

Transverse Journal

Issue No. 10, 2010

On Censorship

"I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it."

— Voltaire

Transverse Journal is a graduate student journal from the Centre for Comparative Literature at the University of Toronto, in Toronto, Canada.



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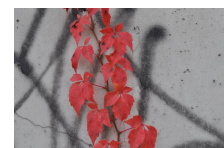


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"THE WITNESS" 2010

ORIGINAL ART BY OLGA BAZILEVICA

MATERIALS: OIL ON CANVAS, 36 X 65 CM

Editor's Introduction: A Call to Arms!

When it was determined at the beginning of the fall term that this issue would focus on censorship, I knew the topic was a timely one. The proliferation of digital media is occasioning unprecedented opportunities for disseminating information. Last year in Iran, Twitter was crucial in contesting the disputed elections when heavy government censorship shut down media and messaging services including Facebook and YouTube. [Read about it [here](#)]. Closer to home, the Vancouver Winter Olympics were dogged by questions of corporate domination and the resultant threats to freedom of expression, especially within [the artistic community](#). Ongoing debates about Facebook in China continue to raise a host of questions about the role new media will play in an increasingly digitized, globalized world.

Given Transverse's debut as an entirely web-based publication, it was only fitting to study the contours of its new home. Some of the articles in this edition are similarly inclined, while others interrogate the manifestations of censorship throughout history and across a variety of media including novels, magazines, visual arts, and folk songs, to name a few. The articles explore many facets of a theme that is pertinent across disciplines.

At the time of publication, certain events within the University of Toronto have made the theme of censorship even more urgent on a personal level. With practically no advance notice and an unsettling lack of transparency, the Strategic Planning Committee has decided to cancel the University of Toronto's Comparative Literature programme and disband the department by 2011. East Asian Studies is likewise under siege, and most of U of T's language departments are slated to be merged under a single umbrella within a proposed School of Language and Literature. Had students been consulted, we would have been united in decrying these cuts from the beginning; now that plans are underway to carry out this plan, we must speak with even more force. It is already difficult to do interdisciplinary study at the University of Toronto, and the proposed changes would make it virtually impossible to undertake the research that has resulted in the acclaim of our students and faculty. If these changes go ahead, this will be the last issue of Transverse; sadly, this is only the beginning of a list of entities that will cease to exist. Several websites have been set up in solidarity with our efforts to fight the university's decision, and I invite you to find them on the links page. Please spread the word about the plight of comparative literature departments across the country and around the world. We must affirm the value of studying literature for itself. We must resist its being commodified into a dollars and cents equation in which it inevitably comes up short. It is our hope that electronic media will help us spread our message in what is truly a time of crisis for the Centre for Comparative Literature, as for the university community at large.

Thanks for your readership and support.

Myra Bloom,

Editor-in-chief

Coming Together over *Filles* and *Femmes*: Pornography and Homosocial
Desire in the Shifting Power Structures of Seventeenth-Century France

By Matthew Callahan

Towards the mid-seventeenth century two different works bearing two distinctly similar titles appeared on the French literary scene. *L'École des filles*, the first of these two works, appeared in 1655, and purports to be a self-improvement sex manual. The second, *L'École des femmes*, is a theatrical comedy by Molière that satirizes devout society while commenting on the education of women. These two works, published only seven years apart, scandalized French society and unleashed a debate revolving around perceptions of propriety and standards in both textual media and theatrical arts.

L'École des filles is a short pornographic novel written in the style of popular self-improvement manuals of the day. [1] The work is divided into two main dialogues preceded by a preface entitled “Épître invitatoire aux filles” (Blessebois et al. 169). The dialogue is presented as taking place between two young women, Fanchon and Suzanne. In the first dialogue, Fanchon is portrayed as the younger, more naïve cousin of the older and more worldly Suzanne. Robinet, Fanchon’s aspiring lover, has convinced Suzanne to school her cousin in the art of lovemaking. Suzanne explains in explicit detail the sex act, as well as dispelling myths and superstitious beliefs her cousin holds regarding pre-marital sex, even suggesting that she might enjoy it. The text is interrupted by the arrival of the would-be lover, who has come to check on his project. During this intermission, the affair is consummated and the second dialogue details the sexual exploits of Robinet and Fanchon, describing Fanchon’s blossoming knowledge, which comes as a result of her blossoming sexuality.

L'École des filles is generally believed to have been written in the summer of 1655 (Turner 1). Its authorship, however, remains uncertain. No evidence remains of the true identity of the author or authors, a fact that has inspired many contradictory readings of this text. However, as Joan de Jean remarks in her work *The Reinvention of Obscenity* regarding the notion of authorship in the seventeenth century, “[t]he author is the individual singled out for punishment when a work becomes the target of censorship” (65). With regards to *L'École des filles*, Michel Millot and Jean l’Ange, the two publishers of the text, were tried and punished as the authors of the text.

On December 22, 1662, not yet seven years after the publication and controversy surrounding *L'École des filles*, Molière staged the first production of *L'École des femmes* at the Théâtre Palais-Royal. This five-act comedy, which was hugely successful, thrust the playwright into a debate over not only the alleged indecency of his work, but also over the aesthetics of comedic theatre itself. [2] The action centres on the antics of Arnolphe, a bourgeois gentleman who has just recently elevated his status through the purchase of a name: Monsieur de Souche. He has had the daughter of a peasant woman brought up in a convent to be completely naïve in order to ensure that she would be unable to cuckold him. However, the comedy relies on the confusion created when Horace, the young and impressionable son of Arnolphe’s old friend falls in love with the latter’s young protégée, Agnès. Unaware of Arnolphe’s newly acquired title, he recounts his developing love affair, unknowingly giving his rival the information needed to counteract his own influence. Throughout his interactions with Agnès and Horace, Arnolphe’s mind is cynically predisposed, constantly inferring the worst about his protégée. Natural love prevails, however, despite all of Arnolphe’s schemes. In the end, in a fantastic *pater ex machina*, both Horace’s father and Agnes’ (hitherto unknown) father appear and reveal their plan for the marriage of their children. Finally, in spite of Arnolphe’s careful preparations, he is left utterly speechless and exits the stage.

Molière’s success came at the price of a scandal. Much of what we know about the critiques aimed at his work has been preserved through Molière’s rebuttal: the one-act *La critique de L'École des femmes*. This counter-critique portrays a satirical debate mocking his critics through a clever use of his enemies’ empty rhetorical strategies. It is indeed through the mouth of one of Molière’s invented critics, Climène, that we learn that his play was judged as obscene. [3] Moreover, Molière was positioned at a historic juncture. Being present at court in the 1660’s, the author would have been witness to the assumption of full control of the state by Louis XIV after the death of Cardinal Mazarin in 1661 (Hollier and Bloch 312). At the same time, Louis’ more libertine court began to replace his mother’s pious court, a fact that can be read in Molière’s theatre. Indeed, in his counter-critique of *L'École des femmes*, Molière discloses his plan for a new aesthetic of comedy:

Je voudrais bien savoir si la grande règle de toutes les règles n'est pas de plaire, et si une pièce de théâtre qui a attrapé son but n'a pas suivi un bon chemin. Veut-on que tout un public s'abuse sur ces sortes de choses, et que chacun n'y soit pas juge du plaisir qu'il y prend ? (Critique [IV] 132)

Molière establishes his comedy in the necessity to 'plaire' – denoting both pleasure and entertainment, in the same way that the pedagogical treatises of the day focus on a desire to be pleasing. By taking up the problem of education, sexuality and female social status, Molière firmly places his comedy into the realm of societal criticism.

Even after nearly three centuries of critical work, the debate rages on, centering on whether these oeuvres belong to an objectifying and misogynistic genre or whether they can be claimed as proto-feminist. Joan de Jean, for example, claims *L'École des filles* provides women with a modern voice by describing and allowing for a female right to pleasure in the text (Reinvention 74-8). The work, however pornographic, does not contain any "hint of blasphemy" or any unorthodox political views (Politics 116). Other critics however do not share this view. Ruth Larson claims *L'École des femmes* as "an erotic satire" and develops a theory of feminine empowerment through a satirization of the popular devotional and behavioral 'how-to' manuals revolutionized by one Nicolas Faret (501). Her analysis concludes with a provocative conjecture that perhaps the wife of Faret had a hand in the writing of *L'École des filles*, suggesting a powerful link between subversive social action, pornographic literature and female empowerment.

Like *L'École des filles*, *L'École des femmes* has also been appropriated as a feminist work. Barbara Johnson suggests that the competing notions of pedagogical authority represented by Horace and Arnolphe in *L'École des femmes* in fact provide the ideal situation for learning (181). She continues by claiming that "[t]o retain the plurality of forces and desires within a structure that would displace the One-ness of individual mastery could perhaps be labeled a feminization of authority" (ibid.). Roxanne Lalande, however, notes the subtle linguistic transformations that occur in the work, underlining the fact that the feminine concept of fortune is gradually replaced by a paternalistic notion of destiny (173). Indeed, as the author goes on to explain, "Act V is a staged demonstration of the laws of fate: ultimately an underlying and preordained structuring principle was in operation from the outset..." (ibid.). Ultimately, despite Arnolphe's failure, paternal authority is re-established in the figure of the father and the new husband.

In light of this cursory presentation of these two *Écoles*, it seems rather clear that both the anonymous author or authors of *L'École des filles* and Molière could be said to be questioning the systems of authority in their day. However, much of the critical discussion surrounding these two works centers on either the subversive libertine and, therefore, liberating aspects of these works or their misogynistic and objectifying nature. My goal is not to rehash the debate, but instead to reframe it. *L'École des filles* and *École des femmes*, while being subversive and indeed libertine, do not serve as proto-feminist works. The sexual and societal situations presented in these works, while indeed being revolutionary, do not attempt to re-envision or even balance the unequal relations between men and women, however subtly. Instead, these works demonstrate a revolutionary shift from one source of authority to another – in essence, giving up one paternalistic master for another.

Throughout *L'École des filles* and *L'École des femmes* the reader can witness the representation of a transformation of authority, from what might be termed an "old order" to what could be argued is a "new order." That is to say, this imagined shift of power goes from a source of authority that is ancient and well founded, to a newer alternative and rival source of power. Yet, this transformation, negotiated among men, is depicted through the process of female education. Indeed, in these two works the knowledge conferred and withheld by the competing sources of authority reveals itself as obscene and pornographic.

At the center of this debate is the question of whether or not pornographic and obscene works have the capacity to liberate their objects. Pornography is in many ways a modern phenomenon; despite the fact that sexually explicit descriptions of sexual acts meant to arouse have existed since pre-modern times, the means to mass distribute them, and therefore the need to suppress them, is a decidedly early-modern phenomenon. Lynn Hunt, in her introduction to *The Invention of Pornography* points to this very modern, and dialectical, relationship pornography has with authority in the seventeenth century by explaining how these writers employ "the shock of sex to criticize religious and political authorities" (10). Thus, the revolutionary nature of the text relies on a literary performance enacted by the author in the face of the authority being questioned. Yet, while it is clear that literary obscenity can act as a subversive agent for the subject (author), it remains a question whether or not it can serve the same role for its object, in this case, women. I would argue that these two works demonstrate a reimagining of the power structure – paternal authority; however, this re-conceptualization excludes women precisely through its depiction of women as the object. More precisely, throughout these two works, the representation of female education is employed as a means of upending societal or familial mores, with a specific emphasis on an obscene or pornographic sexual representation of women.

Although seemingly removed from each other, an investigation into the relation of male power structures to obscenity and pornography can be quite fruitful. Indeed, a feminist reading of pornographic representations highlights the role these depictions play in the construction of not only sexual relations but nonsexual relations as well. In the *Pornography of Representation*, Susan

Kappeler argues that pornography is not sexuality; it is but a form of representation, and indeed, the examination of the means of representation is crucial (1). She then underlines the dialectical relationship between how sex is portrayed and how it is enacted between couples, each one informing the other. In the context of the two works in question, the sudden availability of these works on a mass scale helped to naturalize their content, with the goal of blurring the lines between the representation and the real.

Furthermore, this mechanism of reimagining power structures through a common desire and objectification of women is the express goal of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's exploration of male homosocial desire. This concept of homosocial desire is derived from the social sciences, being employed to describe social bonds between persons of the same-sex. Any basic explanation of male homosocial desire relies on its performative aspects: one critic explains that male practices of gender function primarily through "enactment[s]" which occur predominantly in front of other men and are done essentially for their approval (Kimmel 128-9). This practice involves leveraging their positions by using 'markers' of masculinity (ibid). These markers can be "wealth, power, and status, physical prowess, and sexual achievement" (Flood 2).

In her study of homosocial desire in literature, *Between Men*, Sedgwick takes this notion of homosociality and attempts to draw it back into what she terms "the orbit of 'desire' of the potentially erotic." Sedgwick argues that one cannot understand the overarching structures of society without examining and engaging the links between these structures and the homosocial continuum. Sedgwick concisely expounds her theory of homosocial desire and its relation to power structures by stating:

[in] any male-dominated society there is a special relationship between male homosocial (including homosexual) desire and the structures for maintaining and transmitting patriarchal power: a relationship founded on an inherent and potentially active structural congruence. For historical reasons, this special relationship may take the form of ideological homophobia, ideological homosexuality, or some highly conflicted but intensively structured combination of the two. (25)

Sedgwick continues in this vein, ultimately remarking (including in her analysis concepts borrowed from Lévi-Strauss) that patriarchal heterosexuality would be better served by discussing the objects (women) in terms of their exchange or symbolic value. Women are viewed as property in this system, and their primary purpose is to be exchanged not between men and women, but between men.

Sedgwick's theory concludes that heterosexual marriage, essentially the possession of the woman, and particularly the woman as property, is the conduit by which men engage in a relationship where the real partner is another man (26). Sedgwick seamlessly transfers this concept to her examination of literature, in her attempt to decipher the power structure inherent in the triangular desire found so often in western literature. With a strong reference to the theories of René Girard, Sedgwick examines the power relationships of the erotic triangle, examining literary texts to reveal relatively obscured gendered power inequalities. The two *Écoles* also fit neatly into this theoretical framework: both *L'École des filles* and *L'École des femmes* negotiate desire and power inequalities through their depiction of women.

From the very beginning of *L'École des filles*, the text establishes itself as a rival source of authority. The text mimics and transgresses the popular self-improvement treatise, presenting itself as a female educational manual, carrying a strikingly similar name to many other works of the day. Nicolas Faret's *L'Honneste-Homme ou, l'art de plaire à la court* was published in 1630, already signaling the shift from devotional manuals that taught one how to please God, to an etiquette manual designed to instruct the reader in *Honnêteté* – the art of socially virtuous behavior. Contrasted with Corneille's verse translation of Thomas à Kempis' *De Imitatione Christi*, *L'Imitation de Jésus-Christe*, Faret's treatise clearly places the behavioral practice in the exterior temporal realm – while simultaneously grounding it in an interior eternal and religious context.

L'École des filles, however, attempts to locate its pedagogical mission strictly in the physical and corporeal domain. Mimicking the *table des matières* found in these devotional and self-improvement manuals, the text lays out, in a "Table mystique et allégorique" the subjects of the dialogues (Blessebois et al. 173). Where one might find in Faret's manual an entry regarding "Maximes que doit observer celui qui n'a jamais vu la cour, pour y aborder" (Sommaire des matières III), the corrupted manual describes, "46. De l'éjaculation de la liqueur d'amour et comment elle se fait" (176). Religious and state authority is further challenged by a mock Papal bull where the king's *privilege* would normally be found,

Notre auguste père Priape fulmine anathème contre tous ceux de l'un et de l'autre sexe qui liront ou entendront lire les préceptes d'amour, expliqués moralement en la célèbre École des Filles, sans spermatiser ou être stimulés de quelque émotion spirituelle ou corporelle. (183)

The text presents itself thus as explicitly pornographic – indeed, pronouncing an anathema for those who do not ejaculate or are not stimulated – while it also reveals its gendered subject. Not only is it designed to titillate and stimulate, it is meant to ‘faire spermatiser’ – to cause a male ejaculation. The focus on male sexual pleasure forms the basis of the novel from the start.

L'École des filles thus reappropriates this common seventeenth-century topos of the treatise, and subverts its purpose. From being pleasing to God, then pleasing to the king and high society, this new manual claims to instruct the reader in the practices of sexual pleasure. However, the tone of the work establishes clearly the priorities in sexual instruction. “Voici l'École de votre sagesse et le recueil des principales choses que vous devez savoir pour contenter vos maris quand vous en aurez” (169). While later on in the dialogue it is revealed that women are indeed able to derive pleasure from sexual intercourse, it is but an afterthought. Furthermore, despite the fact that mutual pleasure is preferred in *L'École des filles*, male genitalia and indeed every part of the male body are described, whereas there is silence and ignorance regarding the female genitalia and body.

The supplementary role of women in this school of sexual enlightenment demonstrates neatly the true axis of power relations in the novel between men and women. It is only through the sex act, and that through Robinet, that Fanchon is able to be educated and empowered. After her sexual awakening with her lover, Fanchon declares to her cousin, “Ma cousine, cela est étrange : depuis que Robinet a couché avec moi et que j'ai vu et senti les choses... Je n'étais bonne auparavant qu'à filer et me taire, et à présent je suis bonne à tout ce que l'on voudra” (224). The illicit sexual knowledge therefore brings confidence and authority to an otherwise silenced Fanchon, yet, it is only through the opening of the hymen (and only then through heterosexual male-centered sexual activity) that the mind can be opened for women in *L'École des filles*. The physical loss of virginity and innocence leads to a meta-physical enlightenment. This new knowledge does not, however, lead Fanchon into higher knowledge. This carnal knowledge is instead the extent of her knowledge while also constituting a new and unprecedented desire. Fanchon, newly enlightened, explains to her cousin, “il semble que l'on ne soit garçon et fille que pour cela, et l'on ne commence à vivre au monde que depuis que l'on sait ce que c'est...” (224).

While sexual practice represented in *L'École des filles* purportedly opens the mind of the ingénue, it is love that claims to make the naïve wise in Molière's *L'École des femmes*. Arnolphe's unassuming rival, Horace, demonstrates this natural sentiment in stating, “l'amour est un grand maître” (III IV). Our introduction to Arnolphe reveals his surprising comprehension of the ways of the world. James Turner, in *Schooling Sex*, describes Arnolphe's character precisely by expounding on the fact that he is not a puritanical man or a businessman, but “a specialist in libertine literature, a quoter of Rabelais, and a collector of ‘contes gaillards’” (Turner 255). All of his study has led him to believe that he can succeed where all the other husbands have failed. His aim has been to keep a woman pure, in order to protect her honor and love her fully, knowing that she could never betray him. Arnolphe's plans can thus be read as a homosocial enactment founded in his desire to trump the other husbands.

However, Arnolphe's masterplan is fatally flawed from the start. While gloating about his eventual triumph in securing a faithful wife who will sew, pray and love him, Arnolphe describes what he truly desires in a wife, “Même ne sache pas ce que c'est qu'une rime ; / Et s'il faut qu'avec elle on joue au corbillon / Et qu'on vienne à lui dire à son tour : ‘Qu'y met-on ?’ / Je veux qu'elle réponde : ‘une tarte à la crème’” (I I 96-9). Through the word game, Molière is manipulating the audience with the impropriety of the suggested word (e.g. con). In so doing, he relieves himself of the obligation of naming the obscene, and through the referential process of language relies on the audience to supply the comedic elements. Throughout his interactions with Agnès, he is constantly the victim of his own cynical worldview.

Agnès, on the other hand, is portrayed as innocent, naïve and pure – her uneducated remarks about sexuality underline the impossibility of educating an ignorance of natural knowledge. While with Arnolphe, Agnès exclaims, “La douceur me chatouille et là dedans remue / Certain je ne sais quoi dont je suis toute émue” (II. V. 563-4). Although she is not yet in possession of the vocabulary to express her sexual desire, this desire manifests itself all the same. Thus the repressive system of the enforced innocence of the female subject is criticized; the silencing of the rhetoric of sexual language does not actually stifle desire. Simultaneously revealing her naivety as well as suggesting another obscene quid pro quo to the audience, these lines nevertheless reveal an important theme in *L'École des femmes*. While the sophisticated, educated schemer eventually fails, the ingénue, who was educated in order to be a fool, finds an innate logic to her sexuality that reveals itself through a natural romantic love for Horace. Ultimately, however, Molière's *L'École des femmes* depends on a standard patriarchal denouement that negates the possibility of any genuine feminine empowerment.

In the final scene of *L'École des femmes* – as triumphant as this love is – the traffic in women is perpetuated. It is eventually revealed that Agnès really has no real choice, despite the fortuitous outcome. The triangle of desire centered on Agnès dissolves in the final scene, when Arnolphe exits silently, defeated by his own cynicism and scheming in the face of natural desire. The desire for the object is not lessened with his departure; rather, the source of authority has shifted out of his favor. Paternal authority, however, is reinstated after being wrested out of the hands of Arnolphe, when Chrysalde and Oronte – the father of Horace, reveal the truth

parentage of Agnès. Chrysalde cheerfully declares to a silent Arnolphe, “Je devine à peu près quel est votre supplice ; / Mais le sort en cela ne vous est que propice : Si n’être point cocu vous semble un si grand bien, / Ne vous point marier en est le vrai moyen.” The pleasure the audience derives from the unexpected realization that Agnès and Horace will be married, reveals the extent to which Agnès has simply functioned as a piece of property between two males enacting a performative gesture of appropriation around male desire.

Pornography, by definition, does not simply function inside the text. In *L’École des fille* and *L’École des femmes* a metatextual and participatory structure plays a significant role in the development of homosocial desire. It is also this participatory structure that imparts to these texts their pornographic nature. In *L’École des filles*, the reader is invited into the sexually explicit text, encouraged and commanded to participate with the girls as they explore their sexual desire. With Molière however, the participatory nature of his text is subtler. His use of the quid pro quo throughout the text utilizes the power suggestion in the mind of the spectator or reader. Not simply a misunderstanding, Molière’s quid pro quo literally replaces an innocent thought with the obscene. In the same scene where Agnès confesses her unnameable desires to Arnolphe, Molière’s most infamous quid pro quo, the ‘le’ underlines this point. In an effort to hide the fact that Horace took her *ruban*, Agnès hesitates to finish her sentence, leading Arnolphe to imagine the worst:

Arnolphe: Ne vous a-t-il point pris, Agnès, quelque autre chose?...

Agnès: Hé! il m’a...

Arnolphe : Quoi ?

Agnès : Pris...

Arnolphe : Euh !

Agnès : Le...

Arnolphe : Plaît-il ?

.....

Agnès : Il m’a pris le ruban que vous m’aviez donné... (II V 571-8)

Through this protracted quid pro quo, the reader is left to his or her own imaginings about what it is that Arnolphe could be assuming. The spectator, however, was likely privy to a gestural rhetoric that might have given a hint as to what Arnolphe suspected, but to which Agnès would have still been naïve. The physical and mental participation in the obscenity of these two works marks them as pornographic. Subversive for this reason, they were subject to the repressive machinery of censorship.

Ironically, the attempts to suppress the dissemination of this pornographic literature are linked with its production through the desire for power. Male homosocial bonds serve to create and preserve power; therefore censorship can be viewed as a homosocial institution, with the expressed goal of repressing materials that would subvert the authority of the dominant group. When that dominant group’s interests thus revolve around the suppression of sexually obscene materials for religious reasons, the title of ‘obscene’ and the consequences of censorship fall upon the work; however, when the work is judged indecent or obscene on religious grounds (e.g. protestant pamphlets) the work also is censored in the same way. Indeed, what becomes evident is that the line that separated politically or religiously subversive tracts was often articulated by and with sexually subversive works. Of the multiple examples in the history of obscenity, a prime example lies in the fact that many times sodomy was linked with Protestantism; both were harshly suppressed (DeJean 31). In this way, *L’École des filles* and *L’École des femmes* can be read in their historically subversive context.

By examining the ways in which these works maintain the status quo, particularly in terms of the maintenance of masculine structures of domination over women and other non-hetero-normative male figures *L’École des filles* and *L’École des femmes* appear rather modern; perhaps this is only to say that these male structures of domination have not substantially altered in the course of the last 350 years. Although, as Ruth Larson and others claim, this work can be seen as revolutionary, it remains that while these works may indeed be emancipatory in one sense, it can remain repressive in another. That is to say that while they do suggest a less repressive attitude towards sexual education, they do not indeed attempt to revolutionize the status of women. They instead undermine the authority of devout society, calling into question the continued supremacy of the church, and suggest an alternative but still masculine source of power.

Perhaps it might be suggested that these works can be read as evolutionary steps toward the transformation of power structures that René Girard discusses in his work *Deceit, Desire and the Novel*. He traces, through the nineteenth century, the replacement of the King and the Church with the middle class and bourgeois culture. This important work, drawn on heavily for Sedgwick's theory of homosocial desire, underlines the replacement of overarching structures, and the mimesis that results from this exchange. The modern representational form of sexual intercourse had democratized pornography, creating, maintaining and reinforcing the desired object of men, as learned through the performatives of other men.

If indeed the homosocial is tied to the erotic, as Sedgwick proposes, it is also mitigated through the obligatory heterosexuality inherent in male-dominated kinship systems like that of seventeenth-century French culture. Homosociality, thus, might be viewed as a way to dispel the violent self-loathing that could possibly arise from the paradox of living in a patriarchal-dominated society and being attracted to men. Homosociality can similarly be used to provide an outlet to perhaps unexplored homosexual desire. The homosocial then gives this homosexual desire a place in society where it would be otherwise unacceptable. In this way then, pornography and overt erotic literature can be situated in a suppressed homosexual or homosocial desire. Ultimately Sedgwick's discussion of erotic triangles concludes by saying that what has changed over time in western culture and has varied across cultures is the way homosexual practices are perceived by the dominant community (26). Unfortunately, the role of women as well as their treatment is inextricably linked with the perception of homosexuality; where gender and class inequalities are significant for homosexuals, so too does the fate of women follow a similar trajectory. An unanswered, and perhaps unanswerable, question remains: is it possible that obscenity or pornography can portray egalitarian relations, and truly provide freedom and personal sexual expression? In the case of these two works, it appears not.

The obscene has a complex place in modern society, much as it did in the early modern period. In many ways the seventeenth century shines a light on our modern society and our views on obscenity and pornography. Today, as in the seventeenth century, the obscene often pushes boundaries and affords a sense of freedom and experimentation that might not be otherwise possible. Furthermore, our definitions of the obscene, the erotic, and the pornographic have shifted to accommodate new and different forms, while the formerly obscene becomes absorbed into our culture. So, too, the dialectical relationship between the censored (or forbidden) and the coveted mirrors that of the seventeenth century. Today, male homosocial desire continues to function as a useful way to decode our modern world. For seventeenth century texts, *L'École des filles* and *L'École des femmes* are extraordinarily modern, revealing many modern sensibilities and gendered power biases. However, it is only through an understanding of male desire – and the bonding it creates – that the modern reader can truly begin to grasp that the radical and revolutionary natures of these works derive from their utter banality.

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[1] The use of pornographic is meant to designate explicit material that is used for the express purpose of titillation. There is an important designation to be made between erotic, obscene and pornographic. In a 17th century French context, the word pornography (a nineteenth-century invention) would have been anachronistic – as the vocabulary for this type of obscenity had not been developed due to the relatively recent possibilities of mass publishing. See, for example, the entry for *pornographie* in *Le Trésor de la langue française* < <http://atilf.atilf.fr/tlf.htm>>.

[2] See for example, the arguments laid forth by Donneau de Visé and others regarding the apparent lack of aesthetic quality in Molière's work in: Jean Donneau de Visé, Edme Boursault, Charles Robinet and Georges Mongrédien, La Querelle De "L'école Des Femmes", Comédies Tome 1 (Paris: Marcel Didier, 1971).

[3] With regard to an infamous use of the quid pro quo, the "le" of the "ruban", Climène declares, "Il a une obscénité qui n'est pas supportable." Scene III, *La Critique de L'École des femmes*.

Telling Tales: State Censorship and the Growth of Oral Culture in Early Soviet Russia

By Miranda Corcoran

For much of the Soviet period censorship functioned as a centripetal force, working tirelessly to centralise and subjugate the myriad voices of a diffuse and variegated populace, bringing all aspects of public and private discourse under the province of its authoritarian rule. In doing so, the vast apparatus of Soviet censorship sought to exercise absolute control over numerous diverse modes of speech and expression, ferreting out dissenting voices in both print and broadcast media, as well as in many other public forums. In this fervent pursuit of a homogenous discursive sphere, Soviet censorship directly mirrored the tactics of many other totalitarian regimes which came into being in the first half of the twentieth century. However, as many observers have established, the Soviet system was unique amongst its dictatorial contemporaries because, through the combined forces of censorship and propaganda, it more often than not championed profound *personal* ideological transformation rather than merely propounding *political* conformity (Kiaer and Naiman, 2006; C. Davies, 2007). As such, the Soviet Union attempted to exert a unique kind of hegemonic control over its citizens. Like other totalitarian regimes, it required obedience, acquiescence and the expurgation or assimilation of difference. However, the Soviet system, particularly in its nascent years during the 1920s and '30s, also required genuine enthusiasm, belief and loyalty from its subjects. It asked not only that its citizens conform, but that they actively take the regime's ideologies into themselves, transforming their inner lives in accordance with party dictates, so that the self, rather than representing a private, a-political sphere, becomes "simply another 'realm' to be remade by the state" (Kiaer and Naiman 3).

This article will explore the crucial role played by censorship in the construction of the Soviet ideological framework, examining how censorship worked to shape individual subjectivity through the presentation of a unified, monolithic vision of reality from which all conflicting discourses were necessarily excluded. However, I will argue that this attempted ideological colonisation of everyday life was ultimately unsuccessful; that the rigors of official censorship inevitably led to the construction of an unofficial realm, wherein citizens could establish a free discursive space, developing new means of transmitting artistic, philosophical and political ideas. This article will focus in particular on the re-emergence of a vital oral culture during the early Stalinist period, which, through its production of intangible cultural artefacts such as songs, jokes and anecdotes, provided a means for citizens to transmit information and keep alive the memory of forbidden words and ideas. Consequently, I will establish that the failure of Soviet censorship to silence these subversive discourses is emblematic of the overall impossibility of maintaining any form of ideological hegemony.

Spanning over six decades and shaping Russian intellectual and cultural life for most of the twentieth century, the Soviet Union witnessed one of the longest periods of state-sponsored censorship in modern history. However, its implementation was not an immediate effect of the October Revolution nor of the transition to Communism. Indeed, for a brief period following the end of the Civil War and coinciding with the rise of the New Economic Policy (NEP), there was a short-lived resurgence of private publishing enterprises, which allowed for the re-establishment of both printing and retail facilities (Struve 34). The construction of the complex and inscrutable mechanisms we now associate with Soviet censorship did not fully commence until the founding of the Main Directorate on Literary and Publishing Affairs (*Glavnoe Upravlenie po Delam Literaturny i Izdatelstv*: abbreviated as Glavlit) in 1922 and, even then, censorship continued to exist in a relatively embryonic state for much of the 1920s, concerning itself largely with the suppression of overt political dissidence (Fox 1046). Indeed, it was not until 1932, when all pre-existing literary organisations were disbanded in favour of the single Union of Soviet Writers, that Russia experienced the true crystallisation of autocratic Soviet censorship.

At the same time, the Communist party, still emboldened by the spirit of 1917 and the recent Civil War, was preoccupied with the monumental task of cultivating a unified revolutionary consciousness amongst the diverse population of the newly formed Soviet state. As Jochen Hellbeck notes, there was an unspoken consensus amongst party members that, at this pivotal moment in the historical development of communism, the ultimate success of the revolution depended largely upon the degree to which the Soviet people embraced Marxist consciousness and began to view themselves as "historical subjects whose lives were conditioned by the revolution" (19). Unlike those regimes that merely sought acquiescence and obedience from their subjects, the Soviet government firmly believed that the establishment of socialism, whether in one country or as part of a worldwide revolution, was contingent upon its subjects not simply behaving like good Communists or outwardly accepting party dictates, but upon their ability to transform their inner-lives, their very way of thinking and viewing the world in accordance with socialist ideology.

However, even in the post-revolutionary fervour of the 1920s, socialist consciousness was neither a priori nor universal; “rather, it had to be disseminated by arduous political effort... gradually [taking] hold of the individual, first controlling his environment and outward behaviour, and then entering the recesses of his psyche” (Hellbeck 20)[i]. To this end, as the 1920s wore on, most elements of the media, along with the literary establishment, were placed in the service of the state, primarily charged with the dissemination of party propaganda. However, there was also a growing realisation amongst party leaders that consolidation of a unified public discourse would ultimately lead to a unified public consciousness, that what people could and could not see invariably shaped their understanding of the world around them. The means to control the nature and dissemination of public information was therefore seen as inextricably linked to the regime’s ability to secure and maintain power and, as such, necessitated the construction of a vast bureaucratic infrastructure comprised of numerous complex systems which oversaw the pre-circulation control and evaluation of all printed matter (including the press), film, visual art, advertising and so forth, as well as assuming responsibility for the confiscation or destruction of contentious works already in circulation (Lauk 19-20). As the mechanisms of censorship became more sophisticated, it was employed as a means of establishing a single, hegemonic vision of reality which would conform to and ultimately support party precepts. In doing so, the media was consistently exhorted to propound the party’s utopian philosophies which, based on the Marxist view of history, saw socialism as the predetermined outcome of proletarian revolution and constantly promised that a socialist paradise was just on the horizon (Fitzpatrick 8). As such, all conflicting discourses were necessarily suppressed, in order to present a single, unified image of a society in which conditions were constantly improving and the dreams of the October Revolution were always just on the verge of fulfilment. In this way, the eradication of all potentially dissonant ideas and influences allowed the Soviet regime to transform socialist ideology into material “fact”, providing the tenets of the party with the spurious appearance of incontrovertible objective reality[ii].

