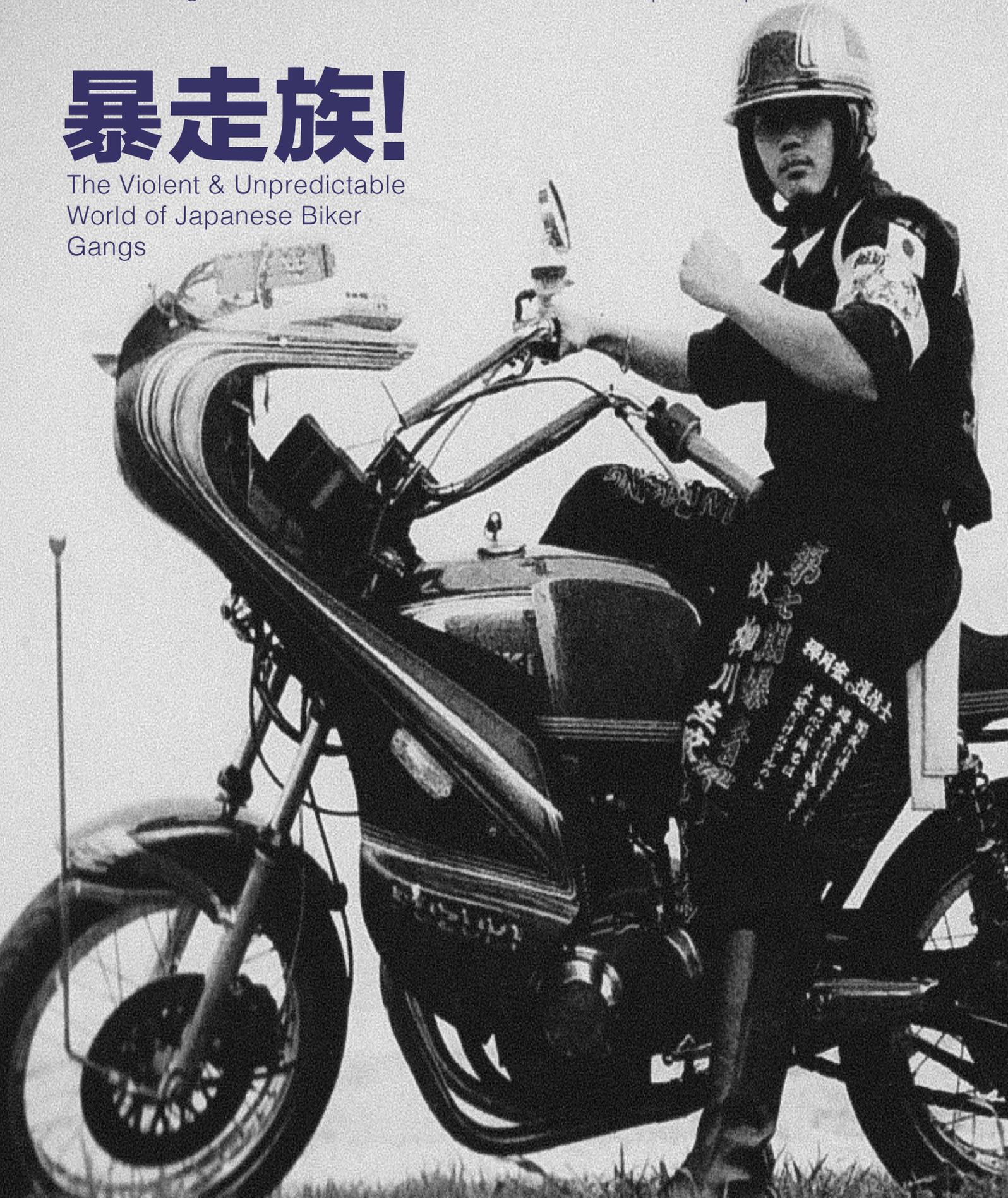


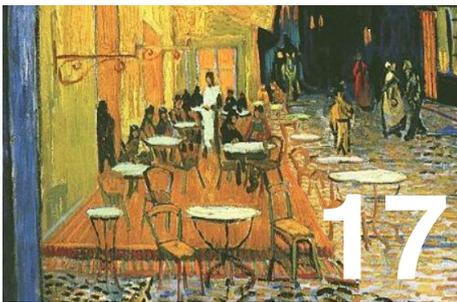
Eye Magazine

The Magazine of The International Academic Forum | Issue 7 | Summer 2015

暴走族!

The Violent & Unpredictable
World of Japanese Biker
Gangs





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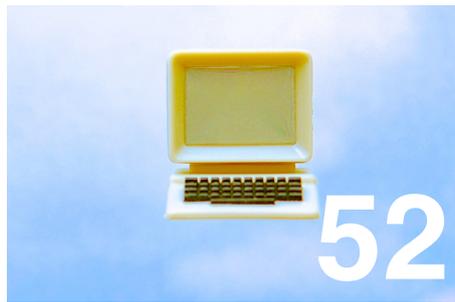
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Editor
Michael Liam Kedzlie

Assistant Editor - Copy Editing & Layout
Lindsay Lafreniere

Original Design & Layout
Thaddeus Pope

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A word from the editor

Welcome to this the seventh edition of IAFOR's Eye Magazine, the International Academic Forum's own in-house e-magazine publication.

Through Eye Magazine, we hope to enlighten you as to various views and opinions of our contributors, many of whom have presented full research papers at our various conferences. To us at IAFOR, Eye Magazine is a place for you to focus on and share interdisciplinary knowledge and research synergies. Of course, that research has to be able to be digestible by the non-specialists. So hopefully, with Eye Magazine, a specialist in the area of international relations can inform and enlighten a language learning expert and likewise, a cultural studies expert can speak to an economist or a lawyer to an environmental engineer, without the burden of the over-specialist terminology found within one's own traditional research silo. To that end Eye Magazine is in many ways an extension of our focus on developing interdisciplinary knowledge and research synergies.

In this latest edition I wish to thank those contributors who have kindly written articles and submitted photos to make this issue an interesting and vibrant read. This edition with its general theme of human conflict and identity has some fabulous articles for you to read. The cover story for this quarterly edition is by Paul Spicer, of Hiroshima Woman's University, under great intrigue and at times of physical danger investigated the violent and unpredictable underworld of Japanese Biker Gangs. Hai'an Dukhans, of St Andrews University, Scotland, has a guest editorial on the current conflict within Iraq and Syria titled *The Islamic State: Balancing the Islamic and the Tribal Identity* that offers a further perspective when analyzing the current crisis and one of the pathways to consider regarding any post conflict governance in the region currently occupied by ISIL. Tom Smith, of the University of Hull, examines the appropriated contextuality of the Jihadist movement in *The Myth of the Second Front: How 'the experts' and 'the global jihad' appropriate Asian insurgencies*. Regular Eye Magazine contributor and the IAFOR Journal of Politics Editor Craig Mark, of Kwansei Gakuin University, here in Japan, looks at the potential export of Japanese submarines to Australia and the possible political developments that may evolve from it in his article *Japanese Subs for Australia? Developments in Australian Defence Procurement / Japanese Defence Export Policy*.

