

Probing the Boundaries
Innovative Dialogue

| Interculturalism |

Exploring Critical Issues

Edited by

Diane Powell & Fiona Sze

Inter-Disciplinary Press
Publishing Creative Research

Interculturalism: Exploring Critical Issues

Edited by

Diane Powell and Fiona Sze

Oxford, United Kingdom

Inter-Disciplinary Press
Publishing Creative Research

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INTRODUCTION

The *Critical Issues: Interculturalism* is an electronic collection of papers presented at the First Global Conference on Critical Issues in Interculturalism, held in Milan, Italy from 30 October to 1 November 2003. The conference was organised to explore the meaning and implications of interculturalism, from a practical and political perspective as well as in a theoretical sense. Truly global, the conference included participants from Brazil, Australia, Nepal, Singapore, Canada, USA (New York, Hawaii, California and Illinois), Europe (Belgium, Austria, Italy, Germany, Ireland and Finland), Israel, and Slovenia.

Topics were wide ranging: interculturalism and education; migrant workers; creativity (performance, art, film, music, literature); everyday life; memory; philosophy; religion and human rights; war and peace; ethnocentrism; travel; cultural hybridity; intercultural dialogue in Europe, the Americas and Asia.

In this respect, the conference was significant in bringing together such a diverse range of scholars from varying areas and interests to share ideas, as well as explore numerous innovative and invigorating discussions. Interculturalism is an increasingly crucial and contested issue in a world of circulating populations. Like migration in the twentieth century, today's migrants are generally moving from economically or politically perilous circumstances to more prosperous and liberal countries. In the current dissemination, however, people are coming from numerous different countries and regions, and at the same time moving in all directions across the globe. There is hardly a country in the world today that does not have to deal with issues of cultural differences within its society. Despite attempts at ethnic cleansing in some areas, none can yet, in history or in our present times, claim a cohesive national identity of 'pure' racial or ethnic pedigree.

Why the issue of *interculturalism* rather than *multiculturalism*? As Leonard Hammer indicates in his paper, multiculturalism is a policy based on the notion of personal autonomy. Interculturalism, in contrast, recognizes that in a society of mixed ethnicities, cultures act in multiple directions. Host or majority cultures are influenced by immigrant or minority cultures and vice versa. Multiculturalism tends to *preserve* a cultural heritage, while interculturalism acknowledges and enables cultures to have currency, to be exchanged, to circulate, to be modified and evolve. Understanding how cultures move around in a society, introduce social changes, and facilitate cultural integration requires an interdisciplinary approach: one that includes the obviously primary concerns of human rights, citizenship, work, education, health and housing, one that also develops inclusive policies and supports the development of creative expression.

This collection of papers broaches a diversity of concerns related to understanding and living in an intercultural world. Section one presents three different perspectives on cross-cultural awareness: in Australia, Israel and Italy. Taking the concept of cultural incompetence from the theories of Lyotard, Derrida, Kristeva, Gergen and Foucault, Katy Batha puts them into practice as a school counsellor in an area of Sydney made up of 130 nationalities with diverse languages and religions. Leonard Hammer examines national policies of multiculturalism and interculturalism, and their effectiveness in delivering rights to migrant workers in Israel. Women migrant workers in domestic and care-giving roles within Italian households are the subject of research undertaken by Nada Bucat and Cristina Finnochiaro. In addition to outlining recent cultural changes in the role of women in Italian families, their paper shows that contrary to popular stereotypes, female migrant domestic workers were often well-educated and had been employed in their home countries.

Section two depicts interculturalism in aesthetics, the latter being an effective channel representing different conceptions of cultures. By means of artistic artefacts, aesthetics grasps the codification of a culture, maps out its rhetorical and stylistic figures, rethinks its narrative strategies, and renders a semiotic model that allows one to redefine interculturalism. Sandra Song and Minh Nguyen explore the politics of intercultural representation vis-à-vis the visual works of Asian-American artist, Theresa Hak Kyung. Examining her visual aesthetics of decolonisation, displacement and disidentification, Song and Nguyen problematize interculturalism with questions of language and subjectivity, as well as their relation to memory. Diane Powell expounds upon the association between memory and interculturalism when she proposes the clinging to fragments of one's past as an expression of intercultural expression. Looking specifically into the later generations of Italo-Australians, she presents observations of how such Italo-Australians cultivate their sense of "otherness."

In section three, 'Interculturalism East/West', Lenart Skof, examines the interactions between the philosophies of ancient Greece and that of Persia and India. In his opinion, interculturalism has had an important function in philosophical thinking from ancient times, spanning Europe and Asia. Art historian Karen Bandlow delves into the works of Roy Lichtenstein, analysing how Lichtenstein's usage of East Asian pictorial elements reveal the dynamics of interculturalism in visual arts. The fascination Asia holds for Europeans is a theme continued by Samantha Chen in her analysis of young independent travellers - 'backpackers' - impact on South East Asian communities and cross-cultural misunderstandings.

Intercultural dialogue in cultural and social milieu is underpinned by theoretical developments in philosophy, ethics and religion. Section four present papers dealing with some of the current issues in these fields. Helder De Schutter introduces the intercultural theories of Martiniquan author, Edoard Glissant, showing

how we may engage in intercultural interaction without falling into the trap of ethnocentrism. Kiyoshi Seko takes up the question of interculturalism in the context of religion and the West's disregard of Asian theologies, suggesting that by not taking account of Eastern approaches to reason and knowledge, the West loses important insights into ways of thinking and being.

Human rights and moral standards are of great significance in a globalized world, but, as Marjaana Kopperi highlights, current standards and methods of determining human rights are subject to diverse interpretations. This is less to do with differences in cultural and religious backgrounds than due to a lack of consensus on the notion of morality. Kopperi advocates an examination of moral views *as* moral views, and a clarification of the role of morality in human life.

Cultural expression is the theme of section five. Tamara Roberts is interested in the sonic elements of music, and how they allow one to perceive interculturalism as more than appropriation, misrepresentation and disenfranchisement. She discusses the hip-hop song *Addictive*, and its copyright infringement case, the latter being characterized as a "music war" between U.S. and Indian musicians. Also using illustrations from the media culture, Patrick Imbert discusses how interculturalism emerges from the new discourses of advertising and literature in the Americas. Seeing this as a shift in the context of global postmodernism, he also indicates how changes in discourse situations vary with their "sites of power."

Intercultural experience is embedded in the practice of everyday life at all corners of the world today. As the papers in this collection exhibit, we connect with an array of cultures in every aspect of daily life: in the workplace, at the shopping centre, around the neighbourhood, at leisure events and at school. Jones Irwin proposes that Henri Lefebvre's work provides a framework for intercultural theory, in particular his concept of *everyday life*, his critique of essentialism and concept of the production of space. As Jones puts it: "Lefebvre's work deconstructs this hegemony of a specific kind of spatial and cultural planning. In so doing, it reopens the question of *difference* which had been stratified and neutralised within the traditional structure. Lefebvre's work thus looks forward to a societal space and time of dialogue, but also of potential conflict - that is, to a genuinely intercultural space and time."

Education at all levels is a vehicle for enacting intercultural forces. While Katy Batha's paper sets the context for primary and secondary education in a multicultural community, Tony Gallagher addresses the problems associated with education in a society. In particular, he analyses a society divided by religion and political conflict, demonstrating how a segregated school system exacerbates social divisions. He suggests that a system of positive collaboration, learning linkages and interdependence may promote greater social harmony. Mark Brasher looks into the difficulty of overcoming conflicting value systems among diverse cultures in the tertiary sector. He notes the arguments for and against universalist and relativist values, suggesting that they work against global understanding and cooperation. Instead, he argues that developing common goals for the future may be far from overcoming such division. Eleonore Wildburger writes about the ethics of intercultural research and how non-indigenous researchers deal with the issue of studying "others". Concluding that concepts of difference still determine intercultural research projects, she advocates creating spaces for dialogue and collaboration in research, particularly with the Indigenous 'others'.

At the heart of all considerations of intercultural penetration and exchanges, one is compelled to exercise a choice between global village and a world of differences. Eric Lau and Fiona Siang Yun Sze explore such inherent tension in the creative contexts of culture: Kurosawa's films, theatre practices of Robert Wilson, Ariane Mnouchkine and Coco Fusco, as well as other performative events. Lau suggests intercultural exchanges as periods of revolutions, and states that intercultural exchanges cannot be merely conceived as an accumulation of past cultural experiences. Sze further explores the hybridised nature of cultures by rejecting interculturalism in performing arts as a resolution of tension between the Eastern aesthetics and the Western artistry. Instead, she takes up the challenge of articulating how interculturalism needs to be performative and performable in order to interrogate cultural boundaries and identities. Simone Griesmayr's paper on "Creative contexts: culture as an agent of change" concludes the collection, buttressing Sze's implicit thesis that in terms of interculturalism, the notion of a culture is antagonistic.

The conference concluded with a development meeting to discuss the establishment of a steering group, email discussion list and the publishing of this Ebook. A follow-up conference is being planned for 2004 to further explore critical issues in interculturalism and build on the networks and themes initiated at the 2003 conference.

INTERCULTURAL CONTEXTS

Search for Senses of Connection and Possibilities in Counselling Interculturalism

Katy Batha

Abstract: This paper came about as a way for me to reflect on my therapeutic practice and my way of living. It gave me the opportunity to examine what I do and to attempt to find the 'big ideas' which have indirectly influenced my approach. Five key poststructuralist ideas were traced through this investigation. They are:

Key concepts:

- a. Truth is relative rather than universal and fixed
- b. Searching for change and difference is valuable rather than emphasising normality and stability
- c. Meaning is organic and prone to slippages rather than intrinsic and unitary
- d. The self is a constantly changing, socially constructed entity rather than the result of an essential personality
- e. Knowledge is controlled by dominant power interests rather than discovered through the "nature" of things.

1. Introduction

I am an Australian of Irish, English and Czech descent. My family includes connections to Scotland, Greece, Japan, and the West Indies. I live on the traditional lands of the Cadigal and Wangal peoples of the Eora nation on the south-eastern coast of Australia. I work as a school counsellor in south-western Sydney, where the local population includes people from one hundred and thirty nationalities. Thirty five percent were born overseas. Thirty eight percent speak languages other than English. The main religions are Catholicism, Anglicanism, Islam, and Buddhism.

Nationality. Language. Religion. These are but three possible cultural markers by which the identity of a person or group might be framed. Others which could be considered would include gender, class, sexuality - migration status would be a significant one in the area where I work. The list is not fixed and could be quite long. Given the complexity of the structure of culture, how can one best approach working in a community of great diversity? The concept of *cultural competence* has become popular of late - the search engine, *Google*, cites over 259,000 references to the term. The challenge to cultural competency, however, seems to me to occur even at the level of the most intimate social unit, the family. How many of you can claim to always be in agreement with all members of your family and to understand their points of view?

I believe that all my social interactions involve some diversity of cultural markers. Consequently, the most useful contribution to my work comes from maintaining a position of cultural incompetence. This should not be confused with cultural insensitivity. To be incompetent implies lacking qualifications, or being inadequate. To be insensitive, on the other hand, suggest an inability to sense change or difference.

I first heard the term, cultural incompetence, from therapist, Gene Combs. I attended a workshop on couple therapy run by Gene and his partner, Jill Freedman, in Liverpool earlier this year and had requested Gene to be mindful of cross-cultural issues as he spoke. He responded by suggesting that as he did not feel competent in his own culture, how could he assume competence in another's culture? He said that cultural incompetence supported his maintenance of a position of curiosity about the meanings people make of the events in their lives.

The concept of cultural incompetence appeals to me and this investigation works backwards from practice to theory and through to the big ideas of poststructuralism, which seem to me to support the maintenance of cultural incompetence. In the tables below I have noted these ideas by identifying their key theorists and concepts. and then briefly explain their implications for my practice and their practical applications in the therapeutic context. Then I will tell you a story.

2. Key resources

a. Truth is relative	
Key theorist	Francois Lyotard
Key concept	Postmodernity: "incredulity" towards <i>grand recits</i> [grand narratives](1979)
Implications for practice	Clifford Geertz (1986, p.124) "experience-near descriptions" vs "experience-distant concepts" ¹
Practical application	Paying attention to, and working with, people's own descriptions and meanings of events

François Lyotard identified that the Enlightenment's grand narratives of Science and Logic had failed to culminate in hoped-for freedom and self-realisation for all. I see a link here with Clifford Geertz's distinction between what he refers to as "experience-distant" concepts used by specialists to "forward their scientific, philosophical or practical aims", and "experience-near" descriptions which people easily use to define what they "see, feel, think and imagine". I seek, in practice, to facilitate the unfolding and enrichment of experience-near descriptions that declare the meanings people make of the events in their lives. This requires the relinquishing of "experience-distant concepts" of psychology that do not match these descriptions.

b. Searching for change and difference is valuable	
Key theorist	Jacques Derrida
Key concept	The outside is/is not the outside (1976, p.44)
Implications for practice	Dialogue of a politics of difference—identity deficits are framed by binary/hierarchical oppositions.
Practical application	Defining and exploring what is absent-but-implicit (White, 2000).

Derrida's identification of the binary quality of meaning-making – a thing's identity is defined as much by what it isn't as by what it is – has generated dialogue about identity deficits and the privileging of certain explanations of events, experiences and identities over others. Michael White's use of the notion of the absent-but-implicit in therapy echoes Derrida's work regarding what is/is not. Curiosity about the absent-but-implicit helps make more available hopes and intentions subjugated by problem stories, thus supporting agency to resist their effects.

c. Meaning is organic and prone to slippages	
Key theorist	Julia Kristeva
Key concepts	Subjectivity is a "work in progress"(cited Lechte, 1994, p. 143); "any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another"(1986, p.37).
Implications for practice	The range of available identity conclusions determines possible conclusions.
Practical application	Challenge limitations of identity conclusions that subjugate preferred possibilities.

Kristeva's work suggests that identity is not fixed and that we rely on what already exists to make meaning. Applying these ideas to understanding who we are and who we might become, suggests that we are confined by the availability and range of meanings that can be accessed at any given time. Where the range of available identity conclusions perpetuate abusive, oppressive or disrespectful practices, I see it as my responsibility to facilitate the investigation, regeneration and recognition of other possibilities in order to support people's agency in deciding what values and beliefs fit with their preferred ways of being.

d. The self is a constantly changing, socially constructed entity	
Key theorist	Kenneth Gergen
Key concepts	Meanings are social artefacts and products of historically situated interchange (1985, pp. 266-269).
Implications for practice	The 'self' relies on socially agreed description.
Practical application	Preferred identities are performed in social settings; the performances are then re-told in ways that embed them in social processes (Freedman and Combs, 1996).

Gergen's notion of socially constructed meaning presents us with meaning-making processes that require negotiation and agreement amongst interested parties. Consequently, our understandings of who we are embody the performance and social acknowledgement of identity. This suggests that in order for therapeutic practices to be effective, they need to reach beyond the privatised, individual-ised practices of the consulting room, to where preferred ways of being can be publicly witnessed and reported, thus giving them currency and credibility.

e. Knowledge is controlled by dominant power interests	
Key theorist	Michel Foucault
Key concepts	Discourses shape "truths" (1965, 1969, 19xx).
Implications for practice	People live according to the normalising standards presented to them by dominant discourses
Practical application	Externalising conversations (separating the person from the problem of concern) assist in the deconstruction of subjugating/marginalising discourses (White, 1991, p. 36).

Foucault's work has revealed the ways in which powerful interest groups determine and control knowledge. According to this perspective, truth is not discovered through rigorous observation of nature but, rather, shaped by discourses controlled by the authorities of areas of interest and disciplines. These truths are then used as yardsticks by which people sublimate their bodies, minds, spirits, actions and relationships. The deconstruction of powerful, yet harmful, discourses becomes a moral pejorative in therapeutic work.

3. Brain-heaviness

This story is related to the practical application of Kenneth Gergen's ideas.² Holding with experience-near descriptions provides people with the room needed to explore the effects of problems in meaningful ways. I was sitting the other day with Losi, a nine-year-old boy, whose teacher was concerned about his apparent level of anxiety and reports of "unusual" behaviours. What Losi and I ended up talking about, however, was *brain-heaviness*.

This was a state, he told me, that resulted from thinking a lot - something that needed to be done at school. My curiosity about brain-heaviness was extensive, as I'd never come across it before. Talking together, we created a dossier of facts about brain-heaviness. Losi said that it wasn't something that took up a lot of space. He told me he thought it would probably fit into a cigar-box. brain-heaviness was useful, he said, in that it meant that you were learning things. It also had its drawbacks, he told me, because it often caused him to sit and do nothing until it was time to go out for lunch.

Talking with Losi about brain-heaviness opened up a conversation that might not have been available if I had glossed over his choice of words. He enjoyed the conversation and told me that these were issues no-one had asked him about before. By stepping away from the belief in the existence of unitary, universal truths about experience, curiosity can be kept alive in therapeutic work. Using people's own descriptions and understandings of problems, and their effects, privileges other ways of knowing in the world, ways that may not have been available to me, to the discipline of psychology, or even to Losi if he had not been invited to articulate them.

I can't begin to know what might be experience-near for any person, so maintaining a position of Cultural Incompetence helps prevent me from closing down investigations of problems, which might be useful for individuals and groups. If I begin to assume knowledge of what the problems affecting a person's life mean, I am likely to miss some important understandings of experience, which determine that person's view of the situation. I can't claim to be perfect in my attempt to do this but I hold the intention and, from time-to-time, ask for feedback from the person to check that we are talking about issues in a way that is meaningful, interesting and respectful for them.

4. Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to my teachers at the Dulwich Centre for introducing narrative practices to me and also to colleagues who have been supportive of, and open to, new ways of thinking in our work. Special thanks to Gene Combs for permission to use his concept of Cultural Incompetence in this paper.

Notes

¹ Clifford Geertz drew an important distinction between what he described as "experience-distant" concepts used by specialists to "forward their scientific, philosophical or practical aims", and "experience-near" descriptions which people would easily use to define what they "see, feel, think and imagine".

² This story is a composite of my therapeutic experiences. Losi is a fictional name.

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Interculturalism and Migrant Workers in Israel

Leonard Hammer

Abstract: One of the implications of an intercultural framework, as opposed to a multicultural one, for the human right to culture is that culture is acting in a multi-directional manner. Thus, culture is not only fulfilling a function of preserving a minority group's rights, but also plays an influential role in the makeup of the claim and the ensuing response. Consideration of the international human right to culture within the context of interculturalism will understand culture as a catalyst for the application of human rights. The human right to culture can act as the basis for implementing the human rights of marginal social groups, in this case migrant workers, by recognising the role they play in shaping and influencing culture.

Keywords: multiculturalism, migrant workers, cultural policy, human rights

1. Interculturalism

One of the implications of an intercultural framework, as opposed to a multicultural one, for the human right to culture is that culture is acting in a multi-directional manner. Thus, culture is not only fulfilling a function of preserving a minority group's rights, but also plays an influential role in the makeup of the claim and the ensuing response.

An interculturalist approach recognizes the broad role of culture within social relationships. Unlike multiculturalism where the notion of culture is linked to personal autonomy or to claims of different contexts of universalism, interculturalism recognizes the importance of a broad understanding of culture that relates to the identity and personal composition of the individual and the link to the greater society.¹ Culture then maintains resonance for all aspects of a person's life, including language, belief systems and forms of social relations due to the role that culture plays within relationships and not solely because of the causal connection between the individual and autonomous choices.²

One of the key issues concerning multiculturalism has been the role of culture within the state. Some, like Kymlicka, identify the goal of multiculturalism as one of allowing all groups autonomous choices for leading a meaningful life pursuant to their cultural understanding.³ This approach becomes problematic when one moves outside of a formal liberal context, as is the case in a variety of states and social systems. Further, the approach to culture as capacity for deliberative choice limits culture to acting in a specific framework of autonomous choice without considering other more definitive aspects associated with cultural identity, as well as focusing on the process and mechanism involved rather than the actual content of culture as it can lead to rather diffuse conclusions.⁴

Within the international human rights context, culture has been referred to as grounds for asserting minority rights, like affirmative action.⁵ The problem with this approach is that it seems to highlight differences within society and entrench such inherent divisions. Even if one were to turn to social discourse as a form of bridging the gap between social groups via cultural assertions and claims, there still remain the marginalised groups and minority participants that have a difficult time actively engaging in the discourse.⁶

What is required is a re-thinking of the implication of culture within the human rights system to take an inward look at culture and consider how the human right to culture might assist in moving forward notions of interculturalism as a more efficient drive for protecting rights.

Considering the role of a human right to culture can prove beneficial in resolving some inherent social conflicts and allow for a better operation of the human rights system. Culture provides the means for both transforming the social order as well as maintaining it. This dichotomous nature of culture can serve to provide a framework for the application of human rights in a broad sense, especially when accounting for the inherent conflicts or misunderstandings that occur between different social groups. Hence, the importance of a right to culture is how the social context brings culture to bear on relationships and the significance of public perceptions and approaches towards other particular groups. As noted by Smelser when discussing the coherence of culture in current studies, "culture is in large part a construct about the society or group under study rather than a simple empirical attribute to be apprehended, recorded, and described" such that reference to culture is "its explanatory adequacy or its usefulness as an explanatory element rather than on its significance as an empirical description."⁷

This understanding of culture as a device is particularly so when accounting for culture as playing a central role in creating one's understanding of reality and determining the manner in which one engages in social interaction. It is possible that a different approach towards culture, one that is broader than the current understanding in the international human rights system, can begin to address inherent social tensions and allow for a better understanding between various social groups. This is an important aspect upon recognizing the role that all groups play in developing a society's cultural milieu, including externalized groups or marginal sections of society.

2. The Rights of Migrant Workers⁸

Culture is an important issue in accounting for the changes that have occurred in states as a result of globalization and the mass movement of populations and post-Cold War immigrants, refugee flows whose groups tend to encroach upon accepted social practices, and the advent of relying on imported foreign labour in the majority of industrialized states. Individuals who move from one state to another maintain strong cultural roots and inherent identities.

In particular, migrant workers need human rights protection, yet have a limited capacity to assert their rights due to their tenuous social position. Given the great difficulties encountered by migrant workers, especially when asserting their human rights in a foreign land, it is possible that the human right to culture can provide a framework for the application of a variety of human rights.⁹ By considering questions like how to uphold rights to culture for foreign individuals a state could create procedures for the application of more substantive human rights. A stable framework of operative rights will better result from a group of individuals who are recognised as playing an active role in social development, rather than being granted rights by the state on the basis of general principles or haphazard policy that is too easily swayed and altered. Creating such a framework is imperative for migrant workers who are at the outer boundaries of the social process yet require a number of important and seminal human rights as a means of protection.

Migrant workers in Israel are confronted with a number of obvious key problems when considering their status and plight in a foreign land. Discrimination is one issue, particularly the unequal distribution of economic benefits and various social rights like health care that the state provides. Unfair treatment by government authorities and employers is another, as migrant workers lack the status and capacity to challenge government decisions or participate effectively in the political process. They are essentially an underprivileged class whose fate is linked to external associations like their own foreign government, which often are rather ineffective at upholding their rights; placement agencies whose sole desire is to ensure a profitable return; their current employer who is driven by the desire to employ an individual who will work for lower wages and reduced benefits without making a fuss; and governmental authorities who are beset by a host of conflicting policy decisions ranging from economic concerns to matters of religious identity. Coupled with a rising unemployment that has reached record levels for Israel, recent government policy has indicated a desire to root out and remove migrant workers, despite allowing in more of such workers for various industries like agriculture and home care for the elderly.¹⁰

The human right to culture can assist to focus on the rights due to migrant workers without losing sight of their entitled protections. Migrant workers present interesting issues given that one is dealing with individuals who are temporarily uprooting themselves for economic reasons. This should not translate into the treatment of migrant workers as economic commodities due to the social and communal interests that naturally come to the fore.¹¹

Upon considering migrant workers as autonomous spheres within society, there still exist connections to the centralised system of social relations. Even with groups like migrant workers, who might be perceived and even treated as economic entities, one cannot ignore the fact that there will be social interaction between the migrant worker and the host society. Just as important is the development of communities and organisations among migrant workers, a development that has occurred in other industrialised states that rely upon migrant workers.¹² States desiring to reap the benefits of cheap labour cannot ignore migrant workers needs. They must recognise the cultural and social implications of "importing" human beings, for the migrant workers as well as the host culture.. Given the reality producing quality of culture, the influence on and by culture for external social groups like migrant workers is unavoidable. They maintain a constitutive role in the social formation of culture, especially as their communities and groups become more cohesive and identifiable. One can discern both the order maintaining aspect of culture as their groups develop and emerge on a social level, as well as the order transforming aspect via their influence on social relations and their external activities.

The focus on the right to culture as an avenue for acknowledging the position of the migrant worker and for upholding their rights, derives from a number of changes that have occurred within Israel. The changes have largely emanated from the bottom up as a result of activities of both the migrant workers and non-governmental organizations, indicating the natural tendency of even non-recognised groups to strive for some form of social cohesion. Municipal organizations have begun to galvanize the migrant workers into organized entities based on geographic regions. Mesila for example was established by the Tel-Aviv Municipality to inform the Israeli public at large regarding migrant workers, reduce internal social tension, and acquire information regarding migrant workers.¹³ The migrant workers have created internal associations that represent their interests and act as a social voice, especially by striving for discourse. There has been the formation of migrant worker groups along geographic lines, such as UPIMA for the Filipinos (and now the Thai workers too), the African Workers Union and a group for the South American migrant workers.¹⁴

The goal of the migrant groups is to assert their role by operating in public forums and asserting the interests of their members.¹⁵ For example, these groups have been to the Knesset and attempt public relations campaigns to inform the public of their existence and intentions. Their approach is to peacefully inform the

public without invoking any political debate. They recognise the lack of a clear policy by the Israeli government and their basic demand is for fair treatment. Indeed, they desire to fully participate in the overall social and economic system and contribute to the country. The representatives feel that Israelis are cut off from the issues and do not really understand or comprehend the extent of problems and abuse that is typical for the migrant worker. The representatives for example felt the necessity to explain to the Israeli public that most of the work migrant workers do is the kind that Israelis refuse to perform.

It has been noted that there is an undercurrent of anger by the migrant workers towards many Israelis and a perceived necessity to address this problem before tensions flare out of control. The current wave of deportations and harsh treatment towards migrant workers not only results in terrible rights violations, but also entrenches the social gaps and disrupts intercultural dialogue and development.

The framework for such action derives from notions of culture as a social transforming process. Migrant workers are engaging in dialogue with the society around them and asserting the role that they inevitably play. Migrant workers are becoming part of their surrounding community due to the creation of internal groups as well as integration with external society simply because of their presence within the state. Within the context of the right to culture then, one can discern a form of applicability for the right. Such development out of the right to culture is not only a natural occurrence, but also provides the impetus for further social programs and enhancement of dialogue.

The migrant worker, even as a temporary presence, plays a significant role in the cultural development of a state, and as such is entitled to demand some type of focus on their social position and status. This in turn can influence their economic position and buttress their fundamental human rights due to them in both the civil and political as well as the social and economic sectors.

Notes

PT¹ TP

See e.g. Raz, J. (1998) *Multiculturalism* 11 Ratio Juris 193

² These are items noted in the principal human rights treaties, discussed *infra*: and see e.g. Lipkin, R. (1997) *Can Liberalism Justify Multiculturalism?* 45 Buffalo L. Rev. 1 where culture is distinguished between deliberative and dedicated cultures.

³ Kymlicka, W. (1989) *Liberalism, community and culture* (Oxford U. P., NY)]

PT⁴ TP

Smelser, N. (1992) *Culture: Coherent or Incoherent* 3 in Munch, R. and Smelser, N. (eds) *Theory of Culture* (University of California Press, USA).

⁵ Baubock, R. (1997) *Cultural Minority Rights for Immigrants* 30(1) International Migration Review 203

PT⁶ TP

Jacobson, T. and Jang, W. (2001) *Rights, Culture, and Cosmopolitan Democracy* 11(4) Communication Theory 434

⁷ Smelser, N. (1992) *Culture: Coherent or Incoherent* 3 in Munch, R. and Smelser, N. (eds) *Theory of Culture* (University of California Press, USA) at 23

⁸ The research regarding migrant workers derived from a 2001 fellowship with the Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs, N.Y.

PT⁹ TP

See *UN Migrant Workers Convention* that recently came into force following the requisite number of state ratifications mandated by the treaty.

¹⁰ Haim Bior, 'eady for work...maybe' Haaretz, August 6, 2003, p. 8, col. 5. For a more complete analysis of migrant workers in Israel, see Hammer, L. (2003) *The International Human Right to Culture as a Framework for Migrant Worker Protection in Israel* MSU-Detroit College of Law Journal of International Law (forthcoming) (contrasting the approach adopted thus far by NGOs in Israel with the right to culture); Hammer, L. (1999) *Migrant Workers in Israel: Towards Proposing a Framework of Enforceable Customary International Law* 17 Neth. Q. H. Rts. 5; International Federation of Human Rights and the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network, Joint Report Regarding the Situation of Migrant Workers in Israel (2003) (online at www.ifhr.org)

¹¹ Piore, M. (1979) *Birds of a Passage: migrant labor and industrial society* (Cambridge University Press, USA) at chapter three noting how the trend is for migrant workers to remain in a state, even if their intention was to enter on a temporary basis, due to the development of social ties and emergence of internal communal groups.

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- ¹² Regarding Europe, see e.g. *Strategies for Implementing Integration Policies*, Prague 6/5/00 at: www.social.coe.int/en/cohesion/action/publi/migrants/strateg.htm; Piore (1979) regarding the U.S.
- ¹³ The Haifa municipality also has created a similar organisation.
- ¹⁴ No groups have emerged for the Chinese and Romanian workers, the other key groups of migrant workers operating in Israel. The Chinese are heavily controlled by their Government, although they have made use of available legal challenges regarding unpaid wages despite threats from the Chinese Embassy that they will be punished upon their return to China.
- ¹⁵ The information was derived from interviews as well as a conference in Israel sponsored by the Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs.

Hashmonaim, Israel

Integration of Female Domestic Workers in Italy

Nada Bucat & Cristina Finocchiaro

Abstract: For many decades, Italy has been a country of transfer for many immigrants coming from Africa and Asia. They arrived on the Italian coasts and left soon after for the rich countries of Northern Europe. Recently immigrant workers have started to settle in Italy for indefinite periods of time. Many of these immigrants are women working as care-givers or domestic workers, filling the role traditionally performed by Italian women. Many of the immigrant women worked without legal permission until recent legislation put them on a legal basis. This paper examines the probability for cultural integration of female domestic workers in Italy. It aims to analyse the perceived interaction and exchange that female domestic workers have with local population. Secondly, it aims to understand the interest expressed by Italian employers in the culture of female domestic workers.

Keywords: integration, immigration, domestic workers, care-givers, cultural difference, acceptance, legal status

1. Introduction

The need for caregivers in Italian families is significant. The job has been traditionally performed by its female members - mothers, sisters, grandmothers and aunts - forming an invisible and unacknowledged welfare system. These women were dedicated to cooking and cleaning, the education and upbringing of children and taking care of the elderly. This invisible welfare system functioned well while Italy was a preindustrialised country with low participation of women at the labour market.

In the past 40 years, the traditional way of life characterised by huge family networks and strong liaisons between its components seems to have disappeared. Firstly, due to migration processes within the country - people moving from one to another city in Italy, leaving elder parents at the city of origin. Secondly, as life expectancy has grown the period of caring for elderly parents and parents-in-law has become longer. Thirdly, the participation of women in the labour market has increased significantly, making it impossible for women who work in full time paid jobs to also care full time for their families.

A solution for this problem was needed. Italian families employed their tradition creativeness and delegated the job to a chain of female domestic and care workers. It is important to emphasise that this need is evident across social classes, and is not applicable only to rich women. Public services are inadequate (only 0,04% of gross Italian domestic product is dedicated to the social services for families), and private services for children and the elderly are expensive.

In other parts of the world, as for example in the Philippines, educated women, mothers and wives, are leaving their own sons, daughters and parents in order to emigrate to rich European countries. Unfortunately, once in Italy the capacity of these women to care and cure is not being rewarded with rights to citizenship or equal opportunities.

2. The chain of care: Italian style

The need to replace the traditional caring networks opened the way for many foreign women to come to Italy. Actually, women are over represented in many immigrant communities in the Italian cities. Moreover, they are also the initiators of the migration cycle: women come first and afterwards invite family members to join her. The first women domestic workers came from former Italian colonies- Eritrea, Somalia and Ethiopia. Later women came from Capo Verde, the Philippines, and Latin America. Finally, after the breaking of the iron curtain women from East Europe came, too.

These workers provide health assistance to the elderly and take care of Italian's children and homes. There is no social mobility for immigrant women. Despite their education and work experience, the only employment for them is a domestic care job. All but 20% of all immigrant women are employed in domestic sector.

The only mobility they can hope for is so-called "horizontal" mobility: after approximately their fifth year in Italy these women tend to leave their "permanent maid" status and try to live an independent life. Permanent maids work and live with a family. Later, when the time comes, they will try to become entrepreneurs and manage their job/s by themselves and search for an accommodation on their own. In this case they will find more then one family and will be paid per day or per hour. These are the essential requirements in order to invite their husbands and children to join them.

Working on an hourly or daily basis ensures more autonomy and empowers these women significantly. Some of them can then initiate the difficult process of having their qualifications recognised and try to gain other employment.

3. Methodology

The research we undertook was based on a questionnaire administrated individually.¹ Taking into account frequent language problems of subjects and the complexity of the survey, we decided to tape record the entire interviews for further analysis and categorisation of some open-ended questions and their comments. These questions afterwards were analysed by three independent judges.

We interviewed 400 female domestic workers from seven countries - Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Capo Verde, Philippines, Peru and Poland - that were employed as domestic workers in Italian families for at least two years.² The research was done during the period of "sanatoria", legislation that urged the regularization of care-givers for elderly people and domestic workers.³ It permitted previously illegally employed workers and their employers to obtain the necessary documents without being penalized. This law specifies the minimum salary of care-givers and domestic workers, and defines their working time, holidays, health insurance, social assistance, maternity leave, illness, accidents and professional injury.

4. Who are immigrant female domestic workers?

The average Italian stereotypes female domestic workers as poor women without any education, coming from some third world country that is probably affected by famine or war. Even though women constitute almost a half of all regular immigrants in Italian territory (45.8%), they appear in mass media in only 18.2% cases, both for TV, journals and newspapers.⁴

The present research illuminated the otherwise obscured picture of immigrant women. What usually remains invisible is that foreign domestic workers in Italy are highly educated and qualified women. The percentage of women without any education is extremely low (7.1%). On the contrary, many of them are college graduated 46.4%, while 25.3% graduated from universities. The level of education is significantly associated with the country of origin (Hi-square = 132.51 (df= 24) $p < .0001$). Polish women have the highest percentage of high school diplomas (66%). Women from African countries are characterised with lower higher education.

In most cases the women who had come to Italy had previous work experience and had held a working position in their country of origin (68%). Only 31.5% did not have a paid job. In most cases, both husband and wife had been employed. Only 22.3% of husbands had been unemployed at the time of data collecting. Thus, we assume that it was not extreme poverty that made them leave, it is more likely that they took a decision to improve their income by exporting a wife's capacity to care and cure, even though she would sacrifice her social status and position. Most Philippine, Polish and Peruvian women had been employed, and only the majority of African women had not held any profession at the time of emigration.

Even though immigrant women bring great professional experience the only career path found in Italy, is in the domestic sector. We wondered if they knew what to expect upon their arrival in Italy. Redefining or giving up one's own professional identity is a very painful process. In most of the cases (56.6%), women knew what their new job in Italy would be. Therefore, they took a conscious decision to immigrate and make this significant change in their lives. The data suggest that the decision to immigrate was not motivated by extreme despair. On the contrary, the decision was taken by intelligent and courageous women who decided to improve their life conditions. One third (30.1%) of immigrant women were surprised to discover the limited work opportunities available for them; basically in the domestic sector - one third of our sample (35.8%) worked as care-giver for an elderly family member (26.1%) or baby-sitter (9%), and a significant part of the sample (29.2%) were taking overall care of the household (cleaning, baby-sitting, cooking).

When they first arrive, many of the immigrant women do not have adequate documents. They are supposed to have a regular work contract before obtaining a permit of stay. Otherwise, if they enter the country as tourists and afterwards start to work, it is quite difficult to change their status. At the time of the survey, 29% of all interviewed women were without permit of stay. The majority of women without legal documents came from Peru and Poland. Living without documents is a significant obstacle to women wanting to have an independent life. Women who work illegally, more frequently have live-in jobs. In this position they risk social isolation and depression, they have no health insurance or maternity leave and can be dismissed without notice.

Illegality is highest among newly arrived women. In fact, 61.3% of women without documents and rights, had arrived in the past 2 years. With the passing of time, these workers succeed in obtaining documents. Among women who have lived in Italy for 10 or more years, only 10.5% still do not have a regular contract. This finding suggests that women who decide to settle down succeed in obtaining legal documents.

5. Settling down of immigrant women: migration project and career

An immigrant woman is a woman split in two. The family of origin wants her to come back to the original country but needs the money she is sending them. The position of these women is not at all simple, as it is illustrated in the following excerpt from the interview:

Well, my family wants me to come back, still I can not come back at the moment, for the economic reasons. It is I that support them all. (Woman from Peru)

When asked about their immediate plans, only 11% of women are sure they want to go back home. Many more are undecided (36.2%), unaware that by delaying the idea of returning makes them even more rooted in the host society. A small percentage would like to migrate again, this time to some country other than Italy (5.9%). The women who nurture the idea of returning to their homelands while delaying the final decision to do so are actually contemplating “the myth of going back home”. We call this “a myth of return”, the cognitive process implemented by immigrant women who continue to believe that resuming life with their families of origin as a goal that sooner or later they will obtain. It becomes a myth as the years are passing and women remain trapped between the expectations of the family of origin that prefers her stay in Italy and help the family budget, and the nostalgia to have her close as a family member. Almost half of our sample (47.2%) will “remain” for an indefinite amount of time and for different reasons: to earn more, to help their children, or stay for good.

Those who have decided to remain in Italy try to have their family members join them. Bringing their children into the host country helps incorporate immigrants into society. For the well-being of children they will try harder to integrate, learning how to access the public health institutions, educational institutions and how to conquer the job market. The number of domestic workers living with their families triples after 10 years of residence. After approximately 3 to 5 years of stay is a crucial time for immigrant women. There is a decision to be made: to go back home, or to fight for more autonomy, private housing, regular documents that will permit them to reconstitute their own family outside of their homeland. If the latter is the choice, immigrant women will seek recognition for their qualifications and job experience and will challenge the rigid Italian social structure that inhibits social mobility.

6. The two subjects of integration

We argue that real integration of immigrants means political, social and cultural visibility and dignity of all minority and/or immigrant groups within the host society. Integration is practiced when immigrant/minority groups have equal opportunities within the host community to access employment and health services, to obtain both basic education and higher education, and to practice their right to unify with the family members. Last but not the least, the minority can feel integrated when all the above mentioned aspects can be practiced by taking into consideration the cultural codes and characteristic of both the culture of origin and the host culture. That is, when immigrants have real opportunities to nurture and express their own cultural identity.

For the subjects of this research it is not easy to practice “real integration”. The users of their “services” - children and old people - have no political power, making care-givers and domestic workers twice invisible. It took some years before some of these women become aware of their rights. Living without documents, without leisure time and with little chance of finding other jobs they remained almost sequestered by the host family. They become invisible members of the Italian family, genuinely caring, nurturing and providing emotional support to the host family. Frequently these women are not as advertisements say “young and without family”, on the contrary - they left their children, their husbands and their own old parents.

Domestic workers are unique foreigners among the immigrant population in that they have the possibility to engage with the Italian family at close quarters. We wondered if this condition could facilitate future integration or whether what happens within the families was not strong enough to assure prerequisites for integration? What was the other part of the story? How was the Italian family living with the host worker? How much did domestic workers feel accepted by the Italian family and did they perceive any interest by the host family for her culture and lifestyle?

The majority of domestic workers (56.4%) felt accepted by the employing family. A percentage of 14.3 described humiliating experiences, while the remaining 29.3% found their working experience “acceptable”. We wondered whether there was any interest in the culture of the domestic workers, and what kind of communication was taking place in Italian homes that employ a domestic workers?

Only 10% of all women reported that they had never been asked anything about their home culture, while in all other cases there was certain interest by the Italian families in the culture of origin of their employee. It is interesting to see which topics were of greatest interest for Italian families. In the first place, the most important information for Italians was the organisation of the family in the country of origin of domestic workers. In the second place, they were interested in finding out more about the economic and political situation in their countries of origin.

These first groupings of interest are probably culturally specific. Italian culture is a so called culture of contact, and low privacy distance and host families actually started their dialogue with foreign workers with very private and intimate questions: they inquired about her family members and her life experiences. This kind of disclosure may be appropriate, as the profession of domestic workers is in fact related to her ways of making family at home. In other words it could be seen as a professional selection interview that reveals family habits and values that female domestic worker will transmit into her “new family”. The curiosity then generally moved towards educational questions and schooling, continuing with curiosity about lifestyles of families. The ultimate cluster included tourism, cuisine and music. Therefore, there was an interest of the Italian families to learn more about the culture of domestic workers.

A consistent number of workers (47.7%) reported that employers knew their personal data, while 31.5% had shared their personal story with the employing family. Only 13.1% had given limited information such as previous work experience as a domestic worker, and 7.4% had not revealed anything about themselves. Our research found that the majority of women from Africa and especially from Somalia liked to be reserved.

Vice versa, there is a curiosity of domestic workers towards Italian culture. The 86% of all care workers considered themselves influenced by some elements of Italian culture that were different from their own culture. There are mainly different life styles and habits that have influenced them in half of the cases (50.5%), while cuisine and behaviours connected with eating habits, dress and costumes, the way to organize home living specifically were less represented. Eighteen percent of female domestic workers considered that interaction with Italian culture had made them more open-minded. Thirteen percent increased their independence, freedom and individualism, while only 3.3% admitted that material things had become more important for them. Therefore, the interaction and mixing of two cultures can not be seen as inconsequential.

Italians and foreign women workers are influenced at superficial and even more profound levels, where change touches personality and values. Approximately 70% of immigrant women did consider themselves importantly changed, while only 30% did not. The interaction with another culture made them feel different, and they consciously attributed this difference to the experience of the multicultural lives they were living. It made 17.9% of them feel more independent, more free and mature, while for 14.2% this experience brought more open-mindedness for the diversity. Ten percent found that their life styles, clothing and nutrition had changed, and 3.9% had become more materialistic. For 18.4% living in another cultural environment was profoundly stressful and they felt depressed, and homesick.

Living and working in the family made these women special immigrants. While single workers interact more with their co-workers in the factories and rarely have the opportunity to observe how local families cope with the everyday problems, immigrant care-givers and domestic workers are actually “participant observers.” They experience a kind of full immersion in Italian culture 24 hours per day, all year around. Still, some of them expressed the difficulties of living with double cultural identity and coping with integration. Some of them stressed the thin line between assimilation and integration. Therefore they observed, learned and criticized, revalidating their culture of origin and the host culture while exercising the everyday process of integration.

It was not easy to work for Italian families, I have changed the way of thinking and living. And when I go back to Poland I have to change again. My sister says “you are more Italian than Polish now”, while here I’m repeatedly being said “You always cook in a polish way”.

7. Conclusion

From 1970 onwards Italian families have been employing foreign domestic workers. These women were first recruited by the catholic churches and missionaries in their home countries and started the chains of employment and care from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe towards Italy.

Their joint venture had quite spontaneous origins. Changes in Italian society did not permit the traditional family care networks to continue and Italian women started to search for a valid substitute.

Rarely do we think of “eastern” or “third world women” as similar to “western emancipated women”. Yet, their choices make them more and more alike. Both European and non European women prefer paid work outside of their homes, believing they can help their families more by having paid employment, and not if being “just a mother and housewife”. Both Eastern and Western women decided to delegate the upbringing of their children to other women or institutions in order to have time to work. They both accepted to leave some other women (aunt, sister or a paid care giver) to take care of their aging parents. They both think their money may help better than their presence. Polish, Filipino, Ethiopian and other women crossed the world (sometimes taking serious risks) to find a well-paid job. Contrary to our expectations and public opinion, these are courageous women with many qualities: they are highly educated and skilled, they have children of their own.

The positions assigned to them by Italian society are not enough, and they aspire to grow and have access to desirable careers and assets. They would like to integrate all parts of their being into Italian society. Their previous work experiences and their knowledge should be integrated as well as that of their family members. At the moment the process of acceptance and integration is inadequate. There is no recognition of qualifications, no job corresponding to their studies or skills, no access to further education. Even worse is the

low social recognition and material status attributed to the care jobs or domestic work they perform at the moment.

Italians are curious about some points of domestic worker's culture but still think of her as a passer-by, a temporary worker, not as an equal citizen who intends to live in Italy for good.

Our data reveals interest and curiosity from both parties. Still, there is lot to be done before culturally different citizen will become citizens with equal opportunities. Distorted and superficial pictures of "the other" is still quite frequent: Italians perceive domestic workers as extremely poor, not very intelligent and single, while domestic workers see distant, money oriented host community with scarce capacity for close relationships. This case illustrated how slowly people gain knowledge on their companions in a multicultural society. Moreover, it showed us that the ones who should be considering change and adaptation are ourselves (the host country), not only the other.

If we all had the energy and zeal to explore our own culture and the culture of the other, we could finally give a chance for integration to happen

Notes

¹ The questionnaire was divided into three parts: the first part explored social and demographic data, migration history and family history of foreign female domestic workers. The second part treated their perception of home and family, the values and social relations both within the culture of origin and the host culture. The third part explored the interest of the host family for the culture of domestic worker, as perceived by domestic workers themselves.

² The paper is an excerpt of the larger research project entitled "The foreign domestic workers: confronting family cultures", financed by Italian National Council for Labour Policy (CNEL Consiglio Nazionale per le politiche di lavoro), within its program for the integration of immigrant workers. The research was commissioned to "Silvano Andolfi" Foundation whose main mission is counselling for local and immigrant families.

³ L. 30 July 2002, n.189, known as Bossi-Fini Law, and D.L. 9 September 2002, n.195

⁴ Censis, 2002

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AESTHETIC INTERCULTURALISM

Intercultural Visuality: Image and Memory in the Work of Theresa Hak Kyung

Sandra Song & Minh Nguyen

Abstract: The paper will examine the theoretical significance of Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's multi-media artwork to current discussions on re-inscribing alternative histories of national unity within an U.S. context. It will also examine the critical importance of Cha's multi-media artwork and text, *Dictée*, to reclaiming while simultaneously problematizing any cohesive identity within and outside of a nation-state engaged in identity politics. As a decisive theoretical manoeuvre, the second part of the project takes up the site of cultural production and its attending politics of representation to challenge and recover alternative ways to narrating history through cultural memory, and in the specific site of visual representation. In the work of Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, we will argue that she takes up this challenge by pushing to the forefront her symbolic connections to a Korean past that entwines with the real struggles of immigration and cultural assimilation to the United States. Her work suggests that our relationship to language and memory both unite and fracture any 'essentializing' narrative of identity both within and outside the borders of a unified and monolingual nation-state. Thus, the fundamental goal of the paper is to examine Cha's visual aesthetics of decolonization, displacement, and disidentification, and how her multi-faceted artwork centres around questions of language and subjectivity and their connection to memory and its fracturing impact on them.

Keywords: aesthetic interculturalism; visibility; language; memory.

Dead words. Dead tongue. From disuse. Buried in Time's memory. Unemployed. Unspoken. History. Past. Let the one who is diseuse, one who is mother who waits nine days and nine nights be found. Restore memory. Let the one who is diseuse, one who is daughter restore spring with her each appearance from beneath the earth. The ink spills thickest before it runs dry before it stops writing at all. (*Dictée*)

We open this discussion on aesthetic interculturalism with an image *of* and recitation *by* Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, a visual artist well aware of the politics of intercultural representation.

Born on March 4, 1951, in Pusan, South Korea, she was the third of five children, who grew up with the direct experience of exile. The economic and social hardships posed by the Korean War forced her family to move from place to place until eventually settling in San Francisco in 1964, after a brief stay of two years in Hawaii. Already a veteran of geographical dislocation at a young age, Cha's Catholic-school upbringing in the United States overlaid her Korean roots with Christianity and steeped her in both French and English languages, as well as Greco-Roman classics. This exposure to different intercultural influences further encouraged her artistic and academic sensibilities, all resulting in graduate degrees in Comparative Literature and Fine Arts at the University of California at Berkeley.

For Cha, the environment of formal experimentation at U.C. Berkeley and the Bay Area meshed well with her biographical roots of dislocation. They served to develop a visual narrative of fragmentation in which she flourished in and nurtured. Throughout her body of work, the themes of fragmentation and dislocation in all their multitudinous forms (i.e. linguistic, cultural, and geographic) resonate as a melancholic longing or search for an elusive cultural past of a "once was" that remains to be "elsewhere." This longing and search embody a fractured psyche that is transplanted to another place and culture. For Cha, of course, this adoption was *forced* instead of *chosen*. It forms the backdrop, or perhaps impetus of her short but powerful art career: it spans throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s, until her tragic murder on November 5, 1982, in New York City, just seven days after the publication of her book, *Dictée*.