This manipulation of reality was particularly apparent during the harsh years of the Ukrainian famine, when the Soviet press consistently depicted collective farms as “happy and prosperous, with merry peasants gathering around laden tables in the evening to dance and sing to the accordion” (Fitzpatrick 9), all the while saying nothing of the poverty and hunger that ravaged the region during this period. Similarly, during the Purges of the 1930s the media presented the image of a nation in which there were no unwarranted arrests or abuses of power, only enemies of the people determined to sabotage the bright future that undoubtedly lay ahead for the Soviet state. Hence, through the suppression of all incompatible discourses, the Soviet regime created a vast metanarrative, a system through which they could construct “the dominant method of perceiving and understanding the reality of [their] culture, the means through which they [could] ‘...unify and order (and smooth over) contradictions in order to make them fit’” into their singular vision of a burgeoning socialist utopia (Hutcheon x). Consequently, censorship played a vital role in the deliberate construction of the grand narrative of social progress which dominated Soviet life during the early Stalinist period. Through the exclusion of all contradictory positions, the Soviet leadership established a cohesive image of enlightened social development in which individual transformation and improvement were mirrored by a society striving for perfection, casting off the tyranny of the tsarist past and striding towards a utopian future. In this way, censorship during the early Soviet period was not merely restrictive but actively creative, functioning to construct “an ideologically correct symbolic environment, filled with content designed to socialise the audience to the ideas and values of Communism” (Jakubowicz qtd. in Lauk 19).

Yet, even as the media worked to create a singular vision of reality which would ineluctably mould individuals’ perceptions of the external world, this reconstruction of subjects’ understanding of their environment was complimented by an equally vigorous attempt to permeate individual consciousness in order to transform the “recesses of [the] psyche” in accordance with Soviet ideals (Hellbeck 20). In 1925, the Central Committee of the Communist party began to consider the role of art and literature in shaping class consciousness, emphatically declaring that there is “no neutral art” (qtd. in Struve 89)[iii]. Rather, it was understood by the committee that, if the citizens of the newborn Soviet state were to comprehend their role in the historical progression of proletarian revolution and truly embrace a collective class consciousness, their very mode of thinking would have to be altered, so that they would instinctively conceive of themselves as part of a single immense dialectic of class struggle in which the forces of enlightenment and emancipation would necessarily triumph over greed and tyranny. Perhaps it was felt that in order to fully appreciate their unique historical position; Soviet subjects would need to view themselves as participants in a large, all-encompassing narrative of heroic revolutionary struggle.

This desire to promote ideological unity through the establishment of a singular, universal narrative coherence would certainly account for the introduction, in the early 1930s, of a comprehensive programme of prescriptive censorship which functioned to promulgate Socialist Realism as the *only* acceptable mode of artistic expression. The term itself is attributed to Joseph Stalin who, in an 1934 address to the Union of Soviet Writers, called for “the creation of works of high artistic significance, saturated with the heroic struggle of the world proletariat and the grandeur of the victory of socialism, and reflecting the great wisdom and heroism of the Communist party” (Struve 256). As such, Socialist Realism, whose authors and artists Stalin envisioned as “engineers of

human souls" (Struve 256), was designed to permeate and transform individual consciousness. In its glorification of "heroic" proletarian struggle against capitalist oppression and unconditional endorsement of party dictates, Socialist Realism existed for the express purpose of cultivating a cohesive ideological consensus amongst all Soviet subjects. Furthermore, in order to maintain the homogeneity of public discourse, all publications, broadcasts, and artworks were prevented from expressing not only politically subversive ideas, but also from voicing any opinions that did not reflect the "grandeur" of the socialist system and the "heroism of the Communist party" (Struve 256). Art and literature that diverged from Socialist Realist principles, and particularly the sort of escapist fiction popular in the West, were prohibited for the sake of maintaining a unified class consciousness.

As such, throughout the early years of the Soviet regime, censorship was conceived of as a unifying force, a means to subjugate the multitudinous strands of public and private discourse to a single monologic vision of reality. Yet, as Mikhail Bakhtin reminds us, the centripetal forces of political and ideological hegemony are constantly being attacked, destabilised and eroded by the centrifugal powers of the heteroglossia, the myriad voices of the excluded and oppressed which function to fragment ideological hegemony into manifold conflicting discourses (Morris 15). In Soviet Russia, censorship worked to create an impenetrable realm of official discourse, pushing out all that was subversive, contradictory or incompatible with its vision of reality. Nonetheless, these suppressed narratives coalesced on the margins of legitimate discourse, challenging the domination of the official realm and calling into question the regime's purported monopoly on truth.

For many Western observers, this struggle for intellectual or artistic autonomy is usually associated with the emblematic image of the battered *samizdat*^[iv] typescript which, as Ann Komaromi notes, is inextricably linked to a mythic image of "political opposition and heroic dissonance ..." (597). However, *samizdat* was largely a post-Stalinist phenomenon originating in the early '50s and reaching its zenith in the 1960s and '70s (Komaromi 598-9). During the early Soviet period, as the party began its immense project of cultivating a unified class consciousness, the monolithic force of official dictum was challenged by something much older, something invariably bound to folk consciousness and the marginalised discourses of the oppressed. As the seemingly limitless mechanisms of Soviet censorship intensified their control over the official realm of literature and the media, this discursive hegemony was countered by a tremendous flourishing of oral culture, whereby genres of popular expression such as jokes, rumours and topical songs (*chastushki*) created an unofficial realm where citizens could freely subvert official values (Fitzpatrick 106).

For Simon McBurney, writing about his experiences of visiting Moscow in the early 1980s, the power of Soviet oral culture lay in its ability to circumvent the rigors of state censorship. In particular, McBurney focuses on the work of Daniil Kharms, whose experimental prose was discredited and suppressed by Soviet censors in the 1930s. Yet, over fifty years later, his work continued to survive, largely in the form of jokes and anecdotes told amongst friends. Out of necessity, these short, fragmentary scraps of prose took on a life of their own beyond the printed page, thriving in the hearts and minds of Soviet citizens as they were relayed from one person to another by the indomitable, untraceable force of the spoken word. In addition to this rather pragmatic function as a means of transmitting suppressed information and ideas, Soviet oral culture also enacted a more symbolic role, representing the possibility of freedom from the ceaseless drone of party rhetoric. From McBurney's account we can infer that, like the innumerable jokes, songs, tall-tales and rumours that thrived during this period, the stories of Daniil Kharms took on a mythic status and entered public consciousness, in the process often becoming divorced from any concrete conceptions of author or creator. In doing so, these works entered the realm of folk consciousness, joining those stories that Angela Carter describes as being without known author, endlessly fashioned and refashioned in order to give comfort to the downtrodden and dispossessed (xi.). Consequently, the importance of Soviet oral culture as a method of transcending the strictures of state censorship can be seen to reside in its power to represent a world outside of the official realm and its constructed notions of class consciousness and social progress.

As a mode of articulating all that has been suppressed by the dominant orthodoxy, Soviet oral culture is heir to a longstanding tradition of dissonant private discourse which, throughout history, has worked to oppose the unifying power of official language, underscoring the fundamental impossibility of constructing a singular conception of truth or meaning. The subversive power of popular culture has perhaps been most rigorously explored by the philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin, who, in his writings on Medieval Europe, argues that at a time when poetry was cementing the ideological world for society's higher orders, this attempt to establish ideological consensus was ridiculed and fragmented by the lower classes in carnivals and at "buffoon spectacles", in the language of the streets, in curses and insults, folk sayings and anecdotes ("Dialogic" 114). For Bakhtin, the consolidated, politically-motivated state will always be subject to a repeated pattern of ideological domination and dissonance, in which "discourse is put to use by [a] dominant social group to impose its own monologic, uniting perceptions of truth" until these are invariably rent asunder by the centrifugal force of the "heteroglossia" – which stratifies and fragments ideological thought into multiple views of the world" (Morris 15).

The world of which Bakhtin writes, with its rigid centralisation of legitimate knowledge, clearly parallels the strictures of early Soviet Russia^[v]. Bakhtin's conception of Medieval Europe is of a world in which, first and foremost, the written word had been

established as the principle domain of power. Although during the Medieval period this was primarily the result of the restricted, and therefore privileged, position of literacy, in the Soviet Union, the written word became a tool of the powerful because of the strict control exercised over printed matter by seemingly omniscient censoring bodies such as Glavlit and its various tributary organizations. As such, because written discourse could be so easily controlled within an autocratic regime, the printed word (and later other media such as cinema and radio) became the canon of Soviet ideology, functioning as the primary repository of those narratives which served to legitimate the policies and philosophies of the state^[vi]. In this way, the discursive universe of Stalinist Russia was demarcated by an official rhetoric, which, as Sarah Davies points out, was characterised by a strong sense of its own importance (8), and which, in its commitment to the dissemination of socialist ideology, re-enacted in the secular realm of Marxist philosophy, the same fervent devotion that Medieval ideologues practiced in the sacred.

Yet if, as Bakhtin insists, even the most sacrosanct elements of the Medieval canon were subject to the abasing power of carnival laughter, the same must be true of all regimes which attempt to impose a singular, monolithic perspective upon its subjects. In the early years of the Soviet Union, the official discourse which was constructed and reinforced by state censorship was repeatedly undermined and destabilised through the proliferation of jokes, songs and folk humour. Like the carnivalesque revelries described by Bakhtin, Soviet oral culture existed as a means of subverting social norms and satirising the discourse of the powerful, profaning all that had been lauded as sacred by the state. During many of the innumerable carnivals that thrived during the Middle Ages, the festivities often centred around the election of a mock king (*roi pour rire*) or the elevation to the status of “royalty” of a clown who, adorned in the splendid garments of the king, was subsequently beaten, abused or mocked (“Rabelais” 197, 206). According to Bakhtin, this ritual enacts the triumph of the new order (the will of the people) over the old regime (the aristocracy), while simultaneously exposing the weaknesses of purportedly infallible leaders: “Abuse reveals the other, true face of the abused; it tears off his disguise and mask. It is the king’s uncrowning” (“Rabelais” 223). Similarly, during the early Stalinist period, as state-sanctioned worship of the Soviet leadership (*vozhdī*) reached cultic proportions, there was immense flourishing of jokes and satirical songs (*chastushki*) which mocked and parodied official discourse that encouraged the unquestioning veneration of party leaders. In order to create a coherent public perception of the *vozhdī* as beneficent defenders of the people, all negative representations of the Soviet leadership were excluded from the canon of official public discussion. Even so-called satirical journals such as *Krokodil* were prevented from publishing any critical material concerning the *vozhdī*. However, public discord could not be completely silenced and this hegemonic vision of infinitely wise, benevolent rulers was repeatedly contested by the existence of jokes such as the following:

Two Russians discussed who was the greater man, Stalin or President Hoover.

“Hoover taught the Americans not to drink”, says one.

“Yes”, replies the other, “but Stalin taught the Russians not to eat”.

(qtd. in C. Davis 295)

This particular joke dates from the Great Terror of the 1930s and, through its depiction of Stalin’s indifference and cruelty, strips away the dual myths of the infallible leader and the grandeur of the Communist party that were constructed by the inexhaustible, unifying powers of censorship, and thoroughly debases them.

Furthermore, this joke serves to profane the air of sanctity associated with purportedly unerring party proclamations by criticising the empty rhetoric which supported Stalin’s collectivisation policies through the establishment of an explicit comparison with the disingenuous moralising of American prohibition laws. The most popular jokes during this period were those which, like the above example, attempted to expose the immense fissure that existed between appearance and reality, dismantling the self-aggrandising mythology of the Soviet State by calling attention to the inconsistencies between the utopianism of party rhetoric and the harsh realities of everyday life. As such, many of the jokes and anecdotes that thrived under communism were preoccupied with the ubiquitous shortages of food and consumer goods, the endless queuing and the perpetual scarcity of urban accommodation which had become hallmarks of Soviet life. As Christie Davies notes, these jokes were not “economic jokes but political ones, since the state controlled the economy and claimed responsibility for the welfare of its citizens and repeatedly told them how well off they were” (297). Yet, as Davies goes on to suggest, the promises and slogans that comprised much Communist party rhetoric related to reality in a way that was not only disingenuous but blatantly absurd, “a breeding ground for jokes as well as resentment” (298). Newspapers, propaganda speeches and official broadcasts were littered with endlessly reiterated slogans such as “Life has become better” and “Catch up and overtake the West” (Fitzpatrick 184). These hollow platitudes were repeatedly utilised to reinforce the most prized metanarrative of the Soviet system, that communism had ushered in an era of inexorable

social progress that would ultimately lead to the construction of an egalitarian worker's paradise. As such, these slogans constitute one of the most ubiquitous examples of how language was used to manipulate and maintain a false vision of reality. Perhaps it is due to their tenuous relationship with reality that these mantras became such a fertile source of humour during the early Soviet period. As empty slogans proliferated, so too did inventive puns and witticisms that transformed clichés such as “Catch up and overtake the West” into wry expressions of discontent like “When we catch [the capitalist countries], can we stay there?” (Fitzpatrick 298). Such jokes, with their propensity for wordplay and subversion, ultimately represented an opportunity for ordinary Soviet citizens to liberate language from the yoke of party rhetoric and commandeer it for their own purposes. In doing so, this reappropriation of language allowed citizens to refashion official dicta in order to reflect a more authentic vision of Soviet reality.

In a similar manner, by giving voice to the everyday horrors whose very existence was suppressed by the official canon of Soviet discourse, oral culture became a means of banishing the deep-rooted fears that pervaded Soviet life. Like the parodic images of hell and the demonic that proliferated at the Medieval carnival, the jokes and stories told by Soviet citizens turned “the symbols of power and violence... inside out” so that “all that was terrifying [became] grotesque” (“Rabelais” 206). Just as Medieval citizens mocked the threat of infernal damnation which lay beneath the moralistic façade of Christian rhetoric, so too did Soviet citizens utilise the unofficial channels of jokes and verbal humour to vocalise the unspoken fears of secret police and mysterious disappearances that abounded under the Stalinist regime. As such, the proliferation of oral jokes under the Soviet regime also corresponds to Freud's characterisation of humour in *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious* (1905), in which he describes the primary function of humour as the “subversion of inhibition” or “release” (qtd. in Cornwell 17). However, in the Soviet context this “release” does not depend on humour's propensity to “reside in things inappropriate to an adult”, but rather on its ability to provide a momentary liberation from alienation and fear (qtd. in Cornwell 17). One particularly chilling joke from this period emphasises the powerlessness of ordinary citizens in the face of state-sponsored violence, highlighting the omnipresent terror of a night-time visit by the dreaded NKVD:

1937. Night. A Ring at the door. The husband goes to answer. He returns and says: “Don't worry, dear, it is bandits who have come to rob us”

(qtd. in Fitzpatrick 185)

As such, although the strictures of Soviet censorship worked ceaselessly to eradicate all discussion of those occurrences which resisted incorporation into a singular utopian narrative of heroic revolutionary struggle, the unofficial discursive space created through the proliferation of oral storytelling allowed for such fears to be vocalised and, through the force of humour, lessened their power to instil terror[vii].

While some scholars have argued that the cynicism of Soviet humour is indicative of capitulation and a resigned acceptance of oppression, the oral culture of the early Soviet period was, in fact, an important subversive tool. By contesting the ideological hegemony constructed and enforced by the exclusionary powers of state censorship, the oral tradition ultimately served as a means for those alienated from the realm of official discourse to subvert and destabilise the metanarratives propounded by the autocratic state. The stories and jokes shared by ordinary citizens became a mechanism through which they could challenge the “totalizing master narratives of [their] culture” (Hutcheon x), as that which was exiled from the sphere of legitimate discourse could be expressed in the unofficial (and often irreverent) realm of folk humour. In doing so, the proliferation of oral culture created an alternative reality which existed alongside and in opposition to the dominant world of official discourse (Morris 194), exerting a centrifugal force that weakened the centralising powers of censorship and, as such, fragmented the cohesive image which Soviet society had created of itself. In the early 1930s, when state censorship suppressed all knowledge of the Ukrainian famine in order to maintain the utopian image of the collective farm that was promulgated by party dictates, the catastrophe was still discussed in all of Russia's urban centres, because even the immense geographical distance between European Russia and the rural Ukraine was still easily traversed by the indomitable power of the spoken word.

In relaying these rumours and stories, early Soviet citizens were re-enacting a recurrent historical pattern in which oral culture, acting as the voice of the poor and disenfranchised, functions to contest the narratives that society constructs about itself [viii]. Citing one of the most famous collections to emerge from the nineteenth-century folklore revival, it can be observed that, at a time when Europe was busily fashioning the metanarratives of enlightenment and progression that would signal the birth of modernity, many of the folktales published by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm (and to a lesser extent some of the more stark tales collected by Afanas'ev and Jacobs[ix]) depicted an alternative world of starvation, brutality and cruelty which “ran counter to the principles of

rationalism and utilitarianism” developed by society at the time (Zipes 120). In a similar manner, the utopian vision of a radiant future inculcated by the Communist party with a view to creating ideological consensus was consistently undermined by the satiric dissonance of popular oral culture, which told of the cruelty and hardship that existed beneath the façade of social progress.

The failure of censorship to establish ideological hegemony in early Soviet Russia ultimately demonstrates that any attempt to impose a single, monologic vision of reality upon a populace will necessarily be countered by the dissenting voices of those disenfranchised by that vision. In this way, the contentious discourses of oral culture act as micronarratives: disparate, often fragmented stories which posit alternate readings of reality to those propounded by society’s metanarratives or totalising schemas. Although these “little narratives” may never gain the power to depose a dictatorial regime or instigate a revolution, they are extremely powerful, not merely because of what they literally say but, as Jean Francois Lyotard writes in *Instructions paiennes*, because of their very existence. Lyotard argues that “since political power is the power to control speech”, the power to employ repressive mechanisms such as censorship to “silence dissenting voices, the very existence of these narratives eats away at established political discourse. This swarm of narratives, competing, dissenting constitutes the strength of the weak; it testifies to the power of speech to rise up against the pretension of any single narrative to hold a monopoly over language” (Chrome 121). As such, if censorship creates a world, uniting all discourse in order to establish a monologic vision of selfhood and reality, then the existence of an unofficial discursive sphere deconstructs that world, compromising its claim to totality and pulling apart its ideological constructs in order to expose the contradictions and injustices which lie at its heart. In the Soviet Union, the subversive potential of these dissenting narratives was so apparent that NKVD agents were frequently charged with the task of ingratiating themselves into food queues, railway compartments, communal apartments and a variety of other public places in order to monitor anonymous conversations (Fitzpatrick 183). For it is in furtive verbal exchanges, such as these, that enforced ideological unity splinters into manifold expressions of suppressed hopes and fears.

Notes

[i] For most, this entailed an arduous process of self-transformation bolstered by the newly formed institutions of the burgeoning Soviet state. The educational system, in tandem with youth-orientated groups like the Komsomol and the Pioneers, as well as various workplace programmes and social initiatives, ensured that Soviet ideology infiltrated every aspect of ordinary life, so that even the most mundane activities became suffused with ideological significance. Citizens were also expected to enthusiastically participate in and venerate the regime’s “newly minted rules and rituals, celebrations and processions, myths and exemplary stories...” (C. Davies 297), all of which served to reinforce acceptance of a cohesive Soviet ideology and encourage the active cultivation of a revolutionary class consciousness.

[ii] This process resembles in many ways the construction of what Michel Foucault and Edward Said refer to as “discourses of power,” those “mental concepts or structures of society, which appear to be natural and objective,” but in reality have been constructed and reinforced for the benefit of dominant social or political groups (Bapat 59).

[iii] The importance of literature as a means of disseminating political ideology is discussed in greater detail in *Revolution on my Mind: Writing a Diary Under Stalin* in which Jochen Hellbeck argues that early Soviet campaigns to eradicate illiteracy were largely based upon the perceived power of the written word to inculcate a unified “revolutionary consciousness” amongst a diffuse population (23).

[iv] *Samizdat* was a system of underground publication through which citizens could disseminate forbidden literary or political works by reproducing them either by hand or, more commonly, using privately owned typewriters and printing the text on carbon or tissue paper before circulating the reproduced texts amongst friends and acquaintances (Komaromi 599). The term *samizdat* itself is a contraction of the words *sam* (self) and *izdatelstvo* (publishing). It is usually attributed to the poet Nikolai Glazkov who used the term *samsebiazdat* (roughly, “I-self-pub”) on his own unpublished manuscripts in the early 1950s (Komaromi 598).

[v] The similarities between Bakhtin's descriptions of Medieval Europe and the practices of Soviet totalitarianism have been noted by numerous scholars, including Sarah Davies, Christie Davies and Michael Holquist (with the latter arguing quite convincingly that Bakhtin's account of Medieval folk humour can be read as a satiric attack on Stalinist oppression (Morris 194)).

[vi] This marks an interesting shift between methods of disseminating information in revolutionary Russia, where oral discourse was privileged as a means of capturing "the revolutionary fervour of the time" through the use of "slogans, proclamations, and blazing oratory designed to sustain the revolutionary enterprise..." and the post-revolutionary "party-state which, because of its reliance on the works of Lenin and Stalin as its canons" privileged the written word as the primary means of propagating party dictates (Ruder 157 – 8).

[vii] Although Bakhtin's conception of the liberating power of the carnival has often been criticised on the basis that Medieval carnivals were officially sanctioned and, therefore, only appear to be subversive when in fact they serve to support a culture's social structures (Morris 196), this criticism does not seem to be applicable in the case of Soviet oral culture which was "private, forbidden, and often furtive, a subject for surveillance [by the NKVD]" (C. Davies 301).

[viii] Obviously, this does not apply in the same way to cultures whose primary mode of transmitting official discourse is through the spoken word (i.e. pre-literate cultures or those cultures that have no written language). Rather, oral culture becomes the language of the marginalised when legitimate discourse is transmitted largely through more sophisticated means (such as print or broadcast) whose use may often be restricted to an elite group.

[ix] Aleksander Nikolayevich Afanas'ev (1826 -71), a prominent collector of oral literature in Federal Russia, and Joseph Jacobs, best known for his collection, *English Fairy Tales*, which was published in 1895 (Carter 456, 457).

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The Politics of a Colonial Folksong: Male Bonding,
Pardos' "Chuchumbé" and the Inquisitorial Body

By Elena Deanda

"I am white: that is to say that I possess beauty and virtue, which have never been black. I am the color of the daylight... I am black: I am the incarnation of a complete fusion with the world [...] and no white man, no matter how intelligent he may be, can ever understand [...] the music of the Congo [...] I am truly a ray of sunlight under the earth..."

Frantz Fanon, *Black Skins, White Masks*

The Spanish Inquisition began to combat heresy in the fifteenth century, and heretical ideas were punished on tangible things such as human flesh. Images of burned witches are the most recognizable depictions of the Spanish Inquisition, but violent spectacles and torture chambers were exceptional and their barbarism is more of a legend created by both French and Spanish enlightenments than a historical fact. However, if the Holy Office was as violent and cruel as it is normally portrayed, is not as important as the fact that this repressive machine had a complicated relationship with the idea of and the actual human body itself.

In what follows, I investigate how bodies can excite discourse. I analyze a Mexican folksong called "Chuchumbé" that was the first folksong to be prohibited by the Spanish Inquisition in 1766. It was also the first of a series of more provocative folksongs in colonial Mexico that depicted clerical and secular sexuality,^[i] and it has been historically considered the 'founding father' of a musical tradition in Southern Mexico called *son jarocho*. By analyzing this colonial folksong, I argue that the materiality of the human body haunted the censor's imaginary and prompted him to ban music, dances, lyrics, and popular festivities. The body that preoccupied him the most was that of the soldier, the soldier who in colonial Mexico is equivalent to a pardo's body.

Pardos, a mixing of Spaniards, Indians, and Africans, were the army in eighteenth-century Mexico. No longer runaway slaves, like their ancestors, they enlisted in the Spanish army to defend New Spain from foreign threats and internal dissidence, becoming, as Jason Frederick has called them, "weapons of colonial rule" (28). They enjoyed three main privileges: tax exemptions, treatment in military courts instead of civil ones, and no civil obligations, and as Ben Vinson and Christon Archer have concluded, they experienced a great amount of social mobility.^[ii] But these men seem to have inherited from their ancestors what Frantz Fanon has called the epidermal schema^[iii]—the racial mark of blackness. This becomes evident when inquisitors iterate the negative value of their presence in the case of "Chuchumbé" and embody them with what in the colonial imaginary has been called 'the myth of the black male rapist.' In this respect, inquisitors fostered a subtle racial campaign against the lewdness of the pardo soldier that will be echoed years later with the viceroy Revillagigedo's campaign to drastically reduce pardo militia.

In what follows, I contend that the 'myth of the black male rapist' allowed censors to hold accountable a class, a gender, and a race in the making of colonial folksongs, but also engaged the censor in a symbolic phallic battle with pardos for the domination of the female body. This symbolic phallic battle reveals the mechanism of male bonding and a dynamics of desire that Eve Sedgwick has called homosocial—one in which "the bond that links two rivals is as intense and potent as the bond that links either of the rivals to the beloved" (21).

Contemporary analyses of the "Chuchumbé" have considered this folksong as a mark of mestizos rebelliousness and one of the first mestizo dissidences in colonial Mexico.^[iv] In these analyses, scholars have wished to redress the subordinated subject vis-à-vis hegemonic discourses and in all cases, the "Chuchumbé" has been read as insurrectionary. But "Chuchumbé" can be read as an act of subversion when race is at stake and of subjugation when gender is the main issue. The systematic reading of "Chuchumbé" as insurrectionary overlooks the fact that the folksong shows a patriarchal and intolerant voice that is complicit with that of the censor. "Chuchumbé" is insurrectionary from a racial perspective, insofar it rearticulates the pardo's identity vis-à-vis white hegemony but it ends up reifying the repressive power dynamics of dominant gender relations.

In the National Archive of Mexico, hall of Inquisition, volume 1052, expediente 20, it is documented that in 1766, Mexico City witnessed a public scandal: a humorous folksong appeared in secular festivities illustrating the clergy's sexual practices. Padre Nicolás Montero, a Mercedarian friar denounced the tune in September to Mexico's Inquisition "because of the great damnation that

causes among the young ladies a song that has been extended by corners and streets of this city that they call the ‘Chuchumbé’ [“lastimado del grave daño que causa en esta ciudad particularmente entre las ahora doncellas, un canto que vea extendido por esquinas y calles de esta ciudad y llaman el Chuchumbé”] (292). Clearly concerned about “Chuchumbé”’s influence over young women’s bodies, the Inquisition opened a case and investigated what was sung, who sang it, how it was danced, and where. On September 23, the verses arrived. “Chuchumbé” depicts in 39 stanzas a sexualized world in which soldiers and friars fight to seduce women. The first stanza explains why the friar felt interpellated. It says: “In the corner he stands / a friar from la Merced / with the lifted habit / showing his chuchumbé” [“En la esquina está parado / un fraile de la Merced, / con los hábitos alzados / enseñando el chuchumbé”] (294).

The word “Chuchumbé” comes from an Afro-Caribbean linguistic family that has named musical genres such as cumbia or paracumbé, usually referring to the bellybutton (Aguirre Tinoco 9). But in this song, ‘chuchumbé’ refers to penis as the refrain shows: “Whether you like it or not/ the ‘chuchumbé’ is going to get you / and if it does not fill you I will fill you up / with what is dangling from my chuchumbé” [“Que te ponga bien, que te ponga mal, / el chuchumbé te ha de agarrar / y si no te avia, yo te aviare / con lo que le cuelga a mi chuchumbé”] (294-295). In its first stanza, this song sexually exposes and ridicules a religious subject. It portrays an exhibitionist friar in the public street who shows his body to any pedestrian. The refrain, in its turn, shows an undifferentiated “chuchumbé” and its genitalia as a potential and merciless menace. When inquisitors received these verses, they seem to have overlooked content yet they focused all their attention on its cultural producers.

A month later, Miguel Francisco de Herrera, an informant, said the “Chuchumbé” was danced among women and men “with gestures, shakings, opposites of all honesty, and a bad example to those who watched them for mixing caresses and for touching belly with belly” [“con ademanes, sarandeos, contrarios todos a la honestidad y mal ejemplo de los que lo ven como asistentes por mezclarse en él manoseos de tramo en tramo, abrazos y dar barriga con barriga”] (298). Besides physical contact, he stressed social contact when he said the song was usually performed “in ordinary houses of mulattoes and people of ‘broken color’... soldiers, sailors and social scum” [“en casas ordinarias de mulatas y gente de color quebrado... soldados, marineros y broza”] (298). Herrera expressed a big concern with the proximity of bodies, the closeness of the body’s lower parts as well as with the proximity of the lower social classes.

That same week, the Spanish Inquisition prohibited the “Chuchumbé” because it was “scandalous, obscene, provocative, and offensive to pious ears” [“escandalosas, obscenas, provocativas y ofensivas a los oídos piadosos”] (14). The edict warned any person who either participated in the performance or witnessed the song with excommunication and a hefty fine. Inquisitors stated that people should “bring and exhibit the stanzas” [“traigáis y exhibáis ante nuestros comisarios en las partes y lugares respectivos fuera de esta ciudad las citadas coplas”] (14). It was not valid to burn them or throw them away; inquisitors needed to possess them because by appropriating them they could effectively deal with its producers.

Four trials were made against eleven persons—five women and six men. Their prosecution was highly publicized, thus highly coercive. Juridical control imposed fear and caused censorship to be internalized within people’s individual consciences. After the proclamation of the edict, it was just a matter of time for denunciations to begin. In Xalapa on January 8, 1767, the cathedral’s organist was denounced for having played the “Chuchumbé” during the mass. That same week, a young Indian denounced a Spaniard cook for having sung the “Chuchumbé.” The cook acknowledged he sang the “Chuchumbé,” but it was a patriotic version, one in which the tense relationships between England and Spain were stressed and that ended with “Death to England, Long Life to Spain” (345). According to him, there was no penalty in singing the tune, just the obscene verses. This intelligent strategy helped him to escape with an admonition.

In August of the same year, a clergyman accused two young Spaniards, Simona and Ana, emphasizing how they welcomed soldiers at nights, had parties, and showed light demeanor and clothes. Simona and Ana were evicted from their residence—for the well-being of the neighborhood—and when they came to testify they blamed a cousin who didn’t live in the city. As with the cook, they were reprimanded. Only a month later, another clergyman denounced Ignacia, Rosa, Maria, a soldier, and the sergeant Laya for having sung the “Chuchumbé,” also emphasizing that Ignacia—a single mother—used to receive the sergeant Laya on a regular basis (385). Inquisitors met with all participants, except for the soldier, who was missing. Again, the accused were simply reprimanded. By the pattern the trials expose, the allegations were not based on the obscene verses or provocative performances, but in the deviant sexual demeanor of the accused—most of them women. Some of these women were implicitly accused of conducting scandalous sexual lives and were presented as sexually ‘available’ to soldiers. These trials describe a space of social interaction among Spaniards, Indians, and pardos. Moreover, they expose inquisitorial inefficacy—the cousin or the soldier never testified—and the Inquisition’s evident uneasiness to punish, at least symbolically, something as immaterial as a folksong.

The social and sexual interaction among diverse races and castes that these trials show let us glimpse the ‘disturbing’ image that the inquisitor saw. There were not just obscene songs but also sexual acts. Worse, women’s willingness to conduct interracial sex-

ual relationships put the inquisitor in a difficult position, because although he was able to censor songs, he was unable to censor the domestic brothel or its potential sexual (and genetic) mixing. Inquisitors grasped symbols and missed acts because sexual practices remained outside inquisitorial jurisdiction and within the private space. Moreover, actions perpetrated by pardos soldiers escaped inquisitorial jurisdiction because they were judged only in military courts (Vinson 1995, 2000, 2004). Pardos' singular status and Simona and Ana's domestic brothel had to be overlooked by the censor's eye, but these two aspects became important because men and women were both creating and performing cultural products next to (possible) sexual acts.

Prior to the eighteenth century, the Spanish monarchy used to regulate and obtain big dividends from prostitution. Before being banned by Philip IV, prostitutes paid taxes, wore a distinctive cape to be differentiated from 'normal' women, and dwelt outside the town borders in *mancebías* (Rodríguez Solís 1891). But in the eighteenth century, prostitutes escaped monarchic supervision. In "Chuchumbé"'s documents what we see is not a brothel but a 'domestic' brothel in which women and men mingled without an economic imperative. Rather, as a spontaneous space of social contact, the domestic brothel sponsored festivities and constituted a space in which sexual identities could be resignified and institutional politics ridiculed. It became a place of negotiation.

Banning the "Chuchumbé" and loose sexuality, the Inquisition addressed an affair of race and class. By policing this folksong, inquisitors were able to locate "soldiers, sailors, social scum," and as the trials show, to examine pardos in a moment in which this caste was invading the principal villages, especially Mexico City.[v] Sexuality, race, and gender were then condensed in the prosecution of the colonial "Chuchumbé." By aligning multiple identities and configuring a symbolic enemy, the Inquisition could control a scattered population and assert authority over their bodies (bodies that were expected to follow the rules: do not dance, do not sing, do not gather, and do not speak).

But besides the concern over women and pardo's bodies, inquisitorial discourse displays another concern. The big elephant in the room during the prosecution of this folksong is the exhibitionist friar who flaunts his "chuchumbé," threatening to charge at any passer-by. For the inquisitors, the exhibitionist friar represents contained bodies, given that all of them were celibate clergymen. When the inquisitor restrains the circulation of a discourse that exposes the wrongdoing of the clergy, he is restraining himself, his fellowmen, the society, to see a picture that points at him, at his own body, at his potential and impossible desire.

