-numbers.com](http://www.the-numbers.com)). Also, [Filmcrave.com](http://www.filmcrave.com) lists Fincher's *Fight Club* as the third most popular film of all time behind *The Godfather* and *The Shawshank Redemption*.

<sup>2</sup> A few readings of both versions of *Fight Club* erroneously list the protagonist's name as either "Jack" (film) or "Joe" (novel). In both versions, the protagonist is necessarily unnamed because he represents the contemporary American "Everyman." The confusion arises when he makes references such as "I am Jack's Raging Bile Duct" (Ulls n.p.) and "I am Joe's Blood-Boiling Rang" (Palahniuk 96). These references come from a popular *Reader's Digest* column where bodily organs are personified and describe their functions in the first person.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.christiananswers.net/spotlight/movies/pre2000/fightclub.html>

<sup>4</sup> David Smith – [http://www.hollywoodjesus.com/fight\\_club\\_02.htm](http://www.hollywoodjesus.com/fight_club_02.htm)

<sup>5</sup> Glenn Jordan – [http://www.hollywoodjesus.com/fight\\_club\\_01.htm](http://www.hollywoodjesus.com/fight_club_01.htm)

<sup>6</sup> See Renee Lockwood's "Cults, Consumerism, and the Construction of Self" for a detailed exploration of Buddhist tropes in *Fight Club*.

<sup>7</sup> While similar examples can be found in Palahniuk's text, the ones mentioned here come from Jim Ulls' screenplay obtainable online at [http://www.hundland.com/scripts/Fight-Club\\_third.htm](http://www.hundland.com/scripts/Fight-Club_third.htm). This is primarily because the three cited interpretations of *Fight Club* as a Christian parable examine only the film.

<sup>8</sup> Giroux and Szeman specify "neoliberalism" to be "a political, economic, and cultural formation which construes profit making as the essence of democracy and provides a rationale for a handful of private interests to control as much of social life as possible in order to maximize their personal profit" (32).

<sup>9</sup> While the way in which *jouissance* is structured in Giroux and Szeman's essay allow us to read it in terms of the Hysteric's Discourse, it should be noted that the left-wing intellectual may also be understood in terms of the Discourse of the University where power/"the Master" is masked by the mantle of "objective knowledge." See Lacan's *Le Séminaire. Livre XVII. L'envers de la psychanalyse* for an elaboration of the Four Discourses.

<sup>10</sup> Moreover, as Lacan observes of the dialectical continuity between the left-wing fool and the right-wing knave, "the result of gathering crooks into a herd" leads inevitably to a "collective foolery ... [and] by a

curious chiasma, the ‘foolery’ which constitutes the individual style of the left-wing intellectual gives rise to a collective ‘knavery’” (*Ethics* 183).

<sup>11</sup> For an elaboration of this, see for example Žižek’s reading of the parodic inversions inherent to Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* in *For They Know Not What They Do* (10-11).

<sup>12</sup> See for example Dylan Evans’ account of the Four Discourses in *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis* (44-46).

# Women and the Arab Spring: Expectations and Concerns.<sup>1</sup>

By Isam Shihada

## Introduction

In December 2010, the world turned its attention to Tunisia after a young street vendor, Mohamed Bouazizi<sup>2</sup>, set himself on fire to protest the government's unjust treatment of the Tunisian people. His self-immolation sparked what is now called the "Arab Spring"<sup>3</sup> which led to the fall of dictators in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen while others may fall in Syria, Bahrain and Sudan. In the Arab world, thousands of women have taken to streets protesting for change and freedom after enduring centuries of oppression where, in several contexts, they have been deprived of social, economic and educational equality, freedom of speech and the right to participate in elections. Women's engagement in the Arab Spring negates the myths that Arabs cannot establish civil and democratic societies without resorting to violence and that they are incompatible with democracy<sup>4</sup>.

The Arab Spring seems to represent a new era of emancipation for women in the Arab world. Yet, it remains to be seen whether women will be afforded the opportunity to play substantial roles in the futures of their respective countries, or whether they will be marginalized, secluded and silenced. In other words, fundamental questions need to be answered regarding whether women will indeed benefit from the ongoing change in the Middle East. Hence, in this paper, I try to examine and chronicle roles played by Arab women during Arab Spring, the concerns and challenges they face and what strategies women should adopt to ensure their rights, in post-revolutionary periods.