Spanning performance, photography, print media (e.g. visual and textual assemblages) and video art, Cha's art practice was both eclectic and fertile. Despite this diversity in modes of expression, Cha's main preoccupation centres on language. Both spoken and written, language is fundamental to all of her work and is taken up in novel ways. She pushes to the forefront her symbolic connections to a Korean past, a past that entwines with the real struggles of immigration and cultural assimilation as they are mediated by language. Accordingly, Cha's work suggests that our relationship to language and memory both unite and fracture any

‘essentializing’ narrative of identity both within and outside the borders of a unified and often, monolingual nation-state.

Returning to the opening image of Cha, we see the artist preparing for an exhibition, cleaning a glass window case with the word, *viewed*, written backwards in lower case. Read at different and multiple levels, this image plays on the idea of her ‘viewing’ us from a glass division (though she does not look directly into the camera) and of her being ‘viewed’ inside this transparent case. It also alludes to her (and to us by implication) ‘viewing backwards’—as exemplified in the backwards position of the text that we see.

In all three references, language is tied to the activity of seeing, but multiple spaces open up to reveal disparate connections between sight and language. In being ‘viewed’, for instance, Cha’s artwork can represent an extension of her self. Her body is tied to language through the organs of the mouth and the larynx, which permits the articulation of words in a language system. But there is also an ironic moment in this image of Cha: being encased in a glass window with the word “*viewed*” written backwards suggests that language does not always lend a transparent connection to the world, despite the transparency of the glass case. That is, while language permits access to the world, it can also provide an impasse for those not acquainted with the rules of grammar or syntax of that given language.

The very position of the text, *viewed* as *deweiv*, is neither intelligible nor decipherable in the English language when it is read from the convention of left to right. If, however, it is read in the Asian way, from right to left, the graphemes become intelligible in the English language. This can only make sense once another convention is employed to decipher the graphemes, thus suggesting a subtle and implicit (almost unconscious) manoeuvre in which two language systems meet and transform themselves into a third language system. A space opens up to incorporate both Western and Eastern conventions. As such, it represents a *third space* or *hybrid space* that offsets the purity or domination of one language system over another. Finally, the third reading of the image alludes to Cha using language to ‘view’ the past. Here, language facilitates access to memory whether personal or collective (i.e. past in present), and as such, her incorporation of Korean graphemes in several of her installations testifies to this interpretation.

For the most part, Cha’s artwork seizes the master languages of English and French at their roots by breaking down words into their semantic parts to develop new words and new meanings, or to play with their aural and written qualities to reveal the gaps in between listening, speaking, and writing words as text. As an immigrant or exile in America, trained and immersed in two foreign languages—English and French—Cha approaches language (acquisition) from the perspective of an *outsider* living in the master’s space. In several of her pieces and multi-media installations, Cha refers to these languages with a sense of distance and consciousness that is akin to an immigrant or exile learning a new language.

Turning to the second image, which captures still-photos of a 1975 performance entitled, *Aveugle Voix* (or Blind Voice), we see these very operations of manipulation and transformation in the grammatical structure of the French language.

In this series of images, Cha is wearing a headband marked *Voix* (or voice) tied over her eyes and another marked *Aveugle* (or blind) tied over her mouth. At the same time, she unrolls a white banner with the following French text: *aveugle/ voix/ sans/ mot/ sans/ moi*. Translated into English, the statement reads *blind/ voice/ without/ word/ without/ me*.

Noting the position of the bands on the different parts of the body and their attending text in the (title of the) performance, there are multiple operations at work. First, the word as text, *Blind/Aveugle* and *Voice/Voix* bear little significance as individual, discrete words. However, their combination as *Aveugle Voix* when literally translated into English, permits the adjective to be placed in front of the noun. Yet, the rules of French grammar dictate that the noun should precede the adjective; that is, the reversal of the original text, *Aveugle Voix*, should be written as *Voix Aveugle* in order to be translated properly as Blind Voice. At work in the original title of the performance is a literal translation of French into English that confuses the convention of one language system over another: French read in the English way. Such a manoeuvre of *literal translation* from one language system into another is common to foreigners learning a new language. They struggle with the rules of grammar and correct syntax—mixing the position of nouns and adjectives from their native tongue into the host language.

Second, the position of the bands over the eyes and mouth in the first still-photo adds another dimension of Cha’s manipulation of language. She opens up the possibility that sight is blind to voice (the literal act of covering her eyes) and the voice speaks blindly (the literal translation of the text covering her mouth). Even more significant is the possibility that “the eyes hear into the space of the blind voice” that is “without word” (*sans mot*) and “without me” (*sans moi*) found in the last still-photo.¹ As Trinh T. Minh-ha (2001) notes, Cha’s performance opens up a space between the *written* word and the word that is *spoken*. Without the aid of the written text, Cha plays on the sounds of words spoken in French. *Aveugle Voix* (blind voice) could easily be understood (aurally) as (*l’aveugle voit*, or *the blind sees*).

Both expressions sound the same in French. Consequently, they demonstrate the potential gaps between words that are written, words that are spoken, and words that are heard. Hearing is blind to the spoken word without its written form. Thus, there are gaps between different parts of the body: the eyes (to see text), the ears

and the mouth (to hear text that is spoken), and the hands (to write text). While they may work together in the comprehension of a language, Cha's performance reveals their separate interventions in language as a bodily system.

Other techniques of manipulation also operate in the multi-media video installation entitled, *Exilée* or *Exiled* in English (1980). In this piece, Cha adopts the formal strategy of combining video and film to evoke the movement of time and space. This movement accompanies physical migration with the symbolic movement (or rather, stillness implied by the seizure of a moment in place and in time) of remembering that migration as a memory in video form. The textures of black and white (or light and shadow) between video and film, and within each medium, as well as the projection of a video onto a large film screen evoke an ephemeral connection between time, space, and memory. The soundtrack in the video carefully charts the time (or duration) in the trans-Pacific passage between San Francisco and Seoul. Distance in time, coupled by distance in space, is measured by the following track:²

following daylight to the end of daylight
ten hours twenty three minuits sixteen hours ahead of this time
ten hours twenty two minuits sixteen hours ahead of this time
ten hours twenty one minutes sixteen hours ahead of this time

While Cha describes a flight from San Francisco to Seoul by counting off the passing minutes, she simultaneously reminds herself of the sixteen hours that separate her from her homeland. This combined allusion to *movement* and *stasis* evokes a sense of suspension: running forward in time with the movement of minutes while remaining motionless by the fixed distance in hours, as measured by the division of Greenwich Mean Time zones that separate San Francisco and Seoul.

The next image extends this argument by fleshing out the implicit connection between language, memory, and image. In the video entitled *Mouth to Mouth* (1975), Cha records an anonymous woman mouthing Korean graphemes, or *Hangul* vowels. To an untrained Western eye, the slow pan in extreme close up focuses on the movement of a mouth, both unintelligible and indecipherable in the master languages of French or English.

Likewise, the fact that the Korean vowels are not heard, but drowned out in electronic noise with recorded water and bird sounds, further suggests a mournful loss of a native language or Cha's mother's tongue.⁴ The sound of falling water (like drops of rain) and birds chirping in flight, combined with the dominant noise and video static image that obscures the mouth in seeking to re/articulate and recover the sounds of a lost language, are all efforts to resurrect a distant past. Thus, Cha implores a *voice-resurrection* of her Korean past while the movement between light and shadow in the concave and convex positions of the anonymous mouth signifies the movement between life and death in the resurrection of that past or Cha's Korean ancestry.

Language, in this case, *Hangul*, is both at the brink of erasure while simultaneously resurrected to life in this video piece. Noise and silence co-mingle and coalesce to reveal gaps and fissures between the image track and the sound track. What is seen is often not heard, and what is heard is often not seen. Thus, the mouth that is marked by a fork tongue split between languages is one that is silenced and drowned out by another's master language or tongue. That is, Cha's quiet and poetic meditation on the movement of a mouth, which up close and in slow motion, seeks out to reclaim and to recover through articulation and enunciation of the graphemes of a lost language, is both ironic and symbolic of the dialectical relation between silence and noise, and between losing a mother's tongue³ and remembering it.

On this notion of *voice-resurrection* through image, memory, and language, Cha's book *Dictée* (1982), is both seminal and powerful. As the collage of images suggests, the book is complex because of its formal composition, one that mixes writing styles, images and voices. Moreover, it is devoted to the fictions of several women: the Korean revolutionary Yu Guan Soon, Joan of Arc, Ste. Thérèse, Cha's mother, Hyung Soon Huo, and Cha herself. Given the diversity of voices and mix of writing styles (i.e. journal entries, allegorical stories, dreams, and dictation exercises), *Dictée* is seminal and germane to discussions on identity politics inside and outside art circles. It is a direct poetic summation of Cha as a woman of colour, and as an artist, who struggled to find a voice to name the forces that shaped her.

In this provocative and experimental book, the spaces between text and image, as well as the pages themselves appear to be fragments. However, these fragments are held together by the different voice positions of women as narrated by Cha. She writes from a conscious sense of distance: neutral in tone, like a dictation exercise with punctuation and pauses duly noted in both French and English. Often, it portrays the perspective of a camera lens framing her subject, such as the case in her description of a young Korean bride preparing to get married. As the caption of the overhead reads, "the memory stain attaches itself and darkens on the pale formless sheet," *Dictée* represents Cha's attempt to mediate the pale white sheet of paper with the blackness of ink and the redness of blood to signify filial relations between a mother and a daughter, and relations that extend beyond the family to include a community of women, who are rewritten as martyrs in their own right. Thus, the book offers

a rewriting of history as a master narrative towards one that aims to recover different and disparate histories of women.

With the interspersed of English, French, and Korean throughout the book, in addition to the references to the nine Greek muses that serve in structuring the book, *Dictée* forces the audience or reader to register the uneasy alliance of language systems that mark the hybrid tongue. The style of writing often alludes to a voice that stutters and stammers to mimic a master's language. In failing to mimic the master(s) languages of French and English, the Korean narrator's voice is marked by accented inflection. It is the type of speech that implodes with interruption and fragmentation. Words and sentence fragments are decomposed, repeated, and often misspelled and mispronounced. They are isolated from each other and left incomplete.

To conclude our discussion, we leave you with this final image of Cha's artwork, entitled *Amer* (1976). Again, a sense of ambivalence resonates throughout the work. An image of a flag, in red, white and blue and with stars and stripe, resembles the American flag at first glance. However, the vertical (top-down) position of the symbolic flag-image is different from the horizontal (left-right) position of the real American flag. Thus, it serves as a *metonymic* symbol of (and for) America. But the text of the piece, which is also peppered throughout the top-left corner of the image-flag, reads *Amer*, or the French word for 'bitter.' The individual graphemes form the French word for 'bitter,' but in their different possible combinations, the word, *Amer*, could also mean, 'à mer,' or 'to the sea.' Broken down further as individual graphemes, the letters, a/ m/ e/ r/ can also combine to form the following words: *mer* (or *sea*); *ma* (or *my* in feminine form); and *mare* (or *pond*), while the pronunciation of individual graphemes in three-letter combinations could resemble a ritualistic chant: *ame*, *ram*, *mer*, *ame*, *era*, *mer*, and etcetera.

Nevertheless, in just reading the two basic combinations, *amer* and *à mer*, we see a potential connection between *being bitter* and *looking to the sea*. For many Asian immigrants and exiles, America captures both senses of the French word and meaning combinations contained in the word. Looking and referring *to the sea*, Asian-based immigrants and exiles have travelled oceans and landscapes in their real, physical migrations to another home/land. While this suggests for the immigrant or exile in America an image for hope and the pursuit of freedom, as emblematic of the American flag, the real frustrations and struggles associated with acculturation and assimilation are deftly captured in the other word combination: *amer*, or *bitter*. Living in a foreign land, despite its offer and promise of better opportunities for the immigrant and the exile, is really fraught with many frustrations and constant battles or struggles with language acquisition and cultural assimilation. In this very powerful conceptual piece, Cha deftly captures the different layers of meaning behind a flag. For the Korean immigrant or exile in America, this image-flag signifies belonging to a place that is not their own, and how that flag represents an intercultural space that is turned upside down. It echoes the multiple feelings of longing, desire, hope and happiness, highlighting the ambivalence of wanting to belong to a place (such as a nation-state) but not belonging there (as a symbolic and imaginary elsewhere).

Notes

¹ See Trinh, T. Minh-ha. "White Spring," *The Dream of the Audience: Theresa Hak Kyung Cha (1951-1982)*. Ed. Constance M. Lewallen. Prepared by the University of California, Berkeley Art Museum. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2001. 33-50.

² Here, the French word, *minuits*, instead of, *minutes*, is deliberate.

³ Here, we are playing with the idea that mother tongue can easily refer to Cha's mother, Hyung Soon Huo, who spoke Korean fluently despite being raised in Manchuria.

Living Souvenirs: Intercultural Memory, Longing and Nostalgia

Diane Powell

Abstract: In the decades following World War II, the biggest group of non-English speaking immigrants were Italian. Today Italo-Australians remain a significant cultural group in Australia. Many of the later generations maintain a strong cultural bond with their heritage. They seem to identify more as Italian than as Australian, even when they no longer speak the language fluently and have had little contact with Italy. They cleave to traces of the real memories of their parents with a nostalgia that is painful and tragic. At times it can also be frivolous and clichéd. It relies on residues of memories, objects, half-remembered songs, stories and games, traditions that resonate in people's lives with a poignancy that speaks of loss. In this paper I consider this clinging to fragments of the past as an attempt to give expression to intercultural experience, and as a practice that risks turning some Italo-Australians into living souvenirs.

Keywords: Nostalgia, longing, belonging, memory, memoir, Italo-Australians, history, identity, hybridity,

1. Introduction

At the turn of the last century Australia was a monocultural nation proud of its "White Australia" policy. Now it is one of the most ethnically diverse nations in the world. This transformation got underway following the second World War when displaced and war-weary northern and eastern Europeans were recruited to settle in Australia. When those sources dried up, the Australian Government reluctantly extended the invitation to the less favoured and darker-skinned Mediterranean groups. Italians were the most numerous immigrant settlers, and today they form one of the most significant groups.

The 2001 census people were asked to select their ethnic ancestry. Italian was the ancestry group most commonly claimed (after Australian, English and Irish). Of the 160-odd languages spoken in Australia, Italian remains the most common non-English language spoken at home.¹

Australian's ethnic ancestry

	First gen	Second gen	Aust'n born of Aust'n- born parents	Also stated another ancestry	Proportion of the Australian population	Spoke language other than English at home	Total
Ancestry	%	%	%	%	%	%	'000
Australian	1.5	15.7	82.8	24.3	1.2	38.7	6,739.6
English	18.7	21.1	60.2	41.8	0.9	36.5	6,358.9
Irish	11.4	16.4	72.1	75.8	1.1	11.0	1,919.7
Italian	30.9	44.4	24.7	33.9	42.3	4.6	800.3
German	19.0	22.5	58.5	68.3	9.8	4.3	742.2
Chinese	74.1	20.7	5.2	14.8	79.6	3.2	556.6
Scottish	28.2	26.7	45.1	57.1	0.9	3.1	540.0
Greek	37.8	46.2	16.0	21.2	68.8	2.2	375.7
Dutch	39.4	44.9	15.7	42.7	15.1	1.5	268.8
Lebanese	43.7	50.0	6.4	12.0	80.0	0.9	162.2
Indian	77.4	20.7	2.0	17.1	60.2	0.9	156.6
Vietnamese	73.8	25.9	0.3	6.0	95.9	0.9	156.6
Polish	49.3	38.4	12.3	36.7	40.1	0.9	150.9

As the table shows, 69% of those claiming Italian ancestry are second and third generation Australians, that is, they were born here of Italian parents or had Australian-born parents.

2. Context

This paper is drawn from a larger project I'm doing which looks at the different ways Italian immigration to Australia has been represented through various mediations of memory or history. I am interested in how repositories of the past – such as archives, mass media, museums, films, personal memorabilia and memories – produce different versions of events. Memory is never fixed or reliable. It offers a multiplicity of ways-of-being, in the past and the present. It is complicit with forgetting. Every instance of remembering reconstructs the past according to the present circumstances, the context, a particular trigger and so on. In the larger project I analyse several memory 'events' which give expression to the intercultural experience of living within and between cultures. One of these 'events' is the intercultural identity of today's Italo-Australians.

This paper is an initial attempt to explore and understand the ways some Italo-Australians deal with intercultural experience by maintaining a strong cultural bond with their heritage, even when they do not speak the language fluently and have had little contact with Italy. I suggest that some Italo-Australians cleave to traces of the real memories of their parents with a nostalgia that is both painful and clichéd. This leads me to wonder whether their expression of identity, based on residues of the past, risks turning them into living souvenirs of an Italy that no longer exists.

3. Italo-Australians

My project came about through research into my own cultural heritage and my experience of being brought up between two cultures. My mother was Italian and my father English. I grew up at a time of assimilation, when everyone was encouraged to forget their origins and differences, to blend in and become Australian, whatever that was. My Italian grandparents came to Australia in the 1920s, they spoke no English and my Italian was very basic. Although I spent a lot of time with them, they told me almost nothing about their past lives in Italy or their first years in Australia. Now they and the next generation have gone and there is no one left to tell their story.

Many second and third Italo-Australians have experienced a similar loss. Grandparents and parents die and children weren't interested in their stories when they were alive. Those of us now seeking to discover our pasts, in response to a real or imagined need to clarify our identity, have to rely on what we can find out through official records, exhibitions, other people's stories and the few images and objects that have been bequeathed to us. Some Italo-Australians, a generation or two removed from the immigrant experience, have an almost religious attachment to their Italianness. In my own extended family network, they marry other second and third generation Italians. Together, they pass on remembered fragments of Italian culture and values to their children, often a generation or two out of date.

To use Roland Barthes' term, they embrace an *Italianicity*: their style, language, and attitude express not exactly Italy but, as Barthes put it, "a condensed essence of everything that could be Italian".² Well, perhaps not quite. It is not exactly *Italianicity* they express, but more of an *Aussie-Italianicity*. For many, their only knowledge and experience of Italy has been acquired through their parents' memory of an Italy that no longer exists and is filtered through their Australian experience. Their *Aussie-Italianicity* is a manner and style peculiar to Italian *immigrant* culture: gestures, speech and dress they adopt to distinguish themselves from *Skips* (Anglo-Australians) and other ethnic groups.

Part of the puzzle I am exploring here is whether this mantle of otherness, this legacy from their parents and grandparents, indicates an ongoing ambivalence about identity that extends beyond the initial immigrant experience. It seems to be a testament to feeling excluded from the Australian mainstream. But, although Italo-Australians dress themselves as 'other', their culture is at once identified, and accepted, as an integral part of the Australian cultural domain.

4. Wog culture

...one thing we are not: SKIPS. No 2nd gen wog really wants to be a skip because skips have warped ideas and so do their parents. All 2nd gen wogs would much rather identify themselves as a wog than ever admit to being a skip, which we are not no matter how easy it might be to be one.³

Of course, culture and identity are not fixed but continually in flux and negotiable. There are many different Italo-Australian cultures, but *Wog* culture, as it is called in Australia, stands out as the most self-reflexive. As well as Australians of Italian ancestry, it includes those with Greek, Lebanese and other Mediterranean heritage.

The notion of hybridity in post-colonial studies is useful in explaining some aspects of the phenomenon I am researching, but is at odds with other features. Italo-Australians are neither the *colonised* nor *colonisers* in

Australia, except by implication in relation to Aboriginal Australia. As Homi Bhabha suggests in his work on hybridity, Italo-Australians do negotiate the *in-between* of cultures and occupy a *third-space* where they invent new forms of cultural meaning. But unlike Bhabha's hybrids, they do not *open up* this third space, in any forceful way, to question or extend the boundaries of established cultural practices.⁴

Self-proclaimed *Wogs* celebrate and exploit being in-between cultures, appropriating and confounding racist language and attitudes to challenge established cultural labels. Although there is hostility and aggression from some constituents, *Wogs* mostly occupy the third space with a joyful and “in-your-face” style which parodies both Australian and Italian (or Greek etc) stereotypes.

In the last decade there has been a plethora of *Wog* products: stage shows, films and television series: *Wogs out of Work*, *Wogarama*, *the Wog Boy*. Currently on television we have a sit com called *Pizza* and there is a website called *Wog Life* which includes pages of *Wog* humour, mostly sending themselves up. The site also contains pages of serious discussions about cultural identity and the struggles of living in-between, or straddling cultures.⁵

The people I am interested in don't participate in the extreme elements of *Wog Life* often depicted in these examples. They wear their Italianness as an ornament, not with irony or to subvert national identity, but rather as a tribute and recollection, becoming themselves a site of memory, or memento. I believe this is a way they express the loss of the history, language, tradition and rituals that might have guaranteed them a clear identity and a dependable framework within which to live their lives.

I have been exploring across the fields of history, cultural identity, and nostalgia in my attempts to make sense of this phenomenon and below I highlight the work of three scholars I have found useful⁶

5. Memory, history and identity

French historian Pierre Nora, in his book, *Realms of Memory*, laments the loss of the kind of memory he calls *milieux de mémoire*. He maintains that in premodern times, the past figured as a constant feature of daily life, attached like a shadow to everyday rituals and community customs.⁷

Nora believes these *milieux de mémoire* have been swept away, paradoxically, by the very preoccupation with history that has overtaken us. Global economic and cultural change and the ‘acceleration of history’ has distanced us from memory.

Instead of *milieux de mémoire*, we now have *lieux de mémoire*: sites we seek out for traces of memory, that we invest with meaning: sites might be locations, memorials, buildings, celebrations or images.

The initial Italian immigrants to Australia brought their memories with them, packed into their very being, their silent traditions and routines infused with the past. It was all many of them knew of life, of the world.

Inevitably, the children and grandchildren of Italian migrants have not been able to connect with their parents' *milieux de mémoire*. The memories parents passed on have become detached from experience and morphed into *lieux de mémoire*. They are now simply traces imbued with meaning: objects, photographs, language, songs and stories, dislocated from their past and our present.

In a magic moment I recently discovered my own *lieu de mémoire* on a website: a trace and fragment from the past, a nursery rhyme/game in Veneto dialect that I knew as a child. Finding it was profoundly moving, affirming something about my identity:



Skips and Wogs in Pizza SBS TV

*Manina bela
fata penela
dove sito sta?
da me papà
cosa ati galo dà
polentin e late - gate!gate!gate!*

(Played like 'This Little Piggy', holding the hand, and stroking the palm: Pretty little hand, like a feather, where have you been? With my father. What did he give you?: Polenta and milk. Tickle, tickle, tickle!)

The nursery rhyme really existed and Veneto was not just some funny language my family spoke, it was a language still spoken today in Italy. This *lieu de mémoire* is a tiny residue of a past that is not evident in formal histories and archival records.

The official histories of Italian immigration leave out the intimate memories that were incorporated into the flesh and bones of people: memories embodied in their voices - the songs they sang and stories they told; in their touch - in the food, wine, objects made with their own hands; integrated in the movements and activities of daily ritual.

These are the traces that Italo-Australians attempt to preserve as sites. These are what Nora calls a "buttress" against losing every vestige of their past.

Lieux de mémoire become more important as memory is depleted and replaced by reconstructed history. If minorities did not preserve memory, history would soon sweep them away. "These bastions buttress our identities, but if what they defended were not threatened, there would be no need for them."⁸

6. Intercultural expression

In Laura Marks' book *The Skin of the Film*, sites of memory and loss feature as personal rather than collective sites.⁹ In writing about the articulation of loss in intercultural documentaries, she unfolds connections between memory and the senses. She offers many insights into the ways memories reside in the senses and can be evoked not only through sight and sound, but awakened through objects, textures, touch, sounds and images. Marks describes how intercultural cinema can bring forth memory through the use of these triggers. For example, she describes a video that conveys touch, or the memory of a mother's skin by using the camera to 'caress' the folds of a silk sari.

The film-makers Marks describes are casualties of colonialism, refugees from catastrophic and horrendous events. Or they are the children of such people. Memories of such trauma can infect the next generation, even when the parents have been silent about their experiences.

It is perhaps the very silence, the unspoken, the unknown, that haunts these children and compels them to unwrap their parents' memories, to sense their parents' reality and to seek resolution. In the face of the immense grief at their loss of history and connection to their culture, they forage for residues of their heritage and cultural knowledge in personal memory, myth, ritual, images and objects.

Italo-Australians have not usually suffered the cataclysmic events and loss that Marks' intercultural film-makers have endured. But many immigrants from Italy did suffer the trauma of war and economic

dispossession. They also felt the pain of leaving their homes, families and traditions, perhaps forever. Once in Australia they did not always tell their children everything about the life they had left behind. Perhaps they were too intent on succeeding in the new country, were embarrassed about it or considered it insignificant. They may not have seen it was relevant to their children, now familiar with Australian ways and part of the new world.

But some children of Italian immigrants have inherited their parents' pain and loss. And the loss for some can be eased or resolved by embracing and keeping alive whatever Italian characteristics and customs they retain. They may not have the creative means of expressions of Mark's documentary makers. Instead they are consoled by inscribing memories on their bodies and their activities. They keep something of their



Italian Festival. Wollongong. NSW 2003

past alive and with them in the values, language, smells and tastes of their parents' Italy.

Italo-Australians use memory and their senses to evoke and maintain their particular cultural styles. A great deal of memory is evoked by the rituals, smells and tastes associated with food. As well as everyday cooking, many families and communities still get together to slaughter a pig and make salami each year, or they peel mounds of tomatoes to bottle *passata* - tomato purée, others make their own wine or *grappa*. Family celebrations at home are often reminiscent of those sit-down feasts outdoors under the grapevines that you see in Italian films.

Many Italian communities have festivals of local significance where the saint of their home village in Italy is commemorated and paraded. Some festivals have become tourist attractions such as the blessing of the Italian fishing fleet at Ulladulla on the NSW south coast. Then there are the big hybrid festas, such as the Lygon Street festa in central Melbourne, or the Italian festival in Leichhardt. Sydney's "Little Italy".

7. Longing and nostalgia

I know exactly what your talking about. I'm a 2nd gen wog and I live in the country where I'm surrounded by skips. When I go to Melbourne to visit the family all of my cousins look and act wogish but I don't. I feel like a real tool. what can you do to help me become more of a wog.¹⁰

Susan Stewart's writing on nostalgia and the souvenir in her book, *On Longing* offers telling insights into people's desire to hold onto the past. It was reading it that began me wondering whether some Italo-Australians could be seen as living souvenirs.¹¹

Stewart points out that we do not collect souvenirs of experiences that are *repeatable*, only those that are *reportable*: "events whose materiality has escaped us, events that thereby exist only through the invention of narrative. The souvenir is a substitute for experience.

In layering themselves with residues of Italian language and customs, Italo-Australians create a sense of authentic experience. But as Stewart says, this represents an artificial relationship, "not the lived experience of its maker but the 'second-hand' experience of its owner/possessor". As I pointed out earlier, most Italo-Australians experience their parents' Italy second-hand, blurred by the distance of time and geography, and filtered through their Australian upbringing.

Just as souvenirs function between distance and intimacy, Italo-Australians are both distant from Italy at the same time as being intimately connected to it through their parents.

Remnants like a battered suitcase full of photos of forgotten uncles and cousins, an old music box from Naples, or delicately crocheted doilies, fall into the realm of nostalgia. They are detached from the memories that cherished them, lost to any context, drained of purpose - they invoke only melancholy. Out of these objects a history is constructed in the present, but the objects lack, as Stewart points out, a continuous identity with their referents.¹²

There is a tinge of the exotic in Italy and things Italian. In Stewart's analysis, the souvenir, the antique and the exotic object are all appropriated and internalised by their owners. Souvenirs appropriate the past to create an imagined history that is "available for consumption"¹³. But the exotic souvenir goes further, it points to the possessor as exotic and other:

Woglife
www.wog.com.au

"The joys of being an OZWOG"

"All 2nd gen wogs would much rather identify themselves as a wog than ever admit to being a skip"

"It's not just a search for a husband (despite what my Nonna thinks)... but a search for IDENTITY"

"... wear too much hair-gel and have 'The Godfather' ring-tone on your mobile phone..."

"...stuck in a time warp..."

"Will Wog ever mean Australian?"

Woglife – www.wog.com.au

The actual heritage of most Italo-Australians is of ancestors who were poverty stricken, often illiterate, and having little knowledge of Italy outside their own villages. But they often romanticise and exoticise their Italianness in order to appropriate Italy's illustrious and long history to infer an intimate link between themselves and famous Italians - from Michelangelo and Puccini, to Pavarotti and Sophia Loren.

Susan Stewart points out that ultimately, the object of curiosity is not the souvenir itself but the person who possesses it.¹⁴ So it is, perhaps, that Italo-Australian may become living souvenirs and objects of curiosity. Especially those who identify themselves as *Wogs* and actively promote their difference and status curiosities within Australian culture.

8. Belongings

Paradoxically, Italo-Australian *Wog* identity, is acquired, perceived and maintained from within the bosom of Australian culture, by people formed as much by Australian education, language and way of life as by their parents' Italian culture. Many Italians say that they don't feel they particularly 'belong' in Australia or in Italy. But I think they are comfortable being not one or the other, but a bit of both. Rather than being ambivalent about their identity, I think Italo-Australians enjoy the ambiguity of a dual cultural identity.

...Well, according to my sister we are OZWOGZ...The good thing about it is I can be aussie when I want, and wog when I want...people may tease aussies, wogs, asians, fobs, whatever, n like on this website we tease ourselves.. But by being of more than one culture, i've seen things from more than one point of view, and i've learned and taught others not to be racist and to not to take their heritage for granted."¹⁵

In conclusion, I don't believe it is from a position of weakness that Italo-Australians express their in-between-ness. They seem to cultivate their "otherness" purposely, proudly and, in some cases, defiantly.

Whether they wear their Italianness as a tribute or use it satirically to confront mainstream Australia, they appear to do so from a secure cultural position, confident of themselves socially and culturally

Note

- ¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001 Census, Ancestry of Australia's population, and, , Australian Social Trends 1999-Languages spoken in Australia
- ² Barthes, Roland, *Mythologies*, Paladin, 1973, St Albans,:124
- ³ www.Wog.com.au 22/05/2003 10:55: 55:18pm
- ⁴ See, for example, Bhabha, Homi K 'Introduction: narrating the nation' in *Nation and Narration*, Bhabha, Homi K (Ed), Routledge, USA, 1990, or Bhabha, Homi K, *The Location of Culture*, London, Routledge, 1994
- ⁵ *Wog Life celebrating wog culture* - <http://www.wog.com.au/default.asp> and *Pizza* website of program on Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) Television : <http://www.sbs.com.au/pizza/> accessed 2/08/2003
- ⁶ Nora, Pierre, 'General Introduction, Between Memory and History', *Realms of Memory*, Columbia, New York, 1996: 1, Marks, Laura U, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment and the Senses*, 2000, Duke University Press, Durham, Stewart, S, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*, 1993, Duke University Press, Durham
- ⁷ Nora, Pierre, 'General Introduction, Between Memory and History', *Realms of Memory*, Columbia, New York, 1996: 1
- ⁸ *ibid* 6-7
- ⁹ Marks, Laura U, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment and the Senses*, 2000, Duke University Press, Durham
- ¹⁰ www.Wog.com.au 2/08/2003 10:42:03 PM
- ¹¹ Stewart, S, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*, 1993, Duke University Press, Durham
- ¹² *ibid* 145
- ¹³ *ibid* 142-144
- ¹⁴ *ibid* 147-150
- ¹⁵ www.Wog.com.au 20/04/2003

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INTERCULTURALISM EAST/WEST

The Mediterranean and Asia:

A History of their Intercultural Encounters and Related Issues in Comparative Philosophy

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Abstract: The history of interactions between the Mediterranean area (Ancient Greece) and Asia (the Near East, Persia, and India) provides a number of opportunities for the application of various approaches and models that are proposed by intercultural and comparative philosophers. According to R.A. Mall, interculturalism is a fundamental conception in contemporary European philosophy. However, it is the emergence of comparative philosophy from the 19th century European tradition that provided methodological foundations for the concept of interculturalism. In my paper, I will first examine historical perspectives on the Mediterranean-Asian cultural and potential philosophical contacts. I will provide a critical overview of some comparative models used in contemporary intercultural analyses. Focusing on the very beginnings of philosophy in Ancient Greece and in Ancient India. Using comparative models, I will highlight and evaluate their potential interactions - from historical contacts, through indirect contacts, to parallels in their respective thought. Finally, I will evaluate the importance of such historical and comparative models for contemporary issues in intercultural philosophy. My aim is to examine historical and theoretical-methodological issues in the philosophical span between Europe and Asia, finally asserting that interculturalism had, has, and will continue to have an important function in philosophical thinking.

Keywords: Intercultural philosophy; comparative philosophy; *Rigveda*; Hesiod; Greek Philosophy; Indian Philosophy.

1. Interculturalism in philosophy

In his work *Zaratustrovo izročilo I*, the Slovene philosopher I. Urbancic declares, "Today's Europe (still?) does not know *what* it should actually and entirely *want* and hence lacks an all-unifying *desire*. Europe: today this is a planet."¹ His words convey fundamental concern for the future of Europe, which is also expressed by Husserl in his lecture *Philosophy and the Crisis of European Man*. Delivered in 1935, it recognises that the crisis in Europe (speaking more than geographically) requires radical reflection and spiritual re-orientation regarding the future European-planetary man. An even more significant analogy between these thinkers is their reference to the Greco-European thought/science as 'philosophy' in opposition to 'Oriental' (such as Indian and Chinese) 'philosophies': Husserl considers these to be simple expressions of universal religious-mystical motives while Urbancic considers European thought to be the superior and *non-barbarian* element in the history of man. He writes, "Philosophy has constantly to exercise through European man its role of leadership for the whole of mankind." ("*Ständig hat Philosophie in einer europäischen Menschheit ihre Funktion als die archontische (our emphasis) der ganzen Menschheit zu üben.*")²

Nevertheless, through numerous approaches within phenomenological-hermeneutical-structuralist (Heidegger, Gadamer, Derrida), pragmatic and linguistic (Dewey, Wittgenstein) as well as other circles, the 'planetary' (European and American) philosophy of the previous century managed to create the space that at the beginning of the 21st century fosters the comprehension of philosophy as a point of encounter between thoughts from different intercultural environments and contexts. In addition, a second branch that is methodologically more open to the diversity of (non-European) thought (Herder, the Schlegel brothers, Schelling, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche...) existed in European philosophy as early as the 18th century. Scheler's well-known thesis on the necessity of the *Ausgleich* between Europe and Asian centres - India, China and Japan - presented during his lecture in 1927, was conceived within the framework of a new *world philosophy* and can be understood as an apex of a tradition already present in the European consciousness. Concomitantly, it directs us toward a topical question about the *orientation* in such thought. G. Wohlfart - with no reference to 'Oriental philosophies' - emphasises the "intercultural intelligence and competence" of the contemporary philosopher that "will have to acquire the Euro-Asian way of thinking."³ Thus, in opposition to Husserl, Heidegger and Urbancic's illustrations of spiritual crises, encounters of different cultures, philosophies and religions became a challenge for contemporary times. Therefore, one most relevant question in contemporary philosophy is: How European can 'European' philosophy (together with its Greek origins) be? To what extent is the adjective 'European' simply

one of many defining aspects of the essence of this philosophy? As a result of such inquiries, two fields other than philosophical hermeneutics appear to be topical: comparative philosophy and intercultural philosophy.

Mall considers every opportunity for the application of comparative philosophy to be intertwined with its intercultural context. He believes there is a close connection between interculturality and the hermeneutic situation in the humanities and the *ethos*; i.e., our commitment to fellow human beings, which should also be reflected in philosophical historiography.⁴ As a result, contemporary intercultural philosophy has become a place of encounter between African, Latin American, European, American, Indian, Tibetan, Chinese, Japanese, and numerous other philosophies. On the other hand, the inevitable hermeneutic circle, which arises despite openness and constant inducement towards reconsidering the role of prejudices in this movement, leads to analogous and responsible hermeneutics in this ethos of intercultural philosophising. Thus, one can assert that at the beginning of the 20th century, the contemporary philosophical research had shifted from the traditional Hellenistic-Christian-Jewish axis - the Athens-Rome-Jerusalem triangle - through the beginnings of the Neo-Hinduistic Indian (also comparative) philosophy to as far as Indian intellectual and spiritual centres (Delhi, Varanasi) and finally Kyoto. It is at this juncture that the traditional Greek name for 'philosophy' and Indian philosophical systems (*darshana*, *anvikshiki*) are joined by the Japanese name for 'philosophy' (*tetsugaku*).⁵ With these hermeneutic shifts, the history of 20th century philosophy cleared the old debt of the Hegelian philosophy of history and mind, returning to the path that it had been committed to since the times of the first contacts between ancient civilisations and philosophers of important cultural centres.

Here, in Mall's words, the field of the contemporary *intercultural-comparative* philosophy comes into creation: "This attitude, this culture of interculturality, accompanies all cultures like a shadow and hinders them from absolutising themselves; this attitude is the very condition needed for the possibility of a genuine comparative philosophy."⁶ Comparative philosophy *presupposes* the interculturality of philosophical thought. Hence, its contemporary form cannot be bound exclusively to great philosophical traditions and networks of canonised philosophers. The task of comparative philosophy is to embark on a quest for traces of intercultural encounters through history and, as expressed by G. Wohlfart, to move between the comparison as identification (xenophilia) on one hand, as well as the negative and complete absolutisation of differences on the other.⁷ A further inseparable task of intercultural-comparative philosophy, travelling along the traces of the history of interculturality, is to rethink the conception of philosophy - its origins and the contemporary intercultural hermeneutic situation.

2. History of interculturalism between India and Greece

In 1952, P. Conger published a contribution on possible Indian influences on Greek philosophy. It mentions two routes from 'India' (in the period around the 10th century BC limited to the basin of the Indus River and today's western India) to 'Greece' (a wider Mediterranean area of Greece, its islands, Asia Minor, Egypt, Italy, and Sicily). The first route ran along the coasts of the Arabian Sea while the second one crossed Mesopotamia. Moreover, Conger also indicates the possibility of a common 'Aryan' heritage of Ancient Indians, Iranians and Greeks, supporting it with results of comparative religiology and comparative linguistics. However, his conclusion is limited to Greek religion - "there is no doubt of foreign influences on the Greek religion or religions"⁸ - and not philosophy, although he also deals with Greek poets and philosophers of the Pre-Socratic period. According to him, Homer's *Odyssey* (I, 22-25), for instance, reveals the poet's supposed knowledge about Indians that refers to the thesis of the Indian origin of 'Ethiopians', later rejected by subsequent researchers. Karttunen's studies of the first documented commercial contacts, taking place in the 3rd millennium BC between Indus regions, Mesopotamia and the Arabian Peninsula (along the two routes mentioned by Conger - the more important maritime route from ports of the Indus civilisation and the land route through Iran), and his definitions of the actual contacts of the Greeks resulted in the conclusion that through neither the land route nor the maritime commercial route along the Red Sea did acknowledge India having reached Greece. He added that during the 1st millennium BC in Mesopotamia (and of course in Greece) the Vedic culture was even less known.⁹ After the arrival of Indo-Iranians in Iran and India in the second half of the 2nd millennium BC (concurrent with the decline of ancient Indian civilisation), the Vedic culture settled in the northern part of today's India and moved toward its north-western part (basins of the Ganges and Yamuna Rivers, as far as today's Bihar) in the following centuries. Documents bear witness to contacts between Greece (Mycenae, Crete) and Mesopotamia and even though Mediterranean seamen could already sail as far as India in the 3rd and 2nd millennia BC. Still, too little evidence exists to support any thesis of direct influences between the Indian and Greek cultures in this period. According to Karttunen, direct contacts between Greece and India can only be dated (on the basis of existing evidence) in the period of the Achaimenides (6th / 5th century BC): the period of Persian supremacy between the Indian and Greek worlds. Due to such restraints for comparative and intercultural philosophy of ancient Vedic and ancient Greek philosophies prior to this period, the following two possibilities for *comparative* analyses remain: the first, along the traces of relatedness in the common Indo-European heritage; the second, with regard to forms of typological similarities of doctrines without documented contacts and with

limited indirect influences (Mesopotamia). Our concluding question, though also related to the first, is mainly dedicated to the second aspect (in the sense of *the philosophy of the beginning*).

3. Some comparisons between Ancient Indian and Greek philosophies: *Rigveda* and Hesiod

The 129th hymn of the 10th book of the *Rigveda* (*Riksamhita*), which can be dated to the Middle Vedic period (1200-850 BC, the period followed by the first *Upanishads*), provides probably the first philosophical evidence for the general question of the origin of the existent. It also provides evidence for the question of the First and concomitantly, in the flow of the existent and non-existent, the continually preserving principle of all the living and non-living world. Together with other 'philosophical' *Rigvedic* hymns (10, 81-82; 10, 121, etc.), the hymn is an expression of the wish of ancient Vedic Indians to approach that which stands at the beginning of the world, enabling gods and people to come into being in this world and the world to preserve itself from day to day. Analogous to the development of Greek philosophy (Parmenides, Plato, Aristotle), within the framework of Indian philosophy, the 'first' philosophers can be recognised in the most important Upanishadic (and generally the first philosophical) thinkers: Raikva, Shandilya, Uddalaka Aruni, Yajñavalkya and others (Uddalaka Aruni and Yajñavalkya, the central thinkers of the *Upanishads*, probably lived in the 8th / 7th century. Ruben¹⁰ categorises them as the third generation of Upanishadic philosophers who lived in late 7th century, at least a century before Thales). Nevertheless, the pre-Upanishadic period with its *Rigvedic* hymns bears crucial importance in relation to the question about and the definition of the beginnings of philosophical questioning.

Apart from *Rigvedic* hymn 10, 121, one that describes the birth of the world from a golden embryo/egg (*hiranyagarbha*) and cosmic waters, the *Rigvedic* (RV) hymn 'Nasadasiya' (RV 10, 129) is the most important and most frequently translated hymn of the *Riksamhita*. The hymn can be divided into two parts: the first talks about the beginning of the world (10, 129, 1-4ab), while the second (4cd-7) describes the created world, a world populated by gods and poets who explain the new reality. The key stanzas remain the first and second, in which a Vedic poet wonders about what was there before the 'beginning' of this world. It questioned: what/how *was* it then when nothing yet existed? (v. 1a: "Then was not non-existent nor existent"¹¹). "No sign was there, the day's and night's divider" (v. 2b) - in manifold ways the answer is hidden in the mysterious language used, which nevertheless anticipates the philosophical nature of the *question* about the *beginning*. In the introductory lines, the poet removes himself from the mythological content, as gods came into being only later: "The Gods are later than this world's production" (v. 6c). Hence, the beginning is described as a state in which only the indivisible One is present ('tad ekam'; cf. Gr. 'to hén'). In the absence of any sign of life (there is no death, no human element, no immortality, no divine), the One breathes by itself: "That One Thing, breathless, breathed by its own nature" (v. 2c). The One is neither existent nor non-existent. If the non-existent had existed at the beginning, it would have already predetermined the existent, the time and space. The only thing that 'is', can, beyond this dichotomy, be understood as the enigmatic and mysterious primal void, embracing all possibilities before the creation of the world: "All that existed then was void and formless" (v. 3c). In light of the third and fourth stanzas, the first two describe the creation process of the world and life: what is necessary is desire (*kama*), the ground principle of the creation of the world in this cosmogony: "Thereafter rose Desire in the beginning, Desire, the primal seed and germ of Spirit" (4ab). Before desire, there is the spirit. Thus, the 'spiritual' - according to the majority of interpreters (including the most important Indian commentator, Sayana) - becomes the first recognisable sign of the life of the One. V. 4b contains a genitive structure that allows the possibility of the opposite interpretation - that the thought was born from love or desire. 'Kama' (desire or love) can be compared to Hesiod's 'éros' and is the principle that provides the origin from which life is born. Deussen contrasted 'kama' (and the later desire to exist - 'trishna') with the Greek expressions 'éros' and 'epithymía' (cf. Aristotle, *Met.* 984b23).¹² An even more significant comparison is offered by Hesiod (lines 116-125) in the *Theogony*: his Chaos can be juxtaposed with the Vedic conception of the beginning, devoid of the existent and the non-existent. Already West points out a selection of *Rigveda* hymns (in particular 10, 72. 90. 129. 190) that can be - together with the other theogonic literature of the ancient world - compared to Hesiod's *Theogony*.¹³ In a comparative sense and within the framework of *the philosophy of the beginning*, Hesiod has, to a significant extent, shifted from ancient mythology to an entirely *new* question of the cosmological or cosmogonical 'void' and pre-creation state. He is, more than the Indian poet, formally and comparatively compelled to expressive forms of the mythological language. Nevertheless, his Chaos can be understood as a singular philosophical *epoché*, a shift to the state before the creation of the celestial and terrestrial worlds: "Verily first of all did Chaos come into being, and then broad-bosomed Gaia [earth], a firm seat of all things for ever (...) and Eros, who is fairest among immortal gods."¹⁴ Chaos belongs neither to the order of being nor to the order of non-being. It is a "qualitative void"¹⁵ of *the philosophy of the beginning*. As such, it is comparable to the fundamental question of the Vedic thinker. The Vedic hymn also describes the initial 'qualitative void', that is neither existence nor non-existence. Just like the Vedic poet, Hesiod does not answer the question of whether something had been there before Chaos: Chaos is simply referred to as 'came to be' (*généte*).

This First Thing - Chaos ('*Cháos*', cf. 'One Thing' or 'tad ekam' from RV 10, 129) is in permanent preservation. Only from it can all the existent and the male and female poles of life arise. Hence, the Chaos - a yawning gap, a gaping void, an opening - is an image of the primal and formless *openness* of the space and the void, from which Hesiod then derives the Earth and later the Sky ('Ouranós'; v. 126). *Éros* - with a role that is analogous to that of the power of desire or love (*kama*) in the Vedic hymn - is the principle that enables Earth to conceive new gods after union in love with Sky (vv. 126-27 and 132-33).

An interpreter of Hesiod, Albert, uses the *Theogony* to relate to Scheler's thesis on the necessary adjustment of European and Asian spiritual centres.¹⁶ Therefore, some comparative possibilities encourage us to tread the path toward the tradition of *the philosophy of the beginning*. In addition to the common Indo-European heritage from which both traditions arise, the poems also bear witness to the ancient and common desire of early poets and philosophers, reaching toward the Beginning, which is hiding the First Thing, and which together with the First Principle of the existent, creates and preserves each being.

4. Conclusion

Referring back to the initial issue, it can be noted that the intercultural-comparative orientation of philosophy with its primeval 'polyarchic' function can accompany the European-*planetary* philosophy in its 'archontic function' of philosophy of man (Husserl). Following the inner *ethos* of the orientation toward the recognition of the value of expressions of thought of different cultural centres and networks - it can develop past, contemporary and future areas of intercultural philosophic comparisons. I believe that for a contemporary intercultural orientation in philosophy and its intercultural ethos, it is also crucial to reexamine those issues where no direct contacts (and therefore no direct intercultural influences) can be traced. It is precisely through this openness and comparative orientation that further possibilities of intercultural and comparative analyses can be established. Only through this new ethos in philosophy can the traditional path of monologue be transformed into the path of dialogue and, in Wimmer's terms, future polylogues that consider other traditions as equal interlocutors.

Notes

- ¹ Urbancic, Ivan. *Zaratusastrovo izročilo I*. Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 1993. 124.
- ² Husserl, Edmund Husserl, "Philosophy and the Crisis of the European Man." 29 September 2003. <http://www.users.cloud9.net/~bradmcc/husserl_philcris.html>. (Accessed 13 December 2003). "Die Krisis der europäischen Menschheit und die Philosophie." 29 September 2003. <http://www.cc.jyu.fi/~rakahu/kirjat/krisis_kleine.html> (Accessed 13 December 2003).
- ³ Wohlfahrt, Günther. "Interkulturelle Inkompetenz. Eine Glosse über die deutsche Philosophenprovinz," in *Komparative Philosophie*. Ed. Rolf Elberfeld et al. München: Fink Verlag, 1998. 11f.
- ⁴ Mall is referring to Davidson and his 'principle of charity' from *Inquires on Truth and Interpretation*. Both consider this principle as a commitment to the quest for truth and meaning in "the system and behaviour of others." (Mall, Ram A.. *Intercultural Philosophy*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000. 8.)
- ⁵ The term was introduced by Nishi Amane (1829-1897). It includes philosophers from the philosophical school of Kyoto (Nishida, Nishitani etc).
- ⁶ Mall, Ram A.. *Intercultural Philosophy*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000. 9.
- ⁷ Wohlfahrt, Günther. "Wordless Teaching - giving signs: Laozi and Heraclitus" in *Komparative Philosophie*. Ed. Rolf Elberfeld et al. München: Fink Verlag, 1998.
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- ¹¹ *The Hymns of the Rgveda*. Tr. Ralph T. H. Griffith. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1995. 633.
- ¹² Deussen, Paul. *Allgemeine Geschichte der Philosophie mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Religionen: Erster Band, Erste Anteiung: Allgemeine Einleitung und Philosophie des Veda bis auf die Upanishad's*. Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1915.
- ¹³ West, Martin L., ed. *Hesiod: Theogony*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966.
- ¹⁴ Ed. Kirk, G. S. *The Presocratic Philosophers*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999. 35.
- ¹⁵ über. von Karl Albert. *Hesiodus: Theogonie*. Sankt Augustin: Academia Verlag, 1998. 23.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*

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East Asia in the Art of Roy Lichtenstein

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Abstract: In my presentation, I intend to examine those works of Roy Lichtenstein which are related to East Asia. I have assigned individual pieces within this subset of works to one of three artificially constructed categories, each of which reflects the specific manner in which Lichtenstein was inspired by East Asia: The first category contains those works in which Lichtenstein includes East Asian pictorial elements; the second, works in which he alludes to or uses East Asian material and techniques; and the third, containing works of Lichtenstein in an East Asian setting. Though the delimiting criteria do not always permit an unambiguous assignment to a given category, they do serve to highlight key characteristics of the reception of East Asia in the art of Roy Lichtenstein.