Also in this Summer 2015 edition, Michael Heitkemper-Yates, of the Graduate School of Humanities at Kobe

University, notes the post-postmodern modal shift back towards the threshold of experience in his essay *Conflict Irresolution: Post-Postmodernism and the Legacy of Ironic Subversion*. Christina Bethel of East Carolina University provides an illustration of the impact of Japan's Soft Power movement in her article *Princess Robot Bubblegum Critiques: "Cool Japan"*. Brian R. Clack of the University of San Diego examines the question "where then does love stand with regard to its benefits and costs?" in his article *Love, Suffering and Conflict: Some Lessons from Freud's Civilization and its Discontents*. Gary Ka-Wai Wong, of The Hong Kong Institute of Education, looks at ways to take the advantage of the latest in mobile technologies for our classroom teaching and learning practice, and how to enhance our students engagement in his article *Cloud Computing for Collaborative Knowledge Construction: A Case with Google Drive*. Ken Chang, of the National Cheng-Chi University, Taiwan, offers in this issue a fascinating look into the notion of unacknowledged matricide in writer T. S. Eliot's *The Family Reunion*. Mary Jane S. Camarador, of Southern Luzon State University, Philippines asks the question "so what is a Boy Band?" and discusses gender, music, adolescence, representation and homosocialization in *I Love You, Bro: The [Mis] Representation of Male-Bonding in Boy Bands through their Music*. Frances Shiobara of Kobe Shoin Women's University, Japan in her article *The 10,000 Hour Rule and What it Means for Language Teaching* explains that there are no easy short cuts in language learning and that 'old fashioned' attributes like hard work and application, and plenty of practice make all the difference. Lastly I wish to thank Jared Baxter, our art contributor, who IAFOR President Dr. Joseph Haldane recently interviewed. This interview and a further article from Jared on the Van Gogh series of research that is now gaining international attention within the art world is also included in this Summer 2015 edition. Once again my heartfelt thanks to all of the contributors who submitted articles, essays and opinion pieces.

We trust that this edition of Eye magazine will once again be an informative, interesting and exciting way for us to communicate with you, and you in turn with us. We hope you enjoy reading it

Sincerely,

Michael Liam Kedzlie
Editor
mkedzlie@iafor.org



The Myth

EDITORIAL



What is this idea of the second front? It is a pernicious and dangerous idea that refuses to go away. In particular, through this essay I want to demonstrate that the second front needs a renewed critique because of the appropriation of various Asian insurgencies by both so-called 'terrorist experts' and the 'actors' of the global jihad. This critique illuminates some of the most interesting and forward-thinking ideas addressing The Sixth Asian Conference on Arts and Humanities conference themes of conflict and community. Indeed what we will do is challenge the very

definitions of those words and ask ourselves what is the conflict and what is the community?

Now some of you may be well versed in this 'second front' idea and be curious as to why I am still bothering to put energy into discrediting it. Well, I wish I didn't have to, however research and commentary on terrorism in Asia (and elsewhere) continues to be influenced by the idea. Which like all ideas is difficult to delete. The wealth of material that was produced advocating the region, as the second front remains well referenced and

regarded today – certainly in some policy circles. But more than this, and any notion of 'I told you so', those that lead the charge in claiming links between Asian insurgencies and the dark dangerous network of al Qaeda, have recently renewed their vigor for this subject.

Zachary Abuza, Maria Ressa, and Rohan Gunaratna being the three most visible of the so-called experts on the regions insurgencies. What they did and continue to do, is connect the local to global by way of citing movements of people, arms,

of the Second Front

How 'the experts' and 'the global jihad'
appropriate Asian insurgencies

by Tom Smith



funding and ideology from one time and place to another. This conflation of the so called-connections, of which the best known story is that of the Afghan Mujahedeen returning to South East Asia equipped and fuelled to fight their local jihad as part of a wider global jihad, is not evidenced unproven. It's an attractive story and a fascinating idea but alas I have found by some good old-fashioned empirical research and some all too rare fieldwork in the region it to be a fanciful one.

Over the past few years I have focused

on both the Southern Thai and Filipino insurgencies as supposed examples par excellence of the second front. Asking what, if anything, connects the Pattani or Mindanao to 'the global jihad'. But I would ask you to not just limit yourselves to these two locales, but others, while they work well as a case study comparison as both are situated in non Muslim states, distant from the capitol, with similar geographies, the second front idea was expanded to other areas, obviously Indonesia and Malaysia. But following last month's knife attack in Kunming, it's certainly raised the spectra of Xinjiang

becoming a more prominent example of the jihad in Asia and sparking further revival of the second front thesis. Such positing of the local within greater global contexts by both government officials and the media, as is nearly always done, continued here with Kunming.

It's this that interests me – how is it connected to the jihad? So, I set out to see what others had claimed and scrutinized their sources and evidencing, but more pointedly I went to the locales myself– the immediacies of the insurgencies and asked the



people if and how the insurgency was connected to the others events around the world.

For the most part this meant riding a motorbike and playing football in a jungle fringed landscape occasionally broken up by mosques and malls. I spoke to a wide selection of people but was particularly interested to hear the views of young people. The ‘angry young men’ trope who have supposedly been radicalized by an evil ideology into a dark network was beginning to be exposed and discredited and eventually gave rise to the discipline of critical terrorism studies as an application of critical theory.

Examples of others who have noted the weakness in the second front thesis need to be held up as academic heroes in the field. Natasha Hamilton Hart beat me to the punch by noting the terrible trend for definitive tones in this field. She says: “At no stage do the books written by Abuza, Gunaratna or Ressa – or most of the analysts who cite them – discuss issues of credibility or interpretation with regard to

official information...Rather than offering any reflection on his sources, Gunaratna frequently fails to even cite a specific source for his claims, or fails to identify the source sufficiently. Yet there is no sign of doubt or uncertainty in his work.”(Hamilton-Hart, 2005)

Likewise Michael Connors who warned us that “Despite the fact that his work has been criticized for overreliance on intelligence agency materials and for often making unsubstantiated claims, Gunaratna remains an authoritative international figure”(Connors, 2006).

What has Kevin Bacon got to do with terrorism in Asia, Tom? Well about as much as Al Qaeda does it seems. I honestly don’t mean to be flippant, but this fantastic insight by Graham Brown needs repeating, sharing, and circulating amongst peers once more. If you would allow me another quote: “The general way in which different types of source are utilized and, in particular, how tentative allegations are transmuted, through a kind of process of academic Chinese Whispers,

into established facts, studies of international terrorism in Southeast Asia and elsewhere would benefit from much greater contextualization within the domestic politics of the country in question, rather than their current focus on specific individuals, organizations and networks”(Brown, 2006)

This portrayal Brown criticizes of a conflict where individuals are supposedly members of groups and networks is rarely evidenced, yet it exists as an almost existential truth. Bin Laden even on his death was considered the mastermind, despite any evidence to substantiate this. We all somehow knew him as being in control of a global network with tentacles everywhere (Abuza, 2002; Brimley, 2006).