## Arab Spring: Causes

In the Arab world, dictators, from Hosni Mubarak<sup>5</sup> in Egypt to Ali Abdullah Saleh in Yemen, have accumulated enormous wealth earned by plundering foreign aid budgets, lavish military weapons contracts and corruption. Power is also being centralized where they use secret police to terrorize, kill and counter any dissent to keep the people cowed and under complete control.<sup>6</sup> For example, in Egypt, we find that feelings of humiliation, lack of democracy and endemic destitution (or literally an absence of bread<sup>7</sup>), have driven them to rise up and revolt against the oppressive Egyptian regime which has deprived people of

their freedom, dignity, and basic daily needs and violated their rights. Within this context, Ashraf Ezzat argues that Egyptians don't even have to get arrested to feel degraded; all they have to do is to,

queue up in a long line that could drag out for hours just to buy a loaf of bread or sign the endless papers to apply for an ID card or a driving license or wait their turn to get examined in a hospital which has no beds or medication for them.<sup>8</sup>

Moreover, the Egyptian regime has “a million and half well-trained soldiers whose sole mission is to keep the Egyptian people down.”<sup>9</sup> For instance, during the Egyptian revolution, the military has killed protesters, persecuted and imprisoned thousands of them including women. We see that most of protesters, in Egypt, are young women, men and university students who find themselves with neither hope nor future since they are unable to find work and marry. Put differently, they are driven by “an untamable anger and a profound sense of injustice to change the regime.”<sup>10</sup>

In the Arab world, uprisings have really taken regimes by surprise since they have not paid attention to the sweeping technological transformation. Social websites like Facebook and Twitter<sup>11</sup> have been beneficial for political and social groups who can interact freely and even revolt when organizing and assembling on the streets would put people's lives at risk like facing detention and physical threats. In this regard, Alaa Al Aswany argues that in Egypt, demonstrations have been organized through Facebook “as a reliable source of information; when the state tried to block it, the people proved cleverer, and bloggers passed on ways to bypass the controls.”<sup>12</sup>

Furthermore, social media creates history by giving the world a new means of communication. In the past, while journalists had to be physically present on the ground to interview people about their experiences, Twitter and Facebook, today, have made numerous eyewitness accounts possible which have revealed “how fragile a totalitarian regime can be in the face of a widely used simple communication technology.”<sup>13</sup> Besides social websites, channels like Aljazeera<sup>14</sup> have played prominent roles in covering the sufferings of the ordinary Arab man and woman and shedding light on the oppressive means used by the dictatorships to keep their people down.

## **Women and Arab Spring**

During the Arab Spring, we have witnessed women protest alongside men where they “were harassed, tortured, shot by snipers, and teargased”<sup>15</sup>. We also find that female social media organizers and journalists tweeted, filmed and reported the revolutions. I argue that women have just been instrumental in bringing down dictators like Zin Din Ben Ali<sup>16</sup> in Tunisia and Hosni Mubarak<sup>17</sup> in Egypt. Their active participation in the revolutionary Arab Spring not only shatters the traditional stereotypes about Arab women, viewed as oppressed, passive and voiceless<sup>18</sup>, but also sheds light on their determination to chart and reshape their own destinies. Similarly, Soumaya Ghannouchi<sup>19</sup> argues that the type of the woman that has emerged out

of Tunisia and Egypt in the Arab Spring deconstructs “the perception of the Arab women as powerless enslaved, invisible and voiceless.”<sup>20</sup>

Furthermore, none of the uprisings in the Arab countries can be possible without the participation of women. They were among the first to protest at the Avenue Habib Bourguiba<sup>21</sup> in Tunis, Tahrir Square<sup>22</sup> in Egypt and Pearl Roundabout<sup>23</sup> in Bahrain.

Tunisian women have indeed set an inspiring example to all women in the Middle East by toppling Ben Ali and taking part in building a new civil and democratic Tunisia. For example, in Tunisia, Saida Sadouni<sup>24</sup> has led the historic Kasbah demonstration that succeeded in forcing Mohamed Ghannouchi’s<sup>25</sup> interim government out of office. During the Kasbah demonstration, Sadouni told protesters “I have resisted French occupation. I have resisted the dictatorships of Bourguiba and Ben Ali. I will not rest until our revolution meets its goals.”<sup>26</sup> In another case, one may say that the blogger Lina Ben Mhenni<sup>27</sup> is probably the first Tunisian woman to inform the world about the Tunisian uprising in December, 2010, and continues blogging despite being threatened, censored and terrorized.