Keywords: Roy Lichtenstein, art, East Asia.

1. Introduction

Globalisation increases the tendency towards a hybridization of East and West in contemporary art throughout the world. Even an icon of American Pop Art like Roy Lichtenstein (Slide 1) was inspired by East Asian art. As Lichtenstein's work is usually associated with blond cartoon girls and motifs from the world of advertising, one may be surprised to find in his art connections with classical Chinese landscape paintings, delicate fans and handmade Japanese paper. The constant engagement with the classics of modern European art is a major characteristic of his art. The fact that he engaged not only with Western – that is to say his own – culture, but also with that of East Asia, has yet to receive any scholarly attention thus far.

2. Works in which Lichtenstein integrates East Asian pictorial elements

Let's open the discussion with a closer look at the first group. In early 1994 Lichtenstein saw the exhibition *Degas Landscapes* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York¹, and was extremely impressed by some black and white monotypes (Slide 2). Later, he explained that it was mainly their atmosphere that reminded him of classical Chinese art (Slide 3).²



Slide 8

He started visiting exhibitions on Chinese landscape paintings in New York, Washington, and Boston, and acquired books that he used directly as a source of inspiration for the painting series, *Landscapes in the Chinese Style* (Slide 4). Neither the stylistic resources upon which he drew – Benday dots and bold black outlines – nor the media he uses – oil and magna on canvas – are in any way new to his oeuvre. Here, they are instead employed to emphasize some key characteristics of Chinese ink painting. By varying the size of the dots, Lichtenstein achieved different shadings and enormous depth. Bold black outlines create analogies to Chinese ink painting by establishing accents and emphasizing details like boats and bridges.

Furthermore, he used Chinese landscape painting to enhance certain aspects of his art which had fascinated him throughout much of his artistic career: The broader genre of landscape painting, which he had approached from manifold viewpoints, can be found throughout his work (Slides 5/6). Already in the 1960s, he is concerned with reduction and abstraction. Likewise, cultural clichés have always been an important aspect of Lichtenstein's art (Slide 7). In his so-called "Chinese" painting series, we find the artist humorously playing with the clichés of Western viewers and integrating them consciously into his work (Slide 8). The title of the series *Landscapes in the Chinese Style* is in itself an ironic hint for the absurd generalizations about Chinese art in currency in the



Slide 9

Western world. It is interesting that the curators of exhibitions in Singapore and Hong Kong changed the title slightly, taking out the "the" and turning it into *Landscapes in Chinese Style*. Such a change underscores that in China, as in Europe, there is certainly not just one single style of landscape painting.

Looking closely at the tiny elements in the "Chinese" paintings, we find figures with rice picker hats walking across bridges or sitting in fishing boats (Slide 9). What is striking is that neither this type of hat nor bridge is in any way typical of classical Chinese landscape painting. Yet both of these elements are extremely familiar to a Western viewer and immediately trigger associations with East Asia. Therefore, it does not matter that in fact some of the bridges, for example, are much more Japanese than Chinese.



Slide 13

"Oriental" Still Lifes – all reflect the blending of East Asian pictorial elements with American culture. Moreover, the artist was fully cognizant of what he was doing. In an interview in 1983, he says:

I would hardly see an Oriental influence in my painting. I've done some "Oriental" subjects. But it's an Occidental world view of Oriental ideas. I mean, it has a viable frame and a table, an Oriental table, an Oriental bowl, and a dragon, it's very cliché, and a bonsai tree, and another bowl. It isn't specifically either Japanese or Chinese. I mean it's such an idiotic view of the Orient. And I've done a couple like that that have kitschy objects in them and pretend to be Oriental. 4

3. Works in which Lichtenstein alludes to or uses East Asian media and techniques

Let's now take a look at the second group, the works in which he alludes to or uses East Asian material and techniques (Slide 15). In 1984 Lichtenstein was asked to take part in a project and design a lacquer piece of "applied art". The idea was to create "a new concept for functional art, based upon the ancient Asian art form of lacquer decoration, to be achieved by combining American modern art with new European technology and craftsmanship in a series of giant lacquer furniture pieces."⁵ Lichtenstein decided to design a monumental lacquer folding screen. To begin, he created a full size maquette for a five-panel screen with brushstrokes both on the front and the back.⁶ It was then shipped to France, where the final lacquer screen was fabricated (Slide 16). The lacquer technique used for this screen differs vastly from the original East Asian technique. The main difference is certainly the material used for the layers applied on the wood. Instead of using the sap of the lacquer tree, which is called *urushi* in Japanese, six layers of polyester were used in France to create Lichtenstein's screen. Instead of polishing the final layer, typical for the classical East Asian lacquer technique, a special coating was applied to make the "lacquer" even shinier. Lichtenstein's brushstroke screen reflects the perception of East Asian culture in the West through two ways. First, as with the folding fan, the bonsai tree or the Japanese bridge, the choice of the folding screen was another Asian element that has become extremely popular in Western culture and at the same time still associated with the Far East. Second, by using a Westernised lacquer technique, he stresses even more strongly the blending of East and West.

The next example out of the second group is the *Seven Apple Woodcut* series he did in 1983 (Slide 17). In these works the artist used both Japanese techniques and material. The illustrations were printed on handmade Japanese paper in collaboration with two woodcut masters trained in Japan. Despite Lichtenstein's use of Japanese woodcut printing, the manner in which he employed this media and technique was very much his own. Let me quote an eyewitness, Raymond Foye, who supervised the project:

At first I didn't understand Roy's approach to the traditional Japanese woodcut – I found it to be quite opposed to what I considered the nature of the medium. Why seek hard flat colours when the potential for

delicate overlays was inherent? Why not use the grain of the wood? Why work with primary colours when exotic pastels were available? But slowly as the prints evolved I realized he *was* working with the tradition, or rather he was making the tradition work for him...

In these works Lichtenstein was less concerned with the stereotypical perception of East Asia in the West, and more with developing certain characteristics of his own art. Within the context of Japanese woodcut printing, he concerns himself with a subject matter that permeates his entire oeuvre: the brushstroke. In his apple woodcuts, stylized brushstrokes form the fruits. Again, he gets very close to the boundary of being abstract, though without actually crossing it.

4. Works of Roy Lichtenstein in East Asian settings

Now let us turn our attention to the third and final category and look at those works of Lichtenstein situated in East Asian settings. The first case that I would like to consider is found in Zurich, Switzerland (Slide 18). Last June, a brushstroke sculpture was installed on the Blatterwiesen next to the Zuri lake in front of the China garden. Looking at one of the apple woodcuts – *Apple with Grey Background* – it becomes clear where Lichtenstein took the brushstroke from: he had literally cut it out from one of his prints and turned it into a model for the brushstroke sculpture (Slide 19). I discovered this connection in the spring of this year at the Roy Lichtenstein Foundation. On the slide one can see the paper model standing next to one of the prints. But even without knowing that this brushstroke has its origin in Japanese woodcut printing, because of its placement in front of the China garden it has become a fascinating encounter between American and East Asian culture in the middle of Europe.



Slide 21

In the early 1990s Lichtenstein was asked to take part in a public art project in Tokyo (Slides 20/21). He, together with nine other well-known artists from the US, Europe and Japan, designed works for the Shinjuku I-LAND, a prestigious and expensive area of Tokyo.⁷ Again, Lichtenstein chose the brushstroke motif.⁸ His original sketches reveal what Lichtenstein first had in mind when designing the sculptures. On one of the sketches he had scribbled: "is there a simple Japanese calligraphy that stands for some ideal: friendship, peace, etc..." (Slide 22). Later he was to find such a Japanese character: *tōmo*, Japanese for *friend* (Slide 23). However Lichtenstein did not simply enlarge the character in its original form, but first deconstructed it, putting the individual pieces together in a completely new manner.

The final sculpture project that I would like to talk about is the *Singapore Brushstrokes* (Slide 24). They are a series of six sculptures created in 1996 for the Pontiac Land Group and installed in the Millennia Plaza, Singapore (now known as Roy Lichtenstein Plaza). The brushstroke itself had been an important and recurring subject in his art throughout his life, the connection to East Asia being emphasized, interpreting the *Singapore Brushstrokes* as a "bridge between East and West." In a commentary written for the Pontiac Land Group, Brooks Adams declares:

...Lichtenstein saw the Six Brushstrokes in a self-conscious relation to Chinese calligraphy. Indeed, they are a fusion of East and West, the masterful flourishes of the Chinese tradition blending with the heritage of the Abstract Expressionists, who are, after all, the Western calligraphers par excellence.⁹

To assert that Lichtenstein's *Singapore Sculptures* are direct descendants of Abstract Expressionism and to call the Abstract expressionists "Western calligraphers" is certainly highly questionable and simply another use of stereotypes. The commissioners are making use of the name and myth of Roy Lichtenstein as a well-known American artist, and connecting them with the clichés of Asian calligraphy. However, to embark on a discussion of this in further details would certainly go beyond the scope of this paper. The point I am making is how a simple but global phenomenon like a brushstroke can become a bridge between Western and Eastern culture due to its deep but differing significance in both Western and East Asian art.

5. Summary

In the course of today's discussion we have seen numerous examples illustrating how Lichtenstein takes East Asian art, materials and techniques as a source of inspiration, and uses it to develop certain aspects of his own art: landscape painting, reduction and abstraction, each of which has fascinated him throughout his artistic career. Humorously, he plays with visual clichés entertained by the Western viewer and integrates them consciously into his work. From his art, one learns less about East Asian art and culture itself, than about the manner in which it is perceived in the West and how it has blended with Western culture. Therefore Lichtenstein never creates pseudo-Asian copies, but genuine and unmistakable "Lichtensteins".

List of Slides

- 1 *Girl with Hair Ribbon*, Roy Lichtenstein, 1965, oil and Magna on canvas, 121.9 x 121.9 cm.
- 2 *Moonrise*, Edgar Degas, ca. 1877-79, Monotype, 11.9 x 16.1 cm.
- 3 *Mountain and Lake Landscape*, Xia Gui (active 1190-1220), Tusche auf Seide, 26.8 x 230.9 cm.
- 4 *Landscape with Boat*, Roy Lichtenstein, 1996, oil and Magna on canvas, 149.2 x 244.5 cm.
- 5 *Sky and Water*, Roy Lichtenstein, 1985, oil and Magna on canvas, 167.6 x 243.8 cm.
- 6 *Littoral*, Roy Lichtenstein, 1964, oil and Magna on canvas, 91.4 x 172.7 cm.
- 7 *In the Car*, Roy Lichtenstein, 1963, oil and Magna on canvas, 172.7 x 203.2 cm.
- 8 *Landscape with Boat*, detail, Roy Lichtenstein, 1996, oil and Magna on canvas, 149.2 x 244.5 cm.
- 9 *Landscape with Bridge*, Roy Lichtenstein, 1996, oil and Magna on canvas, 261.6 x 127 cm.
- 10 *Japanese Fan*, Roy Lichtenstein, 1992, painted and printed paper, marker on board, 38.4 x 53.3 cm.
- 11 *Interior with Bonsai Tree*, Roy Lichtenstein, 1991, oil and Magna on canvas, 299.7 x 355.6 cm.
- 12 *Bonsai Tree*, commercial ad in Roy Lichtenstein's Composition Notebook.
- 13 *Oriental Landscape*, Roy Lichtenstein, 1973, oil and Magna on canvas, 178 x 106.5 cm.
- 14 *Paintings: Oriental Still Life*, Roy Lichtenstein, 1984, oil and Magna on canvas, 101.6 x 152.4 cm.
- 15 *Maquette: Screen with Brushstrokes*, Roy Lichtenstein, 1986, painted and printed paper on board, 239.4 x 342.9 cm.
- 16 *Screen with Brushstrokes*, Roy Lichtenstein, 1986, lacquered wood with relief, five panels, 239.4 x 342.9 cm.
- 17 *Red Apple and Yellow Apple*, Roy Lichtenstein, 1983, woodcut on handmade Iwano Kizuki Hosho paper, 70.8 x 95 cm.
- 18 *Brushstroke*, Roy Lichtenstein, 1996/2001, painted and fabricated aluminium, 983 x 640 x 183 cm.
- 19 *Apple with Gray Background*, Roy Lichtenstein, 1983, woodcut on handmade Iwano Kizuki Hosho paper, 63.9 x 67.9 cm / *Brushstroke: maquette for sculpture*, Roy Lichtenstein, 1996, tape, painted and printed paper, foam core.
- 20 *Tokyo Brushstrokes I*, Roy Lichtenstein, 1994, painted and fabricated aluminium, 1005.8 x 284.5 x 228.6 cm.
- 21 *Tokyo Brushstrokes II*, Roy Lichtenstein, 1994, painted and fabricated aluminium, 593.7 x 266.7 x 99.1 cm.
- 22 *Sketches for Sculpture: Tokyo Brushstroke I*, 1993, graphite on paper, 74.05 x 31.12 cm.
- 23 *Sketch for sculpture: Brushstroke Sculpture Friend*, Roy Lichtenstein, 1993, graphite and coloured pencils on paper, 31.1 x 21.6 cm.
- 24 *Singapore Brushstroke A-F*, Roy Lichtenstein, 1996, painted and fabricated aluminium.

Notes

- ¹ See Kendall, Richard. *Degas Landscapes*. New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1993.
- ² Dorothy Lichtenstein in conversation with the author, New York, 20/06/2001.
- ³ Dorothy Lichtenstein in conversation with the author, New York, 03/06/2003.
- ⁴ Porter, Melinda Camber. *A Conversation with Roy Lichtenstein* (unpublished).
- ⁵ Proposal for the project Real American, "Precious Metal", Hi-Gloss Pop: A Modern Art Exhibition (Giant Variations on the "Applied Art" Theme, Las, Pascal /Craig Braun/Lana Jokel, (New York, 23/01/1984, unpublished), p.1.
- ⁶ Size of the brushstroke screen: 239,4 x 342, 9 cm.
- ⁷ The other artists who took part in the project were Daniel Buren, Luciano Fabro, Robert Indiana, Sol LeWitt, Hidetoshi Nagasawa, Katsuhito Nishikawa, Giulio Paolini, Guiseppe Penone, Gilberto Zorio.
- ⁸ The size of the larger sculpture: 1005,8 x 284,5 x 228,6 cm; of the smaller sculpture: 593,7 x 266,7 x 99,1 cm.
- ⁹ Adams, Brooks. *Six Brushstrokes: A Commentary by Brooks Adams*. Singapore: Pontiac Land Group, 1998.

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Independent Travellers and Southeast Asia

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Abstract: My paper is a description of the economic, social, and cultural impacts of independent travellers on Southeast Asia. My findings will draw upon academic research and my own independent travels and work in the region. Independent travellers (backpackers/budget travellers) from developed nations are culturally and economically influential in South East Asia. While package tours and upscale tourists frequent well-trodden destinations, independent travellers seek off-the-beaten-track sights and gravitate towards basic local establishments. The relative simplistic form of travel stimulates an infrastructure for backpackers in South East Asia. Popular backpacker destinations provide an impetus for locals to establish tour operators, restaurants, accommodations, etc. to meet the needs of the growing economic sector. Consequently, it is not uncommon for small towns and villages to depend on tourism as a main source of income. Cultural misunderstandings and miscommunication between locals and independent travellers are common. Ideas, mannerisms and lifestyles are easily misunderstood due to language barrier. More importantly, the omnipresent dichotomy separates the locals and backpackers into distinct groups with incomprehensible differences. Many independent travellers choose to view South East Asia as a region that is "simple" and less hectic than developed nations. Quite often backpackers would deem a place as "spoiled" if any trace of development is evident. Many choose to allow only the image of "primitive" locals as authentic. Conversely, many locals in the industry believe that tourism is their path to development. Tourism is one of the largest industries in the world and modern technology and transportation enables different nationalities to physically meet and interact. However, with the myriad of cultures in the world, fostering understanding requires a realistic understanding and view of different groups through mutual respect.

Keywords: Tourism, Economics, social and cultural impacts, independent travellers, Southeast Asia.

Southeast Asia has been a popular destination for independent travellers (budget backpackers/backpackers) since the early 1970's. The region's cultural and religious aesthetics, warm climate, and natural scenery have attracted first-time and returning backpackers. As a region that contains some of the world's poorest countries, Southeast Asia views tourism as a source of foreign exchange and tool towards economic development. Despite the region's primary interest in luxury tourism development, an independent traveller infrastructure has organically developed to cater to the needs of such tourism. Whether travelling independently for spiritual, hedonistic, economical, and or educational motivations, independent backpackers impact destinations economically and culturally.

With the availability of discounted airfares, guidebooks, established or emerging infrastructure, and relative wealth, travellers are able to explore Southeast Asia independently. The average traveller prefers to travel alone, is educated, European, middle class, single, obsessively concerned with budgeting his/her money, and at a juncture in life.¹ In addition to European travellers, a growing number of independent travellers come from Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, South Korea and the USA. Travelling with a partner from home is also common, and families' sojourning together is an emerging trend. While the motivations for travel are wide and varied, destinations on the traveller circuit have the following qualities: economical, naturally attractive, friendly locals, blends local resources with travellers' amenities, significant traveller population and low impact tourism development.

Independent travellers first appeared in masses during the late 1960s and early 70s in Southeast Asia. Travelling without itineraries, the original travellers were called "drifters." Many went overland from Europe to Asia on a route called the Hippie Trail. Drifting was a form of rebellion against the security and affluence of the modern world. Vogt's research in 1976 contends that the primary motivations (for travelling independently) was the quest for personal growth, which is achieved through autonomy in decision-making, stimulation in daily life, learning through exposure and detachment, and transient yet intense interpersonal relationships.² By using cheap local transports or hitchhiking, drifters felt they were having more authentic experiences than packaged tourists. Many travellers at the time were in their late teens or early twenties.

Over the years, as independent travel has become more accessible, people of varied economic backgrounds and age groups have chosen to travel independently for cultural, economic, educational, spiritual and hedonistic reasons. Ironically, many travellers believe that their presence is normally the beginning of the "opening up" of a town or village to mass tourism. As a destination becomes more popular with tourists, independent travellers seek out new places that have not been "spoiled" by tourism. It is not uncommon for independent travellers to go for a few weeks or as long as a year travelling overseas.

Independent travellers whom I've met in Southeast Asia expressed that some of the reasons they chose the region as a destination were to experience the cultural and religious aesthetics and a slower pace of life; to learn from countries with fewer material wealth; and for the warm weather (sun, sea, and water sports). Many travellers viewed Southeast Asia as a region that globalisation has not entirely marred. Thus, experiencing it (before it is developed) provides them an alternative view of the modern world. By travelling with minimal possessions and experiencing societies of less material wealth, travellers hope to learn from and appreciate the countries they visit, and gain a more broad view of their own culture and life. During winters, many travellers flock to Southeast Asia's numerous islands and beaches for the year-round warm weather and lively nightlife.

Over the years, the increase in the number of independent travellers has resulted in a popular circuit and an infrastructure evolved to help travellers visit these popular destinations. Consequently, instead of spending most of their time interacting with locals, travellers seek each other out for advice, support, and social activities. Only the most intrepid travellers seek out uncharted territories and avoid the backpacking ghettos. This paper considers independent travellers as people who are not on group tours and prefer to frequent local establishments.

In 1958, a research mission commissioned jointly by the US Department of Commerce and the Pacific Area Travel Association (PATA) published the Checchi Report after visiting the Pacific and Far East. It claimed that international tourism was "virtually nonexistent" in countries like Indonesia and far below its potential everywhere. The Checchi Report called for a quadrupling of tourism in the area between 1958 and 1968.³ Consequently, the World Bank Group (IBRD), International Finance Corporation (IFC) and International Development Association (IDA) provided aid money to encourage international tourism in underdeveloped countries. These organizations primarily provided loan and equity investments in privately owned businesses, as well as physical infrastructure for large tourism complexes such as international standard hotels. However, given the extremely high import content of luxury tourism such as in high-end hotels, the net foreign exchange gains of luxury tourism are often quite small.⁴ Concurrently, as development for mass tourism was underway, entrepreneurial locals accommodated for the increase in budget conscious independent travellers in Southeast Asia. Because travellers generally prefer economical local establishments, more authentic experiences, and are on budget constraints, enterprising locals quickly saw the demand for this market and built budget guesthouses, bungalows, restaurants, etc. to cater to this segment of tourism. Despite the fact that independent travellers spend less than mass tourists, locals also gain in foreign exchange since most goods and services are locally produced.

Since the Checchi Report, Southeast Asia has become an international tourist destination for mass tourism and intrepid travellers. According to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), international arrivals to the region reached 42,202,266, accounting for a 7.83% increase compared to the year 2000 despite the negative growth (-0.6%) in world tourism performance in 2001. According to the Tourism Authority of Thailand, in the year 2002, 54.34% of the 10,872,976 visitors were classified as "Non Group Tour" as oppose to 45.66% who were there under "Group Tour".⁵ Travelling independently is becoming a norm not just with young travellers but low cost airfares and guidebooks have made it a more viable option for everyone.

To many locals and governments in Southeast Asia, tourism is an "export." Independent travellers are a branch of mainstream tourism, a source of foreign exchange, income, and aid towards development. Independent travellers in masses are influential in "discovering" future tourist destinations, creating new jobs and in certain cases, becoming an intricate part of the local economy. Despite their frugal form of travel, independent travellers are well aware that they are more economically privileged relative to locals. Therefore, where and what ever they go and do, travellers do not deny that their presence in large numbers inevitably induces significant changes to the social, economic and cultural fabric of destination sites over time.⁶ Unfortunately, most destinations have been developed organically with short-term profit motivations, ignoring their carrying capacity limitations. Most commonly, a destination's growing popularity attracts foreign investment for mass tourism: local landowners either goes into partnership, lease or sell their land to investors. Consequently, tourist establishments cater more to luxury tourism. The destination's economy becomes inflated for locals, and travellers become gentrified and are left to seek new and more remote destinations.

Independent travellers were instrumental in influencing the "alternative tourism" market for hill tribe trekking in northern Thailand. From the early 1970s, hill tribe trekking became increasingly popular with independent travellers in search of authentic experiences in their travels. As a result of their growing numbers, a budget trekking niche emerged from routine mass tourism. Because of the small capital investment needed to start these trekking companies, many locals and later tribesmen opened tour-operating establishments to cater to budget trekkers. Though the prices which the jungle-companies could charge their "shoe-string" travellers were only a fraction of the price of the tours offered by the tourist agencies, and that their own profits and the income of their guides were low in comparison with those prevailing in the mass tourist establishment, the business of jungle trekking attracted growing numbers of locals.⁷ Hill tribe trekking targeting independent travellers has become an important part of the local tourist market.

For many island communities, their introduction to tourism normally derives from independent travellers' intrepid discoveries. Unfortunately, because of their remoteness, size and lack of alternative resources, islands easily depend on tourism as a main component of their economy. For example, Haad Rin beach on Koh

Phan Gan, Thailand became the new independent travellers haven after the Thai government began large-scale tourism development on its neighbouring island, Koh Samui. The island's isolation from the mainland and lack of infrastructure kept mass tourism out, and independent travellers flocked to the new "paradise". Because of the island's remoteness to the mainland, local strongmen and families were the enforcers of law and order. Because of the travellers' relative wealth, a natural alliance developed between them and the local strongmen, who stood to gain from their presence.⁸ In May 1989, in response to the insistence of the travellers, Haad Rin had its first Full Moon rave where party drugs were easily attainable, and pounding electronic music kept everyone up until the next day. When the reputation of the island spread to the outside world, pressure was put on the Thai government to crack down the lenient policies of hedonistic tourism. The new policy resulted in a significant decline in travellers and the local tourism industry suffered tremendously. Subsequently, the Thai Narcotics Suppression Agency and the local operators had to recognize the importance of keeping Koh Phan Gan attractive to independent travellers seeking hedonistic holidays. Because of a lack of an alternative clientele and missing the necessary infrastructure for mass tourism, independent travellers have become a necessary part of the local economy.

While independent travellers can have a strong impact on the local economy, it is important for tourism development to have long-term goals, incorporate carrying capacity restrictions in their policies and develop with local benefits in mind. The locals of Boracay in Philippines developed for tourism in the early 1970s. In response to a trickle number of travellers on the island, locals built rustic cottages, provided locally grown foods to the guests and considered their service as extra income. By 1981, the island became a popular international traveller destination, and the Ministry of Tourism of the Philippines declared the entire island a Tourist Zone in 1981. The growing popularity of the island caught the interest of foreign investors to attract mass tourists. By 1996, there was an increase in largely foreign-owned and foreign-staffed hotels. They attracted packaged tourists who mostly frequented the hotels' restaurants, gift shops, and other tourist establishments, resulting in a tremendous amount of leakage of income and employment to non-Filipinos.⁹ The development of Boracay for mass tourism pushed independent travellers out, and tourism became less of a financial security for locals with small bungalow businesses. Additionally, the short-term profit seeking development plans of the island ignored long-term environmental planning and carrying capacity issues such as the treatment of sewage waste. In 1997, the waters of Boracay were declared contaminated due to inadequate sewage treatment. Tourism dropped significantly overnight. The Philippine government has promised to improve infrastructure, but the aim is still catered for luxury tourism.

Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia and Myanmar are recent popular independent traveller destinations in Southeast Asia. Like their neighbours, the governments have embraced luxury tourism as opposed to recognizing the importance of the independent traveller niche. In 1996, foreign investment in tourism was second to that of oil and gas, according to the Myanmar government. The Cambodian Ministries of Tourism and Environment, assisted by the United Nations and Worldwide Fund for Nature, also chose tourism as a major component of the country's redevelopment strategies for conservation and rural communities. However, studies have shown that the lack of proper transportation infrastructure and training of locals in the tourism industry to meet high-end tourists in developing countries cause unsatisfactory experiences for visitors.

Few governments have viewed the independent traveller niche in tourism as a permanent niche in the economy, perhaps because they offer less in economic and certainly in political terms to the ruling elite. Additionally, some governments and locals fear that independent travellers due to their laid-back lifestyle and relative travelling freedom to package tourists might have a negative influence on their society and social values. However, part of the traveller's desire for local establishments is to experience another way of life and support local development. Governments can take advantage of this motivation and acknowledge the importance of independent traveller's towards long-term sustainable tourism development.

Language barriers, economic disparities, and unrealistic preconceptions between travellers and locals of each other cause cultural misunderstandings and miscommunication. Due to the profitability of tourism, locals in the service industry are more inclined towards accepting traveller behaviour even if they are being culturally insensitive. With the traveller infrastructure in existence, independent travellers tend to gravitate towards each other for support and companionship, resulting in a "mini-bubble". Within the "mini-bubble," rules and understandings of local culture are distorted. Because they remain in the confines of a traveller establishment, the locals liberate their cultural tolerance levels towards travellers. Travellers are sometimes unaware of their offensive actions. Consequently, being in a "mini-bubble" and being in contact primarily with locals in the service industry presents an unrealistic representation of both groups. Cultural misunderstandings thus arise.

There is a parallel between the increase in tourists and the decline in friendliness of locals. With the rising number of visitors usually come longer work hours, more frequent misunderstandings and a reduced level of personal closeness between hosts and guests. Many locals working in the service industry are migrant workers, hence view the space as work and travellers' relationship with the destination as play. In many instances, the demand of the money makes locals sacrifice their traditional tolerance levels of conduct.

In affected destinations, local young people are most susceptible to the impact of the "demonstration effect" where locals may become dissatisfied with their own standards of living or way of life, and try to copy

the habits and way of life of tourists. This may include discarding traditional dress and purchasing products used by tourists. Therefore, consumption patterns may change.¹⁰ While backpackers can wander for extended amounts of time on a shoestring and do not consider themselves to be rich, locals see their carefree lifestyle as a luxury and envy their freedom to move around and see places. A shoestring lifestyle seems lavish to locals who will never be able to leave their country or travel to other countries due to economic or political reasons. However, for countries with strict foreign media censorship, independent travellers can provide an outlet of the outside world and learn on first-hand the conditions of those countries.

The normal haphazard and organic development of tourism in Southeast Asia results from inexperienced locals who are uncertain of travellers' tastes and preferences and their inability to communicate with them. While travellers do prefer a modest form of comfort, they also desire authenticity of the culture. In popular traveller destinations, many establishments consist of bars and restaurants with western food or modified local foods for foreigner tastes. Due to the saturated foreigner inspired establishments, a common complaint from travellers is the lack of authentic local cultural establishments in travellers' ghettos. While travellers may not be as adventurous as their drifter precedents, many are curious and open minded enough to explore and respect foreign cultures and customs if told of their social or cultural blunders.

For many independent travellers, the culture shock of being in Asia is exacerbated by the confusion of the symbolism of the visited culture and the inability to neither communicate clearly nor comprehend the local language. English has become the common language between travellers and locals. While group tours are taken care of by escorts and guides, individual backpackers come directly into contact with locals to seek accommodations, travel advice, transportation schedules, health issues, bargaining, etc. When two language groups make contact, the group with the greater incentive (not necessarily the lower power or status group) will learn the other group's language.¹¹ Because there is more incentive for locals' to learn English, travellers often do not learn the native language. Furthermore, for locals working in the tourist industry, they can pragmatically practice speaking English with tourists. However, locals' English levels are confined to the level for travel and many travellers speak English as a second language, which sometimes results in confusion and mistranslation. Living in a "mini-bubble", language barriers and compounded by Southeast Asian's non-confrontational approach in resolving grievances cause many travellers to be ignorant of their cultural insensitivity.

The problems with Southeast Asian tourism development that targets independent travellers lie in the lack of long-term planning on sustainable tourism issues, the regions' view of the budget tourism market as a mere stepping-stone for luxury tourism, and the ineffective methods on conveying native customs to visitors. Independent travellers need to be considered as an important and permanent component of the tourism industry in Southeast Asia. Providing infrastructure for the independent travellers' market requires fewer resources, and low impact development benefits locals and small businesses. Effective and direct communication on societal conduct needs to be conveyed to independent travellers and tourists.

For many independent travellers and tourists in Southeast Asia, their fault lies in their static views of the region, shaped by the media as either a hedonistic haven or an ancient culture untouched by globalisation. In many tourist advertising and travel literature, people of developed nations travelling to Third World countries are promised a life-changing experience or a spiritual awakening. However, many travel writers do not speak or comprehend the local language, and have had minimal contact with the destination before their assignment, thus resulting in a superficial understanding of a destination's culture, custom and society. With their preconceptions shaped by a biased media of Southeast Asia, travellers become disappointed when they find destinations with modern amenities, or are heavily visited by package tourists and fellow independent travellers. As a result, they are compelled to find "the real" country or destinations that are "not spoiled" by tourism. Independent travellers need to understand Southeast Asia's economic needs, as well as accept the locals' desires for development and a higher standard of life.

Arguments regarding the development of tourism in Southeast Asia abound from travellers, tourists, and foreign media, but the voices and opinions of locals who are directly affected are rarely discussed. By providing the stories and opinions of locals as supplements to travel literature, visitors can have a more informative and personal understanding of their impact on a destination. Additionally, Southeast Asian governments, as a part of their tourism development plan, can aim to provide more signs and directions in foreign languages for visitor destinations.

Independent travellers are and have been culturally and economically influential in Southeast Asia. Their niche in the tourism market should be considered as important as mass tourism for the region's economy and development. More research needs to be done on the impact of independent travellers and their influence on Southeast Asia. Policies need to be implemented on bridging the cultural and communication gap between hosts and guests. Research has been neglected on bringing the voice of locals affected by tourism to the forefront. Consequently, the absence of this perspective can only offer the visitors an oblique understanding of the impact of tourism in Southeast Asia. I propose that foreign and Southeast Asian researchers in the academic or journalistic field collaborate, interview, collect ideas, views and opinions of locals regarding independent travellers, in turn publish or produce informational material for the general public.

Notes

- ¹ See Riley, Pamela J.. "Road Culture of International Long-Term Budget Travelers." *Annals of Tourism Research*. 1998. 315.
- ² See Vogt, Jay W. "Wandering: Youth and Travel Behavior." *Annals of Tourism Research*. 1976. 4: 26.
- ³ See Wood, Robert E. "Tourism and Underdevelopment in Southeast Asia." *Journal of Contemporary Asia*. 1979. 9,3: 275.
- ⁴ See Wood, Robert E.. "International Tourism and Cultural Change in Southeast Asia." *Economic Development and Cultural Change*. 1980. 28,3: 578.
- ⁵ See Thai Authority of Tourism. "Thailand Tourism Statistics 2003." <<http://www.tat.or.th/stat/main.htm>>
- ⁶ See Westerhausen, Klaus. *Beyond the Beach - An Ethnography of Travellers in Asia*. Bangkok: White Lotus Co. Ltd, 2002. 167.
- ⁷ See Cohen, Erik. "'Primitive and Remote' Hill Tribe Trekking in Thailand." *Annals of Tourism Research*. 1989. 16: 38.
- ⁸ See Cohen, Erik. "Marginal Paradises - Bungalow Tourism on the Islands of Southern Thailand." *Annals of Tourism Research*. 1982. 9:190.
- ⁹ See Smith, Valene L. "Power and Ethnicity in 'Paradise': Boracay, Philippines." *Hosts and Guests Revisited: Tourism Issues of the 21st Century*. Eds. Valene L. Smith and Maryann Brent. New York: Cognizant Communication Corporation, 2001. 152.
- ⁹ See Keyser, Heidi. *Tourism Development*. Capetown, South Africa: Oxford University Press, 2002. 349.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid*, 352.
- ¹¹ *Ibid*. 351.

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**INTERCULTURALISM, PHILOSOPHY,
ETHICS AND RELIGION**

Gadamer and Interculturalism: Ethnocentrism or Authenticity

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Abstract: Intercultural communication is susceptible to ethnocentrism in two different ways. First, a self-conscious and overtly ethnocentric relativist may base his perception of the other totally on his own prejudices. A second ethnocentric danger originates from a certain universalism, which pretends to envisage a neutral transcendent omega-point, but nonetheless often and surreptitiously ends up with the imposition of its own particularity in the name of a universal truth.

In this paper I compare the approaches of Édouard Glissant and Hans-Georg Gadamer, who present mutually incompatible theories of the way in which intercultural relationships should be thought of in an appropriate and authentic way devoid of any form of ethnocentrism or undesirable disrespect for the alterity of the other. On the basis of the importance that Gadamer assigns to the *Vorurteile* (prejudices) that everyone inevitably takes along in every possible understanding of texts or others, Gadamer has mainly been accused of ethnocentrism in the first sense, which gave rise to the Habermas-Gadamer debate. In this debate, Gadamer has remained free of the second charge of ethnocentrism. Nevertheless, his concept of *Horizontverschmelzung* (fusion of horizons) and the strong appeal to symmetry between life forms do make his hermeneutical position vulnerable to this second criticism. Therefore, a more positive assessment of the opacity of the process of intercultural communication, might be appropriate. For that purpose, I analyze the postcolonial answer of Glissant to the ethnocentric problem.

Keywords: hermeneutics, postcolonialism, Gadamer, Glissant, intercultural communication, alterity, multiculturalism, ethnocentrism, relativism, universalism

1. The problem

In this paper I have a dual aim. First, I want to introduce Édouard Glissant into philosophical discourse. In the past thirty years, this Martiniquan author has developed a remarkable theory of interculturalism, but has remained virtually unknown to philosophical surroundings. The second, and more important aim of my paper is to contribute to the difficult task of developing a thorough understanding of how ethnocentrism may be avoided in intercultural interactions. For that purpose, I compare the approaches of Glissant and Hans-Georg Gadamer, who present mutually incompatible theories of the way in which intercultural relationships should be thought of in an appropriate and authentic way devoid of any form of undesirable disrespect for the alterity of the other.

Intercultural communication may be susceptible to ethnocentrism because, once we understand that we are embedded in a particular and situated form of life, in a specific cultural and linguistic context, then the question arises how we can at the same time do justice to the other's otherness (and his own situatedness) as well as to ours. Intercultural communication is susceptible to ethnocentrism in two different ways. First, self-conscious and overtly ethnocentric relativists may base their distortive perception of the other entirely upon their own prejudices, which they believe to constitute the insurmountable boundaries of their situatedness. I take the theory of Richard Rorty as an example of this way of thinking. A second ethnocentric danger originates from a certain universalism which pretends to envisage a neutral transcendent omega-point, but nonetheless often and surreptitiously ends up imposing its own particularity in the name of a universal truth. To give an example here, one might think of those theorists of instrumental language theories, who would aspire to design a new neutral language, which would be capable of providing the true view from nowhere, entirely devoid of ethnocentrism. But of course, this would be to deny one's own situatedness which would only give rise to unnoticed ways of reducing the other. A man who thinks to have no horizon or to have gotten rid of it – and I am quoting Gadamer here – “is a man who does not see far enough and hence overvalues what is nearest to him.”¹

So, this dual lure of ethnocentrism forms the impasse from which both Gadamer and Glissant seek to elaborate an escape. The challenge is to retain the idea of linguisticity and, at the same time, to avoid distorted intercultural images.

Let me briefly indicate the extent to which the ‘solutions’ of Gadamer and Glissant to this challenge are in opposition to each other.

2. The solutions

Gadamer resolutely emphasises the inevitable embeddedness in cultural and linguistic horizons. However Gadamer perceives this finitude not only as a limitation of understanding as such, but simultaneously as a basic precondition for it. For him, all understanding is interpretation. Absolute understanding is impossible. Because of this Gadamer has mainly been accused of ethnocentrism in the relativistic sense. However, Gadamer is NOT a relativist. Gadamer does believe there is hope for cross-cultural understanding. According to him, it is hermeneutics that offers the solution to the problem of ethnocentrism. The hermeneutic experience enables us to escape the prison-house of language. Gadamer's hermeneutical solution is founded on the idea that to understand something is to engage in a conversation in which one attempts to reach *Verständigung*. *Verständigung* may be translated both as understanding and as agreement.² *Verständigung* contains the idea that the goal of this conversational communication is agreement (concerning the object).³ Of course, this does not mean that all differences should be ruled out. We can have meaningful disagreements. But Gadamer seems to believe that, at least at the beginning of the conversation, there should be an aspiration to agree on the content. However, this agreement about the content is not the only meaning of *Verständigung*, and it is certainly not the essence of what Gadamer is aiming at. The second and more fundamental sort of agreement Gadamer makes use of here is the need to come to some "common mind."⁴ In saying that agreement is the primary meaning of understanding, Gadamer principally asserts that it is necessary to create a common ground, that a common language in which the object is to be perceived needs to be developed in the conversation. This common understanding is instantiated in the sharing of a common meaning, seen through a shared language.⁵ Thus, the partners in conversation construct a language that did not exist prior to their conversation, but is developed during the course of conversation about an object. In this common language, we are "transformed into a communion, in which we do not remain what we were."⁶ The idea is "to attain a higher universality that overcomes, not only our own particularity, but also that of the other."⁷

For Gadamer, this finding of a common language coincides with the very act of understanding and reaching agreement.

Now, while Gadamer is certainly not an adherent of a Rortian relativistic ethnocentrism, one might still be suspicious concerning the question whether or not he may be ethnocentric in the more universalistic sense. I think one might claim that Gadamer is more vulnerable to this second ethnocentric suspicion. Gadamer resolutely states that every understanding is an interpretation. However, there is a strong implication of symmetry between horizons. Moreover, Gadamer believes that a fusion of horizons ought always to be possible. A conversation's purpose is to reach agreement concerning the object, in a common language in which both are able to understand each other undistortively and transparently. These 'universalistic' assumptions may seem to entail more respect for otherness than a relativistic subjectivism can provide, but it may still be possible to claim that otherness is being improperly reduced here just as much as in subjectivism.

In anticipating the completion of the other's statement it is not clear, for instance, just how it is actually possible to make a distinction between better and worse prejudices. We should be capable of doing so since, although we cannot abandon our prejudices, being open to the text's truth means to be prepared to question our own self-understanding, which may possibly lead to the abandonment of some of our own beliefs. This means that we need to be able to make a distinction between 'good' prejudices and 'bad' prejudices. Some prejudices are erroneous and distort the truth. Others, however, are genuine preconditions of understanding.⁸ This entails serious consequences for our understanding of the object of the anticipation of completeness, i.e. the other's speech. What the other says may or may not be true, and it may or may not be coherent. Therefore, in being confronted with the other's newness, we sometimes have to give up some of our own beliefs, and we sometimes must retain our own but reject the ones of the other. It is easy to see that the impossibility of conforming to the anticipation of completeness may be due to limited capacities or to a lack of meticulousness on the part of the interpreter. Still, such a 'bad interpreter' may not be conscious of the state of his interpretation and, therefore, may believe he has achieved a genuine fusion of horizons when in actuality he has reached nothing but an assimilation and a reduction of the other to his own language.

In other words, it is not clear how one might ever be sure one has reached a genuine understanding. More importantly, it is not easy to know whether one can ever become aware of having failed to reach genuine understanding. In thinking one has overcome relativism by engaging in a fusion of horizons in a common language in which one finds agreement with the other, the self-assured position that a transcendent "omega-point" has been found may surreptitiously result in the imposition of one's own particularity in the name of a universal truth. I take the expression "omega-point" from Taylor, who links it with *Horizontverschmelzung*.⁹ Gadamer himself doesn't use this word. Nonetheless, he explicitly puts forward the idea that it should be the aim of a true conversation to overcome all alterity: the "placing of ourselves [within a situation] is not the empathy of one individual for another, nor is it the application to another person of our own criteria, but it always involves the attainment of a higher universality that overcomes, not only our own particularity, but also that of the other."¹⁰ In sum, in maintaining that all alterity and all obstacles to genuine understanding have been overcome

in the elaboration of a shared and inclusive language, Gadamer's hermeneutical position may be more vulnerable to the second snare of ethnocentrism. Therefore, a more positive assessment of opacity in the process of intercultural communication might be desirable. For that purpose, I turn to the postcolonial theory of Glissant.

Glissant comes from Martinique, a small island in the Caribbean, and has dedicated many novels and philosophical texts to the postcolonial experience of cultural fragmentation. In his works, Glissant wants to elaborate a view of the subject in which there is room for plurality, discontinuity and opacity. Glissant clearly denounces two ways of thinking about intercultural relations. First, he rejects an essentialistic conception of identity (which he calls 'root-identity', or, in French, *identité-racine*), which treats language, territory, culture and belonging as self-sufficient and self-transparent essentialistic concepts. His alternative to this root-identity is the poetics of relation, in which intercultural relationships are based on nonreductive and equal relationships. The poetics of relation is not founded on root-identity but on a thinking of identity as a rhizome, a notion developed by Deleuze and Guattari, which Glissant uses in order to relocate the essence of subjectivity within intersubjectivity, without however leaving behind the notion of rootedness: unlike a tree, which is grounded in a single central point, the rhizome, which is both root and stem, grows randomly and from many different nodes at once.¹¹

Secondly, he wants to replace the ideal of transparent understanding with an obligation to respect the opacity of the other. Glissant wants to develop a theory of intercultural communication that avoids the assimilating reductions, inherent to the ideal of transparency and transparent understanding (Glissant agrees to those who see understanding as grasping (*prendre*, which is the root of *comprendre*). In this respect, he has understood that "the more the other resists in his thickness or his fluidity (without restricting himself to this), the more expressive his reality becomes, and the more fruitful the relation becomes"¹². Thus, opacity safeguards the other's difference: the more he is opaque, the more difficulty I have in understanding and reducing him. Relation and opacity therefore join forces: opacity enables authentic, non-hierarchical and nonreductive intersubjective and intercultural relationships; it therefore founds the Relation. Given this fundamental role of opacity, Glissant develops it into a moral (and political) right. "I demand for all the right the opacity".¹³ We should not interpret this as a mere right to seclusion or isolation in an impenetrable autarchy: the right to opacity is more fundamental than the right to difference (PR 204). Glissant is just concerned about how to resist models of communication based on reductions. In order to live with the other, to build with him, to love what he does or to risk with him, it is not necessary to understand (*comprendre*) him – be it a person, a community, or a people.¹⁴

3. Analysis

It is clear now how Glissant responds to the need for a more positive conception of the role of opacity within intercultural relations.

Gadamer stands for a paradigm in which we aspire to fully understand one another, to reach a common understanding. We are embedded in specific traditions, but we are nonetheless able to reach out to the other in solidarity if we succeed in fusing our horizons.

Glissant's main project runs counter to this, by favouring elusion over lucidity, Relation over Horizontverschmelzung. Central to his thought is the idea that it is not necessary to understand the other if we want to live, build, and work together. It is not the essence of language to reach agreement or understanding. Glissant's philosophy of interculturalism is not based on elucidating understanding, but rather on developing strategies to foster density, opacity, and resistance. Consciousness, presence, lucidity, transparency: in short, all aspirations to achieve an understanding by removing opacity are essential to Gadamer's project.

In working out this main opposition, we encounter several additional differences. First, as indicated above, both share a basic commitment to intercultural openness and contact: we should start from a willingness to reach out to the other. But they differ in the extent to which this openness asks us to overcome alterity. For Glissant, the willingness to be open is a willingness to preserve alterity. To engage in Relation is to show respect for the other as different from oneself. In other words, Glissant does justice to the fact of pluralism, i.e., the existence of real differences.

For Gadamer, however, the attitude of openness implies that one should aspire to overcome both one's own particularity and that of the other.¹⁵ Gadamer's project is characterized by a radical inclusiveness: once a fusion of horizons is reached and a common language worked out, all alterity and all absences will have been overcome. Inclusiveness should thus guarantee the absence of absences.

In opposition to this, Glissant urges us to respect our own particularity as well as that of the other not by removing all absence but, on the contrary, by allowing its presence, by attributing positive value to absences. Not the absence of absences, but the presence of absences is central here. Now, it may be clear that if Glissant wants to create space for alterity by respecting it as a presence that is an absence of presence, then, of course, there should be at least a certain degree of presence. I mention this because the account of Glissant's position I've given so far may perhaps have given rise to the erroneous impression that Glissant rejects all presence, all understanding. This would be a misunderstanding. The right to opacity is not a right to mere absence, it's a right

to preserve the absence. It does not amount to invisibility, but it is “the active production of a visible but unreadable image”.¹⁶ In other words, opacity should not be interpreted as complete unintelligibility, as a total abstention of understanding, but rather as a strategic resistance to which the colonized may appeal in being confronted by the colonizer. However, it would be equally erroneous to conclude from this that Glissant merely replaces the ideal of transparent and reductive understanding with an ideal of true understanding. It is the purpose of Glissant’s plea for the right to opacity to introduce obstacles to understanding, to enable strategies of resistance against ‘being understood’. Thus, opacity is directed not only against ‘reductive ways of’ understanding, but against understanding as an ideal. So, although he doesn’t reject understanding as a whole, it seems that Glissant does want to attenuate the importance of understanding in intercultural communication.

Because of this, Glissant advocates a more formal understanding of genuine intercultural communication in comparison to the very content-based understanding that Gadamer preaches. By ‘formal’ I mean to say that there is a tendency in Glissant to focus more on the intersubjective preconditions of genuine communication than on what is actually said. For Gadamer, it is clear that what one says prevails over who is saying it: the “task of understanding is concerned in the first place with the meaning of the text itself”.¹⁷ “Where a person is concerned with the other as individuality, e.g. in a therapeutical conversation or the examination of a man accused of a crime, this is not really a situation in which two people are trying to understand one another”.¹⁸ This priority of the what over the who/how is closely related to Gadamer’s conception of understanding as agreement (*Verständigung*).

