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EDITORIAL

Merry Christmas from *the quint*. Can you hear the sleighbells are ringing in the first issue of our fifth volume? Still grounded in the North, our quarterly is now five years old and growing rapidly. National and international writers and readers have joined *the quint*, this issue's contingent making it one of the hardest hitting to date. Fall may have disappeared under the harsh cover of our Northern winter but the North's vital interests in regional and global matters have not. An eclectic stocking of Christmas reading, arresting articles, stunning poetry, splendid visual art and useful reviews, this *quint* is for readers looking forward to curling up beside a warm woodstove or fireplace with a cup of something hot and preferably mulled. Showcasing ideas and art from Canada, the United States, and Tunisia, our seventeenth offering begins with a very controversial article by Natalie M. Dorfeld about the crisis affecting sessional lecturers in universities throughout the United States and Canada. John George Hansen and Rose Antsanen's thoughtful examination of the pedagogy of Indigenous Restorative Justice, a specialty offered at the University College of the North, and Carolyn Creed's sensitive discussion of Northern Cree students' responses to Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* follow: both are well worth reading. Readers interested in science fiction will not want to miss Karima Arif's reading of memory, history and the body in *Slaughterhouse-Five* (just about everyone's favourite Kurt Vonnegut novel). Ross K. Tangedal's thoughts on transnational crisis via Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* and Tony Kushner's *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches* provide much food for thought. For readers of Salman Rushdie, Carolyn Owenby proffers insightful analyses of *Shame* and *Midnight's Children*. And last, but certainly not least, Ahmad Gashmari's discussion of fantasy, memory and the unimaginable in *Falling Man* is a fascinating comment on the cultural aftermath of 9/11

Of course, no *quint* would be complete without its creative complement. We are excited to be able to showcase, on the one hand, Christopher Moylan's incredibly sensitive and versatile lyrics, and, on the other, Steven N. Wingate's startlingly powerful blank verse. Then our visual offerings bring us back in a circuitous circumpolar fashion to the North: we are honoured to be able to display a selection of paintings by Kristjana Gunnars. A gifted artist and scholar/poet, Kristjana hails from Iceland and has also lived in Canada and Norway.

I should not keep you from this issue of *the quint* any longer. Here's to good reading and a long, warm, and wonderful holiday season! We at *the quint* wish you and your loved ones a very happy Christmas together and all the best in 2013. *the quint* will be back in March with more offerings just in time for Easter.

Sue Matheson
Co-Editor



THE ADJUNCT CRISIS IN HUMANITIES: EXPOSING HIGHER EDUCATION'S DIRTY LITTLE SECRET

by Natalie M. Dorfled

According to McKerrow, Gronebeck, Ehninger, and Monore (2002), authors of *Principles and Types of Public Speaking*, every problem/solution investigation needs three key points. The first point, commonly referred to as the problem step, must make readers conscious of the situation and its potentially hazardous outcomes. The second point, the need step, addresses the need for action. The third and final point, otherwise known as the solution step, calls for specific measures, ones explicit almost to a fault, in order to resolve the problem. The situation in this article, as noted above, is the adjunct phenomenon in English teaching. Beginning as early as the 1960s, and gaining more attention in the late 1980s with the “Wyoming Conference Resolution,” part-timers have routinely been paid a fraction of full-timers’ salaries while teaching equivalent (and often greater) course loads. They have traveled hundreds of miles a week in order to make ends meet and subjected themselves to degrading job titles, such as “special lecturers, wage-section faculty, hourly faculty, short-term faculty, and emergency faculty,” only to be promised no sense of real job security from one semester to the next (Duncan, 1999, p. 6).

Granted, many administrators view part-time faculty members as “fine wine at discount prices,” but their monetary value to any given institution is only one slice of the pie (Gappa & Leslie, 1993, p. 141); one must look at the “scrambling” effect these individuals perpetuate (p. 147). Because adjuncts are constantly on the move due to poor pay and various other conditions, department chairs often have

to hustle at the last minute, sometimes only a day or two before a class is scheduled to begin, to cover sections. This scrambling leads to anxiety, thus creating an uncomfortable working environment for everyone involved. Moreover, students, particularly incoming freshmen, could potentially leave any given class with an acerbic taste in their mouth due to a bad experience with a flighty, frustrated, and frazzled instructor. While this may or may not be the adjunct's fault, the adjunct lifestyle is certainly not conducive to any sort of "balance" ("The Downside of Using Adjuncts in Colleges," 2005, p. 1).

Because the job pays so little and requires so much, stability is hard to find for both the adjunct professor and employer. Subsequently, adjuncts are often rootless, administrators plan out schedules on a day-to-day basis, and students are, regrettably, the casualties of this irreverent practice. Clearly, something must be done soon before "higher education's dirty little secret" further degenerates (Marklein, 2002, p. 1). Indeed, while every person, city, and situation is different, practical solutions, multiple ones at that, are desperately needed at this time. According to Carroll (2003), author of "We Exploited, Not Unqualified," we all need to stick together and "protest this educational fraud" (p. C.5). If we do not, tribulations will continue plodding along at a status quo rate, and adjuncts, "the current system's victims," will continue to be abused and alienated (Gappa & Leslie, 1993, p. 278).

Here it is important to define the term, *adjunct*, because to those outside of academia, it can run the gamut from anything to a car part to a qualifier to a bottle of hand sanitizer. It is "something joined or added to another thing but not essentially a part of it . . . a word or word group that qualifies or completes the meaning of another word or other words . . . an associate or assistant of another" (Merriam-Webster, 2005, p. 1). Regardless of the multiple elucidations, one thing remains clear: adjuncts are a part of something, not completely included, and always on the side. To those inside academia, similar designations can easily be applied. According to CUNY, the City University of New York, adjuncts are part-time faculty and staff. These individuals "are usually hired on a semester-by-semester basis to teach one or two courses at individual colleges" ("What is an Adjunct?," 2005, p. 1). While many possess advanced degrees and years of experience in the field, they are paid approximately

40% less per hour and receive little to no health and retirement benefits. Because institutions have no ongoing commitment to adjuncts, "administration has more flexibility to add classes at the last minute at the start of the semester and to cut courses in the spring when enrollment usually drops" (p. 1).

Smallwood (2001), author of "Jill Carroll, a Proud Part-Timer, Thinks Many Adjuncts Need a New Attitude," an article which was featured in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, believes the part-timers and their phenomenon are "well-worn ground" in university circles (p. A.12):

They're cheap labor, they get treated poorly by their institutions, they have little contact with the wider university, and they aren't on campus long enough to help students. In general, the thinking goes, the growing use of part-timers is destroying much of what once made an academic career special. (p. A.12)

Additionally, many feel that "the consistent use and abuse of adjuncts not only is harmful to the adjuncts themselves, but undermines the quality of education" (Kauppi, 2001, p. B.20). In many ways, the establishment damns those who do and damns those who don't; it is a catch-22 situation: "Part-time faculty members currently have the worst of both worlds. They are not really employees, because they lack job security . . . And they are not really independent contractors, because the colleges set their pay and design their contracts (Hoeller, 2001, p. B.20).

Regardless of the situation, and much like the original definition(s) listed above, adjuncts are always the "other." They want to be included, but they are not. They are on the side, expendable entities in every sense of the word. With that said, does academia exploit its workforce? More specifically, is academic management impeding its next generation of educators for a short-term economic gain? From a financial point of view, many adjuncts who teach full-time at various schools only earn between \$12,000 to \$15,000 a year. According to Smith (2000), author of "Report: Adjuncts Could Earn Same Salary Flipping Burgers," part-timers earn "comparable salaries as fast food workers, baggage porters, or theater lobby attendants" (p. 11).

The trend of replacing full-time faculty with adjuncts is predominantly evident in “English, Composition, Philosophy and Foreign Language departments,” as full-time faculty members only teach a mere “7 to 34 percent” of the class offerings (Smith, 2000, p. 11). If this keeps up, the notion of full-time faculty may very well become extinct. This, in turn, creates a “nomadic” and/or “freeway flyer lifestyle” (Shell, 1998, p. 7) for the adjunct, often moving from place to place, sometimes commuting hundreds of miles a week, only to secure another low paying job. “Like wildcats or grizzlies,” states McConnel (1993), adjuncts “have a large range as their home territory . . . often they are stuck where they are, being, often women with families in permanent locations” (p. 41).

Sooner or later, this chaotic lifestyle takes its toll. Delaney (2001), author of “The Long Halls of Ivory: Adjunct Professors,” claims while most adjuncts are the backbone of institutions, teaching about half to two thirds of the classes, they are still treated like second class citizens. “The pay is low, benefits are thin, and the stairway to full-time employment is hard to find” (p. 1). Moreover, and because of this, once one is stamped with the part-time sticker, a person is likely to stay that way. Dubson (2001), just one of the numerous adjuncts cited in Delaney’s article, says the dream of starting a family and becoming a full-time professor at this point in his life are probably just pipe dreams. “Adjuncts,” he claims, “are considered second-tier, and full-time faculty members like to keep it that way” (p. 2).

A realization must be sparked on behalf of the faculty, administration, and students, according to Theis (2003), to encourage the development “of an atmosphere of trust and openness” (p. 166-167). Without such an environment, “low morale and conflict” will ultimately ensue, and all parties involved will suffer because of it (Gappa & Leslie, 1993, p. 279). In a better world, adjuncts would be given the same opportunities and privileges that full-time faculty enjoy, and perhaps all too often, take for granted. Lad Tobin, author of *Writing Relationships: What Really Happens in the Composition Class*, stated, “Ideally, they would have as many of the benefits that the tenure track faculty have . . . that means office space, access to phone and computers, [and] library resources” (personal communication,

2006). He added, “Whatever you’re able to give full time faculty, I’d like to see given to adjuncts . . . in material conditions, too, from pay to sabbatical to benefits. As much as possible, make those jobs as closely competitive to tenure track jobs as possible” (Tobin, personal communication, 2006).

Sadly, however, we do not live in a perfect world. And as long as there is an overabundance of part-timers willing “to subsist on poverty-level or subpoverty-level wages,” few changes are likely to occur (Ehrenreich, 1997, p. ix). Ehrenreich (1997) feels the adjunct phenomenon is extremely disheartening. She states, “It’s like finding out that an elegant old gentleman you’ve always admired at a distance has a secret life as a mugger and a thug. It’s painful to watch. But of course it’s happening everywhere” (p. ix). Patricia Stock, known for her groundbreaking work in *Moving a Mountain: Transforming the Role of Contingent Faculty in Composition Studies and Higher Education*, said she has seen the movement up close and personal all too often. What used to be employed as a “stopgap measure,” simply filling a position when someone retired or when institutions were in a bind, has now become the norm. She stated, “. . . it stopped being that. It’s a matter of this has become our permanent faculty on an exploitive basis” (Stock, personal communication, 2006).

This “really disastrous” lifestyle, according to Gary Rhoades, who wrote *Academic Capitalism in the New Economy and Managed Professionals: Unionized Faculty and Restructuring Academic Labor*, and many others interviewed, has the capability to discourage many young people from going into the academy (Rhoades, personal communication, 2006). In fact, he thought it already has to some extent.

What can be done? There are several new directions, all of which might be productively pursued in order to improve the current situation of adjuncts: work to better unite the literature and composition divide, reconfigure the research and teaching hierarchy, and diversify current master’s and doctoral level programs to include alternatives to academic work. One possible way English Departments could rectify the adjunct situation in the humanities is to bridge the long standing, and often unnecessary, literature vs. composition divide. Historically speaking, literature has always had

the upper hand. According to Downing, author of (2004), literature has been considered “privileged” since the Romantic period in 1770-1830. It “could better meet the requirements for the disciplinary discourse. This was particularly the case when corporate models of management were tied to the political mission of the nation-states” (p. 62). Literature was also tied to lofty themes, including “nationalist identity and cultural pride” (p. 62).

Two hundred years later, the same value systems persist. “Teachers of literature became the priests and theologians of English, while teachers of composition were the nuns, barred from the priesthood, doing the shitwork of the field” (Scholes, 1998, pp. 35-36). The so-called “shitwork of the field” entails teaching a plethora of introductory composition classes, otherwise known as service courses for the university, and graduate students and/or adjunct faculty make up over 90% of the “disposable” teacher pool assigned to this duty (Bousquet, 2004, p. 5). Sequentially, this creates an unsettling division in many departments. Full-timers teach literature, and part-timers teach composition. There are few exceptions. Thus, various tensions can arise, and individuals may be less likely to socialize and assist one another in a variety of ways. However, if professors, both full-time and part-time alike, were given the opportunity to teach literature and composition courses, many disconcerting labels (the “fully disciplinary workers” vs. the “service learning” workers) could be removed and discarded once and for all (Downing, 2005, p. 37).

Tilly Warnock (2005), author of “Making Do, Making, and Making Sense: Burkean Magic and the Essence of English Departments,” believes “we are all teachers of reading and writing” (p. 152). She states, “we are all committed to teaching language and literature as strategies for coping and as equipment for living” (p. 148). Literature should not be valued over composition or vice versa. A progressive department, she feels, should be diversified in every aspect, including course schedules, opportunities, and rotation. If the division were to be united in the future, and professors were given the opportunity to teach on both sides of the English fence, it would certainly eliminate an influx of us vs. them nuisances. Furthermore, it could create a newfound respect for leverage, equitable labor,

and disciplinary unity within the academic workplace (Downing, 2005, p. 230). Clearly, all of the above would take a considerable amount of time. Unification is a radically new concept for many administrations and/or educators to swallow, let alone follow. The prestige of teaching literature may never fully disappear due to various political reasons, but by reorganizing the playing field, a more even distribution between both parties could be reached.

A second possible way that English Departments could improve the part-time predicament is to reconfigure the research vs. teaching load for graduate students and/or adjuncts. Downing, author of *The Knowledge Contract: Politics and Paradigms in the Academic Workplace*, (2006) believes there are lots of jobs and work to do; “it’s just that the work is being parceled out in exploitive ways to part-time, flex workers with no benefits” (personal communication). Much like the literature vs. composition divide mentioned above, there is often an unspoken division between the “academic celebrities” of a department, the researchers and/or notable authors, and those who undertake the “degraded work” of the field, the teachers of composition (Downing, 2004, p. 60 & Vaughn, 2004, p. 167):

When disciplinary alone reigns, there are, of course, moments of truly innovative work, but too often normal practice means that those privileged few mopping up the fields of disciplinary stabilities in published research get better funded than other domains of work such as collaborative learning, teaching, writing, and curricular design, to name just a few. (Downing, 2005, p. 228)

The question then becomes: What is a simple graduate student and/or adjunct to do? Research and teach? For obvious reasons, such as the poor pay, incessant travel, and heavy emotional burden, it is difficult to effectively tackle both at the same time. Hence, I suggest an unusual alternative. Graduate students and/or adjuncts should have the option to be assigned to a higher-ranking member of the department on alternating teaching, researching, teaching, and researching semesters.

Teaching, obviously, brings money into the institution. That is a given. However, much

could be gained by inviting graduate students and/or adjuncts to study with senior members of the department. On the senior members' behalf, they could have an extra set of eyes, ears, and hands at their disposal, a Mini-Me research assistant if you will. Meanwhile, the graduate students and/or adjuncts could learn valuable research skills while making connections in the field. Paula Caplan, author of *Lifting a Ton of Feathers: A Woman's Guide to Surviving in the Academic World*, said mentoring is absolutely necessary to one's growth if he/she wants to progress from A to B in academia (personal communication, 2006). She continued:

There is really something that the colleges and universities can gain from that because I think their attitude is, 'Well, we need somebody to teach this course because so and so is on sabbatical. And why do we care? It's not our responsibility to see if that they get research time.' (personal communication, 2006)

However, she added, if individuals are engaged in research, "... they're more likely to get excited when they teach about their own research. And so there really is something to be gained" (Caplan, personal communication, 2006). Thus, by offering graduate students and/or adjuncts the opportunity to teach and research in alternating semesters, they could maintain a more realistic workload, obtain invaluable skills and connections, and add a few lines to their vitae. In both cases, teaching and researching, institutions would continue to make money by attracting a larger pool of potential students.

The third possible way English Departments could enrich the lives of adjuncts would be to revamp the current master's and doctoral level curriculums in order to include greater diversity and/or alternatives to academic work. In "How to Reform the MLA: An Opening Proposal," which calls for a reduction in the number of Ph.D. programs, Nelson (1996) claims, "Meanwhile, a long-term job crisis that leaves many new PhDs either unemployed or marginally employed in part-time jobs had become semipermanent" (p. 44). Known as "discards," these individuals are told -- "Don't count on it" -- when they drop hints about landing a full-time, tenure track position (Nelson, 1996, p. 45).

The cold hard fact remains that even if the literature and composition bridge were to be united, and the research vs. teaching hierarchy allowed multiple options, the market is simply too overcrowded, and it does not look like it is going to change any time in the near future. Therefore, it is recommended that English Departments become more responsible, perhaps more realistic is a better word choice, with their core curriculums. While it is certainly a blessing to have courses like Topics in British Literature Before 1660 and Second Language Teaching out there, according to humanities statistics, more than half of new Ph.D.s will be underemployed and ultimately looking for work outside of the academia (Toth, 2006, p. 2). As a result, it would be beneficial to catch up with the times and update many of our archaic programs to better accommodate the needs of our current academic landscape. According to the *Profession and Occupational Outlook Handbook*, three of the most popular alternatives for English majors working outside of the academy can be found in the high-tech industry, in print as qualified writers and editors, and in the public relations realm.

Mark Johnson (1996), author of "Professions Beyond the Academy," earned his Ph.D. in English in 1995. After an unsuccessful search to land a full-time job, and a subsequent unwillingness to place himself at the mercy of "a kind of academic Great Depression," he took a job at Intuit, a highly influential California-based software company (Curren, 1994, p. 59). He claims:

The university is not the only life-supporting system the world has to offer PhDs. Especially in the humanities, PhDs new and old tend to be ignorant and often disdainful of job opportunities beyond the academy. Such a limited vision is understandable. Ten or more years of higher education steeps us in a culture of research, high art, student mentoring, and humanist values. (Johnson, 1996, pp. 60-61)

While it is difficult for many graduate students and/or adjuncts to think of a life outside academia, thanks in part, he says, to the "clone factories" created by departments and advisors, the corporate world is hungry for creative individuals who know how to meet deadlines (Gies, 1995, p. 6). In Johnson's department alone, which includes 18 writers, there are two other Ph.D.s. His boss also has

a master's degree in creative writing from University of California, Irvine. He adds, "Keep an open mind, reject ivory-tower arrogance toward the corporate world, and take the doomsayers with a grain of salt" (Johnson, 1996, p. 67). The trick, he states, is thinking outside the box. Current programs are geared for educators, for those who want pursue opportunities in higher education. We're led to believe any other career, unfortunately, is a second rate choice. However, such sentiments are damaging. There is a whole other world, an extremely thriving one at that, just waiting for us outside the ivory tower.

According to the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, the employment of writers and editors is "expected to grow about as fast as the average for all occupations through the year 2014" (U.S. Department of Labor, 2006-2007, pp. 1-9). Additionally:

- A college degree generally is required for a position as a writer or editor. Although some employers look for a broad liberal arts background, most prefer to hire people with degrees in communications, journalism, or English.
- Writers and editors held about 320,000 jobs in 2004. Writers and authors held about 142,000 jobs; editors, about 127,000 jobs; and technical writers, about 50,000 jobs.
- Median annual earnings for salaried writers and authors were \$44,350 in May 2004. The middle 50 percent earned between \$31,720 and \$62,930. (pp. 1-9)

Considering some Ph.D.s make a measly \$16,000 a year, \$44,350 (with merely a BA degree) does not look too shabby (Swift, 2001, p. 2). Unlike working within the academy, many writers and/or editors can also work from home, and they don't have to move with regards to freelance work. They can simply write their articles, save them, and send them off with the push of the button. It is, indeed, an appealing

Public relations, much like working with technology, creativity, and deadlines, can be yet another attractive employment prospect for English majors. According to The Public Relations Society of

America, individuals with strong backgrounds in research, media relations, cultivating relationships, speaking, and writing and editing are perfect fits for such a calling (2006, pp. 1-7). They add:

Since the public relations professional is often trying to reach large groups of people, an important tool is the printed word. Examples of its use are found in reports, news releases, brochures, speeches, video, scripts, trade magazine articles . . . A sound, clear style of writing is a must for public relations work. (pp. 1-7)

Thoughtful and progressing English Departments could develop additional courses which nurture the skills needed for careers in public relations, as well as everything mentioned above. It is not implied that courses, such as Topics in Postmodern Literature, Comparative Literary Theory Applied to Traditional and Special Literatures, and Observation in Teaching English, do not have their place. They most certainly do. However, they are more geared towards those who wish to continue and research and teaching within the academy.

English Department may be more advantageous to offer additional courses, even at the master's and doctoral level, such as Advanced Technical and Scientific Writing (for those who relish working with computers); Seminar in Professional Writing (for those who excel in editing); and Advanced Technical and Scientific Writing (for those who wish to pursue a career in a public relations firm), to keep in step with today's ever-changing job market. By revamping programs to include more up-to-date courses, colleges and/or universities could still hold onto those who wish to pursue a career in academia while attracting new students and innovative professors, ones who wish to break the mold and explore various avenues outside the institution. With today's glutted market in the humanities, such an expansion in curriculums may not become a question of when, but why not earlier?

If all three suggested solutions to the adjunct phenomenon were to come to light (the fusion of literature and composition, a reconfiguration of the research and teaching hierarchy, and a curriculum facelift at the master's and doctoral level), perhaps the adjunct situation would improve

significantly. For one, a level playing field would be created. Full-timers and part-timers alike would teach literature and composition, which could breed a newfound respect in many areas. Secondly, if graduate students and/or adjuncts could team up with senior members of the department, their teaching and researching skills would improve, and institutions could reach larger audiences. Finally, by revamping current programs to include more timely courses, graduates would have more than one lone opportunity upon graduation. On their own and as a unit, these suggestions are highly feasible, and it wouldn't cost institutions a great deal of money. The wheels of change may take time, as nothing moves quickly in academia, but if graduate students and/or adjuncts are aware that there is room for change and growth, it may offer a glimmer of hope on an otherwise austere horizon (Johnson, 1996, pp. 60-68).

The adjunct trend is progressive in the sense that it is always changing, constantly morphing to take on different shapes, sizes, and characteristics. Therefore, it likely will always be a contemporary issue within the academy, one open to lively debate and additional research. One possible follow up would be to further investigate origins of the psychic wage mantra, which Marc Bousquet, author of *Tenured Bosses and Disposable Teachers: Writing Instruction in the Managed University*, has described as “give of yourself . . . be a part of us” (personal communication, 2006). When does it begin exactly, and why are so many of us willing to be exploited in every sense of the word? When, in other words, does enough become enough? Furthermore, why are so many senior members of the academy willing to turn a blind eye to such a catastrophe? In addition to mentoring and incorporating new classes into the curriculum, should monthly sessions, such as “The Problems of Adjuncting,” “Become a Lawyer Instead,” and “Know When to Hang it Up, Kid,” be added into the fray? Perhaps. Secondly, it may be advantageous to investigate successful adjunct programs. Inquires could include examining adjuncts in integrated departments, adjuncts who are well paid, adjuncts in comparison to workers in other fields, and how organizations, like CCCC, MLA, and NCTE, are dealing with cotemporary adjunct issues. Are the current presentations really spreading more awareness throughout the academic

community, or are they just turning more people off? Lastly, if the mushrooming adjunct trend does continue as it has, it would be interesting to see if it will ultimately obliterate the tenure track system. With regards to full-time faculty members having their benefits cut and workloads reduced in record numbers, Rhoades stated (personal communication, 2006):

So, I think the conditions of adjuncts are almost like the canary for the mine. It's, like, this is a foretelling of what's happening to the whole of the academy, not just adjuncts. And I think the full-time, tenure track folks haven't figured that out for the most part yet. I hope they get a clue soon. After all, we (part-timers and full-timers) soon may be sharing the same leaky boat if the tide continues to shift.

Theis (2003), author of *Mapping the Geography: A Narrative of Long-Term English Adjunct Teaching*, states that “compassion asks us to connect heart and mind in our professional relationships” on the last page of his dissertation, page 167. Many adjuncts are torn right down the middle between realms of logic and reality. Much like Berry's (2005) infamous one-liner in *Reclaiming the Ivory Tower: Organizing Adjuncts to Change Higher Education* -- “good work but a bad living” – the heart says to stay, and the head says to go (p. 9). Countless part-timers hope all of the effort and sacrifice put forth in their adjunct careers, in addition to their education, publishing records, and recommendations, will be enough to land them full-time, tenure track job within the next few years. The other side of the coin, the thousands of “underemployed Ph.D.s” wandering the country, trying to scrounge up work in the “glutted market” of education (Anson, personal communication, 2006), which only grants 40% of English Ph.D.s tenure track positions (Toth, 2006, p. 2), is other too much, too painful to bear.

Mahatma Gandhi, who was no stranger to the hands of exploitation himself, stated the following:

It's the action, not the fruit of the action, that's important. You have to do the right thing.

It may not be in your power, may not be in your time, that there'll be any fruit. But that doesn't mean you stop doing the right thing. You may never know what results come from your action. But if you do nothing, there will be no result. (p. 1)

Hence, we, as a collective academic community, must keep trying. The future is unknown, but we know what the present holds, and we want more for ourselves. We want more for everyone (the adjuncts, the students, and the next generation of educators) involved.