One of the memorable scenes of the Arab Spring is that of female demonstrators donning headscarves or jeans, protesting, camping and sleeping in tents in front of government offices. Within this context, Magda Adly<sup>28</sup> states that during the Egyptian revolution we have seen women of all castes and ethnicities, wearing veils and jeans, come to rallies in thousands and leading what is happening on the ground. Concerning the participation of veiled women in the Arab Spring, one may argue that this is yet another stereotype, one which falsely links the veil<sup>29</sup> with submissiveness, that is being dismantled. For example, we find many Arab women activists choose to wear the veil, yet they are “no less confident, vocal or charismatic than their unveiled sisters.”<sup>30</sup>

If we take the example of the Egyptian revolution, we find that women assemble, organize, protest, guard tents and patrol streets for security at Tahrir square. It is the leader of the Egyptian revolution Asmaa Mahfouz<sup>31</sup>, a representative of her young generation, who has been inspirational in turning a one-day demonstration into a raging revolution. For instance, she has uploaded a short video on Facebook in which she challenges whoever says that women should not go to protests because they will get beaten.

In Yemen, demonstrations against the rule of President Ali Saleh have been led by a young charismatic woman, Tawakul Karman<sup>32</sup>. Karman has been campaigning since 2007 demanding political reform in Yemen. When she was arrested in January, 2011, the Yemeni authorities were forced to release her following a wave of angry protests in Sana. Speaking about her experience in jail, Karman says,

After a week of protests in the Yemeni revolution media outlets reported my detention and demonstrations erupted in most provinces of the country; they were organized by students, civil society activists and politicians. The pressure on the government was intense and I was released after 36 hours in a women’s prison, where I was kept in chains.<sup>33</sup>

In a powerful statement of international support for the Arab Spring and the important roles played by women proclaimed by the peace Prize citation, “We cannot achieve democracy and lasting peace in the world unless women obtain the same opportunities as men to influence developments at all levels of society.”<sup>34</sup> Tawakul Karman has recently been awarded the Noble Peace Prize for her efforts to advance democracy and human rights, and equality for women in her country. We find that Karman has been honored for her nonviolent struggle for women’s rights in Yemen which represents the right moment for women to achieve basic and equal rights. As a liberal Islamist, Karman seems to represent the idea that Islam is not against peace and women Islamists can also fight for human rights, freedom and democracy<sup>35</sup> and will play a vital role in modernizing Arab societies. To be awarded the Noble Peace Prize can also be seen not only as a message of support and endorsement for the Arab Spring which has empowered the disadvantaged women and down trodden people, but also as a victory for Arab women in their struggle to end oppression and dictatorship.

What has inspired Arab women and thrust them into the heart of protest is their yearning for change and political freedom. They have played crucial roles raising hopes that their meaningful contributions would translate into social, civil, democratic and political rights. Not only women participate in the protest movements raging in Arab countries, but also they assume leadership roles there. Arab women prove themselves through continuous action on the ground at Kasbah, Tahrir Square and Pearl Roundabout.

I argue that the new model of young women leaders like Ms. Karman, Mona Eltahawy, Saida Sadouni, Lina Ben Mhenni and Asmaa Mahfouz deconstructs the prevalent two narratives concerning the representation of Arab women. The first narrative centers upon notions of women’s sexuality, family honor and reductionist interpretations of religion and conventions to justify women’s subordination.<sup>36</sup> The second is the Orientalist narrative which views Arab and Muslim women as oppressed and miserable objects of pity in desperate need of Western intellectual, political and military intervention to save them from darkness and lead them to enlightenment.<sup>37</sup>

Hence, we find that Arab women’s participation in the Arab Spring deconstructs both narratives, where we find Arab women refusing to be degraded, isolated and silenced. Instead, we see women who are determined to liberate themselves as they liberate their societies from dictatorship. Put differently, they take care of their own future, a future which they seek for themselves and is thus an authentic one, defined only by their own needs, choices and priorities.

### **Arab Spring: Women’s Concerns and Challenges**

Historically speaking, women have been the most consistent and staunch advocates of democratic and civil society values across the Arab world. If we take the example of Tunisia, which has the most progressive personal status code in the region, we find that the Tunisian government abolished polygamy and enacted women’s equality in marriage, divorce and child custody after independence in 1956.<sup>38</sup> Yet, women have

tangible reasons to worry about their future since national revolutions betrayed them in the past. If we take the case of the Algerian revolution against French colonialism, we find that women participated, fought and were killed beside men in war.<sup>39</sup> Yet, by the time the Algerian independence was won, women were sent back home by their revolutionary male fighters.