The result is a narrative of an informal hierarchy which even if cellular or hydra in structure was and is inherently top down with central leadership hidden away somewhere in remote caves or jungles yet benefiting from all the joys of a globalized 21st

The result is a narrative of an informal hierarchy which even if cellular or hydra in structure was and is inherently top down with central leadership hidden away somewhere in remote caves or jungles yet benefiting from all the joys of a globalized 21st century CEO.

century CEO.

But its simply not true of course, this thinking was built on an outmoded top-down model, the same model in which Islam was portrayed in International Relations when Oliver Roy described the Islamic world in terms of a Centre and peripheries. In the post 9/11 space, the idea of a global jihad was simply overlaid onto this model complete with a center – be it Afghanistan or Iraq as the source of purity or an authenticity which needed to be exported to the periphery by missionaries to the far flung corners where safe havens and sanctuaries could be created for exotic jihad.

What we have been left with is straight from Hollywood, of a puppet master, with a powerful and connected network, pulling the strings. But it is time for the puppets to cut the strings. It is time we inverted the pyramid and rethought our conceptualization of the jihad, particularly in Asia and with it challenge our ideas of community and conflict. In much the same way that Mary Kaldor made the distinction between New Wars and Old Wars, I suggest we now have old wars, new wars and the jihad – where the individual is at the apex – at the center of the ‘everyday conflict’. Able to pull down or download whatever they want and need from the jihad which has become not a single doctrine for disciples but an ethereal groundswell co-opted and manipulated, abused and challenged, but with every act, donation, internet forum post, video download and discussion, the groundswell, the jihad, grows for later appropriation. We have already become accustomed with the idea,

if not comfortable with the practice of web 2.0 and the idea of social collaboration and two way platforms for dialogue and exchange. In such a case I suggest we start to think about the jihad and consider this conflict as jihad 2.0 if that helps us move on intellectually from regressive ideas of networked terrorists and the second front.

The jihad is a mashup, a hosting service, a platform from which the jihad is crowdsourced. It always was this way, but the language and ideas from technology and media

and the challenge they bring to our previous incarnations of identity and community are striking in discussing the jihad.

The jihad is on Google Drive, somewhere up in the cloud, it is everything and anything for anyone and everyone to take what they will from. No control. No direction. No indoctrination. No radicalization.

Manifest examples of this are in the art of the jihad, the nasheed videos on YouTube, Facebook and Twitter. Ethnically and culturally diverse,



regionally appropriate and suitable to whatever setting be it Chechnya, Kashmir, Palestine or Patani and Mindanao. They acknowledge their

violence. For which the violent act out on behalf of. The chest beating idea of 'representing' their people is strangely familiar to the jihad in several locales.

or whatever we come to call it, be you in paradise, downtown Manhattan, London or catching a train in Madrid, the plausibility for a connection to

The non-violent contributions are just as important as the violent ones. The violence obviously catches our eye and we obsess over it naturally, but in doing so we neglect the underbelly of non-violence. For which the violent act out on behalf of. The chest beating idea of 'representing' their people is strangely familiar to the jihad in several locales. It is manifestly challenging, which in itself is striking and enchanting.

heritage, they recall the tradition of a global religion or omnipresent identity that recalls international brotherhood, kinship and sympathy. Whether the practice of the hadji or one of the 5 pillars of the faith – to give to charity, the jihad becomes interwoven with 21st century Muslim life and identity, expanding the individuals horizons and ideas of community beyond their local mosque and immediate family but to the plight and suffering of fellow Muslims far away. This cosmopolitan caring and empathy should be regarded as the most important connection to the jihad rather than looking for mythical instances of al Qaeda moving people and arms and plans from one battle field to the next. The reality for young Muslims and non Muslims is a connection based cerebrally. An empathy, a sense of duty, a 6th Pillar of Islam – the jihad, to contribute to do your bit in whatever way. To post a comment, to like a video, this jihadi clicktivism is the connection we shouldn't ignore and should restrain from condemning.

But its also very modern as well as displaying hallmarks of tradition and heritage, vibrantly so. It's even, dare I say, in some respects quite progressive, and acutely feminine in some senses. The non-violent contributions are just as important as the violent ones. The violence obviously catches our eye and we obsess over it naturally, but in doing so we neglect the underbelly of non-

It is manifestly challenging, which in itself is striking and enchanting.

Are Jihadist like environmentalists, part of a global social movement akin to others acting ethically or humanitarily for others far away? Faisal Devji suggested this in his groundbreaking philosophical 2005 work *Landscape of the Jihad* (2005). It is an idea that has so far not been tested or followed up. The idea antagonizes some who find it repellant to analyze jihadists in the same way we would other activists and global social movements, but the violence does not take place in a vacuum and we must learn to appreciate that behind the violence lies a growing environment, or what Devji calls beliefs and practices of non-violent participation, a fuel which lacks central control and authority. This we can evidence, we can cite it can be verified, it can be attested to in the public domain and it runs counter to the second front radicalizing network narrative.

So, the next time you hear or read of somewhere long forgotten becoming the next breeding ground or sanctuary for the jihad, ask yourself if that is credible, if the evidence they put forward is substantive enough compared to what you see all around you and what I have suggested today. The idea that jihad in paradise is the threat we all face is false. There are no fronts to this war, conflict, insurgency

the jihad remains. So even if Disney decide to make a movie based on Mark Bowden's article *Jihadists in Paradise* (2007), we all know the difference between storytelling and reality.

There is no second front - there are no fronts. What we can only be sure of is that the sentiment shared by individuals has been misread by experts as evidence or radicalization and appropriated by violent sociopaths as consent. The jihad is, as yet, rarely articulate, perhaps because of its metaphysical inexactitude. Without any order and cohesion and while the jihad revels in been contested, argued upon like a politician who says they act in 'the public interest,' the jihad will ask more questions of us than anyone has answers for. At the very least we should caution against those who attest to having the inside story from secret sources, demanding a better standard of basic academic disciplines and peer-reviewed rigor.

At the very least, the next time you are exposed to these issues, if the ideas of who they are and what is their fight are not at the foremost of your mind, one should be very skeptical.

Tom Smith teaches and researches at the University of Hull, UK. A fully referenced version of this article can be supplied upon request to the Editor at publications@iafor.org



The Islamic State Balancing the Islamic and the Tribal Identity

By Haian Dukhans

International media has recently reported that the Islamic State group (IS) demanded the release of an Iraqi woman, Sajida Al-Rishawi, detained in Jordan in exchange for the Jordanian pilot, Muath al-Kasaesbeh, they captured and executed later. The organisation's insistence on releasing a woman raises many questions about the nature of a group that exacerbates the subordinate situation of women in the communities it rules. What needs to be looked at carefully in this situation is that by insisting on releasing

Sajida Al-Rishawi and not any of the other male prisoners held by Jordan, IS is attempting to portray her arrest as a violation of women. This is a matter of high sensitivity in the tribal society and applied to the tribal idiom of honour, which is a rational reason for the group taking revenge.