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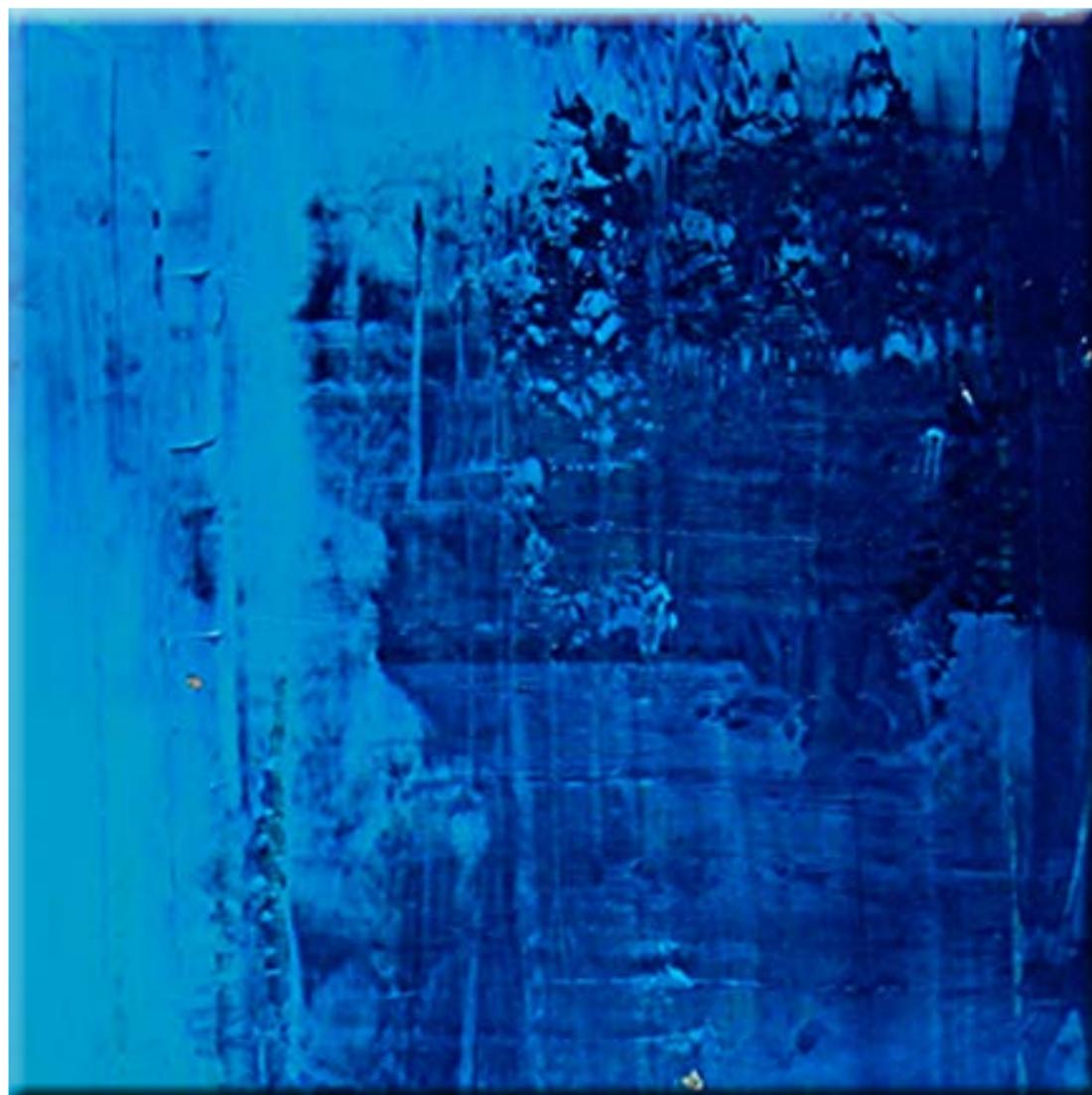
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Kristjana Gunnars

Detail from *Angel of Silence*
acrylic on canvas
36" x 36"

Love

And what of love?

The new thing,

Prepositioned,

longed for,

propositioned,

warmed to,

predicated,

whispered for

called, inwords

forenouns,

foldnouns,

soft, siftward

the soothe of it

on the fingertips,

tip of the watchword

spelled out

tongue wards...

nownouns

dropped
like earrings...
the thing of it

Uncolored,
Rainclouds un-
Grammared,

Breathheld;
the evening weight
between the eyes,

gone, as
silence is,
finger on the key

everything
befored, pre-hurt,
treaty-ed,

longing pierced
like the skin
of milk

and after then
and then, touch

septembered,

old-fashioned,
and next, next
meadowed, twi-

lit, lips drawing
on lips...
virginwork

of light on stems,
mary bearing
joseph back to

bethlehems
and stars
from wine,

every birth
gospelled like
water over sand

you are this
and only this
you are only

sleepish
intimate
folding unfolding

in forgetfulness
forlessness,
lessless, fullness...

--Christopher Moylan

The Pedagogy of Indigenous Restorative Justice

by John G. Hansen & Rose Antsanen, University of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

'Inniew', is a person of the four directions. So I use my mind, physically, emotionally, and spiritually that's what it means in Cree culture...

---Elder John Martin

To the Swampy Cree of Northern Manitoba, "*Poonā 'yétum*" means to forgive someone. In the N-dialect of the Omushkegowuk (Swampy Cree) language, *Poonā 'yétum* refers loosely to not think about the crime anymore, which could be interpreted as a situation that resulted in a resolved conflict and someone has achieved healing. The old Cree people still indirectly model the concept of *restorative justice* which seems to have its cultural origins in the connection the people have with spirituality and the emphasis on making reparations, restoring relationships and healing from wrongful behavior. The old people knew what they were talking about when they say that it is important to *forgive Poonā 'yétum* oneself and others in order to heal from wrongdoing. In this article we will discuss the concept of restorative justice as healing and we will explain why traditional Indigenous ways of teaching are important in the north.

The philosophy contained in this article is principally that of the Inniew (Cree people), or more specifically the Omushkegowuk (Swampy Cree) people. These terms used for describing the people: Swampy Cree, Omushkigo or Omushkegowuk (which means 'people of the muskeg') are the section of the Cree people who live in swampy areas throughout northern Manitoba and northern Ontario along James and Hudson's Bay. In the n-dialect of the Cree language spoken by the Omushkegowuk the people are just called Inniew, which means the people.

Since I am a Swampy Cree, and was the main instructor of the Restorative Justice and Conflict Resolution program at the University College of the North for some eight years. I have developed the philosophical discussion as much as possible from an Omushkegowuk perspective. Our co-author Rose Antsanen is of the Dene people, and she taught as a sessional in the Restorative Justice and Conflict Resolution program at the University College of the North for some four years. I trust that our interpretation will uncover both the colonial and the white-supremacist position that Indigenous peoples were primitive savages without any justice system or government who need and require

colonization. The philosophical interpretation covered in this article takes the present circumstances of historical colonization effects of Indigenous peoples into account.

The teachings of the Swampy Cree and many other Indigenous peoples are constructed on notions of holism. The philosophy of taking all of the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual domains into account reflects Indigenous culture and pedagogy. What has been used to symbolize this holistic way of teaching is the four directions concept, a philosophy that has been used to educate and guide the Inninew (Cree people) since time immemorial. The concept of the four directions is representative of the same holistic philosophy as the medicine wheel. Such holistic and sacred philosophy has been an important factor in the development of the Restorative Justice and Conflict Resolution Program, which is a two year diploma program that examines Indigenous history, culture and traditional methods of resolving conflicts. The concepts of 'Indigenous holistic pedagogy' and 'Indigenous restorative justice' are the educational foundation of the program.

Indigenous Pedagogy in the Restorative Justice Program

Our approach to teaching in the restorative justice program is largely influenced by an array of teachers, professors and respected Indigenous Elders that have taught us important lessons for life. Consistent with traditional Indigenous models of justice, we teach through the circle and thus the chairs are arranged in a circle. We see that the circle encourages classroom discussion and promotes a sense of equality in the classroom. Promoting classroom discussion is very important to our teachings.

As we gained experience as faculty members we came to regard teaching and research as our main responsibilities. Inquisitiveness about teaching and continued search for knowledge is a value we promote in the program.

Our teaching philosophy emerges from the following assumptions:

1. Students can read so we do not teach straight out of the book, and therefore what we do in class is discuss the printed matter in a circle.
2. Students do better when encouraged to think. We do our best to encourage them to think and analyze information in a holistic manner, bringing in feelings as well as intellect into the classroom discussions.

In terms of style, it is particularly important for students to feel welcome, and thus promotes student success.

One of our goals is to bring a lot of discussion to classes. We try to be passionate and motivated about teaching as we find it stimulates students to think in a way that encourages learning. With the right mix of students we can have excellent discussions. When we teach, we try to make sure that we encourage students to express their ideas and views. With class assignments, we try to make them as intriguing as possible. We think carefully about the development of assignments to encourage students to make connections between theory and practice. In the context of restorative justice, we evaluate students work based on the assignment criteria and what was covered in class.

The Restorative Justice and Indigenous Justice Similarity

Indigenous restorative justice systems are evident in tribal narratives, and these events are reflected in modern scholarship. Friedrichs (2006), for example, has stated that "it is now commonly noted that restorative justice is rooted in the most ancient and enduring practices of indigenous peoples in what in the modern world has come to be defined as crime" (p. 449). As a rule, restorative justice offers an Indigenous methodology for healing victims, offenders, and communities. In Canada, for example, some First Nation communities have experienced positive change as a result of recovering aspects of their justice traditions. A prime exemplar of this is Hollow Water First Nation (Ross, 1996; Green 1998). Restorative justice involves returning to the First Nation teachings that were overrun by colonial powers as State justice was brought in to take over the conflicts in Indigenous communities. Smith (1999), a prominent Maori author on Indigenous decolonization methodologies, wrote that "[r]estorative justice in Canada, for example, applies the concepts of the 'healing circle' and victim restoration which are based on indigenous processes ... and as such ... "[r]estorative programs are based on a model of healing rather than punishing" (p. 155).

The past few decades have witnessed Indigenous societies struggling to restore their judicial systems, struggling toward self-governance and independence in the political, social, economic, and judicial realms. The purpose of justice for Indigenous nations has been principally that of healing while the Western State sanctioned retributive justice model has suppressed the reality of that intention through colonization. Thus, the restorative justice and conflict resolution program is a decolonization manifestation as it provides students with an Indigenous justice understanding.

Restorative justice initiatives are currently resurfacing in all parts of the world, offering alternative justice possibilities to Indigenous people as well as the mainstream at large. Yet, despite the renaissance of restorative justice initiatives, Indigenous incarceration continues to increase. This is recognized by many as a manifestation of the effects of colonization and systemic discrimination (AJI, 1999; Jackson, 1992; CFNMP, 2004). Restorative justice recognizes that the widespread practice of incarceration does very little, if anything, to facilitate the healing process, particularly for Indigenous victims, offenders and communities. Therefore it is from the base of decolonization that the restorative justice and conflict resolution program begins.

The Old Ones and the language they adhere to, speaks of a traditional justice model that was grounded in the praxis of the community and healing was crucial to that original justice system. The Cree word 'opintowin', describes the activity of justice, which "involves the principles of repairing harm, healing, restoring relationships, accountability, community involvement and community ownership. Opintowin, describes a justice process where the people help each other, it means, in other words to exercise, "lifting each other up" (CFNMP, 2004, vol 1, p. 4-1). Like many other cultures, the Cree people recognized and emphasized the potential for healing from wrongdoing. It was restorative justice, from the praxis of the community that guided Aboriginals into the justice process and the people observed its capacity for healing. The Law Commission of Canada (2003) maintains that restorative justice is "a process for resolving crime and conflicts, one that focuses on redressing the harm to the victims, holding offenders accountable for their actions and engaging the community in a conflict resolution process" (p. xiii). To the Law Commission, accountability,

reparation and community are vital constituents to a restorative justice model.

For Indigenous people, restorative justice is a communal responsibility; it is a process that “begins by Aboriginal families and communities accepting responsibility for Aboriginal criminality” wrote McIvor (1996, p. 10) in her examination of the concept of Aboriginal justice. An Indigenous justice model requires a space where “families and communities can rely on their traditions, values, languages and ceremonies to heal themselves”. McIvor (1996) maintains that the “successes of the Aboriginal sentencing initiatives promise benefits for the Indigenous community and for Canadian society” (p. 20). Today, some Indigenous communities are in a process of decolonization. In other words, we are re-establishing a system of restorative justice based on their traditional teachings (Green, 1998; Ross, 1996).

The Aboriginal Justice Inquiry (1999) has discussed the concept of restorative justice in relation to the Indigenous experience and notes that, “the purpose of a justice system in an Aboriginal society is to restore the peace and equilibrium within the community, and to reconcile the accused with his or her own conscience and with the individual or family who has been wronged” (p. 22). This Indigenous dimension of the restorative justice concept speaks of a healing process that largely disregards the punitive dynamics that drive call for justice in the Western world. Indigenous restorative justice includes the community, the victim, and the offender in a process that emphasizes healing. Ultimately, it is through healing that Indigenous communities found purposeful justice. It was in healing, that the people found real meaning in justice.

The restorative justice manifestations still practiced in tribal communities oblige us to continue our healing pathways. Ancient Indigenous restorative justice idea and practices are exhibited in the phenomena of modern day sentencing circles and these circles are recognized by many as a culturally appropriate approach to dealing with wrongdoing in our contemporary Indigenous life (Monture-Angus, 1994; Turpel, 1993; Ross, 1996; Green, 1998). As a rule, a sentencing circle process includes the victim, the offender and any other concerned community members. The people come together in a circle, ensuring that the offender faces his or her victim and the community. In the circle, the victim has a safe place to tell the offender how they were impacted by the offence. Conversely, the offender has an opportunity to explain his or her inappropriate and wrongful behavior. Such dialogue helps the offender to understand the effects of his or her wrongdoing. It is through the circle that communication happens. The people speak, and provide suggestions as to how the offender might repair the harm and make things right (Green, 1998; Johnstone, 2002; Ross, 1996). Indigenous restorative justice is done through a cyclical process that includes the sharing of ideas and feelings. It focuses on constructive things like repairing harm and communications.

Looking at the Past

From the late nineteenth to the middle of the twentieth century, the attempt was made to colonize and subjugate Indigenous culture forever including Indigenous restorative justice systems. Indigenous children were torn from their homes, separated from their roots and imprisoned in residential schools where they were taught Western values, language and culture, as well as the notions

of male superiority or dominance. We know from documented evidence that missionaries working in residential schools habitually belittled the children, beat them up, and in some cases sexually exploited them (RCAP, 1996; CFNMP, 2004; Jaine, 1993). This State sanctioned abuse went on for generations, and the outcome was profound social dysfunction and cultural devastation.

One of the most important aspects of decolonizing Indigenous culture is understanding one's identity. John Martin, a prominent Swampy Cree Elder has discussed what it means to be Inninew (Cree people):

Being Inninew, I am a four directions person. That's what it means, Inninew, it means four, meaning I have my mind, my body, and also I have a spiritual being, I have feelings, that's how we learned when a person is teaching something – John (Cited in Hansen, 2011, p. 137).

The word Inninew teaches us that our very being is comprised of four parts, the mental, emotional, spiritual and physical. Inninew, also refers to the collectivity of the people and suggests holism. It is through holism where influential teaching and learning can be developed. In Indigenous culture it is understood that every person has the capability to experience holism. John Martin elaborates further:

'Inninew', is a person of the four directions. So I use my mind, physically, emotionally, and spiritually that's what it means in Cree, Cree culture...In education you see...When you're teaching the students learning skills and you make them do the work, work skills is what you're teaching them, but sometimes people forget, and so people try to figure out why this person is not doing so good, why they don't know that or they forget that. But when you don't look at the emotional, spiritual part, because those two parts are not covered, and when we cover the emotional part and the spiritual part we understand – John (Cited in Hansen, 2011, p. 148).

The four directions philosophy teaches us that we learn when we are taught in a way where each of our four human realms is equally developed and balanced; balance is also the key to our well being (Brown, 2004; Bopp 1988; Hookimaw-Witt, 2006). Hart (2000) states that balance “occurs when a person is at peace and harmony within their physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual humanness; with others in their family, community, and the nation; and with all other living things, including the earth and natural world” (p. 41). We hope to balance our teaching by making sure to discuss each of the four realms. The four directions is the metaphor utilized to demonstrate the holistic pedagogy utilized in the restorative justice program. Traditionally, Indigenous justice was practiced based on holistic principles that adhered to holism and this phenomenon is reflected in current literature concerning Indigenous models of justice (Ross, 1996; Brendtro, Brokenleg & Bockern (1998).

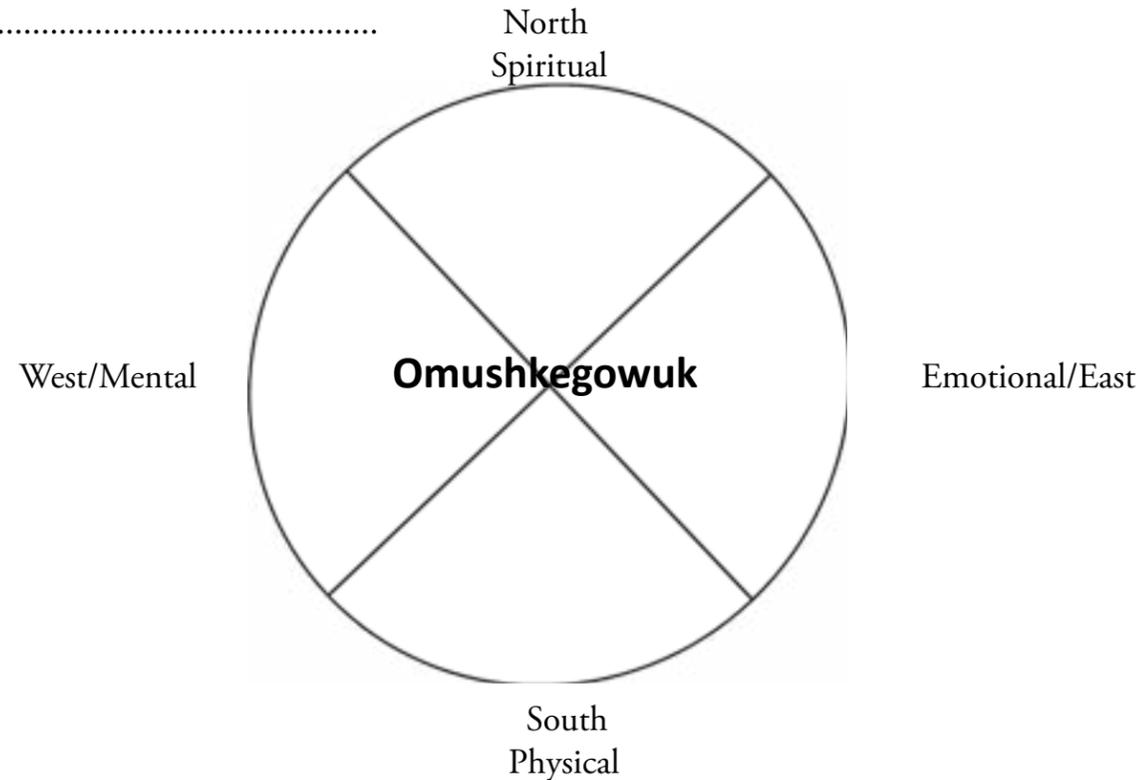
In their book, *Reclaiming Youth at Risk*, for example, Brendtro, et al (1998) draws a parallel between reclaiming youth at risk and holistic teachings. The holistic point of view was expressed by Brendtro, et al (1998) who interpreted what they had researched with troubled youth in accordance with a belief in holism or the four directions. Brendtro, et al (1998) observes:

The number four has sacred meaning to Native people who see the person as standing in a circle surrounded by the four directions... We believe the philosophy embodied in

this circle of courage is not only a cultural belonging to Native peoples, but a cultural birthright for all the world's children (p. 45).

This passage suggests that Indigenous teachings have the capacity to connect with other peoples around the world and that these teachings can benefit all humanity.

The Four Directions Concept



The four directions holistic philosophy is reflected in the language of the people, and it brings to light the notion of holism and the need to keep balance in our lives. So, we embrace the four directions concept in the restorative justice program because it helps both teachers and students organize various ideas in the program.

The restorative justice program promotes the significance of tribal knowledge and the curriculum is constructed to accommodate Indigenous philosophy. In turn, the First Nations teachings allow for both teacher and students to learn together and paves the way for knowledge acquisition. This is the pedagogical reciprocity between teachers and learners, the interconnectedness, and speaks of a holistic pedagogy that promotes a capacity to learn and accomplish anything.

Teaching and learning about restorative justice is grounded in tribal philosophy and speaks

of the value of Indigenous culture and restorative justice. Understanding of Indigenous restorative justice must be grounded in traditional teachings. Justice must be examined through the lens of Indigenous perspective and worldviews. Indigenous languages are the link to the past from where traditional knowledge can be manifest. For example, the language of the Cree people reveals the connection we have to the wheel. Those ancient stone circles found in various places throughout North America represent holism. Friesen (2000) provides a physical description of the wheel:

Physically, it consists of a central pile of rock (cairn) with spokes emanating in the four directions- east, west, south and north. Each direction has an inherent color, red, white, yellow and black. Each of the four spokes signifies a specific characteristic, a living creature, a season, and an element (p. 98).

The required capacity and desire to teach and learn by developing holism is achievable through the holistic pedagogy that emerges from an Indigenous worldview.

Indigenous Worldview

Embracing holistic pedagogy in the restorative justice program has to be grounded in the Indigenous worldview and is exhibited through teachings such as sharing circles, stories, and personal experience. According to Wilson (2004), Indigenous teaching methods involve:

talking circles, storytelling, looking at things like personal narrative because when you're relating a personal narrative, then you're getting into a relationship with someone. You're telling their side of the story and then you're analyzing it. So you're really looking at that relationship that develops between the person that is telling the story and the person analyzing the story, it becomes a strong relationship (p. 211).

Such Indigenous teachings expresses itself as a relationship-based pedagogy, which adheres to Indigenous ethics that involve respecting and naming the sources who are passing on the knowledge and culture, in this case, Omushkegowuk culture. Thus, an Indigenous research methodology can be considered a life-long learning process or ceremony. This process has been continuously reproduced within Indigenous cultures since time immemorial.

Consistent with the pedagogy of holism is the relationship based ways that we interpret information. Wilson (2004) observes how we interpret information involves:

our whole life-long learning leading to an intuitive logic and ways of analysis...that is especially true for participant observation and action research. It just can't be thought of as a linear or one step leads to another way. All of the pieces go in, until eventually the new idea comes out. You build relationships until with the idea in various and multiple ways, until you reach a new understanding or higher state of awareness regarding whatever it is that you are studying (p.214).

This passage clearly illustrates the holism within Indigenous education systems. In terms of his own writing Wilson illustrates the approach of an Indigenous teaching methodology. He states later (2004: 219) that “you have to use intuitive logic where you are looking at the whole thing at once, and coming up with your own answers through analysis that way. So it’s mostly innate within us.” In the restorative justice program it explicitly recognized that the elders, the philosophers and guides of Indigenous societies provide the groundwork for how the justice process was practiced in Indigenous communities.

Indigenous restorative justice fits well with the holistic teachings discussed by Wilson (2004), and it also resonates with the conceptual pattern of Hookimaw-Witt’s (2006) research process which enabled her to respect the Cree worldview and culture by the use of the medicine wheel. In doing so, Hookimaw-Witt demonstrated respect for the people and effectively created understanding of Cree culture and Indigenous feminism. The relationship between restorative justice and the medicine wheel philosophy manifests itself in the Indigenous worldview. A worldview is the way we see ourselves and understand the world, to what Adams (2000, p. 43) called “consciousness”. Restorative justice is apparent in the Indigenous consciousness

A significant feature of the pedagogy of the restorative justice program is the Indigenous worldview. Worldview we can define as a set of beliefs, principles and assumptions that we use to organize our understanding of reality. A worldview, a set of beliefs, principles and assumptions, provides meaning about life. A worldview provides a way to organize all the information that we ingest through our senses.

An Indigenous worldview is very holistic and circular. There are cycles and patterns that give rise to the idea that all things are interconnected and equal in significance. In the culture of the Indigenous it is understood that plants and animals, like humans have a spirit. We can see how this holistic worldview manifests itself in the notion that the metaphysical is an integral part of the physical world. Indigenous restorative justice models distinguish from the mainstream restorative justice models in the sense that a spiritual dimension is always present in an Indigenous justice process. Recognition for the metaphysical manifests itself in the phenomenon of there always being a prayer before the Indigenous justice process. John Martin has discussed the connection between spiritual ceremonies and peacemaking methods; he states:

When we have our camps, everything is spiritual the trees are alive, the grass, the rocks, they have a spirit. The animals they have a spirit and so the ceremonies are based on those teachings, like the things that we do, it what was for a purpose—John (Cited in Hansen, 2011, p. 167).

Spirituality is inherent in the traditional First Nations justice process, and thus holistic worldview. Respect for the old people is manifest in the worldview of the Aboriginal. The Cree philosopher Ermine (1995) observes:

Our people’s education systems esteemed the Old Ones highly. It was the Old Ones, from their position in the community, who guided young people into various realms of knowledge by using the trickster. The Old Ones, above all, knew the character of the trickster and his capacity to assist in self actualization (1995, p. 105).

In Indigenous education systems the stories of the trickster are often utilized as a way to teach values and lessons for living. One may consider that Ermine’s interpretation of self-actualization refers to fulfilling ones potential, that is, to developing into the being that one is ultimately meant to become.

A central point in Ermine’s discussion on Indigenous worldview is the subjective search for knowledge, which is a process that involves looking within oneself (introspection) and reflecting on it as a pathway to acquire insights into meaningful knowledge. He writes:

Those who seek to understand the reality of existence and harmony with the environment by turning inward have a different, incorporeal knowledge paradigm that might be termed Aboriginal epistemology. Aboriginal people have the responsibility and the birthright to take and develop an epistemology congruent with holism and the beneficial transformation of total human knowledge. The way to this affirmation is through our own Aboriginal sources” (1995, p.103).