During the eighteenth century and long before, friars had to fight with the materiality of their sexual bodies. Clerical sexuality was considered both a misdeed and a heresy, a misdeed under the form of sexual cohabitation and a heresy under the form of sexual solicitation in auricular confession.[vi] Since the Letran Concilium in 1123, priests lost their rights to have concubines—a habit they practiced since the early Middle Ages. After 1123, their marriages were annulled. In 1545, as part of the Counter-Reformation, the Catholic Church declared celibacy as the state of excellence for ecclesiastics and instrumentalized it as the mark of differentiation with Protestantism.

Sexual cohabitation was always overlooked because it belonged to Episcopal jurisdiction but in the eighteenth century, the crisis of sexual solicitation in auricular confession escalated. However, its inquisitorial punishment happened behind closed doors and remained as a secret among the clergy. Exposing it publicly would go against the very tenets of both the Church and the Inquisition because this heresy was internal. When the "Chuchumbé" shows the exhibitionist friar, it overtly exhibited clergy's sexual practices and desires. By exposing, denouncing, and ridiculing its sexual practices, "Chuchumbé" hailed the inquisitorial body and expected to be interpellated by it. Obscenity foresaw its own censorship and censorship named its object. By forbidding the "Chuchumbé," inquisitors ban the public display of pardos' sexuality but, more importantly, the public display of their own sexuality.

Censors' bodies saturate legal documents. They are unspeakable and operate by absence but their attention to other bodies is the mark that inscribes them within the text, especially when they reflect about the ideal conformation of the social body. The Mercedarian friar was the first censor to think in the body politic. In his opinion, the "Chuchumbé" needed to be forbidden "because of the great damnation that it causes among the young ladies." In his view, women were the social group to be protected. Herrera, soon after, brought the attention to the outcasts' gathering and their lascivious dances. The rest of the denouncers stressed the collusion between those two ends: women and soldiers, Spaniards and 'broken color.' Between the Mercedarian and the last denouncers, the myth of the black male rapist emerges and is constantly iterated. Pardos, women, and shakings were seen as the recipe for spiritual downfall.

But, worse, women were not resisting the pardo influence; they were sponsoring it. Censors invoked the myth of the black male rapist where there was no rape whatsoever. In the myth of the black male rapist, a black man is depicted as a hyper-sexual 'beast' prone to rape white women. In the United States, for example, the myth of the black male rapist emerged also in the eighteenth century in trials against runaway slaves who were supposed to rape women and ipso facto were lynched.[vii] Contemporary criticism, and especially critical race theory, has read the myth of the black male rapist mediated by the narrative of institutionalized

lynching, thus it has considered it as potentially subversive (Eldridge Cleaver, Lynn Curtis, Frantz Fanon, Angela Davis).[viii] But approaches such as those by Patricia Hill Collins, Devon Carbado, and Robyn Wiegman stress the fact that the myth of the black male rapist originates and develops within the borders of a phallic sphere, a sphere when women become instrumental to male rivalry.[ix] From a materialistic point of view, Luce Irigaray has pointed out the role that women play as the site of exchange among men—as in the institution of marriage or in prostitution (31). Drawing from Irigaray’s thought, Eve Sedgwick has considered how “women are merely the vehicles by which men breed more men for the gratification of other men” and how this solidarity enables them to sustain their overall domination (33).

The myth of the black male rapist is a colonial narrative in which black men threaten white men’s sexual dominance over women. Though they are in a struggle to destabilize each other, they remain intimately bonded. In the inquisitorial case against “Chuchumbé,” inquisitors invoked the myth of the black male rapist by pointing to the social and sexual interactions between white women (the Spaniards) and black men (the pardo soldiers), and they felt entitled to represent and protect all women’s best interest. Their invocation of the colonial myth was a strategy to protect women and control the public display of black male sexuality. However, women turned the tables because they sponsored the party and fostered the performance of pardo’s sexuality.

The role of women in the analysis of both the inquisitorial case and the stanzas of “Chuchumbé” is deeply ambiguous; it is both an impasse as an opportunity to reflect about women’s agency in the making of colonial folksongs. In the song, ‘female poetic voices’ acknowledge the power they have over men, as in the couplets: “My husband left me / to make fun of me / but sure he will return / for what I have in here” [“Mi marido se fue al puerto / por hacer burla de mí, / él de fuerza ha de volver / por lo que tengo aquí” 295]. Or: “In the corner there is a quarrel / Good Lord! What will happen to me? / these fools are killing each other / for what I have in here” [“En la esquina hay puñaladas, / ay, ¿qué será de mí? / que aquellos tontos se matan / por esto que tengo aquí” 295]. In the first case, the wife is confident that her sexual force would eventually bring her husband back home; in the second case, a woman worries about how that same force makes men fight over her. Under different lenses, though, the first couplet shows how women are vulnerable in a society in which marriage is defined by men, and the second, how they become an instrument for men to let off steam and releasing their own frustration and anger. ‘Female poetic voices,’ then, do not necessarily question male domination but, at least, they bring it upfront as a problem. In consequence, ‘female’ presence in “Chuchumbé” is problematic since it can be considered both a ‘voice’ that acknowledges domination as well as one that negotiates power. Furthermore, the predominant presence of five women (of eleven individuals) in the inquisitorial trials as the sponsors and participants in “Chuchumbé”’s performances may also point to the possibility that, in the democratic dynamics of popular music, a space will be open for women to negotiate with men along gender lines in the making of folksongs.

“Chuchumbé,” still, is literally and symbolically phallic. The male domination that unfolds from what the ‘female poetic voices’ say is also expressed in the symbolic fight in which ‘male poetic voices’ engage. In the stanzas, ‘male’ and ‘soldier poetic voices’ fight the clergy for dominion over women’s bodies. ‘Male poetic voices’ advise women to steer clear from friars’ influence: “What can give you a friar? / Even if he loves you so much / he can give you tobacco / and a prayer for your death” [¿Qué puede darte un fraile / por mucho amor que tenga? / un polvito de tabaco / y un responso cuando mueras”] (295). And ‘soldier poetic voices’ aim to seduce women by showing off their good position: “Come with me / come with me / that I am one of the yellow soldiers” [“Vente conmigo, / vente conmigo, / que soy un soldado de los amarillos”] (295).[x] Though subtle, seduction is another way of exerting domination. However, it is seduction and not violence that is the strategy these ‘voices’ have chosen to approach the other; as such, “Chuchumbé” goes a step ahead of the Inquisition by offering a new seductive representation of pardos’ sexuality.

Ultimately, soldiers competed with friars (or other men) for dominion over women’s bodies and the pervasive violence of their fight sometimes reached the object of their desire. Thus, some women are verbally aggressed in the folksong when they are called by names such as “the booty-shaker,” the “fasting-whore,” or “the little-fucker” [“Sabe vuesa merced, / sabe vuesa merced, / que la ‘meneadora de culo’ / le han puesto a vuesa merced... / Sabe vuesa merced... / que la ‘puta en cuaresma’ / le han puesto a vuesa merced... / Si vuesa merced quisiera y no se enojara / la ‘fornicadorita’ se le quedara” 295]. This symbolic male violence pervades both the stanzas as well as the inquisitorial case against the “Chuchumbé,” and it is directed to either men or women, installing thus a triangle both erotic and violent.

In the prosecution of “Chuchumbé,” women were the pivotal object upon which both inquisitors and soldiers fought, and by fighting over them, men bonded. But as Eve Sedgwick has noted, male bonding has also “an intimate and shifting relation to class” (1)—and, it is my contention, with other identity markers, such as sexuality and race. According to this view, male solidarity can be broken when hierarchical structures must be reified. Considering race and class, then, male bonding can dissolve and that is why inquisitors directed their attack towards ‘sailors, soldiers, and social scum,’ a specific caste and a social class, namely that of the pardo soldier. Yet, despite the fact that inquisitors considered the presence of (pardo) soldiers as potentially subversive,

they agree with them in symbolically dominating women -- inquisitors by 'protect' women from dangerous folksongs just as pardos 'protect' them from dangerous friars.

Taking into account gender relations, "Chuchumbé" cannot be read today systematically as insurrectionary or dissident. If race is at stake, we can say that pardo soldiers are battling with friars in a racial fight, but neither pardos nor friars can win a gender-related battle. "Chuchumbé" is subversive because of the social and sexual defiance among black and white men inside and outside the song. However, the two coexist in a homosocial context, and the gender problem persists because both black and white men disregard and subjugate women.

At first glance, it looks that, in this male battle, Spanish white supremacy won over colonial mestizo culture by resorting to censorship, surveillance, and by effectively repressing—though momentarily—a song. Yet, prohibition incites discourse and more provocative folksongs emerged after the "Chuchumbé," defying the Church, the Empire, and the Inquisition's censorship, and they eventually became, as an inquisitor said, a 'necessary evil.' Though current criticism of colonial folksongs wishes to redress the issue of mestizo culture vis-à-vis the Spanish empire, it is fair to say that "Chuchumbé" remained in the same field of its enemy. This folksong is a fine example of how what is subversive in race might be an act of subjugation in gender and vice versa. In consequence, analysis of colonial folksongs that are rooted in the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality, have to consider the idea of intersection as a problematic one, that is, as an inclusive and exclusive space in which taking a side simultaneously conceals one and reveals the other.

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[i] After the "Chuchumbé" a boom of folksongs emerged as the 18th century reached its end. Most of them were denounced to the Inquisition but not everyone was banned by edict. Besides the "Chuchumbé," the "Pan de jarabe," also called "Jarabe gatuno" was banned by edict. This folksong depicted the sexual negotiations between Saint Paul and Saint Peter. Other folksongs, such as "Tirana," were also denounced but they were not prohibited. In "Tirana," Christian scenes such as the crucifixion were mocked and parodied with sexual connotations. At the turn of the century, the Inquisition considered these folksongs a "necessary evil," after seeing that repression was not being effective and that they were more important problems to deal with, such as the Creole movements of Independence in Mexico. María Águeda Méndez, ed., *Amores prohibidos: la palabra condenada en el México de los virreyes*. Antología de coplas y versos censurados por la Inquisición de México, México: Siglo XXI, 1997; and Margarita Peña, *La palabra amordazada: literatura censurada por la Inquisición*, México: UNAM, 2000.

[ii] Pardos soldiers were recruited for the first time in the 17th century when the pirate Lorencillo attacked the port of Veracruz. As inquisitorial documents and historic work have shown, they had a privileged position in front of other castes and social classes. Ben Vinson III and Christon Archer have documented the predominance of pardos in the period of 1670-1762 that was drastically undermined by 1789 with Revillagigedo as a new viceroy. The drastic reduction of free colored militiamen made by this viceroy in favor of the Spaniards was part of a campaign to disarm these populations in a moment of worry for pre-Independence movements. *Archivo General de la Nación*. Indiferente Virreinal 2751. Indiferente Virreinal 6047. *Correos* V. 10. E. 1. *Marina* V. 15. E. 26. *Alcabalas*. V. 327. E. 24. F. 240–261. *Impresos Oficiales*. V. 53. E. 11. F. 184. Ben Vinson III, "Free Colored Voiced: Issues of Representation and Racial Identity in the Colonial Mexican Militia," *The Journal of Negro History* 80.4 (1995): 170-182; "Race and Badge: Free-Colored Soldiers in the Colonial Mexican Militia," *The Americas* 56.4 (2000): 471-496; "Articular el espacio: El establecimiento militar de gente de color libre en el México colonial de la Conquista hasta la Independencia," *Callaloo* 27.1 (2004): 331-354. Christon Archer, "Pardos, Indians, and the Army of New Spain: Inter-Relationships and Conflicts, 1780-1810," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 6.2 (1974): 231-255.

[iii] Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove P, 1967) 112.

[iv] Álvaro Alcántara López, "Los motivos del son," *Son del Sur* 7 (1998): 33–42. Georges Baudot, and María Águeda Méndez, "El chuchumbé, un son jacarandoso del México virreinal," *Caravelle* 48 (1987): 163–171. Rolando Antonio Pérez Fernández, "El Chuchumbé y la buena palabra," *Son del Sur* 3 (1996): 24–35.

[v] As Vinson has found, the pardo militia doubled from 1670 to 1762 and by becoming increasingly visible it exerted a great influence on the social milieu (2004, 338-341). In Mexico City "colored soldiers were charged with the defense of the Royal Palace and Hospital, in addition to walking beats in both the suburbs and downtown areas... By patrolling here, the soldiers, metaphorically speaking, assumed a type of control" (1995, 176).

[vi] On the misdeed of solicitation: Jorge René González Marmolejo, *Sexo y confesión: la Iglesia y la penitencia en los siglos XVIII y XIX en la Nueva España* (México: Plaza y Valdés, 2002). Stephen Haliczer, *Sexuality in the Confessional: A Sacrament Profaned*

(New York: Oxford UP, 1996). J. Pérez Escobedo, *Sexo e inquisición en España* (Madrid: Temas de Hoy, 1992). Adelina Sarrión Mora, *Sexualidad y confesión: La solicitación ante el Tribunal del Santo Oficio (Siglos XVI-XIX)* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1994).

[vii] Paul Crawford, "A Footnote on Courts for Trial of Negroes in Colonial Pennsylvania," *Journal of Black Studies* 5.2 (1974): 167-174. Daniel Cohen, "Social Injustice, Sexual Violence, Spiritual Transcendence: Constructions of Interracial Rape in Early American Crime Literature, 1767-1817," *William and Mary Quarterly* LVI.3 (1999): 481-526.

[viii] Cleaver depicted interracial rape (black/white) as an insurrectionary act, and Lynn Curtis alleged that it is "the penultimate way for a black male to serve up revenge on his white male oppressor..." (78). In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Frantz Fanon perpetuates the idea that black men defy white supremacy when they touch white women, because they "grasp civilization and dignity" (63), and thus, the ideals of white male supremacy. Women are instrumental to men's intentions, as Fanon sees it, and they are the medium by which—quoting Louis T. Achille—men surpass their racial inferiority and enter "to complete equality with that illustrious race, the master of the world, the ruler of the peoples of color" (72). Angela Davis's chapter on the myth of the black rapist disregards the idea of rape as a gender problem, and focuses on white men raping black women. For Davis, "the portrayal of Black men as rapists reinforces racism's open invitation to white men to avail themselves sexually of Black women's bodies" (182). Thus women remain in the middle as an object. Overall, for these approaches women's bodies become the space in which men's conflict are resolved.

[ix] Patricia Hill-Collins realizes that within feminist discourse, rape is the dominant narrative whereas in anti-racist discourse, lynching is the main trope. She sees how difficult it is to reconcile both agendas and reaches for the concept of violence as the point in which these problems converge. Violence is the tool of social control and political domination inflicted on both men and women who are constrained to play a role of dominant-dominated within an "ethos of violence" (225). In this same optics, Devon W. Carbado asks why black male aggression has to be overlooked in order to consolidate a problematic racial solidarity (339). Victimized by having been lynched, emasculated, and having lost control over black women's sexuality (with white men's rape), black men experience an ontological crisis that somehow propels them to exert violence because of their historical subordination. And as Carbado sees it, the performance of this violent hyper-masculinity ultimately reinforces the same old mechanisms of oppression, though now from the dominant side. Finally, Robyn Wiegman says that in phallic battles, men remain ultimately bonded. According to his view, men change roles in the system of domination, but they remain tied in the pervasive phallic sphere. Sometimes even race might be overlooked to make masculine domination prevail over women. For Wiegman, "interracial male bonding narratives function as the site of multiple negotiations within the masculine, the space that, in the paradigm of sexual difference, presents itself—and is often accepted—as monolithic, internally cohesive" (115).

[x] Ben Vinson stresses the role played by clothes and color to distinguish ranks by skin color in the colonial militia. "Pardos wore green and white uniforms with silver buttons... The complete uniform cost ten pesos and five reales... Morenos, by contrast, wore short jackets with blue collars and lapels... Their outfits cost nine pesos and three reales... perhaps the styles and costs of their uniforms suggest that pardos felt of slightly greater worth than their moreno counterparts" (1995, 173).

Sexuality, Eroticism, and the Partaking of Flesh: Unintentional Critical Censorship of Herman Melville's *Typee*

By Rachel Grimshaw

Public and critical reception surrounding the publication of *Typee* (1846), Herman Melville's first novel, has been well documented by scholars. Melville's *Reviewers* contains numerous English reviews where concerns regarding authenticity flourished, as well as American reviews where concerns regarding the negative portrayal of missionaries abounded (Hetherington, 1961). During the first five years of his career, Melville wrote six novels and enjoyed immense literary fame, but by the mid 1850s, his name and readership began to fizzle out. When he died in 1891, his readership had all but disappeared. In the twentieth century, an obscure and forgotten Melville was revived in literary studies. Contemporary critics have moved away from matters of religion and authenticity in the works of Melville and towards cultural (language, literacy) and political (democracy and colonialism) evidence and implications in Melville's poetry and fiction. More recently, some scholars have begun to address issues of gender and sexuality in a number of Melville's works. While Melville's short story, "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids" (1855), and his acclaimed novel, *Moby Dick* (1851), among others, have been analyzed by scholars for the purpose of identifying male dominance, homosocial behavior, and overt sexuality, *Typee*, on the whole, has remained on the periphery.

When *Typee* was first published, readers took their cues from scholars and critics who were too preoccupied with matters of authenticity and religion to acknowledge or highlight the overt sexuality of Melville's text. Likely much of this oversight stems from an ignorance of Marquesan culture and from an inability to readily recognize the eroticism embedded in the text. Contemporary readers, however, no longer rely on critical opinion to inform reading selections, but twenty-first century readers, lacking the contextual, historical, and anthropological framework of *Typee*'s inception, are not able to grasp the importance of the text. Thus from its initial critical reception through to the way contemporary readers regard the work, *Typee* has been unintentionally censored by critics and readers alike, who, for a variety of reasons, have failed to address the subtle nuances of sexuality, eroticism, and the partaking of flesh prevalent throughout this novel. A discrepancy exists between the mid-nineteenth century audience, who likely remained oblivious to anything more than "sensuality" in the text, and the modern 21st century audience, who likely remain unaffected by the subtle nuances of the text.

Somewhere between the rigid media censorship of the mid-19th century and the lax standards and sensationalized pursuits of contemporary media, the audience's ability to recognize the merit and critical importance of Melville's first novel was lost. While I recognize that to try and etch out a historical space for *Typee* utilizing modern tools, language, and concepts is a complicated, if not impossible task, it is one worth undertaking. Many of the constructs referred to here regarding sensuality, sexuality, homosexuality, and male-intimacy are late twentieth-century Western constructs that point to the socially and culturally constructed aspects of sexual desire and identity, and while they cannot stand in for, eliminate, or replace earlier constructs, they can help bring back and rearticulate classic or canonical texts in new and critical ways. The discrepancy between what was read by critics and what was actually there is of particular importance, because it downplays *Typee* as a seminal text in which Melville offers social and cultural commentary, however restrained or refined, about issues concerning the fluidity of sensuality, the potential space for homosexuality, and the societal shackles of propriety.

In order to understand the ways in which *Typee* functions as a seminal and groundbreaking text, it is important to first establish the culture and lifestyle of the Marquesans, particularly the *Typee*—the tribe who held Melville captive while simultaneously captivating him. I will first outline Tommo's descent into the *Typee* valley and then expound on Marquesan life, culture, and practices as they relate to Tommo's stay among the *Typees*. Tommo, the story's protagonist, has heard of the Marquesans long before he sets eyes on them through tales told by other sailors. Among the different Polynesian tribes, the *Typees* are considered the most ferocious and are the most feared. Tommo recounts a story about an English vessel that one night after a "weary cruise" pulled into the Nukuheva bay and was greeted by a canoe full of "natives" who guided the vessel to safety. We are told, "that same night the perfidious *Typees*, who had thus inveigled her into their fatal bay, flocked aboard the doomed vessel by hundreds, and at a given signal murdered every soul on board" (27). This is quite different from the reception Tommo and his fellow sailors are met with. When their ship first arrives in the bay, the sailors are greeted by a group of native women swimming towards the men. Tommo recounts that he "watched the rising and sinking of their forms, and beheld the uplifted right arm bearing above the water the girdle of tappa, and their long dark hair beside them as they swam, I almost fancied they could be nothing else than so many mermaids—and very like mermaids they behaved too" (20). As Tony Oliviero claims, "[d]uring this daylight phase the na-

tive women are described as 'nymphs,' 'mermaids,' and 'creatures,' frolicking about the decks" (40), innocent descriptions that seem to posit the women as child-like. Tommo and the rest of the crew become instantly enchanted by the native women, and we are told that upon nightfall, the ship was "wholly given up to every species of riot and debauchery. Not the feeblest barrier was interposed between the unholy passions of the crew and their unlimited gratification" (21). William Heath notes, "[a]s more ships took advantage of this situation, and the promiscuous girls learned that sex was a commodity that could be bargained for, a species of semiprostitution was established, with iron nails as the preferred payment" (46).

Tommo, of course, has no way of knowing how frequent of an occurrence this exchange between the sailors and the natives is, but nothing in Tommo's description of the debauchery surrounding him exists to imply that he is somehow separate from the events or merely relating his observations at sea. He begins the passage with the shared possessive pronoun, "our," and offers later social commentary which suggests guilt when he claims, "Alas for the poor savages when exposed to the influences of those polluting examples! Unsophisticated and confiding, they are easily led into every vice, and humanity weeps over the ruin thus remorselessly inflicted upon them" (21). The "missionary William Crook, although confessing to 'strange' and 'violent' temptations, lived among the Marquesans without sharing their sexual generosity; but he remained a cultural enigma and was robbed, mocked, and denied food" (Heath 56). From the moment the nymphs board the ship, and throughout Tommo's stay among the Typees, he is never treated as an outsider. He is, instead, met with the utmost kindness and hospitality, and he is encouraged to partake of the pleasures of the island which should imply to the reader that Tommo's treatment by the Marquesans was directly connected to his accepting of their offer. Moreover, Tommo does not shirk responsibility onto the friendly and naked women nor does he establish his fellow sailors as morally-void sinners who will have their conquest no matter the price; he simply attempts to ease his conscience by falling back on the inevitable "contaminating contact of the white man" (21), a social and cultural critique of what it means to be a Westerner. So even before Tommo enters the Typee valley, he has all but admitted to partaking of native flesh and spoken to the inevitability of his doing so because as he claims, when white men are faced with innocence or hospitality, they must act as "civilizers," and we can see from the passage above, and Tommo's charged language, that to civilize is not a very civilized undertaking. Tommo's waffling between what he has been indoctrinated to believe is right and the idyllic pleasures the island has to offer becomes a prevalent theme throughout the text, but this is also an early instance of Tommo questioning the superiority of Western thought and ideals when compared to his newly discovered paradise.

When plotting to abandon his ship and the oppressive captain, Tommo plans to flee to the Happers, a tribe known for their hospitality toward strangers. When Tommo and his companion, Toby, finally find the opportunity for escape, they lack the necessary provisions to sustain them on their journey, and they have no map or compass to direct their way. The only plan they manage to muster is one where they can hide undetected until their ship has left the bay, and they no longer have to worry about being caught or sent back on board. Upon first escaping, the two men spot a valley in the distance, and it becomes their intended destination. The valley is much further away than they initially suspect, however, and it takes them five long and grueling days to reach. Almost as soon as they reach the valley, the men spot two natives, a young man and woman. It is at that moment that Tommo realizes just how little he knows about the people and the land he so exhaustively sought, because he must quickly make the distinction of whether these natives are Typee or Hapar, and he, of course, has no way of knowing. Tommo needs these natives not to be Typees because "their very name is a frightful one; for the word 'Typee' in the Marquesan dialect signifies a lover of flesh" (27). Paul Witherington claims the "reference seems to have a double meaning: it is, he says, 'an ambiguity that suggests either cannibalism or sensuality and, more important, the cannibalism of sensuality, a paradox crucial to the novel'" (Martin 73). Fortunately, for Tommo, he somehow guesses the correct identity of the young natives and is ushered into their village where he is met with much curiosity and hospitality. Cannibalism is, of course, the interpretation Tommo fears regarding the name, Typee, but there is an alternate and equally significant aspect of Marquesan life that dually pertains to Tommo's linguistic definition that Witherington points to: eroticism.

Tommo, armed with traditional Western notions of civilization and propriety, "brings with him into the valley a notion of sexuality as sinful and overwhelming," and thus when "he encounters a people for whom sexuality is really nothing much at all" (Oliviero 41), he is unprepared to understand, legitimize, or rationalize Typee culture and practices. While Tommo did not live in the valley long enough to witness all of the erotic traditions of the Typee, understanding those traditions certainly helps the reader formulate a sense of how shocking these practices must have been to Tommo's Western social, political, and cultural values and ideals. Oliviero further claims, "on a strictly political level, the valley of the Typees is a utopia in which healthy men and women live lives devoted to the pursuit of peaceful, sensual pleasure, marred little by the need to work for their bread and completely unsullied by the ravages of conscience" (39). While Tommo's portrayal of Typee life is often censored—or limited, at best—these are the very aspects we are allowed to see in detail. Throughout the text, the Typees are portrayed as gentle, lazy, peaceful people who express the same low level of concern for where their next meal is coming from as they do about covering their bodies.

Sensuality and eroticism were intrinsically linked to almost every aspect of Marquesan culture. In his exploration of Marquesan culture, William Heath explains, the Typees “assumed that orgiastic activity aroused these gods to procreate and replenish the land; thus eroticism was central to their religious ritual” (48). Sexual prowess was also linked to social standing as “nothing was more honorific in Marquesan society than sexual skill. The culture placed enormous importance on the genitalia; women were massaged from infancy and herbal medications were applied to achieve the desired vaginal qualities” (Heath 48). Unlike Western ideals where purity was inherently linked to religion, social standing, and a qualification for marital bliss, “during the period between puberty and marriage, adolescents were expected to acquire as much sexual expertise as possible” (Heath 49). Even when Tommo attempts to describe the practices of the Typee with any sort of detail, he cannot do them justice because of the limitations of Western notions. These limitations are felt most strongly when Tommo describes the sexual relationships, marriages, or unions of the Typee.

In chapter twenty-six, Tommo claims, “Previously to seeing the Dancing Widows I had little idea that there were any matrimonial relations subsisting in Typee” (132). The only couple who come close to his notion as marital or affectionate are “old Marheyo and Tinor” who “seemed to have a sort of nuptial understanding with one another; but for all that, I had sometimes observed a comical-looking old gentleman dressed in a suit of shabby tattooing, who had the audacity to take various liberties with the lady, and that too in the very presence of the old warrior her husband, who looked on as good-naturedly as if nothing was happening” (132). Here we see Tommo struggling to make sense of his observations; he feels indignation toward the tattooed man and Tinor for acting indecently and on behalf of Marheyo who should be appalled but isn't. While he can't make sense of Typee unions, his ability to relate instances of polyamory are even more disjointed. Tommo, on several occasions, witnesses Mehevi “romping—in a most undignified manner for a warrior king—with one of the prettiest little witches in the valley” who had a son that “bore a marvelous resemblance to Mehevi” (133). Tommo notes that many of the warriors do not publicly acknowledge the maidens they are smitten with, but things become hopelessly confusing to Tommo who claims, “Mehevi, however, was not the only person upon whom the damsel Moonoony smiled—the young fellow of fifteen, who permanently resided in the home with her, was decidedly in her good graces. I sometimes beheld both him and the chief making love at the same time” (133). Interestingly Tommo does not react to this witnessed threesome as the reader would expect. He does not act disgusted or treat this encounter as grotesque but instead reacts with the limited responses at his disposal from his Western repertoire. Tommo expresses surprise that a great warrior could “consent to give up a corner in the thing he loves” (133). It is beyond Tommo's senses to first acknowledge that a man of honor could allow his mate to be shared with another, particularly a teenage boy, and second, he makes the assumption that what Mehevi and Moonoony share is love and not lust or mutual and sensual pleasure for the sake of pleasure.

The Typee were one of several Marquesan tribes that practiced pekio, “a system of secondary mateship in which women of the upper class had two or more husbands. In general, the more beautiful and sexually alluring a woman was the more secondary husbands she attracted” (Heath 49). What Tommo was witnessing, unbeknownst to him, was the way in which this system operated seamlessly and without consequence inside Typee culture. Heath further claims, “Infidelity was rare because of the variety of heterosexual outlets, as well as auto-eroticism, homosexuality, and bestiality; promiscuity was not harmful precisely because the culture was so permissive” (50-1). The very feature of Marheyo and Tinor's relationship that allows Tommo to discredit it as marriage then is precisely what made it a functioning and acceptable union inside the culture. One reason Tommo is uncomfortable about the situation and embarrassed for Marheyo is that “aggressive behavior of men is related to the Western concept of marriage. The acquisition of a bride in the West becomes the first step in the development of a system of private property and of the defense of that property by force if necessary” (Martin 75).

While Tommo remains preoccupied with the sensual expressions surrounding him, the reader is more concerned with Tommo's own intimate relationships. During his stay with the Typees, Tommo formed two close relationships, one of which has been well documented by scholars. Tommo and Fayaway's love-or-lust affair has been picked apart and analyzed from every angle, but his relationship with Kory-Kory, the person he spent the most—and arguably more intimate—time with throughout the book, has not seemed to generate much critical fervor since Typee's initial publication. Shortly after Tommo arrives among the Typees, he is appointed a body servant by Mehevi (63). Caleb Crain claims, “The peculiar voluptuousness of the island touches Tommo most directly through his relationship with Kory-Kory, his appointed companion. Kory-Kory bathes, spoon-feeds, carries, and sleeps beside Tommo. Even when a bevy of girls gathers around Tommo to rub him down with oil, Kory-Kory sits close by watching 'with the most jealous attention'” (41). Melville may have unintentionally been saying more than he meant to in this peculiar scene, “since massage was often a preliminary to intercourse” (Heath 57), and if that is, in fact, the case here, Kory-Kory's jealousy may be justified as a precursor to events he knows are about to unfold.

While Kory-Kory seems to be captivated by Tommo, Tommo is in turn captivated by the stranger, Marnoo. Upon first glimpsing the traveler, Tommo remarks, “His unclad limbs were beautifully formed; whilst the elegant outline of his figure, to-

gether with his beardless cheeks, might have entitled him to the distinction of standing for the statue of the Polynesian Apollo" (98). Tommo further elaborates, "The hair of Marnoo was a rich curling brown, and twined about his temples and neck in little close curling ringlets, which danced up and down continually, when he was animated in conversation. His cheek was of a feminine softness, and his face was free from the least blemish of tattooing, although the rest of his body was drawn all over with fanciful figures" (98). These physical descriptions are as specific and dotting as the ones paid in honor of Fayaway and her immense beauty and charm. Crain argues, "Recent anthropology has confirmed the homosexual activity of the Marquesans. Homosexual and autoerotic play is standard for Marquesan children and adolescents" (31). Thus it would be completely inside the realm of normalcy for Kory-Kory to be smitten with Tommo, and Marnoo has probably enjoyed his share of male admirers, but Tommo has no language to describe these sensations nor does he even acknowledge them. Like an envious lover, however, Tommo becomes offended when Marnoo refuses to pay him any attention. Tommo watches Marnoo walk through the village and relays, "I involuntarily rose as he entered the house, and proffered him a seat on the mats beside me. But without deigning to notice the civility, or even the more incontrovertible fact of my existence, the stranger passed on, utterly regardless of me" (99). Tommo responds, "Had the belle of the season, in the pride of her beauty and power, been cut in a place of public resort by some supercilious exquisite, she could not have felt greater indignation than I did at this unexpected slight" (99). Tommo as a belle is a peculiar description to use if he was not in some way attracted to or enamored with Marnoo, and it shows just how comfortable he has become inside Typee life and culture.

While Melville, through the invention and voice of Tommo, had no means to name or describe the male intimacy that likely surrounded him in more ways than those already identified, his preoccupation with this intimacy can be traced through his obsession with cannibalism throughout the text. In Marquesan culture, "if women are scarce on a particular island, homosexuality is considered a normal practice for adult men" (Crain 31), but in "mid-nineteenth-century America, it was difficult to imagine that a friendship between men could involve physical intimacy without slipping into something other than friendship. The act of sodomy implied coercion and submission; it was undemocratic" (Crain 39). The word homosexual did not appear in English until 1892, but the idea of male intimacy was already gathering momentum in Melville's mind and became much more prevalent in each of his subsequent novels. In the "nineteenth century, cannibalism and homosexuality shared a rhetorical form. Both were represented as 'the unspeakable' (Crain 28). According to Rita Gollin, Tommo "finally sees human remains at the Ti, proof of corruption at the heart of Typee existence. Although he had expected to find evidence of cannibalism, and eagerly sought it, he is horrified, and is now eager to leave the valley" (33). Throughout the text Tommo mentions cannibalism repeatedly; even when he is being treated kindly, he cannot help but remind the reader that he could be devoured any time by the savages. As Gollin points to, Tommo spends much of his time at each separate feast going from dish to dish, describing each one in as much detail as any other object in Typee culture, but the reader is aware of his morbid desire to eventually come across human flesh being prepared for consumption.