In no part of the Middle East are the tribal elements more sharply defined than in Iraq and the East of Syria where IS dominates. The population that inhabits this part of Syria and

Iraq is largely tribal, defined by anthropologists as composed of an independent, regional political groupings made up of structurally similar segments. The leaders of the Islamic state who tend to be Iraqis and Syrians were born and raised in tribal communities themselves and often speak of their tribes and the honour of their people animatedly and with pride. In all of IS videos and statements, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the self-proclaimed caliph, is not identified by his name and surname only but by the Quraysh tribe



of whom the Prophet Mohammed descends. These links to the Prophet provide a kind of cover to court alliances with Sunni tribes by helping him establish legitimacy in denoting the “purest” of Muslims by carrying the prophet’s blood in his veins.

Throughout history up to the present day, tribal identity and Islamic identity have been in constant struggle and every Muslim with a tribal background is stuck in a dilemma of trying to balance the compulsions of their tribal background and the teachings of the Islamic faith. Although Islam tried to adapt all the tribal codes of honour and revenge, tribal influences remained to permeate even the most cosmopolitan Arab states such as UAE. What this short article is trying to argue for is that IS actions are more swayed by a tribal template hidden beneath an overtly religious surface.

One of the main principles of Arab tribalism is honour. Arabs are taught that honour is more important than

release” to be prepared to carry arms saying, “I swear by Allah that the enemies will force you to carry them and you will carry them voluntarily or by force even after a while because this is how honour will be safeguarded and dignity will be retrieved and the rights recovered.” Likewise, in tribal codes, any member of offensive community is liable to be attacked in revenge for an offense committed by a member of his community. Al-Adnani called on Muslims in Western countries to “find an infidel and smash his head with a rock, poison him, run him over with a car, or destroy his crops.” A few months after his appeal, two French citizens of Algerian origin attacked a satirical newspaper in Paris, “Charlie Hebdo”, killing 10 of the magazine’s journalists while shouting: “We have avenged the Prophet Mohammed, we have avenged the Prophet Mohammed, we have killed Charlie Hebdo.” IS has praised the two gunmen who stormed the offices of the magazine in Paris as “heroic jihadists.” The most sensitive part of tribal honour is the

sader airplanes above their heads day and night?” To atone for the shame incurred by this aggression on Muslim women, tribesmen feel they must seek violent vengeance.

Moreover, the group’s execution of hostages from the US, UK, Japan, Egypt and Jordan, without requiring any explanatory recourse to Islam, is an implication of the system of collective guilt. The horrific manner in which the execution took place ought to be placed under the heading of pro-active deterrence. Arab tribes have always existed in a de facto stateless anarchy where the use of retaliatory force was an effective technique for suppressing future challenges. The continuous release of beheading videos shows genuine mastery of the technique of deterrent intimidation.

To conclude, understanding the influence of tribalism upon the development of Islam, and by extension IS, requires acknowledging of the basic characteristics and dynamics of

Throughout history up to the present day, tribal identity and Islamic identity have been in constant struggle and every Muslim with a tribal background is stuck in a dilemma of trying to balance the compulsions of their tribal background and the teachings of the Islamic faith.

wealth, fame, love or even death. Thus, whenever there is transgression against honour, there are reactions that seem on the face of it emotional because they are not based on calculation but rather stem from a need for revenge. According to the central institution of the tribes, when honour is violated, it must be avenged by the entire group. Abu Mohammad al-Adnani, the Islamic State’s chief spokesman, scatters indicators of this thinking throughout his speeches, using the word “honour” frequently. As the coalition started its air strikes against the group, al-Adnani asked all Muslims in an “audio

behaviour of transgression against women as it directly relates to the honour of the men in the tribe. Violation of women provokes the most violent reaction. Again, al-Adnani’s speeches and other IS leaders’ statements are replete with sentences about the violation of Muslim women by enemies. “The crusaders have killed nine Muslim women three days ago by striking a bus transporting them from Sham to Iraq” Al-Adnani said when addressing the tribes of Syria and Iraq, “Will you leave the disbeliever to sleep safely at home while the Muslim women shiver with fear of the roars of the cru-

Middle Eastern tribalism. IS’ attitudes towards its adversaries reflect the influence of tribal values. Without this understanding, the war on terror will not end in any kind of recognizable victory as the current military actions are only exacerbating the conflict.

Hainan Dukhan is a doctoral student at Saint Andrews University, Scotland. A fully referenced version of this article is available on request from the editor at publications@ia-for.org



The Power behind Starry Night

Vincent's Empyrean Vision

by Jared Baxter



“That doesn’t stop me from having a terrible need for – dare I say the word – for religion, so I go outside at night to paint the stars...” – Vincent van Gogh

pyrean Heavens, his tenth and final sphere, where the Trinity, in perfect balance, turns the cosmos.

While it remains uncertain if Vincent read *The Divine Comedy*, his existing letters reveal a more than cursory familiarity. Most notably was his opinion that the pinnacle of artistic achievement included the portraits of Frans Hals, and quote, “Dante’s Paradise, the Michealangelos, and Raphaels, and even the Greeks.”

As a denizen of Provence, Vincent was immersed in a culture in which Dante’s shadow still loomed large. In May, 1889, Vincent admitted himself as patient at St. Paul’s, a Catholic asylum nestled in the Alpilles, its landscape famous for inspiring Dante’s Gates of Hell. Vincent had just moved fifteen miles from Arles where, for a millennia, sarcophagi had been stacked at an ancient Roman necropolis. The site inspired Dante to pen, “Even as at Arles where stagnant grows the Rhone” beginning his sixth circle of hell, the realm of heretics.

Vincent admired and studied many whom adored and recreated images from *The Divine Comedy*, including: Giotto, Delacroix, Hugo, Carlyle, Corot, Doré and Rodin. Beyond the scope of this article, there is a broad base of circumstantial evidence suggesting Vincent not only studied Dante but painted numerous scenes from the *Commedia*. Further, it was well within Vincent’s purview to paint images inspired by literature, especially at the confluence of poetry and theology.

Among literal interpretations, art historian Albert Boime’s “social history” theory is the most widely accepted. Based in no small amount of scientific research, he had three UCLA colleagues at the Griffith Park Observatory, wind-back time and recreate the pre-dawn cosmos outside of Vincent’s asylum window the morning he reported painting *Starry Night*.

They determined the two brightest orbs were analogous to the placements of the morning star, Venus, near the skyline of the Alpilles, and the moon, in the upper, right-hand corner. Boime and his own lead astronomer, however, disagreed about the placement of the remaining stars, one determining the Aries constellation, the other, Cygnus. Vincent’s imagination, though grounded in reality, therefore, created most everything else.