This passage demonstrates the need for Indigenous education to be grounded in Indigenous ways of knowing. The pathway to these Indigenous sources, ceremonies, rituals, stories are through the old people who have inherited accumulated stories and experienced the life world of the people. Ermine (1995) elaborates further: “The priceless core within each of us and the process of touching that essence...is to exercise inwardness...this inner space is the universe of being within each person that is synonymous with the soul, the spirit, the self, or the being” (p. 103). For Ermine, the Indigenous exploration for knowledge is a subjective search that largely disregards the concepts of ‘objectivity’ or deems that there is no need for a researcher to be detached from the study. Such subjective and personal knowledge helps to explain why Indigenous education systems are grounded in personal narratives or stories. In fact, one may argue that stories formed the basis of traditional Indigenous education systems.

Indigenous epistemology emerges from a people who have a holistic worldview. The implications of this holistic worldview are that Indigenous education has a duty to identify and sustain wholeness and to share the benefits of holistic thinking with other cultures. The mission of Indigenous education, therefore, is to continue reproducing the culture for the benefit of all human beings. Ermine maintains that “Only through subjectivity may we continue to gain authentic insights into truth...Aboriginal resources such as language and cultures are our touch stones to achieving this” (1995, p. 110).

Respect is demonstrated in the restorative justice program because it that embraces the premises of Swampy Cree culture and encourages dialogue from the students. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996) has stated that Indigenous education must be respectful: “to the cultures, languages, knowledge and values of Aboriginal People and to the standards used by Indigenous people to legitimize knowledge” (p.1). This, by all means, makes sense, as any research that explores Indigenous culture has the duty to conform to Indigenous values, standards and customs. This research follows Indigenous education systems by virtue of maintaining the connection that we Cree have to the old ones and the holistic teachings.

The restorative justice program embraces the concepts of subjectivity and personal narratives. Denzin (2003) provides the following interpretation that values subjectivity:

participatory mode of knowing privileges subjectivity, personal knowledge and the specialized knowledges of oppressed groups. It uses concrete experience as a criterion of meaning and truth. It encourages a participatory mode of consciousness that locates the researcher within Maori defined spaces in the group (p. 2).

Much like the Maori culture, teaching in the restorative justice program requires participation of the students. This form of participatory learning is more than a description of culture and storytelling reminiscence of the past. It is an aspect of decolonization: a mechanism designed to promote insights that allow the students to have a voice. According to Smith (1999), testimonies and remembering are decolonizing methodologies; she notes "Indigenous testimonies are a way of talking about an extremely painful event or series of events" (p. 144). Within the context of justice, the Cree are distinctive in the sense of being Indigenous peoples living within a Western state, and have a restorative consciousness of justice. Participation in classroom allows the exploration of that Indigenous consciousness through narratives. Smith (1999) notes that "Indigenous peoples across the world have other stories to tell" (p.2). Such narratives come alive in the restorative justice program, which adheres to Indigenous conceptions of justice.

Conclusions

As Indigenous educators, we see that Indigenous justice models offer other justice possibility. By embracing the notions of holistic thinking and Indigenous pedagogy, or simply by examining narratives, we hope to promote student success. Although the Indigenous restorative justice system has been suppressed or marginalized through colonization, it is currently resurfacing in North America and other continents. The pedagogy of restorative justice is expanding and progressing in all directions. The concluding statement ought to come from Cynthia Chambers (2003) who said: "When the Dene elders spoke of survival, they meant survival of us all, not just Dene people; when the Cree elders hold a pipe in ceremony and pray, they pray for us all, not just for the Cree people. So too curriculum theorizing must begin at home but it must work on behalf of everyone" (p. 148).

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THREE CURSES OF MAN

A kingdom of impossible secrets. The jester at the keyhole. The sly, aching limbs of the ptarmigan as it trolls the tundra for meager grub.

Beyond these images we are unable to offer you a single morsel of solace, but please repent nonetheless. The salvation we offer is far better than the salvation offered around the corner, down the street, or even uptown, and our prices are far cheaper, so you will not feel ripped off.

Join us. Throw away the husks of what made you once believe. Throw away licentiousness and your dark hungers, replace them with sweat and mental confusion so warm you will conflate it with the memory of your first love. Continue on this path until you encounter an armored knight who asks what fuels your restless pursuits, and answer him thus:

“Greed, from love of my mother’s breast. Sorrow, the bitter aftertaste of my first moment alone. Unease, what happened when all the stoplights turned green at once and left me on the threshold of endless possibilities, all ending in disorder.”

--Steven N. Wingate



Kristjana Gunnars

Angel of Silence
acrylic on canvas
36" x 36"

Charity Girls: The Northern Manitoba(n) Response to Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*

by Carolyn Creed, University College of the North, The Pas, Manitoba

“(The) Other: Most commonly, another person or group of people who are defined as different or even sub-human to consolidate a group’s identity.... “The other is the devalued half of a binary opposition when it is applied to groups of people.”

David M. Jones, *Marginality and Othering*

The text of the novel *Jane Eyre* lies buried within the *Norton Anthology of Women Writers*; yet before my Women Writers I course had concluded, the narrative foregrounded itself in the collective consciousness of every class. Having taught the English Literature courses for Brandon University’s Northern Teacher Education Program during most of three decades, I found the common story of Aboriginal Manitobans’ experience of residential schools circulating among my students. When I started teaching in the north, the students themselves (women and First Nations individuals the majority) often turned out to have begun their schooling at a distance from family, lodging within a school setting overseen by pious instructors. Most of my students in this new millennium are too young to have gone to such schools. Instead, they have listened to parents and grandparents recall the experience; so I have questioned several regarding specifics of the accounts.¹ Even at a remove, their reaction to the tales of deprivation and disease in boarded-out children is still deeply affecting. What I hope to show is that Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* replicates many of the same

¹ These interviews with students were approved by the Brandon University Research Ethics Committee (BUREC).

feelings that the residential-school stories have stirred, including the certainty that without parents to direct them, such children will find their well-being sorely compromised; and, if they survive, former pupils of live-in schools run under philosophies of “warehousing-the-unfortunate” will feel inadequate to the tasks life requires of them. I can demonstrate the intertextuality between the section of Brontë’s novel involving the Lowood Charity Girls’ School and accounts or analyses of First Nations students in Canadian residential schools; I can also connect the sense of the parentless children in these circumstances to “Nobody’s Child,” a song that stirs a similar pathos within its audience. (I have taught the song in a preamble to poetry classes, and therefore have discussed its content with northern students.) There is a universal quality to *Jane Eyre’s* great early conflict—one critic refers to the novel’s “archetypal appeal [as] the first serious work of fiction in the West that creates a heroine who achieves individuation” (Snider 12). The conflict turns out to have a tragic parallel to two real-life situations: one is the author’s own school experiences, and the other is the trials and sufferings of the Indian residential-school students in Canada for more than one hundred years after the schools’ first appearance in 1879. Last, I will direct attention to the question of a patriarchy’s gender-bias arising from both the fictive situation and the collective lived experience.

Jane Eyre is introduced to Brontë’s readers as a girl who lost her parents in her infancy, and who, as a result, has developed an incomplete sense of her identity in the world. The self-righteous adults who consign her to the charity school express the belief that she will be taught and looked after “in a manner suiting her prospects . . . to be made useful, to be kept humble” (Brontë 45). As for Jane, whom we meet when she is ten, the school-placement may release her from a real bind: she hopes that by going to Lowood School, she will gain the chance for a better life than the one that includes her current dependency on people who do not care for her. Though Jane appears willingly to have chosen the school-life, she has not really made a choice; it would have been impossible to continue with aunt and cousins in the hostile foster home which her beloved late uncle’s estate has become. Even having declared a willingness to attend the girls’ school, the fictional figure Jane shares much with the First Nations children who climbed into vehicles that would carry them to the regimented workhouses for young Aboriginals that were Canadian residential schools.

Like Jane Eyre and the other girls of Lowood, a First Nations child “was to be brought to civilization through discipline, and, if necessary, by punishment and would become, therefore, a

civilized [individual]” (Milloy 43-44). Among the children brought into the residential-school environment, each had a set of gender-specific tasks: the boys learned “carpentering, blacksmithing, agriculture, shoemaking or bootmaking, and printing”; the girls “received instruction in sewing, shirt-making, knitting, cooking, baking and kitchen work, laundering, dairy work, ironing, gardening, and general household duties” (Milloy 34-35). The perception of potential “usefulness” to mainstream society dominates the early outlines of the school system. On the other side of the model is the teachers’ perception of certain children under their instruction as “useless” or unable to learn. Punishments meted out as a consequence of this impression count among the harshest messages sent by Brontë, as well as the most disturbing accounts of the residential school survivors.

In her first days at Lowood, Jane Eyre meets Helen Burns, the classmate who will serve as the symbol of martyred innocence for her and for Brontë’s readers. Burns exhibits the Biblical quality of “turning the other cheek” when she is punished wrongly for slight infractions of Lowood’s draconian school policy. In doing so, she fascinates Jane, who responds directly and defiantly to ill-treatment. After submitting meekly to a pair of punishments—being forced to stand in the centre of a large room before all her fellow pupils, and being beaten about the neck with a rod composed of bundle of twigs—Burns drives Jane to bewildered protest. Both punishments have been carried out by the history and grammar instructor, Miss Scatcherd; the first, we gather, is for perceived inattention to a lesson while the second results from the instructor’s notice of less-than-spotless hands: “You dirty, disagreeable girl! you have never cleaned your nails this morning!” Miss Scatcherd utters this blame even though the morning clean-up has been rendered impossible by the frozen condition of the girls’ wash-water. Helen responds mildly to Jane’s horrified reaction: “[I]f she struck me with that rod, I should get it from her hand; I should break it under her nose” (Brontë 77) Helen answers, “It is far better to endure patiently a smart which nobody feels but yourself, than to commit a hasty action whose evil consequences will extend to all connected with you; and besides, the Bible bids us return good for evil” (Brontë 77-78).

Burns’ accommodating attitude demonstrates to Jane the possibility that the oppressed can rise above their tormentors by tolerance and forbearance; thus, when Jane herself is forced to submit to the humiliation of public disgrace by Mr. Brocklehurst, the patriarchal head of the institution, she can submit without losing her sense of self-determination. Helen Burns smiles on her way past

Jane, who is standing on a stool in the centre of the same great classroom, and Jane declares, “It was as if a martyr, a hero, had passed a slave or victim, and imparted strength in the transit” (Brontë 96) Like both Jane Eyre and Helen Burns, the Aboriginal students who were forced to face the punishments of beating and abasement at the hands of authority had to search for the strength to bear the blows to body and spirit.

Though “public humiliation was the most mortifying experience for all [Aboriginal] children,” and though reportedly “every effort was made to avoid it” by parents in their traditional culture (Grant 43), it was the most common form of punishment in the residential-school environment, according to my sources. Haig-Brown describes how “public humiliation was combined with corporal punishment.... Perhaps the punishers understood enough of [Aboriginal] culture to know that public humiliation was the worst form of punishment, or perhaps a lack of awareness caused them to punish children doubly” (83) The intentions of the instructors may have been relatively benign, issuing from a belief that they must discipline forcefully to achieve the end of co-operation. Milloy points out, however, that along with other disciplinary excesses, “lecturing [became] verbal abuse and public indignity” (138). As with Brontë’s protagonist, the students of the residential schools had to bear the humiliation with stoic acceptance.

As for physical abuse, of the type Helen Burns underwent in front of her new friend Jane, the vision of cultural change seems to have driven some of the worst treatment of First Nations pupils. One of my interviewees details how a relative “got punished for sticking up for a girl who was getting kicked in the stomach by a ‘brother’.... He wasn’t allowed to join the other students until he said sorry for his actions” (Personal interview 28 April 2005) The paradigm of coerced co-operation created a heavy penalty for the students who failed to comply.

Most distressing to my students among the torments endured by the Lowood girls is the act, decreed by Brocklehurst, of cutting off the hair of a student who has revealed a head of naturally curly hair. For the headmaster of the charity school, hair so revealed displays the sin of pride: “I have again and again intimated that I desire the hair to be arranged closely, modestly, plainly.” He continues by declaring that “that girl’s hair must be cut off entirely” (Brontë 90). Yet in the midst of criticizing many more of the “topknots” on the charity girls, he is interrupted, and caught in his own hypocrisy, by the entrance of his own wife and daughters, decked out in finery and wearing

“a profusion of light tresses, elaborately curled” and even, on the wife, “a false front of French curls” (Brontë 92) Brontë thus shows graphically that the Christian precept of modesty held up by the patriarch has been summoned for the girls at the school without its being practiced within Brocklehurst’s own family.

“The cutting of the hair” is cited by a student of mine as a scene within the novel notable for evoking the residential-school experience (Personal interview 29 April 2005). Though residential school hair-cutting, and the more severe head-shaving, represented a special horror for both boys and girls from Aboriginal cultures, I find the literature examining the indignity lays particular emphasis on the way girls were shorn of their locks. Haig-Brown illustrates the importance of this violation: “Traditionally, the styling of females’ long hair had played a role in important events, including puberty rites. Cutting hair short had been used as punishment for adult women for offenses such as adultery” (52). Northern Manitoban students have reacted so strongly to the humiliation of the shorn hair because they have powerful cultural associations with long hair as a feature of both personal pride and tribal identity; its loss at the hands of boarding-school instructors or administrators thus symbolizes the removal of a component of selfhood.

Beyond the punitive treatment of students by staff, the circumstance of children’s entry into the boarding-school situation in the first place causes much reflection in northern Manitobans who read *Jane Eyre*. Before being sent to Lowood School, Jane is identified as an orphan who faces narrow choices in how her life will turn out. The orphan figures importantly in Victorian literature because “the representation of orphans was sometimes used as a catalyst for pathos [since] the effects of disinheritance and exclusion were illustrated through an orphan” (Buck 883). Though we do not learn the fact until later in the novel, a surviving uncle of Jane’s on the “Eyre” side of the family has been searching for her since her parents’ death, and is put off by Aunt Reed when he makes an inquiry that reaches this aunt; by the end of the novel, “Jane, like many other fictional orphans, eventually discovers familial connections and financial support, thereby gaining both security and power” (Buck 883). Meanwhile, in her girlhood, Jane displays the insecurities of her fragile position within her Aunt Reed’s household by suffering a breakdown in the room which was the deathbed site of her caring uncle, her only defender from the time of her infancy. Because she has lost this ally, and has been banished to the site of his passing, the “red room,” as punishment, she succumbs

to ghost stories told by her aunt's servant and collapses in terror. The effect of the punishment will work a contrary effect after a while, liberating Jane and strengthening her for the fray. Subsequent confrontations with Mrs. Reed, her uncaring care-giver, consign Jane to Lowood, where her aunt hopes the girl will learn the humility that she finds deficient in Jane's character.

In a superficial look at the novel, Jane's situation seems to differ substantially from that of a majority of residential-school attenders: she has no close family to whom to return, whereas most students of the residential schools were taken away from a loving family. On two counts, however, the similarity of the entry into the schools may be drawn. First, the stated philosophy that governed the creation of the Canadian schools was that children should be removed as completely as possible from biological family: " 'To kill the Indian' in the child, the Department [of Indian Affairs] and churches aimed at severing the artery of culture that ran between Aboriginal generations" (Milloy 42). An orphan state enforced by rare contact with first families thus created isolation and alienation within the children, who would be unlikely to re-integrate into their birth-culture on their return home. Further, clergy running the institutions made the selection of children for residential school attendance, disdainful of the requests for regular contact: "All these difficulties over [reunion-creating] vacations could, of course, be obviated by recruiting children who, by European definition, were orphans. It is not surprising, then, to find a marked preference for such children" (Milloy 31). A ballad popularized by Hank Snow called "Nobody's Child" serves as a useful reference in my poetry classes in the north, popular for its sad narrative: "No mommy's arms to hold me and soothe me when I cry,/ Sometimes I feel so lonely, I wish that I could die" (Hibbs/Snow qtd. in Stark Internet 23 July 2005)—captures the condition of abandonment so severe that death would be preferable. Orphaned artificially or in reality, residential schoolchildren often found themselves with no welcoming home on the reserve once their "re-education" was completed. The eradication of connection to home "was included in the indoctrination which was hoped [to] serve as a control even after people had left the direct influence of its perpetrators" (Haig-Brown 120).

Another ideological similarity to the boarding school phenomenon in the fictional and real-life cases exists in the identifying of nuisance that each group, unaffiliated young females and Native children, created for their mainstream patriarchal societies. The societal dilemma concerning Victorian girls and women, that individuals among them might resist the assigning of and training

for socially-expected roles, was called "The Woman Question" from the 1830s onward (Buck 1145-46). The phrase, "The Indian Problem," used by Canadian authority figures at the height of the residential-school era, had an identical origin, according to a 1960 annual report by the Department of Indian Affairs: "The Indian problem exists owing to the fact that the Indian is untrained to take his place in the world. Once teach him to do this, and the solution is had" (Qted. in Milloy 34). Charlotte Brontë's own training for society, especially in the Clergy Daughters School at Cowan Bridge, the experiential equivalent of Lowood (Johnson's Intro to *Jane Eyre* xii), caused the resistance that eventually, paradoxically, gave rise to Brontë's creation of the novel: "The training of Victorian girls in repression, concealment and self-censorship was deeply inhibiting, especially for those who wanted to write" (Showalter 25). I can argue that the most traumatic aspect of life at the schools was not in the interpersonal interactions, but in the spectre of fatal illness which stalked the students.

The disease which claimed the greatest number of girls' lives in the novel was typhoid fever; similarly, this, together with tuberculosis, is the illness which claimed two of Brontë's own sisters while they attended the Clergy Daughters School (Gilbert and Gubar 469). However, the sickness profiled more closely by Brontë is tuberculosis: this ailment threatens and eventually claims the life of the heroic Helen Burns. Conditions at Lowood are described in this way by Brontë: "Semi-starvation and neglected colds had predisposed most of the pupils to receive infection: forty-five out of the eighty girls lay ill at one time" (110). Grant answers an identical question about the denial of good, nourishing food to students in residential schools—and infection as its consequence—by citing widespread examples of ill health due to "scanty servings" and "meat...unfit for human consumption" (115). She continues, leading into a section of No End of Grief devoted to tuberculosis, "Though the staff might not have understood the psychological importance [of food for Native students, it] was used as yet another way to dehumanize and break the spirits of the children in their care" (117).

Student responses to Helen Burns's early death employ terms such as "horrific," and speculate that "they wanted to get rid of Helen Burns so there would be one less female to worry about" (Personal interview 28 April 2005). By contrast to teachers and administrators who remove themselves from the contagious girl, Jane tracks down Helen's sickbed, though she says, "My eye

sought Helen, and feared to find death” (Brontë 116) Jane is discovered at dawn by a sympathetic teacher, “my face against Helen Burns’s shoulder, my arms round her neck. I was asleep, and Helen was—dead” (119). The pathos of the scene caused one northern reader to describe the “enraged” emotion it evoked: “For Helen to die like that was pure evil from the people in charge” (Personal interview 29 April 2005). Whereas the novel explains the conditions as temporary and without active malice toward the Lowood students, texts analyzing the residential-school experience refer to the deprivation and spread of illness as nothing short of cultural genocide, deliberate on the part of planners, administrators and instructors (Grant 24).

Even the strongest critics of residential schools will concede some of the benefits which the better-run, more truly philanthropic institutions offered. Milloy acknowledges “girls... proficient at needlework” and points to some success in “practical training and its carryover to life after school” (165). Brontë characterizes Lowood as having changed once its deficiencies draw the notice of the wider English society, so that eventually Jane can have “the means to an excellent education placed within [her] reach” (121). Characteristic of the school for which Jane eventually becomes a teacher herself is the freedom and guidance given to her that allow her to develop her painting and drawing skills. Confronted about the quality of her training by her new employer Rochester, she speaks frankly of Brocklehurst’s inadequacies as an administrator (“a harsh man [who] starved us” [Brontë 182]), yet she produces her portfolio of paintings when her employer presses her, and even declares in response to his queries, “To paint them, in short, was to enjoy one of the keenest pleasures I have ever known.” Studying scenes such as a seascape with shipwreck, complete with “a drowned corpse glanced through the green water” (185), Rochester replies, “That is not saying much. Your pleasures, by your own account, have been few...” (186) Thereby he identifies the pale rewards of the charity school.

In reaction to the residential school and its “edifications”, a former student/survivor of my acquaintance has produced an artwork generated from the torn-down residential school outside Brandon: she has taken a slim brick from the school’s facade, surrounded it by a braided-rope frame, and painted colourful flowers over the brick-face, topped by a beaming yellow sun. The act of reclaiming the thing it once was for a new use serves as a powerful form of deconstruction, literally and figuratively: no longer a brick in the wall of a confining building governed by an equally

punitive ideology that held her and her classmates within, it has become a decorative, individualized artefact in the hands of a woman with something to say.

A palpable sense of the withheld identity, the denial of birth-family and the imposition of a foreign set of standards and expectations comes through in both Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* and the literature that recounts the residential-school experience. As an understated admission, in 1960, of the negative impact of one Ontario residential school, an unnamed Anglican bishop writes,

The... [school] has over the past years suffered a somewhat unhappy household atmosphere. Too rigid regimentation, a lack of homelike surroundings and the failure to regard the children as persons capable of responding to love, have contributed at times to that condition (Qted. in Milloy 290).

The charity girls in Brontë’s narrative join the pupils of Canadian residential schools as sufferers under patriarchal systems with a terminal disregard for the loving capabilities of their young charges.

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Pat

1. Telling Stories

The coast was late in arriving
For that sudden sunset,
so we invented a new far away,
beautiful, well preserved,
like a bible newly translated
from a long winter’s sleep.

2. Last Breaths

What did we expect? a paper
airplane gliding like a gloved
finger over dust...a conclusion
comforting, almost inaudible
amidst the date palms
And ghosts in the varnish...

3. Anticipation

Sadness so evening kitchen,
so dirty dishes and ice chips,

so twist-off bottle of Ginger Ale...

clouds gathering kindling
from what's left of the treeline
to burn what's left of sleep...

Regrets and disappointments...
Everything addled, a bit
Off kilter, too bright and
too dark at the same time...
All the windows thrown open,
Flocks of heron, egrets come through.

Pills and crumpled napkins,
breakfast crumbs, newspapers
Baking in the oven... Pat telling
stories that don't fit together;
words come first, then the puzzle,
then the empty spaces.

4. Last Day

And on television an old man
Talking to an empty chair, other
Old men bobbing like cut bait
For Leviathan to clear the air...
This is Florida. I can't wait
To get out of here...

A few families on Bonita Beach
Paralyzed by the sun. Stillness
Everywhere. Within the stillness,
A slight rise and fall on the bay
That pulls freighters into the haze.
Does God read my mind?

Maybe, maybe not.
Pat has only a few days.
and I am content to sit here,
mind empty, more or less,
no memories, no lists, no tasks,
just stillness and sand.

God reads my mind.

--Christopher Moylan



Kristjana Gunnars

Garden of Tangier
acrylic on canvas
48" x 60"

The Mutilation of Memory, History and the Body in

Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*

by Karima Arif, La Manouba University, Tunisia

I intend in this present paper to tackle the celebration of mutilated history, memory and the body in Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*. To account for my thesis, I will demonstrate the way the novelist celebrates the sense of chaos, disarrangement and evil surrounding the tripartite of memory, history and the body as basically dramatized and experienced by the protagonist, Billy Pilgrim in either real or fantastic ways. The extended metaphor of mutilation hanging over the novel encapsulates Vonnegut's preoccupation with the return of the repressed which is transposed in the 'aestheticization' of evil in a war novel subtitled originally as *The Children's Crusade* and *A Duty Dance with Death*. Additionally, the novelist provides us with an immeasurably apocalyptic depiction in which history is reduced to ahistoricity, memory to disorder and the body to utter dehumanization and cracking. With this in mind, *Slaughterhouse-Five* exposes an estranged version of celebration, which paradoxically revolves around evil. The discourse the novel displays is, therefore, anarchic knowing the fierce accusation it directs to the politics of evil and violence in the context of war. Nestled together, history, memory and the body are given a voice and credence as well. Here, celebration takes on pronounced ideological and political significance. The brutal mutilation inflicted on history, memory and the body illustrates- at least from Billy's vantage point- the novel's repulsive attitude towards the ideology of war and its makers.

The state of mutilation the novel celebrates is due to ethical relativism and the ruthless atrocity

of an instrumental mind. Fraught with a dystopian stance, Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* exposes a morbid representation of the 'literature of exhaustion' which needs 'replenishment' This claim implies that a postmodern narrative with the novel into question a case study decries the firm belief in perfect imagined communities by anchoring the narrative into reality.

A close look at the novel makes it clear that celebration takes on a pejorative meaning. *Slaughterhouse-Five* is a book that quintessentially portrays a ruthless experience of horrifying non-action on the one hand and a suffusing power of evil on the other. Vonnegut's novel illustrates and registers cogently a string of ethical aberrations and abuses in a war context in the United States of America during the sixties as recounted by a disturbed optometrist named Billy Pilgrim. The sum total of the unethical instances exposed in the narrative find embodiment first in a philosophy of irresponsibility which negates free will and advocates on the contrary the circularity of being and reading history in backwards and forwards and second in a permeating evil and its legacies of corruption, dehumanization and violence.

In line with the dystopian extrapolations *Slaughterhouse-Five* generates, I suggest to consider the undeniable ethical implications, which I do uphold cogently picture in full expression and tone the horrifying Dresden narrative which the novelist /narrator chooses to recount via a telegraphic vision, since none of its chapters, incidents and idiosyncrasies can be easily and directly transposed in ample conventional story-telling and plot. Below is the novel's title which the novelist writes in the following way:

A FOURTH-GENERATION GERMAN-AMERICAN
NOW LIVING IN EASY CIRCUMSTANCES
ON CAPE COD
AND TOO MUCH,
WHO, AS AN AMERICAN INFANTRY SCOUT

HORS DE COMBAT,
AS A PRISONER OF WAR,
WITNESSED THE FIRE-BOMBING
OF DRESDEN, GERMANY,
"THE FLORENCE OF THE ELBE,"
A LONG TIME AGO,
AND SURVIVED TO TELL THE TALE,
THIS IS A NOVEL,
SOMEWHAT IN THE TELEGRAPHIC SCHIZOPHRENIC
MANNER OF TALES
OF THE PALNET TRALFAMADORE,
WHERE THE FLYING SAUCERS
COME FROM,
PEACE.