Tommo's seeking of the manifestations of his most morbid and curious desires in spite of his having no way to categorize and understand them becomes the driving force behind Melville's first novel. Rita Gollin claims, "Tommo anticipates primitive delights but also primitive horrors; and he is eager for both," and, "at no point does he expect or desire a simple idyllic paradise" (32). Tommo is so forthright with his descriptions on sensuality because although he might have been surprised by the sheer outward display of sexual prowess and physical intimacy among the Typees, he had the language and faculty to make sense of it, and it was easy for Tommo to fall into that particular aspect of Typee culture. The darker and seedier aspects, however, seem to draw him in and compel him to seek out that which he knows he is not ready for. While Tommo remains torn, "Melville, however, is clear enough. Typee is not only very much a part of the world, but its insulation and Edenic innocence make it an impossible place for men to live and still remain men" (Ruland 323). Once Tommo is snapped back to reality through the realization that he is actually living among those who practice cannibalism, the spell becomes broken, and Tommo must flee, yet like "a lover (or as a lover), Kory-Kory has custody of Tommo's body. He takes care of its pleasures and its needs, but by virtue of that, he controls Tommo. Tommo cannot escape from the Typees until he can escape from Kory-Kory" (Crain 41). In order to escape cannibalism, Tommo must first disentangle himself from his intimate connection with Kory-Kory.

Sensuality, homosexuality, and cannibalism have to be discussed in this text because they are so deeply ingrained in the very culture in which Tommo submerged himself. William Heath contends, "the fact that few critics have studied the Polynesian cultures Melville wrote about is symptomatic of a flaw in our literary assumptions" (43), and "to understand them on anything like their own terms demanded a radical reappraisal of cultural assumptions that few were capable of making" (44). The point Heath is driving home is that to only look at Typee through an Americanized lens—one of capitalism, democracy, and colonialism—strips this text of much of its meaning. Melville didn't create some utopian, made-up civilization but actually lived and dwelt inside Marquesan life and culture, and he therefore had to confront his assumptions and ideals regarding not only sensuality and civilization but also male intimacy and the consumption of flesh.

Once Tommo makes his escape, it requires him to shirk all Typee influence, and he is forced to once again clothe himself in the heavy and binding garb of Western thought – this can't have been an easy undertaking after all the pro-primitivism comparisons he had made against the West. In a shocking and gruesome turn of events, Tommo is forced to procure his freedom by throwing a boat hook at one of the very Typee who had fed, clothed, and befriended him throughout his stay. Interestingly it is Tommo who plays the final role of the savage, turning his back on the kindness shown him and inciting first violence. Crain argues, “the violence also serves to relieve Tommo's panic. It breaks a threateningly attractive sense of identity with the cannibals...Tommo is not a cannibal; he is a man who kills cannibals” (33). This final severing also, I think, serves as a way to rid Tommo's conscience of any and all liberties he may have taken while a citizen of the Nukuheva valley and purges the primitive, preparing him to re-enter civilization once again a Westerner.

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Emergence by Proxy: The Horizontal and Vertical Politics of Internet Policy in Turkey

By Sarah Kimberlin Harris

Often within transnational discourse, the Turkish government's suspension of approximately 3,700 websites to date is understood as a problematic form of state assertion in the face of global telecommunications. For example, in the European Union's Turkey Progress Report (2008) – part of an annually published edition outlining the remaining stipulations for Turkish accession to the E.U. – Turkey's Internet laws, which grant local judges and prosecutors the authority to indefinitely suspend websites, are described as a violation of the freedom of expression. Also notable in these reports is that the promotion of human rights is typically embedded within a liberal capitalist framework.[i] Likewise, civil society groups within and outside of Turkey argue that state website suspensions contribute to a repressive regime of information exchange.[ii] What is problematic here is not that these organizations make ethical claims for the right to speak and be heard online, but instead that they approach information and communication technologies (ICTs) as primordial, expansive and self-organizing attributes that contribute to an imaginary of the Internet as a uniform, neutral, global cyberspace, freely accessible if only left alone.[iii] Nevertheless, despite recycled pronouncements that Kemalism is dead, long ago dissolved by powerful transnational alliances and global cyberspace, this national category endures through domestic Internet policies that target and silence alternative nationalisms deemed threatening to state power.

In this article, I will consider Eugene Thacker's description of the Internet as a global "digital commons," as well as Achille Mbembe's theorization of power hierarchies within an occupied territory, in order to critique the horizontal metaphors dominating Turkey's Internet debates. While the phenomena discussed here are historically and culturally specific to the Turkish context, this article is primarily an exploration of the understandings we might gain when using critical theory to analyze ICT metaphors frequenting geopolitical and civil society discourse. I first draw upon Thacker's description of the Internet as a horizontal network of "digital transfection"[iv] to consider how Turkish Internet practices both reinforce sovereign power - through state-mandated website suspensions implemented through a telecom monopoly - as well as resist it, for example, in the online social networking of Kurdish and LGBTQ communities for whom the Internet is a means of political mobilization. Then, I utilize Mbembe's discussion of infrastructural warfare to consider how a hierarchical understanding of power relations within society connects with the vertical model used within Internet Protocol. Both forms of verticality are extremely relevant to contemporary Internet policy debates. Third, I situate the proxy server as a point of intersection between these vertical and horizontal relationships. The proxy simultaneously operates as a node of social convergence, through its circumvention of online barriers (such as website filters targeting Turkish IP addressed request signals within a given network), as well as a node of divergence, differentiating the experiences of Internet users along a vertical axis of power, for instance along class lines that delimit Internet practices within a particular place. By foregrounding the proxy's dual functions in sustaining and resisting sovereign power, I seek alternatives to the "either-or" framework of current censorship debates assuming Turkey's teleological progress towards a European modernity.

In 2007, videos depicting Kemal Mustafa Atatürk (the founding father of the Turkish Republic) as a homosexual were posted on YouTube.[v] In response, the Turkish government passed laws authorizing the courts to suspend websites displaying "insults" to the Turkish Republic, to "Turkishness" or to Atatürk.[vi] In conjunction with a centralized board that monitors expression in film, television, radio and online media, these laws have enabled the suspension of thousands of websites.[vii] YouTube remains blocked by a renewable court order implemented through Türk Telekom,[viii] the national telecommunications corporation providing most ADSL access.[ix] Hence, when a user with a Turkish IP address attempts to access YouTube, she will encounter a suspension notice that lists the judge's name, the case number and the date of the suspension's commencement (see figure 1). By neither explaining a suspension's rationale nor informing the user of stipulations that must be met before the suspension is lifted, the notice acts as a one-way channel of sovereign discipline. However, underneath the notice's impenetrability, there exists a clandestine network of proxy servers, software and ICT knowledge used to circumvent web-filtering technologies and resist the state-corporate complex that the 2007 Internet laws were intended to fortify.[x] Despite the argument made by technocrats in Turkey's urban centers that proxy technology renders website suspensions ineffective, there exist substantive impacts of this seemingly benign performance of state power. For example, when working-class users access the Internet at cafés where data caching (allowing for the surveillance of a user's online activity) and website filtering (implementing website bans and blocking proxies) are mandatory, suspensions create firmer digital borders for those users without personal computers or access to private connectivity.[xi] Suspensions and surveillance is posited as a collaborative effort, as Turkish users are encouraged by the govern-

ment to visit a state-produced website called "Informer-Web" where they can report questionable websites to the authorities. This interactive process hails the Turkish user as a patriot-informer, consenting to web-hegemony through his or her participation.[xii]

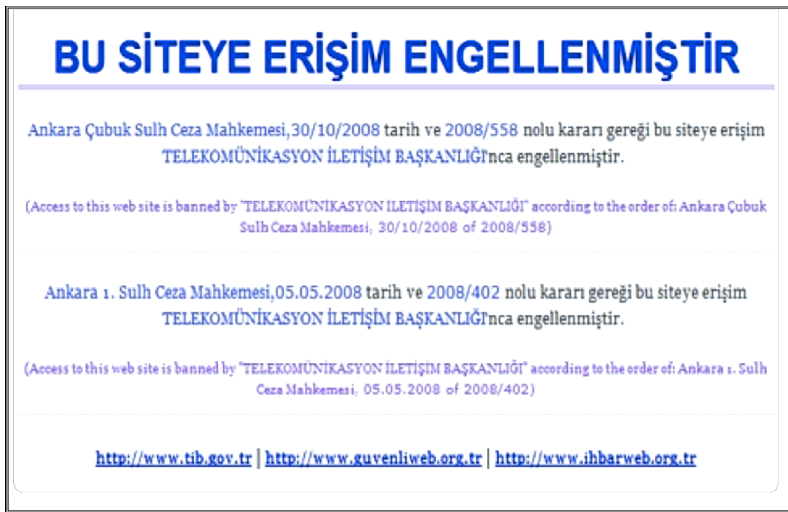


Figure 1. Screen view when attempting to access <www.youtube.com> from a Turkish IP address (August, 2009). Top line reads "this website's connection is in suspension." <www.ihbar.org.tr> is the link for "Informer Web."

Importantly, recent battles over online expression exist within a milieu where Turkey's struggle to maintain its national sovereignty has dramatically changed over the last two decades, in part caused by a politically fractured state and a sizeable diaspora. On the one hand, the majority party is Islamic, moderate and center-right, endorsing a relaxation of Turkey's laicism and a series of neoliberal economic reforms to meet E.U. accession stipulations. However, nationalist, Kemalist parties promoting secularism,

economic protectionism, continued militarization of the East and resistance to E.U. interference in domestic affairs, maintain substantial influence through parliamentary seats and military alliances. While negotiating this internal fissure, the state also attempts to regulate the diverse online activities of its dispersing population, as over 10% of Turks currently live outside of the national territory, mainly residing in Europe, the Middle East and the U.S.[xiii] Additionally, Turkey continues to struggle with E.U. and IMF demands for continued democratization and economic liberalization meanwhile grappling with the violent dislocations and devastation caused by years of military conflict with the Kurdish national liberation movement.[xiv] This ecology of conflicting social forces raises the stakes of Internet regulation. Indeed, the government's preoccupation with the activities on social networking and video sharing websites, exemplified in its suspensions of Blogspot.com, Wordpress.com, Blogger.com and GoogleGroups, is emblematic of how online control is seen as a key political strategy. Yet because proxy technology is used both to implement and to circumvent network control, what Turkey's Internet laws were originally intended for – to protect state power and intellectual property rights – results in speculative, pre-emptive regulation, plural digital resistance and sovereign exception.

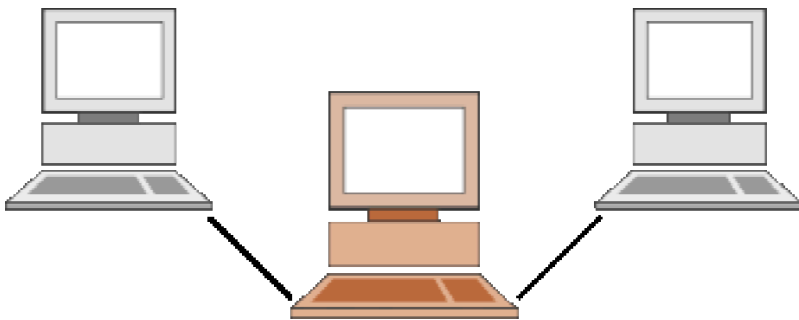


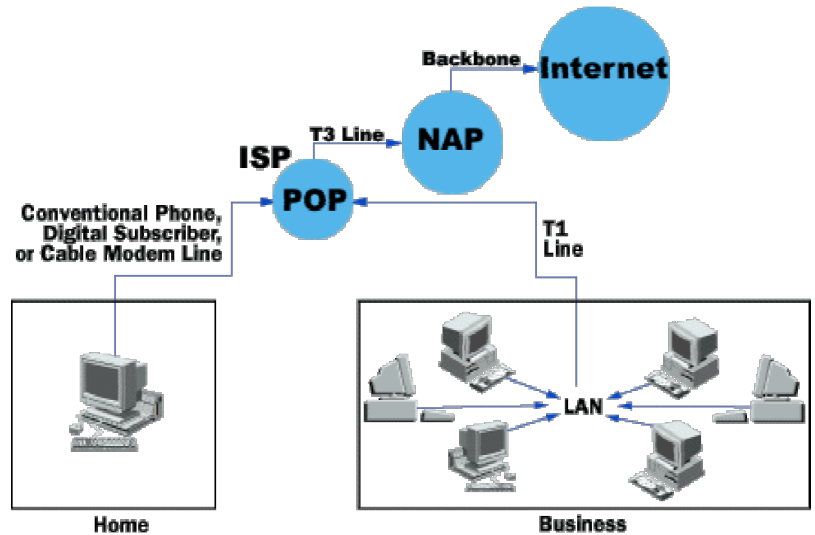
Figure 2. User with Turkish IP address ß Proxy Server à End Server

In order to understand the divergent social uses of the proxy, it is imperative to understand its basic functions. The proxy server is a computer system or application program that acts as an intermediary between users seeking resources from other servers. It can be placed in the user's local computer or at various points between the user and the destination server. The "anonymous," "open" or "tunneling" proxy allows the user to "hide" her IP address,[xv] since the transport of data packets occurs between the end server and the proxy rather than the end server and the user's machine. In other words, if a Turkish user connects to an open proxy from her personal computer to request a file or web page that is restricted by her Internet Service Provider,[xvi] the intermediary proxy server first evaluates the user's request according to its filtering rules (which in the case of an open proxy, is non-restrictive). After the request is validated, the open proxy provides the desired connection to the destination server by requesting its service on behalf of the Turkish user without disclosing the user's actual IP address. However, the proxy is not necessarily a tool of circumvention to online hegemony, as just as frequently this technology is used to restrict traffic by IP address or Internet

protocol for purposes including surveillance, network security, data collection, safe-guarding against viruses, information leakage protection, caching locally to increase speed and performance, and to restrict access to particular sites. Thus, while Türk Telekom uses “content filter” proxy servers to enforce website suspensions, “tunneling” proxies function to bypass the former. Also notable, although a tunneling proxy hides a user’s identity from the end server (essentially erasing a user’s “Turkishness”), the manager of the proxy can still access the user’s personal information, introducing a certain level of risk to any reliance on a proxy. While journalists, scholars, businesspeople and political dissidents in Turkey may use tunneling proxies to circumvent website suspensions, depending on their management, these same proxies could monitor and document users’ activities without their knowledge and provide or sell this data to governments and corporations.[xvii]

Figure 3.

An example diagram depicting the Internet as a horizontal communication network[xviii]



In his 2008 article “Uncommon Life,” Eugene Thacker analyzes the balancing principle of “the commons” through the lens of biotechnology in order to theorize “life itself.” First, he discusses how the concept of the commons historically responded to the problem of “governing the living” or managing the diversity that emerges within a heterogeneous society (Thacker, 309). The concept of the commons articulates the negotiation between the singular and the plural, which within the realm of the biological could be described as the interrelation between the microbe, the individual and the species. Within the context of Internet technology, the relationship between a computer, an Internet Service Provider, a Point of Presence and a Network Access Point is one possible way to imagine the singular-to-plural organization of the “digital commons” (see Figure 3). Whether the “life” of the commons is seen as a biological entity, an informational one, or as Thacker argues for, both,[xix] its primary function is to balance rights with constraints, innovation with regulation. Yet the homeostasis resulting from the balance of control and freedom is always predicated on continuous internal flux, on micro-processes of change in a constant feedback loop with overall self-organization. This is why Thacker invokes Foucault to elaborate his definition of life as “(life is) what resists and life is also what is resisted” (Thacker, 318). This bidirectional description of life connects to his central claim that large-scale transformations – whether they are biologically categorized as evolutionary progress/pandemic or technologically categorized as IT innovation/cyber-terrorism – occur through a process of transfection, or the horizontal exchange of information across networks.[xx] All life, whether it is the life of ideas or of microbes, shares this common design principle. Considering Turkish user-generated online expression as “emergent life” in a “digital commons” facilitates a radical reimagining of the tension between top-down state regulation and the grassroots struggles for deregulation. Global Internet debates exemplify transfection; they are not “a conflict between opposing parties but between intersecting processes: multiplicity and control, circulations and regulations, emergence and exception” (318). In other words, contrary to arguments that website suspensions suppress minority expression and streamline media content into a unilateral regime of state propaganda, a significant yet overlooked purpose of every telecom regulation is to manage multiplicity, circulation and emergence rather than to end these processes altogether. Undoubtedly, we must acknowledge the potentially repressive consequences of a state institution delineating which websites may “live” from those that must “die” – as not all of digital life’s mutations are considered equal - but in order to critique state regulations, we must first understand why they exist and how they function, an understanding that is sorely lacking in current ICT policy debates.[xxi]

One step in this direction would be to consider examples of how state power not only controls digital emergence but also establishes a space for sovereign exception within its legal frameworks. That is, the state allows for those particular emergences that benefit national interests to survive, or as Thacker describes, “sovereignty creates the conditions in which exception is internal to emergence – in which it is even necessarily and naturally part of the logic of life as multiplicity, as emergence” (Thacker 318). A

recent example of sovereign exception to a Turkish telecom regulation occurred in January 2009 at the Davos World Economic Forum, where Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan walked out of an internationally televised debate between himself and Israeli President Shimon Peres, after which he agreed to be taped for a YouTube video that was posted on The Davos Question Channel.[xxii] In the interview, he addressed a global audience, knowing full well that Turks would have difficulty accessing the video because YouTube was banned from Turkish IP addresses. Erdoğan's participation in YouTube's "Davos Debates" - despite Google's refusal to remove "insulting" videos from its YouTube archives and despite the Turkish government's suspension of YouTube - is a significant example of sovereign exception. During a moment of heightened political spectacle (he walked off the stage mid-debate following his emotional critique of the winter 2008-09 Israeli airstrikes on the Gaza Strip), Erdoğan seized the opportunity to address a global audience via a popular online network, to position his nation as a key mediator in the Palestine-Israel peace process, and to promote himself as a humanist-hybrid figure bridging Middle Eastern and Western ideological divides.[xxiii] As a member of the majority-ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) whose popularity had been in decline, Erdoğan sought to increase his domestic stronghold (his reproach of Peres deeply resonated with Turkish citizens who later greeted him with an enthusiastic homecoming parade) and to advance E.U. accession negotiations (by portraying himself as a rational mediator between East and West). If sovereign exception is a reach for control over online emergence's diffuse directionalities, then Erdoğan's paradoxical violation of Turkish telecom policy can be seen as an endeavor to shape the Turkish national imaginary in a particular direction that would benefit his sovereign interests at home and abroad.

By and large, the criticisms of Turkey's website suspensions waged by local and transnational activists, scholars and journalists take two forms: either the bans are positioned as an infringement of basic human rights as defined by international law (a humanist approach), or because of the circumventive capability of tunneling proxies, the bans are portrayed as futile (a techno-scientific approach). Both of these frameworks emphasize horizontal, geopolitical asymmetry between nations, for example, in the humanist comparison of an undemocratic Turkish Internet with a democratic European Internet, or in the techno-scientific delineation of China's strong filtering infrastructure compared with Turkey's weaker, partial implementations. However, both approaches fail to address how policies are experienced differently by diverse user populations. The vertical metaphors employed by Achille Mbembe in "Necropolitics," could radically reconfigure current Internet debates. Mbembe describes our political moment as one in which the "subjugation of life to the power of death" has become normalized. This milieu, he argues, stems from the late-Modern political paradigm positing the body politic as an exercise of reason in the public sphere through the social contract between citizens and the state (Mbembe 39).[xxiv] Today, instead of abstract reason and truth, the foundational terms of our contemporary body politic are life and death itself.[xxv] In the age of necropolitics, "vertical sovereignty," or the splintering of people who share the same geographical place by way of infrastructural control, is how difference is managed by state and non-state actors. At times adopting IT language, he focuses on the Palestinian occupied territory as "divided into a web of intricate internal borders and various isolated cells" (Mbembe 28). Importantly, he transitions away from mapping traditional forms of sociopolitical control as a series of horizontally embedded borders within borders, towards outlining a new (necro)politics that is vertically constituted of "over- and underpasses, a separation of airspace from the ground":

Under conditions of vertical sovereignty and splintering colonial occupation, communities are separated across a y-axis. This leads to a proliferation of the sites of violence. The battlegrounds are not located solely at the surface of the earth. The underground as well as the airspace are transformed into conflict zones... Everywhere the symbolics of the top (who is on top) is reiterated. (Mbembe 29).

Mbembe's metaphor of verticality in describing necropolitical power relations is useful in conceptualizing the various interests vying for Internet control in Turkey. Although we cannot equate website banning with the occupation that Mbembe discusses, it does possess necropolitical functions as its foundational terms are life and death cloaked in two-dimensional reason. The website suspension notice in Figure 1 offers an illustrative example. Other than the sovereign's signature, no further elaboration or rationale is owed to the Internet user, and once a notice marked with legal signage (a court case number, a date, a judge's name) is posted, a website can disappear. What is at issue here is the sovereign's ability to instantaneously render a website lifeless. Of course, materially speaking, a digital "life" is a series of encoded data packets - a webpage, a blog, a digital extension of the human being - not microbes, DNA, nor the human body. Yet the semiotics of the suspension notice indicates the Turkish government's attempt to subsume website extermination into a rational process of "e-death" and "e-life" management. Indeed, these bans can be viewed as an expenditure of those particular emergences in the digital commons that are deemed threatening to the health of the Kemalist body politic. For example, among Turkey's Queer communities, blogs and social networking sites provide a safer space within which LGBTQ Turks can communicate without risking physical and psychological harm. Online presence pro-

pects and nurtures ways of being that are punished and censored through a hyper-masculine, hetero-normative, nationalist ideology. In lieu of the considerably high suicide rates among Queer Turks, online networking offers emotional and literal life-support for LGBTQ people. Arguably, the government’s October 2009 suspensions of gabile.com and hadigayri.com, two enormously popular LGBTQ websites in Turkey, were intended to exterminate Queer online emergence and hinder the possibilities for expanding support, connection and community among Queer Turks.

It is no accident that a vertical metaphor is also inherent to Internet data transmission protocol. Internet Protocol (IP) is a system of rules that computers use to communicate across various servers and networks, and these rules are arranged into vertical modules or layers. Because the Internet is a vast heterogeneous network, maintaining a series of rule-layers in a shared protocol becomes necessary for communication between disparate sender and receiver machines. Each layer of IP performs a specific function for the layers above and below it. In the sender’s machine, the vertical layers allow for the disassembly of data into packets with different functions (or “multiplexing,” see fig. 5); in the destination server, these packets are reassembled “up” according to the IP’s rules into a unified signal (“de-multiplexing”). Hence, there exists a simultaneous horizontal movement of data across the Internet from server to server and a vertical movement of data “up” and “down” IP layers within an individual server. The IP model resonates with Mbembe’s sociopolitical discussion of “who is on top” in that an Internet Service Provider, operating at the host level of the protocol (see fig. 4), can apply a filtering proxy that blocks requests from particular IP addresses, a form of data which is transmitted at the gateway level, which is “underneath” and cannot override the host level. Because digital “passing” becomes a prerequisite to successful signal transfer around a website suspension, a tunneling proxy will omit the user’s IP address from its data-request in order for this request to successfully move “up” through the destination server’s vertical protocol.[xxvi]

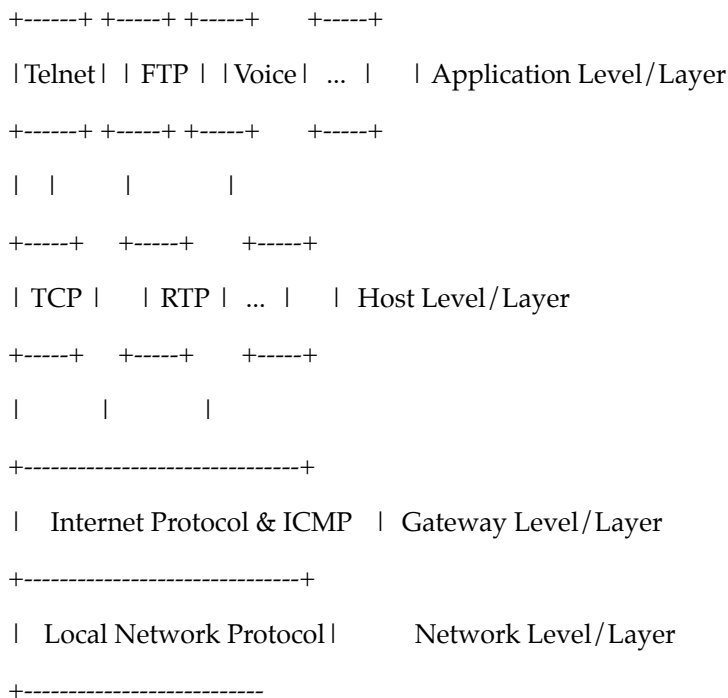


Figure 4. A model of Transmission Control Protocol layers.[xxvii] Transmission Control Protocol (TCP/IP or IPv4) is a standard Internet Protocol used on the Internet.

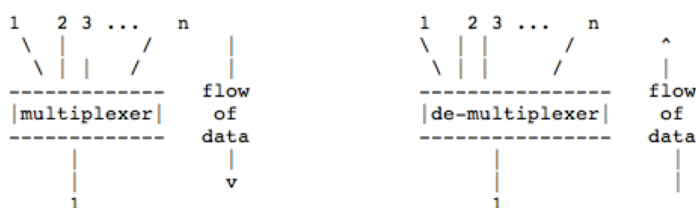


Figure 5. Model of a signal being sent along Internet Protocol from a sender machine to a receiver machine. The multiplexer function vertically breaks down data into distinct datagrams (packets of information) that travel horizontally to the destination server. A de-multiplexer does the opposite, vertically reassembling datagrams into a unified signal.[xxviii]

In December 2009, the Internet Technologies Association (ITD), a Turkish NGO, filed a lawsuit in the European Court of Human Rights against the Turkish government for blocking YouTube from Turkish IP addresses. The ITD is arguing that website blocking is a violation of Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950) which protects the individual's freedom of expression as a universal human right. Using human rights law to curtail Turkish website banning may be effective as long as the AKP – who privileges E.U. accession and will likely conform to human rights stipulations – maintains a majority vote in the Turkish parliament. However, if and when nationalist parties regain seats, the humanist appeal will fail to curb restrictive Internet policies. Likewise, activists who use a techno-scientific argument – reasoning that tunneling proxies render the bans ineffective – fail to consider how perfecting online filtering technology for a complex, dynamic system in continuous transformation will always be an impossible feat, and the state never aimed to perfect its filtering technology in the first place. Similar to Thacker's metaphor of transfection, IT innovation serves a dual purpose: for the state sovereign, innovation can improve the health of the body politic by way of improved targeting technologies, yet these same innovations will always lead to new forms of proxy resistance.

Thus far, in their attempts to establish universal, online free-speech, the techno-scientific and humanist arguments dominate public debates, yet neither has had a substantial impact on Turkish Internet policy, aside from Turk Telekom's recent privatization. In lieu of this, how do we include other paradigms in order to understand and negotiate differences between Internet policies worldwide? Furthermore, how do issues of access and exclusion interrelate with the global trend towards an increasing commoditization of online information exchange? Including a framework of verticality in Internet policy debates is an important step in beginning to answer these questions. That is, policy makers must seriously consider the disparate impacts of a single policy on the differently situated communities within a society. In closing, I will briefly mention two vertical disjunctures, the first of which arises when comparing those Turkish citizens with access to personal computers and thus to tunneling proxies that can circumvent website bans, to working class and rural citizens whose online engagement is powerfully shaped by Internet café filtering and surveillance technologies. Another form of vertical disjuncture exists at the sites of electronic waste dumping in the Global South, which serve as the receptacles for the toxic vestiges of Western technological progress; the violent repercussions of hazardous e-waste on the individuals laboring at these sites is excluded from the "symbolics of the top" in E.U. Progress Reports and Google ad campaigns. I conclude with these two issues – the former positioned during a computer's "life" and the latter at its "death" – because they point to how asymmetrical relationships shaped by class, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and citizenship acutely impact the ICT empowerment of local communities. Verticality foregrounds previously overlooked patterns of connectivity or lack thereof and would illuminate the various ways that telecom policies limit and/or expand the Internet practices of working class and minority communities. This is a matter that deserves more attention in transnational debates that erroneously contrast a democratic West with a repressive Middle East and fail to acknowledge the influence of transnational media corporations and global capital in determining the ICT capacities of the multitudes.[xxix]

Notes

[i] "Turkey's Electronic Communications Law which would provide the basis for alignment with the EU framework did not enter into force after its adoption by the Parliament. Competition in the fixed and broadband markets remains marginal. More than 95% of broadband Internet access services are provided by the incumbent's Internet operator. . . Implementing regulations on provision of Internet services at public places and on principles and procedures concerning the regulation of broadcasts on the Internet have been adopted during the reporting period. Implementation of these regulations has the potential to violate freedom of expression" (Turkey 2008 Progress Report, 52).

[ii] There is an extensive amount of research contesting Turkish Internet policies, including Akdeniz & Altıparmak's study "Internet Restricted Access" as well as studies by Reporters Without Borders and Open Net Initiative.

[iii] In *Control and Freedom: Power and Paranoia in the Age of Fiber Optics*, Wendy Chun problematizes the notion of "cyberspace" as a utopian landscape providing a shared global experience in the present. Chun focuses on various attempts to either ignore or hide the fissures of online temporal and spatial disjuncture. The metaphor of "cyberspace," Chun argues, is designed to

interpellate individuals as “users,” governments as “regulators” and corporations as “providers,” making each party feel a sense of control, mastery and autonomy that finally serves online advertisers, Internet corporations and state institutions alike (Chun 15-16).

[iv] “All of these processes have to do not with infection but rather with transfection, the ability of microbes to exchange, share, and distribute genetic information through a microbial network. This new microbiology suggests that evolution happens horizontally. In this sense resistance is contagious.” (Thacker, “Uncommon Life,” 316).

[v] “This just in – Atatürk is gay!” was allegedly the punch-line of Stavraetos212007 news-parody YouTube video, but as it was permanently removed from YouTube’s archives, online descriptions and responses to the missing original are the only records of its existence.

[vi] Notably, website suspensions occurred before 2007: “several websites were blocked starting in 2000 in Turkey through orders issued by courts and enforced by the then dial-up ISPs.” However, Law No. 5651 on the “Regulation of Publications on the Internet and Suppression of Crimes Committed by means of Such Publications” provided a legal framework that rapidly promulgated website banning (Akdeniz 5-6).

[vii] 77% of the blocking orders are administered by a centralized telecom board, the Information Technologies and Communication Institute [BTİK], while 23% are court ordered. (Akdeniz 5).

[viii] Türk Telekom (TT) became operational in 1995 as the sole telecommunications operator, owning the entire telecom infrastructure including conventional telephone lines, satellite communications, cable TV lines, submarine lines and the Internet backbone. In 2003, the Turkish government partially privatized TT as part of the IMF’s emergency rescue package and its liberalization commitments to the WTO. The state now owns 30%, Oğre Telecom, a Lebanese multi-national media corporation, owns 55%, and 15% is free standing. Today, over 95% of online connectivity in Turkey is still controlled through TT’s ADSL (Tunç).

[ix] On October 30th, 2008, a fourth court order was issued to renew the suspension of YouTube from Turkish IP addresses. Iran, Pakistan, the UAE, Thailand and Brazil are examples of other states that have banned YouTube.
<<http://mashable.com/2007/05/30/youtube-bans>>

[x] Internet laws not only reinforce state ideology but also support private media conglomerates that control domestic television and news markets. A significant example of an intellectual property related website suspension order occurred on October 20th 2008, when access to Blogger.com and Blogspot.com were blocked by a Turkish court. Digitürk, a subscription based digital TV platform in Turkey, owns the rights to transmit live coverage of Turkish football league games and obtained the suspension order after identifying blog entries on Blogger and Blogspot that provided links to websites hosting pirated transmission of the games (Akdeniz 37).

[xi] Most Turks do not own personal computers and access the Internet at cafes and universities. “The OECD called in 2007 for more initiatives to increase public use of ICT, with research from the EU Statistics Office showing that Turkey is among the countries in which Internet access is very low. The research found that only 39% of Turks had computers at home, and that Turkey was below the EU average in terms of both computers per household and internet access...”
<<http://www.pr-inside.com/turkey-information-technology-report-q-r804349.htm>>

[xii] “Informer-web”: <<http://www.ihbarweb.org.tr/>>

[xiii] This figure is an estimate using data 2006-09 data compiled on “Turkish Population”: <http://www.filepie.us/?title=Turkish_population#Turkish_populations_by_country> c. Filespie, 2009.

[xiv] Although the purpose of the Turkish military’s 30-year campaign in the East (which has killed an estimated 30,000 individuals) is purported to fight PKK terrorists, it has arguably functioned to thwart Kurdish human rights and assertions of political mobilization. The PKK – Partiya Karkeran Kurdistan or the Kurdish Workers Party – was the political party formed by the Kurdish national liberation movement in the early 1980s. It is regarded as a terrorist organization by Turkish and U.S. governments, and in Turkey it is illegal to promote this organization in public discourse. An estimated 20-30% of Turks are Kurdish. Over the last decade, the demands of Kurdish rights groups have transitions from national liberation to federal autonomy. Until 2003, public expression in Kurdish (in television, radio, print, and public schools) was illegal.

[xv] An IP (Internet Protocol) address is a four-part number separated by dots (e.g. 192.321.991.2) that uniquely identifies a computer on the Internet. Every computer has a unique IP address.