Though the Arab Spring certainly presents positive changes, there are many challenges women face. There is indeed more to be done when it comes to supporting women's rights throughout the Arab world and there are also reasons for intensifying efforts to ensure that women's rights are not compromised during political transitions. In the Arab world, the rise of Islamists<sup>40</sup> to rule and sexual assaults against women demonstrators have made women not only feel afraid about their safety but also concerned about their hard-earned rights obtained under previous toppled dictatorships.<sup>41</sup> The challenges women face, in fact, pose crucial questions about what will the status of women be in post-revolutionary societies like Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and Yemen? And what roles can women play to protect their rights? In other words, will the women who supported and participated in the 2011 revolutions "be pushed aside by military, Islamist, or other leaders, or will they be allowed to take part in governing in the judiciary, and in making autonomous decisions about their own lives?"<sup>42</sup>

The disturbing reports of virginity tests and the sexual assaults on women protesters in Cairo's Tahrir Square have intensified women's fears. For example, at Tahrir Square, Mona Eltahawy<sup>43</sup> has been held for hours while blindfolded, sexually groped and one of her arms broken. Recounting her painful trauma, Eltahawy writes:

Besides beating me so monstrously, my left arm and right hand were broken; the dogs of (central security forces) subjected me to the worst sexual assault ever. Five or six surrounded me, groped and prodded my breasts, grabbed my genital area and i lost count how many hands tried to get into my trousers.<sup>44</sup>

In another case, we find that the scene of dragging the unconscious young woman in the blue jeans,<sup>45</sup> with her upper-half stripped, through the streets of Egypt testifies to the brutality of the military in Egypt using the weapon of shame to subjugate women. Yet, sexuality can no longer be used against women due to rising levels of feminist consciousness in Egypt in particular and in the Arab world in general. For instance, when the military in Egypt has subjected young women to degrading virginity tests<sup>46</sup>, women sued them<sup>47</sup> and used social media like "Facebook and Twitter to expose their brutal actions, an endeavor which demonstrates women's persistence to continue their struggle for freedom.<sup>48</sup> In her article, "the unknown woman shows the struggle is not over," Ahdaf Soueif points out that one of the disgusting patriarchal techniques used against women is groping them sexually in a way to insinuate that "females who took part in street protests wanted to be groped,<sup>49</sup>" which consequently led women to develop counter techniques like wearing multiple layers of light clothing without buttons to avoid sexual harassment while protesting.

To add more, it is deplorable and outrageous to see that women, in Egypt, have been left out of the political dialogue since Hosni Mubarak's fall. For example, the committee assigned to rewrite the constitution

in Egypt does not even have one single female legal expert. In this regard, Nawal El Saadawi argues to counter any attempt to exclude women from being part of ongoing changes in the new Egypt, it is very important for women to unite as a strong political power.<sup>50</sup>

In the Arab world, women still continue to face public and private discrimination on a daily basis. If we take Saudi Arabia as an example, we find that Saudi women still suffer from gender segregation, unequal educational and economic opportunities and the prohibition from driving.<sup>51</sup> Though King Abdulla's announcement that women will be granted the right to participate in the 2015 local elections, this reform can be seen as only one positive step out of many necessary steps that the Saudi government must make to ensure equal rights for Saudi women. Yet, the vast majority of Saudi women are still waiting for their Arab spring. Within this context, Christoph Wilcke argues that "women are even forcing change in calcified Saudi Arabia, where the so-called guardianship system requires them to obtain permission from a male relative to travel, work, study, or take part in public life."<sup>52</sup>

On the other hand, in Tunisia, the Islamists under Rashid Ghannouchi<sup>53</sup> try to appease the fears of women by making it clear that there is no contradiction between Islam and women's rights and they would not seek to reverse women's equal rights. They are also neither interested in polygamy nor in forcing women to wear the veil. They also intend to take progressive, modern and moderate Turkey as an example to follow. However, Shirin Ebadi,<sup>54</sup> drawing on the bitter experience of women and the Iranian Revolution<sup>55</sup> in 1979, warns that women should demand their rights now during the popular uprisings sweeping the Arab world to "avoid being short- changed by post-revolutionary governments,"<sup>56</sup> since if women cannot gain equality now, then this cannot be a real revolution and won't lead to democracy.

In order to avoid past errors committed by feminist and political groups during the period of nationalism in 1950s and the Iranian revolution, where they put off their demands for equality until after the overthrow of regimes, the women's rights movement should move fast to secure constitutional rights. Hence, women must sustain an uprising before it is too late and redouble efforts to ensure that their rights are not sacrificed during political governmental transitions. They should also persevere in forming political parties with clear programs, run in elections and demand their quota according to international law.

Women, in fact, must adopt a new political discourse based on emphasizing women's leadership. Ideally, male revolutionaries should not stand by or shy away but support and recognize the right of women to dignity, equal rights and freedom of expression since it will not be possible to develop Arab societies without women. It is, undoubtedly, foreseen and expected that there will be real challenges to this process of women's emancipation, as recent attacks on female demonstrators indicate. But the dynamic process of revolutionary change is irreversible and those who have started the Arab Spring will continue in rebuilding their new societies. Finally, there is no doubt that this is the right moment of transformation in the Arab world for women and men, but any revolution that fails to achieve equality for women will be incomplete.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> References for these articles were updated in October 2012 to include substantial new academic treatments of the Arab Spring.