The message is definitely couched with an explanatory account, on the part of the novelist, of the narrative's genesis, intended purposes and all the perils facing its full transposition in a matter-of-fact tone that could provide a succinct narration and reconstruction of the horrifying event of the Allies' firebombing of Dresden. The sense of discontent is implicitly sensed through the allusion to the "flying saucers" coming from the planet Tralfamadore, which Billy Pilgrim insists on its existence all along his Dresden story. The label, 'peace' already signals the presence of its opposite in Billy's world which is that of the earthlings.

Subtitled as *The Children's Crusade*, the novel looms also as an antidote to the threatening danger of a dwindling ethics orchestrated with a scandalous sense of dehumanization characteristic of the twentieth century, more particularly the American culture and society during the sixties where a cacophony of historical events including the second World War and the Vietnam war is a relevant context. This uneasiness and soar sentiment as to the destiny of the humankind are inculcated in

Billy's racing with his weakness, all the forces he could not defeat or change and most importantly time. The heinous atrocities and brutalities of war are so unspeakable and unjustifiable that it becomes quite challenging to the novelist/ protagonist to come out with an adequate anti-war story at the end dramatizing the war experience in its truthfulness and wholeness. The dystopian vein of the novel is quite synonymous with the depiction of a world stripped of humanity, spirituality and hope. The birds' grunts, "poo-tee-weet" in the first and last chapters voice emphatically the inability to describe the ruthless carnage, mutilation and devastation inflicted on Dresden, due to the irrationality and futility of man.

Hinging on the repercussions of two destructive world wars, the great economic depression, industrialization along with its flagrant abuses of the natural world, the humanist discourse that fuels utopian projects has unfairly consolidated motives of efficiency at the expense of ethical commands and stipulations. Such an intolerable infringement of the "Human" is already a proof of the extended metaphor of mutilation in the novel.

Subtitled as *The Children's Crusade*, the novel dramatizes the crux of all sense of horror, ruthlessness and meaninglessness engulfing war scenes and memories as embodied in the helpless and anti-heroic figure of Billy Pilgrim who came "unstuck" and "spastic" in time, having "no control over where he is going next, and the trips aren't necessarily fun. He is in a constant state of stage fright, he says, because he never knows what part of his life he is going to have to act in next" (23) after going through a string of horrifying and brutal incidents through the course of his life which is now introduced from a non-linear and 'jumbled and jangled" (19) point of view with obvious backwards and flashbacks.

The narrative is an account of a traumatic experience that haunts Billy Pilgrim and the novelist Kurt Vonnegut- knowing the autobiographical hints of the novel- and anchors him paradoxically in an array of times and blurs to a large extent the reader's search for the validity of the Dresden firebombing far from Billy's unbridled imagination and disarranged historicizing of the event round

which the narrative veers. As a representative work of dystopian fiction, Vonnegut's novel displays the opposite of a heavenly world and negates, henceforth, the possibility of setting order instead of chaos. In this respect, it is quite pertinent to underline the main features of the dystopian structure which respectively apply to the protagonist's journey and its resulting ominous destruction.

The narrative is notably a psychic response to a disheartening experience. This means to say it records history in things as perceived by a schizophrenic imagination and mutilated consciousness. This remains unproved unless we go further into the narrative wherein Billy unfolds gradually as thoroughly buffeted by the trauma of war where things seem to him unbelievable to be depicted in their entirety and full chronology. He even acknowledges this fact right from the beginning as he overtly confides to the reader that it is not quite easy for him to re-member the disparate and dispersed parts of his experience of the Dresden firebombing. The great difficulty he faces and which torments him terribly leaves indeed room for the endorsement of twists, inversions, errata in the final chapter concerning the date of Kennedy's assassination, flashbacks and forwards that fit a traumatized memory.

The first anomaly that looms bulk in the novel is the insanity and the 'ahistoricity' of the anti-hero who unfortunately goes through a spastic journeying in the world. Therefore, his credibility is already shaken as he is stripped of his temporal traits.

Right from the beginning, the narrator makes it clear that:

As a trafficker in climaxes and thrills and characterization and wonderful dialogue and suspense and confrontations, I had outlined the Dresden story many times. The best outline I ever made, or anyway the prettiest one, was on the back of a roll of wallpaper. I used my daughter's crayons, a different color for each main character. On end of the wallpaper was the beginning of the story, and the other end was the beginning of the story, and the other end was the end, and there was all that middle part, which was the middle. And the blue line met the red line and then the yellow line, and the yellow line was dead. And so on. The destruction of Dresden was represented by a vertical band of orange cross-hatching, and all the lines that were still alive passed through it, and all the lines that were still alive passed through it, came out the other side.

The end, where all the lines stopped, was a beetfield on the Elbe, outside of Halle” (5).

Here, the choice of an adequate narrative to tell the tale of Dresden is quite suggestive as the novelist chooses a special way of outlining his narrative. By applying an infantile game based on drawing, he maps more or less the edges and boundaries of his narrative account which is going to be a mere personal visualization of events sensed from the lens of an infantile imagination. Being a “jumbled” narrative, *Slaughterhouse-Five* is an anti-war novel that is hard to be situated in time. This assertion takes one to note the seemingly utter confusion the novel’s protagonist goes through in order to find out seeds of a vivid visualization in the portrayal of the firebombing of Dresden by the British and American troops. What seems weird in the book has to be traced back to Billy’s trauma, which causes his hallucinatory and turbulent versions of what he witnessed in the past.

True to his name, Billy is a pilgrim, a wanderer whose journey is ongoing with the promise of achievement already distracted. His being in the world is tightly associated with his quest of spirituality which turns out to be meaningless and absurd. Herein, one could argue that Billy displays the features of a ‘rhizome’¹ in the sense that he has no gravitational center. He is similar to ‘the body without organs’ as he is free floating and in a state of motion all the time. Seemingly, the rhizomic feature of Billy makes of him a mere puppet, a plaything tossed by fatalism unable to control the course of his life.

With this in mind, Billy is incomparable to the utopian investigator who visits a new land to endorse it with his own ideals or even venture himself into a new cultural mode. This fact heralds “the basic narrative pattern—a visitor from another place or time encounters a superior civilization—allows for considerable virtuosity of treatment.” (Kumar 26) In *Slaughterhouse-Five*, Billy visits Tralfamadore though he does not choose to go there. In his eyes, his kidnappers’ way of life and thinking are better

¹ A rhizome refers to the state of being which ceases to be gravitational. It is an entity that is free-floating and in a permanent state of motion, becoming and transformation. The word is used by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in their book, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*.

than the earthlings. Anyhow, Billy’s voyage is a crucial element in the narrative structure of the book. As a detail, Billy’s visit is going to open up room for debate and cultural confrontation between two divergent societies.

Billy is not to be put in the pattern of utopian questers as Lemuel, for instance in Thomas More’s *Utopia*, for he is just a schizoid and a *non-character* (my emphasis). In this particular context, Vonnegut asserts that his novels do not contain characters but rather people as he admits that,

“There are almost no characters in this story, and almost no dramatic confrontations, because most of the people in it are so sick and so much the listless playthings of enormous forces. One of the main effects of war is that people are discouraged from being characters” (164).

As Billy goes home, establishes himself well in the American society, becomes a wealthy optometrist and marries Valencia after the painful chapter of war he has not ceased to spread the philosophy of fatalism maintained by his kidnappers the Tralfamadoreans. Obviously, Billy Pilgrim tends to ascertain the fact that his accounts of the planet Tralfamadore, his capture and his mating with Montana Wildhack the sexy American movie star do not relate to the airplane crash and the grave damage of his skull but rather to days of war, a war in progress as he labels it. In a sturdy contrast to his assertion as to the truthfulness of what happens to him on Tralfamadore, he recounts his journey on radio which drives his daughter Barbara mad as she threatens of sending him to an old people’s house. What can be drawn from Billy’s insistence on the credibility of the Tralfamadore part of his war memory is that one is either introduced to a disturbed psyche that results from trauma or a strategic device the novelist makes use of to reveal the meaninglessness and absurdity of war.

As for the implicit message the novelist communicates through the figure of Billy is plainly an antidote to war and its evils. Vonnegut who shares so many affinities with our passive “hero” seems to be highly critical of the waning of human sympathy, sharing and tolerance. This being the case, he subtitles the novel as *The Children’s Crusade* to enhance his plea for stopping brutal carnage

inflicted on innocent children as the result of the evil intentions of politicians. Notably, the extended metaphor of children permeates the novel in that the soldiers are ironically described as babies, mere automatons in the hands of crazy governors and who are brought to the battlefield despite their teeth. The veterans mentioned in the novel are short of the privileges and qualifications of military men. An illustrative example is Billy who has no military garb and is referred to as the “filthy flamingo” with legs bopping up and down, the three ditched musketeers, the soldiers’ dehumanizing living amid meat lockers and the protagonist’s recourse to childhood whenever he feels tormented by war memories. In chapter four Vonnegut makes the following assertion: “The American fliers turned in their uniforms, became high school kids. And Hitler turned into a baby, Billy Pilgrim supposed” (75).

Billy has no clear temporal positioning in time, for the reason he is unstuck. He is indeed doomed to a state of bouncing, coming back and forth in time. The issue of time is quite significant in that it has to do with the Tralfamadorians’ philosophy of fatalism which consists of a non-linear outlook of history. Billy Pilgrim is so passive and somehow unreal. He does not feel responsible for things he does or what simply happens to him. That is why the teachings of the Tralfamadorians quite appeal to him. He thus clings to thinking in *four dimensions* like them to escape the atrocities of war and his prior feelings of guilt and remorse traced back to some painful incidents throughout his life. His penchant for passivity can be drawn from his resort to the limerick song, the fatal phrase, ‘so it goes’ and other incidents relating to childhood.

In the novel under study, almost all sense of spatiality and temporality is absent or recognized in mere flashbacks and forwards. *So it goes*. The reader is introduced to a narrative where the protagonist mostly embodied in the time-traveller Billy Pilgrim’s response to time and space in a quite peculiar way which calls into question the fallacy of belonging to a desirable future, for the latter itself is recreated in a dreamlike moment in such a way that strips it from its significance. This resulting deformed temporality negates the novel’s association with a utopian impulse that strives to deepen

it in the future.

The problematic treatment of temporality in the novel elucidates illuminating insights into the permeating philosophy of passivity Billy espouses and finds solace in as he could protectively escape his traumas. This strategy of moving back and forth in time introduces Billy as a juggler, a fact that points to a distorted vision and an unintelligent reception of time. This fact bespeaks a discontinuous relationship with reality, which is deeply seated in the concept of estrangement. This state of chaos goes against the utopian creeds of continuity and progress. The collapse of temporality mirrors intelligibility in terms of associating the present with the future, which is the case of Billy whose accounts of pre-war and post-war times intersect and converse by a string of coincidences.

Though, the war part remains the indicator of the present for Billy simply because it is the true tangible thing he could ever see in his traumatic experience of war. Once trauma becomes a suffusing temporal point in Billy’s mind, the need for reorganizing the pattern of events ceases to be of paramount importance, for what counts is the permanent feeling of insecurity, imminent collapse and disdain of all those who resulted in the children’s crusade. At this point, Billy regresses imaginatively in a foetal state as he could not grasp the utility of war. Thus, he dwells in his schizophrenic memory where time is turned on its head.

The tendency towards atemporality is accounted for a non-linear reception of time on the basis of a passive philosophy leaning on accepting things as they are through negating the potential of free will in changing the course of events. Billy’s denial of resistance and transgression has to do with a twofold condition. First, he has undergone a series of events that shunned him from asserting his voice such as his father’s aggressive order ‘swim or sink’ as he intimidated him to drown himself in the pool despite his will. Second, he was sent to warfare without his consent. Apart from this, Billy has always realized the banality of war. So, he lets himself inflicted by it without actively responding to it. One can claim that passivity and non-linearity are inextricably linked, for the former is the immediate outcome of the latter.

The retreat into mere acceptance of fate does vindicate the utter denial of war by flouting its pattern and positioning through the axis of time. The abduction of responsibility, however, conveys an ethical aberration in that one ceases to be responsible for their acts. The disavowal of duty results in non-action that will obfuscate later on the quest of happiness which is the watershed of all utopian projects. In his reflection on freedom and responsibility, Jean Paul Sartre upholds the fact that action-which is enhanced by freedom- results unavoidably in infringement and evil doing.

The novel opens with a description of Billy's disturbed temporal experience of the world, which rather calls into question his utter loss and subordination to forces greater than him which will gradually unfold to the reader as he/she goes further into the narrative. Such a portrayal minimizes the hero's role in a story. It seems that Billy Pilgrim can be easily referred to as an anti-hero, a disfigured character stripped of all the attributes of protagonists. The very thing that grabs one's attention is Billy's living of the world, which does not belong to the past, the present or the future but rather to them all at once. The result is his confusion and inability to comply with the demands of progress and futurism.

Billy recalls more than once his horrible war experience during the Dresden firebombing and his stay in the German camp and dreams of his childhood days and asserts the credibility of his encounter of the Tralfamadorians after the airplane crash. Such events are not recalled in a linear way but rather in an untidy one. What braids them is coincidence. Taking into account the protagonist's indifference to what happened, happens and what will happen in the future lays bare his irresponsibility.

One of the most tragi-comic features associated with Billy is his being in a position that forces him to act out while he cannot indeed. This displays a very intricate condition in that Billy is granted a freedom that is not his. This paradox is what his life is based on. Each time he is expected to act out and resist fatalism, there is somebody who does things for him or boots him out, which is rather ironic and tragic in tandem. In all the parcels of his story he recounts his distorted response to time

that is schizophrenic at heart.

Being not in tune with time elicits an enigma of existence. This applies to Billy who travels in time without being aware of its value or contribution to what makes him what he is. This is testified through his hasty gathering of temporal points in a single instance of fury or hallucination which renders them distant glimpses of a time that ceases to be historical or a living broken body simply because it lacks in depth and consistency owed to logic and progress. Obviously, Billy's outlook of temporality is disarranged. He sees times as being similar. That is why he clings to his alien kidnappers' appreciation of circularity. The allusion to the fourth dimension and cyclicity of being which the Tralfamadorians are content with is a tool used by the novelist to comment on the absence of resistance and the normalization of evil in a war context in which people cease to opt for recuperating what has been lost out of irrationality, greed and materialism.

True to his name, Billy Pilgrim is a mere traveller in time, a 'rhizomic' being who is constantly floating off, moving back and forth in time, knowing not where his extended present will lead him to. He just lets himself retreat into either dreaming of the 'giraffes' or recalling glimpses of childhood and even pre-birth. This attests to his penchant for withdrawal from his surroundings and what anchors him in a post-traumatic reality. In the novel's first and last chapters, Vonnegut espouses a first person point of view in narrating the tale by inscribing his authorial intrusions. Then, all along the middle part of the Dresden war story, Billy moves from a time point to another and rushes to memory once he is confronted with the present.

Billy writes in the second letter in which he illuminates the Tralfamadorians' teachings:

The most important thing I learned on Trafamadore was that when a person dies he only appears to die. He is still very much alive in the past, so it is very silly for people to cry at his funeral. All moments, past, present, and future, always have existed, always will exist. The Tralfamadorians can look at all the different moments just the way we can look at a stretch of the Rocky Mountains, for instance. They can see how permanent all the moments are, and they can look at any moment that interests them. It is just an illusion we have here on Earth that one moment follows another one, like beads on a string, and that once a moment is gone it is gone forever." (26-27)

So, the belief in circularity excludes to a larger extent the idea of progress, which is bound, from an earthly standpoint, to what *will happen*, and not what *has already happened* (italics my emphasis). This conviction in time's fluidity-that is to say its inclusiveness of all times- enhances Billy's indifference to what goes on around him, mostly death which therefore looms as synonymous with life at other previous/forthcoming points in history. The allusion to illusion undermines *action* which applies to evil doing in *Slaughterhouse-Five*. The Tralfamadorian reasoning quite appeals to Billy as it enables him to inhabit spaces of happiness which are miles away from his sordid reality. The Tralfamadorians' philosophy seems to be contradictory, for they accept things as they are and choose what 'interests them' at the same time. This attests to the problematic issue of free will and choice in Slaughterhouse-Five.

The most adequate role he has to perform is that of a juggler and a trafficker of climaxes just to avoid anchoredness which will perish him. His life's course cannot follow a progressive line. This fact is twofold: on the one hand, Billy's passivity or non-action tells of his helplessness in front of the determinations lurking in the outer reality. This is because he he could not unleash the heavy burden of history, memory and the steady process of pilgrimage-though it does not provide him with his desired spiritual elevation. On the other hand it serves as the novelist's tool to register Billy's estranged strategy to converse with history and materialize his war memories and traumas. In the main, passivity is to be set in the realm of non-action which is rather intensified via the retreat into fantasy.

Evil stands for an extended metaphor that encompasses all forms of ethical inadequacy including violence, disillusionment, dehumanization, irrationality and greedy materialism at the expense of spirituality. The visualization of evil operates throughout its banality and normalization in a world that synonymous with 'post-humanism'. The enactment of evil which I do believe is a defining feature of dystopia is utterly synchronized and associated with an apocalyptic vision. The latter is discerned throughout the portrayal and concretization of the catastrophe and the resulting

demise of Dresden, its reduction to a waste land and the anxious grunts of the birds uttering the illegible words, "pee-tee-weet".

The embodiment of evil is seen in the dehumanizing effect of war at material, physical and psychic levels. Starting from war as a lens from which to measure and discuss the issue of evil in the novel, it is paramount to demonstrate its ruthless carnage and mutilation best illustrated in the meat lockers, the delousing station along with its futility and utter association with childish motives. The horrifying world of Dresden displays war dehumanization boosted by man's irrationality and misuse of technology. Evil infiltrates almost everything. It has become part of man's life, behaviour and worldview. It is driven by irrationality, greed and motives of power. The very act of committing evil looms questionable as it is triggered by futile reasons and enacted by passive doers/'non-characters' (my emphasis).

In the novel into question soldiers could easily be referred to as Eichmann's (see Hannah Arendt's dramatization of the character of Eichmann in her famous novel) knowing that thoughtlessness and the absence of critical thinking are the common denominator of all the 'Eichmanns' on earth is the absence of thinking. Their reduction to mere automatons in the war points out their shortage of reason and passivity. Billy and his war companions are driven to war for various reasons-stupid ones indeed-ranging from loss, compulsion, pride and search for heroism.

The novel abounds with allusions to the loss of sight and insight through the dichotomy of the frames and the lenses. Vonnegut asserts that "frames are where the money is" (24). Here, there is an utter denial of lenses which provide sight. The frames stand metaphorically for mere appearances, the shallow coverlet where faith unfortunately resides. The priority that is given to the frames springs from the drives of materialism in the American society during the post-war era. What counts is not sight and knowledge but rather a sugar coating of them. Taken from a literary standpoint, the frames allude to the narrative structuring of the story regardless to its focal meaning.

That Billy is an optometrist is not an arbitrary detail. The novel is in its entirety the steady quest for attaining a full and clear sight of the world. The mention of the frames and the lenses is strategic as it alludes to the function each item serves. Frames describe the very contours of sight while lenses define its core, the ground from which it is urgent to provide a corrective and cure for short-sightedness and a partial consciousness. What is ironic is that Billy is unable of finding out his lenses. He could not, for instance, vindicate his own perception or transfer his "sight" to others. Here, one is led to consider his daughter's interference as her father dares to spread his Tralfamadorian convictions on the radio and through letters he writes for magazines. Undoubtedly, the whole journey he undertakes to adequately find out a better way to come to terms with his existence and war memories ends up being fruitless providing him unfortunately with no healing or wisdom.

The loss of sight does not only apply to Billy but also to humanity in general. The lack of bravery and self-assertion are dramatized through the introverted and turbulent perception of the historical event of Dresden firebombing which will, henceforth, touch on all aspects of existence. The loss of vision manifests at private and public spheres relating to Billy, the professional optometrist and his fellow people and humanity in general. Lenses and frames define, therefore, the dichotomy of wisdom and unreason in the novel. Optometry is a token of science. This might be read as a critique of the scientific discourse deficits in the sense that it cannot ensure the full consciousness and integrity of mankind. No wonder that the frames become a substitute for lenses where sight resides. This reversal heralds the devaluation of the essence for the sake of shallow surfaces. In tune with this assertion, one can make the point that the realization of futility amplifies and lays bare credence to the unbridled and abusive exploitation of science and technology.

Applying the symbolism of the lenses and frames to the narrative as a textual embodiment, it is quite evident that the war story lived by Billy is transposed in a matter of fact tone through a dauntless search for adequate frames-referring to narrative framing and structuring-to accomplish the concretization of the lenses-that is the moral statements the story implies. At this level, one

should note the ending as materialized by mere words uttered by the birds, and not human beings. Therefore, reaching the ultimate core that is to say materializing the particulars of war accounts remains ambiguous as it is mediated by one's memory and perception of the whole event. With this strife between sight and immaturity or childishness, the novel remains entangled in a middle ground where the distance between the lived experience and the mediated one is bound to the narrator's lenses that is to say his sight.

The collapse of sight in the novel is inextricably linked with utterly dystopian consciousness in that it points out the defilement of the reason faculty which lies behind the enactment of actions and their ordering according to a system based on rationality and good judgement. The frames/lenses game is reflective of an unfair and carefree interchangeability of the spiritual with the material. The frames set boundaries and edges to surround the lenses. It is a part/whole relationship now subverted to serve the interest of those who look for appearances, masks and shells, the very bubbles of the dream. The Lions' Club is a miniature representation of the newly rich and opportunists who took advantage of the lean times following two destructive world wars and the all terrific Great Depression. The club makes part of the social jungle of the American society in the sixties. Possibly, the airplane crash which Billy survived in 1968 forms a turning point in his life as it might declare implicitly his abrupt awakening brought about his brain damage-creating in him a fissure, a moment of self-reflection that enables him to realize the absurdity of the life he is leading-based on chance and mischance as well-, which he has not chosen or even had a command on.

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SHADOWS AND MAPS

The scavenger birds and all their emulators kept their disrespectful shadows out of our sight until dawn. No doubt they spent the night parading around in circles, never failing to ignore the pleas of their lust.

It is likely, I have heard, that such birds will be adorned with holy feathers in heaven. That the promised divine comeuppance will indeed occur: last to first, ugliness to beauty, simplicity of mind elevated to a goal we can all achieve.

These birds threaten nightly to devour my liver and soul, aping the eagles that feasted on Prometheus. I need a bodyguard for my soul, which is so priceless no gallery can dream of auctioning it, no corporation can hire it to hawk its sullen wares.

Your soul, too, is priceless. Do not pretend that I am yet another scribe speaking only of himself. Your soul is golden, your soul radiates love in perfect concentric circles around you. Your soul is a map which gives the streets of our universe more coherence than that universe itself—always obfuscating, always coy—is ever willing to offer.

--Steven N. Wingate



Detail from *Garden of Tangier*
acrylic on canvas
48" x 60"

Kristjana Gunnars

This Storm is What We Call Progress: Whitman, Kushner and Transnational Crisis

by Ross K. Tangedal, Kent State University, Ohio

There are some writers who live most significantly for their own age; they are writers who help redeem their time by forcing it to accept the truth about itself and thereby saving it, perhaps, from the truth about itself.

--Irving Howe, *Politics in the Novel*

Interactions between cultures, peoples, and nations have driven the political and social relations of the world. The Americas, seen as a place of exploration and desire, have called for difference since the times of immigration. However, due to internal struggles, the reality of cohesion has remained admittedly silent. Among the callers for action, literature plays a heavy role in metamorphosing the difference inherent in human systems, while simultaneously provoking the need to experiment with new types, modes, and theories. Politically, literature functions on a plane of emotive action, driving readers to resurrect and analyze forgotten times, agonies, and forfeitures. Howe writes, "The novel, to be sure, is inconceivable without an effort to present and to penetrate human emotion in its most private, irreducible aspects; but the direction in which the emotion moves, the weight it exerts, the objects to which it attaches itself, are all conditioned, if not indeed controlled, by the pressures of abstract thought."¹ Considering abstraction, literature relies heavily on the blending of motivations, conducting readers to investigate the resulting action both within the work and themselves. Such

connection to personal identification and connection drives the piece forward, resulting in a newly birthed reaction to it. That reaction then drives the possibility of seeing beyond intrinsic systemic force, feeding into a revolutionary state of change, response, and vision. However, without that initial emotional relationship, such an effect could not exist.

The interconnectivity between internal and external emotional responses provides the pulse for Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* and Tony Kushner's *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches*. Writers for their times, as Howe puts it, each relies heavily on emotional reaction and reading in order to promulgate a national newness. From that newness comes the transnational evolution of characters' identities beyond the nation, thereby constructing a relatively original emotive response in readers and audiences. However, the transformation from nation to transnation brings with it complex systems and endeavors, unearthing the struggles innately found in characters' identities. Such a crisis is a resulting side-effect of morphing between boundaries, breaking down certain staid notions in order to generate newly constituted inclusive ones.

The process of breaking down these notions relies on character structure. The character of Walt Whitman proceeds to react, analyze, and reconfigure the transnational crisis by drawing from experiential knowledge of loss, death, and history, while Tony Kushner's Roy Cohn serves as an allegory for nationalistic anachronisms struggling with the need to accept change for the inclusion of others, for with such inclusion the cultural capital of any nation would increase due to the addition of varying ideals, systems, and politics. Each author focuses on human emotion as the center of a transnational crisis present in both of their times, for in both eras the internal and external battles fought between humans and their identities are evident. The resulting connection between human ideals expands the notion of nation well beyond the Americas, and the remaining effect is one of fragmented history evolving into a more transnational human system.