- [xvi] There are approximately 30 Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in Turkey, all of whom rent ADSL use from Türk Telekom.
- [xvii] Turkish law requires ISPs to document and cache their patrons Internet use for a specific amount of time and hand over this documentation if requested by the government.
- [xviii] From "Internet Infrastructure," How Stuff Works: <<http://computer.howstuffworks.com/internet-infrastructure1.htm>>
- [xix] "In the age of biotechnology and biomedicine, life is also increasingly fashioned and refashioned along several lines, as evolutionary or species life, as a molecular and informative code, as a set of pathways or systems, even as a set of nanoscale machines" (Thacker, "Uncommon Life," 318).
- [xx] "All of these processes have to do not with infection but with transfection, the ability of microbes to exchange, share and distribute genetic information through a microbial network" (Thacker, "Uncommon Life," 316).
- [xxi] "This essay assumes that the ultimate expression of sovereignty resides, to a large degree, in the power and capacity to dictate who may live and who must die" (Mbembe 11).
- [xxii] Erdoğan talks to "global citizens" in the YouTube "Davos Debates" (Davos Economic Forum, January 2009): <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=szRc0eZO6hA>> (YouTube, January 2009), visited 12/1/09.
- [xxiii] Erdoğan and the AKP continue to attempt to act as mediators between Iran and the U.S. over issues of nuclear energy development.
- [xxiv] "Within this paradigm, reason is the truth of the subject and politics is the exercise of reason in the public sphere" (Mbembe 13).
- [xxv] "Therefore, contemporary experiences of human destruction suggest that it is possible to develop a reading of politics, sovereignty and the subject different from the one we inherited from the philosophical discourse of modernity. Instead of considering reason as the truth of the subject, we can look to other foundational categories that are less abstract and more tactile, such as life and death" (Mbembe 14).
- [xxvi] Wendy Chun's book *Control and Freedom: Paranoia and Power in the Age of Fiber Optics* provides a nuanced explanation Internet infrastructure and the imaginary of cyberspace, Publications from DARPA and USC give insight into the debates around the initial construction of Internet Protocol and explain how IP functions.
- [xxvii] "Transmission Internet Protocol," DARPA, 1981. <<http://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc793>>, accessed 12/10/09.
- [xxviii] Solofsky and Kale, "TCP/IP Tutorial," Network Working Group, Spider Systems Ltd. January 1991. <<http://www.rfc-editor.org/rfc/rfc1180.txt>> accessed 12/5/09.
- [xxix] "One thing I've recognized is that Toni and I use the term multitude in essentially two ways. They're in contradiction with one another. . . In one sense, and in *Empire* it was used more this way, the multitude is an always-existing social force that insists on its own freedom, refuses authority, breaks its chains. On the other hand, and this is our inclination in the new book, multitude is a political project. Multitude hasn't yet existed. Multitude could exist as a form of organizing, something that could be created today. There's one notion of multitude that's always-already, and there's another that's not-yet." - Michael Hardt, interview by Smith and Minardi.

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Advice to a Daughter

Go, say hello to Perilla,
 my hastily-scribbled letter.
 Tell her I miss my little girl.
 She will either be with her mother
 or with her fast-dancing muses.

The Danube has frozen over; gone is my life in the shade.
 My tears freeze before they even hit the page.

Tell her that, even though I'm among
 shaggy barbarians in leather pants and furs,
 icicles of alcohol in their beards,
 I'm still writing.

Writing a poem that you can't read to anyone
 is like dancing in the dark.

Ask her, letter, if she's still devoted to our shared pursuit.
 I was her first friend and hero. I harnessed
 Pegasus for her to ride and led the horse to water.
 I was also her first teacher and critic.

Don't be afraid of following in my footsteps, daughter¾
 Don't burn your poems; your songs are never mistakes.

Your looks will fade someday.
 You don't want people to say, "She was once a great beauty"¾
 You want them to respect who you are today, tomorrow, and forever.

There's nothing we own that isn't mortal
 except talent, the spark in the mind and the fire in the heart.

Debbie Herman dherman@yorku.ca

Rest Cure

I sit in my study in Sils-Maria
by the open window, smelling wood chips
and frost, bundled up in undergarments
against the soul-choking winds.

My sister says I am a poetic fool^¾
But I tell her the cold is good
for a man's constitution
and I leave her to her sewing.

I suddenly think that I have been here before,
thinking the same thoughts,
scribbling the same ink blots onto paper^¾
as though a tiny demon no larger than an atom

perched aloft my eardrum and threatened
me to repeat this provincial life
of leprous fever and angst
until the sands of time are crystals.

I decide that the cold mountain air
is no better than the pills I purchased in France
and close the cracked window, shut tight the drapes
that veil the outside world in inviting shadows.

Debbie Herman

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Behaving Badly in the Press: John Taylor and Henry Walker, 1641-1643

By Kirsten Inglis

The Divell is hard bound and did hardly strain,
To shit a Libeller a knave in graine.

Taylor, A Reply as True as Steele

Such is the language of a beastly railor,
The Divel's privihouse most fit for Taylor.

Walker, Taylor's Physicke

In the spring of 1641 John Taylor the water-poet, well known for the scurrilous and inflammatory verse he had published throughout his long career (and indeed had compiled and printed as a collected works in 1630), saw to the printers a tract entitled *A Swarme of Sectaries, And Schismatiques: Wherin is discovered the strange preaching (or prating) of such as are by their trades Coblers, Tinkers, Pedlers, Weavers, Sow-gelders, and Chymney-Sweepers*. David Cressy's tongue-in-cheek observation that this very pamphlet was "Taylor's main contribution to religious sociology" (230) underscores the irreverent tone of the pamphlet which was a satiric invective against mechanic preachers and which typified the tone of much of Taylor's writing in the early 1640s. This particular pamphlet sparked a brief but intense press-skirmish between Taylor and the preacher-turned-parliamentary newsman, Henry Walker. The central pamphlets of the exchange include[1]: Taylor's *A Swarme of Sectaries*, Walker's *An Answer to a Foolish Pamphlet*, Taylor's *A Reply as True as Steele*, and Walker's *Taylor's Physicke*. The pamphlets contain a mixture of religious polemic and personal invective and the exchange is a fascinating example of the kind of pamphlet flying that burgeoned in the early 1640s and which is often read as a result of the collapse of formal censorship in the summer of 1641.

The idea that a draconian and all-encompassing state of censorship utterly collapsed with the abolition by statute of the Star Chamber and the Court of High Commission in 1641 has been largely exploded in recent scholarship. While Annabel Patterson's *Censorship and Interpretation* (1984) provides a useful model for thinking about the hermeneutics of censorship, critics have taken exception in recent years to Patterson's characterisation of the degree of formal censorship in the Stuart state prior to 1641 and the idea that poets and state entered into a mutually convenient "code of 'functional ambiguity'" in order to avoid entanglements with licensing laws and post-publication censures (McElligott *Censorship* xxiv)[2]. As Michael Mendle points out, even before the Abolition of the Star Chamber in July of 1641, mechanisms of censorship implemented by the 1637 Star Chamber decree were largely non-functional and "in this respect the act abolishing Star Chamber was an obituary, not an execution" (313). I will argue that the Taylor/Walker exchange, exactly contemporary with these upheavals in the system of state censorship, provides good reason for seeing the system of censorship in the early 1640s as far more complicated and less consistently implemented than it is made out to be in many historical accounts. The exchange reveals that censorship, as Jason McElligott argues in his introduction to *Censorship and the Press, 1580-1720*, "should be seen as the variety of processes whereby restrictions were imposed upon the collection, dissemination and exchange of information, opinions and ideas. These processes were active both before and after the initial act of publication, and they were by no means only 'top-down' or state-inspired processes." (xiii). Also, despite the intensely personal and vitriolic tone of the pamphlets and their apparently polarized positions in regards to religion and politics, the Taylor/Walker exchange reveals an ambivalent attitude towards the political situation of the early 1640s[3].

I want to begin by considering the relationship between slander, libel and the law in Caroline England[4]. Instead of considering the narrow and perhaps limiting system of state censorship in order to conceptualize the relationship between poets and the state, M Lindsay Kaplan posits the semantic field surrounding 'defamation' as a way of understanding "larger cultural expectations about what can and cannot be said or written" in the early modern period (6). The pamphlet flyting of Taylor and Walker would seem to be a particularly apt exemplar of this paradigm, and I will argue that Kaplan's model provides a fruitful way of thinking about the rhetoric of this exchange. In particular, I tend to see the exchange as a way of reconciling the 'defamation' model proposed by Kaplan with McElligott's proposal that 'censorship,' usually considered by critics in the narrow terms of pre-publication licensing, in fact encompassed a variety of different measures, both pre- and post-publication. McElligott points out, for example, that more serious offences of transgressive speech (usually involving religious or political content) were not usually dealt with under licensing provisions but "through the evolving and wonderfully flexible common law of libel, which included criminal libel, blasphemous libel and seditious libel" (Censorship xvi). Although Caroline state censorship "aimed to control heresy, scandal (that is, diminution of the reputation of the king and nobility), division, and sedition" (Mendle 308), libels of the kind employed by Taylor and Walker in the 1640s were present in the literary culture throughout early-Stuart rule and were in many ways beyond the law. The authors of libellous or satirical works used different and no less effective methods of dissemination that circumvented the printing system and its laws – methods such as manuscript circulation, foreign presses, mobile presses, and oral performance. Andrew McRae calls such methods "fugitive models of publication and speech" and argues that the use of such modes of dissemination by writers both reacts to and helps to shape the political climate in early-Stuart England (Literature 2). Also, as McElligott makes clear, many libellous materials reached the 'licensed' press even during periods of more intense censorship, since the state system was far from consistent and tended to punish only a very few individuals in order to serve as an example to the larger community (Royalism 196). Henry Walker, for example, was subject to post-publication censorship in 1642 for his role in the production and dissemination of a now-lost pamphlet entitled *To Your Tents, O Israel*.

Ernest Sirluck argues in a 1956 article that Henry Walker threw a pamphlet he had written and printed into the King's carriage as it passed him on January 5, 1642 at Guildhall (301). The incident appears to have been chaotic, with people thronging the streets and shouting, but Sirluck quotes John Rushworth as reporting that "one Henry Walker an Ironmonger, and Pamphlet-writer, threw into his Majesty's Coach a Paper, wherein was written (to your Tents, O Israel) for which he was committed, and afterwards proceeded against at the Sessions" (301). Sirluck makes a compelling case that this paper was a pamphlet which was suppressed to such a degree that it is now completely lost (305). The pamphlet was named by both King and Commons in speeches in 1642, and Taylor refers to the incident in his mock-biography *The Whole Life and Progresse of Henry Walker the Ironmonger*. Taylor claims that Walker, after leaving his first trade of ironworking, "set his wits a worke to compose such things as he supposed would vent or be saleable" (not unlike Taylor himself, of course), and that "there hath not bin fewer than between 4 or 500000 of such Pamphlets of his dispersed" (A2). This highly exaggerated figure suggests an element of fiction in Taylor's account of Walker's life, but both the detailed description of the pamphlet, which Taylor claims was designed to "stir up the Kings Subjects to mutiny" (A4), and Walker's subsequent trial at the Old Bailey, provide an important record of an otherwise largely ignored incident in the revolutionary process. If Taylor is to be believed, Walker had by this point determined that Charles was a tyrannical king whose subjects might rightfully depose him and he expressed these sentiments in a printed pamphlet. While I would treat Taylor's 'evidence' as suspect at best, especially given what I will argue is Walker's careful rhetoric of conciliation in his earlier pamphlets, I do find Sirluck's conclusion that this pamphlet did indeed exist and that it endured vigorous post-press censorship compelling. The complete eradication of the tract along with the evidence of Walker's prosecutions for disseminating pamphlet literature agree with Walker's growing role in spreading parliamentary sentiment. Finally though, Walker writes back with a conciliatory tone, arguing in 1643's *Modest Vindication* that he is loyal and grateful to the king to whom he dedicates the *Vindication*. Regarding the reports that he threw a pamphlet into the king's coach, Walker claims:

...upon what grounds or by whom it should be raised I cannot tell, neither can I say any thing of it, onely thus much I can ingenuously protest, that I am not onely innocent, but ignorant of any such act, and so farre clear, that I am absolutely free from all such intention in my self, or privity in others. (3)

Given Walker's reputation as a parliamentary reporter and supporter, it is difficult to gauge the sincerity of his plea. However, the same can be said of Taylor's initial accusation, and what remains striking in the exchange between the two men is the underlying ambivalence of each man's political position, despite their overt antagonism on personal and theological grounds.

To turn to the central pamphlets of the Taylor and Walker exchange, I would suggest that, at least in part, the pamphlets' bitter personal invective was designed to vigorously promote their sales, as both Taylor and Walker were cognizant of the public desire for sensational news and scandal. Taylor especially had proven himself a shrewd businessman and self-promoter in the early

years of his literary career. Taylor of course was and is famous as the ‘water-poet.’ A Thames waterman since the 1590s, he published his first volume, entitled *The Sculler, Rowing from Tiber to Thames*, with his Boate laden with a hotch-potch, or Gallimawfry of Sonnets, Satyres, and Epigrams, in 1612. The collection included an unprovoked attack on Thomas Coryate, and Bernard Capp argues that Taylor “no doubt calculated that a pamphlet war would secure him a share of Coryate’s fame” (13). Taylor’s shrewd sense of self-promotion is evident as well in his enterprise of travel writing. Taylor would embark on journeys after having elicited promises from sponsors to pay for an account of the travels upon his return. Taylor completed journeys within Britain and on the continent, even travelling to Prague in 1620 to “report on the Bohemian situation in person” (Capp 24). Taylor was welcomed to court by Frederick and Elizabeth and published an account of the trip disguised as “a simple travel tale to reassure the authorities” on his return (Capp 25). As Bernard Capp notes, the partisan spirit of the account was readily apparent; “it was a packet of news and propaganda designed to hearten a worried public” (25). Taylor’s interest in the international political situation is evident, and it is striking to note that the man who would rail against puritans and mechanic preachers in the 40s was warmly welcomed by the Palatine Frederick, the hope of militant Protestants in England, in the 1620s. It is perhaps indicative of just how far attitudes had to shift before the kind of polarization David Cressy posits existed in the years leading up to the civil war could come into being. Taylor’s politics of the 1640s are often represented as unequivocally royalist and conservative; Capp calls him a “fairly unsophisticated royalist” (163). There is evidence however that Taylor had a more sophisticated grasp of politics and religion than is generally ascribed him. Capp’s own research reveals that in the years leading up to the civil war Taylor was optimistic that the king and parliament could function in concert to resolve such issues as monopolies and religious separatism (143, 165). Taylor’s literary output reflects this ambivalence even into the 1640s.

Taylor’s 1641 broadside entitled *The Complaint of M. Tenter-hooke the Proiector, and Sir Thomas Dodger the Patentee* evinces a barely restrained glee at the prospect of parliament’s abolition of monopolies and patents[5]. Taylor’s ‘Projector’ laments:

Loe I, that lately was a Man of fashion,
 The bug-beare and the Scarcrow of this Nation,
 Th’admired mighty Mounte-banke of fame,
 The Juggling Hocus-pocus of good name,
 The Bull-beggar, who did affright and feare,
 And rake, and pull, teare, pill, pole, shave, and sheare,

Now Time hath pluck’d the Vizard from my face,
 I am the only Image of disgrace.

Taylor’s delight at the downfall of the projector (who ‘was screwd up too high / That tott’ring I have broke my necke thereby’) is evident and he phrases the complaint in the past tense, indicating that Parliament has already implemented these monumental changes. Taylor explicitly ascribes the downfall of such schemers to parliament’s actions; Sir Thomas Dodger, Taylor’s ‘patentee’ complains that “Time, and fortune, both with joint consent / Brought us to ruine by a Parliament.” So, while Taylor is remembered as a determinedly royalist propagandist, his voice in the early 1640s is far from polarized, as he espouses religious conservatism (though definitively not Catholicism) at the same time as he envisions the king and parliament working together to combat such abuses as patents and monopolies.

The first pamphlet in the Taylor/Walker exchange, *A Swarme of Sectaries*, is a collection of verses ridiculing the practice of mechanic preaching and in it John Taylor sets up a series of unnatural pairings, arguing that:

A Preachers work is not to gelde a Sowe,
 Vnseemly ‘tis a Iudge should milke a Cowe
 A Cobler to a Pulpit should not mount,
 Nor can an Asse cast up a true account.

A Clowne to sway a Scepter is too base,
 And Princes to turne Pedlers were disgrace:
 Yet all these, if they not misplaced be,
 Are necessary, each in their degree,

If each within their limits be contain'd,
Peace flourisheth, and concord is maintain'd. (3)

Such invective against mechanic preachers was hardly a novel sentiment in the 1640s, and as Andrew McRae notes, Taylor himself “typifies as well as anyone the expansion of popular engagement in religious and political controversy” (Literature 212). It is ironic that while he denigrates the practice of lay preaching as unnatural, Taylor’s own position as a Thames waterman does not seem to be a ‘natural’ background for the public expression of religious and political views. Taylor’s audacity in publicly printing the pamphlet, his outright ridicule of the “most famous preaching Cobler Samuel Howe” (8), and his own ‘mechanic’ background piqued the ire of Henry Walker, who penned a quick reply to the attack, entitled *An Answer To A Foolish Pamphlet*.

In his *Answer*, Walker calls attention to Taylor’s own class position, musing that Taylor must have been “Tutor’d in the stewes, because he is so perfect in their speech, full of base roughish wishings, Curses, and Revilings” (6) and he subtly mocks both Taylor’s trade and his clientele, asking “What, wilt thou again lament the losse of those dayes, wherein thou hast attended the whole fry of famous whores, to ayre themselves by waters?” (3). Even though Taylor’s initial pamphlet espouses a religious and not a political affiliation, Walker adroitly turns the pamphlet against mechanic preaching into a coherent vocalization of Taylor’s political affiliation, as he reinterprets and re-presents Taylor’s relationships with the ‘famous whores’ (the royalist gentry whom Taylor would ferry along the Thames) and with the figure of William Laud, describing Taylor getting drunk on sack in the tower with the imprisoned bishop. Walker’s pamphlet was published anonymously and is an example of the increasing trend that Cyndia Clegg sees during this period of printed works being disseminated with their authors’ names withheld (222). This is a situation that the state, in a 1642 order, attempted to curtail:

It is ordered that the Master and Wardens of the Company of Stationers shall be required to take especiall Order, that the Printers doe neither print, nor reprint any thing without the name and consent of the Author: And that if any Printer shall notwithstanding print or reprint any thing without the consent and name of the Author, that he shall then be proceeded against, as both printer and Author thereof, and their names to be certified to this House. (47)

The order requires that the author consent to the printing of his works and it is explicitly concerned with the ability to censure an author after the fact of publication, should the material be deemed to be seditious. This is evidenced by the fact that any printer found to be disseminating works without the name of the author could be proceeded against as if they were the author of the work. Again, despite the illusion that censorship had ‘collapsed’ after 1641, orders like this one illustrate that the state still attempted to institute controls over printed matter. John Taylor replies to Henry Walker’s anonymous *Answer to a Foolish Pamphlet* in *A Reply as True as Steele*, and the mounting personal antagonism is apparent in the verse and its accompanying woodcut, depicting the figure of a constipated she-devil expelling Henry Walker, complete with the andirons representative of his trade as an ‘iron-monger.’ Taylor’s attack is bitter and personal as he describes Walker:

Sprung from the devil and a mad Dun Cow,
Nursd in a Dunghill where he suck’d a Sowe,

This Amsterdam’d cur, hath strange Libels flirted

And much foul Inke besquittered and besquirted
That every where his Rougish Pamphlets flies
That England’s all embrodred or’e with lyes. (1)

There is an obvious religious agenda in Taylor’s invective, as he questions the legitimacy of Walker’s voice in the reply, calling him an ‘Amsterdam’d cur,’ a common enough charge against Puritans, but also recalling the fact that Puritan writers, including Walker (Clegg 224), often had to resort to foreign presses in order to have their voices heard. Taylor goes even further, ‘outing’ Walker, who had published his initial reply anonymously. He presents an anagram of Walker’s name – “KNAV, REVILER, HEL” – and finally decides “perhaps I then should name him HENRIE WALLKER” (1). Alastair Bellany argues that anagrams circulating in manuscript rely on the reader to ‘decode’ them and thus create their meaning (290). Taylor, provocatively, does the work of decoding for his reader and leaves no room for interpretive doubt. The fact that he does so in a printed tract to which his name was attached would seem to suggest that he felt little to fear in the way of pre- or post-publication censorship. The personal antagonism and religious polemic are obvious in the pamphlet, but Taylor’s attitude towards King and parliament is remarkably ambivalent, as he appears, even at this relatively late date, to have faith in the effectiveness of “the Parliament...that High Court...that Blessed Senate” (5). While posterity has identified Taylor and Walker as unequivocal royalist and parliamentarian respec-

tively, in this pamphlet it is the voice of the royalist Taylor that accuses Walker of being unwilling to let Parliament work. Taylor complains that “Master Walker and such Knaves as he / To wait their leasures cannot quiet be,” and he urges patience with the parliamentary process (Reply 5). The Taylor/Walker exchange, at first glance, appears to illustrate the kind of rising tensions and heightening antagonism that David Cressy identifies as resulting in an increasing polarization of factions in the years leading up to the civil war. With their virulent personal attacks and clear religious differences, the two men appear representative of a nation embroiled in bitter ideological disputes. Despite this, however, it is apparent that Taylor especially presents a far from politically polarized voice, even in 1641, as he articulates a clear position of religious conservatism and urges the reconciliation of King and parliament.

It is worth considering that the personal attacks in his spat with Walker are consistent with the kind of scurrilous verse Taylor had written throughout his career and that the pamphlet war is of the kind in which Taylor habitually embroiled himself, delighting in causing controversy and having his voice heard. Not only was a public dispute good fun, it was a chance for self-promotion, and Taylor seizes the opportunity to attack, not just Walker’s religious affiliation, but his poetry as well in *A Reply as True as Steele*:

Thou hat’st the muses, yet dost love to muse
In railing tearmes thy betters to abuse,
Verse must have method, measure, order, feet,
Proportion, cadence, weight and number, sweet

But thou that hat’st good verse, and libels make

Dost with the Devills cloven foot thy measure take (6)

Walker perhaps takes Taylor’s criticism to heart, since his reply, *Taylor’s Physicke*, is written almost entirely in prose; however, he also presents a tone of reconciliation, although not with Taylor, whom he accuses of base birth, hypocrisy and papistry and who is clearly represented in the tract’s woodcut, floating on the river clutching a bottle and consuming the excrement of a large-breasted devil. Despite the continued tone of personal hostility towards Taylor, Walker offers a statement of his loyalty to both King and parliament, emphasizing that “my allegiance to my royall King, my sincerity and reall submission to that honourable Assembly, to the godly Lawes of the Land, and my love to Church and State, is well knowne to those that know me” (A5). Likewise, his 1643 *Modest Vindication* addresses “thou my Sovereigne, Charles, all Europs splendour” and presents a tone of reconciliation between God, King and “People” (2). Walker’s conciliatory tone here suggests either that he, like Taylor, does not yet feel that religious convictions translate exactly into a political choice between King and parliament, or that there are still some sentiments that cannot be expressed in print, even after the apparent abolition of formal institutions of censorship.

The Taylor/Walker exchange reveals two writers maintaining a delicate balance between what can and cannot be said in the press. What seems evident from their exchange is the fact that while the kind of personal libel each engages in does not warrant a fear of censorship or censure, the articulation of an explicitly revolutionary political position (such as we must assume Walker expressed in *To Your Tents, O Israel*) most certainly does, even after the collapse of formal censorship in 1641. David Cressy argues persuasively that the collapse of licensing “released a welter of voices – official, contestant, subaltern, satiric – and an unprecedented surge of information, news, and opinion” (294), and I think we can count Walker and Taylor among these voices. However, their heated and violently personal pamphlet war reveals the complicated nature of the religious and political tensions in the years preceding the English civil war and is indicative of a state censorship machine in turmoil – on the one hand, it allowed a proliferation of controversial pamphlets into print and, on the other hand, it still vigorously pursued and prosecuted writers of seditious material. While Walker and Taylor’s pamphlets initially appear to articulate clear antitheses between papist and puritan, royalist and parliamentarian, they in fact present a more conciliatory and concerned approach to the political situation of the day than appears on the face of the pamphlets. While there is certainly a deep antagonism between the two men and a clear difference in their positions on religious reforms, such divides did not necessarily translate into polarized political voices. Until the very end of their exchange in 1643, both Taylor and Walker adhere to the possibility of a king and parliament able to work in concert, and while their pamphlet exchange certainly reflects the rising tensions of pre-revolutionary English society, it also reveals a potential for reconciliation that, at least until 1643, seemed possible.

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[1]For scholarly treatments of the exchange see McRae (*Literature* 212-16), Capp (144-5, 169), and Cressy (299).

[2] For discussions of Patterson's arguments see especially Kaplan (1997), McElligott (2009), and Robertson (2009), who finds Patterson's 'social contract' model of poet-state interaction particularly problematic.

[3] I would stress that I see this as ambivalence rather than the kind of deliberate 'functional ambiguity' posited by Patterson. I think the exchange reveals Taylor and Walker to be negotiating their subject positions relative to larger process of change and conflict in the 1640s, including formal institutions of censorship, self-fashioning of a particularly public kind, market forces for publication, as well as political and religious changes.

[4] I will not treat libel and slander as functionally different for the purposes of this paper. As M. Lindsay Kaplan points out, after 1660 courts tended to discriminate between slander and libel, with the former understood as spoken defamation and the latter as written defamation; however, previous to 1660 this distinction was not consistently understood and as such the terms were relatively ambiguous in the period in question (12).

[5] The woodcut accompanying the broadside depicts the projector with the head of a swine and the ears of an ass, with hooks instead of fingers, representing his greedy and grasping nature. The Patentee is dressed in a style that would become associated with the very Cavaliers Taylor is usually considered to have supported.

"Self Portrait – Door & Field," C Jacqueline Livingston, 1964

Censored bodies, censored selves. Towards a feminist critique of neoliberal anti-porn legislations

By Ewa Majewska

Abstract In the contemporary societies we see an amazing focus on protecting the children from both: being exposed to sexually explicit material and being used in production of such. This focus is often strengthened by feminist argumentation against pornography. With all the respect to efforts in combating sexual harassment and violence, I would like to propose a feminist critique of contemporary forms of censorship growing in such a "protective" context. I will also provide a wider context for my reading of several cases of censorship of feminist work, where the culture wars worked perfectly in pair with neoliberal economic changes.



Censored bodies, censored selves. Towards a feminist critique of neoliberal anti-porn legislations

Whether it is the fault of conglomerate publishing controlled by accountants

or a failure of inner-directedness on the part of writers, my generation

seems focused upon crowd pleasing and success

to the detriment of being free to tell the truth

Erica Jong, *The Devil at large*, Capra Press 1993, p. 36

The opposition of art and pornography or the aesthetic and the obscene,

is one which has structured much modern cultural discourse.

L. Nead, "Above the pulp-line". *The Cultural Significance of erotic art*"

As Paul Ricoeur used to say, symbols "donnent à penser" (give to think, "feed" the thought). Hans Georg Gadamer continued this thought while elaborating on art as "game," which allows the viewer to involve engage in free play, which he understood as disinterested[1]. Even though this definition of art's duty might sound slightly classist, we can still regard it as a relevant to the exhibition of Jacqueline's Livingston photographs in the Palace of Abbots in Gdansk in 2009. Rethinking intimacy, kinship and

relations, gender, and family from a progressive, feminist perspective seems a refreshing opportunity in Poland, since the ubiquitous Catholic ideology dominates narratives of family and kinship.

There is however another definition of art, which comes from the French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu, who undermined the belief in “disinterested” character of aesthetic experience, so very praised since Kant and later also Gadamer. In his definition, art and aesthetics are both not only socially produced, but also help to reproduce social class divisions by generating elites on the basis of cultural competence[2]. Feminist writers, including Linda Nead and Carol Jacobsen, draw strong conclusions from the fact of social production of art and aesthetic norms – they show, each in a different manner – how art has always been a field of a misogynist exclusion of women, people of color and queers from the mainstream of cultural production[3].

Lynda Nead proposed interesting critical insights concerning the term “obscene”. She sees it as a socially-produced category that enables the exclusion of politically difficult topics when they enter the domain of art. It is extremely useful in reproducing repressive and exclusionary social categories of “otherness”[4]. Calling a feminist or gay artist “obscene” constitutes, in her opinion, a particularly functional way of neglecting the value of her/his art and its themes. As a social and political factor, this exclusion has been particularly helpful in silencing debates over cultural perception and regulation of sexuality, including pornography. Nead writes that

Obscenity appears as a given or intrinsic quality of an object of representation; it is the point at which the sacred powers of art are rendered useless. If art represents here the domain of pure culture, then obscenity symbolizes the profane, where culture disintegrates and the subject is strictly beyond representation”[5].

However, the distinction between “pure art” and “the obscene” is culturally produced, as Nead persuades us. The historicity and function of these categories make them purely political in the sense given to the word by Aristotle and later repeated by Hannah Arendt: they are active, they produce effects, they are not just descriptions, they are deeds or – to use the very famous term from language and then also queer theory – they are performatives, they reproduce social distinctions[6].

To call a work of art “obscene” automatically means to deprive it of its aesthetic value and engage in a procedure of shared abjection. The notion of “obscenity,” applied to the work of Jacqueline Livingston thirty years ago and repeated by some journalists in Poland in 2009, does not allow us to understand or sometimes even approach her work; it condemns it before even allowing us to see it. The pictures exhibited in Gdańsk were family shots, including breast feeding or adults and children, clearly family members, sunbathing. Most journalists[7] remade their vocabularies after seeing the exhibition: they understood the inappropriateness of the rhetoric of ‘obscenity’, and were able to approach her project in a more flexible manner.

The price many feminist and gay artists pay for exhibiting their family pictures has rarely been discussed. One of the most interesting accounts of these stories can be found in the groundbreaking book on contemporary forms of censorship edited by Robert Atkins and Svetlana Mincheva, *Censoring culture*[8]. In this work, we read of the shockingly brutal effects of the “war against kiddy porn”; for example,

On the morning of February, 3 2000, on my way to work, I dropped off a roll of film at the MotoPhoto in Upper Montclair, New Jersey, with a note stating that I would pick up my pictures some time around 3:30 the same day. When I went to pick up my film, the police was waiting for me. They proceeded to question me about the photographs. The images were of my granddaughters, age 3 and 8, naked, frolicking around the bedroom prior to taking a bath”[9](Marian Rubin).

Or:

In 1976, as an assistant professor of photography at Cornell University, I exhibited a few photographs of male nudes, including one of my 6-year old son, Sam, playing with himself.(...)I refused to remove my photographs and argued in their defense: <My photographs were meant to challenge a sexually repressed culture, (...)>. A month later I was told my contract would not be renewed.(...) My son was asked about how he felt about the photographs of him (“Fine, we’re nudist”) and I was asked, “Are you photographing other children nude?” (“No”)[10] (Jacqueline Livingston).

After reading these testimonies (the book also provides stories by Marilyn Zimmerman and Betsy Schneider), I am glad that my mother, who – as an artist, often painted me, also naked (bathing or sun-tanning) or my father, an amateur photographer, who documented my childhood with his camera, never had to go through that kind of investigation -- no MotoPhoto has ever had access to their work. Interestingly, an important aspect of Jacqueline Livingston’s artistic interventions has always been the capacity

to bring into the public sphere the family pictures which most people produce, but never show in public. The private/public division is here questioned in a very special way – only after seeing some of her pictures do we realize we might have plenty of similar ones... which somehow never left our desk.

The scandal surrounding the photographs of Jacqueline Livingston has always been fascinating for me. Her art has always had all the elements of what interested me in feminism – a discussion of gender norms and the public/ private division, a questioning of the existing limits of artistic production, a deep interest in sexuality and its repression/ governance, and a non-traditional approach to family and intimacy. I was more than proud to be invited to give a talk in the session accompanying the exhibition of her photographs of in Gdansk in 2009.

The scandal concerning her work first came to light in 1976, when she exhibited her family pictures at the Cornell University, including the photographs of her son playing with himself, later published in the *Village Voice*. The scandal led to court, with the artist accused of child pornography, becoming one of the most known cases of censorship in the USA. The artist was fired from Cornell University, where she worked as assistant professor, and, although all charges were eventually dropped, her job was never reinstated. This led her to sue the University, ultimately resulting in a settlement; Livingston was however never again allowed to teach at Cornell. She later opened a “One-Artist’s Gallery” in New York, but already in the 1980s, after regular visits by the FBI and difficulties exhibiting anywhere, she decided to change professions.

In *My Story*, written in 1994, Jacqueline Livingston declared: “Wilhelm Reich’s book *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* influenced my thinking about child rearing. According to Reich, being raised in sexual freedom (i.e. masturbation is healthy, premarital sex and sex education are a person’s human right) is the first step in structuring personalities who will not follow authority. Most contemporary sociology books used in college courses today support Reich’s ideas, particularly that masturbation is healthy” [11]. Her example clearly shows that there still are some things, which have been accepted in theory, but which are being punished if discussed/ presented in public. One of them apparently is the sexuality of children and artistic representations of children’s nudity. When these topics are discussed in a scientific context, they do not seem to generate controversy; in the fields of art and media, however, they are not only rarely present, but, when they are, become subject to severe observation, contestation and government intervention. In the USA, Canada, the EU and Japan, new legislative tools have been produced since 2000 to prevent this kind of material from appearing, thus generating new forms of censorship.

Livingston’s exhibition in Poland was followed-up by an act of censorship: an article written on her art and representations of nude children was banned from publication in the most popular art magazine in Poland, *Obieg*, for “promoting child abuse”; the main argument from one of two editors of the magazine was, “I am a father, I know what abuse is”. This phrase, as upsetting as it might sound if taken literally, reminds us of the still astonishing dominance of white heterosexual men in the art scene. As Carol Jacobsen has written, “The focus on overt, after-the-fact acts is actually a conservative brand of censorship based on the ideological assumption that public expression is a “natural” entitlement of the dominant (i.e. white, heterosexist Western male) perspective” [12]. Never mind the clear effort of the author of the article to problematize the strategies of preventing child abuse based on some 10 years of experience as a trainer for students and teachers in topics such as sexual harassment, domestic violence and the rights of women and girls. The editors of “*Obieg*” based their disgust, censorship and labeling of Livingston and the author of the article as supporters of child abuse, only on their “personal feeling,” which, not surprisingly, reflects the more general, conservative attitude of society [13].