Of course, this difference is related to the more general dissimilarities between the two projects. Gadamer is concerned with the happening of truth and meaning, whereas Glissant mainly concentrates on questions of identity. In other words, Gadamer is interested in genuine (intercultural) understanding, Glissant in genuine (intercultural) relations. Nevertheless, this again shows us a genuine disagreement about the nature of authentic intercultural communication. Gadamer’s content-based conception of others ultimately aims at reaching a common understanding, an agreement (*Verständigung*). To do this, we need to come to understand what it is that the other says or believes. The best way to understand others will therefore start from a presumption of both the intelligibility and the truth of the other’s point of view. Both features are part of what Gadamer calls the anticipation of completion. Even if *Verständigung* will not always result in sympathy or in solidarity, it does remain a necessary precondition of the ability to reach solidarity and sympathy.

Again, Glissant presents us with a different picture. If Gadamer’s anticipation of completion implies a willingness that includes, at least at the beginning of the conversation, both the assumption of the other’s intelligibility and an appreciation of what he is going to say, Glissant seems less willing to approve of understanding and its importance in reaching solidarity. It’s not that Glissant is not interested in solidarity. It seems that he wants to think the possibility of having sympathy for someone or to reach solidarity with him without aspiring to understand him (completely). His assertion—quoted above—that we do not need to understand the other in order to live with him and to love what he does seems to point in this direction. In opposition to Gadamer, Glissant does not believe that it is necessary to anticipate the other’s complete intelligibility to me, but, on the other hand, he does seem to reinforce the idea that we should sympathize with the other even if we do not understand him. In as sense, Glissant thus offers both a curtailment as well as an extension of Gadamer’s anticipation of completion.

4. Evaluation

Let’s recapitulate the followed line of reasoning before bringing this comparison to a close.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this comparison, both authors share comparable enemies (which may be identified with the two lures of ethnocentrism). Anachronistically speaking, one might say that Gadamer reacts against a ‘Rortian’ belief in being imprisoned within ethnocentrism, in a relativistic ethnocentrism, as well as against the idea that it is possible to step out of one’s own clothes and meet the other as he is (which only leads to a reductive assimilation of the other, (and which is vulnerable to the second ethnocentric thrust). In a similar way, Glissant reacts against a conception of identity as an essentialistic and insurmountable root, as well as against an equally problematic subjectivistic rootlessness. We are both situated and capable of solidaristic interactions with others.

This seems to be the impasse from which both Gadamer and Glissant seek to elaborate an escape. The challenge is to retain the idea of linguisticity and, at the same time, to avoid distorted intercultural images. Gadamer’s response to this task does not consist in a complete detachment from existing languages or horizons, but it is also not confined to them. Thus understood, one might say that *Horizontverschmelzung* implies the development of a third language, based on the concrete languages of the interlocutors of the conversation, while, at the same time, being an entirely new language, which did not exist prior to the conversation. In opposition to this, Glissant is much less optimistic about the ability to fuse horizons. His ideal of a true conversation is one where the partners are prepared to take alterity seriously by rejecting Gadamer’s humanistic ideal of mutual

understanding in an inclusive language. In Glissant's ideal conversation, both interlocutors have the right to speak their own languages, so that the opacity of the other is maximally respected.¹⁹ It is obvious that Glissant's plea for the right to opacity is closer to Rorty's relativism than to the universalistic belief in neutrality. Both seem to believe that all understanding is inherently reductive and that all attempts to escape from our linguistic and cultural horizon are in vain. Rorty responds to this by way of resignation: if you can't beat ethnocentrism, then join it. Glissant is more optimistic regarding the possibility of respecting the other's alterity: instead of abandoning the aspiration to safeguard intercultural understanding from ethnocentrism, he wants to give up the ideal of understanding itself. He believes that if we continue to cling to this ideal, either in a Gadamerian overcoming of all alterity or in a Rortian reduction of it, we are not genuinely respecting others.

Glissant's position thus allows us to fear that aspiring to *Horizontverschmelzung* in the way Gadamer urges us may result in glossing over the opacity, the density, and the heterogeneity of the other. This is, of course, close to Derrida's insight that all identity is structured by heterogeneity, otherness and undecidability (and his corresponding criticism of Gadamer's universalism). Glissant endorses this vision, but focuses on the moral right for all to be not (fully) understood. So the idea is not merely that every understanding is necessarily interwoven with an undecidable moment and tends to gloss over heterogeneities, but primarily that understanding gets richer the more the other is dense, that every conversation should encounter opacity. Related to this, a second question for Gadamer would deal with the extent to which intercultural communication has to appeal to an ideal of understanding. Glissant would question the great importance Gadamer – as well as Heidegger – seem to attach to understanding as characteristic for all human relations. Glissant does provide a withdrawal of understanding as an ideal for all (intercultural) relations. In intercultural and even intersubjective communication, (transparent) understanding is not only possible, but primarily undesirable.

Of course, in this imaginary conversation, Gadamer wouldn't throw in the towel so easily. I think that Gadamer would question the (low) extent to which openness plays a role in Glissant's theory. For Gadamer, a genuine dialogue between all interlocutors demands a considerable degree of openness which, in turn, implies mutual risk-taking and the willingness to possibly alter some of one's own beliefs. Glissant's dialogue of the whole-world (*Tout-Monde*) also implies openness but, because of unequal power relations and in order to reduce the other's assimilation, Glissant wants to (grant a right to) erect certain walls between people and between cultures. This introduction of opaque structures in one's speech should impede the dominant other's full understanding of the subaltern. I believe Gadamer would argue that Glissant too easily disentangles the inherent link between openness and willingness to engage in mutual risk-taking. In rejecting the importance of the ideal of understanding instead of trying to reduce the level of ethnocentrism in understanding, Glissant throws out the baby with the bathwater. Maybe we should indeed concede to Gadamer that, in order to reach solidarity, we do have to make at least some effort to project ourselves into the other's predicament, to identify oneself with him by trying to understand him. Maybe Gadamer is right in asserting that true solidarity implies a willingness to take seriously what the other says, which should not be understood as an attempt to reduce him but to show him respect.

Secondly, and related to this, we might also ask (from within Gadamer's theory) whether or not this suspension of the moral ideal of understanding, which is not a suspension of dialogue, has any intrinsic value in itself. Shouldn't we rather conceive of the right to introduce detours and to increase opacity as a mere temporary measure in order to encourage equality in Relation as long as it has not yet been achieved? Of course, as power inequalities may be characteristic of all human relations, the temporality of the right to enhance opacity might be structural. But this right would still only be privatively legitimisable (in opposition to the phenomenological presence of opacity, which is not temporary at all, but is a structural element of communication with others and thus liable to be unjustly neglected and glossed over in the ideal of understanding). Given the fact of the reductive thrust inherent to understanding others (on which there is agreement), one might question whether strengthening the amount of non-understanding is the appropriate thing to do. If not, then Gadamer might ultimately be right in asserting that "[w]hoever wants me to take deconstruction to heart and insists on difference stands at the beginning of a conversation, not at its end."²⁰

Notes

¹ Gadamer, Hans-Georg, *Truth and Method* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1975), 269.

² The English translation (*Truth and Method*) of Gadamer translates *Verständigung* both as 'agreement (concerning the object)' and as 'understanding' (e.g., *Ibid.*, 341, 347). Although this may be a translation error, it is nonetheless illustrative that even the German phrase "sich in der Sprache verständigen" [to agree/understand (to) one another in language] is translated as "to agree about the object", suggesting that understanding and agreement about the object are closely related (Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Hermeneutik I. Gesammelte Werke I* (Tübingen: J.C.B.Mohr, 1990), 387; Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 345). Taylor uses

the phrase ‘to come to some common mind’ for *Verständigung*, and adds that “this expression has the right semantic reach to link understanding and common purpose” (Charles Taylor, *Philosophical Arguments* (Harvard: University Press, 1995), 151). A third possible translation, offered by Grondin, refers to a situation in which “the partners in a conversation find themselves in a basic agreement, generally on this or that matter” (Jean Grondin, “Gadamer’s Basic Understanding of Understanding.” In *The Cambridge Companion to Gadamer*, ed. R.J.Dostal (Cambridge: University Press, 2002), 36-51 at p. 39). In his monograph on Gadamer Grondin translates this as “to agree mutually on common ground” (Jean Grondin, *The philosophy of Gadamer* (Bucks: Acumen Publishing Ltd., 2003), 57). He mentions that this connotation can also be seen in the English ‘we understand one another’.

Apart from this, there is one occasion in which Gadamer makes clear that the meaning of ‘agreement’ is primary in understanding. Here, he uses the German *Einverständnis* as roughly equivalent to *Verständigung*: “Wir gehen von dem Satz aus: ‘Verstehen heißt zunächst, sich miteinander verstehen’. Verständnis ist zunächst Einverständnis” (Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*, 183). This is translated in English as follows: “Our starting-point is the proposition that to understand means primarily for two people to understand one another. Understanding is primarily agreement or harmony with another person” (Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 158).

³ Ibid, 260.

⁴ Taylor, 151.

⁵ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 260, 341.

⁶ Ibid, 341.

⁷ Ibid, 272; Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Ästhetik und Poetik I. Gesammelte Werke 8* (Tübingen: J.C.B.Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1993), 367.

⁸ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 263.

⁹ Taylor, 126.

¹⁰ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 272; see also Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Ästhetik und Poetik I. Gesammelte Werke 8* (Tübingen: J.C.B.Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1993), 367.

¹¹ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Rhizome* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1976).

¹² Édouard Glissant, *l’Intention poétique. Poétique II* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969), 23, translated in Celia M. Britton, *Édouard Glissant and Postcolonial Theory. Strategies of Language and Resistance*. New World Studies (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1999), 18.

¹³ Édouard Glissant, *Traité du Tout-Monde. Poétique IV* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997), 29; Édouard Glissant, *Poétique de la Relation. Poétique III* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990), 209.

¹⁴ Ibid, 207; Glissant, *Traité du Tout-Monde*, 29.

¹⁵ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 272.

¹⁶ Britton, Édouard Glissant and Postcolonial Theory, 24.

¹⁷ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 335.

¹⁸ Ibid, 347.

¹⁹ Britton refers to *Le Quatrième Siècle*, a novel about a transported African who escaped as a slave out of the plantation. Years later, he encounters his former master and, in this conversation, each speaks his own language so that neither understands what the other is saying. According to Glissant, this results in mutual respect (Celia M. Britton, “Opacity and Transparence: Conceptions of History and Cultural Difference in the Work of Michel Butor and Édouard Glissant,” *French Studies. A Quarterly Review* XLIX 3 (1999): 308-320., at pp. 310-311.

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Silent East: How can we Give a Voice to Asian Theology?

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Abstract: In this age of global communication and exchanges, one gives much hope and expectations to the so-called “East-West” dialogue. This is especially true in the area of theology, where the issue of interreligious dialogue has been taking on a greater significance. Turning our eyes to the East-West relations within Christian theology itself (rather than under interreligious settings), however, we will be surprised how silent Eastern (or Asian) theology is, and how limited its influence has been, when compared to its Western counterpart, which continues to dominate and exercise “universal” influence over the global academy. It is in this context that I seek to describe how and why this situation of “silent East” and “eloquent West” has come about within Christian theology, and strive, without rushing into a hasty condemnation of the West (and its Eurocentrism), to understand and overcome it. It is my conviction that Asian theology that is enabled to speak out of its tradition and distinct approach will be more capable of contributing constructively to the future development of theology as a whole.

Keywords: East-West dialogue; interreligious dialogue; Eurocentrism; postcolonialism and religion; Asian theology.

When one discusses “interculturalism” in a particularly religious context, one is likely to give much attention towards the relations among different religions. In fact, interreligious dialogue has been taking on an ever greater importance. This is especially so, given the current world situation in which religions play a major role in either intensifying or alleviating tensions and conflicts between (or within) different communities. What I would like to address today, however, is the issue of interculturalism within one religion, namely, Christianity. This is not to say that interreligious issues are unimportant. Rather, I hope to demonstrate that East-West dialogue¹ within one religion can have a major impact, not only on the religion in question, but also on interreligious dialogue or even society at large, especially on the intellectual level.

I believe that I am not overstating here. Given that Western thought has inherited much from Christian theology (as much as it has from Greek philosophy), if a major paradigm shift within Christian theology through an internal East-West dialogue is to occur, it does not go without posing a challenge to the traditional Western approach to reason in general, which is in fact being questioned within the West itself, especially by the so-called “postmodern” philosophy.²

Christianity has been a multicultural entity, and it is more so today than ever before. The occidental facet of Christianity is now quickly changing, to the extent that the majority of Christian population is now living outside the Western world.³ The growth of membership in Africa and Asia is especially notable. Out of the 342 member churches of the World Council of Churches, which is the “United Nations” for the Christian world, more than two-thirds comprise communities outside Western Europe and North America, half of which are based in Asia and Africa.⁴ In other words, Christianity is no longer a religion of the West.

Turning our eyes to theology, which is a guiding principle for the Christian community, the situation is, however, quite different. Certainly, the number of non-Western theologians has been on the increase, and so are academic institutions and publications of theological literature outside the West. Yet, the voice of non-Western theologians in the global academy, especially of those in Asia, is still hardly audible, not to mention being influential, when compared to their Western counterpart. In other words, in spite of the demographic shift of the Christian population, the West continues to be vocal (and even eloquent), while the East remains in silence.

Certainly, some may wish to argue that Asia has now acquired a distinct and emerging voice of its own, such as in the so-called “contextual theology,” similar to the “liberation theology” in Latin America.⁵ In fact, one can insist that Asian theologians are, or at least in principle must be, respected and heard as much as Western ones.

The objection is legitimate in theory. But in reality, how many Asian theologians are regarded today as important as major Western ones, such as Karl Barth or Paul Tillich in Protestantism, or Karl Rahner or Hans Urs von Balthasar in Catholicism?

Even “contextual theology,” albeit important and deserving attention, does not match mainstream Western theology in terms of influence. In fact, the very designation of Asian theology as “contextual” is suggesting. As a prominent liberation theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez has noted, “ ‘Contextual theology’ is an interesting term because while Asia, Africa, and Latin America do contextual theology, only Europe does universal theology. But is Europe not another context?”⁶ In other words, the situation is almost that the West alone is able to speak with a universal voice, while the rest of the world is occupied with their own “context.” If

such a mapping of theology is accepted, Asian theology today will continue to find itself confined within a framework set out by the West.⁷

This Eurocentric (or Westcentric)⁸ bias that civilization (and theology) flows from the West to the East (as well as to the rest of the world), and not the other way round (except for some exotic food, music, clothes, ancient artefacts, martial arts, etc.), is so strong and pervasive a view that even some “Easterners” simply take it for granted. My intention here is however, not to condemn or correct such a bias, but to pose a question: the “why” of this Eurocentrism. This is because I do not think it is simply a matter of prejudice. It actually points to a certain reality.

Certainly, we cannot overlook the fact that theology, particularly of a systematic kind, has been historically developed in Western Europe and with the expansion of Christianity, spread to the rest of the world. Therefore, there is no surprise that the West has been the centre of theology.

Yet, given the changing face of Christianity, this is no longer a historical necessity. In principle, a reversal of the flow can occur at any moment. Why then does the West still continue to enjoy its prestigious status in the global academy? There must be various factors behind the inertia, but it appears that Western dominance of the academy is not totally unrelated to the Western dominance of the world in general.

From Oswald Spengler⁹ in the early twentieth century to Samuel Huntington¹⁰ of our times, the West has not been lacking in apocalyptic prophets foretelling the decline of Western civilization. A sober observation of the world situation proves otherwise. In the words of a Muslim scholar Anouar Majid, “the occasional anxiety over the decline of the West...is premature: wealth and power are still mostly concentrated in the hands of the same colonial powers that dominated the world at the end of the nineteenth century.”¹¹

In fact, it is an established fact that Western countries (and Japan) continue to dominate the global economy. In the so-called “postcolonial” world today, Western countries,¹² which represent only about 12 % of world population, still produce two-thirds of the world’s income.¹³ Out of the tops 500 multinationals, which control 70% of world trade,¹⁴ 377 (about three-fourths) are companies based in Western countries.¹⁵ In regard to the academy, more than 60 % of published articles in science and technologies originate in the West.¹⁶ This comes as no surprise, since in the age of Internet, two-thirds of global communications are produced in five European languages.¹⁷ Indeed, the West has not shown the slightest sign of decline.

Such is the context for academic activities today, of which we must be aware. In fact, academic research and exchanges are often conducted in Western languages, and this already sets certain restrictions for non-Western scholars. In order to participate in a global conversation among theologians, they are to communicate in Western languages because their “local” languages do not reach a global audience.

Moreover, the historical and therefore inevitable dependence of theology on Western methods, approaches and vocabulary has made it difficult for non-Westerners to develop their theology in relation to their own intellectual traditions. This is especially so when the Western approach is imposed as the normative one, or at least the most developed and sophisticated method.

Furthermore, many highly regarded research centres of theology are geographically concentrated in the West. These distinguished universities and faculties, with their physical, financial and technological infrastructures, continue to attract international scholars and students. To quote Anouar Majid again, “cultural hegemony is real, and the presence of the Third World intellectual in the West — despite the proverbial exceptions and other conscious complicities—is a stark manifestation of this reality.”¹⁸

Thus, we cannot pretend that Eurocentrism can simply be dismissed by “political correctness.” There is an underlying, concrete and extensive reality, together with its political, economic, cultural and intellectual extensions, that needs to be challenged.

But let me clarify myself here. My intention is not to launch a campaign to reverse Western hegemony. I am keenly aware that such a project can easily be absorbed into a nationalism or religious fundamentalism. My intention is rather to safeguard a plurality of approaches to theology, and therefore to reason, and perhaps to life as a whole, so that both the East and the West can be enriched through such diversity. On the one hand, the Western contribution in articulating, defending, promoting and developing the Christian faith must be fairly valued and appreciated, but on the other, its limits and drawbacks must also be recognized and overcome in the light of different intellectual traditions.

How then should one pursue such a different approach?

First, any bias or unconscious presuppositions stemming from the Western frame of thought in theological concepts, methods or approaches must be identified. This does not set out to eliminate occidental elements in theology, but rather to determine the scope of revision, bringing to the fore what has previously been taken for granted. For example, basic concepts like “dialogue” or “theology” can be critically re-examined. Moreover, this is not only a matter of concepts and vocabularies, but also a question of how reason is conceived, what comes under the range of critical reflection, or how reason is institutionalized, etc.

Second, one should take a simultaneous step to develop Eastern thought, particularly in relation to Western reason, in order to equip Asian theologians to re-examine and construct their own theology critically. An Asian approach is often described as more intuitive than logical, more practical than analytical, and therefore

hard to be presented in a systematic way. The Japanese Zen approach refuses to speak, for example, as a radical gesture of renouncing the dependency of human reason on words/concepts.¹⁹ However, such an intention can be logically and systematically communicated. The strength of an Asian approach (especially a Zen one) seems to lie in its critique of language limits, and in an awareness of the insufficiency of concepts and reason constructed upon language. Yet, unless this is presented in a way understandable to the West, such a silence of Zen, for instance, will appear to the West as a mere, incomprehensible silence, or even a refusal to share its own insight.

I believe through such a critical examination of the Western intellectual apparatus on one hand, and the articulation of Eastern insights on the other, it is possible to construct (or discover) a new approach to reason and knowledge, even to life.

For example, one of the distinct features of an Asian approach can be described as a unity of knowledge and life, or in Western terms, theory and praxis. The unity of these two aspects (or the emphasis on praxis) has also become a major issue in modern Western thought.²⁰ In theology, the theory-praxis issue appears as a separation of theology and spirituality, an alienation from our beliefs or understandings of who we are or how we live.²¹

Such an alienation between knowledge and life is rejected, for example, by a Zen Buddhist approach: it states that one can have a right perception of reality only when one is enlightened by *prajna*, the transcendental wisdom that Zen strives to achieve.²² Here, a certain spiritual state is a prerequisite of any intellectual activity. Setting aside the positive implications and weaknesses of such a religious teaching, it nonetheless poses itself in sharp contrast to the alienation between knowledge and life in Western theology, of which, to exaggerate, theologians doing moral theology are not required to be moral, theoretically.

If such a unified structure of intellectual activity and spirituality is applied in Christian theology, it would result in a more holistic type of theology. In fact, such an insight of the “spiritual illumination” of the intellect is not lacking in the Christian tradition itself, but has just been neglected in mainstream Western theology.

Thus, I believe that such an interactive process of constructing (or discovering) a new approach will contribute to the development of theology, from which both the West and the East can benefit. Furthermore, such an “Asian approach” in theology can produce an impact beyond the realm of Christianity or religion in general. Let me briefly state the reasons by way of a conclusion.

In studying Asian thought, one encounters Asian religions inevitably. Indeed, if we regard Christianity as one of the wellsprings of Western thought, it is much more so for the case of Eastern religions to Eastern thought. The separation of religion and philosophy is a unique phenomenon in the West. In the rest of the world, the two are often intertwined.

If an East-West dialogue cannot avoid religion, there follows two consequences. On one hand, an East-West dialogue within one religion can take on an interreligious dimension at the same time. On the other hand,

the fruit of such an internal dialogue spans beyond an exchange between different religious approaches, to one that is between two different modes of thinking. This is why I foresee a greater impact in such a paradigm shift within Christian theology beyond the realm of theology itself.

Perhaps too optimistic, I believe that giving a voice to Asian theology will eventually pave the way for an emergence of a radically different paradigm and approach, competitive to the entire Western system of reason and knowledge.

When such occurs, that would be the real beginning for the decline of monocultural domination, after which Easterners and Westerners together would witness an unfold of a truly multicultural world.

Notes

¹ The usage of terms like “East” or “Asia” throughout the present paper does not signify the author’s uncritical acceptance of those debatable and possibly problematic concepts. Such terms are utilized merely for the sake of convenience, with a clear awareness of their fluidity. In the present paper, the term “Asia,” for example, primarily, if not exclusively, designates regions that have been under a relatively strong influence of Hinduism and Buddhism.

² The potential influence of a “postmodern” critique of Western reason on theology will be discussed in my forthcoming paper, “West meets West: Frontiers in the Christian Theology Today.” This paper will be presented at the First World Hongming Philosophy Congress, Chaminade University of Honolulu, Hawaii, July 22-25, 2004.

³ Multiple statistics suggest that Western Europe and North America represent only about one-third of the Christian population worldwide. For example, see World Christian Database (<http://asp2.breuer.com/wcd/>).

- ⁴ According to the official website of the World Council of Churches (<http://www.wcc-coe.org/>). As for the Roman Catholic Church, which is the single largest Christian body and non-member church of WCC, nearly half of its population is found in Central/South America and Africa,. (See, Holy. Statistical Yearbook of the Church 2001. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice, Vaticana. 2003).
- ⁵ To be more precise, liberation theology is a form of contextual theology.
- ⁶ Remark (recorded by the author) made during a discussion on the occasion of 50th anniversary of the Faculty of Social Science at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas, Rome, May 10, 2003.
- ⁷ For the proponents of the “contextual theology,” Western theology is also a type of “contextual theology.” However, this is not a widely held view about mainstream Western theology.
- ⁸ The “Europe” in the term “Eurocentrism” here is meant to include Western Europe and its extension (such as North America).
- ⁹ Spengler, Oswald. *The Decline of the West*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- ¹⁰ Huntington, Samuel, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Touchstone, 1997.
- ¹¹ Majid, Anouar. *Unveiling Traditions: Postcolonial Islam in a Polycentric World*. Durham, NC: Duke University, 2000. 47.
- ¹² “Western countries” here refer to the member countries of OECD: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United States and the United Kingdom. They exclude Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Turkey, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary.
- ¹³ Population and GDP data according to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Human Development Reports 2003*.
- ¹⁴ Korten, David C. *When Corporations Rule the World*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2001. 126.
- ¹⁵ “The Global 500,” *Forbes.com*, 2 July, 2002 http://www.forbes.com/global/2002/0722/global_print.html (Accessed 20 October 2003).
- ¹⁶ *Qui Gouverne l’Economie Mondiale? Alternatives Economiques*, Hors-Série 47, 43.
- ¹⁷ Majid, Anouar. *Unveiling Traditions: Postcolonial Islam in a Polycentric World*. Durham, NC: Duke University, 2000. 35.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid*, 44.
- ¹⁹ “Furyu-monji” (non-dependence on words/letters) is a teaching in the Japanese Zen tradition.
- ²⁰ This is especially true in existentialist and Marxist thought.
- ²¹ “As spirituality and theology have each grown more focused on particular dimensions of their respective spheres (inner experience on one hand and the criteria of ‘scientific’ scholarship on the other), theology has correspondingly felt less sure of what exactly to do with either the spiritual life of theologians themselves or with the lives and texts of spiritual writers.” (Mark McIntosh, *Mystical Theology*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1998. 14.)
- ²² For example, see Suzuki, Daisetsu Teitaro. *Zen Buddhism and Its Influence on Japanese Culture*. Kyoto: Otani Buddhist College, 1938 (particularly chapter 1).

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Moral Perfectionism as a Challenge to Human Rights

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Abstract: Reflections on the question of moral diversity and universal standards have given rise to several responses. Bhikhu Parekh argues that of these responses, relativism, monism and minimum universalism have been proved most influential. It is however amazing how little discussion there has been of these approaches on a kind of theoretical, structural, or meta-ethical level. In this paper, I shall consider these questions especially with regard to the issue of human rights. In the current discussion of human rights, minimum universalism is represented in the “traditional” view of human rights. According to this view, human rights are seen as providing the universal standard against which the norms and laws of a society are checked, but this standard is, however, limited: it does not provide human beings with a complete way of life. This minimum universalistic view is challenged by monistic or perfectionist views which claim that legal and political norms of a society must be based on a specific - often religiously or culturally justified - ideal of life. My claim is that many of the controversies in human rights discussion are due to different interpretations about the nature of morality and not, for instance, to cultural or religious differences. Therefore, I think that it is of fundamental importance to take a closer look at these moral views *as* moral views.

Key words: human rights, Islam, minimum universalism, moral monism, perfectionism.

1. Introduction

In the globalized world of today, discussion on and search for some common moral standards has become ever more important. People with very different backgrounds, values and moral ideals are inescapably connected to one another and have to find some way to live and work together. Thus, along with moral pluralism, the need for some universal rules and moral standards has also increased. As such, the question of moral diversity and universal standards is not a novelty. On the contrary, reflections on the subject go as far back as ancient Greece and have given rise to several responses, as Bhikhu Parekh in his article *Non-ethnocentric universalism* points out.¹ According to Parekh, three of those responses have been proved most influential. He calls them relativism, monism and minimum universalism.

Relativism sees all moral norms inseparably connected to culture, tradition and history: “human beings have no intellectual and moral resources other than those derived from their culture or society, and hence remain unable to take an independent and critical view of the prevailing beliefs.”² Monism claims that there is one highest or truly human way of life, a uniform conception of the good based, for instance, on the human nature or the structure of the universe or the will of God. Minimum universalism admits that moral life can be lived in several different ways, but believes that it is possible, nevertheless, to define a universally valid standard for right conduct. This standard provides a kind of “floor” or “irreducible minimum”, “which no way of life may transgress without forfeiting its claim to be considered good or even tolerated”.³

2. Perfectionist and non-perfectionist views of morality

Relativism, monism and minimum universalism can certainly be seen as the major responses to the question of moral diversity and universalism, and, therefore, it is amazing how little discussion there has been of these approaches on a kind of theoretical, structural, or meta-ethical level. As far as I know, very little has been done to clarify what really characterises those views as *moral views*. What is meant by morality itself? What is seen as the role and meaning of such a conception as morality in human life and society? How is the nature and purpose of morality understood? These are questions that should be asked and responses to them make the crucial difference between different views.

Generally speaking, moral approaches can be divided into two categories on the basis of what they see as the nature and purpose of morality. These can be called moral monism and minimum universalism as Parekh does, or, following John Rawls, comprehensive and non-comprehensive doctrines, or, as I prefer, perfectionist and non-perfectionist views.⁴ What is crucial, however, is that they offer very different views of the characteristic and basic tasks of morality. As Parekh points out, these approaches do not differ from one another merely in degree but in their basic orientation, approach and assumptions.⁵

The most important distinguishing feature between these two approaches, I think, is whether morality is seen as being based on a definite ideal of the highest good, a specific ideal of a truly human life, or whether it is seen as independent of such ideals.⁶ Monistic or perfectionist approaches view morality from the standpoint of a specific ideal of life and derive the requirements of morality from this account. Morality is about how a human being should live in order to lead a truly human life. Moral monism lays down a specific, uniform ideal that

reveals what is really good and valuable in human life. It determines which way of life is the highest or truly human, and which ways of life are false or inferior. It is thus the purpose of morality to offer human beings an ideal of the good or best form of life and urge them to realize this ideal in their own lives.

Minimum universalism, by contrast, does not appeal to the ideals of life in questions of morality. This approach regards the questions of specific ideals of life as different and separable from morality, which is seen rather as setting *limits* to the promotion of such ideals than as being based on them. In a sense, minimum universalism, divides the moral world into two spheres, the first of which has to do with the definition of common moral standards, the other with more or less changing and mutually inconsistent ideals of how a human being should live. Minimum universalism holds that “there is a minimum social morality which can be rationally defended, based on human needs that are so fundamental and inescapable that they cannot be gainsaid”.⁷ It is, then, the purpose of morality to specify this moral minimum, those universal principles, which all societies should satisfy. But “once a society meets these basic principles, it is free to organize its way of life as it considers proper”.⁸

These alternative approaches are represented in different moral theories or doctrines, and they are evident also in the discussion of universal moral standards, such as human rights. As regards human rights, especially the implications of these theories in public or political morality are important. Minimum universalism is already by definition primarily concerned with the field of social, public, or political morality. It aims at setting down a minimum standard for social, public, or political morality in order to secure the necessary conditions of any tolerable human life. Within the limits of these standards - and *only* within the limits of these standards - pursuit of a variety of different ideals of life is possible. In the field of public or political morality, minimum universalism rejects perfectionist views, that is, views that seek to ground morality on, or derive it from, a specific ideal of life. It should be remarked, however, that rejection of perfectionism in the political field does not rule out the introduction of such perfectionist ideals altogether. What minimum universalism requires, is merely that the pursuit of these ideals should be limited to the field of personal and social life, and not introduced into public life.

Accordingly, many theories that begin with a specific ideal of life, are not interested in political morality at all. They are more concerned with individual pursuits and personal perfection than social justice or political morality. However, if the perfectionist approach is extended to the political field, it entails that basic institutions and legislation of the society should be shaped in accordance with a specific ideal of life. In other words, the basic principles of a society should be built up so that they encourage valuable and virtuous ways to live, and discourage, or even make impossible, those ways of life that are seen as worthless, deplorable or disgraceful. It is the purpose of politics and legislation, not merely to set up the necessary conditions for a tolerable human life, but also to make people live in accordance with a definite ideal of the life, because only this kind of life is seen as truly virtuous, valuable, and appropriate for human beings.⁹

3. Human rights from a perfectionist point of view

In the discussion of human rights, minimum universalism is represented in the “traditional” view of human rights as provided in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and various conventions. According to this view, human rights are seen as providing the universal standard which every society must respect, but this standard is limited: it does not provide human beings with a complete way of life. As Heiner Bielefeldt, in his study of human rights has put it, “while constituting political and legal standards, they [human rights] do not entail a comprehensive guidance as to how to lead one’s life both as an individual and within one’s community.” They “do not give any answers to existential questions of the meaning of life and death”. In this respect they “cannot compete with cultural and religious traditions”. Yet they certainly have a critical effect on those traditions in a sense that they require them to modify those practices that conflict with the demands of human rights.¹⁰

This minimum universalistic view is, however, challenged. From the monistic or perfectionist perspective, it has been claimed that legal and political norms of a society must be based on a specific ideal of life - usually a religious or cultural ideal - and not on the minimum universalistic view such as human rights. Hence, instead of modifying legal and political norms of a society on the basis of human rights, it is maintained that human rights must be seen within the limits of those ideals and even reshaped in accordance with them. This view can be seen, for instance, in certain claims for the specific Asian, African and Islamic conceptions of human rights.

Eva Brems, professor of human rights law at the university of Ghent, Belgium, has examined these and other claims that have been put forward especially in the Asian, African and Islamic human rights discourses. Brems argues that within Islamic discussion there are basically three different attitudes towards the relationship between Islam and international human rights. These attitudes can be called apologetic, interpretative and secular.¹¹ The crucial question that divides the participants of this discussion is whether the universal human rights or the Islamic law of shari’a should be seen as the primary source for the definition and revision of moral, political, and legal norms of a society.

In this discussion, the apologetic approach can be seen as representing the perfectionist view. It holds that the proper answers to all life issues - from individual, social, political and legal to economic, aesthetic, and intellectual - are already given in one's religion.¹ In other words, a specific ideal of life - as given in one's religion - provides the perspective from which moral and political, as well as religious or spiritual matters are settled. As regards human rights, "shari'a is the highest norm, against which all other norms, including human rights are checked".² Human rights are subject to the shari'a and can be constrained and limited on the basis of it.³ From this point of view, it is possible to define Islam, as is in fact often done, as "a comprehensive, complete and perfect system which neither needs nor is susceptible to change. The proper application of Muslim principles and Muslim law is sufficient to deal with all problems and difficulties facing humankind at all times".⁴

4. Perfectionism and non-perfectionism in "East" and "West"

However, according to Brems' study, an apologetic and perfectionist view of (public) morality is only one approach to the subject within Islamic discussion. Interpretative and secular approaches try to make - in one way or another - a distinction between religious ideals of life and principles of public or political morality, such as human rights. Whereas the former are meant to govern the spiritual life of human beings, the latter are concerned with the best organization of society, the rights and duties of human beings toward one another, and principles of justice.⁵ As regards human rights, the secular view clearly takes human rights to be the primary norms against which other norms, including those based on religion, are to be checked. The interpretative approach, in turn, emphasises the redefinition and reformation of religious tradition in a way that makes it more compatible with human rights.⁶

A debate between moral monism and minimum universalism can also be seen within the Western philosophical and religious tradition. It is not uncommon, for instance among Christian scholars, to criticise the distinction between the sphere of public morality and the field of specific ideals of life, placing religion in the latter category. According to this criticism, morality, both on the individual and political level, should be grounded instead on the Christian ideal of life. Thus, Basil Mitchell complains that a Christian cannot agree that his Christianity "should occupy the status merely of private preference with no authority over man's social life and no claim to objective truth".⁷ Mitchell defends a view according to which morality is better backed up if it is based on a religious world view, than if it is seen as autonomous and independent of religion. Or, to be specific, he argues that "much of the Western ethical tradition ultimately makes sense only if a religious [that is, Christian] view of the world is presupposed".⁸

Moral monism is not absent in the political practice of Western societies either. As Parekh points out, "it is evident in the concern to reshape the rest of the world in the liberal-capitalist image of the West".⁹ In this case, it is not merely the general requirements of a tolerable life that are promoted, but the entire way of life with its ideals and values. Thus, the tendency of the United States to promote the entire "American way of life" under the banner of human rights has often even been seen as one of the main reasons for other nations to resist also the implementation of human rights. Moral monism can also be employed to foster a specific (liberal) ideal of authenticity, self-development and self-directed life in a Millian sense.¹⁰

It is also important to remark, that the traditional, minimum universalistic concept of human rights is by no means a natural result from the Western tradition, or a consequence of a specific Western ideal of life. On the contrary, issues of human rights raised long-lasting resistance, for instance, on the part of the Christian churches, and, as Bielefeldt reminds us, "people in the West, had (and still have) to fight to have their rights respected".¹¹ In the Western world, as everywhere else, there exists a variety of competing ideals of life, some of which are better consistent with the minimum universalistic human rights conception than others.

5. Conclusion

My claim is that many of the controversies in human rights discussion are due to different interpretations about the nature of morality and not, for instance, a result of cultural or religious differences. Such disagreements about a proper understanding of the nature and purpose of morality seem to exist in all societies and cultures.¹² I think, in fact, that these differences in perceptions of human rights are not so much differences *between* different cultures and traditions as *within* them.

Therefore, I think that it is of fundamental importance to take a closer look at these moral views *as* moral views. It should be asked what kind of view of the nature and basic tasks of morality is embodied in different claims regarding human rights or universal moral standards. It should be clarified what is meant by the conception of morality, and what is seen as the role and meaning of such a conception in human life and society. Without this kind of meta-ethical scrutiny it is difficult to deal with competing claims about human rights (or common moral standards), not to speak of deciding between these claims.

Notes

1. See Patrick Bannerman, *Islam in Perspective: A Guide to Islamic Society, Politics and Law* (London: Routledge, 1988), 16.
2. Brems, 289.
3. Ibid, 254-255.
4. Bannerman, 12.
5. On these distinctions, see, for instance, Muhammad Khalaf-Allah, 'Legislative Authority,' in *Liberal Islam: A Sourcebook*, ed. Charles Kurzman (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 37-45; 'Ali' Abd Al-Raziq, 'Message Not Government, Religion Not State,' in *Liberal Islam: A Sourcebook*, ed. Charles Kurzman (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 29-36.
6. Brems, 192-200.
7. Mitchell, 54.
8. Ibid, 157.
9. Parekh, 131.
10. On this discussion, see Monique Deveaux, 'Cultural Pluralism from Liberal Perfectionist Premises,' *Polity* XXXII (2000): 473-497. On 'liberal perfectionism', see Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995); Joseph Raz, *The Morality of Freedom* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986).
11. Bielefeldt, 97.
12. See, for instance, Alan Wolfe's discussion on cosmological conflicts in the American society. Alan Wolfe, 'Neither Politics Nor Economics,' in *Toward a Global Civil Society*, ed. Michael Walzer (Providence, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1995), 241-249.

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**INTERCULTURALISM, CULTURE
AND EVERYDAY LIFE**

L'Auberge Espagnole: Interculturalism in the European Melting Pot

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Abstract: Many films use cultural encounters as a theme that conveys our different national identities. Using narratives from the film *L'Auberge Espagnole*, I will discuss how cultures interact with another, in turn allowing prejudices, stereotypes, clichés, and ethnocentrism to emerge.

Keywords: Ethnocentrism, European melting pot, multiculturalism in Europe

1. Cinema and interculturalism

There are many films, mostly comedies, that use cultural encounters as a theme to convey our various national identities. When cultures interact with another, prejudices, stereotypes, clichés, and ethnocentrism, for instance, emerge.

It was during an oral exam at my University that I heard from one of my Erasmus students the film *L'Auberge Espagnole*. She was very enthusiastic about the film, since it resembled the very experience that she was living. The film speaks to anyone who either looks back in memory or forward to the experience of leaving home for the first time.

2. *L'Auberge Espagnole*

L'Auberge Espagnole is a French film released in June 2002. In addition to '*L'Auberge Espagnole*' and its English translation, 'The Spanish Apartment', this movie is also sometimes listed as 'Euro Pudding' (which for some, sums the movie up perfectly) or 'pot luck.' I think that it is better to subscribe to the French title as the expression contains a second meaning: "a place where you get out exactly what you put in"¹ or "free-for-all," a meaning that precisely reflects the vision of Europe as conveyed in the film.

The movie was a huge hit in France and won a lot of festival awards. The production of this movie took place in Paris and Barcelona in 2001, shooting on high-definition digital video. It is classified as a comedy. The director and screenwriter is Cedric Klapisch. As a filmmaker, he does best in depicting young generations through "sociological comedies." *Le Péril Jeune*, *When the Cat's Away* and *L'Auberge Espagnole* are a kind of trilogy in which Klapisch would go from "closer" (his youth, his natal district) to "further" (Spain and especially Barcelona as a place of utopia), while maintaining the characters. For example, the rather bewildered, post-68 youth, just like his parents, is looking for new values without understanding their repercussions.

Premise: Xavier (Romain Duris) is headed for a business career, by courtesy of his absent father's connections. Envisioning his future, he feels a little intimidated and anxious. To postpone what seems inevitable, Xavier takes a risk by leaving Paris, his "hippie" mother and his girlfriend Martine (Audrey Tautou) for a year in Barcelona. He enrolls in an university exchange program in Erasmus in order to gain working knowledge of the Spanish language. He has to learn the language to get a job in the Ministry of Finance, a job that is promised to him by a friend of his father. He imagines that his year of studying economics at the University of Barcelona will lead him to a revelation, and an understanding of his resistance to the life he has not quite chosen.

The moment he exits the plane in Spain, Xavier meets a French neurologist Jean-Michel who is working at the hospital in town. The doctor and his beautiful but exceptionally dim wife, Anne-Sophie, invite him to stay with them while he looks for a place to live. He agrees to whatever Jean-Michel asks him to do, mainly to look after Anne-Sophie who has not yet picked up the language and is afraid to leave the apartment. Xavier knows he must find a bedroom of his own, and so, he answers an ad looking for a roommate. He winds up sharing an apartment with an eclectic, attractive mix of young international hipsters who include guys from Italy, Denmark and Germany, and girls from England, Belgium and Andalusia. Together, the septet share a series of adventures that consist some budding romances...

As one of the film's English states: "Where a year can change a lifetime." Truly, all the original projects of Xavier will be changed, he will become a writer... An audience member shares, "(...) A few months abroad can change your life and your vision of life". Klapisch, the film director, asserts that he first wanted to speak of the "living chaos in which our world evolves." The film thus ends in a hilarious journey of initiation during which the young boy, Xavier, will confront his own identity in a middle of a joyful *cultural melting pot*.

3. European melting pot and European construction

The expression *melting pot* usually refers to United States, not Europe. Historically, mobility is inscribed in the notion of a European construction. A region of immigration, as well as of migrations, Europe has been constructed through a permanent mix of populations: a permanent ethnic and cultural melting pot. An European student, whose mobility is temporary, for example, stands as a new foreigner. His expatriation is only temporary: his stay lies somewhere between short-term tourism and long-term, permanent migration. At the moment, the European community is trying to promote linguistic and cultural diversity. Since the Maastricht Treaty, European construction set the mobility of individuals (especially young people who are undergoing training) as one of its political principles. Among the rights conferred by European citizenship, there is, in the first place, that of travelling and living freely in the member states of the Union.

Despite the Medieval peregrinations or itinerant journey of *happy few* in the XIX century, the institutionalisation of student mobility that is open to everyone in Europe is a recent phenomenon. The creation of major European programs at the end of the eighties such as Comett (1986), *Erasmus* (1987), *Lingua* (1989), *Tempus* (1990), and more recently, *Socrates* (1995) have materialised this intention to open a new era in the field of inter-European exchanges.

However, at present Europeans are mainly sedentary: EC foreigners only represent 2% of the European population (Eurostat, 2000), much less than the target of 10%. Nevertheless, the multicultural experience has to be considered as a “capital” that can be augmented according to the number of languages and cultural experiences more or less mastered, and to the different ways they were obtained.² Student mobility inscribes intercultural contacts via a student’s actual experience. According to Klapisch :

This program (Erasmus) created in a political and institutional way is an extraordinary moment of life. I think that it creates a new generation of minds. Being 20 or 25 and going to study abroad is an experience of life I would wish for everybody.³

Apart from the physical, social and symbolical transition from one world to another, student travels represent a case of professional mobility, another *rite of passage*: from adolescence to adult age, from a dependant life to autonomy, from scholastic culture to university or professional culture, from a national culture to another.⁴

The film presents its theme of interculturalism in many ways: genesis, choice of the location, European casting of European actors, the use of European languages to write the film and to direct the actors. Each of the actors represents his or her own country, so that the filmmaker can play on the international stereotypes.

4. Genesis and location of the film

Cédric Klapisch once paid a visit to his young sister when she was an Erasmus student in Barcelona. She was then living with other young people of different nationalities (two French girls, an Italian, a Spanish and a German). He felt that experience to be an *Auberge Espagnole*. He adds:

All that discontinuous, irregular and polyphonic aspect, is first of all a source of comedy. Sharing a flat with people speaking different languages is of course funny, but not only the languages are mixing (...). It is, at the same time, a source of comedy, reflection and questioning about Europe and, more generally speaking, about differences.

Moreover, from his perspective, European students make up a world apart:

I discovered then this new generation of European students that were forming a Erasmus community abroad, with their parties, meetings, networks. (...) It was the first years of the Erasmus program: the first European generation to coexist. It was then a real discovery to see it going smoothly. It created both confusion and something harmonious. The film speaks a lot about this opposition between confusion and harmony.

Klapisch himself has a significant experience as an expatriate: from the ages of 23 to 25, he studied in New York, a place where he had seriously considered contextualising the film. Many funny scenes of the film were inspired by his personal experience of the melting pot, or told to him by Erasmus students: the love story between Soledad from Tarragona and Lars the Danish boy (the latter eats at 7 p.m. while the other eats at midnight); the memo board of the flat on which is written in seven languages: “X is not here. He will come back tonight” (this message is written in numerous languages in order that anybody can answer to relatives and friends calling Wendy). Other anecdotes include Wendy understanding “fuck” instead of “fac” (abbreviation for

“faculty”) when she answers a phone call for Xavier, the division of the fridge into seven different compartments, each for a different roommate, each a source of dispute.

The choice of Barcelona is not entirely random: Klapisch already knew the town, a town that symbolises dynamism and energy. Barcelona is often seen as a place of pleasure, not of study, as Jean-Michel immediately tells Xavier at the airport, “You will have fun.”

5. An apparent patchwork of scenes

Some critics mention the fact that the film does not have a framework and appears as a patchwork of scenes. The film was written under unusual conditions: in just 13 days, with a month for the preparation of shooting and 9 weeks for the actual shooting. Klapisch was also preparing for another film at the same time. He uses the same film approach as for the case of *When the Cat's Away*:

The story was constructed this way: the ideas did not come from the script, but from the research of locations and cast that would be informing the screenplay. The film was made in any “old way,” struggled along, and appeared a bit “upside down.” This principle appears to me as essential to *L'Auberge Espagnole*, a film that deals with the chaotic and inconsequential side of today's world.”

The film actually aims to speak about the chaos of life. But this confusion is *organised* in a certain way.

The film demonstrates how there can be unity in things that apparently do not have any. Where so many odd-couple-type movies make a big deal about overcoming differences, this European community finds its balance with an easy effortlessness. To discover unity in diversity is a predominant feature in the Klapisch filmography.

6. A film that leaves space for the subconscious

There is a parallel between the writing of the film and what it seeks to tell. By stopping the story and then starting over from a different point, the film mimics the process of writing, as if Xavier is composing his tale in his head as he speaks.

For this type of film, the rough draft is essential. You must trust your spontaneity. The subconscious is magic: in the subconscious, there is logic and organisation.” (...) I was able to externalise the very intimate things because I was not thinking. I believe there is something very profound in lightness and in chance. (...) The scientists say that the true researchers don't know what they are looking for. This is also true for creation.

The film leaves plenty of room for the subconscious by making explicit the « *évidences invisibles* »⁵, a notion as proposed in the title of the book by Raymonde Carroll, a book on the encounters between Americans and French people. As far as the interculturalism is concerned, the *subconscious is fundamental*. Most of the cultural facts are produced subconsciously (or even unconsciously), and are implicitly more so within European cultures.

7. The headache of European casting and shooting

The way in which the casting of the film was done is revealing:

I travelled throughout Europe. Germany, Italy, England...I met a lot of young actors. My only criteria was that they have to ‘epitomise’ German, Italian, English and that they should enter in this story that still did not exist. I did not know at that stage if I wanted an Italian boy or girl, a Danish boy or girl! It's only after seeing actors that I thought of the characters. The actors constructed the personalities of the characters from their own personalities.

In each country, a cast director made a first selection before the director auditioned the selected actors. To explore the character of Xavier, the director asked the actors how they perceived French people. Some members of the audience were surprised by the new “conventional” look of the short-haired Romain Duris, who eventually took on the role of Xavier.

I would say it's a typical French student, with a rather bourgeois lifestyle. Somebody who has problems with his family, identity, sexual life, and the girlfriend he leaves in Paris. It was

interesting to play with somebody who is rather “typical” in every sense of the word. He is not at all special at the beginning though gradually he learns how to become so.

The other individuals who lived in this flat are not exceptional either, though they each possess an unique. Such is the challenge of the film: to depict these young Europeans *without lapsing into caricature*.

Each actor gave me a sort of insight to the characters. As a result, for instance, Kelly Reilly was the English girl. I didn't choose her simply because she represents all of England, but because she was an English girl, like Romain Duris was French. But at the same time, he is also France, Federico d'Anna is Italy...and it is true for everybody. When I started from an individual, there was enough caricature to represent its country, but it must first start from a single identity. And everybody was laughing at seeing how English the English girl is, how Spanish the Spanish girl is ...

As far as the shooting and writing of the film in foreign language is concerned, the director explains:

To direct actors, it's awful to do so in a foreign language! For a moment this film was really an *auberge espagnole*! It is like a sort of Tower of Babel where everybody spoke a different language. (...) I did not give texts to translate, but sometimes, I wrote directly with the translator. It would have been nonsensical to write a text in French and have it translated. It is impossible to write with a French logic when it is something that has to be read in another language. It would sound false.

The result is however a typical French vision of Europe. In the flat, Xavier maintains a positive image since he tends to favour the good understanding of everybody. He defends at best the interests of the flat-sharers when the owner wants to throw them out. I feel that in reality, Europeans probably do not necessarily share such a positive vision of the role of the French in Europe.