With music strong I come, with my cornets and my drums,/I play no
marches for accepted victors only, I play marches for/conquer'd and slain
persons.

--Walt Whitman, "Song of Myself"

Walt Whitman's poetry elevates the idea of the *nation* to a more worldwide design, functioning not only as an American ideal but an interconnected human ideal as well. Within Whitman's strategy are two major points of contention, both of which operate as initiators of transnationalism. Crisis, an emotion and state of mind felt as a result of outward stimuli acting upon the individual and the country concurrently (i.e.-the Civil War, the Texas Revolution, the American slave trade), appears prevalently throughout *Leaves of Grass*. The crisis, of both a spiritual and natural/procreative nature, consumes Whitman in certain areas, chiefly concerning subsequent generations (or possible lack thereof). History, traditionally written and experienced in retrospect by the "winners," functions as a record of lost voices, something so irrevocable that Whitman treats stories of these voices with compassionate recollection, as opposed to nationalistic propaganda. In utilizing both crisis and history, Whitman elevates his poetry from nationalistic American verse to a more diverse collection of ideas and images intent on crossing transnational human boundaries, for humanity does not start and end with the self. Instead each must equally experience crises and joys in order to illuminate the self further. That mutual connection through crisis (and history) expands Whitman's reach, for he collectively takes responsibility for the interconnectivity needed to develop a core nationalism, which in turn can then cross over into other nations and other cultures, due mostly in part to his concern with humans both internally and externally.

Crises occur during different points in life, sometimes involving few or many. In the case of Whitman, the self identifies itself through many, and vice a versa. The self operates within the community/nation as both individual and interlocutor. In essence, a crisis upon one is a crisis upon all. As Whitman writes, "Agonies are one of my changes of garments,/I do not ask the wounded person how he feels, I myself become/the wounded person" and in experiencing that mutual pain Whitman,

representing the universal self, speaks for all.² David Lehman labels Whitman, "the product of a crisis, the exposure of the mind to the possibility that death will wipe out consciousness forever."³ Death itself is not an American notion, but rather a human notion. Lehman positions Whitman as a crisis product due to the poet's involvement with diametrically opposed ideas of self and other. By consistently connecting himself, and others, with death (or the fear of death) Whitman presents a crisis to the future of the human condition, not merely the individual. In recognizing death, life (in the form of the body and soul) *must* take center stage, thereby evolving the self into both individual and nation, America into both sovereign and worldly. In so doing, Whitman simultaneously advocates for nationalism and transnationalism to coexist, or possibly become one.

The internal and external human crisis evident in Whitman shows itself within the poetic sequence *Children of Adam*. Whitman proclaims "I sing the body electric,/The armies of those I love engirth me and I engirth them,/They will not let me off till I go with them, respond to them/And disrupt them, and charge them full with the charge of the soul."⁴ In so proclaiming, Whitman immediately identifies with others on a human level, for he offers himself up to scrutiny ("They will not let me off till I go with them"), promises action on behalf of all ("charge them with the full charge of the soul"), and signifies armies with love ("The armies of those I love engirth me and I engirth them"), a combination of opposite systems of emotional strength dependent on Whitman's own brand of connectivity. In connecting love and hate, life and death, Whitman redefines the influence the body and soul has over humanity, both internally and externally. So, as the crisis takes shape, Whitman's attention continues to focus on death (or refusal of procreation) as a human problem, not just an American one.

An example of the internal/external relationship the body and soul have over the crisis of humanity appears in section seven of "I Sing the Body Electric." Concerning a slave at auction, Whitman writes,

Exquisite senses, life-lit eyes, pluck, volition,
Flakes of breast-muscle, pliant backbone and neck, flesh
Not flabby, good-sized arms and legs,

And wonders within there yet .

Within there runs blood,
The same old blood! the same red-running blood!
There swells and jets a heart, there all passions, desires, reachings, aspirations,
(Do you think they are not there because they are not express'd in
Parlors and lecture-rooms?) (260).

His set up is one of outward beauty, describing the musculature, sensuality, and positivistic attributes of the slave body, but he transitions seamlessly toward the internal, proclaiming commonality and mutual consistency within (as signified by the heart and internal passions). Though Whitman deals with binaries frequently, his use of the inner and outer body as images produces striking contrasting imagery. With that image comes the crisis of the body, not only as product but also as human. As Whitman sees it, “This is not only one man, this is the father of those who shall be/fathers in their turns,/In him the start of populous states and rich republics,/Of him countless immortal lives with countless embodiments and enjoyments” (260). The crisis here is invoked by the degradation of the slave, as well as the auctioneers and attendees failure to recognize the democratic potential within. As that occurs, Whitman’s crisis becomes a crisis for humanity, for as he spoke with authority concerning mutual agony, so too does he speak with that same authority here.

As Whitman moves between external and internal crises, the hindrance of procreation, the stoppage of life and generations, spells an end to Whitman’s sense of nation, for without humans humanity ceases. All are included, all races, genders, creeds, and colors, and Whitman’s crisis overtakes his lyrical style by penetrating the text with dark binaries. Whitman struggles with the notions of women (section eight) and body/soul (section nine), stressing the inability of nationalism to solve inner crises effectively. This incapacity, non-recognition of the human crisis, indefinitely results in death not only for the self, but for Whitman as well, for he sees himself as the soul, the self, and the nation. Upon listing numerous bodily images, Whitman finally concludes, “O I say these are not the parts and poems of the body only, but of/the soul,/O I say now these are the soul!” (263). Whitman’s poetry represents the inner and external crises experienced by Americans and others, taking responsi-

bility for nationalism’s needed evolution into transnationalism.

As crises affect the collective security of a nation, an equally important connective agent is histories. Mutually experienced and wrought with imagery, the Texas slaughter section included in “Song of Myself” elicits similar reactions from the self (and nation) as the crisis. If history is written by the winner, how then does Whitman deliver an analysis of worth through death? Also, if histories expand the notion of transnationalism, how can a poem about a distinct moment in *American* history develop wider notions of “nation?” Whitman subverts the normal by dismissing the story of the Alamo as untellable for, “Not one escaped to tell of the fall of Alamo,/The hundred and fifty are dumb yet at Alamo,”⁵ and therefore he tells another tale, another story, another history. By exposing a lesser known story, Whitman rewrites the history of the area, positioning the pride, glory, and heroism on little-known as opposed to well-known figures. Within the tale, Whitman expresses the importance of its telling with the lines,

They [soldiers] were the glory of the race of rangers,
Matchless with horse, rifle, song, supper, courtship,
Large, turbulent, generous, handsome, proud, and affectionate,
Bearded, sunburnt, drest in the free costume of hunters,
Not a single one over thirty years of age (230).

As this story progresses, Whitman rewrites an historical period, intended to propel the other (Mexican soldiers, dead rangers) first instead of after. Histories involve internal and external notions, as do crises; therefore Whitman relies on his reader to position the poem equally with well-known stories. In doing so, the reader can then gain from Whitman a stronger sense of transnationalism, for other countries in other wars have experienced similar situations in similar times. This poem crosses boundaries by developing a substantially human reaction to death and conquest, notions globally relevant and impressionable, with the opening (and similar closing) line, “‘Tis the tale of the murder in cold blood of four hundred and twelve young men” (230). Young *men*, not young Texans, not young Americans, but young *men* who are the focus of the poem, a minor poetic tactic developing major human notions. Such a move explores the difficulty in labeling soldiers good and evil, while

dually suggesting that the reader consider the power of death as a human act, not a national act. The transnationalism developed is not merely a globally external venture, but a humane internal venture as well.

For example, Whitman imagines the Texan soldiers as “large, generous handsome, proud, and affectionate,” preserving their iconography as ones of proud heroism. However, more interestingly, Whitman writes the Mexican soldiers as mere workers. “*The work* commenced about five o’clock and was over by eight,” (230) does not necessarily condemn the soldiers as evil, but rather gives them the possibility of redemption, at least on a personal level. As one Texan tries to pull from his assailants, “the three [Mexican soldiers] were all torn and cover’d with the boy’s blood” (230). Whitman refrains from portraying these men as anything but innocents, just as the Texan soldiers were. Strength of tale, however, lies in the ability of Whitman to defend the slain soldiers (and the others actors) by simply telling their stories. In using both soldiers’ identities, Whitman experiments with transnational possibility, for neither side is explicitly at fault, and the poem does not generously produce a nationalist piece of propaganda (as the Alamo massacre invariably became). Instead, Whitman’s awareness of histories, coupled with emotional responses to those histories, expands the notion of nation to include voices unheard, and virtually unknown, until their unearthing. Whitman utilizes this opportunity and expands upon it, resulting in the self absorbing more voices, more stories, and therefore more humanity.

Irving Howe writes, “The self comes to be treasured as a reserve of consciousness, a resource beyond the press of social forms. The child of history, it erects a defense against the assaults of history.”⁶ In telling this tale, Whitman rewrites an historical moment as it pertains to his ideas of transnational interconnectivity. This story, filled with differing ethnicities, opposing sides, and differing cultures brings together the value-systems of others, forcing a relationship between histories (just as he connected Mexican and Texan soldiers) which must be reconciled. As the crisis before resulted in an enlightened sense of self and nation, so too do those senses heighten after reading/listening to a Texan story which *isn’t* about the Alamo defense. Transnationally, Whitman succeeds

due to his ability to recognize and act upon the crises and histories inherent in humanity. In his Texas segment of “Song of Myself,” Whitman clearly wants readers to experience both internal and external human struggle by recognizing the human element of transnationalism. In supporting neither side, but exclusively the deaths of young men, Whitman recalibrates the nationalist energies inherent in wartime and exposes the international ramifications of human conflict. By exposing one, he exposes all, and by giving us one history, he gives us the opportunity to realize others as equally important in value. Crises and histories *must* be considered as parts of a transnational whole, for through these shared experiences we may be able to understand and expose other important features of ourselves. Walt Whitman rewrote, recognized, recollected, and reestablished humanity’s crises and histories as integral to the growth of the human as one with the world, not solely independent of others. As America goes, so goes the world, and as Walt Whitman goes, so goes the self...and humanity.



...I see the universe, Joe, as a kind of sandstorm in outer space with winds
of mega-hurricane velocity, but instead of grains of sand it’s shards of
glass.

--Roy Cohn, from *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches* by Tony Kushner

As much as Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass* focuses on the transnational crisis of humanity, so too does Tony Kushner’s play *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches*. For Kushner, the crisis (or catastrophe) exists within the innermost identities of many characters (Roy Cohn, Louis Ironson, Joe Pitt, Harper Pitt) and the external notions of AIDS, nationalist politics, and homosexual inclusion. Though wide in scope, the play generously identifies important relations between humans and their systems, and how those systems develop various modes of identity. With Whitman, the main concern lied in the relationship between the interconnectivity inherent in internal and external human

modes. With Kushner, this is also clearly evident; however, his play takes the notion one step further, turning the transnational sentiment of Whitman into a postmodern treatment of the human crisis. He explores this idea in the character of Roy Cohn, who's political and social situations force the elevation of the ideals set forth in Whitman, specifically core nationalism and the required evolution into transnationalism. With *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches*, Tony Kushner's postmodern fantasia, a relationship is formed between internal and external human systems, turning the play's world into a transnational experiment.

Of the main characters, Roy Cohn emerges first as a progenitor of nationalist principles and historical sin. His identity, fragmented yet booming, houses two opposing manifestations: an inner homosexual desire and a power-oriented external drive for power. The relationships formed with Joe Pitt, his doctor, and Ethel Rosenberg, exemplify these divergent ideas, positioning Cohn as *the* nationalistic character throughout the play. Cohn's outer being represents a core nationalism prevalent during the Reagan eighties. Encountering Roy for the first time, Kushner gives us a man, "*conducting business with great energy, impatience and sensual abandon: gesticulating, shouting, cajoling, crooning, playing the phone, receiver and hold button with virtuosity and love.*"⁷ This representation of power, evidenced by the way he is described doing business, continues in his first lines: "*(Hitting a button): Hold. (To Joe) I wish I was an octopus, a fucking octopus. Eight loving arms and all those suckers. Know what I mean?*" (11). The notion of love is a confusing one, for love and Cohn's supposed "sensual abandon" do not coexist comfortably. It is with such abandon that Cohn operates, while juxtaposing it with careful sensuous wording. At times, Kushner writes Cohn as caring, yet always reverts his attention back to himself. Further, the conversation with Joe maintains a static relationship as opposed to an active one, for Cohn obviously remains above Joe in stature, volume, and intention (judging solely by the tone of their first conversation). The love Cohn speaks of instead shows the nationalistic intent of power, supplying as many pliable persons with a false sense of security while simultaneously breaking the community in order to manufacture "progress."

Progress, seemingly at the core of nationalism, produces a binary in the human participants

(community vs. individualism). In splitting the system in such a way, Cohn's notion of the world as a whole begins (along with his passing comment about love) the transnational experiment. In passing fashion, Cohn proclaims to Joe, "I see the universe, Joe, as a kind of sandstorm in outer space with winds of mega-hurricane velocity, but instead of grains of sand it's shards and splinters of glass. You ever feel that why? Ever have one of those days?" (13). Accepting the chaos of the universe as insurmountable only generates more doubt in the universe, which leads to the need for moral progress. Again, these lines give an early sighting of Kushner's portrayal of nationalism, and who represents that system. The more chaos, the greater need for moral control, a touchstone of Cohn's political agenda. Of course Kushner intends for the reader/audience to disregard Cohn's notions, rather intending them to see Cohn as archaic, unrealistic, and mad. However, David Savran writes that, "*Angels is carefully constructed so that communitarianism, rationalism, progress, and so forth, will be read as being preferable to their alternatives: individualism, indeterminacy, stasis, and so forth*"⁸ Savran's reading of progress is not morally centered (as Cohn's supposedly is) but practically centered, focusing on the inclusion of differing moralities and systems over exclusion.

However, as the play progresses, Cohn's systems are interrupted by his own inner desires. Cohn's diagnosis with AIDS (and the discovery of his obvious homosexual desires) proves a turning point in the representation of his character, for we are now exposed to the internal human situation of Cohn, as opposed to his blustering external cover. Cohn informs his doctor,

This is reality. I have sex with men. But unlike nearly every other man of whom this is true, I bring the guy I'm screwing to the White house and President Reagan smiles at us and shakes his hand. Because *what* I am is defined by *who* I am. Roy Cohn is not a homosexual. Roy Cohn is a heterosexual man, Henry, who fucks around with guys.⁹

The labeling Cohn worries himself with only propagates the notion of internal over external crisis, for regardless of result, Cohn's inner self cannot equal his outer anymore. The life led has produced an irreversible consequence, not unlike Whitman's ruminations on death. In the diagnosis comes a metaphor for evolution as well, for the progressive nationalism Cohn represents now becomes com-

plicated as it slowly disintegrates with him.

Kushner's catastrophe concerns itself with this transition between the internal and external. Cohn's diagnosis not only offers a wildly divergent path for the play to explore, but also complicates a national definition and identity. Does the individual suffer slowly and without others, or does the country embrace a communitarian sense of inclusion and progress? According to Ranen Omer-Sherman, "Unlike virtually every other character who in one form or another embraces some confidence in historical and individual progress, Cohn manifests a fatal indifference to all but his own jungle struggle. His devastatingly morbid Social Darwinism infects his vision of eternity."¹⁰ Cohn's futility frames the play as a harbinger for social evolution in the form of transnational hope. Unlike the archaic nationalist diatribes Cohn so freely spouts, Kushner's prime intention is to excoriate such actions by realizing a more inclusive societal framework.

Of Cohn's diatribes, his notion of the father, a key concept in the evolution of his nationalist approach, cloaks Cohn even further in crisis. "I've had many fathers, I owe my life to them, powerful, powerful men. Walter Winchell, Edgar Hoover, Joe McCarthy most of all...the son offers the father his life as a vessel for carrying forth his father's dream."¹¹ In listing such figures, Kushner intends for his readers/audience to realize their legacies in the American political canon. Hoover and McCarthy, namesakes for intolerance, paranoia, and nationalistic fervor (in the form of both black lists and communist witch hunts), represent Cohn's inability to see their hidden legacies as allegedly closeted gay men. If power plays the major role in progress, these figures complicate that power by their internal inability to evolve. Cohn's eternity truly is infected by these relationships, for their lack of internal expression in an external manner forces them into the likes of the powerless, as opposed to the powerful.

Unable to understand the loss, Cohn continues expressing the need for the centralization of power. "WASHINGTON! When Washington called me I was younger than you [Joe], you think I said 'Aw fuck no I can't go I got two fingers up my asshole and a little moral nosebleed to boot!' When Washington calls you my pretty young punk friend you go or you can go fuck yourself side-

ways 'cause the train has pulled out of the station, and you are *out*, nowhere, out in the cold. Fuck you, Mary Jane, get outta here" (106). At the expense of practical progress is opportunity cost, if and when they arise. Such individual gain breaks down the integrity of inclusion, as Cohn says, "Life is full of horror; nobody escapes, nobody; save yourself. Whatever pulls on you [Joe], whatever needs from you, threatens you. Don't be afraid, people are so afraid; don't be afraid to live in the raw wind, naked, alone...Let nothing stand in your way" (58). The need for others' involvement in the life of Cohn only exist as gateways to personal success, not communal success. Cohn's notion of fear couples with his earlier comment about love, utilizing sensually expressive emotions to downplay the need for change. If power and the individual are the bulwarks of humanity, the objectivist self floating through shards of glass and horrors, then Cohn need not worry himself with others. However, his internal struggles with his own identity force a charged reaction to anti-nationalist actions, positioning himself as a fervent American, something he needs in order to survive. He must be remembered as a patriot, a man of moral progress in a time of immoral chaos.

The prime example of remembrance, Ethel Rosenberg, allows Cohn to completely express himself to Joe; "That sweet unprepossessing woman...I pleaded till I wept to put her in the chair. Me. I did that...Why? Because I fucking hate traitors. Because I fucking hate communists. Was it legal? Fuck legal. Am I a nice man? Fuck nice...You want to be nice, or you want to be Effective? Make the law, or subject to it. Choose" (108). The passion for making sure Joe knows 'he did it' marks a crucial point in the transnational experiment. Roy Cohn stopped communist infiltration. Roy Cohn convicted a traitor. Roy Cohn saved America from the outsiders encroaching upon it. He is, "the paradigm of bourgeois individualism--and Reaganism--at its most murderous, hypocritical, and malignant,"¹² while all the while professing love for country, creed, and societal loyalty. In Rosenberg, Cohn has placed all energies, all legacies, developing himself as the nationalist incorrect with both himself and his worldview. Through Cohn, Kushner pushes through nation and into transnation, allowing his hatred to spew forth as fodder for the progression of humankind.

However, the play does not easily treat community or individuality. The play itself is a list of

ambiguities, utopian/dystopian worldviews, freedom/insecurities, and historical sin on both ends. Kushner never allows his audience to comfortably claim meaning or intent, instead relying on the play's panoply of incendiary actions (mostly through Cohn) to process a notion of crisis. Transnational crisis, the confusion inherent in settling on an expanded view of the world community, separates Kushner's characters ideologically, politically, and morally. Savran continues, "the play's ambivalence...is not simply the result of Kushner hedging his bets on the most controversial issues. Rather, it functions...as the play's political unconscious, playing itself out on many different levels: formal, ideological, characterological, and rhetorically,"¹³ and through these various modes Kushner constructs the transnational experiment. Roy Cohn, as nationalist caretaker, pleads for social integrity, when his own identity is anything but. This personal crisis manifested in Cohn becomes a metaphor for the crisis inherent in all of us, and our varying nations.

The confusion, distortion, fragmentation, and lucidity of the play hearkens to Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, but in a postmodern fashion. While Whitman seems ready to explain away the difference inherent in humanity, Kushner embraces it confidently, allowing the fractious nature of both humanity and nationality to struggle for their own resolution. Of course, that resolution remains futile, for, as the title suggest, the millennium approaches, but what will it bring? Change? Newness? Acceptance? Kushner considers these notions while embracing the situational needs of his characters. For Cohn, his needs rely solely on his own image and power, regardless of time or place. Ethel Rosenberg's emanation tells Cohn, "The shit's really hit the fan, huh, Roy?" to which he replies, "From the throne of God in heaven to the belly of hell, you can all fuck yourselves and then go jump in the lake because I'M NOT AFRAID OF YOU OR DEATH OR HELL OR ANYTHING!"¹⁴ Cohn's blustering, and fervent nationalistic endeavors, has finally caught up with him, for the world will resolve him the only way it can, by succumbing him with the AIDS virus and a broken internal identity. In hallucinating Ethel Rosenberg, Cohn shows his guilt, even if he doesn't say or show it. To the end, Cohn never allows his external self to fail, causing his internal self to self-destruct.

Kushner inevitably saw the wrongs perpetrated during the Reagan eighties, while simultane-

ously commenting on the lack of resolution. Both parts of the play, *Millennium Approaches* and *Perestroika* end with the same lines spoken by the Angel, "Greetings, Prophet; The Great Work begins: The messenger has arrived" (119), intending a non-resolution in the present. The great work is ongoing, the messenger always arriving, for humanity, in its basest sense, requires the notion of reconciliation to function. From a transnational standpoint, Kushner utilizes Roy Cohn as the nationalist grandmaster, while exposing the need for such nationalism to evolve into a transnational human spirit. As Whitman saw the internal and external human modes of characters interconnected, so too does Kushner, while all the while retaining the need for the transformation of nation, world, and human to occur. The futile Cohn mentality leads to destruction of self, which in turn leads to the ignorant reduction of *world* to *nation*. Readers need not require Cohn's redemption; they need only recognize the lack of it due to inner struggle with external needs.

NOTES

- 1 Irving Howe, *Politics in the Novel* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1957), 21.
- 2 Walt Whitman, "Song of Myself," *Leaves of Grass*, ed. George Stade (New York: Barnes & Noble Classics, 2004), 228.
- 3 David Lehman, "The Visionary Walt Whitman," *The American Poetry Review* 37, no. 1 (2008): 12.
- 4 Whitman, "I Sing the Body Electric," *Leaves of Grass*, 254-255.
- 5 Whitman, "Song of Myself," *Leaves of Grass*, 230. Hereafter quotations from "Song of Myself" are cited in text.
- 6 Irving Howe, "History and the Novel," in *The Norton Anthology of Literary Criticism*, ed. Vincent B. Leitch. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001), 1537.
- 7 Tony Kushner, *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches*, (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1992), 11.
- 8 David Savran, "Ambivalence, Utopia, and a Queer Sort of Materialism: How *Angels in America* Reconstructs the Nation," *Theatre Journal*, 47, no. 2 (1995): 215.
- 9 Kushner, *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches*, 46.
- 10 Ranen Omer-Sherman, "The Fate of the Other in Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*," *MELUS: The Journal of the Society for the Study of Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States*, 32, no.

2, (2007): 17.

11 Kushner, *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches*, 56.

12 Savran, "Ambivalence, Utopia, and a Queer Sort of Materialism," 211.

13 Ibid., 208.

14 Kushner, *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches*, 111.

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BRAHMANS BENEATH THE SKIN

Everyone is exchanging new hats for old, piling plenty upon plenty. Declaring that no thought, however vague, should be permitted to leave our mouths without submitting to the joint caress of those minds we have deemed most holy.

Sirens ring to celebrate the separation of all from all. Private eyes look upon one another seeking private thoughts, which dance unabashed in the air seeking new masters. Who would you be if your thoughts desired another home? Would you miss them sorely or, like the brahman you are beneath the skin, dismiss them and appropriate the dreams of another before strolling on?

Answer my question. But first inhale as deeply as you have ever imagined—have no fear of destroying the fragile tissue within you, for it is eternal. Then entertain yourself with fantasies of bondage, certain that release will come. For what is more lovely than the thought of love that does not reinvent itself, but pauses briefly to smile before expiration?

You cannot answer this second question? Then you are not worthy to answer my first. Go home, feed your pets and your demons. Sleep and try again.

--Steven N. Wingate

Kristjana Gunnars

Silk Road
acrylic on canvas
48" x 96"



Reading *Shame*: A History of Context

by Carolyn Owenby, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts

When reading the novels of Salman Rushdie, and particularly a novel like his 1983 *Shame*, one can easily become overwhelmed or consumed by the greater Rushdie-context: the author, his other novels, and the events of and following the fatwa in 1989. *Shame* in particular is often read within a greater context, not so much of the fatwa—although after 1988 and the publication of *The Satanic Verses*, the book received more critical attention (Booker 4) and its sales seem to have increased (McDowell A8)—but instead of Rushdie as author, and of his earlier novel, *Midnight's Children* in 1981. *Shame*, itself shortlisted for the prestigious Booker Prize, is often seen in the shadow of *Midnight's Children*, which was awarded the Booker Prize in 1981 and the Booker of Bookers Prize in 1994, among others (*The Rushdie Letters* 187). A novel which describes itself as a sort of “modern fairy tale” about “not quite Pakistan” (quotes that become ubiquitous in any reading), *Shame* is often seen as a sequel to this “best-known” (Washington G8) Rushdie novel before 1989, the one that made him famous (Enright 1), *Midnight's Children*. Seen often as “a somewhat less important work” (Booker 4), *Shame* has been read innumerable times as simply a rewriting of *Midnight's Children* in a Pakistani context, rather than an Indian one. Despite remaining largely overshadowed in this way, *Shame* has received a fair amount of critical attention, both in conjunction with the earlier novel and on its own, for its literary and narrative techniques, and for its exploration of themes of political corruption, repression of women in Pakistani culture, ideas of shame and shamelessness, and migrancy (Frank 131). This project, then, will briefly discuss the ways in which *Shame* has been analyzed in conjunction with *Midnight's Children*, and will then examine the ways in which it has been viewed on its own, outside of that earlier context. The question, however, remains: although the book has managed to extricate itself, at some points, from the context of *Midnight's Children*, can it possibly remove itself from that greater context of Rushdie-as-author as well?

Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and *Shame* have been described as "the definitive novels of the cracking apart of the [Indian] subcontinent, hammered into a single entity over the course of the centuries, into three nation-states" (Desai 1). *Midnight's Children* is about India and *Shame* is about Pakistan; both novels take aim at political figures—the former at Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, and the latter at the relation between Pakistani Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and the General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq. Perhaps because it is "a much more severe and despairing book, more bleak and claustrophobic" (Ahmad 139), one which "takes the 'fantastic' devices found in *Midnight's Children* one stage further" (Parnell 255), *Shame* has been viewed as a much more political novel than its predecessor. As a result, in Pakistan the book was banned, although initially celebrated by the press (Salman Rushdie Interviews 67) and described as 'popular' by critics such as Inderpal Grewal (Dingwaney 158). Even this ban, however, can hardly be seen outside of the context of Rushdie's other novels: it becomes part of an escalating set of reactions—Indira Gandhi's lawsuit for slander in response to *Midnight's Children*, Zia-ul-Haq's ban of *Shame*, and finally the Ayatollah Khomeini's fatwa in response to *The Satanic Verses* (Leonard 4). Stylistically and thematically, the two earlier novels share much more than political reactions, however. In each, Rushdie places the narrator as a sort of historian, recounting the (political) history of his own country, but also presenting history as "a kind of nightmare, full of distortions and absurdities" (Kakutani BR10). Both books "build imaginary countries and try to impose them on the ones that exist" (Rushdie, *Shame* 86, another quote which becomes nearly ubiquitous in discussion of *Shame*). Themes such as voyeurism—demonstrated in *Midnight's Children* through Dr. Aziz, falling in love through a perforated sheet, and Omar Khayyam in *Shame* doing the same through a telescope—recur in both novels (Durix 460). The idea of nation permeates both texts as well, but to different ends: in *Midnight's Children*, the book's narrator Saleem, born at midnight on the day of India's independence, comes to represent an entire nation; in *Shame*, one family from "Pakistan's ruling class" is the center of the book, functioning to expose Pakistan's "chicaneries and shamelessness" (Dingwaney 161). Parallels between characters in the novels, and between these characters and those of *The Satanic Verses*, appear in criticism, such as in Timothy Brennan's assertion that, "Exactly parallel to the coupling of Saleem and Shiva in *Midnight's Children*, or Iskander and Raza in *Shame*, Gibreel Farishta and Saladin Chamcha are the two that make one in Rushdie's world" ("The Cultural Politics" 121).

Midnight's Children and Omar Khayyam of *Shame* is examined. Many links can be made between these two men: they are both characterized similarly, as "inverted, infatuated, insomniac, stargazing, fat" (Lakshmi 153), and they both, in some fashion, have three mothers (Amanuddin 44). However, Rushdie also constructs these men as opposites. Saleem dominates his novel; he is the center around which his story takes place. Omar, on the other hand, is an entirely marginal character, dominated by the other characters and by the events of the novel. In a lecture entitled, "*Midnight's Children* and *Shame*," Rushdie explains that, "I wanted a character as unlike Saleem as possible. Saleem's entire personality has to do with the idea of being central to things. And I thought this time I would like to talk about... a very peripheral figure like the hero, so-called, of *Shame*" (13).

Another parallel, between the narrator figures in *Midnight's Children* and *Shame*, has received particular attention in literary criticism. In *Midnight's Children*, Rushdie sets up "intriguing relationships between the narrator and the listener," as between Saleem and Padma. He sets up a parallel relationship to this, between author and reader, in *Shame*, "where the author continues to intrude and involve the reader in the 'gossip'" (Amanuddin 42). However, the voices of these narrators differ. Where, as Sara Suleri indicates in her book *The Rhetoric of English India*, Saleem's narrative "unfolds with the disarming quality of a joke that knows it is a little too long," the narrator of *Shame* is "ill at ease" with the novel's "own sense of fabrication" (178). Although different, both narrative voices Rushdie constructs as the most appropriate voice to narrate his particular story. Saleem, born at the same moment as the independent nation of India and bound to the nation's fate in a bodily sort of way, becomes the most appropriate narrator for this history of India; India's story is his own story. Conversely, the narrator of *Shame* is a migrant, an outsider, an immigrant, and is writing the story of a nation made of immigrants, a nation marked absolutely by post-coloniality. Therefore, although speaking with different voices, these narrators gain their authority to speak through the same means (Dingwaney 161). *Midnight's Children* and *Shame* have also been discussed as novels of 'leavetaking,' wherein Rushdie leaves the country where he resides to return to his two homelands, "the country of his birth (India)" in the first, and "that second country (Pakistan) where he tried, half-heartedly, to settle down and couldn't" (Ahmad 135). In *Shame* in particular, Rushdie and his narrator (if one can tell the difference) attempt to write their "last words on the East from which, many years ago, [they] began to come loose" (*Shame* 22).

Even more often in discussion of Rushdie's early novels, the parallel between Saleem Sinai of

Although the pairing of these novels proves fruitful, at some point it becomes possible to examine *Shame* without relying on its comparison with *Midnight's Children*. Critics often begin with a discussion of the novel's form, and of its position as both a postcolonial novel, and a postmodern one. Aijaz Ahmad explains in his book, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures*, that "what is new, and decidedly postmodernist, is the emphasis we find in *Shame* on the productivity, rather than the pain, of dislocating oneself from one's community" (134). Recalling the narrator's voice in *Shame* as the voice of the immigrant, the meaning of this becomes clear: Rushdie's narrator (and Rushdie himself) writes—is able to write, to tell stories—because he is a migrant (an "Outsider! Trespasser!" he says in *Shame*, 21, another quote which recurs frequently in discussion of this novel).

The constant interruptions and the self-reflexive quality of the narration in *Shame* are both postmodern techniques as well (Cook 27). Sara Suleri describes the novel as "a televised narrative, fully equipped with commercial interruption and a will to remote control" (182). Critics often, then, view the novel as functioning doubly: first as historical allegory, and second as postmodern narration, interrupting its own story, creating a sort of "revisionary historiography" (Spearey 173) out of the novel. Rushdie's revisionary tactics do not, however, stop here, and they begin to serve thematic purposes in the text. Rushdie's novel "addresses the unspeakable monsters and the silenced spectres that overspill the borders of Pakistan and its post-Independence history by reconfiguring not only official historical accounts" (Spearey 171), but also many classic, and particularly Gothic, texts. Among those referenced, by Susan Spearey and other critics, are the *Thousand and One Nights*, *Tristram Shandy*, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, *Frankenstein*, *Jane Eyre* and *Beauty and the Beast*. These last four texts, in particular, demonstrate the theme of monstrosity throughout Rushdie's novel, a theme I will discuss in more detail later.

In addition to the novel's postmodern narrative techniques, the discussion of *Shame's* form as a sort of parody arises often in literary criticism. Over and over again, critics characterize the novel as a farce, as a "parodying of revenge tragedies" (Fletcher 99), and as filled with "grotesque scenes of 'black comedy'" (Albertazzi 12). Rushdie constructs a story with two main political figures, the caricatures of Zia-ul-Haq and Bhutto, and explains that, "the idea that a man you place in power to be your yes-man, should end up as your hangman... had some of the configurations of high Shakespearean tragedy," but that these people, Zia and Bhutto, "were not high Shakespearean tragic

figures. They were much lower-grade figures" ("*Midnight's Children* and *Shame*" 15). In the novel, then, Bhutto becomes "a playboy-turned- power-mad politician whose cunning wins him undeserved popularity," and even his daughter, the later Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, is parodied: she becomes "the famous 'virgin Ironpants'" (Pipes 48). In this way, it becomes clear in *Shame* that, "Rushdie sees our age as a kind of burlesque, 'in which clowns re-enact what was first done by heroes and by kings'" (Albertazzi 12). Rushdie uses ridicule and satire to reveal the nature of those (real-life) powerful political figures he parodies, but he takes the idea of parody further. The novel itself parodies the Qur'an, the authoritative text for such a Muslim country as Pakistan. The novel contains "portentous capitalizations... elliptical utterances, and an absurdly elaborate number symbolism," as well as "run-on words [which] probably mimic the practice of Arabic calligraphers, who often connected adjacent letters," (Brennan, "*Shame's* Holy Book" 112).

Parodying this authoritative text, the text which gives Pakistan's leaders (and therefore Rushdie's caricatured targets) authority, Rushdie "launches his assault on the politics of the Pakistani state" (113). Parodying the authorities and the holy book of Pakistan, the political aims of the novel become quite plain, but Rushdie's narrator (and also Rushdie himself) attempts to shield himself from a political backlash, calling his story simply a "modern fairy-tale" (*Shame* 68). Although the story obviously "moves through the families of Iskander Harappa (the Bhutto figure) and Raza Hyder (the man who would be dictator [Zia])" (Hussain 6), it does so with a disclaimer: that this story is fictional (purely fictional, the narrator pretends he wants his audience to believe). Vijay Lakshmi explains that, "The use of fable gives [Rushdie] a tool for 'off-centering' reality, so the reader will not go hunting for the missing pieces that could make a puzzle whole. Time and again the narrator in *Shame* reminds us of the make-believe character of this book" (153). However, Rushdie knows well enough—and did even before the 1989 fatwa—the dangers of writing such a political novel, even despite his insistence on its status as "fairy-tale." *Shame's* narrator knows this well enough, adding to his disclaimer, "But suppose this were a realistic novel! Just think what else I might have to put in" (*Shame* 68). However, because his novel is fairy-tale only (he insists yet again), "nobody need get upset, or take anything [he says] too seriously. No drastic action need be taken, either" (*Shame* 68). Of course this insistence, this pretending that his audience should believe him, only reaffirms for the reader the fact that this is not simply "fairy-tale." Knowing that he is "Exposing the practices of the ruling elite, he tells us that his writing could be censored" (Grewal 127); and of course his novel was censored, banned from sale in

Pakistan. The forewarnings here become more striking when one pauses to think of the fatwa affair in 1989. In some way, although *The Satanic Verses* must be seen ostensibly as a much less political novel than *Shame* and even *Midnight's Children*, Rushdie's forewarning here is an "eerie foreshadowing" (Moss 28) of the fatwa affair. Reading *Shame*, "now with the benefit of hindsight," one sees the "hints about the predicament in which Rushdie, with the publication of his next novel, would find himself" (Duffy 98).

Returning to Rushdie's use of "fairy-tale," many critics have discussed the importance of this genre—of this self-proclaimed genre—in the greater scheme of the novel itself, rather than its relation to a possible outside censor. *Shame* is a novel "whose 'logic' is partly that of the fairy tale, partly that of the nightmare" (Enright 1). Susan Oommen points out Rushdie's references to *Sleeping Beauty* and *Beauty and the Beast*, particularly through the story of Sufiya Zinobia, the girl who becomes a beast throughout the story (37). The fairy-tale form also begins to demonstrate a theme in the reception of the novel as a whole: an underlying complicity Rushdie has with the oppressive English colonizers, or the oppressive, patriarchal, post-colonial government that has taken its place. The fairy-tale functions doubly. Timothy Brennan explains in his essay, "*Shame's* Holy Book," that, first, "the genre of the fairy tale is that of the subversive—the covert satirist operating under conditions of intense repression" (116).

However, and perhaps more importantly, "the origins of the fairy tale itself are closely associated with the whole process of European nation-forming" (116). Rushdie—not only as migrant, but as migrant who "has lived most of his adult life in England" (Parnell 236), the country of India and Pakistan's former colonial oppressors—cannot escape the tropes of the West. The novel, operating "with the conventions of western literature" (Parnell 237) and in the English language, the language of the colonizer, "inevitably evokes some of the baggage of colonialism and hints at a potential complicity in an insidious, ongoing, cultural imperialism" (Parnell 237). Written from this very particular migrant position, narrated from that "new position of belonging and not-belonging" (Hussain 8), *Shame* is an inherently conflicted novel. Rushdie and his narrator 'belong' in the East, but both are immigrants. Both possess a dual sort of identity, which enables in *Shame* this "critique so completely 'felt' that it could only have come from a native, and yet so imbued with English points of reference that it could not possibly have" (Brennan, "Shame's Holy Book" 121). Many critics discuss this sort of dual,

migrant identity in *Shame*, and also the status of the English language in the novel. Cynthia Carey Abrioux indicates that, "the novel becomes the chosen site for [Rushdie's] creative battle with the English language" (73). Rushdie writes in English, borrowing from western texts, and writing in the western "fairy-tale" form, but he also borrows from eastern texts, and hybridizes the English language, turning it also into a sort of oral-sounding narrative, in a more eastern tradition. He uses "jokes, linguistic inventions, puns, journalistic-type passages, interior monologues, lists, oaths transcribed literally from Urdu... run-on-words, run-on-sentences" (Abrioux 74). Despite the fact, then, that Rushdie's "use of a foreign language becomes a mark of complicity, even conspiracy" (Hussain 13)—a mark of his English-ness which opposes his Pakistani-ness, or even his general Eastern-ness—his migrant, double identity complicates things. Rushdie must, in some way, be seen as a conspirator with the colonizer, using their language, borrowing from their literature. However, his origins cannot be changed by his immigration—he may be complicit with the colonizer, but as a migrant from the East, Rushdie may never fully become the colonizer. Although in self-exile, and although because of this Rushdie is "free to choose the degree of elasticity of that bonding [to Pakistan]" (Ahmad 131), the bond exists and, in some way, is irrevocable.

Perhaps the most often quoted phrase in the discussion of *Shame*—whether in newspaper reviews or in scholarly articles—regards the location of the novel. Rushdie's narrator explains: "The country in this story is not Pakistan, or not quite. There are two countries, real and fictional, occupying the same space, or almost the same space. My story, my fictional country exist, like myself, at a slight angle to reality" (22). This phrase is quoted in nearly every mention of *Shame*, from book reviews (Enright, Towers), to newspaper articles on Rushdie or his works (Wood, Lehmann-Haupt), to critical essays (Suleri, Fletcher). Suleri indicates that the 'not- quites' and the 'almosts' here are a symptom of the narrative voice: "A text of such nervous self-consciousness is of course aware of [its] undoing, and attempts to collaborate in its own unraveling in a series of complicated disclaimers" (179). Of course, just as when Rushdie's narrator pretended to insist on the novel as a mere "fairy-tale," here his insistence on the novel's location as outside of reality only serves to validate its location: "a country which is 'not quite Pakistan' and 'not only Pakistan' but is, in the most obvious ways, Pakistan" (Ahmad 135). In "*Midnight's Children* and *Shame*," Rushdie himself, not as narrator and not in a reverse-psychological sort of logic, warns that, "it will be very easy when reading *Shame*... to forget that it's about a real place" (15). Certainly, Rushdie aims his critique not only at Pakistan; He

explains that it, “obviously does have applications elsewhere. It’s about a world that’s so locked into itself that it cannot escape from its own logic—and the processes of that logic continue to unfold, generation after generation” (Salman Rushdie Interviews 67). The political warnings Rushdie’s novel provides could be applicable in any such world, any such country, but of course the location of this book as also in Pakistan, and primarily in Pakistan, is certain. The novel “uncovers and exposes the illegitimacy and brutal authoritarianism of neocolonial regimes in Pakistan” (Abrioux 67). Those two crucially important characters—Iskander Harappa and Raza Hyder—in fact are, despite the ‘series of complicated disclaimers,’ the figures of Zia-ul-Haq and Bhutto. The novel “reads Zulfikar Ali Bhutto’s career as a trope for Pakistani history, which is represented as an elitist and familial power struggle between the flamboyant and Westernized Harappa and the militaristic and Islamic Gen. Raza Hyder” (Suleri 182).

In a reading of *Shame’s* location in ‘not-quite Pakistan,’ one must also keep in mind the relationship Rushdie himself has with the ‘real’ Pakistan. Rushdie was born in India, in Bombay, and was schooled in England. His Muslim family eventually migrated to Pakistan, where Rushdie lived for a short period of time. However, whereas India may be viewed as “the country of Rushdie’s own cherished childhood” (Ahmad 140), Pakistan was nearly unbearable for him. It is “a society that Rushdie never knew in those golden years before the uprooting” (Ahmad 140). His family’s migration to Pakistan and away from his beloved Bombay upset Rushdie. Therefore, Pakistan must be seen “as a trope for betrayal: its betrayal, to him, of the idea of a home, and his betrayal of it, in his need to have none of it” (Suleri 177). Rushdie’s very harsh criticisms of the closed society and the oppressive government of Pakistan, then, cannot come as much of a surprise. Aijaz Ahmad explains that Rushdie moved away from Pakistan “because he had found the country ‘suffocating’ and ‘claustrophobic’” (133). There is to Rushdie a feeling in Pakistan “of being contained, and that was what [he] wanted to write about [in *Shame*]” (*Salman Rushdie Interviews* 66). In many ways, Rushdie’s focus on one family, one very small group of the Pakistani ruling elite, demonstrates the claustrophobia he feels is characteristic of Pakistan.

Rushdie also focuses on Pakistan as a manmade creation, a sort of absurd, implausible monster of a creature, “that country divided into two Wings, a thousand miles apart, that fantastic bird of a place, two wings without a body” (*Shame* 186). Implausible, absurd—but of course this is the

real Pakistan, not simply Rushdie’s ‘not quite.’ Susan Spearey explains that, in *Shame*, “moments of origination, such as the foundation of the Islamic state of Pakistan in 1947, are depicted quite clearly as acts of fabrication, as monstrous creations which refuse to admit to their piecemeal construction” (174). This sort of “suturing together of disparate ethnic groups” (Spearey 176) reminds us once again of Rushdie’s English literary heritage, as Pakistan becomes a monster in the fashion of Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*. Spearey additionally points out the reflection of this technique—the suturing, the piecing together—in the makeup of the novel itself (176). Rushdie’s *Shame*, then, becomes a sort of monstrous tale, creating monsters—of the Pakistans (real and ‘not-quite’), of itself, and of its characters. In the story of this third monster- creation, in the figure of Sufiya Zinobia, “Rushdie enlists Gothic conventions of monstrosity in order to expose the repressive conditions inherent in Pakistan’s project of national self- fashioning” (Spearey 171). Sufiya becomes a main focus in much critical analysis of the novel, but I will take a moment first to explain the particular origin of her monstrosity, shame, another (obvious) main theme and point of critical examination.

As the novel’s title suggests, Rushdie takes up the theme of shame and how it functions in a Pakistani context. He explains that he “wanted to talk about the importance of [shame] as a kind of social concept, especially in the East” (*Salman Rushdie Interviews* 29). More than that, Rushdie pairs shame with its opposite, shamelessness, and both appear in excess in differing characters in the novel. Omar Khayyam, the novel’s closest character to some sort of protagonist, is the embodiment of shamelessness, unable to feel its opposite. Sufiya, conversely, becomes the embodiment of shame, blushing from the moment of her birth because she is ashamed she was not born a boy, as her father wanted. Rushdie’s narrator voices perhaps the main problem with shame in Pakistan: “Wherever I turn, there is something of which to be ashamed. But shame is like everything else; live with it for long enough and it becomes part of the furniture” (*Shame* 21). Critical attention has also been paid to the novel’s use of the Urdu word for shame, “sharam.” One of the problems of the idea of ‘shame’ in this novel enters here: it is a problem of translation. “The English signifier ‘shame’ can only partially and inadequately translate the Urdu word ‘sharam’” (Abrioux 67). Once again, Rushdie’s status, and his narrator’s, as immigrant, places him here as the only one who can explain this to us— because he is not English but also is not Pakistani, because his dual-identity allows him immediate access to this ‘untranslatable’ double meaning of sharam/shame. Sara Suleri explains that, “The curiosity of shame thus becomes a figure for censorship, an area of repressed significance that represents the untranslatability

of an Eastern culture into a Western context” (186). For Rushdie, as well, the condition of this “cycle of shame-leading-to-shamelessness” is a symptom of the “humiliation experienced by the natives under colonial rule” (Afzal-Khan 82). Because of the continued oppressiveness of the post-colonial government, in fact because of its status as a sort of neo-colonial government, the theme becomes clear in Rushdie’s novel that “all Pakistanis still, as neo-colonials, harbour this shame as their colonial legacy” (Duffy 104). The trauma of colonization, and further the abuse and continued repression dealt at the hands of the ‘post- colonial’ leaders, have caused “Pakistani people, according to [Rushdie, to] still view themselves and each other as objects because they have been unable to shake off the sense of shame and denigration” (Afzal-Khan 82). The shame inflicted by the colonizer, its opposite but “similarly repressive” force, shamelessness, “have come to impel political action and to define the national ethos of Pakistan” (Spearey 172).

After establishing shame’s origins and untranslatability, critical theory moves to Rushdie’s exploration of the connection between shame and violence. Regarding the oppressive post-colonial government in Pakistan, Cynthia Carey Abrioux explains that the “humiliation of a colonized people will paradoxically lead to the desire to imitate the perpetrators in their violence and to an attempted legitimization of it” (67). This dynamic in *Shame* is highlighted as one of the most important themes in the novel. Timothy Brennan explains that “It is, in fact, the central irony of *Shame* that the progress supposedly represented by Pakistan’s escape from European control had the accidental effect of exiling it from the rights and protections developed in the European continent” (“*Shame’s* Holy Book” 118). As a symptom of the post-colonial condition, then, Pakistan has turned to violence and oppression, reenacting the colonial condition under the guise of independence.

Sufiya, whose name translates to ‘shame,’ becomes the literal incarnation in the novel of this shameful violence, and becomes the site for critical consideration of the novel as “an embodiment of several acts of shame and shamelessness in Pakistan into a monster with supernatural powers of terror and destruction” (Amanuddin 42). It is through Sufiya, then, that the novel comes to its main discussion of its title, and the critical analyses of the text reflect this: Sufiya becomes a central character in every discussion of the novel’s main themes. The book, through Sufiya, demonstrates Rushdie’s point that “Shame turned inward breeds monsters” (Towers BR3). Sufiya, however, does not suffer only from her own shame. She comes to possess “the destructive power of the violence

resulting from an overdose of shame” (Fletcher107). In much the same way that Omar cannot feel shame, Sufiya cannot not feel it; she absorbs it from those around her, taking on a shameless nation’s worth of shame into her own body. Although she was ashamed at first of her gender, and later of her mental retardation, Aijaz Ahmad explains that “Sufiya’s shame comes to refer less and less to herself (her femaleness; her mental retardation) or to her family (which is ashamed of her on both counts, femaleness and retardation)... she becomes almost literally, the conscience of a shameless world” (146). Overwhelmed by shame, by “All the shame she absorbs on behalf of those who do not feel it” (Grewal 134), Sufiya transforms into a monster. Here we see that it is not only shame itself which breeds monsters, but the sort of culture in Pakistan, closed, oppressive—the sort of culture where shame and shamelessness appear finally in excess, dangerously. Rushdie explains through Sufiya not only what an excess of shame does to a single person, but he “elucidates the capacity of the culture he described to create monsters” (Duffy 99).

The creation of Sufiya’s character, and her monstrosity, demonstrates both the derivative nature of the novel in general, and the theme of suturing together disparate pieces into one monstrous whole. Rushdie explains Sufiya as “a character who suffered excessively from emotional shame and as a result became capable of a violence that was much greater than her physical powers indicated” (Salman Rushdie Interviews 29). Sufiya’s violence, her exaggerated physical powers, and her descent into madness because of her excess of shame “is in keeping with the post-modern excessive carnival that animates the text in general” (Duffy 99). Just as the narrative is fractured but sewn together monstrosity, interrupted so many times by the narrator yet still comprising a single novel, so Sufiya’s character becomes an amalgam of fractured pieces, a monster like Mary Shelley’s. Sufiya also “personifies not only the oppressions of Pakistani history, but also the oppressive contradictions of the post-colonial subject” (Hussain 13). She is derived from the stories of three such ‘post-colonial subjects’ in England: a young Pakistani girl murdered by her father, “because he heard she had made love to a white boy” (Marzorati 44); an Asian girl assaulted by four white boys, but “so ‘ashamed’ that she did not want to talk about it” (Amanuddin 44); and a boy “who burned to death in a park from a fire within him” (Amanuddin 44). Sufiya becomes the character representing these three post- colonials, as well as her entire nation; she is a monster, sewn together from these disparate parts. Through her, the “ghosts of Sufiya Zinobia—and particularly those of the Pakistani immigrants in London whose tragedies the narrator relates in a series of asides—live out the consequences of the

history that she literally embodies” (Spearey 176).

Rushdie also creates the monster of Sufiya Zinobia through literary stories of monstrosity, from both East and West. She can be seen as functioning in the vein of “the subcontinent’s many stories of vampires and its folktales of ghouls” (Amanuddin 44), but the references to Western literature become much more critically examined. She literally becomes “the Beast emerging from inside the Beauty” (Ahmad 147); she manages to simultaneously occupy the space of Beauty and Beast. In a play on pronunciation, Rushdie formulates her as another dichotomy of figures in Western literature: “she is Hyder and, once married, Shakil, an Eastern and inverted version of the Jekyll/Hide figure” (Spearey 174). When she is locked away, she, the “ominous, hidden female monster [is a] rewriting of the most famous of such figures, Bertha, the madwoman in the attic of *Jane Eyre*” (Duffy 101). She becomes the site for the collapse of dichotomies into excess: “she embodies the worst excesses of both masculine power and feminine unruliness. She is the monstrous woman who fails in her wifely duties... she is the monstrous man whose violence and sexual aggression threaten public security” (Spearey 174). Sufiya also becomes the character wherein the “allegorical relation between public and private spheres” (Duffy 106) is played out most explicitly. The book itself plays out this theme—“all the major characters [belong] to a single family” (Ahmad 140) which also represents the nation as a whole—but Sufiya does it better: she absorbs public shame into her private body, and thus loses control, lashing out in a very violent, and public, way. Her “unconscious impulses and energies”—themselves a movement from the public to the private sphere—“ultimately work to direct the course of public affairs” (Spearey 172). Sufiya (unlike Victor Frankenstein’s monster, who is obsessed with a sort of unattainable domesticity) “attempts to redefine and ultimately to transgress the boundaries of the domestic,” another movement between private and public spheres, and she does so “by endlessly shifting and rearranging the furniture, by escaping from behind the screen or by casting off the strictures of an identity determined almost exclusively by a gendered body” (Spearey 177).