<sup>2</sup> Mohamed Bouazizi was a Tunisian street vendor who set himself on fire on 17 December 2010, in protest of the confiscation of his wares and the harassment and humiliation that he reported was inflicted on him by a municipal official and her aides. His act became a catalyst for the Tunisian Revolution and the wider Arab Spring, inciting demonstrations and riots throughout Tunisia in protest of social and political issues in the country. The public's anger and violence intensified following Bouazizi's death, leading then-President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali to step down on 14 January 2011, after 23 years in power. The success of the Tunisian protests inspired protests in several other Arab countries, in addition to several non-Arab countries. The protests included several men who emulated Bouazizi's act of self-immolation, in an attempt to bring an end to their own autocratic governments.

<sup>3</sup> For more information on the Arab Spring, see Robin B. Wright, *Rock the Casbah: Rage and Rebellion Across the Islamic World* (Cape Town: Deckle Edge, 2011); Bruce Feiler, *Generation Freedom: The Middle East Uprisings and the Remaking of the Modern World* (London: William Morrow Paperbacks, 2011); John R. Bradley, *After the Arab Spring: How Islamists Hijacked the Middle East Revolts* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Lin Noueihed and Alex Warren, *The Battle for the Arab Spring: Revolution, Counter-Revolution and the Making of a New Era* (CT: Yale University Press, 2012); Sohrab Ahmari, Nasser Weddady, Lech Walesa and Gloria Steinem, *Arab Spring Speaks out for Freedom and Justice from North Africa to Iran* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Hamid Dabashi, *The Arab Spring: Delayed Defiance and the End of Post colonialism* (London: Zed Books, 2012); Marwan Bishara, *The Invisible Arab: The Promise and Peril of the Arab Revolutions* (New York: Nation Books, 2012); Marc Lynch, *The Arab Uprising: The Unfinished Revolutions of the New Middle East*. (Jackson, TN: Public Affairs, 2012); Jean-Pierre Filiu, *The Arab Revolution: Ten Lessons from the Democratic Uprising* (USA: Oxford University Press, 2011); James L. Gelvin, *The Arab Uprisings: What Everyone Needs to Know* (USA: Oxford University Press, 2012); James Petras, *The Arab Revolt and the Imperialist Counterattack* (Atlanta: Clarity Press, 2011); Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Arab Awakening: America and the Transformation of the Middle East* (Washington, D.C.: Saban Center at the Brookings Institution Books, 2011); Minky Worden and Christiane Amanpour, *The Unfinished Revolution: Voices from the Global Fight for Women's Rights* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2012).

<sup>4</sup> For more information on this topic, see Nicola Christine Pratt, *Democracy and Authoritarianism in the Arab World* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2006); Ibrahim Elbadawi and Samir Makdisi (eds.), *Democracy in the Arab World: Explaining the Deficit* (New York: Routledge, 2010); Gerd Nonneman (ed.), *Democracy, Reform and Authoritarianism in the Arab World* (New York: Routledge, 2010); Francesco Cavatorta and Vincent Durac, *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: The Dynamics of Activism* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

<sup>5</sup> For more details on the rule of dictators in the Middle East, see, e.g, Roger Owen, *The Rise and Fall of Arab Presidents for Life* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012); Galal Amin, *Egypt in the Era of Hosni Mubarak, 1981-2011* (American University in Cairo Press, 2011).

<sup>6</sup> For more discussions on the brutality of Arab regimes, see, James Petras, *The Arab Revolt and the Imperialist Counterattack* (n.c: Clarity Press, 2011).

<sup>7</sup> For more information on the Egyptian revolution and the democracy of bread, see, e.g, Vijay Prashad, *Arab Spring, Libyan Winter* (n.c: AK Press, 2012); Wael Ghonim, *Revolution 2.0: The Power of the People Is Greater Than the People in Power: A Memoir* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012); Ashraf Khalil, *Liberation Square: Inside the Egyptian Revolution and the Rebirth of a Nation* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2012); Alaa Al Aswany, *On the State of Egypt: What Made the Revolution Inevitable* (London: Vintage, 2011); Alaa al Aswany and Jonathan Wright, *Arab Spring Dreams: The Next Generation the State of Egypt: A Novelist's Provocative Reflections* (The American University in Cairo Press, 2011); Alaa Al Aswany, *The Yacoubian Building* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2006).