8. A singular use of the clichés

The common use of clichés is widely criticized. Indeed, Klapish relies on a deliberate use of the clichés:

I had in mind the sentence of Hitchcock that says 'If you shoot in Switzerland, the action must take place in a chocolate factory and the characters must go skiing. ... Therefore I played with the clichés. For instance, since we were in Spain, I put in a Flamenco scene. But since I found it was a bit ridiculous, I add a sentence of the guy who says 'Spain is not only flamenco.' (...) Besides, everything is a bit exaggerated. The characters are very stereotyped, and so are the situations... The 'Heil Hitler' scene is born out of an improvisation between the two actors. The German told us that his grandparents were Nazis. All the other European actors then insisted very virulently that it was absolutely necessary to speak about Nazism. One of the themes in this film is to convey the identity of each country. It was thus necessary to handle the clichés to show what's inside."

At the same time, the filmmaker creates a distance with the stereotypes by using humour and jokes, some of which are technical (accelerated images, mosaics etc.). He begins with little stories, stories of unusual individuals, before highlighting a more general context. Hence, the audience will not remember the caricature but some particular moments of the film, such as the scene when Isabelle teaches Xavier how to give pleasure to a woman, the arrival of Alistair, the scene of the fly with William, Wendy's brother. William sees the others only through stereotypes: proud Spanish, orderly Germans... He does not perceive the foreigners as individuals, but as foreigners of a certain type. This foreign origin, which prevails over the other dimensions of an identity, works as a symbolic border.

9. Analysis of an emblematic scene: the casting of the new room-mate

I will now analyse a significant scene of the film in which the intercultural content – notably through cultural clashes - appears clearly.

a) Extract of the scenario: *L'Auberge Espagnole* (int. jour)

Four persons are around the table and look at Xavier who smiles warmly. The weather is nice, but the shutters are closed such that there is half-light typical to warm countries.

Wendy

We are really sorry, it's not a trial or anything like that. We didn't know there would be so many people answering the ad...

(Soledad brings a glass of water to Xavier.)

Tobias

So we have decided to meet everyone and to decide all together. Because you know we want to be cool together. We want "good vibes" between people, you know

Xavier

Sure...cool, no problem, I understand...

Alessandro

I don't know, but maybe it is going to be difficult with you, because you are French and all of us are already from different countries. I'm Italian, Tobias is German, Wendy is English, Lars is Danish and Soledad is Spanish. She's the only one from here.

Soledad

De Taragona...

Lars

So what's the problem? We never said that nationality would be a....

Alessandro

No, of course but it's obvious that if the person is Italian or Spanish, it will be easier for everybody here.

Soledad

If the person is Italian, it is not any easier for me...

Alessandro

No, okay, okay...But...No okay, okay...I don't agree but okay...

Tobias

Hey, Alessandro let's keep "good vibes," okay ?

(To Xavier)

You see the rent is not so cheap, so we need to be in a group, so that it's cheaper for everybody. But we need to organize things so that it becomes possible for everybody to live... You see?

Xavier

Yes, yes...

Tobias

So, Xavier, what are you studying?

Xavier

Economics...

Tobias

Hum...Good... And huh...What do you expect your life to be in five years from now?

Wendy

This is ridiculous Tobias, how can you ask a question like that? I don't know what I'm going to do in five years...What conclusions do you want to get out of a question like that...

(Soledad burst out laughing.)

Soledad

Hostia, Tobias que preguntas? ...

Tobias

Come on, it's a very normal question...Listen I have a list of questions, if you don't like my questions or if anyone wants to ask questions, go ahead...

(Mosaic multiscreen. Everybody speaks at the same time...)

Voice-off Xavier

I immediately adored this place... I would have given anything to make them accept me here. The chaos that they are living in here looks exactly as that which had haunted me for so long... I had just found a sister. This house was part of me...

(Tobias seems to be troubled. He looks for another question)

Tobias

Okay, Okay, Well you know, it's just for casual discussion, you know...So okay. I don't know. Well, Xavier do you like...huh...music ?

Wendy (mimicking Tobias)

Yes...And do you ride horses ?

b) Scene analysis

We will try to apply here the methods of the *ethnography of communication*, especially the mnemotecnical form *SPEAKING* developed by Hymes.⁶ This model examines the components of the communicative event. Beyond the description, it is necessary to correlate and evaluate the impact of these components within the context of the film.

S : Setting

This scene takes place *after* one's physical arrival in foreign territory, when a foreigner finds himself in a very down social position (for e.g. when Xavier strolls about with an enormous suitcase in a town that is completely new to him at this stage i.e. *before* he forms new social bonds.) It is an authentic *rite of passage*, rite of aggregation to the new world. These rites go with the most important events of life, indicating the transition from one social position to another, one world to another. They force the individual to find a new way of fitting into the new environment.

The housing problem is one of the most crucial upon one's arrival because a living place is the basis for the appropriation of the space. The choice of the accommodation - a personal space - symbolizes a way of taking roots in the new territory. The housing problem is quoted in the Erasmus surveys as the main difficulty faced by foreigners upon their arrival. It is the first test of a traveller's capacity to adapt, especially the competence in organising his material life.

Often, activities and social contacts abroad constitute "housing strategies." There are three types of social networks : *ethnic*, *native*, *international*. The recourse to the ethnic network helps to curb the fear of uncertainties (at the beginning, Xavier briefly rooms with the newly-wed couple whom he first met at the airport), but at the same time may produce rejection and exclusion from the natives: while calling his French friends on his mobile, Xavier is almost physically attacked by some Barcelona street urchins in *Carrer del Escudellers blancs*, telling him to go back to his country. The indifference of the natives often encourages foreign students to turn to their ethnic or international groups.

Xavier eventually chooses an international group, mixing with students of different nationalities. This choice has a great advantage: he will not stay alone for a long time. Contacts with other foreigners are often the main relational resource for the foreign students. Their social experience will primarily be an introduction to the world of other European students.

P : Participants

All the roommates are present in this exposition scene. It is not surprising that it is therefore featured in the trailer. The audience is introduced to the characters at the same time as Xavier, the film protagonist, appears. Also, all of them reveal their personalities in their own personal way. As the filmmaker explains :

What I like particularly about this scene is that the French man is treated as a foreigner. The film will be released in France but it is the French man who has immigrated. It is a scene of inverse racism.

At this very moment, Xavier is an *étranger* in both sense of the French word: “foreigner” in the political context: someone who has another nationality; and “stranger” within the group of the flat-sharers.

The scene takes place at the beginning of the integration process to the group: the group must open itself up to new relationships and the newcomer must be willing to be included. He must be tactful and use strategies to enter this already formed group. The successful formation of new relationships will depend on his initiative, personality and the interest that he creates among others.

One should notice that this group is quite easy to integrate because it is made of foreigners that share with Xavier the same social status, and are also looking for new friends in a foreign country.

This scene is significant in terms of representing how the entire film was constructed:

There was a banner day, as a result of my travels throughout Europe to do the casting, when I put together for the first time all the actors of the film acting as room-mates : English, Danish, Italian, Spanish, French, and German. We asked each of them in which language he speaks. Everybody spoke reasonable English. For this first working session, I thought it was important that each actor would act something. So I invented this scene where they were all present, without knowing at that stage whether I would keep it or not. It was only an initial contact. The scene came from the memory of a roommate selection process that I had already gone through myself in New York. And the idea on which the scenario is based, is that everybody speaks a lot, apart from the one who is supposed to introduce himself but couldn't even get a word in.

E : Ends

This type of interaction can be classified as *convergent*, since all the protagonists agree to maintain for a certain (very short) time their cognitive and visual attention on a convergent point (focus): to recruit a new roommate in order to pay less rent. The debate on selecting the newcomer allows everyone's value system to surface. It is not surprising that such a situation (especially in this heterogeneous group where different cultures are at stake) will generate cultural clashes.

Some audience members from a French forum on the Internet criticized the fact that the film – too much based on the consensus - does not include any true clashes. For others, it is exactly the main asset of the film. Some of the subplots, nevertheless, contain strong arguments and cultural clashes. The conflict will remain limited, because the will to live together in peace is stronger. In fact, part of the interaction (Lars, Tobias, and Wendy) shows the efforts made by the participants to define and redefine the elements able to provoke *dysphoria*. Each inappropriate feeling (Alessandro the Italian shows clearly that he does not want a French in the flat) will be repressed. The participants tend to adopt a certain affective discipline in order to preserve the existence of the convergent encounter.

A : Acts

According to Goffman, this interaction may be euphoric or dysphoric (state of tension). We can list the forms of temporary dysphoria, those that make immediate way for the “good vibes.”

The cock-fighting between the Italian and the French

The filmmaker justifies the aggressive reaction of Alessandro towards Xavier:

I wanted to have a clash between the Italian and the French, because I really think that Gucci cannot love Yves Saint Laurent. The Italian would prefer not to see the French. (...) I wanted some rivalry with them about the way of cooking. I found the idea of a cockfight between the two Latin boys funny. I deleted it later on, but some of it remains: the attitude of the Italian who does not like the French.

This is perhaps what Gregory Bateson call *discordant punctuation*; the relational aspect of communication - a metacommunication. To restore communication (and a convergent encounter), Tobias has to remember the role of “good vibes,” so as to prevent any discrimination based on nationality. What Tobias does is to return to a *digital communication*, concentrating on the content/objective (for e.g. not to express love or hate towards a determinate nationality) – a sort of communication favoured in the German/American culture, An *analogue communication*, on the other hand, focuses on the relationship and emotive side of the interaction.

As it is always the case in Europe (there are always clashes between geographic and cultural neighbours or cousins, though rarely with people living further away), this rivalry of *frères ennemis*⁷ contains Latin resemblance: fashion, gastronomy, vines, cheese, monuments, cinema etc.

In this scene, Xavier is considered as an involuntary ambassador, as an ethnic or national representative of its country, as a “type,” not as a person. He has not even opened his mouth, but had received the stereotypical projections from others (especially Alessandro). He starts to understand the importance of the

national dimension of his identity. These initial representations, fitting with the various national stereotypes, may usually prevent or hinder the social discovery.

When a person lives abroad, national or cultural differences always surface at the beginning. The fact that the natives are not changing their topic of conversation in the presence of the foreigner is a good sign of integration. At a more advanced stage, cultural differences are of no interest any more. The natives see the foreigner as person, not as a representative. Xavier reaches this stage after 9 months of staying with the roommates (This is however applicable for being inside this temporary international community, not with the rest of the Spanish natives, as the latter experience would certainly require more time).

Differences between the German and the French

Tobias' ridiculous question ("What do you expect your life to be in five years from now?") breeds a second dysphoria.

The German, for instance, who put always everything in order, tries to organise this meeting in a way that seems to him rational, and this starts off a clash with the others. (...) It's once again a scene in which I whip pieces here and there. I was asked in New York the same question that was being posed to Xavier: what he will do in five years' time. I had found this question so stupid that I thought it would be a very good reason for them to debate upon.

Germans and Americans share a somewhat similar cultural point of view: everything has to be explained, or clarified. Whereas the American norm is *explicit* (in order to assimilate 280 millions foreigners in two centuries), the French norm is primarily *implicit*. The American culture is *binary*: a proposition has to be true or false. 'An American is not at ease with the nuance of grey, whereas the French bathes at ease in an ocean of ambiguity that he tends to maintain.'⁸ Hall give the following advice: "Germany is the country where it is important to spell it out, where no details shall be forgotten, where nothing cannot be left to imagination."⁹

The French are more attracted to the *complex*, and the American by the *simple*. The strength of the American culture lies precisely in its ability to simplify the complex to create value (Mac Donald, Disneyworld, American management, computer-science...). For Americans or Germans - cultures as a form of fundamental processes - to understand means *to separate*. For the French, it means *to link up*, to establish and maintain the bonds. French comprehension is mainly *contextual* because the contents of what would be articulated will be coloured by the context. Hall defines French culture as a "rich context," whereas American culture is a "poor context" - the sense of what is to be articulated comes mainly from the contents, not from the context. By the term "rich context," he implies analogic cultures in which the world is different from the thing (the signified is different from the significant). Being too explicit would be qualified as naive, not to say stupid, or even worse. (This accounts for Wendy's reaction in her typical English humour.)

K : Keys

The participants are supposed to engage in "fresh talk,"¹⁰ an unprepared and totally spontaneous discourse.

I: Instrumentalities

Various signals, verbal or not, punctuate the scene. They usually have a *subconscious effect* on coordinating the exchanges.¹¹ Here, they convey the acceptance of Xavier (the postural attitude of Alessandro is clearly aggressive) and reactions to the various queries made to him. Xavier exhibits positive responses to facilitate communication: a smile, for e.g. The two *dysphoria* in crescendo are punctuated by laughter (Soledad), visible attempts of both Alessandro and Tobias, who are embarrassed and have to save face in front of the others.

It is noticeable that in both cases, the girls play the role of facilitation: first, Wendy tries to make Xavier at ease ("It is not a trial," she explains) and then to joke at Tobias' proposal; Soledad criticizes Alessandro's attempt at creating a Latin alliance that excludes the French ("it would not be easier for me") before laughing at Tobias' ridiculous question. Though being the one that apparently has a weaker command of English, Soledad expresses very well her opinion in both cases.

N: Norms

They dictate the rituals of a community, the way in which the speeches are distributed, according to the status, roles, and circumstances of the exchanges. Here the *ethos* of the group can be summoned by the "good vibes", which reminds me of the typical values during the post-68 period. Such are well depicted in other films of Klapisch: good relationships, tolerance, think pink, etc. The music is rather techno (*Radiohead*).

Another implicit norm is the *use of English* between the flat-sharers. We know that the learning of Spanish is one of the reasons why Xavier went to Barcelona. European students understand how important it is to be fully fluent in a native language in order to complete their training in that environment (Xavier even

becomes an *habitué* of the Iposa café in Barcelona, where he learns the *puta madre* spanish in a few months). Therefore some audience members from a French forum (*Allocine*) are surprised to see English widely spoken as a *lingua franca* in the group, though they live in Spain:

I would find it more logical if they had communicated in Spanish. They live in Spain, no? So they have to adapt. If they had spoken together in Spanish, they would have made much more progress in this language.

The level of communication in English is not realistic in this movie, as one of the participants on the French forum rightly notes (such a critique is also mentioned in a Spanish review¹²):

(...) it seems that northern and southern Europeans can get by the same in English, as we know that in this sort of conversation, northern Europeans always tends to monopolize the talks. They master the English language better. It's true that Soledad always remains silent during the discussions.

The only one who speaks most Spanish is in fact Soledad. Inside this international community that is partially disconnected from the inhabitants of Barcelona, the only language that favours integration is English. Xavier's partial mastering of English allows him to avoid the linguistic frustration (in Spanish) that usually sets Erasmus students socially apart right from the beginning.

G: Genre

The discussion between roommates in selecting the newcomer resembles a work interview, one that a candidate has to pass in order to get a job. Such is one of the most *stressful* situations and also a *rite of passage* in life, like a trial...

10. Rediscovering the richness of the European Babel

Following my observations about Americans (and Germans), the French often find Americans too simple, too naive. There is a characteristic scene in the film, whereby Wendy, who appears till then (at least to Xavier) as a cold, puritan, serious English girl, suddenly falls in love with an American boy (Bruce) after a lovely evening of drinking and music. Later on, Xavier asked Wendy how she could fall in love with such a stupid American boy. His reaction seems to me characteristic of the way the French see Americans. Perhaps this reaction reveals jealousy, since Xavier and Wendy seems to get on rather well together, and thus contains one of the most permanent reproaches that the French have towards the English: they continue to betray Europe for their love-story with United States¹³. There are still unfailing transatlantics, even in love affairs.

There is an even more symbolic climatic scene in the film, one in which all the pieces of the puzzle unite together: all the flat-sharers unite to give an alibi to Wendy (while she was having sex with Bruce), when Alistair, her English boyfriend, arrives from England with a bunch of flowers. Europe unites ... to eliminate (metaphorically) the Americans. This final scene, in which Alistair discovers William, Wendy's brother, in bed with Bruce, is once again a caricature - a worn "gag" that usually appears in Vaudeville theatre - but in this film, it works very well from the narrative point of view.

The film is *Eurooptimistic*, as confirmed in the following BBC-films review:

Presumably Klapish regards the chaotic flat-share as a metaphor for the on-going wider process of European integration. Given the current Euro tensions, 'Pot Luck' represents a fairly benevolent vision of people of diverse cultural identities and nationalities muddling together and providing one another with mutual support, despite their differences.¹⁴

But we can still wonder whether the European student sees himself as a foreigner in Europe, or if Erasmus has announced a new - maybe strange - way of being European. The film gives an answer in the final monologue, revealing the vision that supports the entire film: "I am him, him and he... I am like Europe, I am all this. I am a real mess." This final monologue, affirmed by a Spanish critic as a slogan made for the European Union¹⁵, also says: "I am French, Spanish, English, Danish. I am not one, I am many".

Surely, it is only through *decentration* attained by means of Erasmus that multiculturalism can be founded. Xavier is no longer "closed-minded" in terms of "his" culture, nor he is dominated by ethnocentrism, sociocentrism, but he is still egocentric:

(...) But if Xavier remains annoyingly egocentric, the film is, on another and more remarkable level, about exactly what he is. It points out the associations between commercial and cultural globalizations, but celebrates rather than laments the loss of fixed identities.¹⁶

Till this final monologue, Xavier has already made the most important decisions for his future life: he runs out of Bercy and decides to be a writer, to fulfil the dream he has had as a child. The love story with Martine is over. The year in Barcelona allows him to understand his real personality, to choose the life he always wanted, to be himself, to cut off ties with a difficult past. Like Europe, Xavier is now completely free and can “take off” (refer to last image in the film). Xavier, through his Erasmus experience, has discovered the same freedom akin to an experience of a novel:

The novel, read or written, reminds us of this freedom...and its extreme importance. It's freedom: the freedom not to be satisfied with one identity (religious, national, sexual, political) conferred when we were born.¹⁷

The film deals with the unique richness of a multicultural and multilingual Europe. As illustrated here by the Peruvian writer Mario Vargas Llosa, it goes far beyond a Euro currency:

I believe in Europe. It is the richest and the most original enterprise of modern times, but I would not use the term of European identity. (...) There is no European identity, except if we consider that total diversity and co-existence of racial, political, cultural extremes defines an identity. (...) The idea of Europe is fantastic because it goes against a homogeneous society. There is always, beneath nationalism, the search for a common denominator to homogenise. And Europe means a coexistence of total diversity...¹⁸

Today, when everybody mentions only the decline of old Europe in face of an invasive America, an expanding China or India, we should remember that the key to an European miracle lays in its melting pot.¹⁹

“Cultural Europe is multicultural Europe”²⁰

Notes

*All the quotations from French sources are translated *are not official translations*.

1. *Le petit Robert, dictionnaire de la langue française*. Paris: Dictionnaires le Robert, 2002.
2. See Murphy-Lejeune, Elisabeth & Geneviève Zarate. “L’acteur social pluriculturel: évolution politique, positions didactiques.” *Le français dans le monde*. 2003. 34-35.
3. All the quotations of the filmmaker, Cedric Klapisch are taken from interviews that appear in the booklet accompanying the DVD and VHS editions of the film.
4. See Murphy-Lejeune, Elisabeth. *L’étudiant européen voyageur, un nouvel étranger*. Paris : Didier, 2003. 108.
5. See Carroll, Raymonde. *Evidences invisibles, Américains et Français au quotidien*. Paris : Seuil, 1987.
6. See Hymes, Dell. “Models of Interaction of Language and social life,” *Directions in sociolinguistics, The Ethnography of Communications*. New York : Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972.
7. Cocteau: “A French is an Italian in a bad mood.”
8. See Baudry, Pascal. *Français & Américains, L’autre rive*. Paris : Village Mondial documents, 2003. 28-30.
9. See Hall, Edward T. & M.R. Hall in *Guide du comportement dans les affaires internationales*. Paris : 1990. 57.
10. See Goffman, Erving. *Le Parler frais d’Erving Goffman*. Paris : Minuit, 1989.
11. See Gumperz, John. *Language and social identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982. 15.
12. “También se echa en falta algun personaje que no entienda inglés, o que no se pueda casi comunicar con los demas por desconocer idiomas que no sean el suyo propio, situacion por otro lado mas creible que una casa en la que “mas o menos” todos entiendan a todos con relativa facilidad.”
<<http://www.canalcine.net/html/laubergeespagnole-critica.htm>>
13. To study the difficult relationships between English and foreigners - especially the French - and their strong friendship with the United States, see Paxman, Jeremy. *Les Anglais, portrait d’un people* (Préface de Théodore Zeldin) Editions Saint-Simon pour la traduction française, 2003. 54-59.
14. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/films/2003/04/08/pot_luck_2003_review.shtml>
A German review comments on this euro-optimism differently: “L’Auberge Espagnole umschreibt das Ideal

- von multikulturellen Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl junger Europäer auf ungezwungene Weise, ohne Lehrmeisterlichkeit. Und wer als Erasmus-Student im Ausland war, wird einige witzige Déjà-vu-Erlebnisse genießen.” (< <http://www.cineman.ch/movie/2002/LaubergeEspagnole/>>)
15. “(...) es una comedia graciosa que muestra una cara de lo que es odiosamente llamada ‘La Nueva Europa’ y todas sus consecuencias, aunque dejando un regustillo final de ‘todos somos europeos, y por lo tanto somos uno’ que no acaba de funcionar, como casi todas las moralinas evidentes que se exponen al final de algunas películas, ya que parece estar sacado de un eslogan publicitario realizado por los presidentes de los países que forman la Union Europea <<http://www.canalcine.net/html/laubergeespagnole-critica.htm>>
 16. <<http://www.popmatters.com/film/reviews/l/lauberge-espagnole.shtml>>
 17. See Huston, Nancy. *Nord perdu suivi de Douze France*. Paris : Actes Sud, 1999. 105.
 18. Llosa, Mario Vargas. “L’Europe, c’est la coexistence de la diversité.” *Le Français dans le monde*. No. 326, 2003, 6-7. <<http://www.fdlm.org/fle/article/326/mariovargasllosa.php>>
 19. David Cosandey uses the word *mereuporia* to explain this miracle, one that is in part due to the constant emulation between European nations. This theory makes it possible for one to understand the progress and decline of great civilisations: Islam, China, India, Europe, and United States. See Cosandey, David. *Le secret de l’occident, du miracle passé au marasme présent*. Paris : Arlea, 1997. Also see Manent, Pierre. “L’héritage libéral.” *Revue des deux mondes*. 2002. 47-54.
 20. See Patrikios, Titos. *Le français dans le monde*. 326, mars-avril 2003. 46.

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The Elusive Truth: Intercultural Music Exchange in *Addictive*

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Abstract: Truth Hurts's 2002 song *Addictive* led off a current trend of referencing Asian musics and cultures in rap, hip-hop and R&B recordings. The song features music sampled from Bappi Lahiri's "Thoda Resham Lagta Hai" (sung by Lata Mangeshkar). This unauthorized and uncredited sampling sparked a Lahiri-led court battle: he described it as a "war for the Indian composer" in response to the "cultural imperialism" practiced by the *Addictive* producers. Truth Hurts's creative and legal teams, plus the majority of press coverage, have also illuminated the negative dynamics of appropriation and misrepresentation within the "music war." However, these critiques pay little attention to the actual *sound* of "Addictive." Examining the song's sonic elements exposes several useful points of positive intercultural exchange. In our current political circumstances, the image of "war" has much currency and is becoming a metonym for all East-West interaction. The critical focus on violence and racism in *Addictive* is misguided. Lahiri and the others are not going to court over representation. Rather, money is of primary concern. Selective portraits of cultural imperialism that ignore the music are employed only as a means to financial winnings.

Keywords: music; culture; Orientalism; metonymy.

I am a hopeless optimist. Still, this paper emerged out of two points of contention I have with cultural studies and the majority of academic discussion on intercultural performance. First, few cultural theorists actually examine the sound components of music, mainly focusing on circumstances around the creation or performance of a piece. Second, most merely point out what is wrong in intercultural encounters - appropriation, misrepresentation and disenfranchisement. While not seeking to diminish these negatives, I think it is equally useful to locate what is productive in intercultural performance, particularly because we live in an interconnected world.

To examine these notions, I will discuss the hip-hop song "Addictive," and its surrounding copyright infringement case that has been characterized as a "music war" between U.S. and Indian musicians. I will show that analysing the actual sound of "Addictive," in addition to its context, gives a more accurate portrait of its intercultural dynamics. The result of this more detailed examination contests the image of war and points toward more productive ways of doing intercultural critique. In the first section of this paper, I will summarize the court case, talk about how it has been constructed as a "war," and situate it within a larger media and political trend labelling all east-west interaction as such. Second, I will discuss how the standard language of cultural critique is insufficient for global sites, particularly the *Addictive* debate that emphasizes money over representation. Finally, I will show how focusing on the song's sound unearths positive intercultural dynamics within it.

In the spring of 2002, black U.S. singer Truth Hurts released "Addictive." The song features vocals and accompaniment sampled from "Thoda Resham Lagta Hai," written by Bappi Lahiri and sung by Lata Mangeshkar in the 1981 Hindi Bollywood film *Jyoti*. *Addictive* expresses a generalized, faux-Asian aesthetic by using Lahiri's song and Orientalist imagery in its video. While quoting or referencing Asian music and other artistic traditions is nothing new to the west, both broadly defined, over the last two years these borrowings have significantly increased in rap, hip-hop and R&B recordings. *Addictive* differs in that it does not just place the music side-by-side, but fuses them to create a new entity. Regardless, *Addictive* producer DJ Quik sampled Lahiri's piece without permission or compensation, sparking a U.S. court battle in which Lahiri seeks over one million dollars from Aftermath Records, run by rap superstar Dr. Dre. Thus far, Lahiri has successfully won an injunction to stop sales of *Addictive* until he is credited or litigation is completed.

Lahiri has referred to the court case as a "war for the Indian composer."¹ Truth Hurts, her collaborators, and several voices from the U.S. press mirror this rhetorical construction. War is often about political posturing and verbal haggling. Similarly, the *Addictive* war rages in the language surrounding the trial. Lahiri and his legal team charge the song's producers with practicing "cultural imperialism,"² a sentiment one U.S. critic echoes, saying the producers were "pillaging the third world for material."³ Further, Lahiri's legal team calls the song a "flagrant disregard, and disrespect, for their client's religious beliefs, culture and ownership of the copyright." They claim its lyrics "are obscene and cause extreme offence, to the sensibilities of many Hindu and Muslim people."⁴ Invoking language of religious difference specifically capitalizes on current "Islam vs. West" tensions. Lahiri abstracts his dispute into this binary when, instead of naming individuals, he vows to "take legal action against the Americans for recycling his song."⁵ And the U.S. artists have fallen into the corresponding imperialist role. Dr. Dre belittles Mangeshkar, describing *Addictive* as just "a drum track, bassline and this Indian girl singing."⁶ While the singer is actually a woman in her seventies and holds a world record for her proliferation, Dr. Dre's words pose her as the inferior Other, reifying the monoliths of east and west.⁷

These words of war reflect real life domestic tensions between urban blacks and Asian Americans or immigrants in the U.S. However, while early west coast rappers referenced China and Korea to discuss local tensions, more recent recordings feature primarily Southeast Asian idioms to create exotic, romantic, and pleasurable sound palettes. The current “war on terrorism” has created even more interest in the East among Westerners. Individuals are constantly committing “acts of cross-cultural poaching” in order “to imagine alternate possibilities for selfhood while also negotiating anxieties about racial, gender, and national differences,”⁸ and imbalanced political and economic forces clearly influence these encounters. But many negotiations that allow for individual agency within political crises are overlooked in a world of 30-second news bites. Meanwhile, events that are biggest, create the greatest fear, or spur consumption are promoted systematically by those that control media images. Thus, “war” has become *the* intercultural performance, a metonym for all East-West interaction; what George Lakoff describes as a “general principle [. . .] needed because one cannot list all the examples.”⁹ Members of the press, numerous world political and religious leaders, a fair amount of the academy, and others all employ the metonym by categorizing and separating cultures and nations. I do not suggest that this conception dictates our thoughts or actions, but its proliferation must influence our experience. When we hear “war,” it conjures images and tensions of, among many others, the Persian Gulf conflict, bombing in Afghanistan, and the current unrest in Iraq. And, because these images consist of state-enacted physical violence, “war” is more specifically a stereotype, a representation *not* based on images of the whole and used to make quick judgments about a person or event.¹⁰ The result of likening the *Addictive* affair to war is a pre-constructed narrative of greed, dominance and bloodshed that breeds fear of intercultural interaction and breaks down communication.

Many critics of intercultural performance rely on simplified narratives of cultural imperialism, currently expressed through the war metonym. A standard critique might highlight how *Addictive* producers placed Lahiri’s piece into hip-hop, a form fed by U.S. corporate enterprises and sweeping the globe in a telling imperialist image. Lahiri’s song could be described as the background, third-world drum machine for Truth Hurts, a generalization supported by the hodgepodge of belly dancing, gauzy fabric, sequins, lots of small bells, and henna-stained hands in the *Addictive* video. We could construct Truth Hurts as a yellowface minstrel, asserting her “Americanness” by performing a homogenized and stereotyped Other. Certainly, in the wake of September 11th frenzy in which many in the U.S. joined to ostracize and vilify Asians and Asian Americans, discussions of *Addictive* could easily illuminate a plethora of negatives when read solely through the lens of war.

But elements that diverge from the portrait of totalising west-on-east brutality are obscured by this scheme. Language that deals in binaries is insufficient and inappropriate for *Addictive* and other cosmopolitan exchanges. Claims of authenticity or appropriation require two distinct sites with material moving between them, but cultures are not bounded as such. Further, popular music has no tangible presence and no local or rightful “home.” Hip-hop, R&B and Hindi film songs, although born out of specific locales, are performed, created, and consumed worldwide. Models of east-west or global-local cannot accurately reflect music enjoyed so diversely. Further, intercultural performance need not always occur person-to-person, reflecting disparities of dominance. Intercultural experience is possible between person and song, or a myriad of other media.

So, while standard cultural critique would focus on Orientalism in “Addictive,” Lahiri and the others are not going to court over representation. Rather, money is of primary concern, with issues of representation employed only as a means to financial winnings. Lahiri, known for illegal sampling himself, claims numerous artists have lifted from him before but he ignored it. His decision to litigate this time suggests he saw it as a lucrative endeavour, perhaps due to Dr. Dre’s high profile. Actually, the song has already brought financial gain to those involved. It was a major success for Truth Hurts, breaking into the top ten on U.S. and U.K. charts, and holding the number nine spot on the Billboard Hot 100.¹¹ Lahiri declared, “I feel very proud because no Indian composer before has made it to the US and UK top 10 charts. It’s a proud moment for Indian music and for the Hindi film industry.”¹² Instead of revelling in the pride of representation, however, Lahiri has released his own album of song remixes and is touring the U.S. As another example, Dr. Dre’s legal counsel claims he did not know how to find the original track’s owner and thus did not credit Lahiri. However, copies sold in India *have* credited him, suggesting it was done only when thought to increase sales. Racism cannot fully explain this inconsistency; capitalism can. And there are now at least two remixes of “Addictive,” one by much criticized Indian arranger Harry Anand who does not credit *anyone* involved with the previous songs.

Perhaps the litigants and U.S. press have neglected the lyrics and music of *Addictive* because they undermine the lucrative metonym of war. When the music is considered, however, several positive dynamics emerge. First, none of the involved parties have ever claimed to dislike the *sound* of the song. Mangeshkar allows, “I don’t mind what they’ve done. They haven’t tampered with my song.”¹³ Notions of one-sided appropriation or domination deny the agency of individuals, seeing them as objects in an all-engrossing, non-variant system. But Mangeshkar rejects the trope of passive victim by exercising her ability to accept “Addictive.” Similarly, Truth Hurts was invited to the Zee Gold 2002 Bollywood Awards because viewers *enjoy* her song. Performing in an Indian setting also allowed an opportunity to re-imagine *Addictive* in a new context, giving audiences a chance to ascribe their own meaning to the exchange it fostered. While U.S. press members have perpetuated the trial’s polarized images, one Indian critic reflects a more light-hearted sentiment saying,

“the music world can be really funny. A song whom nobody knew, a song which was a complete flop when it was released two decades ago, a song which even the film’s director and music director had forgotten... this tune has now become a rage in the West. But never mind - that’s showbiz, folks.”¹⁴

Orientalist and primitivist imagery is often represented alongside the Occident or modern to detail “monstrous hybridity.”¹⁵ But *Addictive* offers a more positive sonic blend, based not on difference but similarity. Sampled Mangeshkar starts the song, singing about a garland of wedding flowers that is both beautiful and bittersweet.¹⁶ Truth Hurts joins and sings about a boyfriend or husband and their roller coaster relationship that ultimately survives because “he’s so contagious.” These two narratives are capable of complimenting one another as both deal with the pleasure and pain of relationships. Further, DJ Quik was never searching for an exotic sound to represent “India,” but instead came across Lahiri’s song on television and liked what he heard. The original song and hip-hop actually share much common ground in terms of instrumentation and orchestration. Both feature generally repetitive drumbeats with small changes to accent certain phrases, simple harmonic progressions, and minimal ornamentation from strings and other percussion. In “Addictive,” Lahiri’s beat remains, with less variation, and Mangeshkar’s vocals are the major harmonic undercurrent, guiding the rest of the arrangement.

Because of the strong presence of “Thoda Resham Lagta Hai,” *Addictive* has several points of connection for listeners in the U.S. and abroad. One critic dismisses the mix, saying it provides “the average American” with a way to “feel magically sexy, dancing in a club to the ‘forbidden,’ ‘risqué’ sounds of a faraway ‘foreign’ land like India, even when almost all of those people have no idea what is being said in the song.”¹⁷ But this critique reifies the east-west binary for, who are “those people” that do not understand the Hindi lyrics? There are plenty of Hindi speakers in the U.S., not to mention those worldwide that hear the song along global pop circuits. Neglecting Asian American subjectivities follows a standard formula of racial triangulation in which whites and blacks occupy an “insiders” hierarchy. Asian Americans are then constructed, “as immutably foreign and unassimilable.”¹⁸ But one columnist for an Indian-American e-newsletter describes driving with her mother and their surprise and excitement at hearing Lahiri’s piece, in “Addictive,” on a hip-hop station.¹⁹ A variety of U.S. listeners understand the song’s intertextual dynamics and will not just cast Lahiri’s composition to the background.

Finally, ignoring the music in *Addictive* simplifies a site in which Orientalism, primitivism, east-west and north-south, inter- and intracultural dynamics all collide. This profusion of discourses may seem more confusing than productive. But it actually creates a space in which subject positions are not easily demarcated or stratified, and illuminates points of resistance against the dominant powers on both sides of the sampler. Timothy Brennan describes how U.S. blacks also suffer at the hands of imperialist whites stating:

The U.S. mainstream media’s grasp of the genre known as “rap” is as distant from the source and often as hostile as much of the imperial travel narratives from earlier centuries - viewing events within their own country with the confusion and distaste usually reserved for reporting on antique lands. This reporting - which for at least a decade has been part of an unofficial public consensus - partakes of the same tropes as those found in the discourses of colonialism, even if it is a domestic issue by and about Americans.²⁰

Several critics not only blast Truth Hurts for stealing Lahiri’s song, but also liken her to racist tropes like “Gangsta Bitch.”²¹ While suffering oppression does not excuse black artists from creating Orientalist representation, subjugation within the U.S. breaks down the monolithic west. The all-powerful, pristine Occident becomes a fictive construction and the performativity of Orientalism and primitivism is illuminated. *Addictive* demonstrates how Orientalism can be performed by anyone to distance or violate a population in order to demarcate their own subject position. Black, Asian and other stereotypes move as currency within white, capitalist industry and are used by artists of all races and ethnicities to find success within it. But because people are not fixed in prescribed roles for intercultural interaction, individuals can change ethnocentric dynamics while being equally responsible for the negativity they produce.

Intercultural studies must better allow for narratives that help move us beyond negatives, for no intercultural encounter is automatically racist. Texts are devoid of inherent meaning, rather, each reader or listener exercises an agency that allows them to read for or against dominant ideologies.²² Several critics have made pithy statements about how the “truth hurts,” disregarding that each person in the affair constructed their own truth and used it to their own ends. We *can* read *Addictive* as a violent violation that proves we will never see eye-to-eye with each other. But this move only reifies antagonisms and eliminates potential for good connections, reasons for artist to be more careful in the future. We must complicate our arguments and open our minds to imagine the possibility of good in intercultural exchange. Cultural production and political economy are connected but do not always move parallel to one another. And a song only possesses meaning we ascribe to it.²³

Notes

¹ See Bhattacharyya, M. “After fireworks, Dreamworks - Spielberg and *Mask* makers at my door, yodels Bappi Lahiri,” *The Telegraph*, 22 April 2003, (accessed 6 January 2004). http://telegraphindia.com/1030422/asp/calcutta/story_1895311.asp.

- ² See "Federal court lawsuit claims that hit single 'Addictive' borrows from Hindi song by B. Lahiri," (2002), *New India-times, On-line Edition*, 8 November, (accessed 13 June 2003). <http://www.newsindia-times.com/2002/11/08/dias-32-fed.html>.
- ³ See Fitzpatrick, C. "Boom Go the Bombs, Boom Goes the Bass," *PopMatters*, 11 June 2003, (accessed 13 June 2003). <http://www.popmatters.com/music/videos/t/truthhurts-addictive.shtml>.
- ⁴ See Davis, D. "Press Release," 10 July 2002, (accessed 13 June 2003). <http://www.musiclw.com>.
- ⁵ See Bhattacharya, R. "Bappi Lahiri: Today, you don't have copies, you have Xerox copies," *Screen*, (accessed 13 June 2003). <http://www.screenindia.com/20020906/mcov.html>.
- ⁶ See Kusner, N. "Melody of Errors," *Mid-Day*, 21 June 2002, (accessed 13 June 2003). <http://midday.com/ENTERTAINMENT/MUSIC/2002/June/25916.htm>.
- ⁷ See Singhal, M. "Youth Forum: So Contagious - Truth Hurts," *Lokvani*, (accessed 13 June 2003). http://www.lokvani.com/lokvani/article.php?article_id=486.
- ⁸ See Sponsler, C. "Introduction," in Claire Sponsler and Xiaomei Chen (eds.) *East of West: Cross Cultural Performance and the Staging of Difference*. New York: Palgrave, 2000. 3.
- ⁹ See Lakoff, G. *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. Lakoff, 1987. 77-78.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 79.
- ¹¹ See Kusner, N. "Melody of Errors," *Mid-Day*, 21 June 2002, (accessed 13 June 2003). <http://midday.com/ENTERTAINMENT/MUSIC/2002/June/25916.htm>.
- ¹² See Bhattacharya, R. "Bappi Lahiri: Today, you don't have copies, you have Xerox copies," *Screen*, (accessed 13 June 2003). <http://www.screenindia.com/20020906/mcov.html>.
- ¹³ See Ferrao, D. "Lata's Lament," *The Times of India*, 29 September 2002, (accessed 13 June 2003). <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/cms.dll/xml/uncomp/articleshow?artid=23740892>.
- ¹⁴ See Kusner, N. "Melody of Errors," *Mid-Day*, 21 June 2002, (accessed 13 June 2003). <http://midday.com/ENTERTAINMENT/MUSIC/2002/June/25916.htm>.
- ¹⁵ See Rony, F. *The Third Eye: Race, Cinema, and Ethnographic Spectacle*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996, 132.
- ¹⁶ See Fitzpatrick, C. "Boom Go the Bombs, Boom Goes the Bass," *PopMatters*, 11 June 2003, (accessed 13 June 2003). <http://www.popmatters.com/music/videos/t/truthhurts-addictive.shtml>.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁸ See Kim, C. "The Racial Triangulation of Asian Americans," in G. Chang (ed.) *Asian Americans and Politics: Perspectives, Experiences, Prospects*. Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2001. 41.
- ¹⁹ See Singhal, M. "Youth Forum: So Contagious - Truth Hurts," *Lokvani*, (accessed 13 June 2003). http://www.lokvani.com/lokvani/article.php?article_id=486.
- ²⁰ See Brennan, T. "World Music Does Not Exist," *Discourse* 23.1 (Winter): 151-52.
- ²¹ See Fitzpatrick, C. "Boom Go the Bombs, Boom Goes the Bass," *PopMatters*, 11 June 2003, (accessed 13 June 2003). <http://www.popmatters.com/music/videos/t/truthhurts-addictive.shtml>.
- ²² See Hutcheon, L. *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms*. New York: Methuen, 1985. 27.
- ²³ For insight into the early stages and development of hip-hop, I am grateful to Rafi Crockett. For editing assistance, I thank Kirbie Crowe, Stephen Hill, E. Patrick Johnson, and Mark West.

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Epistemological Displacements in the Media and Literatures of the Americas

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Abstract: The myth of attachment to the land as the hermeneutic fountainhead of territoriality and as the source of identity and signification is undergoing a shift in the context of global postmodernism. No longer validating the orthodoxy's pursuit of the 'single, deep meaning' in a text, the literary discourse and the discourse of advertising in the Americas now work towards transforming their audience into producers of multiple legitimate readings. However, literary critics and professors often tend to refer to a canon linked to modernity. They avoid considering multiple meanings and their realization in discourses, which similar processes deserve to be emphasized, if one wants to establish a new critical thinking based on transversal thinking. This does not mean that discourses are identical. In the case of advertising industry, the resulting displacements are not identical to those created by literary postmodernism. Advertisers continue to be driven by the promotion of their service/product as the sole solution to a perceived problem, whereas literary texts continue to multiply possible problems, and/or possible resolutions. These new dynamics tend to steer populations towards intercultural dynamics and adaptation to different cultural contexts within global postmodernism/postcolonialism. They foster new means to create difference and self-images far from the fear of homogeneity disseminated by thinkers who are still referring to a strong link between territoriality and identity.

Keywords: Modernity; postmodernism; postcolonialism.

1. Introduction

Modernity is linked to the invention of Nation-States, which imposed a common reality through violent means. In order to disseminate this reality, a bureaucracy of pedagogues and critics of literary and historic texts has been created to disseminate official versions that hide exclusion. The historic and literary canons of Nation-States are connected to a territorial logic based on the belief in life as a zero sum game: when some gain, others lose. Conflicts are therefore heightened by a belief in scarcity.

This canon has been put into question after the Second World War, as well as the dissemination of the horror of the Shoah, and the Gulags. Breaking the monolithism of the canon has been helped, among others, by the emergence of the feminist discourse. The latter underlines the fact the women have never been acceded to right equality even though Nation-States pretended to tender to equal citizens.

In the postmodern/postcolonial logic contextualized with the expansion of globalization and of liberalism, what is needed is no longer conformity to a territorial logic but creativity in different contexts. This can be achieved through the recognition of one's own various self images (as opposed to a static identity), through the capitalization of knowledge and the opening of a new 'frontier', which is based on symbolic, cultural scientific and technological expansion. In order to achieve these goals, literature and the media disseminate new paradigms, originating in specialized discourses¹ but which are important to control violence and to transform the war conflicts of modernity into competition. This competition is supposed to control violence in a democratic liberal multicultural world. Its means are cultural and based upon fostering reflexivity on codes and processes of legitimation and on fostering the production of multiple significations and scenarios among the population. Therefore, people can contextualize themselves in different situations, manifesting efficient and non-destructive behaviours.

2. Media and change

In this context, the functioning of the Girardian² appropriation mimesis is transformed. Girard's theory is illustrated by the struggle between two individuals to master an object, while an identical object is readily available. The aim of the appropriation mimesis is to control the object, and the object *par excellence* is the platonic mimesis, which claims it is possible to copy reality. Platonic mimesis aims to impose a discourse linked to a certain type of representation, a common agreement on the facts. Appropriation mimesis in a contemporary society serves to anchor the promises of social improvement underlying all institutional discourses.

According to Platonic mimesis, we can suppose we have direct access to the truth, to the world of ideas, of facts, and of reality. Consequently, the one who can establish what is *fact*³ controls the symbolic world, the world of culture and identity and economics, because he or she can convince others to behave in a way that

reinforces his/her power. These behaviours are generally controlled by a process of attribution that defines an identity as stable, as a *being*. The Platonic mimesis and its capacity to legitimize what *is*, and therefore what must *be done* is the primary challenge of the appropriation mimesis and also constitutes its link to violence. In this case, the power to enforce one's will is inscribed in the dualistic genocidal conflicts of the 20th century.

3. Bhabha's mimicry

There are comparisons to be drawn between the appropriation mimesis and Homi Bhabha's notion of mimicry⁴. Bhabha's mimicry is the expression of the *not quite*, that is to say of a fight for identity between a valorised colonial model and a series of devalued behaviours, because the colonized can imitate the model, but *not quite* attain it⁵. In fact the colonized person can never aspire to become a model in its own right because of its accent, the colour of its skin, its relationship to women often doubly oppressed, its knowledge of many cultures and many languages (at least its own and the colonizer's). In this light, to know more is negative, because it prevents a perfect copy of the colonizer, who (with his/her power) does not need to know more, does not need to learn more languages. The colonized is therefore, at best, only *like*. But in this *like* arises the struggles of the appropriation mimesis, the violence of all those who have been rejected as barbaric, excluded, killed, or declared impossible to assimilate. Bhabha's mimicry theorizes the invalidation as desired by any power oppressing minority groups.⁶

Bhabha's mimicry shows that the Girardian appropriation mimesis aiming for control of Platonic mimesis is always mastered by the same powers and that competition with them is impossible. In a sense, colonization represents the capacity to establish a culture of dominance instead of allowing the flourishing of a culture of mimetic appropriation in which every person competes against any other person, although in modernity this leads to canon building. In the new context, postmodernity and postcoloniality manifest a return of oppressed groups, who attempt to assert their voices amongst other voices leading to contest the 'objectivity' based in the canon, through the appropriation mimesis and the capacity to determine another reality.⁷ Nowadays, mimicry in Bhabha's use of the term is a way to displace a colonial dynamic. It is the site of the fiercest power struggles in certain regions of the planet. It is also a way to displace representations of identity by seeing them as historically unstable processes, ones that deconstruct stereotypes. Such a deconstruction proceeds in a dynamic that aims to master the important components of cultural systems based on the canon and now caught in a mimetic struggle for appropriation.

In the new postmodern/postcolonial dynamic, the mimicry of *like* is no longer negative, because new symbolic and economic assertions have been and are being produced every day. The relation to power is not solely negative for those who live in the *like* and who partake of many cultures because mimicry is replaced by a democratized mimesis of appropriation. This holds true for minorities that are often subject to the imposition of additional forms of mandatory knowledge and to the effort to communicate that has been seen, up until recently, as negative. Thus, a francophone technical college in Ottawa, La Cité Collégiale, plays positively on linguistic difference, no longer framing it as linked to an oppressed or dispossessed minority, but as the capitalization of useful, supplementary knowledge that adds to technical mastery: "*French speaking students bilingual employees*". This reversal of perspective transforms the difference of the Francophone minority of Ontario into an advantage, especially when it is linked to technologies and "a broad range of *regional, national and global opportunities*".⁸

In the new multicultural context, mimicry is displaced by the legitimation of an appropriation mimesis, which is linked to competition and capitalization of knowledge (the new "frontier"), more so than to conflicts and genocide that are based on a territorial logic. Mimicry is no longer a liability, while the capitalization of multiple knowledge, biculturalism and bilingualism become an advantage. Objects to be desired are multiplied in the liberal economic world, and identity becomes the contextualization of various self-images. These self-images function as generators of differentiated advantages because the socio-politico-economic background is itself multicoloured, as demonstrated in the novel by Pico Iyer, *The Global Soul*:

Kazuo Ishiguro, "Ish," as he is generally known [...] seems in many ways a quintessential global Soul, not quite apart of the Japan he left when he was five and not really a part of England [...] "Whenever it was convenient for me to become very Japanese, I could become very Japanese," he says, disarmingly. "And then when I wanted to drop it, I would just become this ordinary Englishman"⁹.

The mimesis of appropriation is thus linked to the breaking of behaviours of dominance, which are built in any colonial power relationship as shown by Laborit.¹⁰ The mimesis of appropriation leads to a society where groups and individuals can assert themselves. The problem is then to transform the relationship leading to war and exclusion into democratic competition, either economic or symbolic. This task is partially realized by democratic liberal societies, which encourage their consumers to become producers of multiple objects, meanings and relationships, all so numerous as to attenuate conflict. This prevents from referring to a belief in life as a zero sum game, a belief rooted in a territorial logic linked to a finite world, thus leading to communicate new paradigms through an emphasis on culture as a production of multiple meanings instead of as a common heritage.

4. Advertising and multidiscursive reflexive activities.

The will to transform the reader into the producer of multiple meanings is present in literature. For instance, in novels by Yann Martel (such as *Life of Pi* or *Self*) and Dai Sijie (*Balzac et la petite tailleuse chinoise*).¹¹ It is also present in the media throughout the Americas. Let us consider an advertisement in the cultural supplement to *La Tercera* (Jueves 27 de enero 2000, p.24) from Santiago, Chile. In it, we see a full-page duplicated image of a nude woman. The first image is labelled *arte* and the second is labelled *porno*. There is an ever-present desire to provoke reflection on the production of meaning, on the process of attribution, and on the rejigging of semantic mechanisms. It suits an audience that heard recent slogans insisting on their right to choose. It is an attempt to erase the remnants of their submission to a “strong” regime. This society must quickly learn the new logic, one that neither rests on truth linked to a group in power, nor on the right to consume a variety of opinions, but on the necessity of training competitive producers in a symbolic globalized economy.