I’d rather not have to censor myself and I would prefer that brilliant feminist photographers like Jacqueline Livingston not have to search for alternative careers, as Livingston did after the scandal with her pictures. I would like the children of my colleagues to be able to choose whether they want to cover their bodies or not, which – especially in the case of girls – still remains an impossible choice, since they are thought to need ‘protection’. This liberty seems for me to be an important, yet not so much emphasized, element of the feminist legacy, if we take the feminist artists’ interventions seriously and decide to follow the efforts of reversing and undoing the normative gaze.

Somewhere between the identification we experience with the family pictures made by Livingston and a child’s body captured while involved in a sexual activity there is a line. What actually happens between these two stages? I think we might want to carefully reconstruct the “crime scene” before referring to clichéd labels like “obscenity”. The nakedness of a child’s body might be a surprising element of what we might understand as a “family album”, if we see it exhibited in a gallery. The sexual activity of a child presented in an album becomes more than surprise for many viewers, although the pictures of Livingston’s son have not been exhibited for years now. They have been captured by the label of “abuse”, although courts dropped their charges in the early ‘80s. Why does her work still cause fear, and why it cannot be reproduced or exhibited?

First of all, we should know that nudity has always been an important element of the artist's family life. Not only did she, her partners and children visit nudist beaches and help to create one, they would also remain naked also in their household and suggest their guests do so as well. This information allows us to see the act of nude photographing in this particular family not merely as an exposure of a naked child's body to the invasive gaze, but as a part of a wider project of eliminating the taboo of nudity, in which the whole family had already been involved. Secondly, Livingston had photographed her family since the early '60s. It had not been a scandalous, one-time activity of capturing someone in an unnatural situation; on the contrary, this was how this family behaved daily, and Livingston's photographs did not constitute a scandalous intervention, but rather a long-term documentary practice. Thirdly, she and her family never barred their children from masturbating; photographing her son in this activity did not mean exposing a child to a new, potentially shocking situation.

I would not like to argue that these arguments provide an immediate answer to the question I asked above, but they definitely constitute some background to Jacqueline Livingston's photographic practice and they allow us to rethink some typical arguments in the wake of the labeling of her work as obscene. Most families in Western societies do not allow nudity, and only some of them practice it, usually in very restrained way. Sexuality of children is rarely discussed and masturbation does remain a taboo practice when children are involved, although it was decriminalized and even supported as important element of the sexual lives of adults. As early as in 1959 Theodor Adorno undermined the focus on "pedophilia perversion," which he perceived as a way of omitting the origins of social problems. He clearly saw a paradox in the fact that the existence of a sexual dimension in children's lives was still contested and he criticized the media for scandalizing adults' sexual contact with minors while remaining blind to violence against women and children. Adorno was astonished by the penalization of homosexuality in post-war Germany and he seemed just as critical of the lack of effective work on violence against children and women in families in his society. He observed that "[...] sexual liberation in contemporary society is mere illusion. This illusion arose together with the phenomenon sociology elsewhere describes with its favorite expression, 'integration': the same way in which bourgeois society overcame the proletarian threat by incorporating the proletariat"[14]. Adorno thought that the healthy sex life appeared as a concept in capitalist, post-war societies, masking rather than correcting sexual repression; the sexual taboos revealed by Freud 50 years earlier remained completely untouched. A similar point of view was presented in *Sex Wars* by Lisa Duggan and Nan Hunter.[15]

I would like to suggest that the new legislations concerning child pornography and the general focus on "protection of children" introduced in the USA, Canada, EU and Japan since 2000 can be seen as a very good example of the power of contemporary neoliberal governance. They have all the elements of disciplinary governance as it was described by Foucault: the control of art and new media, especially internet, is particularly strong. 'Protection' is used to control citizens' interests rather, than practices of violence. The topic of child abuse is very powerful, since it can unite various political options otherwise not able to cooperate, and the atmosphere of scandal allows for the imposition increasingly harsh rules while systematic work in the field of violence against children remains unaccomplished. This moralistic pseudo-preoccupation with the "good of our children" does not meet any standards articulated by pedagogues and psychologists as effective in situations of sexual harassment; it only creates an atmosphere of panic, in which it is easy to accuse a feminist artist or a progressive psychiatrist of abuse, although the statistics of violence against children do not seem to decrease.

Judith Levine, author of a book about the problematic "protection of children", makes a direct link between financial neoliberalism and the preoccupation of adults with child sexuality. She openly states that "[t]he social correlate of economic privatization is 'family values'"[16]. She postulates a significant shift of funding to the state's institutions, which should work with violence against children, women's organizations, which are more and more frequently appointed by governments to do it instead of institutions, and the governmental/ institutional involvements in campaigns against pornography. The strategy applied here could be diagnosed as withdrawal of public funds from the systemic work on violence against women and children (which should include education in public schools, work with victims and perpetrators and with the families of both groups). Far less funding is being provided for small projects by nongovernmental organizations which, although often very well-qualified and successful, cannot replace a country-wide system of preventive and protective work. These changes are typical for neoliberal societies, where all public sectors are currently being privatized in a very similar manner. This sometimes includes the intermediary stage of the involvement of the third sector (i.e. in public services), or not (i.e. in the health sector and universities/ education). Censorship of child pornography could therefore be seen as an ideological justification for cutting costs; it can easily be observed that a systemic, centralized system of prevention and protection of children would cost much more than short-term media campaigns and conferences on pornography supported by the introduction of harsh anti-porn laws. A critical interest in the connection between the market liberalization and the conservative cultural turn was expressed by Lisa Duggan in *Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics and the Attack on Democracy*, where she stresses the necessity of reshaping the way the conflict between pro-and anti-democratic forces has been described. Since the only way current economic changes, including the new, non-redistributory 'equality' and 'multiculturalism', are expressed is as purely neoliberal, we might need to rethink the language in which contemporary social contradic-

tions are inscribed. I think it is also important to observe the shifts in funding of various sectors, at least in Europe. Svetlana Mincheva argues that there is something quite surprising in the attention directed at pornography in the media when the rate of children living in poverty in the US is higher than ever[17].

As Amy Adler argues in her article about child pornography laws, although the very existence of these laws generally brings more benefits than costs to the public, we need to carefully examine their impact on cultural production, since their application might restrict various freedoms otherwise granted by the constitution and other laws[18]. While discussing the history of pornography and activities surrounding violence against women and children, it would be good to remember that research on family-based abuse directed at women and children begins farther back in history than thirty years ago. It was the research and interviews with so-called hysterical women that led Josef Breuer and Sigmund Freud to the discovery of the family darkest secrets – the hidden sexual abuse of women in their childhood. Although Freud is usually rightly portrayed as a misogynist chauvinist with a discriminatory perspective on gender and a stereotyped image of women, it was nevertheless he who allowed “hysterical” women, most of whom suffered from what we now call “post-traumatic stress disorder”, to talk about their experiences of sexual violence and harassment in childhood[19]. As we see, the history of the discovery of child-abuse did not start with late second-wave American feminism, as Adler's narrative might suggest, but should be seen as beginning in the 19th century with research on hysteria in early psychoanalysis[20].

Gayle Rubin discussed the case of Jacqueline Livingston in her text about cultural production of sexuality and taboos[21]. Even though she follows the Foucauldian mode of analyzing the production of prohibition rather than critiquing it, she still mentions all the repressive instruments used against Livingston, including the court cases, police raids and pedophilia charges. Like Adorno, Rubin saw the artificiality of scandals around pedophilia, which the media still tended to produce in the '80s (and nowadays, we might add). For her, they were not an effort to protect children, but primarily a prolongation of a repressive discourse on sexuality. Rubin expressed her discontent with the taboo on child sexuality, which in some cases appears more important to protect than the children themselves.

It seems that just as the slogan “pornography is theory, rape is practice” coined in the '70s by anti-porn feminists from Women Against Pornography, including Robin Morgan, Andrea Dworkin and Catherine MacKinnon, supported the anti-pornographic legislations in Indianapolis, Minneapolis, some provinces in Canada and in Australia, another slogan could be produced based on the legal practices of the EU and USA from the '90s and '00s: “graphic representations of children's nudity are theory, and child abuse is a practice.” Interestingly, in the newly-installed anti-child porn legislations regarding graphic representations of children's sexuality produced without the participation of any real child is equated with hard pornography produced by exploiting women and in real presence of female model. Just as Karl Marx once observed in 18 Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, history repeats itself, once as a tragedy, once as a farce[22]. The case of Jacqueline Livingstone allows us to see both parts of this repetition – her work was first punished on the basis of the general anti-porn turn; subsequently, an even more ridiculous censorship took place in contemporary society's control over images, where concern for children's nudity coincides with the liberalization of the economy, leading to financial cuts in welfare and education.

The current EU anti-pornographic programs and legislations often refer to the feminist concern about the abuse of children. I would like to propose some emphatic observations about this kind of use of preventive arguments against violence. From my long experience as a trainer for equality in education in schools, providing workshops for both teachers and pupils, I need to stress the importance of getting to the roots of the problem of violence against children instead of just curing its symptoms. Although, as Freud used to say, symptoms never lie, we need to examine the whole social context of sexual violence, not only its facade. During workshops about sexual harassment in schools in Poland, many teachers still declare that a piercing in the navel of a teenage girl can be the cause of rape or other forms of violence. This fetishisation of children's sexuality is far from either explanatory or preventive; rather, it serves only to control girls' self-expression.[23] Silence surrounding cases of sexual violence, the lack of knowledge and support of children are much more important obstacles to their safety than is a piercing in a teenager's body or graphic representations of children's nudity.

The proposition of anti-porn legislation presented by the government of Poland in April 2009 and accepted in September with some emendations is a result of the EU anti-pornographic regulations. Finland introduced a similar law a couple of years ago, unfortunately without supplementary measures protecting artistic or scientific work. There is already one victim of this harsh legislation – on the May 21, 2008, the artist Ulla Karttunen was sentenced after some months on trial for producing graphics with hard child pornography without the participation of any living models. The ironic side of the Finnish story is that the artist is active against the objectification of women and children in pornography and her work was meant to warn society about the violence experienced by children forced to participate in the illegal child porn industry. The court decided to refrain from punishing the artist, but still found her guilty, which she declared to be a verdict she feared the most and found most difficult to deal with[24].

The presentation of Livingston's work in Gdansk was in my opinion a brilliant idea, since it is in this city that many of the 200 Polish cases of censorship happened after the political change in 1989[25], including the case of Dorota Nieznska's "Passion", whose trial still continues, although it started in 2002. Her work was aimed at the ideals of male muscular bodies, which make real men consecrate their time, efforts, and often even their health, to invest in the "perfectly muscled" body. The artist spent some 6 months researching and interviewing men going to body-building clubs, and in the end she produced a documentary video and a graphic depicting male organs in the shape of equal-sides cross. The work was immediately taken to court on the basis of the frequently-cited section 196 of the Polish penal code, which protects the "religious feelings" of any citizen from offense. Some of the "offended" declared in court that they had never seen the piece; nevertheless, the artist was banned from leaving the country, the gallery was closed soon after the beginning of her trial, and, although the last verdict from June 4, 2009, declared her innocent, there has since been an appeal, which led to the final judgment in March, 2010: the artist was declared innocent and acquitted of all charges, therefore the process will not be continued[26].

The current Polish debates on family only rarely surmount a conservative, catholic vision, sometimes disguised in a neoliberal costume. The photographs of Livingston therefore tell us something particularly inspiring – that there are alternative modes of representing, but also, of understanding and living family life. And that they might not be ideal; some ironic pictures showing the models' anger or boredom were also on display at Livingston's exhibit. Still, perhaps they let us think about relationships in a less objectifying way...



From the perspective of the long history of the scandal around Livingston's photographs we can see the correctness of a statement on censorship by Svetlana Mintcheva in *Censoring Culture*: "The ultimate dream of censorship is to do away with the censor." [27] It is not repression anymore, it's protection. The famous observations of Foucault about the pastoral power, the interest contemporary authorities have in protecting rather than punishing human beings is clearly at work here. We could add to that the examples of feminist artists I quoted in this article, which demonstrate that there is still much repressive power. Nevertheless, the message is clear: *il faut défendre la société*. [28]

Self Portrait with Sam & Richard, C. Jacqueline Livingston, 1969

[1] See: H. G. Gadamer, *Die Aktualität des Schönen : Kunst als Spiel, Symbol und Fest*, Stuttgart : Reclam, 1995.

[2] See: P. Bourdieu, *La Distinction*, Paris, 1979.

[3] See: C. Jacobsen, *Redefining Censorship. A Feminist View*, in: *Art Journal*, 50(4)/91, pp. 42-55 and L. Nead, "Above the pulp-line". *The Cultural Significance of erotic art*", in: Pamela Church Gibson, Roma Gibson (ed) *Dirty Looks. Women, Pornography, Power*, BFI Publishing, 1993.

[4] See L. Nead, *The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity, and Sexuality*, New York, 1992.

[5] See: L. Nead, "Above the pulp-line". *The Cultural Significance of erotic art*", in: Pamela Church Gibson, Roma Gibson (ed) *Dirty Looks. Women, Pornography, Power*, BFI Publishing, 1993.

- [6] For more on performative aspects of language, see: J.L. Austin, *How to do things with words*, Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard University Press, 1975; J. Butler, *Excitable speech : a politics of the performative*, New York : Routledge, 1997.
- [7] After the Gdansk exhibition I was interviewed by three of them.
- [8] See: R. Atkins i S. Mintcheva (red) *Censoring Culture. Contemporary Threats to Free Expression*, The New Press, 2006.
- [9] *Idem*, p. 213.
- [10] *Idem*, p. 217-218.
- [11] J. Livingston, "My Story", available on-line: <http://magazine.14850.com/9403/censorship.html>
- [12] C. Jacobsen, *Redefining Censorship*, op. cit. , p. 42.
- [13] The story of the Obieg article is described here: http://www.indeks73.pl/pl_aktualnosci_20_731.php and the text which was finally published by the feminist section of the Obieg magazine was initially challenged by the editors. It is available here: <http://obieg.pl/artmix/14370>
- [14] See: T. W. Adorno, "Sexual Taboo and Law Today," in: *idem*, *Critical Models. Interventions and Catchworks*, transl. H. W. Pickford, CUP, NY, p. 72.
- [15] See: L. Duggan, N. Hunter, *Sex Wars*, Rutledge 1998, p. 99.
- [16] See: J. Levine, *Harmful to minors The Perils of Protecting Children from Sex.*, University of Minnesota Press, 2002, Introduction.
- [17] See: S. Mintcheva, *Protection or politics? The use and abuse of children*, in: R. Atkins i S. Mintcheva (red) *Censoring Culture*, op.cit, p. 167-168.
- [18] See A. Adler, *Child Pornography law and the proliferation of the sexualized child* in R. Atkins, S. Mincheva (eds) *Censoring Culture*, The New Press, New York and London, 2006.
- [19] See: J. Breuer, S. Freud, *Studies on Hysteria*, Penguin Classics, 2004.
- [20] For feminist discussions on Freud see for example: H. Cixous, C. Clément, *La jeune née*, Paris, Union générale d'éditions, 1975, J. Gallop, *The Daughter's Seduction. Feminism and Psychoanalysis*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1982; J. Lewis Herman, *Trauma and recovery* New York : BasicBooks, c1997.
- [21] See: G. Rubin, *Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality*, in Carole Vance, ed., *Pleasure and Danger*, Routledge & Kegan, Paul, 1984.
- [22] The original quote is a bit longer, see: K. Marx, *18 Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, available on-line at: <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1852/18th-brumaire/index.htm> .
- [23] See my article on the topic: E. Majewska, *Kolczyk w pępku nastolatki, czyli o fetyszyzacji seksualności dziecięcej na użytek cenzorskiego prawodawcy*. available on-line: http://www.indeks73.pl/pl_web_journal_50_145.php
- [24] See a description of events by the „Helsingin Sangomat” - available on-line”: <http://www.hs.fi/english/article/Artist+convicted+of+child+pornography+plans+appeal/1135236554989>
- [25] A comprehensive documentation of most of these cases of censorship is available at the website of Indeks73, the anti-censorship in Poland; see: http://www.indeks73.pl/en_index.php
- [26] Some more details of this case are available in the article of Izabela Kowalczyk, *Struggle on Freedom* available on-line: http://www.indeks73.pl/en_analizy_81_405.php
- [27] See: S. Mintcheva, *The Censor Within*, in: R. Atkins i S. Mintcheva (red) *Censoring Culture. Contemporary Threats to Free Expression*, The New Press, 2006, p. 299
- [28] M. Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended. Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76*. Translates by David Macey, Picador, 2003.

Reframing the Theatrical Event: Václav Havel's *The Beggar's Opera*

By Aynsley Moorhouse

In Communist Czechoslovakia, on 1 November 1975, Václav Havel's adaptation of *The Beggar's Opera* was performed by amateur actors for an audience of three-hundred invited guests in a Prague suburb. When examining the framing of this event in sociological terms, we need to examine the effects of surveillance, because it so deeply affected every part of the event, and of participants' lives in general. By examining Clifford Geertz's interpretation of 'deep play' in "Notes on the Balinese Cockfight" in relation to Havel's writings on the effects of surveillance in communist Czechoslovakia, the framing of the event can be interpreted as changing from that of a theatrical event to one of "deep play" in which the event is deeply rooted in the socio-political context. These ideas will be explored by defining framing, and by detailing how social framing changes as an effect of surveillance. This new form of framing will be applied to the event of the production of *The Beggar's Opera* to demonstrate how it is akin to Geertz's interpretation of "deep play."

Framing

Framing is a tool developed by sociologist Erving Goffman to compartmentalize human social behavior in different settings and situations. In *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*, he states, "I assume that definitions of a situation are built up in accordance with principles of organization which govern events – at least social ones – and our subjective involvement in them; frame is the word I use to refer to such of these basic elements as I am able to identify" (Goffman, 155). The "principles of organization" are behaviors that people acquire over time and which are learned in a variety of ways (Balme). In examining Goffman's theories about framing, Christopher Balme states that "theatre-going is defined by a series of complex behaviours that regulate the way spectators behave to each other and to the performance on stage," but he stresses that the frames are not static – "socially functional behaviour requires also that we change frames as the situation demands" (37). Each theatrical event is framed differently, and the events come with their own set of rules. Furthermore, framing changes depending on the socio-political and socio-cultural contexts.

In communist Czechoslovakia, and particularly during the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia beginning in 1968, social framing was shaped by surveillance. This was a totalitarian society, and the awareness of surveillance became a part of relationships and events, thus adding a new level of awareness to social interactions. A physical model for this type of society is Jeremy Bentham's model for a prison, the Panopticon. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault states that this model is a "mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form" (205). He explains that "each individual, in his place, is securely confined to a cell from which he is seen from the front by the supervisor; but the side walls prevent him from coming into contact with his companions. He is seen, but he does not see; he is the object of information, never a subject of communication" (200). This creates a lateral division that avoids mass uprisings by removing any possibility of community; it causes complete isolation. Further, by never knowing when he is being watched, a prisoner will always act as though he is under surveillance. According to Foucault, "The Panopticon is a machine for dissociating the see/being seen dyad: in the peripheric ring, one is totally seen, without ever seeing; in the central tower, one sees everything without ever being seen" (204). Much like in a theatre, there is a separation between the acts of watching and of being watched, which dictates a certain type of behavior.

What are the principles of organization, then, which governed social events in Czechoslovakia at the time of the production? To reiterate, this was a totalitarian society that was, in Foucault's interpretation of such a society, based on the concepts of surveillance, separation, and submission. This greatly affected the framing of social interaction. Those whose opinions differed from the governments' could not trust anyone, because there was the possibility of being watched at every level of interaction. The dissociation between the "see/being seen dyad" meant that much of social interaction was presentational. To take an example from Havel's 1978 essay, "The Power of the Powerless," a greengrocer who did not put a sign in his store window that read, "Workers of the World Unite!" (41) risked his livelihood and freedom. He therefore did it, and, if he did not agree with the slogan, felt great shame from submitting to his fear. According to Havel, the only way to live a relatively peaceful existence was to submit to "moral decay," resulting from lying and wearing two faces, and more deeply, from the resulting loss of dignity (41). This, though extracted from a highly polemical piece of writing, comes from a man who was one of the most vocal anti-government voices of the time, and therefore gives us a sense of how those who were against the government would have felt. These are the people who

would have been most affected by the surveillance, and are also the people who were in attendance at the event we are examining.

In a totalitarian society, behaving inappropriately can come at a great cost to one's freedom and livelihood. In Czechoslovakia at this time, any actions taken to subvert the effects of government surveillance and censorship had to be done with the utmost caution, and were therefore greatly affected by surveillance. Havel's initial publication of *The Beggar's Opera* was in 1972, through his own samizdat publishing company (Winton, 140). As a result of censorship, writers developed this form of self-publishing, which involved handwriting or typing manuscripts and distributing copies to friends. Those people would in turn make more copies of the manuscript, distribute them, and so on. This activity was risky, and could have resulted in imprisonment. Havel would have had to have been very careful when publishing this play, and would have had to act inconspicuously. Paradoxically, in attempting to subvert surveillance and censorship, the publication of this play was greatly affected by it.

As we move closer to the actual performance, the events leading up to it were also framed by surveillance. In 1974, Havel showed the play to Andrej Krob, who at the time was the Technical Director at the Theatre on the Balustrade in Prague. Krob decided to direct the piece, and for the next 18 months, he and about twenty friends rehearsed the play with only one of the actors quitting for fear of repercussions (Steiner, xvii). None of the participants were actors, and Krob had never directed before. As a result of the strict censorship on culture, many artists such as Havel were out of work because of their political backgrounds and their refusal to compromise their art. In the 1960s there had been 590 members of the Czech Writer's Union, but by 1970, 475 of them had been removed, and 130 had been blacklisted (Rocamora, 109). Those still working as artists had to be very careful to not compromise their positions by engaging in activities that went against the rules on culture, or that could in any way be seen as anti-government. Most likely, there were no working actors or directors left in 1975 that would have agreed to participate in this very dangerous event. Havel was a blacklisted writer who was very vocal about his anti-government opinions, many of the guests who were invited to the event were known dissidents, and the play itself, though not overtly about the contemporary political situation, had a clear polemical message. In a different political climate, this play would have been performed and produced by a very different group of people and under very different circumstances.

The troupe rehearsed in various locations around Prague rather than staying in one place so as to not be noticed by the secret police. In April 1975, seven months before the event, Havel came to a reading of the play. He offered advice and encouragement, and had some interesting words to say about the actors' amateurism. In a letter to Krob following the reading, he wrote, "Nobody does it like amateurs do. Which means that they don't imitate theatrical mannerisms. Everyone is simply himself/herself, without desperate attempts at making theatre with a capital T" (Rocamora, 130). The comment that each actor was simply him- or herself implies two things. First, Havel is speaking about their acting style. However, given the socio-political conditions, the phrase speaks to the freedom these people might have felt to be "themselves," or truthful, without having to hide their beliefs. Some of this freedom no doubt resulted from speaking someone else's words under the guise of a character. Though it was not entirely risk-free, the participants had entered a social framework in which they were out of the panoptic eye of the secret police.

Theatrical Framing

In their studies on theatre audiences, Susan Bennett and Gay McAuley seek to define the different frames that are at play during any theatrical event. Bennett defines two frames that contain a spectator's experience. "The outer frame is concerned with theatre as a cultural construct through the idea of the theatrical event, the selection of material for production and the audience's definitions and expectations of a performance. The inner frame contains the event itself and, in particular, the spectator's experience of a fictional stage world" (Bennett, cited in McAuley, 270). In the context of *The Beggar's Opera*, this distinction between the two frames is too simplistic because the through-line of surveillance blurs the distinction between the outer and inner frames. Surveillance had strongly affected social framing since the Soviet invasion 1968, and this framing would not end until 1989. It must be noted that even this distinction is too clear-cut, considering Czechoslovakia's history of occupation by other countries, and considering that it had been a communist country since 1948. Surveillance and censorship were not new to the people, and it cannot be said that these effects began in 1968. Furthermore, it is too simplistic to say that the surveillance ended in 1989, as Havel's government certainly participated in its own forms of surveillance and censorship, just as any capitalist government does. Clearly, it is impossible to clearly define the outside frame of the event. An examination of the events more closely surrounding the day of the performance should highlight this blurred distinction further, on a smaller scale. Prior to the actual date, officials had been notified about the performance, but were told that an amateur troupe was producing a translation of Brecht's version of the play. Since both Brecht's and John Gay's versions had often been produced in Prague since the 1930s, apparently no questions were asked (Simmons, 114). The only two conditions were that there could be no advertising or admission fee (Steiner, "Introduction" xvii). In spite of the ban on advertisement, Michael Simmons states that "everyone in Prague seemed to know about it except, astonishingly, the security services" (114). There must have been a mixture of fear and excitement surrounding this event.

Those who were going would have feared that the secret police would catch on to Havel's participation, and that the event would not take place. The fact that so many people knew about the event must have increased their unease and would have affected their interactions with others. In effect, their participation in the inner theatrical event would have begun as soon as they made the choice to participate.

As mentioned earlier, three hundred people came to this event. However, it was held in a pub in Horní Počernice, a remote Prague suburb. In his introduction to the English translation of *The Beggar's Opera*, Peter Steiner writes that the neighborhood was filled with cars driving in circles, because nobody could find the venue, but nobody would ask for directions. Doing so could have notified the authorities to the important event that was taking place, and might have put all those involved in danger (xvii). Again, these people were a part of the inner theatrical framing in their own perception because of their fear of drawing attention to themselves, but also in the eyes of the authorities. Had they been questioned, they would have been implicated in the event. The fear continued throughout the performance. As was well known, very little could get past the omnipotent gaze of the state police, and everyone there, spectators, playwright, and actors alike became the focus of attention. One cast member stated, "We were so happy and at the same time we were so scared" (Rocamora, 132). At any moment the place could have been shut down and everyone arrested, or the participants could have been traced by the registration numbers on their cars, without the authorities even entering the building (Simmons, 114).

The events following the performance are also inseparable from the actual event. A few days after the event, Krob was called in for interrogations, and despite the lack of secondary texts, publicity, or reviews, the state police were able to identify many of the participants. Some lost their jobs or were thrown out of their unions, and some had their passports or driver's licenses revoked. Krob himself lost his position at the Theatre on the Balustrade, and became a window insulator for the next 13 years. Further, as often happened at this time, family members of those at the production and people who were simply suspected of participation suffered consequences equal to those of the people who were actually there (Rocamora, 134). In order to be affected by the event, one did not have to be on the premises, so this extended the event in time and space. The event was blamed for further censorship of culture, and productions all over Czechoslovakia were cancelled as a result (Rocamora, 135). The causes and far-reaching ramifications associated with this performance are astonishing, and it is unclear if they can be separated from the "actual" event. In effect, surveillance blurred the boundaries between the outer and inner theatrical framing.

McAuley is dissatisfied with Bennett's definition of the inner frame, finding it problematic to combine "the event itself" and the "experience of a fictional world" into the same frame. Further, she does not believe that this inner frame "accounts... for the multiplicity of perspective that is fundamental to the theatre" (270). McAuley separates the theatrical event into three more frames, or what she calls "levels of awareness". These are "the social reality, the presentational and the fictional" (271). These "awarenesses" interact at all times, and any one of them can come to the forefront of a performance at any given time for any number of reasons (271). The social reality is the relationship between the spectator and the rest of the audience; the presentational is that between the audience and the performers; the fictional is that which is happening onstage. She uses the term "awarenesses" rather than "frames" to account for the fluidity and dynamism of the relationships (McAuley). As with the blurring of the inner and outer frames, when placed in the context of a totalitarian society, these awarenesses are complicated and blurred by surveillance, and the stakes are raised.

If we set McAuley's analysis of the inner frame in the actual pub once the house opened, surveillance becomes a fourth level of awareness that interacts with the other three. This concept is highlighted by an event that occurred just as the show was about to begin. A man dressed in black came onto the stage, and "[w]ordlessly... took out a cigarette, lit it, and blew puffs of smoke while he coldly surveyed the audience row by row, as if taking account of who was there. The spectators became uneasy, sensing this was not part of the play itself" (Rocamora, 132). The man was Andrej Krob, so there was no increased danger, but it was an acknowledgement of the stakes involved with participating in the event. It was a reminder of surveillance, a reminder that the secret police might be in the audience, and a reminder of the likely consequences for everyone in that room (Rocamora, 132). This reversed the acts of seeing and being seen, by taking the focus off of the stage and onto the audience members. This reminder of surveillance interacted with the social awareness by reminding the audience members that there could have been a secret agent present, and reinstated their lack of trust in each other; it affected the presentational awareness by reversing the relationship between actor and spectator. It also distorted the relationship between fiction and reality, because many audience members were unsure of whether or not it was a part of the show.

Reframing

If we compare Havel's interpretation of the occurrences in Czechoslovakia at the time with Clifford Geertz's interpretation of "deep play" in "Notes on the Balinese Cockfight," we can see great similarities in these societies and the framing of the events.

According to Havel, life under surveillance and the lying, distrust and double-crossing that occurs as a result, leads to a society marked by “moral decay.” As he states in his “Letter to Dr. Gustáv Husák”:

It needs little imagination to see that such a situation can only lead towards the gradual erosion of all moral standards, the breakdown of all criteria of decency, and the widespread destruction of confidence in the meaning of any such values as truth, adherence to principles, sincerity, altruism, dignity and honour. Life must needs sink to a biological, vegetable level amidst a demoralization ‘in depth’, stemming from the loss of hope and the loss of the belief that life has a meaning. (15)

This interpretation of life in Czechoslovakia at the time gives us insight into the views of the central person involved in this event. Keeping the subjectivity in mind, it would seem that the participants in the event were attempting to subvert the effects of surveillance and reinstate meaning in their lives. However, in so doing they were engaging in great risk. In this regard, the theatrical event resembles Geertz’s interpretation of “deep play.” To use another of his concepts, Jeremy Bentham defines “deep play” as occurring when risk of net loss vastly outweighs any possibility of net gain (Geertz, 433). In Geertz’s words, “In genuine deep play, this is the case for both parties. They are both in over their heads. Having come together in search of pleasure they have entered into a relationship which will bring the participants, considered collectively, net pain rather than net pleasure” (Geertz, 433). Geertz applies this concept to the Balinese cockfights, which we will now examine in order to draw a connection to *The Beggar’s Opera*.

Cockfighting in Bali is illegal, but most Balinese men participate in the events nonetheless. It is an integral part of their society. Men place wagers on the cocks and the greater the amount of money involved, the “deeper” the experience. In this materialistic society, when the bets are high, “much more is at stake than material gain: namely, esteem, honour, dignity, respect – in a word, though in Bali a profoundly freighted word, status” (Geertz, 433). When a man’s cock dies in a fight he suffers a great financial blow and by extension, a great blow to his status. The net loss seems to greatly outweigh the net gain. The question then becomes why one would ever engage in deep play. Bentham posits that doing so is irrational, and should be banned by law (Bentham, cited in Geertz, 433). However, it is the very risk involved in engaging in this activity that brings meaning to the lives of the Balinese (Geertz). According to Geertz, in this society, status is of the utmost importance, and the association of money to status applies meaning to the risk: “The imposition of meaning in life is the major end and primary condition of human existence, that access of significance more than compensates for the economic costs involved” (Geertz, 434).

During *The Beggar’s Opera*, the participants were certainly engaging in an activity in which it would appear that the net loss would outweigh any possibility of net gain. In the Balinese cockfights, “it is because money does, in this hardly unmaterialistic society, matter very much that the more of it one risks, the more of a lot of other things, such as one’s pride, one’s poise, one’s dispassion, one’s masculinity, one also risks” (Geertz, 434). There was no possibility of monetary gain for the Czechoslovaks because, as stated earlier, one of the stipulations of doing *The Beggar’s Opera* was that there could be no admission fee (Steiner, xvii). These people were gambling with their freedom of mobility, their livelihoods, and the futures of their children; essentially they were gambling with their freedom. Havel writes that “people have a very acute appreciation of the price they have paid for outward peace and quiet: the permanent humiliation of their human dignity” (Havel, “Letter” 31). By living duplicitous lives and by succumbing to the coercion of the government, each person was, according to Havel, suffering from the utmost humiliation. The risks associated with the event were enormous, but they engaged in this risky behaviour in an attempt to regain their dignity. Perhaps, as in “deep play,” it is because of the risks involved that the event held as much meaning as it did for the participants.

The relationship between the Balinese and the action in the cock ring greatly resembles that between the participants at *The Beggar’s Opera* and the fiction on the stage; or, to use McAuley’s term, the relationships between the presentational and fictional awarenesses. The Balinese reject all things animalistic, and in their daily lives avoid actions that are related to those of animals. For example, babies are not allowed to crawl, because of the association with four legged animals (Geertz, 420). They avoid all conflict, are shy and passive, and “rarely face what they can turn away from; rarely resist what they can evade” (446). In the cock ring, however, the men are able to vicariously experience their animalistic and violent instincts through their cocks. “The slaughter in the cock ring is not a depiction of how things literally are among men, but, what is almost worse, of how from a particular angle, they imaginatively are” (446). Through the fighting in the ring, they can participate in the instinctive actions that they are forced to suppress in their daily lives. The actual fight within the ring symbolizes life not as it really is for the Balinese, but how it would be without their social and cultural constraints.