<sup>8</sup> Ashraf Ezzat, "Mona Eltahawy Recounts the Real Story of Egypt Revolution," "Word Press." November 26, 2011. Accessed July 11, 2012. <http://ashraf62.wordpress.com/2011/11/26/mona-eltahawy-recounts-the-history-of-egypt-revolution/>

<sup>9</sup> Alaa Al Aswany, "United by an injustice and anger that won't be tamed," In *The Arab Spring: Rebellion, Revolution and a new world order*, edited by Toby Manhire (London: Guardian Books, 2012), 4919.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 4919.

<sup>11</sup> For more information on the impact of social media, see, Denis G. Campbell, *Egypt Unshackled- Using social media to @#:) the System* (New York: Cambria Books, 2011)

<sup>12</sup> Al Aswany, "United by an injustice and anger that won't be tamed," 4948.

<sup>13</sup> Denis G. Campbell, *Egypt Unshackled- Using social media to @#:) the System* (New York: Cambria Books, 2011), 5.

<sup>14</sup> For more information on the role of Aljazeera, see Josh Rushing and Sean Elder, *Mission Al- Jazeera: Build a Bridge, Seek the Truth, Change the World* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Mohammed El-Nawawy and Adel Iskandar, *Al-Jazeera: The Story Of The Network That Is Rattling Governments And Redefining Modern Journalism Updated With A New Prologue And Epilogue* ( Jackson, T N: Basic Books, 2003); Khalil Rinnawi, *Instant Nationalism: McArabism, al-Jazeera, and Transnational Media in the Arab World* (New York: University Press of America, 2006).

<sup>15</sup> Minky Worden and Christiane Amanpour, *The Unfinished Revolution: Voices from the Global Fight for*

*Women's Rights* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2012), 2.

<sup>16</sup> On 14 January 2011, following a month of protests against his rule, Zin Din Ben Ali was forced to flee to Saudi Arabia along with his wife Leïla Ben Ali and their three children. The interim Tunisian government asked for Interpol to issue an international arrest warrant, charging him with money laundering and drug trafficking. He and his wife were sentenced in absentia to 35 years in prison on 20 June 2011. In June 2012, Ben Ali was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment in absentia for inciting violence and murder.

<sup>17</sup> For more information on the rule of Hosni Mubarak, see Gala Amin, *Egypt in the Era of Hosni Mubarak, 1981-2011* (American University in Cairo Press, 2011); Roger Owen, *The Rise and Fall of Arab Presidents for Life* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, 2012)

<sup>18</sup> For more details, see Mona Mikhail, *The images of Arab Women: Fact and Fiction* (Washington, D. C: Three Continents Press, 1979); Reina Lewis, *Rethinking Orientalism: Women, Travel, and the Ottoman Harem* ( New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2003); Reina Lewis and Sara Mills, (eds.) *Feminist Postcolonial theory* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Faegheh Shirazi, (ed) *Muslim Women in War and Crisis: Representation and Reality* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011).

<sup>19</sup> Soumaya Ghannouchi grew up in London where she worked as a journalist writing for the Guardian.

<sup>20</sup> Soumaya Ghannouchi, "Female protesters are shattering stereotypes," In *The Arab Spring: Rebellion, Revolution and a new world order*, edited by Toby Manhire. (London: Guardian Books, 2012), 6493.

<sup>21</sup> Avenue Habib Bourguiba is the central thoroughfare of Tunis, and the historical political and economic heart of Tunisia. It bears the name of the first President of the Republic of Tunisia and the national leader of the Tunisian independence movement. During the protests of 2011, many demonstrations calling for the downfall of President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali and that of the national unity government were held on the avenue.

<sup>22</sup> For more details on the significance of Tahrir Square, see Hoda Rashad, *Rising from Tahrir* (Seattle: CreateSpace, 2012).

<sup>23</sup> Pearl Roundabout was a roundabout located near the financial district of Manama, Bahrain. The roundabout was named after the pearl monument that previously stood on the site and was destroyed on March 18, 2011, by government forces as part of a crackdown on protesters during the ongoing Bahraini uprising.

<sup>24</sup> For more discussions, see, Jessica Sarhan, "The Women behind the revolutions and computer screens." *Your MiddleEast*. 18 October, 2011. Accessed July 9, 2012. [http://www.yourmiddleeast.com/columns/article/the-women-behind-the-revolutions-and-computer-screens\\_2258](http://www.yourmiddleeast.com/columns/article/the-women-behind-the-revolutions-and-computer-screens_2258); Soumaya Ghannouchi, "Rebellion: Smashing stereotypes of Arab women." *Aljazeera*. April 25, 2011. Accessed July 9, 2012. <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2011/04/201142412303319807.html>.

<sup>25</sup> Mohamed Ghannouchi resigned as prime minister of the post-revolution government amid further clashes between police and protestors. The interim president, Fouad Mebazaa, named the former government minister Beji Caid-Essebsi as Ghannouchi's replacement.