In a more playful way, a way more plugged into rhetoric of individual psychology versus social relationships, advertisements point to the abyss underlying this profusion of possible meanings. In fact, consumers are regularly invited to produce their own different and meaningful wordings. Xpedior, for instance, urges its readers to “Imagine. Then soar,” based on an image of a clothespin. The advertisement reads: “Some see a clothespin, a couple hugging and kissing, some see a painful antidote for snoring, sheets blowing from a clothesline on a breezy spring day, an alligator standing on his hind legs”.¹²

5. Power relationships and productive misunderstandings.

Néstor García Canclini has pointed out how discourse situations vary greatly depending on sites of power (and the lack of it), because there are non-egalitarian means of appropriating economic and symbolic elements. This implies there are also different ways which one can learn to combine and use them efficiently.¹³ This displacement leads populations to become producers of meaning and actively multicultural, as opposed to producers of more passive notions of multiculturalism linked to the consumption of the ethnic heritage (as critiqued by Bissoondath in 1995 in *Selling Illusions*¹⁴). For example, in the Québec context of Law 101, productive misunderstandings are positive. Law 101, in order to protect the collective rights of Francophones and to avoid the dangers of assimilation (link with the conception of life as a zero sum game), forbids the children of Francophones to go to an English speaking public school, and requires children of immigrants to go to French speaking public schools. For anglo-quebecker, this is not acceptable. But for Bissoondath, sending children of immigrants to francophone public schools is an individual right: the right to be taught in the language of the majority. It is simultaneously an advantage because these children will become trilingual and master the language of the parents, English (which they will learn by sheer necessity) and French. This dynamic displaces the negative bicultural situation outlined by Bhabha in the context of colonialism. Passing from the use of language to its productive function and to reflectivity is becoming an advantage because it combines different sites of enunciation redefining socio-cultural and economic dynamics. It allows to set common future goals for a society on individuals set. It provides the necessary conditioning for productivity in a contemporary society where multiculturalism connects to the legitimacy of territorial movement, globalized cultural and economic competition, as well as with the increasingly frequent presence of bi- and multilingual persons capable of enlarging their geo-symbolic worlds by connecting with different cultural contexts.

6. Summary

The myth of attachment to the land as the hermeneutic fountainhead of territoriality and as the source of identity and signification is undergoing a shift in the context of global postmodernism. No longer validating the orthodoxy’s pursuit of the ‘single, deep meaning’ of a text, the literary discourse as well as the discourse of advertising in the Americas currently work to transform their audience into producers of multiple legitimate readings. However, literary critics and professors often tend to refer to a canon linked to modernity and avoid considering multiple meanings and their realization in discourses, which similar processes deserve to be emphasized if one wants to establish a new critical thinking based on transversal thinking. This does not mean that discourses are identical. In the case of the discourse of the advertising industry, the resulting displacements are not identical to those created by literary postmodernism. Advertisers continue to be driven by the promotion of their service/product as the sole solution to a perceived problem, whereas literary texts continue to multiply possible problems, and/or possible resolutions. These new dynamics tend to steer populations towards intercultural dynamics and adaptation to different cultural contexts within global postmodernism/postcolonialism. They foster new means for creating differences and self-images far from the fear of homogeneity disseminated by thinkers still referring to a strong link between territoriality and identity.

Notes

- ¹ See Imbert, Patrick. *The Permanent Transition*. Frankfurt/Madrid: Vervuert/Iberoamericana, 1999.
- ² See Girard, René. *Des choses cachées depuis la fondation du monde*. Paris: Gallimard, 1978.
- ³ See Korzybsky, Alfred *Science and Sanity*. New York: The International Non Aristotelian Library, 1933.
- ⁴ This is mimesis in the sense of *mimicry*, and should not be confused with the notion of *mimesis* that Alfonso de Toro points out in A et F. de Toro (eds), *El debate de la postcolonialidad en latinoamérica*, Frankfurt/Madrid: Vervuert/Iberoamericana, 1999. 47.
- ⁵ Bhabha, Homi. Of Mimicry and Man : The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse. October 1984, no. 28. 126.
- ⁶ One must of course add that the actual results of colonization occasionally proved to be very beneficial for the colonized. For example, in Pondicherry, the former French colony of coastal India, a senior employee receives 6000F salary per month « ...alors qu'un citoyen indien, même de haute caste, gagne péniblement 500 F par mois. » [...while an ordinary Indian citizen, even of the highest caste earns, with difficulty, 500F a month] (*Grands Reportages*. October 2001. 76-77).
- ⁷ As Alfonso de Toro has pointed out, in order to take into account this new dynamic by which bi-cultural and bilingual minorities manage to transform their position, we would do better by referring to postcoloniality rather than to postcolonialism, which has diverse meanings: "I will replace it (postcolonialism) with 'postcoloniality' by which I mean an intellectual, social and cultural attitude linking the periphery and the centre in a pluralistic and internationalizing way in order to produce dialogue. " See De Toro, Alfonso. 'The Epistemological Foundations of the Contemporary Condition: Latin America in Dialogue with Postmodernity and Postcoloniality' in *Latin American Postmodernisms*. Ed. Robert Young. Atlanta: Rodopi, 1997. 36.
- ⁸ See *Ottawa Business Journal*. April 24, 2000. 11.
- ⁹ See Iyer, Pico. *The Global Soul*. New York: Knopf, 2000. 20.
- ¹⁰ See Laborit, Henri. *Éloge de la fuite*. Paris: Gallimard, 1976.
- ¹¹ For a more elaborate analysis of this symbolic dynamic, see Imbert, Patrick. *Trajectoires culturelles transaméricaines*. Ottawa: Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa, 2003.
- Martel, Yann, *Life of Pi*. Toronto: Vintage, 2002.
- Martel, Yann. *Self*. Montréal : Boréal, 1998.
- Sijie, Dai. *Balzac et la Petite Tailleuse chinoise*. Paris : Gallimard, 2000.
- ¹² See *Forbes*. May 29, 2000. 117.
- ¹³ *La globalización imaginada*. Buenos Aires: Paidós, 1999.
- ¹⁴ Toronto: Penguin, 1994.

Intercultural Everyday Life via Henri Lefebvre

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Abstract: The theme of interculturalism depends for its formulation on the possibility of inter-disciplinarity in the social and human sciences. In his important text, *Philosophy in Cultural Theory*, Peter Osborne has traced the development of Cultural Studies from the original need for a greater connection between the academy and the wider society and culture. Evolving (as Osborne understands the discipline) in Britain in the 1950s and 1960s, the driving force of Cultural Studies was political or “more broadly, political-educational – a political project of popular education....and cultural democratisation”.

From the beginning, the strength of Cultural Studies derived from its capacity to study the present, to address what was happening here and now. Moreover, this process also involved an attempt to extend such analysis of the present to include the contemporary experience of all, and not simply the experience of one aspect of reality or one section of society (Osborne cites Raymond Williams' conception of “whole-ness” as constitutive of culture). Already in this original conception of Cultural Studies, we have the seeds of the current debate. In simplified terms, it is clear that as more attention was given to studying ‘culture’, it became evident that Williams' original conception of a ‘wholeness’ of culture (implying a unity) was becoming increasingly problematic. It is in this context of a challenging of a univocal or unifying definition of culture that I think we can best understand the genealogy of the paradigms of both multiculturalism and interculturalism, recognizing in different ways the irreducible fragmentation of William's original ‘whole-ness’.

This theoretical and empirical backdrop to interculturalism is I think, while highly invigorating, also severely complex and problematic. Its problematicity is heightened from an academic point of view by the increasing specialisation and isolationism of much work in the human and social sciences (as well as the humanities). In this paper, I want to address the particular work of the French thinker Henri Lefebvre, whose writings in the 1940s and beyond were a crucial catalyst towards both inter-disciplinarity in the academy and the foregrounding of the problematic of interculturalism. The eclectic energy and resources of Lefebvre's thinking provide, I believe, an interesting path into the intercultural problematic.

Keywords: Culture, Materialism, Essentialism, Religion, Interdisciplinarity, Politics, Difference, Space, Production, Aesthetics.

1. Introduction

The theme of interculturalism depends for its formulation on the possibility of inter-disciplinarity in the social and human sciences.¹ The 1940s in particular were a crucial time for the development of these disciplines, witnessing what one commentator has termed a ‘veritable explosion’.² The problematisation of strict disciplinary boundaries which took place in the French academy during this period was to be a formative influence on later inter-disciplinary work, both in France through philosophers such as Derrida and Foucault but also wider afield through the work of Stuart Hall in the UK and Paulo Freire in the US and South Americas. In his important text, *Philosophy in Cultural Theory*, Peter Osborne has traced the development of Cultural Studies from the original need for a greater connection between the academy and the wider society and culture. Evolving (as Osborne understands the discipline) in Britain in the 1950s and 1960s, the driving force of Cultural Studies was political or “more broadly, political-educational - a political project of popular education...and cultural democratisation”.³ From the beginning, the strength of Cultural Studies derived from its capacity to study the present, to address what was happening here and now. Moreover, this process also involved an attempt to extend such analysis of the present to include the contemporary experience of all, and not simply the experience of one aspect of reality or one section of society (Osborne cites Raymond Williams' conception of “whole-ness” as constitutive of culture). Already in this original conception of Cultural Studies, we have the seeds of the current debate. In simplified terms, it is clear that as more attention was given to studying ‘culture’, it became evident that Williams' original conception of a ‘wholeness’ of culture (implying a unity) was becoming increasingly problematic. It is in this context of a challenging of a univocal or unifying definition of culture that I think we can best understand the genealogy of the paradigms of both multiculturalism and interculturalism, recognizing in different ways the irreducible fragmentation of William's original ‘whole-ness’. But while the multicultural paradigm opted for the solution of the co-existence of a plurality of independent cultures, interculturalism has sought to go one stage further. On my interpretation, interculturalism no longer accepts the co-existence of self-sufficient cultures, but rather challenges this self-sufficiency through an emphasis on dialogue and, in certain instances, irreducible conflict between cultures; *inter-culture*.⁴

This theoretical and empirical backdrop to interculturalism is I think, while highly invigorating, also severely complex and problematic. Its problematicity is heightened from an academic point of view by the increasing specialisation and isolationism of much work in the human and social sciences (including the humanities). In this paper, I want to address the particular work of the French thinker Henri Lefebvre, whose writings in the 1940s and beyond were a crucial catalyst towards both inter-disciplinarity in the academy and the foregrounding of the problematic of interculturalism. The eclectic energy and resourcefulness of Lefebvre's thinking provide, I believe, an interesting path into the intercultural problematic.

Lefebvre's most famous work *The Critique of Everyday Life* (published in 1947) has been described as "one of the crossroads in the reorganisation of the intellectual field of the second half of the twentieth century" and an analysis of this complex text will be one of my concerns.⁵ I will supplement this analysis with a consideration of some of Lefebvre's lesser known texts, both early and late, which provide a useful and sometimes conflictual context within which to assess his primary text.

2. Constructing a Lefebvrian framework for interculturalism

The most consistent concept of Lefebvre's oeuvre is that of 'everyday life' and it is this enigmatic notion which perhaps provides the key to his importance for interculturalism. Although Lefebvre's work is primarily that of a sociologist, as Michel Trebitsch has observed "its originality lies precisely in its philosophical roots".⁶ In melding sociological and philosophical concerns in his own unique way, Lefebvre was also part of a wider movement which sought to critique the abstract categories of traditional philosophy. Thus, whether through Heidegger's phenomenology or Sartre's existentialism, philosophy found itself being driven out of the 'ivory tower' and back to what Husserl termed 'the things themselves'.⁷ It is in this philosophical context that we can best understand Lefebvre's notion of 'everyday life'. In his first published essay which invokes the idea, entitled 'Mystification: Notes for a Critique of Everyday Life' (written in 1933 with Norbert Guterman), Lefebvre clarifies his opposition to what he terms 'idealist philosophy':

In idealist philosophy, the theory of knowledge has replaced ontology...Hegel already criticised this separation between what knowing and what is known...The object of the theory of knowledge was form without content, essence dissociated from existence. The effort to grasp this elusive form could only lead to exposing the weakness of rationalist thought".⁸

In opposition to a detached rationalism which he associates in particular with the influential movement of neo-Kantianism, Lefebvre posits a materialism, strongly influenced by Marx which can take us beyond the 'mystifications' of bourgeois reason: "The materialist theory of knowledge is located first of all in objective reality. It illuminates the mystifying subjectivism of bourgeois thought by abandoning it and by dominating it".⁹

What Lefebvre terms the "escapism" of bourgeois thought should thus be replaced by an affirmation of this life. Quoting Rimbaud, Lefebvre intones 'On ne part pas - we never leave', that is, we never leave what Lefebvre will call the everyday world, everyday life, living culture.¹⁰

In a famous section of his most important text, a section entitled 'Notes Written One Sunday in the French Countryside', Lefebvre articulates evocatively the basis of his concept notion(?):

we are unable to seize the human facts. We fail to see them where they are, namely in humble, familiar everyday objects: the shape of fields, of ploughs. Our search for the human takes us too far, too 'deep', we seek it in the clouds or in mysteries, whereas it is waiting for us, besieging us on all sides.¹¹

Trebitsch refers to this as Lefebvre's 'archaeological' mode of excavating the 'everyday'.¹² If this was Lefebvre's only insight, we might classify him as part of the wider group of philosophers claiming a similar return to the quotidian at the same time - Lukacs, Husserl, Heidegger etc - it is the specifics of Lefebvre's call to the everyday which marks him out as worthy of attention.¹³ What makes this particular method singular is its sheer eclecticism, its unrivalled ability to look *everywhere*, so to speak, for the everyday. Thus Lefebvre's rediscovery of the everyday is multifaceted from the beginning, not least in the extent to which Lefebvre refuses to define it categorically, despite over 50 years work in this area. 'Everyday life' remains a 'notion' rather than a 'concept'; that is, it is fluid, evasive, a speculation rather than a definition.

It is this fluidity which I think allows Lefebvre's notion to become useful to us in our debate about interculturalism. In the first case, the notion of the 'everyday' is introduced in opposition to the idealism and essentialism of philosophical rationalism, most notably that of Kant. Such essentialism assigns a definite and unchangeable 'essence' to things, as if the nature of something was defined before it even began to exist. The original philosophical statement of this view is given in Plato's Theory of Forms (e.g. Republic Book X), where the mortal world is seen as a poor reflection of a world of eternal archetypes. For Plato, the philosopher's vision should be focused on the transcendent and away from the 'here below'. In the *Republic*, Plato uses the Allegory of the Cave to present the 'lower world' as a cave of darkness, illusion and error while the 'higher world' represents the transcendent nature of the truth of things.

With particular relevance for our intercultural thematic, we can see this essentialism as having been developed in modern philosophy to present a monocultural theory of human society and nature. Robert Bernasconi has shown for example how Kant's essentialism was responsible for one of the most influential

modern conceptions of 'race', an essentialist race defined in *a priori* terms.¹⁴ Races are understood by Kant to be sub-groups of the genus 'human', which "maintain themselves over protracted generations, even when displaced geographically".¹⁵ Unsurprisingly, perhaps Kant also understood these sub-groups to be ordered hierarchically between Whites, Blacks, Hindustanic and Kalmuck, leading to his comment in *Observations on the Beautiful and the Sublime*, that the fact that someone was completely black from head to toe was clear proof that what he said was stupid.¹⁶

Lefebvre's conception of 'everyday life' is directed at undermining this essentialist categorisation of human life and society. Following Lenin, Lefebvre credits Karl Marx with having "clothed the [essentialist] skeleton with flesh and blood", that is, for having reintroduced the transcendent essences into the cut and thrust of material change.¹⁷ This materialist (as opposed to essentialist) perspective also leads Lefebvre to criticise certain forms of Marxism which have fallen victim to the essentialist temptation through their use of the concepts of 'base' and 'superstructure'. Instead, Lefebvre suggests the more fluid notion of 'socio-economic formation' which he links to his concept of 'everyday life'.¹⁸ These concepts eschew transcendent and *a priori* definitions and classifications in favour of 'ambiguity': "Philosophers and philosophy can no longer be isolated, disguised, hidden...ambiguity is a category of everyday life".¹⁹ In asserting a materialism which remains resistant to essentialist definitions, whether of race or anything else, the idea of the 'everyday' is already an ally to a certain intercultural thematic. Bernasconi, in his Introduction to a recent collection entitled *Race*, has identified the need for a broader approach to the discussion of cultural and ethnic identity, moving away from the more essentialist definitions of socio-biology on the one side or simple disavowals of the whole 'problem' by anti-racist theorists on the other.²⁰ Lefebvre's framework of 'everyday life', and his rich socio-cultural analyses, can I think be very helpful here and this is also to recognise Lefebvre's seminal work in this regard.

In addition to his rejection of essentialism, in his emphasis on the 'everyday' Lefebvre was also seeking to contextualise thought in its wider surroundings, those very spaces and places which make thought possible. This introduction of *spatiality* as a theme by Lefebvre, from his earliest work, cannot be overestimated in its influence on the intercultural debate. Any such debate must take account of the strange relation between identity and space, whether it be in terms of nationality or citizenship, migration and diaspora studies, concerns about the development of cities, the relation between urban and rural spaces, and even more particularly the relation between the location of different cultures within the same neighbourhood. All of these concerns have been a consistent feature of Lefebvre's work. His most significant contribution to the theme of *spatiality*, his seminal text *The Production of Space*, highlights the traditional marginalisation of 'space' as a philosophical concept. "Space was mostly treated with disdain, as one 'category' among others (an '*a priori*', as the Kantians said: a way of organising sensory phenomena)...As for the disciplines that studied it, they parcelled it out amongst themselves, and space became fragmented according to simplified methodological premises: geographical, sociological, historical etc. At best, space passed for an empty zone, a container indifferent to its content, but defined by certain unexpressed criteria: absolute, optico-geometrical, Euclidean-Cartesian-Newtonian".²¹ Lefebvre's brilliance consisted not just in this insight, but in his translation of this insight from philosophy into an application to the implicit philosophies behind national, local and global 'spatial planning'. As Lefebvre sardonically notes, 'someone invented spatial planning'.²² The spatial planners of late capitalism are for Lefebvre the direct descendants of the traditional philosophers of space, in effect neo-Kantian. They operate according to rules of strict 'hierarchy', the compartmentalization of space according to the value system of late capitalism which results in specialised areas for the 'marginalised' as distinct from residential, commercial or leisure areas. This creates 'ghettos...and pseudo-schemes, poorly linked with their surroundings or with town centres'.²³

Again, Lefebvre's analysis here has relevance for interculturalism insofar as one of the crucial issues concerning immigration concerns housing policy, the construction of communities, ghettoisation in the city etc. Lefebvre also makes reference here to the "worldwide" organisation of space, which would have relevance for issues concerning globalisation and the relation between development and interculturalism.²⁴ It is Lefebvre's claim that this problem of spatial planning has roots in the Kantian conception of space as *a priori*. Transforming and rejecting this conception of space can thus have liberatory effects: "no longer considering (social) space and (social) time as facts of 'nature', modified to some degree, nor as simple facts of 'culture' - but as *products*".²⁵ This more creative conception of space, and thus of city planning, points towards the possibility of an intercultural city, no longer organised according to the hierarchies and rigid essentialisms of the more traditional mono-cultural or *a priori* spatial model. It is clear that Lefebvre's theoretical and practical work in this area has been very positive from an intercultural perspective.

There are innumerable other perspectives or themes of Lefebvre which might be relevant in this context, and the sheer eclecticism of his work can be at times mesmerising. In the limitations of time here, my analysis can only be selective. I have already mentioned that I consider his attack on essentialism to be the first step towards an intercultural philosophy. Second, I have cited his ground-breaking work in the area of spatial analysis. To conclude, I want to address a potentially more sensitive topic - that of religion.

It has struck me, in my work in an Irish context, that the issue of religion is a particularly resistant one when it comes to intercultural work and progress. In Northern Ireland, for example, segregated education on the

basis of religion remains the norm. In the Republic of Ireland, in the context of an increasing claim to societal and educational interculturalism, the Catholic Church still retains a near monopoly of primary and secondary school ethos and a substantial influence at tertiary level. It is also the case that many development organisations are tied to the Church or affiliated to Catholic groups, so that interculturalism and Catholicism are almost inextricable. One of the most significant aspects of Lefebvre's conception of culture and of 'everyday life' is his interpretation of the place of religion within such a culture. The intercultural framework which I am attempting to derive from Lefebvre's work, which I have already shown to involve a critique of essentialism and a new, 'productive' notion of space, also involves a vehement and unequivocal rejection of the relation between religion and culture.

Lefebvre outlines this rejection of the religious influence on culture in a highly charged and personalised essay entitled 'Notes Written One Sunday in the French Countryside'.²⁶ This piece deserves an independent analysis of its own, but here I shall be schematic. Through a narrative which owes a debt to Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morality*, Lefebvre offers a genealogy of the 'religious' as based on a deterioration of the magic rituals of ancient peasant communities:

So this is what the holy meal has been reduced to: torn away from community to be accomplished by those who mediate between us and the absolute - torn away from the life of the senses and from real festivity to become symbolic, abstract, distant²⁷.

For Lefebvre, the regeneration of culture which his critique of everyday life is meant to inaugurate cannot include a place for religion: "the aim is to change life, lucidly to recreate everyday life. This is the exact opposite of the aim and the essence of religion...religion accumulates all man's helplessness".²⁸

I mention Lefebvre's disavowal of religion as a third strand here in order to highlight a real possibility of conflict within the intercultural paradigm. Charles Taylor, in his essay 'The Politics of Recognition' has referred to this as the conflict between 'egalitarianism' or a politics of equality on the one side and a 'politics of difference' on the other.²⁹ From an egalitarian perspective, interculturalism should involve an equal respect for all views. Thus, religious and anti-religious views should be given equal accommodation and should be able to co-exist as separate and self-sufficient cultures. From a 'politics of difference' perspective however, the specific content of one ideology may be so different from another, so conflictual with another, as to allow no room for such accommodation. Such is the case, for example, with Lefebvre's critique of religion. I have already clarified the important links between Lefebvre's conception of a regeneration of 'everyday life' and interculturalism, both in terms of the critique of an essentialist definition of race and a new conception of space and planning. Would Lefebvre's views on religion be thus an aberration in his thought, a turn away from the intercultural possibilities of his philosophy? On my interpretation, quite the contrary. For Lefebvre, in a Nietzschean key, religion destroys the very lifeblood of culture and thus the death of religion is the very condition of authentic interculturalism. The difficulty with this view, from an intercultural perspective, is that it is completely irreconcilable with a positive or affirmative view of religious culture. Interculturalism thus seems to fail the egalitarian test and to now become subject to the 'slings and arrows' of the unpredictable 'politics of difference'.

3. Conclusion - some residual problems

In conclusion, the claim of this paper has been that the thought of Henri Lefebvre, and most especially his notion of a 'critique of everyday life', can provide a framework for intercultural theory. Lefebvre's work anticipates many current developments (he has been referred to as a 'prehistorian' of interculturalism),³⁰ but also outstrips them in its breadth of understanding and its theoretical and empirical subtlety. Here, I have only touched on what I consider to be three of its most relevant strands - its critique of essentialism, its conception of the production of space and its vehement critique of religion. Such an analysis only scratches the surface of a wonderfully inter-disciplinary and diverse *oeuvre*. Lefebvre's early dalliance with Surrealism, his later work with educational groups such as COBRA, his lifelong relation to Marxism, his focus on the concept of time (in its relation to space), his later focus on 'rhythm' both as a bodily configuration and as a key to the life of cities, his fascination with the phenomenon of 'love' - all of these aspects of his work, amongst many others, are worthy of further attention and analysis, as they relate to the problematic of this conference.

On my interpretation, Henri Lefebvre truly was an 'intercultural' thinker. Consideration of his work refocuses my attention on one of our primary tasks: to realise that the study of culture is always the study of culture(s) in the plural, that no one culture exists in isolation from any other, that is, that all culture(s) are inter-culture(s). But also it makes me aware that this has not been the way we have traditionally thought about life and society. The enigma of everyday life has been lost in the abstractions of so many idealisms. These idealisms have been accompanied by divisive and reifying conceptions of hierarchy and verticality. Lefebvre's work deconstructs this hegemony of a specific kind of spatial and cultural planning. In so doing, it reopens the question of *difference* which had been stratified and neutralised within the traditional structure. Lefebvre's work thus looks forward to a societal space and time of dialogue, but also of potential conflict - that is, to a genuinely intercultural space and time.

Notes

- ¹ My own interest in the topic of interculturalism stems from my work in an Irish education context. Most especially in Primary schooling in Ireland, there is an increasing need to address issues concerning ethnic diversity of schoolchildren. Primarily, this relates to increasing immigration into Ireland but it also concerns changes in the cultural identity of the indigenous Irish population itself. Although Catholicism is still the majority religion in Ireland, there is increasing divergence from the Church amongst its members with regard to doctrinal issues, mass attendance etc. However, Catholic education retains a near monopoly on Irish education at all levels, although in recent years there has been an introduction of at least the possibility of multi-denominational education through a group known as Educate Together. No non-denominational schools exist in the Republic of Ireland.
Given this conflict between a rapidly changing society and an anachronistic education system, Irish educationalists are now stressing the need for change. It is in this context that my own interest in interculturalism has developed. In broad terms, I would follow the standard definition of interculturalism as a fusion between the best aspects of 'multi-cultural education' and 'anti-racist education' (cf Tormey, 2002). While anti-racist education has been criticised for being overly narrow and too negative in its conception, multiculturalism has been maligned for simply exoticising foreign cultures. Interculturalism (also sometimes called 'critical multi-culturalism'), as I understand it, is an attempt to fuse the need to oppose discrimination on the basis of ethnicity with an open and dialogical approach to education, which avoids 'proselytisation or indoctrination' (Tormey, 2002, 18). Interculturalism can also take from multiculturalism a concern with the nature of culture as such, including an emphasis on the aesthetics of culture. Although stemming from an educational context, my own interest, as a philosopher of education, is with how intercultural education can fit into the wider problematic of interculturalism as such. In this sense, I think that philosophy of education can learn much from the debate which has been developing in the wider context of the social and human sciences.
- ² Trebitsch, Michel. 'Preface' to *Critique of Everyday Life* Volume 1 (Verso, London, 1991): xxv
- ³ Osborne, 1999, 20 [CF. REFERENCE]
- ⁴ cf for example Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth* (Penguin, London, 1961)
- ⁵ Lefebvre, Henri. 1991 Trebitsch, *ibid*: xxviii
- ⁶ Trebitsch, *ibid*: xxiv
- ⁷ Lefebvre also shares some crucial themes with twentieth century Marxists such as Marcuse and Adorno, as well as Andre Bréton and the Surrealists. Lefebvre initially shares Bréton's faith that Marxism and Surrealism can be adjoined; "Marx said 'Change the world', Rimbaud said 'Change life'; for us, these two watchwords are one" (Trebitsch, 1991, xx). Indeed the Philosophies group which Lefebvre co-founded in the 1920s in Paris published a joint manifesto with the Surrealists in the summer of 1925, entitled 'La Révolution d'abord et toujours' (Trebitsch, 1991, xx). But gradually Lefebvre comes to be suspicious of a certain bourgeois complacency (cf. *ibid*, xxi) at the heart of the Surrealist project, although he maintains an interest in their aesthetics throughout his writing life. Lefebvre also was to maintain close links with both the COBRA art group and the Situationists. His vehement criticisms of the Symbolists (Baudelaire, Rimbaud) and the Surrealists in *Critique of Everyday Life* (Lefebvre, 1991, 103ff) strike this reader as problematic given the nature of his own project and it is interesting to consider whether his own later work in Cultural Studies (as well as his central text itself) shows a residual influence and inheritance from the French avant-garde. I intend to return to this question in a future essay.
- ⁸ Lefebvre, Henri. (2003a) 'Mystification: Notes for a Critique of Everyday Life' in *Henri Lefebvre: Key Writings* (Athlone, London, 2003): 70-71
- ⁹ *ibid*: 72
- ¹⁰ *ibid*: 74
- ¹¹ Lefebvre, Henri. 1991, *Critique of Everyday Life* Volume 1 (Verso, London, 1991): 132
- ¹² Trebitsch, *op.cit*: xxiv)
- ¹³ Perhaps it is significant that Lefebvre never held a position in philosophy in an academic institution. Rather in 1947, he took up the first official state position in Sociology as part of the CNRS, working as a de facto French civil servant. His doctoral research had been in rural sociology (Elden, 2003, 109) and this soon became an interest in the relation between the rural and the urban. But Lefebvre's interest was never merely academic; during the 1960s and 1970s he was heavily involved in architectural and neighbourhood projects (*ibid*, 110), and his influence can be seen beyond the academy in a whole new concern at this time (as now) with regeneration of the city. The slogan 'Change the City, Change Life' was for example originally Lefebvre's (*ibid*, 110).

- ¹⁴ Bernasconi, Robert. 'Who invented the concept of Race' in *Race*, R. Bernasconi, Ed, (London, Blackwell, 2001)
- ¹⁵ *ibid*: 22
- ¹⁶ *ibid*: 23, 14)
- ¹⁷ Lefebvre, Henri. *Critique of Everyday Life* Volume 1 translated by John Moore (Verso, London, 1991): 3
- ¹⁸ *ibid*: 5
- ¹⁹ *ibid*, 6, 18
- ²⁰ Bernasconi, Robert. *Op.cit*: 1ff
- ²¹ Lefebvre, Henri. (2003b) 'Preface to La Production de l'espace' in *Henri Lefebvre: Key Writings* (Athlone, London, 2003): 206
- ²² *ibid*: 207
- ²³ *ibid*: 210
- ²⁴ *ibid*: 211
- ²⁵ *ibid*., 207
- ²⁶ Lefebvre, Henri. *Critique of Everyday Life* Volume 1 (Verso, London, 1991)
- ²⁷ *ibid*: 222
- ²⁸ *ibid*: 227
- ²⁹ Taylor, Charles. 'The Politics of Recognition' in *Multiculturalism*, Theo Goldberg, Ed, (Routledge, London, 1999)
- ³⁰ Elden, Stuart. 'Coming to terms with Lefebvre' in *Henri Lefebvre: Key Writings* (Athlone, London, 2003) : 2003: xvi)

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INTERCULTURALISM AND EDUCATION

Interculturalism and the Crisis of Value Advocacy in Education

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Abstract: A lot has been written about the practical problems governments and educational systems, in particular, face when serving people of differing cultures. In this paper I address some of the underlying theoretical issues that may give rise to many of these problems. Culture could be described as the medium through which values are expressed and communication and understanding are made possible. But when, for example, a college or university is charged with educating students, how can it best deal with the differences of value and communication practices represented within a diverse student body? In other words, is any set of values normative or is none? How, can transpersonal values be described in an intercultural environment? I propose an approach that attempts to preserve the benefits and limit the shortcomings of the typical approaches of either perpetuating the status quo or presuming a global egalitarianism. In this paper, I, instead describe a non-universalist advocacy of particular, culturally expressed values.

Keywords: interculturalism; values; value advocacy; education

Are values relative? Are none universal? What consequences follow from this for educators in international education? There may always have been a multiplicity of cultures in the world. Though members of particular cultures have frequently claimed their own as the greatest or the measuring stick for all others, they have made this claim in competition with many others. When and where cultures have come into contact, through migration, trade, expansion and war, there has most often been a dominant culture that largely assimilated the others. Today, much is said about the shrinking world, or “global village” in which differing cultures inter-penetrate in ways impossible before contemporary technology like relatively inexpensive travel by jet, widely available television, and dispersed access to information worldwide through the internet. Migration, trade, expansion and war still force many of the intercultural interactions, but there are other forms of sustained contact such as global media, and a greater access to study abroad, work abroad and international non-governmental work.

I teach at an American college in Hawaii, which has an entirely international student body, mostly from Japan, Taiwan and Southeast Asia. The majority of these students study in the United States to better prepare for international careers, whether in business, economics, science, or politics. Students at my college are immersed in American culture, but Hawaii’s unique history has enriched it with many different Pacific, Asian, and European cultural influences that are still identifiable in contemporary Hawaii. In my critical thinking courses our discussions of value lead many students to despair: there are as many differing value systems as there are differing cultures. Most make mutually exclusive or universalist claims to validity. With such mutually exclusive claims, they can’t all be right, or wrong, and what sense does it make to say they are right, relative to their original contexts?

One solution is to search for what underlies all of them. Instead of looking for difference, we could focus on what is globally valued. These global values presumably transcend culture or are shared universally by all cultures. The only alternative, according to proponents of these global values, is to perpetuate jingoistic prejudice - instead, they argue, we must be freed from the particularities of our own traditions. At the same time, critics of a more relativistic bent accuse the globalists of passing off their own culture *as* the universal one. This discussion is not limited to journals and conferences but has actually cropped up on the campus at which I teach, among the various faculty members. A conflict has been developing between those seeking what is common to humans and those who accuse them of colonizing differing cultures under the guise of freeing them from any particular culture. I’m caught in the middle: I share the globalists’ goal of articulating common grounds to resolve socio-political questions that will determine the future of humanity under the pressure of increasing interaction that raises potentially catastrophic possibilities. On the other hand, I agree with the critics, that each of the “universal values” promoted sounds more like particular cultural values of the Euro-American tradition and, furthermore, I do not see what a “culture free” value could really be.¹

The relativists’ criticisms of universal values make a lot of sense: values are culturally bound from origin to expression. There is no such thing as a culture-free value. Even if you can cite some values that appear in many cultures, the more distant in space and time, the more divergent the local expression - inevitably to the point of exceeding valid comparison.² One might say, for example, that all humans value “love”. But what

counts as “love” in modern Europe is very different from what counts as “love” in ancient China or modern Iran. The only value abstract enough to be said to be found in every human culture may be the value of valuing. To move on to particular values leads to a significant divergence among cultures.

The globalists’ criticisms of relativism of values also make a lot of sense: either *equality*, for example, is a human value, better or worse manifest in differing cultures - or it is not. All the efforts to say a particular gender or group is “equal but different” in certain cultures are as ill-fated as any other contradiction in terms. If females do not have standing in court nor participation in political and social processes, to say this is “because of how much they are valued” in the particular culture is a pathetic excuse for misogynous degradation and abuse. However, a thoroughgoing cultural relativism would preclude me from criticizing the worst of injustices in any other culture just because it is another culture.

Each position appears to be wrong about some things and right about others. I will attempt to articulate a position that makes sense of the diversity of culture without losing some kind of transcendence beyond thoroughgoing relativism.³

In order to escape the dead ends of relativism and universalism in the case of the cultural expression of value, it will be helpful to separate out goals from values.⁴ While various cultures may have an actual diversity in values, if they can find resources within those divergent value systems to promote a minimum set of common goals for humanity, the level ground on which differing cultures may meet, will be made possible. For any of these goals to be understandable, let alone endorsable, they must already have precedent in various cultures. Rather than cataloguing the content of all cultures and separating out some common denominator, which is both improbable and inefficient, attempts could instead be made to have a dialogue about what goals may be acceptable to any culture or nation. This differs significantly from the search for the common values in past tradition because looking backwards only confronts us with the diverging histories and particularities of different cultures. By first identifying what all cultures desire for themselves in the future, for example, “prosperity,” each culture can then look within its particular cultural resources for those traditional values that support the pursuit of prosperity and define the forms of desirable prosperity. On the global scale, all nations could externally cooperate to promote their mutual prosperity, which would be internally justified according to their particular tradition and be locally articulated in familiar terms.

Structurally, this resembles ecumenical cooperation among differing religions. In the 1960’s there were many efforts to define what is universal to all religions. This work ran into the same problems we have been discussing here. Many religions make mutually exclusive claims to validity or exclusive, universalist claims to truth or salvation, which are incompatible with reciprocal recognition of all religions. Instead of claiming there are universals underlying all religions, a different approach to cooperation has been to turn to shared goals, rather than shared ultimate beliefs. Groups wanting to help in disaster relief, or to help abused women or children, or to fight for religious toleration and freedom, found they could work together with other religions to achieve these goals, even if they do not have identical ultimate beliefs. Once a common goal was identified, its value could be articulated by each religion within the varying traditions of Moses, Jesus, the revelation to Muhammad, the teachings of the Buddha, or any other. Those working together each valued the *goal*, if on the basis of otherwise incompatible value systems.

To apply this to differing cultures in the world or within a nation: having identified common goals, each cultural group can articulate the value of the goal within its own tradition. This approach avoids the two extremes of the relativist and universalist approaches. The universalist would have us first find the value identical in all cultures. Since it does not exist, it would only come about by homogenizing or assimilating other cultures under a dominant one.⁵ Acceding ultimate relativism, on the other hand, provides no basis for cooperation whatsoever, and devolves into each culture fighting all others to preserve and extend its own values. (These two trends - one culture holding itself as normative for all others, or cultures fighting each other to ensure their survival - are blatantly apparent in many current conflicts around the world.)

What theoretical framework could account for such a goal-seeking approach? Clearly the usual ways of accounting for value, based on an assumed universalism, will not. Contractarianism seems promising, but I would argue it presupposes too much of a commonality to be applicable among all the world’s cultures.⁶ Instead, this pursuing of common goals articulated within differing cultures according to their divergent value systems would be best understood through a variation on Michel Foucault’s analysis of the expression of power in society.⁷ Whereas Foucault is interested in looking at already existing relations in a culture and describing how accepted practices justify their distribution of power relations among the participating individuals (or more accurately “relations of force” since no abstract institutional power is real), I propose using his descriptions of historical practices as a way of projecting the possibility of new forms of practice arising, namely, global goals. Most proponents and critics of Foucault will object that this inverts the deconstructive intention of Foucault’s analysis. Or worse, that I am creating a structuralist narrative out of his post-structuralist epistemology. This may be, but I am not claiming to advocate authentic Foucauldian analysis, instead I am using his insight into the justification of practices to develop a theoretical account of universal goals that may be locally articulated according to divergent value systems.

Such an approach does not require claims of transcendental universalism but still escapes thoroughly relativistic nominalism. It escapes universalism by claiming there are only individual cultures, no global world

value system, each culture approximates better or worse (like Foucault's claim there are only individuals acting, no transcendent institutions exercising power "through" them). It escapes relativistic nominalism by claiming practices are contextually self-constituting, and though they do not have an absolute justification they have a transparent meaningfulness to participants (like Foucault's claim that the practices of science, or imprisonment, or sexuality within a culture cannot be understood from some external standpoint, because their articulation within a discourse of practice is a self-justifying, closed circle).

If the various cultures of the world could shift discussion away from which value is most important and why, they could instead discuss what all cultures want for the future. These common goals would then be articulated and made understandable according to varying systems of value in different cultures. The hard work of defining how each group can realize these goals without conflicting with the efforts of others to realize their goals, would be no harder than what national already accomplish when they find ways for their citizens to peacefully co-exist despite their differing values. What is most valuable in this approach is that it does not require that a universal replace the different historical cultures existing today. Are there any grounds to expect such a tolerant cooperation is possible though? Certainly no nation has been consistently, completely successful in such efforts to be tolerant, but there are substantial examples of success, nonetheless. To cite just a few, the Mauryan King Ashoka in the third century B.C.E. in Northern India eventually established a tolerant and peaceful society of radically divergent cultures and religions. The Iberian Peninsula saw many years of peaceful Moorish rule with peace and tolerance for Islamic, Jewish and Christian inhabitants during the ninth and tenth centuries C.E. And in the United States, though many horrible exceptions can be listed, many extraordinary examples of open tolerance of divergent religions and cultures should be noted.

An effort on the global level, to articulate common goals, and work out local understandings of relevant values within particular cultures could succeed where political and legal efforts have failed. The great project of the United Nations and developing International Law continually break down over the diverging values of powerful particular nations. The U.N. and international law are often misused to promote a particular nation's own values and these institutions are flaunted when they go against a nation's interests and values. In the acceptance of universal rights, the underlying value priority must find support in each local tradition. This will never happen. The traditionally recognized rights of a person to equality, whether they are male or female, will vary radically depending on cultural values regarding gender. There is no progress possible in asking nations to look backwards into past tradition and find they have the exact same values as everyone else. They don't and won't. Instead, if global efforts to promote the goal of protecting women from harm, lead to a future of every nation giving full legal status to women, there is a real possibility for achieving a global practice. Once it is in practice, whether different cultures promote the goal on the basis of divergent exclusive values will no longer be a problem. If each culture promotes equal legal status for women, whether it is on the basis Talmudic tradition, Pauline teachings, the Sunnah, or on Enlightenment principles of human equality, it won't be problematic.

The irresolvable dilemma of universalism versus relativism diverts efforts toward global understanding and cooperation by promoting spurious projects to identify global values that ultimately undermine particular cultures.⁸ Instead, we can side-step the whole debate and agree that different cultures have different values but that need not prevent cooperation in articulating common *goals* for the future.⁹

How can this conclusion be applied to teaching comparative cultures in colleges and universities? In my own courses, discussions of cultures and values neither rank them on a scale of lowest to highest, nor confuse the students by saying they're incomparable because they're all relative anyway. Instead, every effort is made to recreate some kind of meaningful context in which the differing systems of values have their significance. The goals of the various cultures can then be drawn out and we can discuss how well these goals are realized in actual practice and history, by comparing them to other cultures efforts to achieve similar or different goals. In this way, students develop skills at identifying value assumptions and thinking critically about the difference between stated goals and actual practice in their own culture and others.

Notes

- ¹. Neal Chobot most clearly expresses this point in his "Phenomenology and Intercultural Understanding." An individual, says Chobot, "can never completely free himself from his own cultural inheritance" and claims to have done so mask the elevation of one culture as the "objective" frame of reference for the study of any. (Neal Chobot, "Phenomenology and Intercultural Understanding" in Working Papers of the East-West Culture Learning Institute, February 1971, no. 6, Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1971: 3)
- ². Howard L. Parson's *Man East and West: Essays in East-West Philosophy* looks closely at significant differences between basic philosophical beliefs in major cultural traditions in the world. While he finds exceptions and overlaps, he effectively argues that there are some very important, fundamental differences between how various cultures experience the world.
- ³. This strategy is used by Enrico Chiavacci concerning bioethics in "From Medical Deontology to Bioethics: the Problem of Social Consensus of Basic Ethical Issues Within Western Culture and Beyond It in the

- Human Family.” It is also anticipated by Neal Chobot in “Phenomenology and Intercultural Understanding” where Chobot attempts to describe a phenomenological viewpoint eschewing either false universalism or incoherent relativism.
4. The intractable problems with Eric Cave’s attempt to justify a minimum value in *Preferring Justice: Rationality, Self-Transformation and the Sense of Justice* are strong evidence for the impossibility of defining universal values without assuming particular historical, cultural traditions. This partly led to my proposal to pursue future goals rather than seek common values in the past.
 5. A typical example is S. Takdir Alisjahbana’s *Essay of A New Anthropology. Values as Integrating Forces in Personality, Society and Culture* which calls for an objective “science of man”. While this project is understandable in light of the European and American philosophers Alisjahbana cites throughout the book, the articulation of the project does not take into account any opposing ideas from any other cultures or traditions in the world regarding the value of such a science in the first place. Once the project is defined, his analysis of aspects of it uses many examples from non-Euro-American culture, to fulfil a distinctly Enlightenment project.
 6. Rainer Forst’s *Contexts of Justice* explores the problem of relativism/universalism on the basis of a contractarianism appropriate to the national scale, but which is not easily translatable to a global scale. The concrete gains and losses within a nation are not equivalent to the stakes between separate whole cultures within the world and would not function to motivate participation in a contractual relationship.
 7. I am indebted to Thomas Flynn’s “Foucault and Historical Nominalism” for bringing together disparate analyses throughout Foucault’s works. Also, Teodoris Kiros’ *Self-Construction and the Formation of Human Values* made clear to me the parallel paths of Foucault’s historical analyses and my project for future goals. Kiros’ work is focused on philosophical anthropology, not global goals.
 8. Even the best-intentioned efforts, such as John E. Walsh’s *International Education in the Community of Man* aim ultimately at a “comprehensive and inclusive world culture” (John E. Walsh, *Intercultural Education in the Community of Man*, Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1973, 5.) For there to be only one, global culture, the various different cultures would have to have been assimilated by a dominating one. Walsh’s arguments seem shockingly naïve to assume a “third” culture that is global would develop wholly apart from the dynamics of assimilation and resistance between actual, existing cultures.
 9. Paul Hirst’s “An Answer to Relativism” confronts epistemological and ethical relativism by similarly, side-stepping the whole unsolvable dilemma of choosing either one or the other.

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Decolonizing Methodologies: Intercultural Research Ethics at Stake.

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Abstract: This paper will investigate interculturally appropriate, post-colonial research processes, and I will ask if there is a space for non-exploitative methodology in post-colonial research. In this context I will investigate processes of intercultural encounters as to their interrelationship between knowledge, socio-political power strategies and representations of the "Other". I will argue that constructions of a stereotyped "Other" are produced in political acts which shape socio-political realities and, as a consequence, I will analyse racism as a socio-political phenomenon.

Finally, I will argue that racism must be made unacceptable as a standard on all levels of human encounters and I will point to interculturally appropriate encounters as contact zones where the participants re-assess their concepts of the "Other/s" in intersubjective learning processes. I will conclude that education and knowledge, generated in interculturally sensitive encounters, will support processes in which participants articulate their racial/cultural identity as an innate feature of transparent diversity, which constitutes the basis for mutual respect and understanding. As a consequence I will argue that intercultural cooperation needs to operate within well-balanced power strategies that relate, on a fair basis, to the diversity of "Otherness".

Keywords: difference and the "Other"; anti-colonial research; anti-racist research strategies; interculturally adequate research;

There is little doubt that concepts of "difference" and the "Other" are a key issue in postcolonial, intercultural research processes. Colonial discourse was determined by Manichean sets, such as civilization/savagery, black/white, culture/nature. Ever since the times of colonial encounters, belief in the supremacy of the "white race" as the holders of the top position in the Chain of Being has been well established and justified by putative scientific evidence. The American theorist JanMohamed emphasises that colonialist discourse "commodifies" the dominated subject as a stereotyped object and sustains the dominating subject position of the colonisers. Minority discourse - and as a consequence, racist discourse - is, in the first instance, a product of "damage...inflicted on cultures produced as minorities by the dominant culture", as JanMohamed and Lloyd put it.¹

On a similar note, the Indigenous Australian academic Andrew Lattas argues that constructions of the colonial "Other" must be seen within colonial power relations, where lack is deliberately created as a function of the market economy of the dominating class. He concludes,

The secret truth is delivered to us through a hermeneutic process, controlled by certain privileged groups of intellectuals who appropriate the construction of our identities in the process of asking us to confess the secrets they read into our existence. It is time for us to stop treating the artist, the writer, the historian, the priest and the explorer as outside of the power structures of our society. ... It is time to recognize that these figures ... are authorising certain images of ourselves.²

To say it in different words, language creates "truth" which justifies imagined models of this very "truth". As a consequence, postcolonial, intercultural research ethics are increasingly at stake.

In my view, "western" researchers claim to acknowledge difference as such, while at the same time they imply western methodologies under the pretext that they are somehow universally applicable. In her analysis of postcolonial literatures, Elleke Boehmer argues that European research theories have in many ways offered the "scientific" framework to justify colonialism and its implications for colonised peoples. Boehmer says that many Western theorists accept "without question the permeability of other cultures to Western understanding", and she calls this approach the "trap of neo-colonisation in the form of a mindset that applies the European colonizers' view of the world to the 'other'". In similar words, Anne-Marie Tupuola describes these "trappings of Western thought"³ as processes which make the researcher "paraphrase the truths of non-Western participants within a context meaningful to the researcher and his or her intended audience and theoretical framework". In order to avoid this "trap", texts must remain within their cultural boundaries, and critics need to take into account the "partial opacity to one another of different conceptual worlds".⁴

Encounters with the "Other" are processes of identification or exclusion that happen according to fundamentally similar patterns of behaviour. This phenomenon accounts for the fact that culture studies and, by the same token, intercultural research fulfil an important task, or to say it with the words of the American film expert E. Ann Kaplan:

...we must address other cultures, since we increasingly live in a world where we will rely on one another, where not to know will be dangerous. We need to contribute to the decentering of Western culture, and it helps for us to focus on other cultures. Our own paradigms are further opened up, changed in beneficial ways, through the challenges that other cultures offer. ... Knowledge can only happen as we enter into a dialogue with the other culture, as we dare to look at it within frameworks we bring with us rather than trying to get inside "their" frameworks, and losing ourselves in the process.⁵

Ever since I have been involved in intercultural research, in particular in Indigenous Australian studies, my research methods have been at stake, and I realised at the outset that I had to make a decision: would I give preference to the "western" paradigms or would I open up my research agenda to what has been termed Indigenous research methodologies. I have voted for the latter and entered into a challenging and rewarding process of intercultural collaboration.