Boime posits Vincent may have read Camille Flammarion’s *Popular Astronomy* which included a depiction of a spiral nebula, perhaps inspiring Vincent’s turbulent sky. While Vincent may have seen this image, it is nowhere near to-scale in his *Starry Night*, suggesting more relevance than a mere scientific phenomenon.

While *Starry Night*’s hamlet is reminiscent of the nearby town of St. Remy, it was not viewable from Vincent’s vantage point, as evidenced in dozens of other canvasses he painted from inside his room. As Boime pointed out, the moon, that early morning was not in its crescent, but gibbous phase. Boime further noted Vincent’s apparent artistic struggles with creating this heavenly body, attempting to dispel the belief that it is somehow a sun-moon combination, perhaps in eclipse.

Vincent added many other elements including: the Protestant church’s spired steeple barely piercing the roiling firmament, dwarfed by the towering, flaming Cypress, a symbol of death in the Mediterranean. For all these reasons, the painting cannot be accepted as merely literal.

Regarding Biblical inspiration, theories of allegorical depictions of the twelfth chapter of the Book of Revelations, Joseph’s visionary dreams or a sublimated *Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane* have been deemed largely Ptolemaic. This is due to more recent research that has better organized Vincent’s existing letters, more fully

One of the most famous and beloved paintings, *Starry Night* (MoMA, NYC), has mesmerized academia and the general public alike for over a century. What has confounded everyone is the inspiration behind the artist’s visionary canvas. Theories range from the literal to the literary. The latter includes suppositions the image blossomed from some literary source: the Bible or Walt Whitman, usually. This article advances the painting was inspired by Dante’s vision of the Em-



defined his personal Christology as Groningen, and explicated his Symbolist art phase as merely seemingly syncretic. Biblical allusions, however, are due credit for positing the paradox that is Vincent's sun-moon combination.

Art historian Hope Werness pointed out that American poet Whitman, like Vincent, linked the stars, death and immortality. She found many commonalities between the men, between Whitman's poetry and *Starry Night*. Werness did not attempt to over-interpret or define the elements within *Starry Night*, stating:

"Van Gogh created an image of divine love and of the glory and immensity of the cosmos. In the painting, man's temporal and terrestrial existence is contrasted with the immutable and eternal nature of cosmic time."

I cannot disagree with this and will fully admit that I may be guilty of over-interpretation. But I am always reminded of Vincent's admonitions to "look closely," for there are wonders and mysteries hidden within the greatest masterpieces.

Therefore, I believe Vincent's cosmos was inspired by Dante's description of the Empyrean, his tenth and final sphere of heaven where God, the sun-moon combination, reflects upon Christ, the morning star, and the Holy Spirit aflame, breathes equally be-

tween them. I find the citron-yellow, sun-moon combination to be a brilliant metaphor for the conundrum that is God's mystery; an enigma that may have been necessitated by the *Commedia's* final line:

"My yearning aligned in the Holy Spirit as it moves the sun and all the other stars."

One simply cannot paint a sky full of stars *with* the sun in it! Yet, Vincent seems to have found an ingenious way of doing so. Just as ingenious was his ability to give form to the Holy Spirit with his celestial, pulsating, helix. It should be considered more an example of his haloing technique than swirling clouds or nebulae. The remaining ten stars, more like living, breathing flowers? They may represent Dante's ten heavenly spheres.

In conclusion, a few excerpts from Dante, the pilgrim, on his journey to the Empyrean:

So, with your intellect swept bare,
I will inform you with light so alive
That it will shimmer as you look on it.

Deep in the heaven of divine peace
There whirls a body in whose power
rests
The being of all things that it contains.

The heaven after it, with brilliant stars,
Distributes this being to different

essences
Distinct from it and yet contained
within it.

The other circles by various degrees
Dispose the separate powers in themselves
To their own proper ends and propagation.

These organs of the universe proceed
As you now see, from grade to grade,
obtaining
Their power from above and acting
downward.

Within that loving light on which I
looked
And which is always what it was
before

By the sight that gathered strength
in me
As I gazed on, what was One in appearance
Was altering for me as I was changing.

In the profound and shining-clear
Existence
Of the deep Light appeared to me
three circles
Of one dimension and three different
colors:

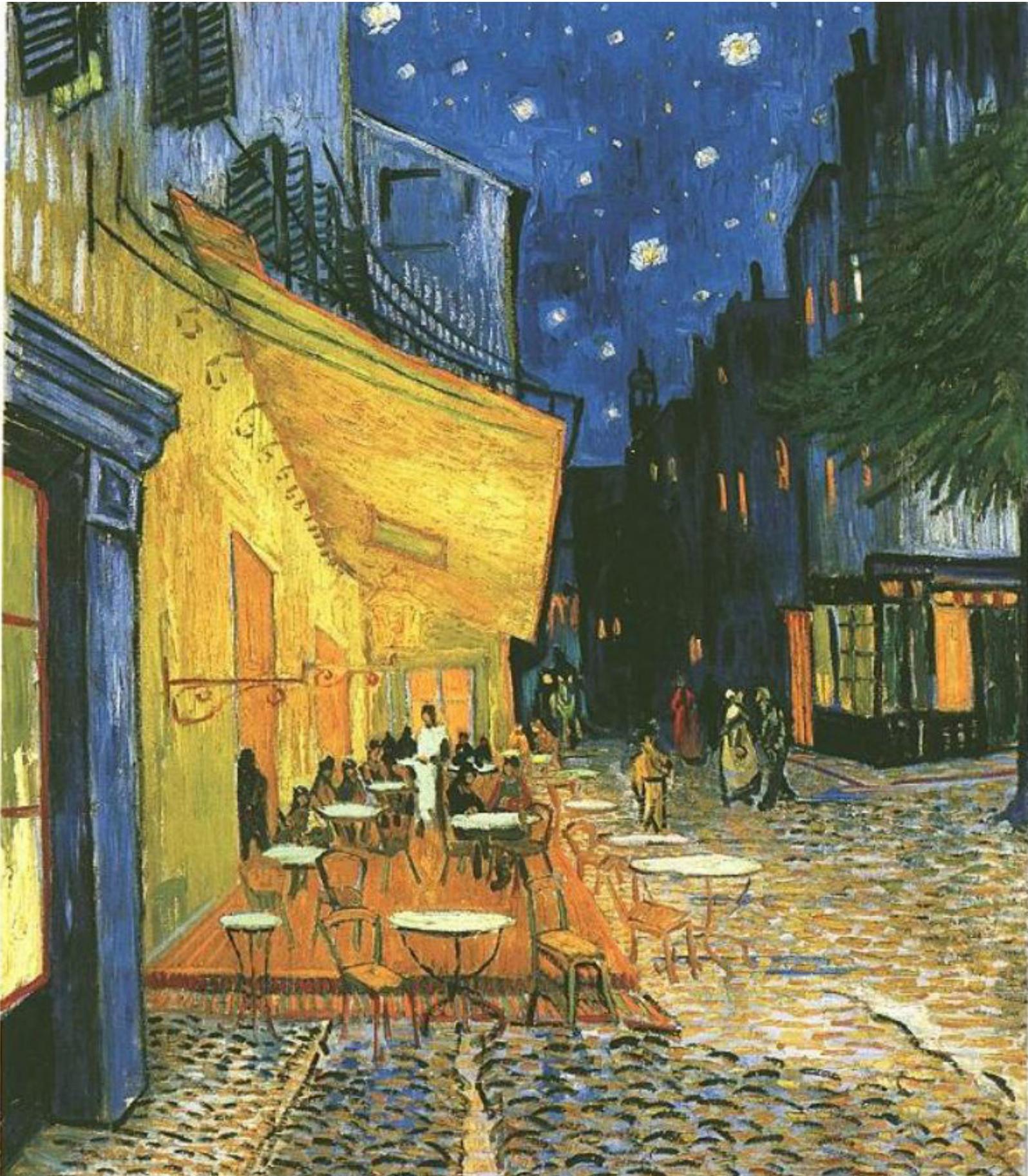
God reflected upon Christ and conversely
Rainbow upon rainbow, the Holy
Spirit
Aflame, breathed equally between
them.