<sup>26</sup> Soumya Ghanoushi, "Female protesters are shattering stereotypes," 6493.

<sup>27</sup> Lina Ben Mhenni is a Tunisian Internet activist, blogger and university linguistics teacher. In 2011, Mhenni was reported to have been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for her contributions and activism during the Tunisian Revolution.

<sup>28</sup> Magda Adly is the director of the El Nadim Center for the Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence to Inter Press Service.

<sup>29</sup> For the debates on the veil, see, e.g, Fatima Mernissi. *The Veil and The Male Elite* (New York: Basic books, 1992); Ali Mohammad Syed, *The Position of Women in Islam: A Progressive View* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004); Nawal El Saadawi, *The Nawal El Saadawi Reader* (London & New York: Zed Books, 1997); Leila Ahmed, *Women, Gender and Islam* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); Anwar Hekmat, *Women and the Koran: The Status of Women in Islam*. (Amherst: Prometheus, 1997); Elizabeth Fernea, *In Search of Islamic Feminism: One Woman's Global Journey* (New York: Doubleday, 1998).

<sup>30</sup> Soumya Ghannouchi, "Female protesters are shattering stereotypes," 6493.

<sup>31</sup> Asmaa Mahfouz is an Egyptian activist and one of the founders of the April 6 Youth Movement. She has been credited by journalist Mona Eltahawy and others with helping to spark mass uprising through her video blog posted one week before the start of the 2011 Egyptian revolution. She is a prominent member of Egypt's Coalition of the Youth of the Revolution and one of the leaders of the Egyptian revolution.

<sup>32</sup> Tawakkul Karman is the head of Women Journalists Without Chains.

<sup>33</sup> Tawakkul Karman, "A Better Country Awaits Us," In *The Arab Spring: Rebellion, Revolution and a new world order*, edited by Toby Manhire (London: Guardian Books, 2012), 5803.

<sup>34</sup> Worden and Amanpour, "*The Unfinished Revolution*", 2.

<sup>35</sup> For more information on human rights in Quran, see, e.g., Muhammad Sharif Chaudhry, *Human Rights in Islam* (Lahore: Pakistan Islamic Education Congress, 1993); Riffat Hassan, "On Human Rights and the Qur'anic Perspective," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 19:3 (1982): 51; Shaheen Sardar Ali, *Gender and Human Rights in Islam and International Law: Equal Before Allah, Unequal Before Man?* (The Hague/ Boston: Kluwer Law International, 2000).

<sup>36</sup> For more information on the reductionist interpretations of religion and conventions, see Miriam Cooke, *Women Claim Islam* (New York: Routledge, 2001); Amina Wadud, *Quran and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Margot Badran, *Feminists, Islam and the Nation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); Margot Badran, *Feminism in Islam: Secular and Religious Convergences* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2009).

<sup>37</sup> For more details on the Western stereotypes concerning women in the Arab world, see Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Vintage, 1979); Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations: Remaking of World Order* (New York: Touchstone Press, 1996); Soumaya Ghannouchi, "Rebellion: Smashing stereotypes of Arab women," *Aljazeera*. April 25, 2011. <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2011/04/201142412303319807.html>; Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994).

<sup>38</sup> For more discussions on the status of women in Tunisia, see Mounira Charrad, *States and Women's Rights: The Making of Postcolonial Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco* (University of California Press, 2001); Minky Worden, *The Unfinished Revolution: Voices from the Global Fight for Women's Rights* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2012).

<sup>39</sup> For more information on the relationship of women and nationalism, see Valentine Moghadam (ed), *Gender and National Identity: Women and Politics in Muslim Societies* (London: Zed Books Ltd , 1994); Jayawadana Kumari, *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World* (London: Zed Books, 1986); Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* (London: Zed Press, 1986); Andrew Parker, Mary Russo, Doris Sommer and Patricia Yaeger (eds.), *Nationalisms and Sexualities* (New York: Routledge, 1992); Homi Bhaba (ed), *Nation and Narration* (London: Routledge, 1990); Anderson Benedict, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

<sup>40</sup> For more discussions on the rise of Islamists to rule in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya, see, John R. Bradley, *After the Arab Spring: How Islamists Hijacked the Middle East Revolts* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Wadah Khanfar, "Islamist parties: We should welcome the rise of political Islam," In *The Arab Spring: Rebellion, Revolution and a new world order*, edited by Toby Manhire (London: Guardian Books, 2012).