As a consequence I have based my research on guidelines which are widely applied in Australian university courses within the Indigenous Australian Studies programs. To my current understanding, these research guidelines have been developed in cooperation with representatives of Indigenous communities abroad, mainly in Canada and New Zealand.

"Western" researchers may ask, "Do we need "other" guidelines, if we investigate "other" cultures?" By Indigenous standards this question is already controversial, as it suggests unequal power patterns between "the researcher" and "the researched". A detached onlooker may underestimate the socio-political relevance of this factor. Yet, if we "western" researchers investigate the (post)colonial "Other" according to our own standards, we may easily fall into the above-mentioned trap of mental neo-colonisation. Mental colonisation has always been a stone-throw away from political power strategies, conflicts and warfare. I also argue that any stereotypical differentiation between "us" and the "Other" are firmly rooted in a colonial mindset in the widest sense of meaning.

Nevertheless, intercultural research necessarily addresses "difference". In intercultural studies, research questions mainly deal with fundamentally different concepts of:

- time
- space
- progress
- knowledge
- research agenda
- individual/community rights
- power and research

In her detailed analysis of intercultural research ethics, the Maori academic, Linda T. Smith, Professor at the University of Auckland, has set up a list of relevant research questions:

- Who defined the research problem?
- For whom is this study relevant? Who says so?
- What knowledge will the Indigenous community gain from this study?
- What knowledge will the researcher gain from this study?
- What are some likely positive outcomes from this study?
- What are some possible negative outcomes from this study?
- How can the negative outcomes be eliminated?
- To whom is the researcher accountable?
- What processes are in place to support the research, the researched and the researcher?⁶

On a similar note, Jackie Huggins, an Indigenous Australian academic, writer and advisor to the Australian government, has set up the following code of research ethics:

- Detached observer status is not advisable. Consult with the relevant Aboriginal organisations and individuals before beginning the project.
- Research relevant literature, films and audios associated with the project.
- Keep Aboriginal people informed and advised, and where possible provide regular updates.
- When the first draft of the work has been completed, take it back to the Aboriginal community and people for their approval and for them to vet.
- The material needs to empower not disempower Indigenous people.⁷

Huggins repeatedly argues that there are limits in cross-cultural experiences and that "Non-Aboriginals must understand their cultural and ethical limitations in studying, researching and writing about Blacks. They must learn to step back in areas where they are not welcome".⁸ Willa McDonald expands on this point, quoting Christine Morris from Griffith University, who says that non-Indigenous people should stay away from "anything that comes under customary law or depicts our basic worldview and values", but they can write about "issues involving interactions between blacks and whites".⁹ There is little doubt non-Indigenous researchers need to take account of the fact that "Indigenous communities are apprehensive and cautious towards research ontologies, epistemologies and axiologies".¹⁰ By the same token, Arthur Smith of the Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Participation, Research and Development at James Cook University, advocates the need of Indigenous people to control the research agenda and he adds: "Collaborative research and partnership arrangements with non-Indigenous researchers will be possible, even mutually beneficial and potentially productive as a 'two-world' construction of knowledge, but such arrangements in the immediate future will need to be on Indigenous terms".¹¹

Australian universities have widely introduced the above-mentioned guidelines in their programs of Indigenous studies. Ever since there has been some debate as to the relevance of these codes for the analysis of literary texts. To my mind, text analysis does indeed transcend disciplinary boundaries, which also means that literary texts may constitute sites of anti-colonial practices. Drawing upon Tony Bennett's point of view, I advocate a "non-literary theory of literature which will theorise its object as a set of social rather than formal realities and processes".¹² By the same token, Hodge and Mishra argue that a more comprehensive definition of literature includes the social functions of texts which must be interpreted by reference to their social reality, the construction of "reality" itself being always problematic, though. In this respect the meaning of a text is located in its production and reception, in the way form and style, as well as 'content' are produced and read. Meaning is always constructed in specific social contexts by specific participants, transforming both the text and the world they are engaged with.¹³

Following David Birch's argument, I understand textual analysis in an anti-colonial context as a political reading act which calls upon the reader's action to generate change in an unjust situation:

Interpretation therefore means becoming involved in the political world of the poem, in just as active a way as would be required in a street march or rally of opposition. ... [E]mphasising literary effects and preoccupations [of the poem] would...reduce the reading from a politically radical and dynamic process to a passive, less politically potent reading ...¹⁴

This means that the reader admits her/his political commitment which determines her/his analytical approach. In this sense, text analysis is an "analysis of ideologically loaded structures and meanings, not of innocent, arbitrary, random structures", or to put it in different words, it is discourse analysis which pays little attention to language as an idealized product.¹⁵ As the form and content of the text are determined from outside through discursive formations, text analysis is more than just recovering meanings. In this respect, texts have no fixed meanings, on the contrary, interpretation becomes a process of construing possible meanings in a variety of possible readings, all of which remain unfixed and open to change and negotiation (ibid). Quoting Ricoeur, D. Birch concludes,

...understanding has nothing to do with an immediate grasping of a foreign psychic life or with an emotional identification with a meaningful intention. Understanding is entirely mediated by the whole of explanatory procedures which precede it and accompany it. The counterpart of this personal appropriation is not something which can be felt, it is the dynamic meaning released by the explanation ... its power of disclosing a world.¹⁶

This attempt "to read texts and history together" allows for different kinds of reading and analysing a text. Following Easthope's point, I argue that my reading position determines both the discursive reading process of the texts and my anti-colonial concern with deconstructing representations of the "Other".¹⁷

In conclusion, I argue that representations of the "Other", firmly rooted in concepts of difference, still determine intercultural research projects. Therefore I advocate the necessity of creating spaces for appropriate dialogues. It is necessary to give up the "we-vs.-the-Other" research positions and to engage in intercultural adequate, collaborative processes. The Indigenous Australian academic Marcia Langton elaborates on a concept of intersubjectivity, where Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants are called upon to engage in actual dialogues in response to the "...need to test imagined models against each other".¹⁸ Drawing upon Langton's point, I argue in favour of what I termed "intercultural adequate, intersubjective contact zones", where all participants are subjects in ongoing dialogues which are established to dismiss the unequal power patterns of the "us-vs.-the-Other" models.¹⁹

To conclude this paper, I have pointed to socio-political constructions of the "Other" within the (post)colonial context. I have drawn attention to Indigenous research guidelines which have been established in reply to inappropriate "western" paradigms. I have briefly focussed on intercultural text analysis as a random example of intercultural research issues. Finally, I have pointed to intersubjective, intercultural appropriate contact zones as the site of research methods which imply cooperation and mutual respect.

Notes

- ¹ JanMohamed, 1990, 1.
- ² Lattas, 1997, 255.
- ³ Tupuola, 1993, 3.
- ⁴ Boehmer, 1995, 245.
- ⁵ Kaplan, 1989, 13.
- ⁶ Linda T. Smith, 1999, 173.
- ⁷ Huggins, 1998, 86-87; emphasis added.
- ⁸ Huggins, 1997, 230.
- ⁹ quoted in McDonald, 1997, 12.
- ¹⁰ Rigney, 1995, 1.
- ¹¹ Smith, 1995, 9.
- ¹² Bennett, 1990, 139.
- ¹³ Hodge and Mishra, 1991, xvii-xviii.
- ¹⁴ Birch, 1989, 164.
- ¹⁵ Birch, 1989, 167.
- ¹⁶ Ricoeur, 1981: 220; quoted in D. Birch, 1989, 168.
- ¹⁷ Easthope, 1991, 138.
- ¹⁸ Langton, 1993, 35.
- ¹⁹ Wildburger, 2003, 21.

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Intercultural Education in a Divided School System

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Abstract: Northern Ireland is a society in which religious, political and national identities have interacted to promote community conflict. Religious divisions have been reinforced by high levels of residential segregation and separate schools for Protestants and Catholics. The present paper examines the role of separate schools and considers possibilities for an intercultural agenda through education. Mass schooling generally acts as a mechanism for social integration, although often excludes minorities through assimilationist assumptions. In reaction, some minorities seek separate schools as a bulwark for maintaining identity and culture. This argument has been deployed in Northern Ireland to justify separate schools for Protestants and Catholics, both historically and in the present: currently, there are just over 1,100 schools, but only 50 of these are religiously integrated and only an additional 40 have a diverse student body. When violence developed in the late 1960s many questioned whether separate schools had contributed to community divisions, and looked to the schools to promote reconciliation and tolerance. The paper will review policies implemented since that time and will examine the limited gains that have been achieved. The paper will argue that past ameliorative measures have been based on a poorly articulated cognitive model in which the goal is some ill-defined attitudinal change. The paper will go on to argue that, in order to promote an intercultural agenda in education, it is necessary to more directly address the implications of diversity in and between schools. This might involve creative ways of challenging institutional divisions among schools and training teachers better to deal with diversity. An intercultural agenda should not just be about the legitimization of difference, a goal which has perhaps been over-emphasized in the Northern Ireland peace process, but also the establishment of shared space and identity.

Keywords: religious segregation, social divisions and conflict, integration, politics and religion, tolerance, selective schooling.

1. Introduction

The conflict in Northern Ireland has long historical roots (Darby, 1997), but took on its current form in the 19th century when political and religious identity became closely associated. In the aftermath of the First World War and the Versailles Settlement, the island was partitioned. However, although the partition line had been drawn to reflect religious demography on the island as a whole, about a third of the population of Northern Ireland was Catholic and retained a desire to join the rest of Ireland in a separate state. Politics in Northern Ireland became fixed around religion, with the Protestant majority supporting unionist political parties while most Catholics supported nationalist parties. In the 1960s Catholics protested against discrimination, but the protests and counter-reactions rapidly descended into violence, a resurgence of support for violent paramilitary groups and the arrival of British troops. Between 1968 and 1994 almost 3,500 people died in the ensuing conflict and many thousands more were injured. The main paramilitary organisations declared ceasefires in 1994 and an agreement on shared governance was signed in 1998. However, the shared governance arrangements have been fragile and are currently in suspension and the underlying conflict remains unresolved (Wilson, 2002).

This paper considers the role of education in this situation and, in particular, the possibilities for intercultural education. A key characteristic of the education system in Northern Ireland lies in the influence of denominationalism and the operation of religiously separate schools. The consequences of this have always provided a focus for debate, but this was highlighted after the outbreak of violence in the late 1960s. Despite this controversy the system has remained largely segregated on the basis of religion. In the context of the peace process, the paramilitary ceasefires (1994) and the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement (1998) this division might be thought of as having two possible outcomes. One is that institutional differentiation could lead to the development of distinctive mission and purpose for different schools and thereby generate a healthy pluralism in education, possibly enhanced by engagement between the authorities of each of the different sectors. This might be thought of as an educational version of consociationalism and, to that extent, might be thought of as akin to the political structures established under the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement. A second possibility is that institutional differentiation might produce divisive effects if it reinforces significant social cleavages and is not mitigated by countervailing processes of interconnection. We consider these alternatives by focusing on a number of different educational debates that have been considered in the last five to six years. Whichever of these possibilities best fits the actual circumstances has significant implications for the potential for developing intercultural practice in education in Northern Ireland.

2. Denominationalism and education

The denominational character of education in Northern Ireland has its historical roots in the establishment of the national system of elementary schools in Ireland in the 1830s (Akenson, 1970). Despite an official aspiration for a non-denominational system, by the end of the century most schools were controlled by the Churches. Following partition proposals for a new school system in Northern Ireland also contained this aspiration, but, as before, denominational interests remained predominant (Akenson, 1973; Buckland, 1979; Dunn, 1990) to the extent that, by 1933, Northern Ireland had a system of Catholic-owned schools, attended almost exclusively by Catholic pupils who were taught almost exclusively by Catholic teachers, and a system of Local Authority schools that were attended almost exclusively by Protestant pupils who were taught almost exclusively by Protestant teachers. There was no formal bar to 'cross-over' between the systems, but they remained religiously homogeneous until the first planned Integrated school was opened in 1980. Even today (2000/2001) statistics from the Department of Education indicate that 94 per cent of Protestant students attend Protestant schools and 92 per cent of Catholics attend Catholic schools. Although the religious composition of the Integrated schools is mixed, only four per cent of students overall attend these schools. Thus, institutionalised religious separation in education became, and largely remains, an accepted fact of life in Northern Ireland. Not surprisingly, when the violence broke out at the end of the 1960s, many commentators looked to the separate schools as a potential contributor to social division, and a possible means for ameliorating conflict.

For a period there was an extended debate on the consequences of separate schools and three main views were put forward (Darby and Dunn, 1987). First, there were those who argued that the main effect of separate schools arose from the different curricula they offered pupils. A second view was that the mere fact of separation sent implicit messages to young people that they were fundamentally different. A third view argued that the issue of separate schools was largely irrelevant to social divisions as they were related more to questions of justice and inequality, rather than to mutual ignorance or misunderstanding.

As stated, there was no consensus on these three explanations, for which reason a range of strategies were pursued through schools over time. Three main strategies were developed. The first involved new curriculum programmes, most notably in the teaching of history and religious education, but later in the development of a new programme called Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU). The second approach involved contact initiatives to bring young Protestants and Catholics together, either through joint school initiatives, or holiday programmes. The third approach involved active attempts to establish religiously integrated schools.

Over the thirty years of the conflict the extent and type of educational initiatives can be categorised into three periods. In the 1970s most schools cast themselves as oases of peace and calm and tried to leave the violence outside the school. In the 1980s a number of individuals and groups established initiatives that proactively sought to use education to pursue reconciliation and tolerance. In the 1990s all this work was put on firmer ground by being incorporated into the 1989 Education Reform Order, which placed EMU and Cultural Heritage as compulsory themes on the statutory Northern Ireland curriculum, obliged government to support initiatives for the development of integrated schools, and permitted parents to vote to transform an existing school to integrated status (Gallagher, 2003).

3. What have been the effects of all this work?

Despite the fact that the statutory curriculum included the themes of EMU and Cultural Heritage, the experience of their impact over the last decade has been decidedly mixed (Leitch and Kilpatrick, 1999; Smith and Robinson, 1992; 1996). There have been examples of extraordinarily good work by some teachers in some schools, and there is little doubt that a wealth of new curriculum materials and programmes, and expertise in addressing issues of reconciliation and tolerance, have developed. However, alongside these gains it is also true to say that most pupils do not have their day-to-day life in school informed by the values and principles underlying these themes. In part this is due to the limited priority accorded to these issues by schools (and, it has to be said, by the education system in general), the higher priority attached to other issues, and the reluctance to address issues related to conflict and division in Northern Irish society more generally. To that extent, the wider social reticence to address these issues in religiously mixed company – a reticence, sometimes referred to as a 'culture of silence', which, incidentally, explains the rather curious facility people in Northern Ireland display in identifying the religion of a stranger – is a process which affects teachers as much as any other group. Until teachers find better ways of engaging with these issues directly, it seems likely they will find it difficult to take young people in schools on this journey.

One particular problem has emerged in the sometimes naïve application of the 'contact hypothesis' in educational initiatives. As noted above, the schools system was, and remains, deeply segregated. In consequence, one of the early initiatives in Northern Ireland was to provide opportunities for young Protestants and Catholics to come together for joint activities. In the early years this mainly took the form of joint holiday programs and a few contact initiatives between Protestant and Catholic schools. Formal work between schools was encouraged

by the establishment of a Department of Education fund to support such work in the early 1980s. This was further reinforced following the 1989 Education Reform Order when schools were encouraged to use this fund to support contact as part of their EMU work. However, the rationale and purpose of this contact was often poorly articulated or understood and there was little systematic investigation of the impact of contact programs. Reports from school inspections indicated that there were sporadic examples of good practice, but they tended to rely on the initiative of individual teachers and rarely had an impact at a whole-school level. The most recent evaluation of the contact scheme confirmed these patterns and is likely to lead to a refocusing of the program (O'Connor et al, 2002). Partly in response to the limitations of curriculum and contact work to date, the current review of the statutory curriculum is likely to see the arrival of some form of citizenship education.

The first integrated school opened in 1981, to be followed by another dozen schools throughout the 1980s. Following the measures contained in the 1989 Education Reform Order, the rate of growth of integrated education increased so that, at present, there are about 50 schools. Over a twenty year period this rate of growth is small, but this should not downplay the remarkable achievement of parents in establishing what amounts to an entirely new school system in not particularly propitious circumstances (Moffat, 1993). Under current conditions the most likely area of growth lies in the transformation of existing schools, rather than the creation of entirely new ones (although there is the possibility of a 'tipping-point' at which change towards a more fully integrated system will rapidly accelerate (Gladwell, 2000)). More generally, there has been limited detailed discussion to date on the impact integrated education might reasonably be expected to have on the pupils and teachers in the schools, or on the wider society. The limited research evidence on the experience of these schools thus far suggests that while they do provide genuinely integrated social spaces, practice varies considerably across (and even within) the schools and it is not clear that there is a consistent and shared discourse of integration, except in quite general terms, across the sector (Johnson, 2001; Gallagher et al., 2003; McGonigle et al, 2003; Montgomery et al, 2003).

One of the core arguments for maintaining separate schools is that the different communities have an institutionalised basis for maintaining and reproducing their identity. Only in such circumstances, it is argued, can the communities feel confident enough to work together for a common good. Furthermore, advocates of separate schools argue that it is possible, through curricular and contact initiatives, to ameliorate some of the potential divisive effects that might arise from separation. One of the most commonly cited examples of this lies in the arrangements in the Netherlands where a history of religious conflict was ameliorated by consociational arrangements involving mass segmentation and elite accommodation. One of the key examples of this process was provided by the constitutional arrangements for education which permitted any group with a distinctive education philosophy (mainly, but not exclusively, denominational interests) to open a school which would receive full public funding as long as it met minimum viability criteria. One of the issues we want to explore in this paper is the extent to which these consociational features can be found to operate in the denominationally divided school system in Northern Ireland, particularly in the years after the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement.

We want to examine this by considering a number of debates that have taken place in education in Northern Ireland over recent years. Most of these focus on issues related, in some way, to denominationalism, but not all, and most could have provided the potential for superordinate goals around which common interests could have organised. In fact, what seems to have happened is that most of the issues have been mediated by existing divisions within education. The paper will argue that this is due to the emphasis on a version of pluralism which overplays institutional separation and underplays a discourse of a common good in education.

4. Teacher education

Students can train as teachers in either of the two universities in Northern Ireland (mainly for post-primary schools), or in one of two teacher training colleges (mainly for primary teachers). One of the colleges is owned and run by the Catholic church and most of the staff and students are Catholic. The other college is wholly state-owned, but in practice the majority of its students are Protestant. A proposal that the two colleges merge was put forward in 1980, but was fiercely resisted by the Catholic authorities (Chilver Report, 1980). Following this the two colleges were encouraged to develop closer links between themselves and Queens University. Recently the relationship with the university was formalised when they became autonomous university colleges. Although they have their own funding arrangements with the Department of Education, the colleges have become integrated into the administrative and academic procedures of the university, and have started to diversify to provide degree programmes. It might be expected that this process would, in time, have lead to a blurring of the institutional edges between the three institutions.

The limited extent to which this has occurred was highlighted recently when new proposals for an amalgamation of the colleges, probably within the university, were presented. In part these proposals were predicated on finding ways in which teacher education could make a better contribution to peace and reconciliation, but they were motivated also by more prosaic considerations, including a downturn in the number of young people, and hence reduction in the demand for new teachers. However, even before these proposals emerged in a concrete form the Catholic authorities made clear their total opposition to the idea and seemed to want to close off discussion on the matter before it even started. That said, a formal review of initial teacher

education has just been announced and the issue of separate provision is almost certain to emerge as a key focus of discussion.

5. Teacher exception

In the 1970s and 1980s legislation was passed outlawing discrimination in employment on the basis of religious affiliation or political opinion. A number of exceptions were allowed for in the legislation, including the employment of domestic staff, clergy, security forces and teachers. Teachers had been added to this list on the grounds that Northern Ireland operated separate schools, although the law included a provision that this specific element be reviewed on a regular basis. Over the years few in education, apart mainly from some of the teacher unions, have consistently argued that the exception should be removed. That said, since education reforms in 1989 the extent to which the schools are in a position to offer distinctive and different curricula has narrowed considerably. In addition, most of the school authorities emphasise the fact that they do not operate impenetrable religious bars to the recruitment of teachers from other faith communities, although there are few data to indicate the extent to which this actually occurs.

As part of the peace process the Equality Commission is preparing recommendations on a draft single equality bill which would bring together anti-discrimination measures across a range of social dimensions. As part of the preparation work for this bill new research on the teacher exemption was carried out, but the results that emerged were much as had been found before (Dunn and Gallagher, 2002). Opinion within the education community appears to be divided into four main groups: those who argue that the teacher exemption is entirely justified; those who say they are largely indifferent to its retention, but who also say that if one group of schools is allowed to operate an exemption, then all should be able to do so; those who say that they are indifferent to retention, but feel that removing the exemption would be too complicated; and those who say, as a matter of principle, that the exemption should be removed. It seems likely that the proposal to remove the teacher exemption will go ahead, although it is likely to meet significant opposition from educational interests.

6. Culture of tolerance group

In the immediate aftermath of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement there was a significant level of optimism in Northern Ireland at the possibility of constructing the architecture for a new society. Most attention focused on the arrangements for the new political institutions, but the Minister with responsibility for Education decided to establish a Working Group to consider ways in which the education system could work towards the promotion of tolerance in general and more integrated schools in particular. The membership of the Working Group included representatives from integrated education, the local authorities, higher education, the Protestant Churches and the Catholic authorities.

This working group represented one of the few forums at which representatives from across the range of educational interests came together to discuss a broader social goal related to the promotion of tolerance. For a time the group considered a range of innovative possibilities, but its energy and momentum became dissipated. A number of factors contributed to this, including the replacement of the Minister of Education and the faltering progress towards establishing the governance arrangements in the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement. The grand ambition at the genesis of the group had been significantly reduced by the time it met to consider a draft final report.

7. Religious education programme

A significant advance a few years ago was provided when the main Christian Churches came together to agree the basis for a common religious education programme for schools in Northern Ireland, even though part of the basis for agreement was that there should be optional elements provided to reflect particular denominational issues. Nevertheless, the fact that the main churches could agree on this programme was seen, by many, as a significant advance. An important caveat to this, however, was that the agreed programme was narrowly tailored to reflect Christian traditions and made little or no comment on wider faith communities. This became an issue of controversy recently when the religious education programme was under review. Initially it seemed that the representatives of the main Christian Churches were unwilling to widen the scope of the programme, even in the face of strong lobbying by the Interfaith Forum which represents the wider religious traditions to be found in Northern Ireland. The new proposals are due to be published for consultation sometime very soon and it is likely, if only to head off a potential legal challenge, that they will include some limited space for a consideration of other faith traditions, but it seems equally likely that the main thrust of the programme will still focus largely on the Christian tradition.

8. Selective education

After the second world war free and compulsory post-primary education was established in the United Kingdom, but by the 1970s this had been abandoned in favour of comprehensive or all-ability schools in every part of the UK except Northern Ireland. The retention of this system has always provided a focus for debate. Following the election of the Labour government in 1997 a research study on the effects of the selective arrangements was commissioned by the Department of Education (Gallagher and Smith, 2000; 2001). The research was highly critical of the divisive consequences of the selective arrangements and, in its wake, the Minister of Education established a review body to bring forward recommendations on the future organisation of post-primary schools. This Body recommended the end of academic selection at age 11, the establishment of a new system of formative assessment to run through primary and post-primary schooling and that post-primary schools should be organised into collaborative networks or Collegiates (Burns Report, 2001).

Since these recommendations were published in 2001 they have been subject to large-scale and continuing consultation. Opinion on specific aspects of the proposals remains divided, although much of the debate reflects class interests rather than denominational interests (Gallagher, 2002). Despite this, however, at a political level a clear division has emerged between the main unionist and nationalist political parties. The Ulster Unionist Party and the Democratic Unionist Party have both opposed change to the selective arrangements, while the two main nationalist parties, the SDLP and Sinn Féin, have both supported significant change, including an end to selection at age 11 years. Partly because of this divided, since the suspension of the Northern Ireland Assembly the direct rule minister appears to be reluctant to take a decision on the issue.

The original rationale for the collegiate proposal was on the pragmatic grounds that the diverse patterns of ownership in schools in Northern Ireland made it inevitable that there would be some institutional differentiation among schools. The problem that was seen to emerge in the selective arrangements was that official policy towards schools, especially in regard to the improvement of standards, seemed to work on the assumption that schools operated as autonomous units, each largely in control of its own destiny and therefore responsible for the achievement of specified targets. One of the conclusions to emerge from the research into the effects of the selective system was that schools, in fact, operate as part of an interdependent system of schools, so that action taken in one part of the system necessarily has consequences for other parts of the system. Partly based on this idea, the review body had concluded that the selective arrangements, allied to parental choice and competition between schools, had the consequence that the relationships between schools were characterised by negative interdependencies. The proposal to establish collaborative networks of schools was mainly based on the intention of creating procedures and practices that would work to encourage positive interdependencies between schools. In the review of the selective arrangements an advantage of the collegiate idea was that it provided a basis for diversity among schools, in terms of their particular specialism or expertise. In addition, the specific proposal required the groupings of schools to be heterogeneous in terms of their management types, thereby providing a basis for, it was hoped, encouraging interconnections between Protestant, Catholic and Integrated schools.

The reactions to this particular proposal were muted among educationalists. Teacher unions worried about the practicalities of collaborative arrangements, some grammar school interests labelled the notion as comprehensivisation by stealth and the initial reaction of the Catholic bishops was to dismiss the idea as a threat to the rights of trustees of Catholic schools and, more particularly, their control over the ethos and character of Catholic schools. At the more informal surroundings of public meetings on the issue some indicated their disbelief that Protestant and Catholic schools could actually cooperate in the way envisaged. Despite this, most of the educational interests had indicated, in their written submissions, that the idea of more collaboration between schools was a good one (although few offered specific suggestions on how this should be achieved) and the basic idea received support on a public opinion survey.

But perhaps the most striking feature of this (on-going) debate is that it has been so rancorous and that it has proved to be difficult to pursue the discussion on a common set of criteria. There was widespread agreement, at least at a rhetorical level, with a principle enunciated by the review body that the education system should place the needs and interests of all young people at the centre of its concerns. However, once a gesture was made towards this principle, most resumed the pursuit of institutional interest in their advocacy of a desired outcome.

The fact that the political debate over selection took on a largely unionist/nationalist character is perhaps surprising. On the other hand, there had been a tendency in the Northern Ireland Assembly for education to become a focus of unionist/nationalist debate. This was most evident in debates over school funding, especially the allocation of the capital fund for new school buildings or other capital developments in existing schools. Given that separate Protestant, Catholic and Integrated schools operate, it is perhaps not surprising that Ministerial decisions on the schools that were to receive capital grants almost invariably turned into a debate over the relative allocations to each of the sectors. The Department of Education always claimed that decisions on the placement of proposals on the capital programme were almost exclusively determined by need, but this claim was generally ignored (or disbelieved) in debates where the principle of equity of treatment was used as if it meant equivalence in treatment across the different sectors.

The further fact that the Minister of Education was Martin McGuinness, one of the key figures in Sinn Féin, merely added another level of political tension to any decisions he took.

9. Conclusion

Each of these different examples points to a problem in the contribution education might play as Northern Ireland struggles to find a way out of the violence that lasted for over a quarter century. As noted at the start of this paper, Northern Ireland has an education system that is characterised by divisions, between Protestant and Catholic, between social classes, and, to an extent, between genders. The main justification of the religious separation has been based on a claim that minorities should have the right to maintain their own schools, especially in a society where a minority faces discrimination in employment, and on a version of pluralism which emphasises the legitimacy of difference. This paper has argued that the justifications cast the education system in Northern Ireland in consociational terms, that is as a system of mass segmentation and elite accommodation. However, each of the examples looked at in the paper of education initiatives that have been pursued in the period since the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement have shown little evidence of the accommodatory side of the consociational claims. Rather, the more evident characteristic of the debates has been the pursuit of separate interests and the striking absence of any discourse of a common good in education.

This is despite the widespread hope at the outset of the devolved arrangements, that education might provide the basis for a superordinate goal around which most political interests could unite. It would seem, therefore, that the legitimisation of difference alone is not sufficient, but that some stronger basis for promoting a discourse of a common good may be needed if education is to take on a more positive role. Hitherto the main vehicle for this has been assumed to be the Integrated schools, although this is hampered by the zero-sum response which is normally provoked whenever any new developments in Integrated education take place. Nevertheless, there are good grounds for arguing that the contexts provided by separate schools limit the extent to which they can contribute to the promotion of positive community relations. Wenger's work on communities of learning highlights the importance of developing a clear identity and strong core processes in order to establish a 'community of learning', but he goes on to suggest that such a community will stagnate if its focus remains entirely internal: in order to develop learning it will become necessary for the community to develop porous boundaries so that its members can come into contact with different assumptions and ways of thinking, for it is from these that the basis for challenge, and new learning, will develop (Wenger, 2000). One possible way to develop these porous boundaries is to build on Varshey's (2002) idea that ethnic harmony is promoted, or disharmony constrained, if there exist networks of interconnection within civic society, with institutionalised linkages being more effective than quotidian, or more informal, linkages. The proposal emerging from the review of the selective system for collaborating collegiates of post-primary schools might provide one basis for creating those type of positive interdependencies between separate schools. Another possibility could be provided by a realignment of teacher education and a renewed commitment to seeing this as a high priority in the training of teachers.

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**CREATIVITY, CULTURE
& PERFORMANCE**

The Ownership of Cultural Hybrids

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Abstract: Many who have viewed Akira Kurosawa's films would realize that he had created a new genre works with a strong blend of Japanese and Western elements, but which are not reducible to either culture. There are some who however claim such intercultural products as belonging solely to their native cultures, thus giving rise to what Charles Taylor calls "non-recognition not giving due credit to other cultures and races." To address this aspect of monoculturalism, I suggest it is important to view intercultural exchanges as periods of revolutions. Like in periods of scientific revolutions, intercultural exchanges involve a change of worldview, a change of meaning and a change of the repertoire of questions. Intercultural exchanges cannot be properly conceived as an accumulation of past cultural experiences. The hybrids must be regarded as new entities, belonging to neither culture. The implication is that it is harder to pigeonhole new cultural products. Zen Buddhism (Indian Buddhism-Chinese influences), for example, cannot be recognized as an extension of Chinese culture, unless as a shorthand. Neither is the Renaissance (Greek, Medieval and Islamic influences) a continuation of medieval culture. The facts that the propagators of a new cultural product belong predominantly to a race or that the culture thrives mainly in a certain country are not proofs of entitlement. The former will marginalize the effort of the minority who contributes to the new hybrid, while the latter is building on the fallacy of the former, i.e., the country of origin supersedes the contribution of the minority. With globalization, intercultural exchanges will take place on a wider scale and the politics of recognition will escalate. Once we recognize that no one culture can legitimately claim ownership over intercultural hybrids, we can deal a heavy blow to monoculturalism.

Keywords: Cultural hybrids, monoculturalism, multiculturalism, interculturalism, periods of revolutions.

1. Introduction

Intuitively, we associate cultures with certain ethnic groups or with countries of origin and it is the most natural way to speak of cultures. What I will discuss in my paper is how problematic the ownership of cultures can be, through the exploration of the nature of a cultural hybrid. This includes, but is not limited to, a new philosophy, a new form of literature or a new scientific outlook produced in the aftermath of an intercultural exchange. I am arguing against a commonly held perspective which political scientist Adda Bozeman speaks of when he writes: "the destiny of each linguistically and morally unified community depends ultimately upon the survival of certain primary structuring ideas around which successive generations have coalesced and which thus symbolize the society's continuity."¹ This view, which can be termed the essentialist model of culture i.e. there are unchanging essences in a particular culture, has been held by laypersons as well as scholars, and in recent times, is popularized by *The Clash of Civilizations*. The Chinese too speak proudly of their 5000 years of unbroken history, while Europeans see their existing culture as building upon the foundation of the Greeks, the Romans and Christianity, ignoring the vast disagreements between these cultures.

My thesis is akin to anthropologist C. W. Watson's argument that the notion of "a (national) culture is predicated on a very dubious essentialism, a cluster of characteristics considered immutable to which ritual reference is made"². Borrowing from philosopher Thomas Kuhn's insights, I suggest that it is inaccurate to view a culture as an accumulation of cultural achievements by a particular ethnic group. There is constancy in cultural values within a period, but not after an intercultural exchange. With each epoch, especially one heralded by an external culture, there is a radical departure from the thoughts of previous periods. There may be a period in our ancient history when cultures may solely belong to an ethnic group but with each intercultural exchange, these cultures are deeply transformed. Thus, our popular use of terms like "Islamic culture", "Western culture" and "Chinese culture" should be highly qualified and only as shorthand for a complex reality. The issue of cultural identity is far from an academic one and in this age of intense cultural tensions, we should re-examine our deeply held assumptions, especially the essentialist model of culture.

2. One essence

Essentialism is the belief that individuals or phenomena have properties that are indispensable to their identities. It entails many beliefs but for our purpose, only two are crucial. The first is the view of development fixity. The concept means that a trait is insensitive to changes in the environment and any deviation from its

goal-oriented development is considered impairment³. It is famously expressed by the fact that an acorn has no other way of developing except to be an oak tree. When applied to cultures, it assumes that a culture will retain its core characteristics despite changes and influences from other cultures. Second, since a culture is defined by its essence or substance, it implies a demarcation from other cultures. This gives rise to a dualist outlook that posits two substances as radical opposites: good and evil, mind and body, self and the other. The binary opposites are often seen as mutually exclusive, occupying no common ground between them.

Monoculturalism assumes that there is only one essence and historically, it refers to Western culture. By creating a standard that is attainable by one culture, all other cultures are seen as the binary opposite—barbaric, uncivilised and unenlightened. It was a familiar argument that except Western culture, other cultures did not have scientific and philosophical traditions or literature worthy of emulation. The dominant culture takes the position that inventions and discoveries from other cultures are not significant until they are assimilated into the dominant culture. It has been said that though the Chinese invented paper, gunpowder, printing and the magnet, it was the Europeans who truly utilised them. Similarly, while acknowledging the Arabs and the Hindus as pioneers of the numeral system, little research has gone into the mathematical traditions of these people.

After dismissing the fact that other traditions do possess science and mathematics, the accompanying account of history is a Eurocentric one. In the classic Eurocentric model, mathematical development is seen as taking place in two eras—in Greece (from about 600 B.C. to 300 A.D.) and in post-Renaissance Europe. The intervening period of stagnation was labelled as the Dark Ages when no great scientific and mathematical thoughts arose⁴. One result is that other cultures feel emasculated from their rich history. Dispossessed of their cultural achievements, Muslims feel alienated from modernity. Prominent Muslim leader Dr Mahathir laments contemporary Muslim's reluctance to acquire scientific and mathematical knowledge when the so-called "western" or "secular" knowledge owed much to Muslim thinkers like Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd.⁵

3. Many essences

In reaction to monoculturalism, multiculturalism tries to repair the damages wrought by cultural monopoly, working on the assumption that each culture has as much to contribute as the dominant culture. In all disciplines, canons are revised, expanded and pluralised. The recognition of the achievements of other cultures has restored dignity and pride to various ethnic groups. To take an example, consider the multicultural history of mathematics. As an alternative to the Eurocentric model mentioned earlier, multiculturalists have presented a complex web of interaction among various civilizations during the eighth and fifteenth century (the "Dark Ages"),⁶ though due to the essentialist assumption, much of history is still concerned with individual culture.

Thus multiculturalism is a fighting creed. While it celebrates various cultural achievements, the boundaries between cultures are sharply defined according to the perceived essences. Cultures are more interested in their own histories than an intercultural history. Pushed to its logical conclusion, we have Samuel Huntington's *The Clash of Civilizations*, in which battlefields are drawn between civilizations (cultures writ large). Influenced by a Eurocentric history, he divides history into three periods: encounters between civilizations, the rise of the west and a multicivilizational system. In his scheme, "contacts among civilizations were, with some exceptions, either non-existent or limited or intermittent and intense" prior to A.D. 1500 and interactions between civilizations only increased from the twentieth century onwards.⁷ What makes people uncomfortable is the absence of any meaningful interaction between civilizations and the inevitability of collisions. In this climate where we do not have a rich intercultural history, efforts to initiate intercultural dialogues will be met with suspicion and great resistance. Like a paradigm, our perception of history tells us what the norm is. A history of clashes among civilization will make meaningful exchanges fraught with difficulties. Correcting our historical perceptions involves doing away with the essentialist model of culture.

4. Revolutions in science

To understand how cultures develop, we can perhaps turn to the structure of scientific development. For a long time, it was commonly accepted that the enterprise of science was about the accumulation of knowledge. However, prominent philosopher Thomas Kuhn is dissatisfied with this view, as it does not explain the disjunction between the worldviews of a community of scientists and another group that seeks to replace the former worldviews. He thus reconstructs the history of science in three stages: the pre-paradigm phase, the normal science and the revolutionary science phase.

In the pre-paradigm phase, there is no one commonly accepted paradigm guiding the research of the various scientific communities. In the normal science phase, the scientific community work within a paradigm, seeking to determine the significant facts and questions, matching facts with theory and articulate the theory⁸. A revolution in science occurs when there is a shift in the paradigm, methodology and the legitimate set of questions. Like a gestalt switch, the new paradigm is incommensurable with the old. There is no logical conflict between the two paradigms since they are judged by two different scientific standards⁹. This argument deviates greatly from the accumulative theory of science which believes that what changes with a paradigm is only the

scientists' reinterpretation of data that is fixed once and for all by the nature of the environment and the apparatus.

However, Kuhn argues that the differences between oxygen and "dephlogisticated air" or between Einsteinian mass and Newtonian mass are not reducible to a reinterpretation of data¹⁰. The mistake rests on a faulty epistemology initiated by Descartes, believing that we are able to use a pure observation-neutral language. The attempt consists of eliminating non-logical and non-perceptual terms from our daily discourse or the scientific language¹¹. This is part of the essentialist framework believing that there is a fixed and unchanging point from which all things can be viewed. However, the data are not unequivocally stable. A pendulum is not falling stone, nor is oxygen dephlogisticated air. Consequently, the data that scientists collect from these diverse objects are different¹².

Second, the interpretive enterprise can only articulate a paradigm, not rectify it. Normal science does not change a paradigm but leads to the recognition of anomalies and crises. They are terminated by the creation of a new paradigm. The primacy of the paradigm is all the more reasonable if we remember that individuals and scientists do not learn to see the world piecemeal or item-by-item. Learning a word (such as "mother") tells us about the object in question as well as other related concepts (like the family and gender differences).¹³

5. Interculturalism as a revolution in cultural development

The foregoing paragraphs seeks to articulate the nature of a scientific revolution. In the subsequent text, I shall argue that interculturalism should be conceived as a revolution in cultural development, not as an expansion and accumulation of the preceding culture. Interculturalism recognizes that cultures interact creatively, giving rise to a product that is vastly different from the inputs. One way to illustrate this is to look at an intercultural film, specifically, Akira Kurosawa's *Kumonosu-ju*. It is a work that marries traditions separated by hundreds of miles and aptly demonstrates the mobility of cultures. Kurosawa's film retains so little of Shakespeare's play that we ask if faithfulness is a good criterion to start with. Unlike earlier adaptations, Kurosawa has brought *Macbeth* to a foreign land and told the tale in symbols appropriate to the indigenous culture.

Instead of importing elements like Christian doctrines and Greek theatre from Shakespeare's *Macbeth* to *Kumonosu-ju*, Kurosawa has replaced them with Buddhist philosophy and Noh theatre. As Buddhism permeates the film, the same story of betrayal takes on a different symbolism, illustrating the primacy of a paradigm. The questions that we ask in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* are no longer meaningful and significant here. For example, instead of having three omniscient witches in a subtle mockery of the Holy Trinity, Kurosawa puts a mysterious old woman at the spinning wheel, dramatizing Buddhist ethics in Noh fashion¹⁴. The circular structure of the film—with the characters going around the forest in circles, the spinning wheel and numerous repetitions—emphasize the crushing laws of *karma* where freedom does not exist¹⁵ (which is a major theme in *Macbeth*). As a result, all scenes of *pathos* and acknowledged guilt in *Macbeth* are eliminated from *Kumonosu-ju*¹⁶. The end result is that Kurosawa has created an unheroic film tragedy¹⁷.

If *Macbeth* is characterized by themes of free will, guilt and *pathos*, the form of Greek tragedy, Shakespeare's soliloquies and the three witches, then *Kumonosu-ju* is not a mere adaptation of *Macbeth*, though the storyline and characterization bear close resemblance to *Macbeth*. This is what happens during an intercultural exchange—a familiar part of a culture enters an unfamiliar sphere and becomes radically transformed by the new paradigm. Like in a scientific revolution, what was once a rabbit has become a duck. Consequently we have difficulty interpreting the symbols with the usual paradigm and articulating the very nature of the cultural hybrid. Kurosawa's film can be seen as a microcosm of what happens when cultures interact in a creative fashion.

Intercultural exchanges are not restricted to arts and sciences but also extend to philosophy as well. Today, *Ch'an* Buddhism is seen as a part of Chinese culture but when Buddhism was first introduced to China, the Chinese resisted its influence because of its insistence on celibacy and its Indian origins. It was seen as un-Chinese.¹⁸ Outlook of life is radically different. While Buddhism expresses contempt for the world and disgust with life, both Taoism and early Confucianism express the love of life. Much emphasis is placed on living well in this world, rather than an inquiry into the afterlife. Even Taoist's quest for immortality is to extend life in *this* world¹⁹. Neither is *Ch'an* Buddhism a mere extension of Buddhism. Instead of pessimism and denial of worldliness, *Ch'an* Buddhism reaffirms life and acceptance of this world²⁰. Besides, influenced by Taoism, *Ch'an* Buddhism places emphasis on intuitive understanding, rejecting conceptual thinking and external influences²¹.

Likewise, indigenous Chinese culture was transformed when Buddhism entered the scene. Taoism was systematized as a religion, borrowing from the organizational system of Buddhist monastery. It became concerned with spiritual afterlife rather than bodily immortality. Early Confucianism was not concerned with metaphysics but with a sophisticated metaphysical framework. *Ch'an* Buddhism created a demand for metaphysical arguments and thus Neo-Confucianism was born, with much attention to *yin-yang* cosmology and

bordered on mysticism. Confucian scholars often speak of preserving tradition rather than innovation. But if one compares early Confucianism with Neo-Confucianism, the changes are fundamental.

Bozeman has defined a culture as “values, norms, institutions and modes of thinking to which successive generations in a given society attached primary importance”²². If a set of thinking and norms define a culture and a work of art, we can then say that Chinese culture has departed from its characteristics when Buddhism was introduced. We are inclined to think of an expansion in Chinese culture, but that is to assume that there is a central set of values that remains unchanged and defines one as “Chinese”. Earlier, the difficulty of defining *Kumonosu-ju* as a mere adaptation crops up since the underpinning paradigms, which are so central to *Macbeth*, are swept away and replaced with elements so alien to *Macbeth*. Similarly, worldviews underwent changes when *Ch’an* Buddhism met Confucianism. The former discarded its pessimistic worldview that formed an indispensable part of Buddhism, while Neo-Confucianism started to focus on metaphysical questions that were not crucial to earlier Confucians. So when an intercultural exchange happens, a cultural hybrid not reducible to its parent culture is born. The cultural hybrid will present a different paradigm, acquire a different set of symbols and ask a different repertoire of questions.

Hitherto, we have been speaking of a cultural hybrid as it stands apart from the parent cultures and is distinguishable from them. But that is a false image. Unlike Kurosawa’s films where intercultural exchanges are frozen in time and crystallize on films, cultural hybrids become less delineated over time. Gradually, a cultural hybrid transposes from the peripheral to mainstream culture. We should remember that when Buddhism was first introduced, it was seen as an Indian influence but slowly became part of the Chinese culture. Antagonism towards foreign influences will subside when these alien elements are naturalized and normalized. This is akin to what Kuhn calls the invisibility of revolutions. Through textbooks, we are influenced to think of the stable outcomes of past revolutions²³ and cultures, rather than going through revolutions, merely expand. This has lent support to the essentialist model of culture in which there is a set of core values that survives changes and defines an ethnic group. But as I have argued, cultures, after numerous intercultural exchanges, are more vaguely defined with numerous interlocks and junctions.

6. Conclusion

The paper is not disputing the constancy of values within a culture. Constancy in values occurs prior to an intercultural exchange and should not be mistaken for essentialism. While it cannot be denied that a culture is distinct from another, the distinction must not be made to the exclusion of intercultural influence, which would make the boundaries less clearly demarcated. For after an intercultural exchange, a culture no longer retains its essential characteristics such as its worldview, its symbolism, its norms and the range of appropriate questions. The cultural hybrid, which initially can stand out distinctly from the parent cultures, subsequently transforms the parent cultures and becomes the convention. Once that happens, the culture has changed its essential characteristics and identity. The intuitive view that a culture belongs solely to an ethnic group can and should only be an expression of convenience, but not the reality.

But more than understanding the nature of cultural development, we should continue the tradition of interculturalism, which is deeply embedded in our past. Collaboration between diverse cultural studies should be the new ethos in our campus and not narrow specialization into esoteric concerns. The mass media should explore the richness of cultural diversity like what Kurosawa did. Our political leaders should strive to recognize the possibility of intercultural dialogues, not the clash of civilizations. This can only come about if we realize that unlike what Huntington has claimed, intercultural exchanges are not aberrations but norms in the course of human history.

Notes

¹ Bozeman, Adda. *Strategic Intelligence and Statecraft*. Washington: Brassey’s, 1992. 26.

² Watson, C.W.. *Multiculturalism*. Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2000. 44.

³ Griffiths, Paul. “What is Innateness?” *The Monist*. 85, 1. 2002. 71.

⁴ Nelson, David, et al. *Multicultural Mathematics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993. 12-13.

⁵ Mohamad, Mahathir. *The Challenge*. Selangor: Pelanduk, 1989. 24-25.

⁶ Nelson, David et al, 13-14.

⁷ Huntington, Samuel. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of New World Order*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996. 48-55.

⁸ Kuhn, Thomas. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1996. 34-35.

⁹ According to Howard Sankey, Kuhn’s incommensurability thesis is untenable as it is not the case that the paradigm shift involves a discontinuous transition between theories with no common reference or which refer to an imagined world. Refer to Sankey, Howard. *The Incommensurability Thesis*. Sydney: Averbury,

1994. 218-219. When applied to cultural studies, this implies that there is still a standard by which we can judge non-liberal cultures. Detailed arguments, however, would go beyond the scope of this paper.
- ¹⁰ Kuhn, 120-126.
- ¹¹ *Ibid*, 126-127.
- ¹² *Ibid*, 121-122.
- ¹³ *Ibid*, 128.
- ¹⁴ Stephen Prince, *The Warrior's Camera*. New Jersey: Princeton, 1991. 144.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid*, 144.
- ¹⁶ Goodwin, James. *Akira Kurosawa and Intertextual Cinema*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1994. 177.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 190-191.
- ¹⁸ de Bary, Theodore, ed. *The Buddhist Tradition in India, Japan and China*. New York: The Modern Library, 1969. 133-135.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid*, 126-128.
- ²⁰ *Ibid*, 241.
- ²¹ *Ibid*, 208.
- ²² Huntington, 41.
- ²³ Kuhn, 136-137.

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How Interculturalism Performs: Performativity, Performability and Theatricality of Interculturalism

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Abstract: My paper does not advocate interculturalism in performing arts as a resolution of tension between the Eastern aesthetics and the Western artistry. On the contrary, it refuses to deny the existence of an “East” and its opposite “West.” At the same time, however, it speaks aloud an opposing voice, “Someone’s ‘Otherness’ is not always mine.”

Interculturalism is not a prenatal, utopian stage of cultural homogeneity and human unity. Its definition cannot escape from the construction of two “othernesses”: a meeting of two fabrications of otherness from varying moments in history within the structure of an artistic medium, be it a music recording, a theatrical production or simply an oil painting. Thus, interculturalism is a self-definition that artists create at the expense of their confrontation with particular social contexts, histories and realities in both eastern and western cultures.

The body of this paper will examine how interculturalism functions within a performative frame. It hopes to see in the theatricality of interculturalism an attempt to create a new narrative that necessitates shared histories and responsibilities. Weaving through the illustrations of a *Legong* Balinese dance performance, Coco Fusco and Guillermo Gómez-Peña’s collaborative border art to Ariane Mnouchkine’s “Oriental” theatre, the paper explores how interculturalism needs to be performative and performable in order to interrogate boundaries. How its theatricality may serve to justify the artists’ legitimacy for decontextualizing other cultures, owning or borrowing authenticities and conventions reveals additionally the challenges of an intercultural future.