Like a wheel turning in perfect balance
My yearning aligned in the Holy
Spirit
As it moves the sun and all the other
stars

Jared Baxter is an independent researcher living on the outskirts of the Portland, Oregon sprawl in rural Washougal, Washington. Originally from Salt Lake City, Utah he was educated in Manchester, England and Davidson College, North Carolina. Over the last three years, his research has focused on Vincent van Gogh, in particular, how Vincent's enduring embrace of Christianity manifested itself in his later life and artwork.

Seeing the Last Supper in “Café Terrace at Night”

IAFOR President Dr. Joseph Haldane interviews Jared Baxter.



Joseph Haldane: How did you come to specialize in Vincent van Gogh, one of the world's most loved artists?

Jared Baxter: Yes, that is a very good question, thank you for asking it. It is kind of a funny story. We had a poster of his in our kitchen and we did not have much money to decorate the home. My wife had purchased a number of his prints. In the kitchen she had placed "Café Terrace at Night" and one day I was sort of looking at the painting, wondering what the man at the middle of this painting is doing. I got up for a closer look and it appeared he was a server. Something clicked. He was a servant. I counted the number of diners around him. There were 12. Then I looked directly behind him. There were window mionones that formed a crucifix. I was convinced I was looking at his last supper. I promptly did nothing about it for about 12 or 13 years

Joseph Haldane: When you saw this last supper as you came to see it in this Vincent van Gogh picture, you were struck that this was a clear depiction of the last supper, for you it was an epiphany, indeed epiphany is the right word in the context of your wider work which involves Christianity. At the time you looked at it

you thought that this is the last supper and then you thought Vincent van Gogh, this is a huge figure, surely someone has written about this, surely someone has noticed it.

Jared Baxter: It happened so long ago, some 15 years ago. The Internet was not quite where it is today. I sent out a couple of emails and did not get any replies and did not think about it or worry about it anymore. Then in 2011 the van Gogh museum announced that a portrait long thought to be a self-portrait was the older brother Theo. On the tails of that a new book comes out, the biography claiming that he did not commit suicide and was likely shot and covered up his own murder. So it was then I realized that discoveries were being made about this artist and perhaps I should dig into this last supper theory than I had a little bit further. On doing so I found no other evidence of no other person having this theory. So I thought I would dig in deeper. To me the elements of the last supper are pretty basic. You need to have a Christ, a serving figure, perhaps just a servant, you need to have 12 diners, one of whom was a Judas, a halo is not necessary but it is quite often in there. That's about the only elements that one needs to create a last supper.

Joseph Haldane: This is something of a coup in the academic establishment. Finding out something that a) people are interested in and b) has some validity and traction among the establishment. How have you found the van Gogh establishment reacts to your interpretation?

Jared Baxter: Not very well. Luckily there are about 40 years of scholarship that have shifted and they have discovered that van Gogh was painting in the symbolist form. In particular Madonna and Child. This is pretty well accepted even by Dutchmen themselves. So it was during the same period in Auvers when he painted the Madonna and Child, which he liked framed with two of his sunflowers. He wrote in a letter that they would be like torches or candelabra in his triptych. He was doing the same type of art in Auvers when he painted Café Terrace at night.

Joseph Haldane: So in other words you are arguing that this fits perfectly well with his oeuvre.

Jared Baxter: Exactly! If you were to do a last supper that is what it would look like.

Joseph Haldane: This is your third



IAFOR conference.

Jared Baxter: Yes it is.

Joseph Haldane: The first couple of times as a regular presenter and this time we gave you a bigger platform to discuss some of your ideas. Perhaps you could give us an idea what your presentation is about.

Jared Baxter: Yes, it was a great honor to have a platform this big. So digging into “Café Terrace” gives you an aperture into his world that hasn’t existed before. When you understand that his work had this kind of religious, transfigured Christian work, a whole new vista opens up and I began studying the other paintings, in particular his “Starry Nights” and his most famous Starry Nights at the Museum of Modern Art in New York with its gorgeous swirling skies, huge luminous moon and pulsating stars. There are a lot of theories written about this painting, unlike “Café Terrace” in which very little has been written. There are a number of theories, which have been bandied about for 80 something years and I thought they were all lacking a little bit. So I reached out to a gentleman who is retired now, Professor Emeritus at Carlton College in Minnesota, and he had written a pa-

per that it may be a subjugated Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane and he goes into a lot of detail why he believes this. Because I thought that “Café Terrace” was the last supper this would fit perfectly because after the last supper became Christ in the garden of Gethsemane and he asked me if there was a third painting in starry night over the Room – how does that fit into the overall scheme. It was at that point that I did not know so I went back into my research and I just became overwhelmed by one name that kept on coming up again and again. It was Dante Alighieri. There were so many references in so many places that I finally read Dante and I will tell you it was life changing. The fact that VG led me to Dante was more important than anything else I have done. Anybody who has discovered Dante has to come to terms with himself. There are some pretty amazing things in his poetry.

Joseph Haldane: So Van Gogh led you to Dante and from this study of Christianity has led you to a work, which has been hugely studied, a giant of the art world to a giant of the literary world. So where next?

Jared Baxter: Yeah that is a good question. I would like to bring this re-

search to a broader audience. That has really been my goal for the past three years researching this. The great thing about IAFOR is that it has given me a bigger platform. Having presented my paper at an academic conference in an academic atmosphere where there are peer reviews going on and there are publishing opportunities. It has been a great opportunity for me to grow as an academic. So now I would like to bring it to a broader audience. I have a book, which I am working on which aims to intrigue people, maybe they have heard of VG, maybe they know a little about that he cut off his ear, shot himself. When people go to his museums that are dazzled by his colors and amazed by the textures yet they feel something else, they feel something a little spiritual. They can’t put it into words. I am hoping that maybe I can help them do that.