<sup>41</sup> For more details on the history of Arab women's struggles for their rights, see Nawal El Saadawi, *The Hidden Face of Eve: Women in the Arab world*. Trans. Sherif Hetata (London: Zed Books, 1980); Suhair Majaj, Paula W. Sunderman, and Thérèse Saliba, (eds). *Intersections: Gender, Nation, and Community in Arab Women's Novels* (Syracuse University Press, 2002); Dayla Cohen-Mor, (ed). *Arab Women Writers: An Anthology of Short Stories* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005); Anastasia Valassopoulos, *Contemporary Arab Women Writers: Cultural Expression in Context* (London: Routledge, 2007).

<sup>42</sup> Minky Worden, "The Unfinished Revolution", 4.

<sup>43</sup> Mona Eltahawy is an Egyptian-American journalist.

<sup>44</sup> Ashraf Ezzat, "Mona Eltahawy Recounts the Real Story of Egypt Revolution," *Word Press*. November 26, 2011. Accessed July 11, 2012. <http://ashraf62.wordpress.com/2011/11/26/mona-eltahawy-recounts-the-history-of-egypt-revolution/1>

<sup>45</sup> For more discussions on sexual harassment against women by the Egyptian military, see, Ahdaf Soueif, "The unknown woman shows the struggle is not over," In *The Arab Spring: Rebellion, Revolution and a new world order*, edited by Toby Manhire (London: Guardian Books, 2012).

<sup>46</sup> Virginity tests are perceived by many women as rape. They are undressed by jeering soldiers, who use their mobile phones to film examinations of women's genitalia. For more discussion on virginity tests, see Habiba Mohsen, "What Made Her Go There? Samira Ibrahim and Egypt's Virginity Test Trial," *Aljazeera*. March 16, 2012. Accessed July 11, 2012. <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/03/2012316133129201850.html>

<sup>47</sup> For more information on suing the Military by women victims, see, e.g, Robert Mackey, "One One year later, Egyptian women subjected to 'virginity tests' await justice," *The Lede*, March 9, 2012. Accessed June 10, 2012. <http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/03/09/one-year-later-egyptian-women-subjected-to-virginity-tests-await-justice/ngroundnews.org/article.php?id=29727&lan=en&sp=0>; Deena Adel, "Against all odds: 'Virginity test' Victim Awaits Her Verdict," *Global Post*. November 21, 2011. Accessed July 11, 2012. <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/middle-east/egypt/111121/against-all-odds-'virginity-test'-victim-awaits-her-v>

<sup>48</sup> Ahdaf Soueif, "The unknown woman shows the struggle is not over," In *The Arab Spring: Rebellion, Revolution and a new world order*, edited by Toby Manhire (London: Guardian Books, 2012), 5081.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 5040.

<sup>50</sup> For more information on Nawal el Saadawi's views, see, Anna Louie Sussman, "An Interview With Nawal El Saadawi," *The Nation*, March 21, 2011. Accessed, July 21, 2012. <http://www.thenation.com/article/159362/interview-nawal-el-saadawi#>

<sup>51</sup> For more information on the rights of women in Saudi Arabia see Sören Jehoiakim Ethan, (ed) *Women's Rights in Saudi Arabia* (Berlin: Volv Press, 2012); Sami alrabba, *Veiled Atrocities: True Stories of Oppression in Saudi Arabia* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2010); Rajaa Alsanea, *Girls of Riyadh* (Penguin Press HC, 2007).

<sup>52</sup> Christoph Wilcke, "Saudi Women's Struggle," In Minky Worden and Christiane Amanpour, *The Unfinished Revolution: Voices from the Global Fight for Women's Rights* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2012), 93.

<sup>53</sup> Rashid al-Ghannushi is a Tunisian Islamist politician who co-founded the Ennahda Movement, currently the largest party in Tunisia. He has been called the party's "intellectual leader".

<sup>54</sup> Shirin Ebadi is an Iranian Nobel peace laureate. She was Iran's first woman judge but lost that job following the Islamic revolution because the country's new leaders said women were too emotional to be judges. She became a human rights lawyer but, after suffering harassment, she left the country in 2009.

<sup>55</sup> For more information on women and the Iranian revolution, see Soraya Paknazar Sullivan(ed.), *Stories by Iranian Women Since the Revolution* (Austin, University of Texas Press,1991); Robin Wright, *The Last Great Revolution: Turmoil and Transformation in Iran*( London:Vintage,2001); Shirin Ebadi and Azadeh Moaveni, *Iran Awakening: A Memoir of Revolution and Hope* (New York: Random House,2006); Haleh Esfandiari, *Reconstructed Lives: Women and Iran's Islamic Revolution* (Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press,1997); Azar Nafisi, *Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books* (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2008).

<sup>56</sup> Shirin Ebadi, "Islamic Law and Revolution against women," In Minky Worden and Christiane Amanpour, *The Unfinished Revolution: Voices from the Global Fight for Women's Rights* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2012), 53.

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