What the audience members saw at *The Beggar’s Opera* was a dramatization of what they were living but were not able to acknowledge. In the play, all of the characters are victims and perpetrators of lying and surveillance. The levels of deceit (in which almost all the characters act as double or triple agents) are so intricate and convoluted that it becomes impossible for the audience

(or for the characters) to decipher who is working for whom, or who is watching whom (Steiner). At the end of the play, Lockit, the crooked chief of police who has blackmailed criminals to act as secret agents for him, is revealed to be a criminal working for some unknown organization. He has taken over the entire underworld and the entire police force, so that the whole of London is controlled by his criminal organization. Lockit says to his wife, "Well, Mary, from this moment on our organization has practically the entire underworld of London under its control... Gaining control of the London Police Force was a piece of cake by comparison" (Havel, 84). He now has a panoptic eye on the whole functioning of the city. Everybody is being watched, but nobody knows by whom. Peter Steiner states that, "It is not simply that an additional layer of pretending has been added that shocks us but the recognition that in the universe of discourse depicted by Havel there is no ultimate cap on the levels that deception generates" (198). This leaves open the question of whether or not Lockit's organization is in fact being watched by some other organization, and is a depiction of a society corrupt beyond comprehension. Considering that the audience was full of political dissidents, by exposing the complex layers of lies and deceit of the characters Havel exposed a prominent part of the lives of the spectators. As with the Balinese, the audience members could witness and respond openly to what they usually had to suppress.

According to Geertz's interpretation, the cockfight is not simply a game, but represents Balinese society as a whole (Geertz). The structure of the event is based on the status structure of the Balinese society, and the rules are based around allegiances within the community. Geertz states that, "enacted and re-enacted, so far without end, the cockfight enables the Balinese, as, read and reread, Macbeth enables us, to see a dimension of his own subjectivity" (450). He goes on to say that this fact turns the cockfights into "positive agents in the creation and maintenance [of the Balinese] sensibility" (Geertz, 450). Likewise, *The Beggar's Opera* was not simply theatre. With reference to the event, Andrej Krob, who as stated above was one of the main participants, stated that he "replaced the word 'theatre' with 'life'" (Rocamora, 144). It was proof that there was still vibrant life in the society, but also was an example of, as Rocamora puts it, "[a] theatrical event [transcending] the theatre" (143) and coming to represent much more. As Havel states, "The main instrument of society's self-knowledge is its culture: culture as a specific field of human activity, influencing the general state of mind... and at the same time continually subject to its influence... It is culture that enables a society to enlarge its liberty and to discover truth" ("Power", 16). Just as the cockfights teach the Balinese about his society and allow him to "see a dimension of his own subjectivity," this cultural event enabled the participants to see their own lives and to gain self-knowledge that had been suppressed.

As a result of surveillance, social framing in Czechoslovakia during the communist era was very complex. This surveillance raised the stakes of the theatrical event of *The Beggar's Opera*, made the distinctions between the inner and outer theatrical event unclear, and added another level of awareness to the inner theatrical event. If we compare Clifford Geertz's interpretation of the Balinese Cockfights to Havel's interpretation of life and culture in Czechoslovakia at the time of the event, the high stakes involved and the cultural importance of the event resembles the "deep play" of the Balinese cockfights. This may provide us with a possibility of reframing this event, and perhaps other similar theatrical and cultural events in totalitarian societies. The result had negative effects which were much more far-reaching than those involved could have imagined. And yet, by all accounts, the participants did not regret their involvement (Rocamora). As Havel himself states in his "Letter to Gustáv Husák," written in the same year that *The Beggar's Opera* was performed, "life may be subjected to a prolonged and thorough process of violation, enfeeblement and anesthesia. Yet, in the end, it cannot be permanently halted. Albeit quietly, covertly and slowly, it nevertheless goes on" (Havel, 27). Although there may be few initial positive effects of events such as this one, it is through culture, and perhaps through "deep play" within culture, that a much-needed voice is provided to oppressed communities.

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The Noise of Silence: Censorship in Anna Akhmatova's Requiem

By Richard Lee Pierre

This essay is about censorship, of course. Yet as with all writing that attempts to address a complex issue, it is really about something else as well. Perhaps this is the case with any writing that attempts to mobilize a conceptual binary: censorship is opposed to the free act of expression, as silence is to speaking, as forgetting is to remembering. Or is it, after all? The friction that results from putting seemingly divided binaries into action can be productive. For instance, the force of potentiality that arises in the energetic field between remembering and forgetting emerges also at the point of poetic construction; the process of literary construction mirrors the processes of memory:

Literature is a technique of oblivion. Censorship is a technique of remembrance. Is this really true? Isn't literature a means of recollection and censorship the oppression of memory? [...] There is no memory without oblivion, no literature without what we may call censorship. (Hohnsträter, 299)

In other words, some material is “remembered” and factored into the formation of a poetic utterance, while other material is “forgotten” and left out, not built into the end result.

It is in the act of censorship—in the political or ideological sense of the word—that memory and forgetting enter into the creating of a public, common voice of a collective. To take an example: many theorists of nationalism have emphasized the role that narrative construction plays in nation-formation and in the endurance of the national idea. The hearkening back to a “golden age” that occurs in so many national narratives, for instance, can be considered a form of organized remembering through the construction of a myth-narrative. However, forgetting is, for better or worse, also an indelible process in the inscription of national narratives. In considering the case of his birth nation, the exiled Czech novelist and essayist Milan Kundera (who is now a naturalized citizen of France) identifies precisely this process:

If someone had told me as a boy: One day you will see your nation vanish from the world, I would have considered it nonsense, something I couldn't possibly imagine. A man knows he is mortal, but he takes it for granted that his nation possesses a kind of eternal life. [...] Forgetting is also the great problem of politics. When a big power wants to deprive a small country of its national consciousness it uses the method of organized forgetting. (235)

Drawing upon his own circumstances, Kundera situates his notion of organized forgetting within a politics of hegemony. Yet I would like to analyze the role of organized forgetting within a broader consideration of national consciousness, taking a cue from Lewis Hyde, who wrote that “both memory and forgetting are dedicated to the preservation of ideals,” and from Salman Rushdie, who reminds us that “memory is a censor, too” (Hyde, vi; Rushdie, 37). Censorship, broadly conceived, is a form of organized forgetting: one power acts to suppress the production (be it literary or otherwise) of another from the standpoint of a variety of possible motives—all of which, however, are involved with the silencing or limiting of certain discourses in favor of a domineering one.¹ Those disruptive discourses do not disappear but are suppressed or repressed in an attempt to act as if they do not exist, to keep the national body at large unaware of them—in a word, to forget them. Viewed in this light, we may state that the act of organized forgetting or censorship is a device to limit the set of possible voices in a national discourse or to differentiate them from outlying, undesirable, or marginal voices.²

Perhaps unfortunately for the censor, poetry doesn't seem to give up so easily. The poet I consider in the following, Anna Akhmatova (1889-1966), is notable for her resistance to censorship but also because her works echo a form of national sentiment, which makes the fact of their censorship all the more remarkable. Akhmatova, whose long life endured many years of self- and state-imposed censorship, ultimately held to her vision of a native Russia and its memorial in her poetry.

Closely reading the works of Akhmatova, it becomes clear that her poetry corresponds to a current of nationalism that is both more fundamental and more elevated than the official party line in the Soviet Union. While Akhmatova's case speaks to the issue of censorship as forgetting, it also bears witness to poetic remembrance, through the device of the “catalog” which is utilized

in her works. The poetic “catalog” of voices comprising a reflection of the nation (the gathering of voices in a polyphonic poetic collective), is made despite (or in spite of) the attempted silencing of state censorship.³

Akhmatova’s relationship to her homeland is clear in the fact that she refused emigration and exile after the repressive turn in beginning of the Soviet years, even though she was aware it meant struggle and sacrifice for her own poetic output. In an intensely personal poem written at the time of the Revolutions of 1917, she expressed her dedication to her conception of her nation. “I heard a voice,” it begins: “it called consolingly. / It said: come hither, / abandon your desolate and sinful land, / abandon Russia forever.”⁴ The voice promises “with a new name I’ll cover / the sores of loss and grief.”⁵ The poem responds to this beckoning with a defiant and determined act: “But indifferently and calm / I covered my ears with my hands, / so that this unworthy speech / would not defile my mournful soul,” a line that rings quite prophetic, given the circumstances surrounding her later writing.⁶

Akhmatova’s works often display a similarly strong sense of national character; nevertheless, her work faced a variety of forms of censorship, a more or less unavoidable condition of being a writer in the Soviet Union: “over a thousand writers lost their lives in the worst phase of the Stalinist terror for reasons of senseless accusations, others were oppressed, arrested, or lived in constant fear.”⁷ The reasons for individual cases of censorship during the Soviet period were varied: opposition to state powers, unacceptable religious or ethnic views, artistic works being classified as degenerate, and many other factors. Furthermore, the situation was complicated in that “the censors’ criteria changed according to the Party line or were in the Stalinist period dependent on personal preferences of the dictator.”⁸ Thus even those writers belonging to officially sanctioned collectives worked under the pressure to maintain their position—though the visibility of that pressure might have varied, given the time and place.

In addition, censorship in the Soviet Union existed at a number of levels, reached into any sector of society, was in no way exclusive to artistic production, and was coordinated simultaneously at these multiple levels at any given time. Arlen Blyum describes five points which comprised the scope of the “System of Total Control” of Soviet censorship (14-25). In addition to the editorial censorships coordinated on the part of media outlets, and those coordinated on the ideological level or by the Soviet state secret police (including GLAVLIT, the Main Administration for the Protection of State Secrets in the Press under the USSR Council of Ministers), Blyum examines the concept of self-censorship in Soviet times, the process of the “internal editor,” a “defensive mechanism, precluding conflict with external censors” (14).⁹

The censorship of Akhmatova’s work was at some points self-imposed (as in the suppression for many years of her long poem *Requiem*), though she faced external pressures, as well, which limited the amount of her work which could be published. Her work was also tampered with: “from 1925 on a fifteen-year long printing ban was imposed upon her. A volume of selected works, which would have been issued in 1926 by a private publisher, was radically mutilated by censors [...]. And the circulation of the edition was restricted by GLAVLIT to such an extent, that the edition was ultimately impossible.”¹⁰ Though Akhmatova had achieved success in the pre- and early post-Revolutionary years, publishing six volumes of verse, it is believed that the growing emergence of religious themes in her work played a part in the censorship imposed upon her work. Even after she was partially rehabilitated into the Soviet literary establishment (a new volume of her work appeared in 1940), “two volumes of selected works prepared for printing in 1946 were withdrawn, because Akhmatova’s work was condemned as ‘imbibed with the spirit of pessimism’ and ‘corrupting of the upbringing of our [the Soviet State’s] youth and insufferable among Soviet literature’” for its “bourgeois-aristocratic credo of ‘art for art’s sake’” (Burkhart, 185; Ermolaev, 99).¹¹ These two volumes, the “production and dissemination” of which were halted by Order No. 42/1629c of the Administration for the Protection of Military and State Secrets in the Press under the USSR Council of Ministers (a renaming of GLAVLIT), had projected circulations of 10,000 and 100,000, respectively.¹² While these particular volumes were only in production at the time of the ordering document, the possibility of censoring works already printed and disseminated was clear. The same document which ordered the halting of Akhmatova’s works also ordered the withdrawal from bookstores and public libraries of three volumes by Mikhail Zoshchenko already printed in 1946. In a presentation given in August 1946, Stalin remarked that the journals of the Soviet Union were charged with the task of “raising the youth” and with “raising a new vigorous generation,” as he asked with obvious skepticism: “Could Anna Akhmatova really raise such people?”¹³ Tellingly, Stalin dismisses Zoshchenko along with Akhmatova in this very same presentation.

Yet during this period, Akhmatova’s masterworks *Requiem* and *Poem without a Hero* were composed—though not published. Facing threats directed towards herself and her son, she composed works in the early 1950s which exhibited some sympathy toward the Soviet State, including some hymns to Stalin in 1952 (Burkhart, 186). Thus, Akhmatova (and to some extent, Boris Pasternak, who also was effectively silenced for years and also turned to translation work) faced a different fate than those writers put to death (Osip Mandelstam, Nikolai Kluyev, Isaac Babel, Akhmatova’s husband Nikolai Gumilyov, and others), driven to suicide (Vladimir Mayakovsky, Marina Tsvetaeva, and others), imprisoned (Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and others), exiled (Yevgenii Zamiatin, Marina Tsvetaeva, and others), or otherwise censored—yet a firm attempt was made to silence much of the voice she intended to contribute to her nation through her work. Realizing that officially sanctioned publication was unlikely at best, Akh-

matova and a few of her closest friends (namely, Nadezhda Mandelstam, wife of the poet Osip Mandelstam) committed verses of the poem to memory in order to preserve the work. The act of internalizing works through memorization—on the personal level as practiced by Akhmatova, Mandelstam, and others, and on a larger level as an aspect of Russian and Soviet life—is evidence of a particular limit to the arms of censorship in Soviet times.

Akhmatova's long poem *Requiem* is both a very personal expression of agony during these later years (her own son spent time in one of the GuLAG camps), and a very public cry of support. The poem, which covers the themes of fear and loss during this time, was not published until after her death. Though Akhmatova and others were aware that the poem could not be published in Russia during her lifetime due to its content, and that it could not even be written down until years after the events it describes took place, she was determined to make a record of the struggles endured personally and by "her Russia." By tracing Akhmatova's poetry during this period, one finds that she remained dedicated to her idea of Russia despite the harsh reality of her political climate by vowing to reveal an authentic voice in her poetry, even if for many years it could only remain dormant in her memory and not written down.

The opening of *Requiem* recounts Akhmatova's own vow to describe the circumstances, and thus to give voice to the collective memory that faced suppression. In the epigraph she writes "No, not under foreign skies / Or the protection another's wings / I was then with my people, / there, where my people, alas, were."¹⁴ It is significant that Akhmatova uses the Russian word *narod* ("people") here, rather than "nation" or "country," because it emphasizes a kind of self-evident or natural collective unity of people based on an identity that is prior to state identity, even as it simultaneously brings to mind the idea of *narodnost'* ("national character"), which was emphasized as a quality and necessity of official art. In the "Prologue" which follows, Akhmatova extends this identity: "It was a time, when only the dead / could smile, glad in their tranquility," a time when the Soviet "stars of death" "hanged over us, / and the innocent Rus' writhed / under bloody boots."¹⁵ Akhmatova chooses the old word *Rus'* rather than "Russia" or "Soviet Union," which again suggests an allegiance to a more natural collective identity which suffers under the illegitimate threat of a totalitarian state power. The poem continues in a variety of voices and timbres which trace Akhmatova's own worries about her imprisoned son, but which also give voice to the collective, as is stated in the poem's "Epilogue": "not for myself alone to I pray, / but for them all."¹⁶ Reflecting a dedication to the collective remembrance cataloged in *Requiem*, the poem closes with lines insisting that a memorial to Akhmatova could only be made in the prison line itself, the site where she stood with so many others.¹⁷ As one critic has put it, though *Requiem* was spurred by Akhmatova's own personal circumstances, the poem-cycle is in effect an elegy for Russia, an expression of the nation's universal significance of loss (Bailey, "An Elegy for Russia").

I will close my reading of Akhmatova's work by returning to the idea of self-censorship. In his book *Giving Offense*, which examines the problem of censorship from many angles, J.M. Coetzee argues that "censorship looks forward to the day when writers will censor themselves and the censor himself can retire" (10). We can imagine this to mean in a very cynical manner that a total indoctrination of a nationalist idea within a body politic would mean no need for censors, because every expression would be an expression of the nationalist ideal. Yet there is another possibility. Akhmatova's self-censorship was a temporary decision motivated not by a desire to be aligned with the state power (though certainly by a desire to be tolerated by it), but by a vow to remember the common collective with which she endured trying experiences. *Requiem* remains a catalog of that collective, and its experience. The story of the poem's survival, as if only by miracle, before finally being published, speaks not to the endurance of organized forgetting, but rather to collective remembering.

Censorship in the Soviet Union operated with a number of specific features as a mechanism in a society of total control. The censorship of Akhmatova's work, which occurred for reasons of political and religious climate, can be understood as the attempt to work as a device of forgetting or the eradication of a voice from the chorus comprising those officially approved by the state. Even when it was published, Akhmatova's work was affected by broader critical perceptions. As one of the few female poets held in equal esteem to male counterparts of the time, issues of gender were foregrounded in the critical reception of Akhmatova's work. She was labeled a poetess, a conduit of the maternal drive related to the myth of the "mother Russia." The Soviet critical machine often emphasized this aspect of her poetry as her definitive role in the modern literary canon; even today, it is her early love poems which continue to be the most assimilated, anthologized, and read, which in some ways overlooks the great deal of her poetry which does not fit comfortably with this gender alignment (such as *Requiem*, or her poems on religious themes), and overlooks the way in which Akhmatova's work relates to other poets who are not so neatly fit into a received idea of femininity, such as Marina Tsvetaeva.¹⁸ As her work stands to be critically received in our time, it provides both a challenge to this mythologized concept of the "poetess," as well as a poetic cataloging of voices which were suppressed via censorship during a period of Soviet history.

In closing, I return to the premise of my paper and to its title: censorship is in the works of Anna Akhmatova. It is not merely reducible to an external mechanism of enforced silence, of organized forgetting. The echo of censorship, of the force of forgetting and silence, sounds in Akhmatova's work as one voice among the many to be remembered.

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1 "Censorship is an authoritarian attempt to control textual communication. Censorship presupposes certain circumstances, a certain media-context: the more alternative sources of information there are, the less effective censorship is. Censorship only makes sense in a closed society. [...] In a closed society literature may replace public discourse" (Hohnsträter, 300).

2 Rushdie considers how nuanced censorship can be, given the particulars of a nation's population: "In India the authorities control the media that matter—radio and television—and allow some leeway to the press, comforted by their knowledge of the country's low literacy level" ("Censorship," 38).

3 I am taking the term "catalog" from Allen Ginsberg, who uses it to describe the similar attempt made in his poem *Howl*. See: *Howl on Trial* (32).

4 "Мне голос был. Он звал утешно, / Он говорил: "Иди сюда, / Оставь свой край, глухой и грешный, / Оставь Россию навсегда" (68).

5 "Я новым именем покрою / Боль поражений и обид" (68).

6 "Но равнодушно и спокойно / Руками я замкнула слух, / Чтоб этой речью недостойной / Не осквернился скорбный дух" (68).

7 "Über tausend Schriftsteller verloren in der schlimmsten Phase des stalinistischen Terrors auf Grund sinnloser Beschuldigung ihr Leben, andere wurden unterdrückt, verhaftet oder lebten in ständiger Angst" (Burkhart, 178). All translations in this article are my own, unless otherwise noted.

- 8 “Die Kriterien der Zensur wandelten sich entsprechend der Parteilinie oder waren in der Stalinzeit von persönlichen Vorlieben des Diktators abhängig” (Burkhart, 176).
- 9 “Внутренняя цензура—это своего рода защитный механизм, предотвращающий от столкновений с цензурой внешней” (14).
- 10 “Und von 1925 an wird auf Grund eines geheimen Parteierlasses ein über 15 Jahre dauerndes Druckverbot über sie verhängt. Ein Auswahlausgabe, die 1926 bei einem Privatverlag erscheinen sollte, wird von der Zensur radikal verstümmelt [...]. Und die Ausgabe wird in der Auflagenhöhe von Glavlit derart beschränkt, daß die Edition schließlich unmöglich ist” (Burkhart, 185).
- 11 “Zwei 1946 bereits gedruckte Auswahlbände wurden eingestampft, weil Achmatovas Werk als 'vom Geist des Pessimismus durchtränkt' sowie 'der Erziehung unserer Jugend schädlich und in der sowjetischen Literatur unduldbar' verurteilt worden war” (Burkhart, 185).
- 12 Document reprinted in: *Istoriia sovetskoi politicheskoi tsenzury. Dokumenty i kommentarii*. Moscow: Rosspen, 1997 (508).
- 13 “Наши журналы есть журналы народа [...]. У нас интересы одни—воспитывать молодежь, отвечать на ее запросы, воспитывать новое поколение бодрым, верящим в свое дело, не боящимся препятствий, готовым преодолеть любые препятствия. Разве Анна Ахматова таких людей может воспитывать, или тот балаганный рассказчик Зощенко? Какого черта с ними церемонятся!” “Vystuplenie tovarishcha Stalina na zasedanii ORGBIURO TSK VKP(B) 9 Avgusta 1946 goda po voprosu o zhurnalakh 'Zvezda' i 'Lenin-grad'.” *Bol'shaia tsenzura. Pisateli i zhurnalisty v strane sovetov 1917-1956*. Ed. L.V. Maksimenkov. Moscow: Materik, 2005 (574).
- 1 4 “Нет, и не под чуждым небосводом, / И не под защитой чуждых крыл, — / Я была тогда с моим народом, / Там, где мой народ, к несчастью, был” (159).
- 1 5 “Это было, когда улыбался / Только мертвый, спокойствию рад [...] Звезды смерти стояли над нами, / И безвинная корчилась Русь / Под кровавыми сапогами” (160).
- 1 6 “Я молюсь не о себе одной, / А обо всех” (163).
- 1 7 At the end of 2006, Akhmatova's will was fulfilled, and a memorial to her (along with other memorials other writers, and to the population at large) placed at Kresty Prison in St. Petersburg. See: <<http://www.rg.ru/2006/12/19/ahmatova.html>>. Retrieved April, 2009.
- 1 8 See: Kelly (207-209, 215-219, 222-23).

Ideological Censorship of the Marriage Plot in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*

By Sergey Toymentsev

In my paper I will examine the theme of missed opportunities in Jane Austen's novel *Mansfield Park* by reformulating it as that of the opportunities necessarily dismissed, repressed, or squeezed out by the ideological imperative of the novel's plot. For this, I will extensively consider the historical and ideological context of Austen's work, upon which the regulatory pattern of her marriage plot is thoroughly predicated.

Ideologically, *Mansfield Park* manifests itself as the conservative project of the country house novel purported to improve the decaying state of aristocratic family in the late 18th-early 19th century called the Regency Crisis (see Sales). Not only does *Mansfield Park* historically capture the transitory moment of aristocratic England, it also promotes the fortification of the domestic ideology as a programmatic cure of it, an ideology which is to solidify and preserve family and home values with the emphasis on the paternal authority and thereby reanimate the traditional (national, patriotic) tendencies of (middle-class) aristocracy. Before we look at how this ideological improvement of the English estate is accomplished throughout the novel's plot, let us first consider what is exactly wrong with *Mansfield Park*.

The Regency crisis of *Mansfield Park* is primarily represented through the irresponsible and cheerfully selfish behavior of Sir Thomas' son, Tom, who is supposed to be in charge of the family and the estate while his father is away in the West Indies. He spends most of his time at fashionable watering places gambling, drinking, and accruing debts. When he is at *Mansfield*, he proves to be a master only in the arrangement of pleasurable activities, such as an impromptu ball or theatrical, not business matters. It is quite noteworthy that Tom is a rather marginal character in terms of his self-representation in much of the novel; he does not participate in the chief ideological dynamic of the narrative organized around Fanny and Edmund as the agents of domesticity on the one side and the Crawfords as their antagonists (anti-domestic metropolitans) on the other. He consistently abstains from his regent's responsibilities yet he is too weak as a person to sustain his social transgressions in the form of a clearly defined (ideological) standpoint. His case represents the rank of aristocracy at its decline, on the verge of extinction. The entropic tendency of Tom's hedonistic lifestyle is exemplified through the fact that he is about to die in his compulsive pursuit of self-gratification. Furthermore, although physically recovered and morally improved, Tom does not participate in the happy-ending of the novel ideologically marked by marriage as the promise of domestic stability in future; that is, it is unclear whether Tom as the heir to *Mansfield* will produce an heir himself and thereby continue the Bertram line (such suspicions are reinforced by the fact that throughout the novel there are no women among Tom's "intimate friends," but men exclusively). The marginalized and uncertain status of Tom as character is ultimately the result of the regulatory work of the narrative that foregrounds the problematic of inheritance and pointedly suggests that not only might he not be a patrilineal successor, but his "connections" as well are quite suspect. It is precisely Tom who initiates the subversion of *Mansfield Park* by inviting his latest "intimate friend" John Yates into the house and allowing him to use *Mansfield* as the stage for the theatrical (while the Crawfords are later recommended by Yates to take part in it). It is also Tom who proposes *Lover's Vows* as the play for the theatrical, the Rousseau content of which rapidly escalates the destabilization of *Mansfield Park* (although he prefers to take minor parts in the play).

Therefore, Tom's personality, with his explicit preference of the interests of outsiders over those of the family, symbolizes the internal threat to the estate, a threat to blur the boundaries within *Mansfield Park* between the inside and the outside, the private and the public, relative and stranger, order and disorder, security and danger, depth and surface, the natural and the artificial, the masculine and the feminine (the list of such oppositions can of course be extended). And it is precisely the regulatory stabilization of the clear-cut divide between these dichotomies that becomes the chief objective of the *Mansfield Park* project, where the character of Fanny as the exemplar of "steadiness and regularity of conduct" (MP, 243), "the perfect model of a woman" (MP, 344), "the one for whom habit [has] most power, and novelty least" (MP, 349) serves as the primary ideological device in the novel's work of the reconstitution of the value system in this historical moment of transition.

Given that Fanny is promoted as the agent of the resurrection of paternal authority, it is worthwhile to look at the representation of Sir Thomas Bertram that exemplifies the ideal of fatherhood in transition. As most commentators observe, Austen's characterization of Sir Thomas (as well as that of Fanny) was undertaken under the influence of Thomas Gisborne's writings, namely *An Enquiry into the Duties of Men* (as well as *An Inquiry into the Duties of the Female Sex*). At the beginning, Sir Thomas does not fit the standard of ideal fatherhood outlined by Gisborne, but as the novel's plot progresses, it registers his successive improvement

culminating in his ultimate admission of his faults (“grievous mismanagement”) in the last chapter. Thus, one of the primary features of Gisborne’s ideal father is to be affectionate to his children: “A parent ought constantly to aim at gaining the affectionate confidence of his children; and should lead them to regard him not as a father merely, but likewise as a friend. He must avail himself, that he may govern them properly, of the joint principles of love and fear” (480). Sir Thomas is emotionally unavailable to his children; he is strict, reserved, severe, and even sublime in his awesome gravity. Despite the fact that it is his original intention to adopt Fanny into the Mansfield house, he nonetheless fails to be welcoming to the heroine upon her first arrival (MP, 49). Even when he attempts to exert his fatherly authority through friendly considerateness, he fails to do so: his advice manifests itself as the ultimate order that aims at gaining “persuadableness” (MP, 286) rather than “affectionate confidence” from Fanny.

According to Gisborne, the father’s attitude towards the marriages of daughters consists in not “constraining their choice in marriage”; the father should not impose his own decision on them but “may certainly be justified in requiring a longer pause and delay from them, when he deems the proposed connection unfavorable to their welfare” (491). Sir Thomas is aware that Maria is indifferent to stupid Rushworth and advises that her happiness should not be sacrificed for the economic advantage; yet he is “happy to secure a marriage which would bring him such an addition of respectability and influence” (MP, 215). The same holds for Sir Thomas’s attitude towards the Crawfords’ proposal to Fanny. Despite her quite determined decline, he is at pains to clarify the advantages of the “proposed connection” (MP, 316) Sir Thomas’s advice discloses its absolute power in his decision to exile her to Portsmouth.

Sir Thomas’s failure of far too authoritative and unaffectionate pedagogy results in his inability to properly maintain his domestic government. Not only is he often physically absent in the West Indies, Mansfield Park is marked by the absence of respect and recognition of the paternal authority on the part of the eldest son, whose debts prevent Sir Thomas from retaining the Mansfield life for Edmund. Despite his attempt to make Tom realize the harm that his lifestyle makes to the estate, Tom finds a number of excuses to ignore his advice. Overall, it is not affection that governs Sir Thomas’s attitude toward his children but rather his anxiety: “he was not outwardly affectionate”, “although he was a truly anxious father” (MP, 55), he saw his daughters “becoming in person, manner, and accomplishment every thing that could satisfy his anxiety” (MP, 56, emphasis added). His anxiety is not only about his children’s future but also his patriarchal power in general, which is effectively undermined by the worsened economic condition of the estate affected by the Napoleonic Wars (as well as economic difficulties in the West Indies). As Joseph Litvak observes, although for his own theatrically subversive purposes, Mansfield Park is “certainly one of the most anxious novels written. Anxiety may be the condition of all narratives, but here it seems especially acute” (334). It is precisely the programmatic task of Austen’s conservative project to promote Mansfield as the site of “a hope of the domestic happiness” (453), despite its underlying anxiety and forces from outside, by the fictional restoration of the paternal authority, a restoration that could only be facilitated by foregrounding such an ideological construction as Fanny. For it is to Fanny that Sir Thomas must be obliged for his transformation from the emotionally distant patriarch into the affectionate domestic father, a figure that is structurally necessary to secure his dominant position within domestic as well as social historical context. It appears that it is not the marriage of Fanny and Edmund – which may be considered as the most asexually affectionate marriage ever, since it can be probabilistically calculated in advance thanks to Fanny’s having Edmund as the only intimate companion at hand in her isolated living at Mansfield (and the narrator “purposely” abstains from elaborating how exactly “it was quite natural that it should be so [for] Edmund [to] cease to care about Miss Crawford and [become] as anxious to marry Fanny, as Fanny herself could desire” (MP, 454, emphasis added) – that makes the resolution of the novel “happy,” although, of course, it is a necessary constituent of the novel’s plot. Rather, it is the re-activation of the paternal authority of Sir Thomas, who finally realizes the proper duties of the “ideal father” thanks to the incorporation of Fanny into the Mansfield family as its absolutely legitimate member.

Thus, once all the undesirable characters are expelled from Mansfield Park (and from Mansfield Park’s plot as well) and desirable comfort is finally achieved (“Here was comfort indeed!” (MP, 447)), Sir Thomas gradually comes to understand what has been missing in his plan of education for his children:

Something must have been wanting within [...] He feared that principle, active principle, had been wanting, that they had never been properly taught to govern their inclinations and tempers, by that sense of duty which can alone suffice. They had been instructed theoretically in their religion, but never required to bring it into daily practice. To be distinguished for elegance and accomplishments – the authorized object of their youth – could have had no useful influence that way, no moral effect on the mind. He had meant them to be good, but his cares had been directed to the understanding and manners, not the disposition; and of the necessity of self-denial humility, he feared they had never heard from any lips that could profit them.

[...] Wretchedly did he feel that, that with all the cost and care of an anxious and expansive education, he had brought up his daughters without understanding their first duties, or his being acquainted with their characters and temper (MP, 448; emphasis in original)

In this passage on the proper task of moral education, Sir Thomas identifies its active principle as the installation of the sense of duty that would in turn govern daughters' inclinations and disposition. Furthermore, that active principle requires self-denial and humility; that is, for the educated, activity comes from without (from the educator), while passivity comes from within. This practice is to be exercised daily, not theoretically but, as we should infer, bodily. The result of such an insemination of duty is the disposition, which is a subjection of the denied/humiliated self to the internalized moral agency from without facilitated by affection, or affectionate infection, namely love (given that tempers and inclinations are involved in the process). The father must love his children if he wants to install that desirable sense of duty into their minds and thereby retain his paternal authority. The "moral effect on the mind" is therefore the selfless selfhood practiced bodily and daily with the ultimate devotion to the educator.

Throughout the novel Sir Thomas does not have a chance to practice this educational strategy on his children except on Fanny, who is a surrogate daughter adopted through the benevolent act of patronage. As Clara Tuite observes, "the adoption of the poor niece is a function of the master's charity which throughout the eighteenth century changed from being a patriarchal duty to an individual action, as the aristocratic familial structure changed from patriarchy, which retained ties of kindred, to patriliney, a structure that reduces kin to the line of descent" (Tuite, 104). That is, the adoption of Fanny is to be viewed as the relatively widespread kinship practice of the period that served for the domestic purposes of aristocratic family. Her "Cinderella-like" career is therefore the novel's ideological plot of female upward mobility: she is adopted from the periphery to the center of aristocratic family in order to improve its moral ambience and facilitate the reconstruction of the paternal regime at Mansfield. Hence, the successful scenario of female upward mobility is predicated upon a number of her familial, social, and psychological characteristics: she must be a cousin to the son of the adopting family (which marks the transition of the marriage market from exogamy to endogamy); she must be of lower social status (which asserts interclass relationship at the expense of same-class one); and, finally, she must be selfless for the purpose of the insemination of the sense of duty to which aristocratic generation of the period turned out to be immune. As Tony Tanner describes Fanny's portrait, "Fanny is weak and sickly ... timid, silent, unassertive, shrinking and excessively vulnerable ... almost totally passive ... [She is] a girl who triumphs doing nothing. She sits, she waits, she endures ... [Her promotion] into unexpectedly high social position ... seems to be a reward not so much for her vitality, as for extraordinary immobility ... She is never, ever, wrong" (8). The list of such characteristics of the ultimate absence of life, or energy, can be extended: she does not light a fire in her room, she often suffers from headaches, she can't walk too long because of her fatigue, etc. To be nothing and to do nothing is Fanny's price for being always right, for being the "perfect model of woman" that cannot be born but produced by the patriarchal machinery (gone awry) for the sake of domestic happiness. Clara Tuite describes Fanny as the "channel or vessel; she does not inherit, she is consumed and drawn in and chewed up by the line in order to correct and restore the smooth operations of patrilineal inheritance" (Tuite, 153). Completely emptied of herself, she is charged with the historical mission to transmit the ideological message of domestic felicity. In other words, she is not a Cinderella but rather a scapegoat supposed to pay debts for the crisis of aristocratic family. It is precisely because of her fidelity to the conservative project of the salvation of home and estate (as well as nation and empire, as Edward Said would argue) that she cannot marry Henry (whose anti-domesticity is exemplified through his flamboyant promiscuity). This fidelity is mistaken by Sir Thomas for the unexpected irruption of individualism. As he exclaims,

I had thought you peculiarly free from willfulness of temper, self-conceit, and every tendency to that independence, which prevails so much in modern days, even in young women ... But you have now shewn me that you can be willful and perverse, that you can will and decide for yourself, without any consideration or deference for those who have surely some right to guide you – without even asking their advice. You have shewn yourself very, very different from anything that I had imagined ... You do not owe me the duty of a child. (318-319)

What Fanny shows Sir Thomas is exactly what Sir Thomas ought to imagine provided he is more consistent in his pursuing the project of the preservation of aristocratic family via domesticity, where he himself is to be converted into an affectionate father from an anxious one. In this scene, Fanny is more than ever right, to paraphrase Tony Tanner; quite on the contrary, it would be ultimately "perverse," according to the ideological framework of the plot, if Fanny married Henry, for she cultivates her sense of duty (domestic super-ego) through the daily practice of incorporating it on the bodily/unconscious level. She does not know what she is doing because she is not supposed to know, since she is a hollow utensil for the transmission of the systematically installed values.