Jared Baxter, a Featured Speaker at the 2015 Asian Conference on Arts and Humanities (ACAHA 2015), was interviewed in Osaka, Japan, by IAFOR’s President Dr. Joseph Haldane.



BosoZuku

Society, Politics and Terror

The Black Emperors were formed in Tokyo in the 1960s and disbanded officially in 1992. Originally based in Kunitachi, Tokyo, the gang became notorious for their exploits around the city, which included violence and theft as well as more subversive links to organised crime. Between 1975-1976, film director Mitsuo Yanagimachi made his debut feature, *God Speed You! Black Emperor*, a documentary which chronicles the lives of the gang members as they try to come to terms with the responsibility of being a part of a gang with rigid hierarchal structures. The film is a stark portrayal, not just of a generational sub-culture, but of Japanese society itself. The disenfranchised nature of the Black Emperor's membership sees teenagers who have been misunderstood by parents and abandoned by the authorities. But what was it that drove these kids to reject a normal life, and join one of the most hardened bosoZuku gangs in Japan?

Japan of the mid-1970s was a country coming to terms with the internal violence of the previous decades. The

1960s saw multiple issues affecting Japanese society; political scandals, public demonstrations against government policy and the Vietnam War. Add to this, a continually growing nationalist movement, internal fighting between political parties, students, and various pressure groups which led to violent incidents and multiple deaths. One cause of the violence was the U.S. Japan Security Treaty, which was initially signed in 1951 but, despite attempts to stop the ratification, was revised and resigned in 1960. Throughout the 1960s, there were multiple demonstrations against the treaty, these included the organised student and political groups, but for the first time ordinary citizens had mobilised to vent their anger at what they saw as, a threat to peace and the possibility of being involved in a regional war with the U.S. This, as far as the activists were concerned, was a flagrant disregard of democratic ideology.

Up until the early 70s, there was a considerable amount of sympathy towards the activists, particularly the

student movement. Even government treated them with a certain degree of respect, deeming that they were fighting to create a better society. However, as the decade wore on, violence escalated as groups became fragmented. This was mainly due to splintered ideologies within the various factions who vehemently disagreed about courses of action. Some members favoured peaceful demonstrations, whereas others demanded violent opposition. The situation escalated with the advent of the Vietnam War, and saw prominent groups emerge, such as Peace for Viet-Nam! and Citizens Union (Be-hei-ren) and the Committee of Anti-War Youth (Hansen Seinen linkai). However, the separation of groups brought with it various problems, such as the lack of a common goal and, more importantly, an increase in confrontation and violence. This resulted in a loss of public and political support, and due to the frustration of many at the lack of direct action, some student organisations turned to more extreme measures. This led to the formation of communist militant terror groups such as the United Red Army (Rengou Sekigun), and the Japan Red Army (Nihon Sekigun), both advocating violent protest and imminent revolution. The groups went on to commit terror acts such as the Lod airport massacre in 1972 and the Asama-Sansou hostage incident in Karuizawa in 1972. Both incidents resulted in the death of both police and terrorists, but most importantly, the incidents had pushed public patience to the limit, and any support that these group may have had disappeared as the public became weary of this constant violence. Also at this time, crucially, the Japanese



economy had begun to boom, and as people began to experience a relatively comfortable lifestyle, their thoughts drifted from the complex political ideologies of those who, just a few years previously, had been in positions of relative power.

In the 70s, Japan had the third largest GDP, mainly due to economic restructuring which saw a swing away from the reliance on imports and an increase in exporting. However, in such cases, and as people become more affluent, a division was created between those that are part of this upturn. This issue is arguably where Yanagimachi's documentary truly focuses. *God Speed!* features a social class produced from the ashes of Japan's troubles. These are people who belong to neither the political intellectuals or protesters, nor the new prosperous Japan. Within the film, we are witness to families who are in a kind of 'social-limbo'. They exist in a fragmented and ignored underclass, and are stranded in a country where being part of a group is an expected social norm. The director examines how these people grapple with life, and the measures that they will go to be part of something, no matter how distasteful it may be.

The Black Emperors are far removed from any stereotypical representations of motorcycle gangs which are seen in western cinema. There is no sense of the violent but sensitive Brando in *The Wild One* (Benedek, 1953), or the freedom and hedonism of *Easy Rider* (Hopper, 1969). In contrast, *God Speed You! Black Emperor* is a soulless, claustrophobic commentary on the rigid hierarchal social structures, and the lengths that people will go to belong.

Yanagimachi's film is considered to be the definitive Boso-zoku documentary. He chronicles the life of the Black Emperors, following various members around the streets of Tokyo. Filmed

in a cinéma vérité style, the director resists camera movement choosing to just 'point and shoot' the action. Gang members bicker, argue and fight about all manner of issues and at times, these confrontations become extremely uncomfortable. However, despite the films stark portrayal of social issues, there is a sense that something is missing, and we are left with a feeling that we are being denied full-access to the inner workings of 1970s Boso-zoku life. Of course, it is probably fair to assume that the director needed (or was ordered), to be discreet. Links with organised crime for example are non-existent, but it is a commonly known fact that the gangs were working under the auspices of more violent well organised criminal organisations. There is also the notion that once a member reaches a certain age, he is then promoted from a jeans and leather biker, to a sharp-suited 'mobster'. A recent conversation with a well-respected ex-Boso-zoku member, who rode in Hiroshima in the late 70s, revealed that for many members the promise was often better than the reward, "it was about what could be ... of course we made money doing various jobs, but really it was all about power ... to make the leap from the one who executed orders, to one who gave them". Yanagimachi stops shy of a full exposé, we are left wondering 'who is actually pulling the strings'? One of many examples occurs when two Black Emperor members go to buy a new motorcycle. Armed with cash, we are not given any kind of clue as to where this money came from.

What is most confusing however is the hierarchal system, which is employed by the gang. The Black Emperors seem to rely on a well customized and severely rigid 'Feudal type' social hierarchy. The importance of 'member order' is highlighted throughout as bosses reprimand lower order members (often with violence), and younger members stray. For example one junior steals money, a crime,



which is seen as deeply offensive to the older members of the gang, and we are present at his 'trial', where he is barraged with questions, advice and physical abuse. Ultimately, one wonders why anyone would want to forsake one constricting social order, to be a part of another which, for the most part, inflicts more stringent rules with much more severe punishments.

God Speed You! is a documentary, which both fascinates and infuriates. The plight of the kids – the lack of hope, the need to belong – comes across extremely clearly, as does their position (or lack of it), in society. However, the actual inner workings of the gang, where the money comes from, who is funding the Black Emperors, the crimes committed, is completely ignored and leaves you wondering 'what exactly is going on here'? *Eye* will feature a full interview with an ex-Boso-zoku member in a future issue, one which will hopefully 'fill in the gaps' of Yanagimachi's film.