The character of Sufiya Zinobia also comes into play in the discussion of women in *Shame*, ultimately serving as a further example of Rushdie’s complicity in the patriarchal structures he seems to criticize. Let me begin with a discussion, first, of the female condition in the novel in general. Rushdie makes a parallel in his novel between the status of himself and his narrator as migrants, marginalized figures, and the status of the female in Pakistani culture. In many ways, the novel “deals, centrally,

with the way in which the sexual repressions of [Pakistan] are connected to the political repressions” (Rushdie, “Midnight’s” 13). It is a story initially and ostensibly about men, political leaders, heads-of-household. However, the novel “eventually becomes a story of the women of these families” (Yardley BW3), when the “‘male’ and ‘female’ plot... are the same story after all” (Fletcher 99). On the surface, Rushdie takes the side of the female figure, the marginalized and oppressed figure in Pakistani culture. The novel becomes “Rushdie’s attempt to reject traditional history and its patriarchal realism. In his emphasis on exclusion and marginality, Rushdie seems to be writing a narrative whose project is the inclusion of women in his fictional/historical account” (Grewal 124). It appears at first that the women, the “tokens of truly oppressed colonial subjectivity” (Duffy 105), have been given a voice in the history of Pakistan, after all. Rushdie would seem to be acting against the forces of colonial oppression (perhaps in a similar way in which the leaders of post-colonial Pakistan see their new country as independent of the oppression they experienced as colonials), and he even “wishes to show that Pakistani ruling elites, which replaced the colonial rulers but retained their exploitative power-relations within forms of patriarchal control, deny women the right to speak” (Grewal 126). The novel operates, therefore, “through a coalition between the writer, the writer as emigrant and exile, and women” (Grewal 125), where Rushdie’s narrator gives voice to the continually-silenced women of Pakistani culture. However, here the theme in critical analysis of *Shame*, the theme of Rushdie as complicit with the oppressors he criticizes, reappears. Rushdie tries to give women voice, but his (male) narrator’s voice is the only one that is heard. Women only appear as “disempowered, voiceless beings who speak through the writer, the one with the voice” (Grewal 125). Rushdie and his narrator, both men, speak freely knowing that they “can list the problems in Pakistan and be sure that [they] would be read in certain parts of the world” (Grewal 129). The women in *Shame* have no such luxury. The so-called ‘coalition’ between women and writer-as-migrant disintegrates as soon as the women try to open their mouths and speak—for they can do no such thing.

Even in his speaking for them, Rushdie’s narrator seems to fail at his feminist sort of aim. He “does not problematize the concept of ‘tradition’” (Grewal 131), and his female characters become part of the project of patriarchal ideology in the end. Aijaz Ahmad notes that, “every woman, without exception, is represented through a system of imageries which is sexually overdetermined; the frustration of erotic need... appears in every case to be the central fact of a woman’s existence” (144). Here the figure of Sufiya Zinobia reappears in critical analysis. Ambreen Hai points to that first ‘ghost

of Sufiya,' the murdered Pakistani girl in London, saying that the novel's feminism, inspired by this story, "has led critics such as Grewal and Ahmad rightly to question Rushdie's representations of female rage that only reinscribe male fear of female power as bestiality" (Hai 21). Rushdie intends the monstrous character of Sufiya Zinobia—because she is a woman, and therefore marginalized like the narrator, and because she comes to possess an uncontrollable, violent power—to represent "the female discourse of shame and also its capacity to exceed the limits of censorship in order to articulate the indictment of a culture" (Suleri 180). Sufiya may be in a way uncensorable, but she is anything but capable of articulating "the indictment of a culture." She, like all the women in the novel, cannot speak—only the male author can do that. Sufiya is "barely allowed to be a human subject at all," and the "possibility of agency is snatched from her" (Duffy 102). She "exercises power only as a monster" (Duffy 105). Even if she is simply supposed to be an example, a kind of warning to the oppressive patriarchal culture of Pakistan, the novel still fails to give females—any female, in fact—any sort of agency in the narrative, any sort of voice. Inderpal Grewal indicates that, "though Sufiya's genocidal mimicry is meant to be a critique of patriarchal culture, it fails because its horror can operate only by playing on a patriarchal fear of women... [who] are all meant to shock the reader into de-peripheralizing them" (138).

Unable to bring women to the center, unable to give them voice in his narrative, to reinscribe tradition and to reimagine new roles for his female characters, Rushdie's attempt at feminism in *Shame* fails. However, because of his participation in a sort of oppressive discourse on gender—the "misogynistic nature of the typologies within which Rushdie encloses the whole range of women's experience" (Ahmad 150)—he becomes complicit in that oppressive patriarchal culture he means to critique. His efforts in fact further the patriarchal agenda: his novel "nurtures a distrust of any oppositional practices engaged in by women" (Grewal 138) through the character of Sufiya Zinobia and the patriarchal fear she evokes. In addition, *Shame* participates in the 'othering' of women, "for the logic of the narrative operates to show the need for addressing the oppression of women by the very process of establishing their subordination" (Grewal 141). Once again, Rushdie's novel, his narrator, becomes a patriarchal conspirator, furthering the project of the oppressor, and further trapping the post-colonial female into either the silenced, marginal female, the dangerous, monstrous woman, or both.

Shame from its beginnings, although overshadowed by the immense popularity and critical acclaim of its predecessor, Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, "occupies a distinguished place at the very apex of 'Third World Literature'... [and] has already become something of a classic of this counter-canon" (Ahmad 125). Often considered one of Rushdie's great trilogy—including also *Midnight's Children* and *The Satanic Verses*—*Shame* considers themes of migrancy, political oppression, gender, and shame, and it does so through the form of the 'fairy-tale,' and of stark political and cultural satire and parody. Sara Suleri identifies it as "scarcely veiled allegory of the symbolic violence of historical process," one that focuses on the real-life characters of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, and she asserts that "*Shame* is from its inception a text that knows it will be banished from the culture that it represents" (175). Writing as migrant, as not belonging entirely either to East or West, Rushdie has special access to concepts of translation, to linguistic and literary sources from East and West, and to the histories of his three sometime-homes: India, Pakistan, and England. In *Shame*, "Rushdie seems to know... the history of the corruptions and criminalities of Pakistani rulers; about these he says remarkably trenchant things, and [he has a] desire to disjoin himself from that history" (Ahmad 138-9). Writing to readers in both East and West, Rushdie's novel has been described as exhibiting a sort of "schizophrenia which results from Rushdie's efforts to address both a western and a subcontinental readership" (Parnell 236). Critics have focused on the status of Pakistan, or 'not-quite Pakistan,' on Rushdie's postmodern and parodic techniques, and on females in the novel. Rushdie's tactics often turn on themselves, implicating him in the very structures of oppressive power that he attempts to critique. The figure of Sufiya Zinobia, in literary criticism, comes to the forefront of discussion, as symbolizing themes of monstrosity, shame and shamelessness, and women. It has become possible, particularly when analyzing such a figure as Sufiya, for critics to view *Shame* outside of the context of *Midnight's Children*, and even of *The Satanic Verses* and its aftermath. However, the figure that seems to haunt all analysis of the text, the figure that seems to be inextricable from any reading of the work, is that of Rushdie-as-author. His migrant status, his relationships to the countries he portrays, his suturing-together of stories and languages from all of his homelands: all of this leads us to the conclusion that, with *Shame*, as well as with Rushdie's other novels (namely, *Midnight's Children* and *The Satanic Verses*), "we cannot read these texts without also reading Rushdie" (Hussain 9).

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WARMTH IN HIDDEN PLACES

Not caring if the hornet is mad not caring if the bull is mad you stumble barefoot in pursuit of a sun that mocks you from its sullen perch. Not believing what your mother told you not believing the formulae of the professors you seek warmth in hidden places, you seek trigonometric symbols in the scrap heaps of dead civilizations, in the boneyard of Olduvai Gorge, in tombs of peat and stone and sand.

The consequence of this search for a race such as ours, forever mired in possibility, is the inability to bear true friendship. Is torrents of wasteful emotion spit into the void. Is turgid hands that cannot grasp or caress. Is a pack mule's back, sagging from the memory of a billion other lives that conscience alone prevents us from living again.

--Steven N. Wingate

Detail from *Silk Road*
acrylic on canvas
48" x 96"



Fantasy, Memory, and the Unimaginable in Don de Delillo's *Falling Man*

by Ahmad Gashmari, Kent State University, Ohio

[9/11] is therefore a case where the real is added to the image as a terror bonus.

(Baudrillard, *The Spirit of Terrorism*)

[9/11] dominated the medium. It was bright and totalizing and some of us said it was unreal. When we say a thing is unreal, we mean it is too real.

(DeLillo, *In the Ruins of the Future*)

September 11, 2001 is America's abrupt and unprepared-for journey back to the harshness of reality. The beginning of the event seems cinematic, a TV hyperreal image broadcast live or seen at first hand. Though fearful and catastrophic, the plane crash was still absorbable by the viewers. The fall is what makes all the difference. It is the unimaginable apocalyptic scene, a moment that marks the end of "American holiday from history" (Zizek 35). The holiday from history here refers to the impact of the technological and hyperreal empire that an advanced culture like the United States has built in order to control all aspects of life including the future. In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks, how did this culture that has drifted miles away from reality into a virtual future endure such a vicious turn in history? This is the one of the questions that Don DeLillo has on his mind when he wrote *Falling Man* (2007),

What follows is a discussion of Don DeLillo's novel, *Falling Man* (2007), as a depiction of the influence of the violent intervention of the real into the world of the hyperreal on people

who witnessed this event. The role of memory as a response and a counter-narrative to the massive spectacle that continues to seem unimaginable will also be discussed by showing, for example, how people in the novel search for traces to catch up with memories of the event.

To begin with, among the reasons that have caused the tremendous shock is that the for a few decades before the events America has started to gradually move into more of hyperreal world, a world saturated with technology, machines, and the media. In his 2003 novel, *Cosmopolis*, DeLillo presented a one day ride in pre-9/11 Manhattan, NY; we can see how people in that society, at that primal time of cyber-capitalism and unmatched power, have come to perceive their lives as a virtual future; one in which there are no uncertainties and everything is preplanned due to the influence of modern day surrogate god: Technology. In the introduction of his first post-9/11 piece of writing, *In the Ruins of the Future* (2001), which comes as a response to the event, DeLillo writes:

In the past decade, the surge of capital markets has dominated discourse and shaped global consciousness. Multinational corporations have come to seem more vital and influential than governments. The dramatic climb of the Dow and the speed of the internet summoned us all to live permanently in the future, in the utopian glow of cyber-capital, because there is no memory there and this is where markets are uncontrolled and investment potential has no limit. (1)

DeLillo here describes pre-9/11 America, where cyber-capitalism and globalization have allowed Americans to achieve a virtual future in which it was thought that living "permanently in the future" was finally possible. This is what DeLillo has described in detail in *Cosmopolis* (2003), where people, like the multimillionaire Eric Packer, live in the glowing delirium of technology which turns them into cyborgs living with the illusion of having finally achieved immortality.

One of the main preconditions of a euphoric hyperreal life is the elimination of the real linearity of time and thus the eradication of the past. This is exactly why, after the fall of the towers, people would start to find it hard to remember; for remembering the past is something they have never got used to because they need—or rather have—no past. According to DeLillo, "there is no memory there;" there is nothing to cling to or try to revive. An important reason behind the absence of historical or

cultural memory in the postmodern age is the influence of mass media which is a dominant feature in contemporary life. Umberto Eco, in *Travels in Hyperreality* (1986), explains the influence of mass media on the loss of memory by showing that even though the mass media are genealogical “because, in them, every new invention sets off a chain reaction of inventions”, they still have no memory “because when the chain of imitations has been produced, no one can remember who started it” (146).

In the novel, people seem eager to establish a memory of what has happened. The culture that is obsessed with screens, cameras, slow motions, and repetitions is, for the first time, unable—and trying desperately—to create a memory of the unimaginable reality. The performance artist known as Falling Man is one of these Americans who are trying to relive—virtually—the “most real” event in the history of America. This attempt can be called a “simulation of simulation” or a “double simulacrum”. By re-enacting this fall, this artist is not imitating the real because the real here has turned to be out of grasping or imagining, which is, according to DeLillo, “too real” to be imagined, and it is therefore unimaginable and unthinkable. So, what he actually does is that he copies a mere simulacrum that is one of the pictures, which was taken at the event of the crash showing a man jumping out of a window head first. We could infer from here that the real is no longer subject to simulation, so the Falling Man is only able to simulate what is already a simulation; a picture.

Interestingly enough, the photograph that the Falling Man recreates is also known as Falling Man. According to the award winning documentary that appeared in 2006 under the name *9/11: The Falling Man*, this famous photograph was shot by the American photographer, Richard Drew, who was watching the event from a nearby street in Manhattan, and when he saw the horrible scene of people jumping out of the windows of the World Trade Centre, he started taking pictures. The documentary which started by: “it was the most photographed and videotaped day in history” goes on to affirm that the importance of the pictures, and especially this picture, is to bear memory to the unimaginable and unspeakable, so we find the narrator in the documentary asserting that:

Some argued that the picture of the Falling Man has to be confronted. It does not only acknowledge the story of the people who have been forced to jump, it alone gives a true

sense of the horror of that day. (*9/11: The Falling Man*)

I do not think that such photographs are capable of giving “a true sense of the horror of that day” because that day is beyond the hyperreal and beyond the ordinary imaginable real; it is unimaginable, and the photo is a mere imitation of what happened.

In the novel, David Janiak—the real name of the performance artist—intends to copy and recreate this very picture with the same posture and position as they appear in the photographs of the original falling man. Keith’s wife, Lianne, searches for information about this artist on the Internet and find out a history of his repeated falls accompanied with photographs. DeLillo asks a question about the mystery of the reason why the Falling Man maintains that posture in all his jumps:

Was this position intended to reflect the body posture of a particular man who was photographed falling from the north tower of the World Trade Center, headfirst, arms at his sides, one leg bent, a man set forever in free fall against the looming background of the column panels in the tower? (*Falling Man* 221)

This shows that there is a resemblance between the photographs taken for the Falling Man in the novel and the famous photograph of the real falling man in the manner of taking these photographs. The photographs that Lianne finds on the internet are not taken because the Falling Man wants to be photographed, but “those pictures that exist were taken by people who happened to be at the site or by a professional alerted to the event by a passerby” (*FM* 220). In the same way, the picture of the real falling man is taken by a passerby who accidentally notices this horrible scene and wants it to bear witness to the unimaginable.

In *White Noise* (1985), DeLillo shows how photographed or televised death has helped lessen the horror of the dreadful reality of death through making it subject to simulation and “spectacularization,” but 9/11, I believe, is a different story. According to Baudrillard, in his post-9/11 famous essay *The Spirit of Terrorism* (2003), the event is seen as a mixture of reality and fiction, but his focus is more on the presence of reality as “a resurrection of history after its proclaimed death” (29). However, Baudrillard does highlight the role of the image and the media as simulators and stresses

that “the role of images is [that] they capture the event (take it as hostage) at the same time as they glorify it” (28). This means that for the first time, the thin deceptive layers of hyperreality were peeled off and “televised death and disaster failed to function as a tool of lessening the horrifying effect of the catastrophe of 9/11,” (Al Mousa 68).

Baudrillard also believes that the effect of 9/11 is a reversal of the virtual simulated linearity of time in which the future was already here. We suddenly found this event summoning the—alleged dead—past from its tomb. It also represents a reversal in the relationship of the image to the real—or reality to hyperreality. Baudrillard argues that 9/11 is “a case where the real is added to the image as a terror bonus, as yet another thrill” (30).

Many theorists including Baudrillard have referred to America as the land of fantasy. In his travelogue, *America* (1986), Baudrillard thinks the cinema is not only in the studios of Hollywood but all over America. Martin, Laine’s mother’s European boyfriend, describes the Towers themselves as fantasies:

But that’s why you built the towers, isn’t it? Weren’t the towers built as fantasies of wealth and power that would one day become fantasies of destruction? You build a thing like that so you can see it come down. The provocation is obvious. What other reason would there be to go so high and then to double it, do it twice? It’s a fantasy, so why not do it twice? You are saying, Here it is, bring it down. (116)

The towers themselves were built as a fantasy—being themselves part of the whole America as “Disneyland.” Baudrillard then thinks that the fall of the towers is a justified end of a fantasy created by the hegemonic power:

The fact [is] that we have dreamt of this event that everyone without exception has dreamt of it, because no one can avoid dreaming of the destruction of any power that has become hegemonic to that degree...we can say that they did it, but we wished for it. If this is not taken into account, the event loses any symbolic. (*The Spirit of Terrorism* 5)

When the event was transmitted live on TV Channels all over the globe, it gave the sense

that it is yet another American movie, or as Slavoj Žižek, in his book *Welcome to the Desert of the Real* (2002), puts it, “The unthinkable which happened was thus the object of fantasy: in a way, America got what it fantasized about, and this was the greatest surprise” (16). The performance artist, or Falling Man, is only visualizing the fall and imitating the cinema, or at least he is re-creating it as it was caught on tapes or in photographs and not how it actually happened. Some theorists and writers have even argued that the whole world have already dreamt of and imagined this fall before it had happened. Other critics say that Don DeLillo himself prophesied this day through his writings over the last four decades due to the apocalyptic atmosphere and anticipation of disaster his works are wrapped in. In his review of *Falling Man*, which he entitled *The Man Who Invented 9/11*, Tom Jonud says that before 2001, “Don DeLillo novel became the template for 9/11” and now “9/11 returns the favor, and becomes the template for a Don DeLillo novel,” (8). American writer E. B. White had also a prophetic anticipation of the 9/11 disaster—more than 50 years before it happened—in his book *Here is New York* (1948):

The city, for the first time in its long history, is destructible. A single flight of planes no bigger than a wedge of geese can quickly end this island fantasy, burn the towers, crumble the bridges, turn the underground passages into lethal chambers, cremate the millions. The intimation of mortality is part of New York now; in the sounds of jets overhead, in the black headlines of the latest editions. (54)

Falling Man shows that after the 9/11 attacks people became unable to fully realize the disaster because it is too real and violent. And, as shown above, America already have gone too far in the realm of hyperreality, and it has virtually been detached from the real which makes many Americans now unable to grasp the real or even imagine it. Therefore, in the novel, most of the characters, especially Keith and Lianne, are very concerned about establishing a memory of the event of 9/11. They use all ways possible to do that. Lianne, for example, spends most of her time searching for information, looking at pictures, and listening to stories in Alzheimer sessions in an attempt to find signs or symbols to revive a memory of the event that causes all the dramatic change in her life and the lives of those around her, but the event yet remains beyond grasping. Among the things that

help establish this memory is her obsession with the story of Falling Man, not the one in the famous image, but the simulator of fall, the performance artist.

She'd heard of him, a performance artist known as Falling Man. He'd appeared several times in the last week, unannounced, in various parts of the city, suspended from one or another structure, always upside down, wearing a suit, a tie and dress shoes. He brought it back, of course, those stark moments in the burning towers when people fell or were forced to jump. He'd been seen dangling from a balcony in a hotel atrium and police had escorted him out of a concert hall and two or three apartment buildings with terraces or accessible rooftops. (33)

Afterwards, and during her walks in New York, she encounters him while performing one of his falls. She watches him attentively as he sets the scene recreating everything to look similar to the scene of 9/11. "Everything was painted in brownish rust...the barrier he'd just passed through and the platform itself, a slatted metal structure resembling a large fire escape" (160). She stands there watching his every move until he falls. The scene provokes and ignites mixed feelings inside her, mainly of terror and confusion and she "felt her body go limp" when she finds that she is the closest person to him; she felt motionless and numb and "she could have spoken to him but that was another plane of being, beyond reach" (168). The story of this Falling Man haunts her in her desperate attempt to remember and imagine the event.

Lianne tries to find signs in all things that happen around her and seeks to interpret them. When she watches her mother light a cigarette, the scene brings a snapshot of that dimmed memory she is trying to establish and make clear. Lighting the cigarette with a lighter that set it ablaze and then disappeared leaving it with smoke and ash brings the painful image of the planes:

Her mother lit up. She watched, Lianne did, feeling something familiar and a little painful, how Nina at a certain point began to consider her invisible. The memory was located there, in the way she snapped shut the lighter and put it down, in the hand gesture and the drifting smoke. (46)

Lianne suffers from memory fade—which is believed to be the beginning of Alzheimer. She seems to fight against this dread all through her life after the attacks. But, how does this become

significant at this very time; i.e. after 9/11? After the attacks, Americans seem as if suffering from inability to remember exactly what has happened, and it was all due to the vastness and horrifying nature of the event which goes beyond imagining. People, henceforth, start to see things around them in a different manner; they try to figure out the meaning of what had happened around them. When it comes to Lianne, who is originally haunted by the thoughts of her father's suicide at the first sign of his senile dementia, her fears become way more tremendous, and she runs a kind of literary support group for elderly victims of Alzheimer's; people who are aware of their decline but still able to write down their experiences and impressions. By doing this, she actually is aiming at two things: first, she tries to establish a memory narrative out of that apocalyptic day, and second she tries to test and reinforce her own memory and remembrance. I think DeLillo uses the victims of Alzheimer to refer to most Americans in that traumatic period. The problem of the inability to remember and to fully understand what has happened is a result of the effect that hyperreality has on the sense of time and temporality. Very similar to Lianne's dilemma in *Falling Man* is Cayce Pollard's story in William Gibson's novel *Pattern Recognition* (2005). Cayce's father goes missing in the morning 9/11 and nothing is found to confirm his death. Cayce feels traumatized and in need for closure. There is a passage in Gibson's novel that probably sums up the whole impact of the event on memory and the failure to imagine what has happened

[She] will watch the towers burn, and eventually fall, and though she will know she must have seen people jumping, falling, there will be no memory of it.

It will be like watching one of her own dreams on television. Some vast and deeply personal insult to any ordinary notion of interiority.

An experience outside culture. (137)

Explaining this memory loss, Baudrillard in *The Vital Illusion* (2000) believes that, as a result of hyperreality, time stands still, the future is already here, and memory is eliminated, and the whole world enters a historical vacuum:

We are experiencing time and history in a kind of deep coma. This is the hysteresis of the millennium, which expresses itself in interminable crisis. It is no longer the future

that lies before us, but an anorectic dimension—the impossibility of anything’s being over and, at the same time, the impossibility of seeing beyond the present. Prediction, the memory of the future, diminishes in exact proportion to the memory of the past. When there is overall transparence, when everything can be seen, nothing can be *foreseen* anymore. (37)

One of the ways used by the characters in the novel in order to establish a memory is a strange interest in still life paintings. We find people like Lianne, her mother Nina and Martin spending all of time gazing at these paintings. Nina has some still life, or “*natura morta*,” paintings by Giorgio Morandi. Still life paintings are those that do not have depiction of living things in them, and Morandi’s in particular are “groupings of bottles, jugs, biscuit tins, that was all” (*Falling Man* 12). This “intertextual” use of the paintings can be seen as an attempt to highlight the fact of the permanence of the domestic in order to shed light on people’s interest in searching for signs of domestic remnants left after the perishing of the living. Those are needed for the establishment of the memory of 9/11. On his way out of the towers when the attacks happened, Keith goes to the office of his friend, Rumsey, trying to rescue him. He finds him dead, leaving behind him fragments of his mug with his thumb alone still holding the ring. The scene of these domestic fragments is what Keith later on keeps recalling in order to figure out the site of the disaster.

Interestingly, one of the paintings that Martin and Lianne attentively watch together revives in both of them the memory of the towers. DeLillo is keen on emphasizing the societal concern to construct a public memory of the attacks, so we find them looking for signs:

Two of the taller items were dark and somber, with smoky marks and smudges, and one of them was partly concealed by a long-necked bottle. The bottle was a bottle, white. The two dark objects, too obscure to name, were the things that Martin was referring to.

“What do you see?” he said.

She saw what he saw. She saw the towers. (49)

Keith’s search for signs is very obvious since he himself was in the towers when the attacks

took place. Unlike Lianne, whose main concern is to evade memory fade and to intentionally seek anything that can bear any memory to the event, Keith does, somehow, experience a conflict between holding on to memories and trying to get rid of them—maybe his first-hand experience in the event makes such memories a very heavy burden. Despite his attempts, images and fragmented memories of the event keep appearing to him like a “filmstrip” on a computer screen:

It was Keith as well who was going slow, easing inward. He used to want to fly out of self-awareness, day and night, a body in raw motion. Now he finds himself drifting into spells of reflection, thinking not in clear units, hard and linked, but only absorbing what comes, drawing things out of time and memory and into some dim space that bears his collected experience. Or he stands and looks. He stands at the window and sees what’s happening in the street. Something is always happening, even on the quietest days and deep into night, if you stand a while and look. (66)

Keith has a conversation with Terry, one of the old friends and card players whom he runs into in Las Vegas incidentally after they have been separated by the attacks. The conversation runs long and digressive in which they discuss what has happened to their friends—the card players—after the attacks. During this, Keith keeps watching an artificial waterfall as part of the decoration of the club, where they are having this conversation, and he suddenly questions whether this waterfall is real or not:

Keith stared into the waterfall, forty yards away. He realized he didn’t know whether it was real or simulated. The flow was unruffled and the sound of falling water might easily be a digital effect like the waterfall itself. (204)

I think his wondering whether the waterfall is real or just some special effect does echo unconscious or conscious wondering about the reality of the fall of the towers. In my viewpoint, this has two reasons. It alludes to the cinematic nature of the American culture, in which fantasies and movies are part of everyday life. On the other hand, this can be the reason of the Americans’ recognition of a sudden appearance of this very reality and their very disability to grasp it or put it in their frame of response. This is what makes all America traumatized and “ultrasensitive.” (120)

Finally, *Falling Man* shows that the mediation of the mass media in the American life is the reason why many people are not able to separate 9/11 from movies or TV fantasies. Images and videos are what now give the event its shape and meaning, and they are what evoke horror and dread in traumatized people, not the unimaginable event itself. I think *Falling Man* is more an archival memory than a novel. The novel starts and ends with the same scene which is the scene of the fall of the towers. This so much echoes the TV narrative and its role in constructing a 9/11 myth based on images and repetitions of the videotaped scene of the destruction.