Given that the marriage of Fanny and Henry is absolutely improbable according the programmatic plot of the novel (which involves, to repeat, the insemination and preservation of duty rather than its dissemination), the ironic narrator playfully teases the reader with such an impossible possibility: "Would he have persevered, and uprightly, Fanny must have been his reward – and a reward very voluntarily bestowed ... " (MP, 451). That Henry doesn't fit the straightjacket of the novel's happy-ending is evident enough, yet the narrator grants him a "missed opportunity" of domestication (which he does not really need), which might be called a wish-fulfilling fantasy of conservative ideology. Had this novel been written at the time of John Fowles' *The French Lieutenant's Woman*,

tenant's Woman or Tom Tykwer's Lola Rennt, it might have had two or even three endings (not necessarily happy), for the ideological constraints have become looser and at times invisible nowadays. But at Austen's time, the power/knowledge apparatus would not permit such a narrative frivolity, namely the alternative alliance of Henry as "bad domestic example" (MP, 451) and Fanny as the exemplar of domesticity, precisely because to avoid such an alliance is the foremost task of the novel's plot. In order to maintain her consistency, the narrator squeezes it out into the domain of "missed opportunities," that is, the domain of "losers" who do not fit the required ideological profile. And yet, it is Fanny who is a loser due to her blind subjection to the daily practice of self-denial, while the Crawfords, who continue to fascinate the reader with their demonic vitality, would hardly complain about the "missed opportunity" of domestication generously granted by the omniscient narrator.

What would have happened if the marriage of Henry and Fanny had really taken place? To answer such a question we would need to consider Austen's notions of the probable and the improbable. As Clara Tuite observes, Mansfield Park's proximity to the genre of fairy-tale, such as Cinderella or the like, where the interclass contact is didactically represented as mutually improving, increases "its realist burden of the probable. This burden dictates arguing for the naturalness of what seems unnatural (surrogacy) and the probability of what seems improbable – in this case the education of the poor into the ways of the rich, and the marriage of the poor into the class of the rich... Realism as practiced by Austen involved eradicating the unnatural and the improbable, but also naturalizing what seemed unnatural. The realism of the genre of domestic realism in this sense offered great opportunities for the presentation of the natural as corrected nature" (110, Tuite's emphasis). That is to say, the narrative technique of naturalization (i.e. converting the unnatural/the improbable into the natural/the probable and vice versa) is considered to be one of the major literary achievements of Austen. Yet, Tuite takes for granted the fact that the direction of un/naturalization is overly dictated by the dominant ideological regime. It is, of course, a commonplace in Austen criticism that her work is predicated on a Burkean conservative ideology, according to which the deviance of individual social class (metropolitan dandyism) is satirized and corrected by general social class (middle class aristocracy). But the satire and correction of the ideologically dominant class (such as Fanny in Mansfield Park or Mr. Knightley in Emma) does not imply the adequate representation of its antagonist. Quite on the contrary, the protagonist's satiric representation and correction of the antagonist proceeds from the effective failure to do so adequately, which is due to the unsurpassable epistemological gap between antagonistic sides. Neither Fanny nor Knightley can comprehend the Crawfords and Frank Churchill respectively, and while failing to comprehend them, they critique them for their epistemological inaccessibility and thereby manifestly disclose their ideological complicity. Both the Crawfords and Frank and Jane escape the narrative capture, producing contrasting readings (e.g. conservative and radical). The narrator is notoriously not helpful here either. As D. A. Miller demonstrates, there is an abundance of irony, ambiguity, and fascination about Mary Crawford in the novel, but what is really needed is the "knowledge of her real character" (183). That is to say, notwithstanding Austen's virtuous mastery in ambiguity, her most fascinating characters prove to be enigmatic, or opaque, and utterly hard to pin down, since they are either cut off by the ideologically (probabilistically) committed narrator as the undesirable causes of social discomfort, or their representation proceeds under the sponsorship of other characters. Even in their self-representation they prove themselves ungraspable, for they are always changeable, unpredictable, impulsive, and deliberately theatrical.

To overcome such a problem of opaque representation of the novel's antagonists effected by the ideological censorship of the marriage plot, I would propose to shift the focus from the level of representation/interpretation to that of the functional/pragmatic analysis of force interaction (which generally refers to the writings of Nietzsche, Foucault, and Deleuze). In so doing, what is at stake becomes not the ideological standpoint to which a certain character adheres, nor how a certain character manifests him/herself in life, but rather how life manifests itself through a character. In this respect, the more life expresses itself through a character, the more s/he is dynamic, strategic, mobile, mutable, ungraspable, imperceptible, and essentially subversive.

Had the miraculous possibility of the marriage of Henry as aristocratic flâneur and Fanny as lower middle class loner at Mansfield been introjected into the probabilistic order of Mansfield Park's plot, it would have exploded the entire ideological construction of the novel. And yet, if within Mansfield Park's narrative frame such matrimonial confusion appears to be virtually impossible, within the unframed "reality", or "life" as the field of forces, subjected to chance (rather than political program), expression (rather than repression), self-affirmation (rather than self-denial), contamination (rather than purification), openness (rather than closure), ex/en-dogamic promiscuity (rather than endogamic fidelity), it would seem quite "natural," if not inevitable. For Fanny, the epitome of vacuity and stillness, Henry serves as a complimentary missing part of vitality and mobility. In a life rescued from ideological imprisonment, such a perfect opportunity for the inter-circulation of energy between them would be impossible to prevent. But the novel's narrator polices each and every deviation from the prescribed ideological scenario; even if a deviation is allowed, it is so only for the purpose of its correction and the reinforcement of control. At times it appears that the narrator suggests that a little more pressure of life, or perseverance (conatus) would suffice to break through the wall of preservation ("Would he have persevered... (MP, 451)), but in the novel the final push towards a vitalistic openness is always chopped off by the narra-

tive closure. Consider, for instance, the ending of Volume 1 where Fanny is about to cross over the threshold of the ideological frame while being finally convinced to participate in the rehearsal.

Fanny could not say she did not – and they all persevered - as Edmund repeated his wish and with a look of even fond dependence on her good nature, she must yield. She would do her best. Every body was satisfied – and she was left to the tremors of a most palpitating heart ... They did begin – and being too much engaged in their own noise, to be struck by unusual noise in the other part of the house, had proceeded some way, when the door of the room was thrown open, and Julia appearing at it, with a face all aghast, exclaimed, “My father is come! He is the in the hall at this moment” (MP, 191; emphasis in original)

This passage exemplifies the climactic clash of the opposite forces of the novel’s narrative, that of repression/negation and of subversion/affirmation. The narrative demonstrates the effective force of collective perseverance on the one hand and the inability of proceeding further on the other: the movement of life is arrested via the installation of the figure of the father. And yet, even if the theater is pulled down, a revolution of forces prevented, and the paternal authority reinstalled, forces of life, pleasure, enjoyment, and expression are not evacuated from Mansfield (for their pulsation animates the slow progression of the plot itself, which is supposed to repress them); rather, they spread out in myriad forms of insurrection vigilantly kept in check until being utterly cut off by the marriage closure that celebrates the stasis of domestic comfort.

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Literary Thresholds, “Community Values” and the Abolition of Blasphemy Law within the United Kingdom: The Love that Dares to Speak its Name

By Laura Webb

‘Of course I knew this would dismay and shock some people- but had I not myself been deeply offended, dismayed and shocked by their disgusting version of the Crucifixion?’[1]

Here James Kirkup defends ‘The Love that Dares to Speak its Name’, which indicates alleged homosexual activities within the life of Jesus Christ and describes a sexual encounter between his crucified body and a Roman Centurion. The poem, published in the ‘upmarket fortnightly paper’ (Sutherland 1982: 148) the *Gay News* in June 1976, became the last item to be banned under Britain’s blasphemy laws, which had existed since the seventeenth century, developed out of the law against heresy (Webster 1990: 22), before they were abolished on the 8th July 2008. The 1977 trial was brought for ‘blasphemous libel’, against the editor of the *Gay News*, Denis Lemon, and his publication (Sutherland 1982:151)[2]. Consequently, the poem was censored within the United Kingdom and its publisher fined £500, his publication £1000 (Sutherland 1982: 154).

However the trial, brought by Mary Whitehouse, invoking a law last used in 1921 (Sutherland 1982: 149), served conversely to bring the blasphemy laws into ‘active disrepute’ (Webster 1990: 20). A Committee against Blasphemy Law was founded (Webster 1990: 20), individual copies of the poem were disseminated by post, and several publications including the *Socialist Challenge* and the *Anarchist Worker* reprinted the poem subsequent to the trial as a protest. Additionally, a ‘Free Speech Movement’ was rapidly formed, which held over one hundred signatories who agreed to co-publish the poem after the trial (Sutherland 1982: 149). Together, these were examples of what Jürgen Habermas has termed ‘public opinion’, which involves ‘the tasks of criticism and control which a public body of citizens informally - and, in periodic elections, formally as well - practices vis-a-vis the ruling structure organized in the form of a state’. (Habermas 1964: 49). Given this exertion of ‘criticism’ and ‘control’, and the boundary position in the history of blasphemy these actions came to mark, it is possible to view this final banned work and the protests it sparked as marking a threshold, occupying a lynchpin position between a society willing to tolerate the blasphemous and one who decides that it no longer provides valid ground for censorship. The notion of a threshold, or boundary, is crucial to an understanding of the rules which govern the texts we censor. It is possible to view literature as operating as a constantly shifting border, a series of standpoints from which at all times it is possible to either assemble, or withdraw. Seamus Heaney has described poetry as ‘...more of a threshold than a path, one constantly approached and constantly departed from, at which reader and writer undergo in their different ways the experience of being at the same time summoned and released’ (Heaney 2002: 190). The factors implicit in this boundary-marking are spatially and temporally dependent. DH Lawrence determined the temporal as a negotiating factor

Man is a changeable beast, and words change their meanings with him, and things are not what they seemed, and what’s what becomes what is not, and if we think we know where we are it’s only because we are so rapidly being translated to somewhere else. (Lawrence 1955: 196)

Over time then, not the texts themselves- which largely remain stable-, but our perception of them, shifts, often as we move towards increasingly liberal or conservative societies. This explains why different countries have vastly distinct regulations regarding the blasphemous in the same historical epoch. Each given “community” or jurisdiction sets its own rules, not necessarily by majority, but according to the beliefs of those in power, and by those whom Lawrence termed ‘the mob’ (Lawrence 1955: 196). Matthew Kieran has stressed the spatial and geographical-cultural variation factor in items deemed obscene, ‘explained by the socio-cultural variance in what is internalized as morally prohibited’ (Kieran 2002: 53). These geographical and cultural boundaries have been problematized by the invention of the internet. In Kirkup’s case, subsequent to the invention of the internet at the end of the 1980’s, the poem was available online, although publishing the poem in this way nonetheless technically constituted a violation of the law. This was a consequence of the new problem of nationally censoring texts which had become available internationally via virtual means. Some web-pages which made available Kirkup’s poem stated alongside it that they were hosted on non-UK servers, and as such, although accessible within Britain, fell outside the remits of British law (Gamaliel 2002). As Herumin explains, ‘the global nature of the internet raises complex questions for many governments’ (Herumin 2004: 17-18). It is impossible to overstate the capacity of the internet to transport material across communities and community boundaries.

Britain's 2008 abolition of the blasphemy laws can be viewed as a sign of a British twentieth-century fragmentation of identity of which the internet is a symbol, as well as a contributing factor. The decline in Christianity and patriotism - and simultaneous rise of more individual-centred activities such as the internet, which provide us with a more precise personal expression - have served as causes of an increasingly polyolithic culture. The contemporary waning popularity of the linked concepts of nationhood and religion (Webster 1990: 23-24) has warranted during the last one hundred years a decreased plausibility for blasphemy laws which, as described in a 1922 pamphlet by Chapman Cohen entitled *Blasphemy- A Plea for Religious Equality*:

...belong to a period... when it was the duty of the State to enforce and openly coerce opinion. They are also part of the general belief that the right discharge of the duties of citizenship depends in some more or less obscure way on the holding of right religious beliefs... Unbelief, heresy and blasphemy partake of the nature of treason, the heretic is one who is a threat to the welfare of the tribe or nation, and, in the interests of the whole group, he must be suppressed. (Cohen in Webster 1990: 21)

Such debate became possible in Britain around the time of the Protestant Reformation, when the organised Church split. As Webster has explained, as opposed to the previously heavy external authority of the established Church, Protestants, and especially, slightly later, the Puritans, now took Christianity into their own hands, reconsidering what had previously been accepted as plain fact, and in their more precise interpretation of the Bible demonstrating an internalisation of their belief, which cleared space for both an alternative interpretation of key Christian texts, and the manner in which Christianity ought to operate (Webster 1990: 28)[3]. Webster has gone so far as to call this a 'conscience-centred revolution' (Webster 1990: 30).

This newly fragmented society of the 16th century, one in which the established Church and monarchy had lost popular ground, was one that gave less credence to the authoritative figures of its religion than the society which had preceded it. In particular, amongst Puritans, heresy against figureheads such as the Pope, whom they considered a false idol, was common as a means of discrediting the older system of belief (Webster 1990: 29). Heretical statements were now spoken by Christians against other Christians, and this rise in heresy would eventually lead to a rise in the more serious crime of blasphemy as, over the next three hundred years, Christianity in its now diverse forms came to hold an increasingly weak grasp on the national conscience. The authority of the individual conscience had much to gain from this radical fragmentation of the unity of the Church, and this had far-reaching and long-term consequences. A schism had been opened up in a hitherto impermeable Church structure which would continue to deepen throughout the Enlightenment and into contemporary society. Regarding the situation in Britain in 1990, Webster writes

A ... telling perspective on the status of blasphemy is offered if we consider the manner in which in our once theocratic state, the authority of the individual conscience has gradually been afforded the same position and been veiled with the same sanctity, as the authority of the Scriptures in earlier centuries. (Webster 1990: 28)

In 1976 however, the blasphemy of the text in the eyes of the law was upheld. Within the legal 'community', the notion of a boundary or threshold is also central to the censorship debate. Moran has stressed 'the importance of 'border' and 'boundary' that connote the fixability and stability of the spatial distribution of law and crime, order and disorder, law and literature, through the distinction between decent and indecent texts. As a 'border' and a 'boundary', the conventions of textual civility are presented in their relation to an 'other' (Moran 2001: 154). From the verdict of the 1976 trial, it is clear that Kirkup and Lemon were perceived and judged as having endorsed this 'other', in this act having crossed a threshold legally, patriotically and religiously. As any 'alternative' or 'other' reading of the poem went unaddressed - the trial ignored the comparison drawn within the poem between Christ's suffering and same sex love - (Moran 2001: 161), so too did any metaphoric implication this could have for the redemption of same sex lovers. Moran also discusses how in the courtroom, the dangerous letters of the poem were turned into 'dead letters' by the jury's refusal to read the poem (or any portion of it) out in court, instead reducing it to mere summary (Moran 2001: 156), couched in legal and scientific terminology (Moran 2001: 161), which favoured Whitehouse's case as it stressed the value of 'reason' - around which the law centres - as opposed to the poem's 'passion', which the summary precluded (Moran 2001: 161-162). The present legal definition given by Halsbury's *Laws of England* states that blasphemy consists of the 'publication of contemptuous, reviling, scurrilous, or ludicrous matter relating to God, Jesus Christ, the Bible or the formularies of the Church of England.' (Gregg 2002: 54) AS such, in the eyes of the court, the poem's blasphemy was straightforward, indisputable and pervasive. Employing at times graphic description, the poem states that Jesus partook of homosexual sex, oral and penetrative, both throughout his life and at the time of his death. It is possible too to suggest that as Jesus is only endowed with active verbs at the climax of the sex act, and afterwards, the act of intercourse is portrayed as a central element in his resurrection:

And after three long, lonely days, like years,

...he rose from sleep, at dawn, and showed himself to me before

all others. And took me to him with

the love that now forever dares to speak its name. (Kirkup 1976, emphasis mine)

Additionally, the phrase 'he crucified me with him into kingdom come' (Kirkup: 1976) could be read to imply that the Centurion (metaphorically) died with Jesus, as such partaking in one of the most significant, sacred episodes of the Bible. Throughout, the poem adopts a casual tone and sexually explicit lexis alongside overt religious reference, as when it names the sexual act at the time of death 'a miracle', and in turns of phrase like

I knew he'd had it off with other men-
with Herod's guards, with Pontius Pilate,
With John the Baptist, with Paul of Tarsus
with foxy Judas, a great kisser, with
the rest of the Twelve, together and apart.
He loved all men, body, soul and spirit... (Kirkup: 1976)

Altogether, the blasphemy of the texts in the eyes of English law in 1976 was difficult to circumvent. However, although blasphemy and obscenity are distinct concepts both ontologically and legally, Sutherland suggests that Whitehouse might have chosen to launch her prosecution under the blasphemy law as the means most likely of gaining a successful prosecution after obscenity had been protected under the 1959 Obscene Publications Act, stating that 'deviant sex and blasphemy was a more combustible mixture than mere obscenity' (Sutherland 1982: 151-152), the perceived blasphemy of the text having been multiplied by its obscene nature. Certainly, certain elements of the text were perceived as 'obscene', in addition to purely blasphemous. Matthew Kieran has identified objectification as an element of the obscene, to the extent that it 'de-humanizes' people by representing them as 'mere objects, things, and commodities' (Kieran 2002: 35). Kirkup's poem can be read as a bearing witness to the de-humanization and reduction to an object of the central figure of the Christian religion. Roger Scruton has also considered the element in 'obscene' objectification which reduces the subject 'to their mere body... thereby precluding their first person perspective'. (Kieran 2002: 26) Indeed, in Kirkup's poem the 'I' protagonist as the active participant of the poem is emphasised, with the frequent use of the gerund and the repetition of present tense verbs adding to this semantic prowess. The moment of death, too, and as such, the loss of Jesus's subjectivity, is emphasised:

Slowly the fire in his thighs went out,
while I grew hotter with unearthly love. (Kirkup 1976)

Other factors also contributed to the poem's demise. Kieran has emphasised the element of repulsion in creating the obscene, and has linked this directly to the body:

Our attention is drawn to the texture, color, and dimensions of body parts, the soft, malleable yielding nature of the flesh, the flecked, glistening, oozing nature of bodily fluids and the hard-bodied, tensile, well-defined nature of bone, amongst other things...The repulsion involved tends to arise from the visceral nature of that

being judged obscene. (Kieran 2002: 50)

This is certainly the case with Kirkup's poem, in which the centurion's 'spear' was 'wet with blood', Jesus's 'shaft, still throbbled, anointed / with death's final ejaculation', whilst 'his dear, broken body' was 'all open wounds' (Kirkup 1976). Indeed, on first reading, given the violence inherent in these descriptions, certain elements of the poem can be interpreted as purely sadomasochistic. But Kirkup's project was greater. Pain and death can be read as metaphors for homosexual love, a point Kirkup in fact made explicitly clear in the phrase 'This is the passionate and blissful crucifixion/ same-sex lovers suffer, patiently and gladly'. Therefore the issue becomes an interpretative one, a literary one, for at this point the construct Kirkup has built, and the cause he has built it for, both surely become apparent. However, together these elements of 'obscenity' served to accentuate the blasphemous nature of the text, constituting what Whitehouse would call 'the recruxification of Christ with twentieth century weapons.' (Sutherland 1982: 151) As Lawrence noted, 'it comes down to this: if you are talking to the mob, the meaning of your words is the mob-meaning, decided by majority' (Lawrence 1995: 196). As in the case of Kirkup, the (judicial) ruling 'mob' both defines and sentences the other.

However, despite this, if the written word is to create the records of history, then the need for the suppressed, to borrow Hélène Cixous's terminology, to write themselves into the language, however controversially or covertly, is a necessity. Indeed, the sense of the sex act verbally articulating something greater than itself is tangible, as in 'It was the only way I knew to speak our love's

proud name/ to tell him of my long devotion, my desire, my dread/ something we had never talked about.' (Kirkup 1976, emphasis mine) Thus whereas the poem's quality has been generally acknowledged to be fairly poor, to quote one critic, 'a soppy dramatic monologue, whose only redeeming feature is an occasional cheekiness' (Sutherland 1982, 150-151), it serves several key purposes. Firstly, as a physical document, it occupies a space in the world (in the case of the internet- a virtual one), and thus assumes a position on the threshold of literature Heaney refers to, a place at which people can gather or separate. As Coetzee has formulated it,

A book can be seen as a vehicle used by an author to project his signature- and indeed sometimes his portrait- into the world, in a multiplied form. It is this potentially endless multiplication of traces of himself that gives to the author... intimations of a power to cross all spatial and temporal boundaries. (Coetzee 1996: 41)

The poem's legal distribution throughout Britain by means of individual copies sent out in the post has been described by Coetzee: '...The master's word... can spread by word of mouth, or from hand to hand in carbon copies...; even when the word itself it not spread, it can be replaced by rumors of itself, rumors that spread like copies'. (Coetzee 1996: 43) Here, literature serves as an underground means of dissemination, a spreading of the 'spirit's final seed' (Kirkup 1976) Kirkup's poem describes; poems like ideas, slowly taking root in the conscience of the 'mob', challenging their place as the 'other' within their given communities. In this way, poetry is extremely powerful as it can speak on behalf of people and movements; it is a form of passive anarchy, seeking to cause disruption to the normative system of the 'mob'. This quality 'of poetry and the imaginative arts in general' to work beneath the surface of historical events to change perceptions on an individual, person by person basis, and to both speak on behalf of and unite distinct communities has been described by Heaney:

...Faced with the brutality of the historical onslaught, they are practically useless. Yet they verify our singularity, they strike and stake out the ore of self which lies at the base of every individual life. In one sense the efficacy of poetry is nil. No lyric ever stopped a tank. In another sense, it is unlimited. It is like the writing of the sand in the face of which accusers and accused are left speechless and renewed.' (Heaney 2002: 189)

In its deliberate controversy, Kirkup's poem deliberately seeks to disrupt the normative established order of church and law by shattering the narratives of both. As such, Kirkup creates a rupture in the discourse between homosexuality and Christianity, and throws two often distant communities into dialogue. In many ways, the ban on the poem only increases its power by making it forbidden, and thereby intriguing, as presumably powerful (Coetzee 1996: 43). The success of this act is not dependant on the vindication of the poem in the eyes of the law and Church, but lies in the act itself- the words are performative in the sense that they enact a rupture between homosexuality and the Christian faith, and in so doing create a space in the sand, a vacuum in which Habermas's 'public opinion' can develop..

Secondly, assuming such a position, the work naturally enters into a literary dialogue with other related pieces. Kirkup's poem exploits this attribute to maximum effect by entering directly into conversation with Alfred Lord Douglas's 1894 poem 'Two Loves' (Gamaliel 2002), a poem which in turn is heavily indebted to Shakespeare's 'Sonnet 144' (LudditeAndroid 2002). Indeed, Oscar Wilde explicitly defended the meaning of the phrase 'the love that dares to speak its name' when on trial in 1895. Thus Kirkup enters into a literary tradition, and associates both his poem and cause with pieces of canonical literature by then too established to be themselves discredited, by this gaining a level of associative power.

Given Lawrence's notion of shifts of perception over time (which allow us to re-categorise the previously unacceptable as acceptable), it is possible to view the concept of blasphemy as having undergone a similar broadening process. If James Kirkup regards the Christian version of the crucifixion to be as false as the Christian religion does his, a possibility begins to open up to view blasphemy in the broader sense of speaking against another's belief system. Indeed, it is evident from the etymology of the word 'blasphemy' that it has not always carried religious and legal connotations. As Gregg surmises

The etymology of blasphemy can be traced to the Greek words 'blaptein', meaning to injure, and 'pheme', meaning reputation;... and 'blasphemeo' meaning blame... This suggests a sense of being responsible for irreverence towards anyone or anything worthy of esteem. (Gregg 2002: 54)

It was during a blasphemy trial in 1676 when the 'Lord Chief Justice, Sir Matthew Hale, first laid down the principle 'that Christianity was part of the law of England, and that a threat to the Church was, by its very nature, a threat to the State'. However, it can be argued that, although the judicial and religious system of the United Kingdom have historically shared principles and definitions, what is to be objectively examined in cases such as this is 'one book against another', and the Bible, the accepted book, against a work of literature which disputes its validity, 'the other' book. Viewed as such, blasphemy becomes a subjective concept. This does not mean that Kirkup's poem is not blasphemous, but it does mean the Bible itself is blasphemous when it is interpreted

against specific groups, such as homosexuals[4]. Given this, any law prohibiting one 'kind' of blasphemy over another seems unjust.

At its most polarised, the debate falls into two camps, the liberal camp and the conservative. The conservative argument proposes the floodgate (Webster 1990: 22) or causal (Kieran 2002: 32) theory, that the presence of blasphemy in a single instance leads to an unstoppable release of the same. The liberal argument against censorship states that any given individual has the right to read or choose not to read any given piece of literature. As William Hunter Alexander stated in his plea for the abolition of the British blasphemy laws in 1884:

Before a Christian is able to procure the shock to his feelings that, we are told, really constitutes blasphemy, it is necessary that he should procure a copy of the publication and read it. This is his own voluntary act. The mere publication is inoffensive and harmless. (Alexander 1884: 16)

'The Love that Dares to Speak its Name' was, fundamentally, a poem about a gay sexual experience published within a text specifically targeted at the gay community. As Sutherland explains of the *Gay News*, 'given the relatively closed circuits of the gay community, there was little general offence from its pornography' (Sutherland 1982: 148). Thus the notion of communities becomes central in our conception of what is acceptable to us, and what ought to be forbidden. It is one consequence of the fragmentation of organised religion within the UK that blasphemy has come to be viewed differently, in the eyes of the law and the public both. This fragmentation can be traced back to Protestant Reformation, and the rise of Puritanism, when the dispute concerning the Bible as an un-contestable Christian text developed. The acts of heresy and blasphemy increased as religious belief systems grew and divided into distinct communities. Britain's acute twentieth century fragmentation of the elements of life which once bound us together - the Church, the family, the patriotic - have resulted in a plurality of communities. It has long been possible to belong to several communities, for example, to be British and a non Christian, but whilst one is allowed to legally dominate over the other equilibrium becomes impossible. Likewise, whilst it has long been possible to be British and a homosexual Christian, that is, to belong to all three communities, the relationship between them was one shrouded in taboo, heavily polemicized and dominated by the opinions of the ruling order. Kirkup's poem insists on the juxtaposition of tenets of Christianity alongside those of homosexuality, fundamentally disturbing the traditions of both. Although it is the case that Kirkup's text is as offensive to Christians as the attitude of Christianity towards homosexuals, and appears to be a case of 'an eye for an eye', given the situation this was perhaps necessary in order to restore equilibrium to a heavily unbalanced scale. In 'The Redress of Poetry' (Heaney 2002: 259) Heaney quotes Simone Weil: 'If we know in what way society is unbalanced, we must do what we can to add weight to the lighter scale...we must have formed a conception of equilibrium and be ever ready to change sides like justice...' Heaney describes this counterbalancing, or 'counter-reality', as a phenomenon

...which may only be imagined but which nevertheless has weight because it is imagined within the gravitational pull of the actual and can therefore hold its own and balance out against the historical situation. This redressing of poetry comes from its being a glimpsed alternative, a revelation of potential that is denied or constantly threatened by circumstances.

Seen this way, the 'blasphemous', in cases when it specifically seeks to redress a historical imbalance and injustice, can work as a factor in creating a space between plural communities for dialogue, for 'public opinion', wherein their conflicting doctrines settle into balance. Thus the notion of boundary is at once multiplied and weakened; there are more boundaries between us, but this prolificacy in turn dilutes their force and status. It becomes increasingly possible to tolerate the 'other' as the non-other fragments. The diversification of our communities and their dissemination of information into diverse spheres means we find ourselves increasingly at Heaney's threshold, considering and re-considering our standpoint. Plural communities leave little space for censors.

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[1] James Kirkup (Sutherland 1982: 151)

[2] The judge was Mr Justice King-Hamilton.

[3] As expressed by John Milton, 'If a particular passage of the scriptures could not be reconciled with the case of human or moral good, then it was to be rejected' (Webster 1990: 28).

[4] See Holy Bible Leviticus xviii, 22 and Holy Bible Romans i, 26-27.

List of Contributors' Bios

Olga Bazilevica was born in Latvia (actually, the Soviet Republic of Latvia) in 1988. She graduated from Aizkraukle School of Art with her final project in painting supervised by Aldis Dobenbergs in 2003, but decided not to continue her studies, and to rather improve her skills on her own pace. Olga is also interested in photography and took part in an international exhibition "Imagine" in Riga in 2008. She took classes in History of Art, History of Architecture and Photography at the Universities of Freiburg and Munich (Germany) and Salzburg (Austria) and is very interested at the relationship between interfaces of text and image. Olga is currently starting her Ph.D. at the Centre for Comparative Literature at the University of Toronto.

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Deborah Herman is an emerging Toronto poet as well as a graduate student in the Department of Humanities at York University. Her work has been published by *Existere* and *Rhythm*, and she has a new poem appearing in an upcoming issue of *The Nashwaak Review*. Deborah has recently won first prize at McLaughlin College's annual Robbie Burns Night Poetry Contest in January of this year.

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She is the author of: „Feminism as social philosophy. Essays on the Family” (2009, Difin Editions, Warsaw); she co-edited books on globalization – „Captive Mind 2. Neoliberalism and its Critics”(with Janek Sowa, Ha! Art Editions, Kraków, 2007) and „Industrialtown Futurism” (with Kuba Szreder and Martin Kaltwasser, Pl - Ha! Art Editions, Kraków, 2007; Ger. – Revolver Verlag, Frankfurt a/ Main 2007). She is a member of the „Toward the Girls” Association (writing feminist manuals for teachers), Syreny_tv (artistic women network) and „Indeks 73” - an interdisciplinary network against censorship. She wrote a report on violence against women for the Polish section of Amnesty International (2005).

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TRANSVERSE JOURNAL

What's Queer about Queer Theory? a call for submissions

Transverse, the Comparative Literature graduate student journal at the University of Toronto is very pleased to announce a call for submissions for our Spring/Summer 2011 issue, "What's Queer about Queer Theory?" We are interested in original academic articles, poetry, artwork and fiction.

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1950-2009) was one of the great theorists of queer theory. Her books, especially, *Between Men* and *Epistemology of the Closet*, brought sexuality to the forefront of literary studies; however, the question that we

are left with today is: what is queer about queer theory? Queer theory has become commonplace, mainstream and even part of the theoretical canon and status quo in most fields of literary and cultural study. To read Sedgwick today is to read literary theory that no longer seems radical or transgressive, and yet, the reader most certainly recognizes the abrasive and shocking nature of what Sedgwick said. In this regard, *Transverse* proposes the following question: what's queer about queer theory? We welcome papers that work to re-read and re-

situate queer theory and more open studies of gender and sexuality. We also welcome poetry, artwork and fiction that pertain to this theme of openness.

Michael D. Snediker's recent book *Queer Optimism* can be seen as an example of a queering of queer theory in that Snediker carefully reads and re-reads the major figures in the school, asking about the place of optimism - a very queer notion - in literary theory. Of particular interest is queer theory in a literary context, given that it is riddled with notions of shame, the death drive and melancholy. Can queer theory move to consider optimism as Snediker proposes? Or, how does queer theory engage with postcolonial studies without simply outing primitive, subaltern, indigenous, colonial subjects (who in many instances transform into objects of study)? Indeed, the combination of queer theory with other theories has proven to provide interesting, meta-critical insights on the theories in question; however, how useful are these models for "giving life" to new modes of queer theory? What is the place of queer theory in phenomenology

(or structuralism, or hermeneutics, etc.)? Is there a "queer time and place" that is not being considered and if so, what does it look like? How queer is time and place? What is the role of queer theory in questions of translation and adaptation? Thus, the ultimate question here seems to be one in which the negotiation of the radical-ness of queer theory alongside the problem of being commonplace needs to be considered. If queer theory is no longer radical, what is it?

For our submissions guidelines, please follow the link at the bottom of our CFP page, found [here](#). Please send articles of approximately 5000 words, poems, artwork and fiction, along with professional biographies to transversejournal@gmail.com by **April 1st, 2011**.

Transverse would like to thank the Centre for Comparative Literature at the University of Toronto as well as the Comparative Literature graduate student conference committee for their sponsorship.