On a personal note, I come from an island that is two oceans away, Singapore. I have the privilege of dispersing my growing-up years in Paris, London, and Shanghai before settling in New York these five years. I can never approach my cultural context without serious ambiguities and dilemmas. While my mother tongues are French and Chinese, I have a colonial history that renders English an “adapted language.” My life is an adaptation. It is telling me that I cannot simply direct *Hamlet*, appreciate Picasso, perform my Chinese zither, or listen to Philip Glass without seeing my engagement as a commentary about and around my inter-cultural influences. I am neither from the East nor from the West. Yet I cannot deny an Eastern personality, nor ignore the Western voice within me. I learn to negotiate, not to resolve the tension between the two polarities in order to escape an identity crisis. In so doing, I ask for licensing from both of my Eastern and the Western influences. The term “interculturalism” thus speaks to me on a personal level. I hope that in opening a discourse on the performativity and performability of interculturalism, I can identify within myself, as a performing artist and a scholar, the first step towards addressing interculturalism as an unmediated but necessary transformation of existing narratives today.

Keywords: Interculturalism; theatre; performance studies.

A boundary is not that at which something stops but, as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which *something begins its presencing*. (Martin Heidegger)¹

To start with a scenario that anticipated my discussion on interculturalism - though I was still too young to decipher such an “ism” at that time - I would like to retrace a memorable moment of viewing a Balinese dance performance, the *Legong* dance when I visited Sumatra in 1989. It was my first return trip to Southeast Asia after some scattered years of growing up in Europe. Besides being my earliest encounter with an indigenous performing art from Indonesia, it was also my first contact with interculturalists from various corners of the globe. As I now retrieve images of the scenario that were immediately catalyzed by and concealed beneath my memory of the performance, what interests me here is however, not the evocation of nostalgia but an accumulation of unresolved conflicts.

In retrospect, the *Legong* dance itself is not so much the site of my scenario, but merely the “backdrop” against another simultaneous “performance” enacted unconsciously by the audience. The actors for this real-life improvisation were a mob of interculturalists from the First World, intensely concerned with flashing their

cameras throughout the performance. I remember vividly the backs of these interculturalists, as well as a dazzling exposition of cameras, zoom lenses, videos, and projectors. At a very visceral level, all of these had then appeared to me as a metaphor of Western technology and dominance: the rule of capital. I now gradually discover that they were refracted in so far as I was actually witnessing at least two simultaneous events: an on-stage performance, intervened by the interculturalists' physical and metaphorical presence.

Now an acute visual trope in my intercultural imaginary, this scenario poses some disturbing concerns. In an existential mode, I ask: Who exactly were these people? What were they seeing? Were they watching a performance the same way as I did? Were they completely oblivious to other spectators? Today such curiosity indicates a context of alienation or neutrality on my part, resembling the technique that German theatrical reformer, Brecht had developed: *verfremdungseffekt*. More significantly, implicit in such inquisitiveness lies an undisturbed sense of cultural belonging and territoriality one that is being assumed, even though it was then undergoing the process of being interrogated and negotiated.

On the other hand, at a reflexive level, I gaze upon myself critically: Who was I? Did I consider myself a Southeast Asian who was watching a performance tradition of my own culture? Or was I performing myself as a voyeur of my own heritage that in turn refracts itself via foreign bodies? To what extent would the *Legong* dance be considered exclusively as "our" culture? Was it seeking foreign endorsement in order to celebrate its indigenous nature at home? What constituted the possessive adjective "our" in our language, our culture, our nation? ... In essence, what initially seemed to be an innocuous collage of details - the cameras, the crowd, and the Balinese dancers' intricately elaborate costumes - provoked me into locating the question of culture within the realm of the beyond. My ambulant and ambivalent pronunciation of the beyond is what Heidegger has otherwise articulated poetically:

Always and ever differently the bridge escorts the lingering and hastening ways of men to and fro, so that they may get to other banks... The bridge gathers as a passage that crosses.²

Interculturalism hinges on the borders of autonomy and empowerment, surviving on the tension in-between. Victor Turner's model of liminality resonates. Any discourse on interculturalism must acknowledge that deploying symbolic elements from one culture into another is an extremely fragile enterprise. I am fascinated, though at times intimidated, by such delicacy and its potential dynamism, ironical but nevertheless unsurprising. What lie at the heart of interculturalism is such fragility and the risks accompanying it: it directs and stages interculturalism as a performance. It is an agent that enables interculturalism to be performative and performable. As an artist, I am most interested in how such a delicate enterprise - its inquisitiveness, urgency, strength and hope for a future (perhaps stability?) - comes alive and becomes theatrical onstage. Today, I am compelled to ask: how does it dramatize, enact and re-enact itself? How does it interrogate the demarcations of cultures? Or does it?

My investigation does not deal specifically with theatre as a "place for seeing," unlike what its etymological origin in the Greek word *theatron* suggests. On the contrary, what draws me is how the ability to see the integrative and disruptive realities of interculturalism today through the transient illuminations of theatre. Theatre faces a constant challenge of reconciling the heterogeneous orders of text and performance, of the written and the spoken. Similarly, interculturalism confronts a hurdle of negotiating some sort of assent between the disparate orders of being, varying temporalities, historicities, and ethnicities. Regardless whether interculturalism functions as integrative or disruptive onstage, it is in itself a form of theatre. Further, the problematic of interculturalism often oscillates within a traditional site of theatrical praxis: intentions and effects. Such coincidence suggests theatre to be more than a mere "modelled differentiability."³ It is a physical site where both the real and imaginary envision a future for interculturalism.

Contemporary theatre practitioners - from Grotowski to Wilson, from Artaud to Schechner, from Brook to Barba, from Suzuki to Mnouchkine - celebrate Victor Hugo's notion of theatre as a "crucible of civilizations." Interculturalism, as Bonnie Marranca articulates, "is linked to world view, practice, and theory/criticism - that is, the mental attitude that precedes performance, the performance process, and the theoretical writing that accompanies performance."⁴ Let me expound on Marranca's view that interculturalism in performance is more method or critical perspective than style. Any choice of a theatrical form necessitates a choice of theatricality: what type of theatricality does the production wish to engage in? And what are its cultural and aesthetic implications?

It is possible for one to consider a theatrical interculturalism, only when theatricality, a status of the fiction through an appropriation of reality, prescribes specific ways for transferring and transforming a source culture to a target audience. By using the word "appropriation," I acknowledge the truth that directors, actors and audience claim ownership over the source culture according to their respective subjectivities and objectivities. On the other hand, I also imply possible dangers of ethnocentrism. Such risks are nonetheless very much needed. They function like receptors and adaptors of an electric circuit, conducting an intercultural dialogue by facilitating the flow from one culture to another. In this light, they make possible a new formulation of methodological principles on the basis of the source culture, and for their adaptation to the target culture:

Discovering the secret of some fascinating exotic dance does not mean that one can easily import it; one would have grasped at most an inspiration, a utopia or more exactly a series of methodological principles subject to reconstruction in the context of our culture.⁵

Despite the diversity in the approaches of adaptations (Mnouchkine, for instance, used Shakespeare as a dramaturgical model for *L'Indiade*, while Brook employed it as a character model for *Mahabharata*), adapters are always in alignment to receptors. They simplify, exaggerate or imitate some representational aspects of the source culture. In so doing, the adapters must unavoidably take on an ethnocentric stand. Yet, aware of such inaccuracies, they serve to relativize and further illuminate, instead of concealing the discrepancies.

The notion of a theatrical interculturalism also subscribes to Camilleri's acceptance of a cultural order as "artificial," that is, "made by human art" and "distinct from the natural order."⁶ Straightforwardly, this concept resists Lévi-Strauss' assertion:

[E]verything universal in humankind relates to the natural order and is characterized by spontaneity, everything subject to a norm is cultural and is both relative and particular.⁷

Interculturalism performs itself in theatre because the latter functions upon the slippery grounds between the natural order and the artificial, constructed objects. The stage speaks only of a semiotic language since every object, gesture, expression or movement under the spotlights has to transform itself into a recognizable sign. A culture is also semiotic, as pointed out by Clifford Geertz:

A culture is a system of symbols by which man confers significance upon his own experience. Symbol systems, man-created, shared, conventional, ordered, and indeed learned, provide human beings with a meaningful framework for orienting themselves to one another to the world around them and to themselves.⁸

Along the same logic, Schechner reminds us that "[P]erforming arts - because they express behaviours and emotion through symbolic action, narrative of both the made-up and collective mythic kinds - are wide avenues of intercultural exchange."⁹ In comparison, Brook is more articulate and precise in his vision of theatre. He treats the latter seriously as a fundamental means of communicating what no other medium can transmit:

Here lies the responsibility of the theatre: what a book cannot convey, what no philosopher can truly explain, can be brought into our understanding by the theatre. Translating the untranslatable is one of its roles.¹⁰

I do not advocate interculturalism in performing arts as a resolution of tension between the Eastern aesthetics and the Western artistry. On the contrary, I interpret it as a force that denies an existing "East" or "Orient" and its opposite "West." It protests, "Someone's 'Otherness' is not always mine." Moreover, once one considers a culture to be an amassment, the East/West polemic dissolves completely. There is no culture in its purity or uniqueness. Neither can a culture lay claims to a pure and defined genealogy. Culture is so omnipresent that no one can begin defining or investigating it. At each intersection, there are cultures within cultures, worlds within worlds. The idea of a "culture" thus becomes duplicitous. Schechner speaks about the plurality of cultures in a similar dignity:

Overlays, borrowings, and mutual influencing have always made every culture a conglomerate, a hybrid, a palimpsest. So much so that we probably should not speak of "culture" but of "cultures."¹¹

With some idiosyncratic humour, he lampoons:

Learn to be intercultural? More like: unlearn what is blocking us from returning to the intercultural. For as far back as we can look in human history peoples have been deeply, continuously, unashamedly intercultural. Borrowing is natural to our species. The swift adoption of Western technology by non-Western peoples is only a recent example of very ancient patterns of acculturation. What is borrowed is swiftly transformed into native material - at the very same time as the borrowing re-makes native culture.¹²

As such, interculturalism is not a pre-national, utopian stage of cultural homogeneity and human unity. Its definition does not steer clear of two and more constructed "othernesses": it is a meeting of many fabrications of "otherness" from varying moments in history within the structure of an artistic medium, be it a music recording, a theatrical production or simply an oil painting. Interculturalism is thus a self-definition that artists create at the expense of their confrontation with particular social contexts, histories and realities beyond their parent cultures. Gone are the days when cultures are genetic facts. Cultures are now social constructions and choices, conscious or unconscious, self-created or externally imposed upon.

Guillermo Gómez-Peña implements the practice of interculturalism as a self-definition aggressively when he states explicitly, "I carry the border with me, and I find new borders wherever I go."¹³ Eager to create art about the misconceptions of and miscommunication at border zones, he repudiates boundaries as being located at a permanent geopolitical spot. Rather, he takes upon himself what he believes to be an artist's responsibility: redefining and reshaping our continental topography.

There is no more appropriate exemplar that enunciates the theory of interculturalism as disruptive than Gómez-Peña's own border art. Collaborating with Coco Fusco, he constructed an interactive performance art piece in the early 1990s, *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit...* Fusco describes it as "a project that concentrated on the 'zero degree' of intercultural relations in an attempt to define a point of origin for the debates that link 'discovery' and 'Otherness.'"¹⁴ The performance was not at all sophisticated: to live in a golden cage for three days, presenting themselves as undiscovered Amerindians from an island in the Gulf of Mexico that had somehow been neglected by Europeans for five centuries.¹⁵ Although originally designed to comment

satirically on Western notions of “an exotic, primitive other,” their mock ethnographic but site-specific display of two “undiscovered” yet imprisoned Amerindians exposed itself to subsequent vehement attacks: are the performers accountable for the moral implications of their performative deception? Even more strikingly naked than their exposed genitals is a harsh reality: the origins of intercultural performance in the West are rooted in ethnographic exhibition.¹⁶ Doubtless, the ability and capacity of interculturalism as a means of interrogating the cultures and their demarcations is being put on trial here.

I first encountered these two undiscovered Amerindians this June in a video presentation of their “performance” at the Field Museum of Chicago (January 1993) and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York (March 1993). I had a simple impulse to turn the video off mid-way through its screening. Not at peace with myself, I did not feel that I had a right to witness Fusco and Gómez-Peña perform the identity of an “Other” for an intended white audience. In part because I am not a white, it was also about me not knowing how to approach the performance. Their performance of a cultural identity is both powerfully poignant and psychologically troubling: while it toys with the blurred distinctions between an art object and the body (performance), it juxtaposes imagination and reality (live spectacle), as well as history and dramatic re-enactment, only to illustrate that the boundaries between them are also not demarcated exquisitely.

When one speaks of boundaries, one thinks of the container. The cage that houses Fusco and Gómez-Peña, as well as their performance, may not necessarily be a coincidence metaphorically. One cannot know if the cage is the container if one only chooses to see into it. Their work emerges as the actual line in itself. Because it is not about being divisive, it is about being truly ambivalent. Because boundaries are no longer well defined, one may easily feel his presence as an audience member threatened. Watching the video screening of museum visitors viewing them, while they returned their gazes from behind the bars adds another layer of voyeurism, generating even more self-consciousness for me as a viewer of them. I felt intruded because I needed to question my identity, even more urgently as compared to when I watched the Balinese dance performance at 9: how do I fit into this performance? Am I the missing jigsaw puzzle, one of the many other fitted pieces, or simply the one who is supposed to piece together the puzzle?

In the end, the extent to which Fusco and Gómez-Peña probe the hilarities that would occur when and where cultures collide or repel has pursued the notion of interculturalism as a kind of people’s theatre to its logical end point. Their collaborative art confronts a situation where boundaries between actor, spectator, and spectacle blur and disentangle. Quintessentially, it features only participants. Theatre and anthropology intersect at this point, illuminating the staging ground of Grotowski’s work: a profound shift from conventionally accepting a dramatic text as revelation, to having undergone an artistic transformation as a participant in a sacred practice or ritual sacrifice. Paradoxically, his disenchantment with humanism’s claims to universality - man precedes cultural politics of difference - also contends that his society is not of art or theatre. It is a theatreless world. The theatricality of interculturalism takes roots in its non-theatrical nature. It is literally like a mask in a Japanese Noh drama or *commedia dell’arte* performance, serving as a mask and a counter-mask.

In describing Fusco and Gómez-Peña’s somewhat self-indicting work, the term “demonstration” seems more fitting than “performance.” The former evokes a strong resonance with action and public protest. A performance must have a form, its architecture emerging from the performers’ bodies and their physicalization of a text or language. Once on stage, one marks a presence, and his presence declares a statement. Ironically, while I sensed my audience presence as feeble, Fusco and Gómez-Peña’s stage presence was not strong either. They had chosen not to “announce the event through prior publicity” in order to create a “surprise or ‘uncanny’ encounter, one in which “audiences had to undergo their own process of reflection as to what they were seeing.”¹⁷ Gradually, I could better appreciate my role as an audience in a conventional theatrical production. A performance cannot force a design. Nor does its performativity perceive this process as being under conscious control. It is a process of percolation.

Despite that Fusco and Gómez-Peña had least anticipated literalism to dominate the interpretation of their work, most public members did fall for their fictitious identities. In so doing, they diverted the performative focus of the experiment to it misinforming them about who the performers truly were. One understands this better when the video features them in the backstage, where they unmasked their costumes and removed their make-up. Schechner’s claim becomes a forceful reminder: “[Y]ou don’t go backstage unless you’re part of the show.”¹⁸ Subverted, Fusco and Gómez-Peña’s work draws attention to the cultural implications of removing a work of art or artefact from its original context and placing it in another culture’s context. How much of their culture displacement is theatrical? How different should we view their work as a displacement within a museum setting, in comparison to situating the Museum of African Art in New York City?

During their act of transferring or translating culture, Fusco and Gómez-Peña call on us to remember that the history of a text or a culture is nothing other than the history of the successive ways in which it has been read. Brought to the surface is thus an intercultural conversation usually made possible only at a price of altering the mode of readability from one culture to another. Indirectly, their work activates a mode of readability that underlines a mode of alterity. Mitigating anxieties generated by the encounter with difference, their piece has also brilliantly revealed the often-fetishistic tendency of the early naturalist endeavour to locate “truth” in “authenticity.”

Fusco and Gomez-Pena's use of time brings viewers into a real-time experience of their work, creating room for them to participate and incorporate past events into the actual time spent on reading the work. They Unlike an audience member from a Broadway show who has to depart when all performers take their bow, one can stand in front of them for as long as one desires. Fusco and Gomez-Pena do not have the ability to control the duration of spectatorship.

I had felt that time is suspended when some of the museum visitors came closer to the cage to experience Fusco and Gómez-Peña more intimately. One is almost gaining a neutral but unfamiliar ground in history, where past, present and future can exist simultaneously. Their borderline work of culture introduces a new order of alterity. It demonstrates that time is not simply a series of "nows" in which the present merges into the past when it moves forward to the future. Instead, the past that is never present revisits as a future that never arrives. Fusco and Gómez-Peña's work thus demands an encounter with "newness" that is no longer part of the continuum of a past and its present. It gives birth to a sense of the new as an insurgent act of cultural translation. As Bhabha states:

Such art does not merely recall the past as social cause or aesthetic precedent; it renews the past, refiguring it as a contingent 'in-between' space, that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present. The past-present becomes part of the necessity, not the nostalgia, of living.¹⁹ History, just as geography, is bunk in their exhibition. Time becomes the object of the work; the form dematerializes, becoming pure surface as you approach it, so that the text becomes the object. Fusco and Gómez-Peña's presence is the text. Suspending time is the text's motive to relate itself to history and geography. The piece calls upon history and geography, criticizing their tendency to configure cultural "Othernesses" as suspended in an immobile and immutable past and site. In its literal sense, their performance of interculturalism does not take place at a site of memory.

In opposition, French theatre practitioner, Ariane Mnouchkine's idea of interculturalism provokes a site of memory. She announces that theatre needs sources and memory, not traditions.²⁰ Recognizing India, China and Japan as her theatrical parents, Mnouchkine draws inspiration from Artaud's concept of "Theatre is Oriental." Many writings on her have quoted this declarative statement in connection with her productions and company, *Théâtre du Soleil*. She believes that one must look to the Orient to search for theatre. Asia has therefore been her habitual theatrical destination, beginning from her first production in 1959 to other more widely known yet controversial productions in recent years: *Les Shakespeares* (1984), *Sihanouk* (1985-6), *L'Indiade* (1987-8) and *Les Atrides* (1992). Citing Mnouchkine:

Everyone has their sources, that is to say something that sets their imagination to work. In the West we have classical tragedy and the commedia dell'arte, which in any case comes from Asia. As far as I am concerned, the origin of theatre and my source is Asia. The West has led us towards realism, and Shakespeare is not realist. For actors who want to be explorers, the Asian tradition can be a base to work from ...I do not believe in starting with a clean slate. I don't deny my influences: but you have to know how to choose them if you can.²¹

Mnouchkine's aesthetic vision of theatre is fraught: the word "Orient" is seductive and problematic. Primarily characterized by exotic stage settings, masks and costumes, her productions enable the world of the Orient to be used and recycled as a portrayal of alterity. The (re)enactment and (re)presentation of Asia in her theatre depicts what Edward Said articulates as the process of Orientalization. It constructs an Asia that is "more particularly valuable as a sign of European-Atlantic power over the Orient than it is as a veridic discourse about the Orient."²²

When using the word "Orient," Mnouchkine is not merely highlighting a trademark of her directing style. Instead, she exposes the core of what conjugates the performativity and performability of interculturalism in her theatre: the power of "seduction." Even though she subscribes to what is perhaps the most unfortunate remnant of Artaud's legacy - the reductionist notion of an "oriental theatre"- she is operating on the mystifying nature of an "Orient." The intention behind the process of a conventional Western orientalisation is instrumental in the context of her theatre. Submerged beneath the carefully designed metaphors of the Orient, and what brings them alive in the Western imagination, lie the consequence of the fiction. The Orient is so defined in order to render it feminised and colonisable; she waits ready to be taken, in marriage or in rape, by an Occident which is male and potent.²³ In this respect, Mnouchkine applies Jean Baudrillard's concept of "seduction" to plumb the emotional "magic" of heightened theatricality in her productions. Seduction, from the eminent French social theorist's perspective, is that which inverts the order and the signs of production. While associating production with naturalism, he sees seduction as artificial instead of natural, gratuitous instead of useful, luxurious and wasteful instead of parsimonious. It is symbolic, not real, ceremonial or ritualistic.²⁴ In this light, critics of *Théâtre du Soleil* will be quick to draw parallels between Baudrillard's advocacy of seduction on the one hand, and the seductive surface of the artifice, ceremonial and adornment in Mnouchkine's productions on the other hand.

I regard Mnouchkine - amongst others like Meyerhold, Lugné-Poe, Brecht, Bausch, Brook and LeCompte - as an influential Western director who has long romanced Eastern forms to generate the very genre of what we today call Euro-American directing: seeking community or universality by dispensing divisions

between apparently disparate cultural practices. She observes the same philosophy of Brook's "international theatre," whose aim is to "articulate a universal art, that transcends narrow nationalism in its attempt to achieve human essence."²⁵ Do not mistake me for attacking Mnouchkine's work, for her art whose historical dependence on the East to retheatricalize the Western stage is indeed very much needed as one of the defining, if not contentious gestures in this century. In truth, it is a relief to learn of her choice of word ("Orient") when she articulates her aesthetic philosophy. This vocabulary legitimizes her work as what constitutes the performativity and performability of interculturalism a worthy academic discourse. Said proposes a semiotic of "Orientalist" power that examines Mnouchkine's European discourse of constructing the Orient as a unified racial, geographical, political and cultural zone of the world. His analysis is relevant to, and revealing of her aesthetic vision of theatre being Oriental:

Philosophically, then, the kind of language, thought and vision that I have been calling orientalism very generally is a form of radical realism; anyone employing orientalism, which is the habit for dealing with questions, objects, qualities, and regions deemed Oriental, will designate, name, point to, fix, what he is talking or thinking about with a word or phrase, which then is considered either to have acquired, or more simply to be, reality...The tense they employ is the timeless eternal; they convey an impression of repetition and strength...For all these functions it is frequently enough to use the simple copula *is*.²⁶

The copula, as Said indicates subtly, is the juncture at which Western rationalism preserves the boundaries of sense for itself. Along the same argument, Mnouchkine is artful in preserving the boundaries of her French identity by favouring "Orient" over "Asia" as her reference. Though riddling boundaries that demarcate national categories with quotation and overlap, she pays honesty to her French identity.

Implicit in this interpretation is my contention that we need to contextualize the theatre within which interculturalism performs. If we need to pursue a study of interculturalism in Mnouchkine's work, we need to contextualize our research within the inner necessities of French contemporary events, not the Asian histories. The distinction that Carl Weber marks between "acculturation" and "transculturation" serves its purpose here. As Weber explains,

[T]ransculturation could indeed be defined as the deconstruction of a text/code and its wrenching displacement to a historically and socially different situation. Not a Kabuki *Lear*, but rather a bolder displacement of the *Lear* fable into a completely new environment.²⁷

In other words, Mnouchkine's "Kabuki-derived performance style" in presenting King Lear to French audiences, Kurosawa's *Ran* and Suzuki's *The Tale of Lear* break free from a common Shakespearean authorship. They depict a Lear in Mnouchkine's France, Kurosawa's and Suzuki's Japan, each disparate from one another. Rhapsodizing about a faraway "Other" without addressing the others in one's parent culture is after all, some sort of cosmopolitan affectation that one would have imagined to be completely anachronistic in this century. How can one presume to talk about interculturalism, I would argue, if one did not encounter the different social and ethnic communities inhabiting one's own cultural space? Hence, the study of interculturalism still needs to be culture-specific. Theoretically, this also pronounces death for the naïve search towards universals of performance ancient or contemporary, finished or in formation, transcultural or intercultural.²⁸

In the narrative graftings of this paper, I have attempted no general theory, only a certain productive tension of the perplexity that surrounds interculturalism within a performative framework. Terms of cultural engagement, whether antagonistic or affiliative, are produced performatively. Not forgetting that all cultures, in spite of their inability to be pure and exclusive, change and reshape themselves at every and any moment everywhere and anywhere, it is nevertheless damaging and self-defeating to conclude that the problematics of interculturalism therefore suggest no salvation, but an inevitable cultural survival of all people. I do not envision an apocalyptic or beatific future for interculturalism. But I do envision a future of its longevity, so long as it keeps its performativity and performability unceasingly ablaze. "Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold." Even though interculturalism embraces all possibilities of dissent, when W.B. Yeats' voice still resonates, one needs to admit the reality: the responsibility for seeking a common ground only emerges as more pressing. It is then up to us, the actors, to seek the familiar in the unfamiliar, the unfamiliar in the familiar, a critical project that Brecht had embarked upon for inventing new dialectics in theatre almost half a century ago. We will have to frame the limits of language and history into a stage, perform on its borderlines of race and gender, take the centre-stage position of translating differences into a kind of solidarity and invite all spotlights to focus on it. The finale is a very much translated excerpt from Walter Benjamin's essay, 'The Task of the Translator':

Fragments of a vessel which are to be glued together must match one another in the smallest details, although they need not be like one another. In the same way a translation, instead of resembling the meaning of the original, must lovingly and in detail incorporate the original's mode of signification, thus making both the original and the translation recognizable as fragments of a greater language, just as fragments are part of a vessel."²⁹

Notes

- ¹ See Heidegger, Martin. "Building, Dwelling, Thinking." *Poetry, Language, Thought*. Trans. Albert Hofstadter. New York: Harper & Row Books, 1971.
- ² *Ibid*, 152-153.
- ³ See Chaudhari, Una. "The Future of the Hyphen: Interculturalism, Textuality, and the Difference Within." *Interculturalism and Performance*. Eds. Bonnie Marranca & Gautam Dasgupta. New York: PAJ Publications, 1991. 193.
- ⁴ See Marranca, Bonnie. "Thinking about Interculturalism." *Interculturalism and Performance*. Eds. Bonnie Marranca & Gautam Dasgupta. New York: PAJ Publications, 1991. 11.
- ⁵ See Volli, Hugo. "Techniques of the Body." *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology: The Secret Art of the Performer*. Eds. Eugenio Barba & N. Savarese Cazilhac. New York: Routledge, 1991. 113.
- ⁶ See Camilleri, Camille. "Culture et sociétés: caractères et fonctions." *Les Amis de Sèvre*. 4. Paris: 1982.16.
- ⁷ See Lévi-Strauss, Claude. *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*. Trans. James Bell & J.R. von Sturmer. Boston: Beacon Press, 1969. 8.
- ⁸ See Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books, 1973. 250.
- ⁹ See Schechner, Richard. "Intercultural Themes." *Interculturalism and Performance*. Eds. Bonnie Marranca & Gautam Dasgupta. New York: PAJ Publications, 1991. 309.
- ¹⁰ See Brook, Peter. *The Shifting Point*. New York: Harper & Row, 1997. 164.
- ¹¹ See Schechner, Richard. "Intercultural Themes." *Interculturalism and Performance*. Eds. Bonnie Marranca & Gautam Dasgupta. New York: PAJ Publications, 1991. 308.
- ¹² *Ibid*, 313.
- ¹³ See Gómez-Peña, Guillermo. *The New World Border*. San Francisco: City Light Books, 1996. 5-6.
- ¹⁴ See Fusco, Coco. "The Other History of Intercultural Performance." *Re: Direction. A Theoretical and Practical Guide*. Eds. Rebecca Schneider & Gabrielle Cody. London & New York: Routledge, 2002. 268.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid*, 267.
- ¹⁶ See Cody, Gabrielle. "Introduction to Part III: Theatres of community and transculturation." *Re:Direction. A Theoretical and Practical Guide*. Eds. Rebecca Schneider & Gabrielle Cody. London & New York: Routledge, 2002. 219.
- ¹⁷ See Fusco, Coco. "The Other History of Intercultural Performance." *English is Broken Here*. New York: The New Press, 1995. 40.
- ¹⁸ See Schechner, Richard. *Between Theatre and Anthropology*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985. 19.
- ¹⁹ See Bhabha, Homi K.. *The Location of Culture*. London and New York: Routledge, 1994. 7.
- ²⁰ See Féral, Josette. "An Interview with Ariane Mnouchkine." *Re: Direction. A Theoretical and Practical Guide*. Eds. Rebecca Schneider & Gabrielle Cody. London & New York: Routledge, 2002. 264.
- ²¹ See Mnouchkine, Ariane. "The Theatre is Oriental." *Intercultural Performance Reader*. Ed. Patrice Pavis. London & New York: Routledge, 1996. 96.
- ²² See Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978. 6.
- ²³ See Innes, Christopher, ed. "Ariane Mnouchkine and the *Théâtre du Soleil*." *Directors in Perspective Series*. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press. 128.
- ²⁴ *Ibid*, 121.
- ²⁵ See Carlson, Marvin. "Brook and Mnouchkine: Passages to India." *Intercultural Performance Reader*. Ed. Patrice Pavis. London & New York: Routledge, 1996. 88.
- ²⁶ See Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978. 72.
- ²⁷ See Weber, Carl. "AC/TC Currents of Theatrical Exchange." *Performing Arts Journal*. 33:4. Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1989. 19.
- ²⁸ See Schechner, Richard. *Performance Studies: An Introduction*. London and New York: Routledge, 2002. 247.
- ²⁹ See Benjamin, Walter. "The Task of the Translator." *Illuminations*. Trans. Harry Zohn. New York: Schocken Books, 1968.

Creative Contexts: Culture as an Agent of Change

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Abstract: When one speaks of innovation or changes, the way of interaction between people or how this works in groups or networks is usually a focus of interest. One can find numerous theories on this subject, be they anthropological, philosophical, mathematical, economical or sociological. However, what most of them shares in common is one influential variable, one that contributes a great deal to the functioning of milieus or networks, though appearing scarcely operational. In order to define this diffused "something," which appears to reject reconstruction, one needs to utilize concepts like culture, common values, synergy, etc. By the term "creative contexts," I want to focus on the cultural dimension within the process of innovation and progress, terms that I understand as occupying mechanisms of knowledge production regimes. But the cultural influence is not per se progressive. Culture, in the sense of strong common values or high synergies can suppress innovation and changes. Such strong or traditions-oriented cultures use innovation to promote already well-established structures of power, a so-called innovation through tradition¹. This antagonistic character of culture can be found, for example, in Pierre Bourdieu's "cultural capital"² and his notion of culture as means of distinction, or implicitly in Clifford Geertz's concept of "the orders of differences."³ From this perspective, culture is not a unifying unit. Action, from this cultural perspective, is characterised by manoeuvres between contrasts, competing sides, opposition and rivals. The basic motivation behind this inquiry is to understand the process of innovation as an intercultural one, as an interaction between diverse cultures and their differences.

Keywords: Cultures, change, innovation, cultural capital, open and private sciences.

1. Culture and Cultural Capital

From the perspective of culture as a means of new concepts, one assumes that different social fields develop distinctive mechanisms to necessitate innovations. New ideas are institutionalised, not only because of their "problem-solving capabilities," but because they "fit" quite easily into an established narrative system. In this context, culture has less to do with the common values, but with differences. Clifford Geertz applies such an understanding of culture by criticizing primarily the over-emphasis of balanced systems, social "Homöostase" and timeless structural pictures⁴. For Geertz, it is important to represent "structures less hermetic, interconnectedness less deterministic, nets more fragile."⁵ In his cultural-anthropological work, the examined groups should not be understood outside the context of their attachment to time and place. Consensus should not be at the centre of a cultural examination, rather it is the process of working out the "order of the differences."

Culture as a form of social difference is a notion similar to the field theory of Pierre Bourdieu. What Geertz represents as the "order of differences" can be seen as "distinction" in Bourdieu's theory, meaning social superiority or eminence. What is regarded as distinctive is varies from field to field (politics, science, arts) and changes over time⁶. Distinction does not simply mean standing out from the mass, but also being able to exhibit such differences strategically.

Distinction can be understood as a degree of freedom in action, in the way the degree of distinction correlates with the accumulation of capital. The term "capital" implies more than the term "financial resources;" it is a combination of various skills, social relationships, or symbols of reputation and power. For Randall Collins, "cultural capital" for example, is defined as: "What is passed on over chains of successful intellectuals is the consciousness about central questions: 'where the next action will be.'"⁷ "Cultural Capital" is less likely to be acquired through scientific literature, but with the help of other types of capital types like social capital or symbolic capital. "Cultural Capital" stands for certain knowledge of prestigious solutions, promising research fields, etc. More than concrete knowledge, it is a kind of developed sensitivity. In other words, it focuses on ideas which fit easily into a field / system of distinction, and can be transformed in capital of any sort. "Cultural Capital" means a profound knowledge of the environment, a competence in which innovations adapt comfortably to the occupying mechanisms. This understanding of culture highlights a distinction between social and cultural processes. "There isn't any autonomous culture away from a social situation."⁸

The emphasis on "differences" (Geertz⁹) and "distinction" (Bourdieu) points to a medium of culture, which has less the appearance of a cocoon surrounding everything, or a ubiquitous "red thread" or network that surrounds us. Common values, synergies etc., are relegated to feast speeches and represent merely a superficial connectedness. Actions in this medium is marked by manoeuvres between contrasts and conflicting parties, as well as strategic uses of resources/capitals and alliances. Rivalry and opposition at this stage are not personal, but also concern contrasting parties, competitive schools,¹⁰ lobbying or interest groups, etc.

Thus, new ideas are not simply understood as independent entities with objective features, their (social, financial or technical) value is estimated in relation to their cultural contexts. This means that under a certain productive regime the occupation of innovations does not unconditionally follow certain criteria of an invention, but their compatibility with “occupying mechanisms” is established by the use and flotation of the different types of capital. The contrasts between “open” and “private” sciences, and their different working mechanisms thus demonstrate a “Creative Context”.

2. Open vs. Private Science

Open and private sciences embody controversial mechanisms of instrumentalization. New ideas find their way into the complex system of the classic knowledge production system (the “Republic of Science”) via an inclusion to a sort of a patronage relationship. By occupying and instrumentalizing specific new ideas, the patronage system gains power in the terms of providing interpretations of natural phenomena, or pretends to “reduce uncertainty.” By doing so, it legitimatize its existence. But the channels to enter this patronage instrumentalization are usually narrowly defined. Disciplines or interdisciplinary research fields work on very selective problems and phenomena, for instance.

The patronage quality of the instrumentalization mechanisms of “Open Science” illustrates a more ornamental character of new ideas in this social field. This means that financial benefits of inventions are not the primary motives of inclusion, but more generally public well-being in return for an acceptance of authority. The historic roots of modern science are perhaps embedded in medieval court patronage, many of such norms and rules that seem to have continued to persist until today. The altruistic image of scientific effort, for example, represents old rites of “gift economy” in patronage relationships¹¹. Further, norms as are those identified by Robert K. Merton (“openness”) are heritages of such traditional feudal structures in Europe. Peer Review, as one of the executing patronage mechanisms in this field, should embody a neutral authority that judges scientific quality, originality and reputation. Through such channels, new inventions find their way to scientific acceptance and utilization. Cultural proximity and capital can be regarded as lubricants for the entrance into this system.

Private Science, on the other hand, is dominated by commercial gain. Therefore, the “Kingdom of Technology” tries to establish monopolies, either by secrecy or by securing legal rights (for example, patenting). Corporate laboratories were established to work on relatively restricted research fields of immediate commercial applicability. A somewhat less significant source of innovations comes from scientific publications and collaborations with scientific institutions. The Schumpeterian model of corporate innovation by the entrepreneurs, or the creative “problem-solving” business pioneers, is not so much in the focus of discussions here. The channels for instrumentalization are associated with possible applications of inventions, the financial pay-off, etc. Cultural proximity and capital also play a role in this respect.¹²

Over the course of the 1990s, the discourse on more efficient ways of knowledge production and application rose in central Europe¹³. The debate sometimes resulted in tinkering in science policy, new institutional settings and regimes. The question I want to pose is: to what extent the fragile and complex organism of “open science”, which operated in a relatively smooth and efficacious way of producing an overwhelming amount of public knowledge, is able to persist such changes? What could be the effects of combining the different outlined occupation mechanisms in a somewhat arbitrary way?

Here, I underline a few assumptions. Information, as a product, has a number of unusual features. Whatever the original costs of producing a particular unit of knowledge are, the reproduction costs are nothing, or next to nothing (if the good is explicit knowledge). This causes products’ failure in markets, and is thus possibly responsible for the problems of “Free Rider.” As market mechanisms do not stimulate a “socially optimal” level of private investment in knowledge production, a society always risks a sub-optimum investment in this aspect. There are two basic instruments to regulate this:

- a) Patents (partially and temporally restricted monopolies for inventors);
- b) Public funds (for research, in particular basic research).

Knowledge, which has been produced as a result of public subsidies, becomes accessible cost-neutrally.

3. Openness and a new property rights regime

The general expansion of patent-law since the early 1980s in the US, for example on software or business processes, as well as on living entities, resulted in far-reaching changes in the US innovation system. One outcome was the increasing privatisation of knowledge and knowledge production. For activities which are formerly public, the new laws opened up the possibilities for private ownership and exclusive access. In various studies (like those of Link/Paton/Siegel¹⁴ or Coriat/Orsi¹⁵), it is assumed that these regulatory changes were reactions to increased competition on world markets. This, as well as new opportunities in bio- and information

technology amplified the increased involvement of the financial sector through direct investments in research & development (R&D) intensive fields.

To regard patents as stimulus for innovation would be too far-reaching. Patents reduce competition because a monopoly for the exploitation of knowledge is legitimized. They produce high expenses for using such information, and the development of efficient or alternative methods are prohibited¹⁶. The correlation of the announcement of patents and the stock exchange value of these companies leads to the assumption that most patents that larger firms have registered at least over the last ten years were not used to protect innovations, but for strategic purposes. This prevents rivals from protecting innovations in the same field or creating strong bargaining positions¹⁷ and market entrance barriers.

4. Two cultures

"Open Science" is guided by specific coordination mechanisms, which are in part responsible for the relative efficiency of this social sphere. The formal and informal rules, open publication and communication, priority etc. are basic norms that coordinate this knowledge production system. On the other hand, "Private Science" is driven by private innovation activities. Both are subtly interconnected. Today, institutional borders between these two "worlds" have disappeared partially.¹⁸ This is in part due to new intellectual property rights regimes, and state R & D policy.

These changes evolved under the special conditions of the early eighties in the USA. Due to the Bay-Dole Act of 1980 (Patent and Trademark Amendments Act), strategic changes in state R&D politics were implemented. The fact that the law was aimed at public research utilities (universities and laboratories) to patent their inventions (either by starting up new businesses or through licensing) opened up new utilization possibilities for innovations in this sphere. Public-funded research could exclusively now be assigned to private enterprises. These new partnerships developed coincidentally with the important breakthroughs of academic research (UC Berkeley, Stanford and Columbia) in information technology and biomedicine.

US American Common Law made a fine distinction between "not-naturally occurring manufactures or compositions of matter" and "products of nature." In 1952, the US congress declared, "Anything under the sun made by man can be patented." The crucial criterion for patents was the concept of utility, which applied for all inventions. This is vastly different in Europe, where the patent laws follow a distinction between discovery and invention. In 1980, General Electrical got the first patent granted for a genetically modified micro organism. In the same year, Stanford received a patent for a DNA recombination technique. The processes for producing biologically functional chimeras were now patentable.

The trend towards patenting at scientific institutions led to a crisis in the international scientific community. The concept that knowledge becomes a market commodity (if state authority awards a patent for this) contravened the operation of science in general, and the Humane Genome Project (HGP) in particular¹⁹. The HGP is an international academic program that functions according to the "Open Science" model. Established in 1988, it aims to avoid duplicated data, enhance collaboration²⁰, or to counter potential legal action of genetically damaged (atomic bombs, nerve gas, Agent Orange) war victims.²¹ Its primary task was to build data bases, which contain all partial DNA sequences that are freely accessible for global research. The entrance of Craig Venters Company Celera Genomics in 1998 made it clear that scientific competition took place under completely different conditions. While under the open science regime, different academic research groups compete, competition now takes place between open and entrepreneurial sciences. Celera's intention in offering scientific results exclusively to subscribed users was a sharp contrast to the scientific mode of knowledge production. In fact, Venter was supported by public research funds for years, and Celera siphoned scientific data of the HGP excessively. In spite of that, and Venters' promises, Celera's company mission statement did not seem to be very much inspired by the idea of "open access." It seems that financial possibilities in private science, and breakthroughs as "Bill Gates" in biotechnology²² are more enticing and profitable.

5. Conclusion

It was not the aim of this paper to judge "open science" as a more efficient way to instrumentalize new ideas or concepts than others. Quite the contrary. It should have been outlined that only a part, perhaps a very small part of potential innovations find their way into the scientific attention space. These mechanisms are not "open" in the sense of bringing the maximum input²³, nor reliable, in the sense of sufficiently protecting from misuse or abuse. From my point of view, these mechanisms are not even promoting innovation at an ideal extent, in part because of the inherent character of culture as outlined above. The role of "Cultural Capital" and "Cultural Proximity" facilitate this tendency eventually.

"Culture" as a notion of common values, as a function of community building, veils the partially conservative facet and its advocacy for traditions. The creative context does not always promote innovation, especially if common values are strongly present. Tradition and values have a variable, instrumental character. They form the "social adhesive" and demand for subordination. Such values are flexible and changeable,

probably for the sake of self-preservation.²⁴ On the other hand, “Cultural Capital” emphasizes on differences, that culture is a sort of strategic resource, and that the accumulation of such a resource has a significant economic and social impact.

Given the examples of “open” and “private science,” I want to show that capital of various forms is accumulated in different ways in these two fields. “Open science” does not culminate in scientific implications directly. In the course of becoming a valued member of a scientific community, publicity is needed (publishing articles in renowned journals, being members of several editorial boards, gracing the public functions, collaborating with experts of other fields, political work, mass media publication etc. Scientists are usually obliged to form patronage akin to relationships, and their efforts are rewarded in the course of a life long career. Fields where different cultural contexts come close (like the outlined genome project) form frontlines where not only “values” are at stake,²⁵ but also the productive regime of these subfields.

It is important to note that “open science” is not a coherent field. What applies for genetics does not necessarily relate to other disciplines or groups. As far as the relation to industry or “private science” is concerned, long traditions and various forms of symbioses have developed in some disciplines. In the technical disciplines and sciences like chemistry, to name a few.²⁶ These fields, at least for their applied research areas, have oriented themselves over 150 years (in Germany) towards the demands of industries and usability criteria. To compare such with the *res litteraria*, the arts, is a delicate task. “Open science” might therefore be best characterised by plurality. When it comes to values or norms, there are hardly any which apply for the whole academic field.²⁷ The same holds true for the production of knowledge, which also differs considerably between scientific fields, disciplines or institutions. Considering this, it is highly questionable that there could be *one* mode of academic knowledge production like Mode 1²⁸, or *one* model of the innovative system.²⁹

If there is not *one* academic culture and that *the* “open science” productive regime does not exist, there is no reason why research policies should follow these afore-mentioned generalizing assumptions (like Mode 2 or Triple Helix) unconditionally by reforming these institutions. “Open science” as an idea and an historical heritage brought forth an enormous amount of knowledge, ideas and innovations over the course of the few centuries of its existence. At least for the moment, there is no alternative of comparable efficiency and productivity. Maybe none with a similar extensive occupying apparatus. Regardless, the case-study of the HGP reveals some of this system’s vulnerabilities and fragilities. Important areas of public science infrastructure are subject to policy tinkering or major re-design efforts. In view of an imperfect understanding and the intricate nature of this “social machinery,”³⁰ it seems highly imponderable what results might be expected, and what unintended effects may arise because of an almost arbitrary mixing of different “Cultural Contexts”.

Notes

¹ See Randall, Collins. *The Sociology of Philosophies: A Global Theory of Intellectual Change*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998. 35.

² See Pierre, Bourdieu. *Die feinen Unterschiede. Kritik der gesellschaftlichen Urteilskraft*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1997.

³ See Clifford, Geertz. *Dichte Beschreibung: Beiträge zum Verstehen kultureller Systeme*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1995.

⁴ Compare: Mörtz Ingo, Fröhlich Gerhard (geertz@symbolische-anthropologie.moderne) “Auf Spurensuche nach der ‘informellen Logik tatsächlichen Lebens’ in *Symbolische Anthropologie der Moderne. Kulturanalysen nach Clifford Geertz*. Eds. Fröhlich/Mörtz. Frankfurt: Campus, 1998.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁶ Fröhlich Gerhard. “Die Aktualität der »Feinen Unterschiede. Ernst-Bloch-Preis für Pierre Bourdieu.” *Die Rheinpfalz*. 22. November 1997. 271. <<http://www.iwp.uni-linz.ac.at/lxe/wt2k/aktua.htm>>

⁷ See Randall, Collins. *The Sociology of Philosophies: A Global Theory of Intellectual Change*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998. 33.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁹ Clifford, Geertz. *Welt in Stücken. Kultur und Politik am Ende des 20. Wien*: Passagen Verlag, 1996.

¹⁰ See Randall, Collins. *The Sociology of Philosophies: A Global Theory of Intellectual Change*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998. 6.

¹¹ See Mario, Biagioli. “Galileo the Courtier. The Practice of Science in the Culture of Absolutism,” The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1993

¹² See Stuart T., Sorenson O. “The Geography of Opportunity: Spatial Heterogeneity in Founding Rates and the Performance of Biotechnology Firms.” *Research Policy* 32, 2003. <<http://www.elsevier.com>>

¹³ See Henry Etzkowitz, Webster Andrew, Gebhardt Christiane, Cantisano Terra & Branca Regina. “The future of the university and the university of the future: Evolution of ivory tower to entrepreneurial paradigm.” *Research Policy* 29, 2000. <<http://www.elsevier.com>>

- 14 See Link A. N., Paton D. & Siegel D. S.. "An Analysis of Policy Initiatives to Promote Strategic Research Partnerships." *Research Policy* 31, 2002. <<http://www.elsevier.com>>
- 15 See Benjamin Coriat & Fabienne Orsi. "Establishing a new intellectual property rights regime in the United States: Origin, Content and Problems." *Research Policy* 31, 2002. <<http://www.elsevier.com>>
- 16 See Andersen, Brigitte. "If 'Intellectual Property Rights' is the Answer – What was the Question?" Birkbeck University of London, September 2002.10.
- 17 See Benjamin Coriat & Fabienne Orsi. "Establishing a new intellectual property rights regime in the United States: Origin, Content and Problems." *Research Policy* 31, 2002. 1489. <<http://www.elsevier.com>>
- 18 *Ibid*, 1492.
- 19 See Klaus, Taschwer. "Krieg der Wissenschaften." *Heureka!* 5/98. Wien: Falter Verlag, 1998.
- 20 See Benjamin Coriat & Fabienne Orsi. "Establishing a new intellectual property rights regime in the United States: Origin, Content and Problems." *Research Policy* 31, 2002. 1495. <<http://www.elsevier.com>>
- 21 See Kneihs, Johann. "Der Wettlauf um die Gene. DNA- Entzifferung." *Heureka!* Wien: Falter Verlagsges.m.b.H. Heft 1/00.
- 22 See Triendl, Robert. "Die Schnellentschlüssler." *Heureka!* Wien: Falter Verlagsges.m.b.H. Heft 1/00.
- 23 See Eric G Campbell, Joel S. Weissman, Nancyanne Causino & David Blumenthal. "Data withholding in academic medicine: characteristics of faculty denied access to research results and biomaterials." *Research Policy* 29. 2000. 303–312. <<http://www.elsevier.nl>>
- 24 See Foucault, Michel. "Two Lectures." *Power / Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings (1972 – 1977)*. New York: Pantheon, 1980.
- 25 Norms and values (like those of Robert K. Merton) have never been fully executed.
- 26 Compare: Weingart Peter. *Die Stunde der Wahrheit?* Weilerswist: Velbrück Wissenschaft, 2001. 178 – 184.
- 27 Academic norms (for example those of Karl Popper and the Critical Rationalists) might be acceptable in natural sciences,, though even in this context, a radical application would lead to damaging effects. See: Fischer Klaus. "Ist Evaluation unvermeidlich innovationshemmend? Eine Reinterpretation der Kuhnschen Sicht der Wissenschaftsdynamik." *Tagungsberichte vom 9. Österreichischen Online-Informationstreffen und 10. Österreichischen Dokumentartag*. Wien: Phoibos Verlag, 2002. <<http://www.uibk.ac.at/sci-org/voeb/odok2001/fischer.pdf>>
- 28 See Michael Gibbons, Camille Limoges, Helga Nowotny, Simon Schwartzman, Peter Scott, & Martin Trow. *The New Production of Knowledge: The Dynamics of Science and Research in Contemporary Societies*. London: Sage Publishers, 2000.
- 29 Compare: Etzkowitz.
- 30 David, Paul A., "From Keeping 'Nature's Secrets' to the Institutionalization of 'Open Science.'" *Discussion Papers on Economic and Social History*. No. 23. United Kingdom: University of Oxford Press, 2001. <<http://www.nuff.ox.ac.uk/Economics/History/html>>