All in all, *Falling Man* shows a culture in the aftermath of the sudden resurrection of reality after its proclaimed death. People's shock by this sudden appearance of reality makes them unable to grasp it. They cling to televised versions of the attack, the photographs of the jumpers, small objects that could cling to their memories, and still life paintings. DeLillo felt a "writerly responsibility" by writing this novel to contribute to the establishing of a memory for this horrible event.

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Occupy the Air

Flocks of tamed pigeons
float from a tunnel painted
on the mountainside,

Boulders push their bellies
into the morning light, pear
trees ride the tall grass...

Out on the bay, icebergs drag
their skirts in the summer haze.
Houses slip inch by inch into

the sea as if afraid of the cold.
Occasional breezes stir
The ash and soot falling

In clouds from the east
Somewhere and when they do
The sunlight spotlights

A fellow stepped off the cliff's
Edge, his legs churning mid-air—

no forward progress, no sudden drop...

Bullets stop at eye-level,
Red clouds pause overhead,
He walks on, not looking

Down, pushing his weight
Into the emptiness that suspends
Him. Pigeons watch with the blank

tranquility of sleep as another
and another steps off, as if
the air beneath their feet held

not space or force or grim
prospects but another kind of
obvious, something worth

the risk of losing , while
others rest...What does it take
to step off the cliff's edge

when so much is falling:
houses dropping, towns
crashing, companies vanishing,

countries sinking in a red sea,

A loud noise sends the flocks
Flying back into the painted dark,
A sudden storm shreds the paper

World, but those who occupy
The edge, the free air, and
The horizon beyond are not

Birds but women, men.
When will they come down?
Maybe soon, maybe never.

Maybe it doesn't really matter
So long as they persist,
Keep at it, keep going,

Not look up, not look down,
But ahead, taking to air,
everywhere.

--Christopher Moylan



Requiem for a Country
acrylic on canvas
48" x 96"

Kristjana Gunnars



Detail from
Requiem for a Country
acrylic on canvas
48" x 96"

BOOK REVIEWS...

Mark Amory, *Lord Berners, the Last Eccentric*. London: Pimlico Books, 1999.

John Butler

For those who wonder if dogs can fly...

In this rather dull and monochromatic day and age, eccentricity is a rare commodity, so it is very pleasurable to sit back and read about a man who liked to dye his pigeons in different colours, drive around with a devil mask strapped to the back of his head, paint moustaches on the portraits of his aristocratic ancestors and take tea with his favourite horse. This same man was also a serious composer (admired by Stravinsky), a skilled painter, a competent novelist, autobiographer and friend to many of the literary and artistic luminaries of his time. Lord Berners knew the Sitwells and the Mitfords, Picasso and

Salvador Dali, Gertrude Stein and Diaghilev, Sir William Walton and Evelyn Waugh, to name just a few people who came under his witty, kindly, occasionally acerbic and sometimes silly spell. Mark Amory, educated at Eton and Oxford, the long-time literary editor of the *Spectator* and ghost-writer for the Kabaka of Buganda, Mutebi II (aka King Ronnie), to whom he was tutor in 1962-63), is well-qualified to write on Lord Berners. He has written a biography of the fantasy-writer Lord Dunsany, edited Evelyn Waugh's letters and worked as a journalist, publisher and film critic. Amory, with his background and education, had no trouble gaining access to Berners's papers and other material, although he was discouraged from writing the book by Heber Percy, Berners's companion for the last fifteen years of his life, who told him "Unless you've got nothing better to do, I wouldn't try." With help and encouragement from Percy's widow Lady Dorothy, who managed the Berners Trust, and with the composer Gavin Bryars to advise him about musical matters, Amory was able to disregard the advice, and

readers should be very grateful that he did.

Gerald Hugh Tyrwhitt-Wilson, 14th baron Berners, was born into a life of wealth and privilege in 1883 and died in 1950 from heart disease. The eccentricity he would become famous for seems to have been in his family; one of them was said to have brought back a pet monkey from the Crusades, another one got on the wrong side of king John, who burnt down his castle and abducted his wife, and a third one became a favourite of Richard II but was executed. Amory thinks his fate may have been linked to the fact that he was "charming." A more serious ancestor, who took his wife's name of Bouchier for his barony, was the English translator of Froissart's *Chronicles*, Marcus Aurelius's *Meditations* and an anonymous 13th century French epic, *Huon de Bordeaux*, in which the character of the fairy-king Oberon first appeared, and which was used as a source for Shakespeare in his *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Berners grew up with a rather strange mother and a mostly absentee father, as well as enduring the depredations of his grandmother, whom he described in his autobiography

First Childhood as "one of the most forbidding, awe-inspiring women I have ever known." Lady Berners (she had the title in her own right, although he "disguises" her as Lady Bouchier in the book) used to turn secular pictures to the wall on Sundays, make all the twenty-two servants attend the same church at the same time, hand out bibles to people who couldn't read them and deliver hot soup to the poor accompanied by morally-uplifting admonitions. In his autobiography Berners described how he once saw some pet birds in cages which his grandmother kept in her bedroom, and went into the drawing-room (he was five at the time) to announce loudly to a stunned audience of adults, "I've just seen grandma's tits!" On another occasion he tells us that he threw one of the family dogs out of a second-story window to see whether it would fly, and was soundly beaten by his mother for being so cruel. Fortunately, the dog landed on a hedge and was quite unhurt, although Gerald's bottom ached for some hours.

Anecdotes aside, Berners made a significant contribution to English music of the times, although it went out of fashion in the decades after his death and is only now being reconsidered and recorded in any quantity. Berners suffered as a composer because he was who he was; rich and/or aristocratic composers



Gerald Hugh Tyrwhitt-Wilson

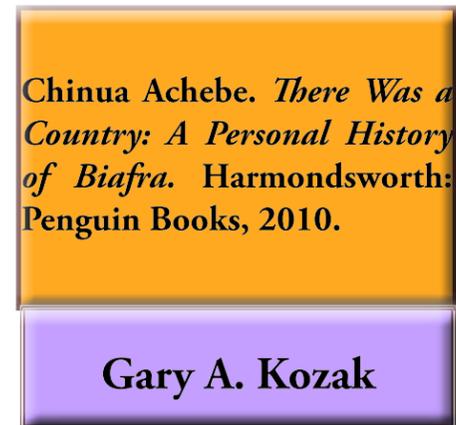
or artists are not in style (think Mendelssohn or Prince Louis Ferdinand of Prussia) now—we like our artists deaf, starving, syphilitic or mad, and Lord Berners was none of those. He even dressed well and owned a Rolls-Royce. Yet Gertrude Stein thought enough of him to write the words for his ballet *A Wedding Bouquet*, for which Berners himself designed both sets and costumes, and he has been praised by those who know about twentieth-century music for his skilled and brilliant orchestration. He has even been called "the English Erik Satie" for his whimsical songs and piano music, which are difficult to perform and bursting with wit and wry humour. An opera by Berners, his only venture into that genre, has been

recently revived by the Dorset Opera Company; naturally it's a one-act comic opera with a deliberately pretentious title, *La carosse du Saint-Sacrément*, based on a play by Prosper Mérimée, who provided the text for Bizet's *Carmen*. For readers who wish to know more about the music, they are referred to Peter Dickinson's 2008 book.

Mark Amory does Berners complete justice in this book, as he ably presents a man who was not just eccentric, but a talented artists and, it seems, an all-out decent human being as well, kindly (most of the time) generous in his hospitality and an inveterate enemy of the snobbish and pretentious. Amory writes with sympathy but without descending into hagiography; he describes Berners's occasional depressions, his financial anxieties, his homosexuality and his sometimes chronic or self-defeating shyness. His research, as we might expect, is thorough, and Amory wears his learning lightly. The reader is painlessly drawn into Lord Berners's eccentric world, meets his friends and shares his low points; he seems, for example, to have regarded the possibility of occasional boredom as a terrible disease and even considered undergoing occupational therapy. Amory is able to deal with his multi-faceted subject almost effortlessly, as he examines Berners the painter,

Berners the novelist and Berners the composer, as well as his little-known early career as, of all things, a diplomat in Europe. Amory's style would have appealed to Berners, as it is dry, ironic and witty, like the man himself. Yet Berners still comes across as a rather enigmatic figure, a man whom one sometimes simply cannot take seriously, yet a little later reveals himself as a dedicated artist, struggling to express feelings which perhaps he didn't quite understand himself. The well-documented eccentricity, however, was not a veneer—Lord Berners was a real person, not someone hiding behind a façade of pseudo-eccentric behaviour. Not only that, but he was a man of perceptiveness and insight. One more anecdote from Amory: a somewhat tiresome woman complained to Berners that she always had to stick up for him at various social gatherings. Berners told her that he had done the same for her, too; someone had said, he told her, that she wasn't fit to live with pigs, "but I told her you were," he said with a bright smile. "Frivolous people," Berners once said, "when all is said and done, do less harm in the world than some of the philanthropists and reformers. Mistrust a man who never has an occasional flash of silliness." We are fortunate that Mark Amory, like his subject, has that "occasional flash," which is one of the many reasons I

unreservedly recommend this book to anyone who wonders whether dogs can fly.



An informative and interesting object lesson from the master writer

Chinua Achebe is a Nigerian novelist, poet, professor, and critic, and is probably the best-known and most widely-read African writer in English, even though, unlike his compatriot Wole Soyinka, he has not yet won the Nobel Prize for Literature. His birthplace was Ogidi, in what was then the Nigerian Protectorate in 1930, Achebe graduated from University College in Ibadan on a scholarship. Since then, he has worked for the Nigerian Broadcasting Service and as a profes-

sor of African studies at Brown University. His notable works are *Things Fall Apart*, *No Longer at Ease*, *Arrow of God*, *A Man of the People* and *Anthills of the Savannah*. As a distinguished author and academic, he has received thirty honorary degrees and numerous literary prizes, including the Man Booker Prize in 2007. He has been called "The Father of Modern African Literature."

Chinua Achebe's latest work, *There Was a Country*, is a memoir as well as a historical, cultural and political story of Biafra. The two elements are fused as he explains the antecedents to Nigerian independence (1960), its post-independence and Biafra's attempted independence during the period 1967-70. This is all accomplished while informing us about his advancing career as a writer and the manner to which this process has determined his beliefs.

Achebe organized his book into four sections. In the earlier chapters he describes his early life in Nigeria with the lead-up to Nigerian independence and post-independence. This section of the book is largely personal and nostalgic with emphasis on his childhood, education and marriage. This earlier part of the book becomes increasingly political as he explores the struggle for independence, ethnic tensions, resentments, coups, instability,

mismanagement and purges.

The second section of the book is more involved as Achebe discusses the Biafran war for independence. He explains the arguments on both sides of the issue, the international community's response, the effect on intellectuals, the brutality, refugee problem and media cover-up. The third section involves the war's end, economic blockade, resulting starvation and the inability of the United Nations to be of much use in coming up with a workable solution. The final part is about the Biafran War's aftermath, with attention given to the increasing corruption, the Nigerian state's failure, terrorism and recovery.

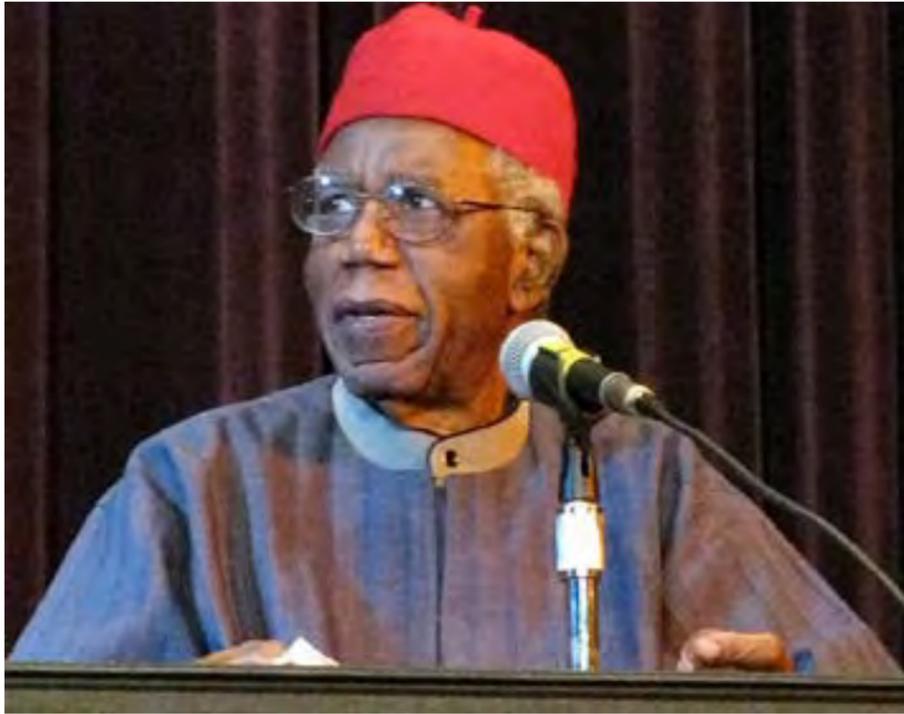
One of the themes of the book is the kind of struggles which emerge when a nation first emerges from its achievement of independence. Achebe has a concern over the wrong path to nation building that started in the early years of Nigerian nationhood. The post-colonial period of early nation building is shown to be not as optimistic as the idealists would believe prior to independence. He gives a descriptive account on the political environment in post-colonial Nigeria.

The social malaise in Nigeria was political corruption. The structure of the country was such that there was an inbuilt power struggle among the ethnic groups, and of course those

who were in power wanted to stay in power. The easiest and simplest way to retain it, even in a limited area, was to appeal to tribal sentiments, so they were egregiously exploited in the 1950's and 1960's.

This feeling of moral obligation continues throughout the book. Achebe is solid in his beliefs and they cover a number of related topics. He also covers the topic of cultural survival, saying that "cultures know how to fight their battles. It is the responsibility of members of a culture to ensure that it survives. If they don't want it to survive then they should act accordingly." Achebe also says that one does not need to go far to discover poetry, which he sees as essential to cultural survival; North Americans, for example, can draw on to their Native American poetry. The overall quality of the literary craft should be the motivating factor for a writer's desire to write. The triumph of the written word is accomplished when the writer achieves union and trust with the reader.

Achebe's hopes and ideals for Africa in general and Nigeria in particular are explained in the earlier sections as Achebe is organizing his literary foundation. As the book progresses, he focuses more on the timeline of events in his country's tragic history. His writing becomes more involved as he provides



Chinua Achebe

vivid depictions of the conflicts involved. The format of the book is similar to the epistolary method which is unique for a book of this nature. Achebe disperses poetry throughout the book, and he also has separately presented sections for individual personal stories, the Biafran national anthem, a Nelson Mandela postscript and an appendix of a speech by the commander of the Biafran invasion. Each section is headlined; and what separates *There Was a Country* from epistolary literature is that there is linear prose in the narrative.

Achebe's position, arguments and reactions are strongly and succinctly-expressed as he explains what the main concerns of Nigerians are or should be:

“How can the state of anarchy be reversed? What are the measures that can be taken to prevent corrupt candidates from recycling themselves into positions of leadership? How can the problems be solved when there is no accountability? How Nigeria brings all the human and material resources it has to bear on its development? How to resolve the environmental problems? How to end ethnic bigotry? How do we initiate proper checks and balances that reduce the decadence, corruption, and debauchery of the past. How to sustain development?”

Achebe's solutions are part of a process. He believes that the improvements will come in stages. Initially, the democratic institutions need to be strength-

ened. This will lead to a free press and a strong justice system. Afterwards, the checks and balances and laws will curb corruption. He believes that Nigerians need to develop a new patriotic consciousness, which should not be based on the simple unity of the country that corrupt leaders promote but also be one based on responsibility.

Chinua Achebe's experience as a writer is evident as he has managed to combine memoir with cultural, social, economic and political history while incorporating them in such a manner. It takes a great skill to accomplish this successfully. It is a multi-purpose book that falls into several categories. Although the book is a type of literary achievement, Achebe's motive is to inform the public about the issue. He is writing as a Biafran nationalist as well as a Nigerian who feels troubled about the country's problematic past and apparently problematic future. This is how he managed to combine politics and history with personal biography. One does have to be patient with the book as Achebe's first section on his early life is tedious at times. It gradually gains momentum as he introduces us to his beliefs and eventually to the issues. The descriptions of war and starvation solicit sympathy but they lack vividness., although all of the additional features such as speeches, individual arguments

and maps complete the book's effectiveness. The inclusion of the poetry and national anthem, however, is questionable, as there seems to be little point to it other than emotional. Regardless, Achebe's latest work is informative and interesting, re-introducing the reader to an almost-forgotten yet tragic conflict which had important ramifications for the recent history of West Africa and perhaps serves now as an object-lesson for regions in other countries where minorities might be thinking of secession.

Paul Chiasson. *The Island of Seven Seas: Chinese Exploration and Settlement on Cape Breton Island*. New York: Vintage Books, 2007.

Gary A. Kozak

Weak argument for Chinese first on Cape Breton

Paul Chiasson is a Canadian architect who was born on Cape Breton Island. Having

Acadian ancestry, he received his education in architecture from Yale. His specialty has been in the field of the theoretical history of religious architecture. In addition to teaching at Yale, he has also taught at the Catholic University of America in Washington and the University of Toronto.

The discovery of the Americas by non-indigenous people has been a contentious subject of history scholars. This is due in part to the lack of documentation in the period preceding the Columbus expedition. Although the Viking discovery has been accepted as a part of history, there still is a great deal of speculation concerning the time and events prior to the arrival of Columbus. Canadian architect Paul Chiasson claims to have found evidence of a fifteenth century Chinese exploration and settlement on Cape Breton Island. The thesis is presented in a new revisionist history book, *The Island of Seven Seas*. His theory claims that the settlement was established by the Chinese and that it flourished before deteriorating into oblivion while, elements of the Chinese civilization are still evident in the native Mi'kmaq culture.

The Island of Seven Cities is presented with a unique architectural viewpoint. Chiasson's professional observations are placed into a histori-

cal account of early exploration blended with his own personal story and itemized thought patterns. The somewhat radical concept is passionately explained by Chiasson following two years of detective work and research on what appears to be a road and ruins in the area. The book's earlier chapters are an account of the history of the early European explorations of North America. The "Island of Seven Cities" was a legend that early explorers felt compelled to research thereby leading to extensive exploration of the area. This early part of the book describes the European story with informative details. This is followed by the story of North America itself as the mysteries of the Mi'kmaq are explained. Afterwards, Chiasson moves on to Chinese culture, sailing tradition and exploration. The middle section deals with cultural similarities between the Chinese and the Mi'kmaq. He finally goes into details on the ruins in Cape Breton. These sections are not actually separated and they merge into one larger linear story.

The book's most obvious feature is its first person narrative as Chiasson emphasises personal thoughts and actions. This both benefits and compromises the book's effectiveness. He uses it to valuable effect when describing the ruins as in a manner an architect would

interpret them. Conversely, he uses it throughout the book in places where it is not necessary. Very often such rambling portions interrupt the prose and become irrelevant. It is further complicated by needless personal dialogues that affect the book's credibility and relevance. Fortunately, these drawbacks are balanced off by the interesting history and architectural descriptions.

Paul Chiasson has the habit of interpreting the historical documents within the context of his already conceived theories. He has written historical literature without using the historical method in similar fashion to a pseudo-scientist not using the scientific method. He is finding evidence of Chinese contact with the Mi'qmaks where the evidence doesn't exist. The Mi'qmak culture and method of subsistence is shown to be more advanced than that of the accepted anthropological conclusion. He states:

"More and more I felt that the Mi'kmaq were the key. They were unlike other native peoples in North America. They were able to read and write. Their society included highly skilled navigators, cartographers and physicians. And there evidence that a foreign community, probably with a small group of Christians among its members, had held some place within the Mi'kmaq Nation."



M'kmaq in ceremonial dress c. 1890s.

Evidence is one serious issue of the book and Chiasson is relying on vague varieties of it. An example of vague evidence is when he states "The records suggested Portuguese or possibly English origins, but, how ever vague the attribution, it was apparent that the observers believed there had been some

thing there." Chiasson attempts to account for scanty evidence with problems in the historical record. The Chinese records are very important to his over all thesis but he is unable to use them. He states:

"The construction plans and archives of the early Ming navy

were burnt by the anti-maritime interests in the government, presumably to assure the irreversibility of the new edicts. This policy, more than any other factor, erased the memory of the navy, its technologies and the foreign settlements in its service."

Despite the weaknesses of Chiasson's theoretical methodology, he does use good research methods. It may be considered an impressive undertaking as it contains a wide range of maps, aerial photographs and journalistic sources. There are diagrams of Chinese sailing ships and examples of seventeenth century photographs of ruins and other photo-

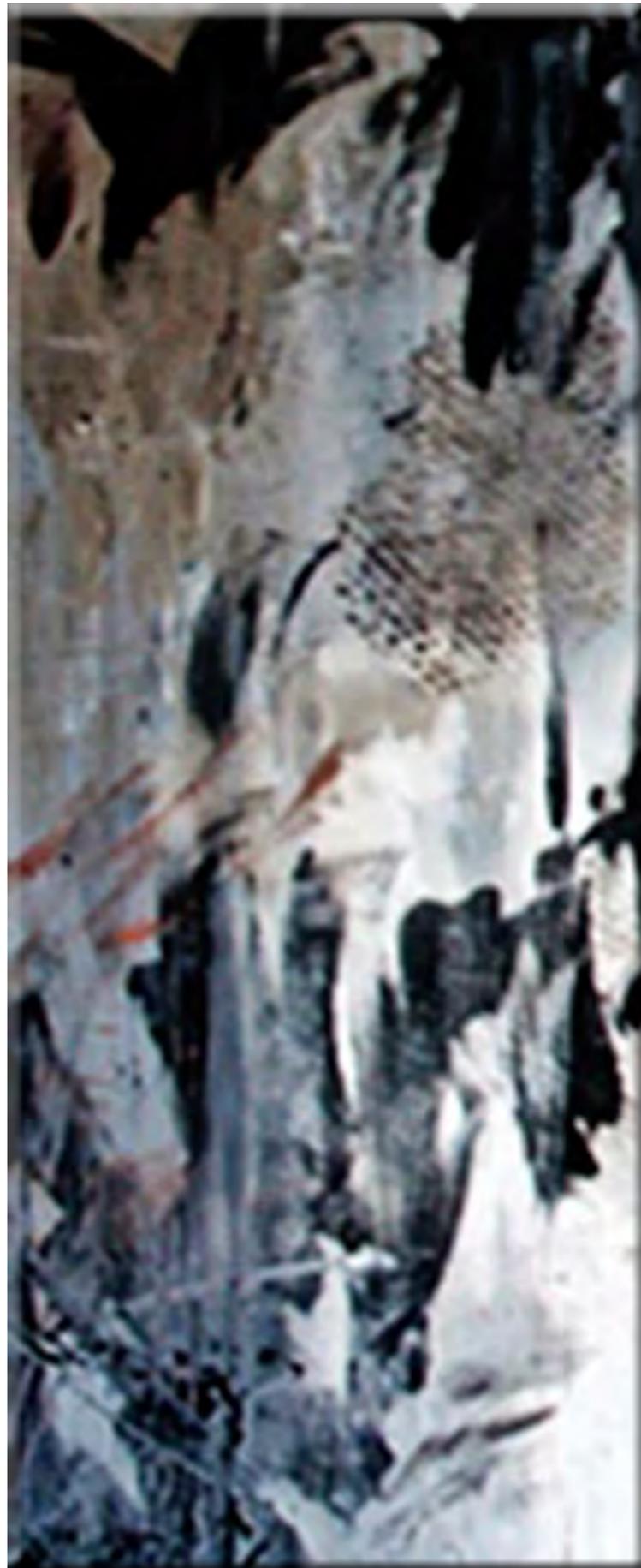
advertising, Chiasson uses landscape photographs depicting his questionable observations concerning the similarities of Inuit and Mi'qmak cultures. Also included are extensive detailed end notes and a diverse bibliography. Throughout the book, his professional architectural knowledge is evident.

Apparently, the ruins that are the main object of his argument have been authenticated. The problem is that they have not been authenticated in his favour as they are not actually ruins whatsoever. This compromises his credibility. Although the book lacks credibility, it ironically can be used as a research source, at least

methodologically-speaking. It is useful because of its dialogue, structure and sources. Its theory and supporting arguments should not be taken seriously, however, as Chiasson's method of creating a theory and interpreting the evidence to support the theory contradicts the scientific (inductive) method and legitimate historical practice. For this reason, the book falls far short of being academic and joins that group of books which purport to prove the existence of Atlantis, Mu, angels and little green men on Mars.



Mi'kmaq at Tuff's Cove, Nova Scotia c 1871.



Detail
Lightness of the Palms

Kristjana Gunnars



Lightness of the Palms
acrylic on canvas
48" x 96"

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