Originally from the UK, Dr Paul Spicer is a media lecturer at Hiroshima Jogakuin University in Japan

Unacknowledged Matricide in T. S. Eliot's *The Family Reunion*



BY KEN CHANG

Commenting on his *The Family Reunion* in 'Poetry and Drama,' T.S. Eliot admits two serious problems he had not solved properly: the Furies and the disruptive perspective of the play.

Eliot complains that the Furies never succeed in being either Greek goddesses or modern spooks and the audience cannot decide whether to see

this drama as a tragedy of the mother or the salvation of the son.

After Eliot revealed he had modeled *The Family Reunion* on Aeschylus's *The Oresteia*, many critics focused on drawing parallels and fussing about the correspondent characters in each plays. Although critic Grover Smith provides explanation of Eumenides as ghosts personifying Harry's animosity

toward both his mother and his wife, he does not pursue further to theorize the theme of matricide. Fellow critic Martha C. Carpentier seems to delve deeper into matricide, but she concluded that the resolved matricide as a transition from paganism to Christianity. In her dealing with matricide, Carpentier dispenses with Amy (mother) to see the play as the salvation of Harry (son). Matricide has not been

adequately explored in comparison with patricide, and I want to employ Melanie Klein's (1988) object relations theory to probe into this theme and accommodate the two problems Eliot encountered. Klein's theory offers a way to simultaneously take Amy and Harry into account without exclusion, and Eliot's unsatisfactory Furies can be seen as embodiment of Harry's mentality. By accommodating Eliot's problems with Kleinian approach, I hope this can bring new light on Eliot's *The Family Reunion* and matricide.

Before proceeding to investigate the relationship between Amy and Harry, we need to ponder on what kind of mother Amy is, she, who made Harry wander around the world for ten years rather than stay at home with her.

Mary and Harry's memory about the hollow tree may shed light on Amy's maternity:

MARY. The hollow tree in what we called the wilderness
HARRY. Down near the river. That was the block house
From which we fought the Indians. Arthur and John.
.....
MARY. They never found the secret.
HARRY. Not then. But later, coming back from school
for the holidays, after the formal reception
And the family festivities, I made my escape
As soon as I could, and slipped down to the river
To find the old hiding place. The wilderness was gone,
The tree had been felled, and a neat summer-house
Had been erected, 'to please the children.'
It's absurd that one's only memory of freedom
Should be a hollow tree in a wood by the river. (52-53)

A hollow tree is the only retreat providing Mary and Harry with the respite from the family pressure, but Amy tyrannically roots out the tree

and establishes another neat summer-house as the manifestation of her all-encompassing control. Forfeiting their pleasant retreat, Amy inhibits them from freely accessing gratification. Amy's act may arouse their stored-up anxiety of deprivation experienced at the first time as weaning. From Klein's point of view, babies react to unpleasant stimuli and the frustration of their pleasure with feelings of hatred and aggression. The babies' sadistic impulse against mother's body not only incurs the sense of guilt but also the fear of a mother's retribution. In babies' fantasies, the hurt mother turns into the persecutor who threatens to dismember and devour babies (Klein, 1988). At the apex of their persecutory anxiety, babies turn to the father for protection. In *The Family Reunion*, the absence of the father figure aggravates this anxiety of being persecuted by the mother. Devoid of the father's protections may result in Harry's wandering, and the absent father may also prompt his insistence on probing into the mystery of his family. For Harry, returning to the Wishwood is being exposed once again to the threat of being in the possession of Amy, because Agatha cogently points out that Amy is identified with the house. In welcoming Harry's return, Amy heartily proclaims that nothing has been changed. Refusing to let go anything in her grip, Amy is the mother who desires to possess her children and keep them dependent on her.

Faced with an intimidating threat, Harry nevertheless chooses to return home. In my view I think he wants not only to investigate the mystery of his family but also to attempt reparation with his mother. Melanie Klein considers that the experiences of suffering, depression and guilt, linked with the greater love for the object, stir up the urge to make this reparation. On his returning home, Harry insists on proclaiming that he pushed his wife off the deck into the sea. About Harry's wife, the only available information is from Amy's description:

She never would have been one of the family,

*She never wished to be one of the family,
She only wanted to keep him to herself
To satisfy her vanity. That's why she dragged him
All over Europe and half round the world
To expensive hotels and undesirable society
Which she could choose herself.*

Being an outsider of his family, Harry's wife serves as a lifeline to help him escape from his family. I think Harry attempts to evade Amy's control by marrying his wife, and the act of marrying empowers him to make him think that he possesses the power to defy his mother. Unfortunately, Harry's marital life repeats the same mode as his childhood with Amy and his wife turns out to be as demanding as Amy. Tinged with a mother's jealousy, Amy's recount may be exaggerated but she acutely captures the essence of their relationship: his wife's desire to dominate and possess Harry. This outcome is predictable in Klein's theoretical framework, because she thinks there cannot establish the successful relationship without the reparation with the mother beforehand (Wieland, 2000). Harry's claim to murder his wife is actually his attempt to show that he is powerful enough to fight against the demanding Amy. Yet the thought of murdering his wife and his mother arouses his sense of guilt, so the appearance of the Furies is the embodiment of his inner feeling. On the one hand he wants to empower himself to live an independent life; on the other hand, he knows this method is an impasse.

Harry's reparation with his mother does not go smoothly. After his insistence on seeing the apparition of the Furies, Amy decides to call up the family doctor Warburton to diagnose Harry. During their meeting, Warburton continually requests Harry to behave normally lest exacerbating Amy's illness. Harry's indignation erupts in his retort:

HARRY. What about my mother?
Everything has always been referred



The hollow tree
in what we called
the wilderness



back to mother.
 When we were children, before we
 went to school,
 The rule of conduct was simply pleas-
 ing mother;
 Misconduct was simply being unkind
 to mother;
 What was wrong was whatever made
 her suffer,
 And whatever made her happy was
 what was virtuous—
 Though never very happy, I remem-
 ber. That was why
 We all felt like failures, before we had
 begun.

.....
 For punishment made us feel less
 guilty. Mother
 Never punished us, but made us feel
 guilty.

Without the interference of the father figure, Amy ascends to be the sole authority determining her children's behavior. Warburton's request reminds Harry of his unpleasant childhood in which the center is around his mother. Providing us with the profound analysis of how Harry's sense of guilt initiates his defiance, Leo Hamalian shows the hostility and distrust circulating between Harry and Amy are actually resulting from a series of affective interactions. Harry's resistance to pleasing Amy induces his sense of guilt, so he desired to be punished to lessen his guilt. He is indeed caught in the dilemma that Amy's chastisement reinforces his hostility but without it he is distressed by his culpability. Melanie Klein observes that at the time the children feel dominated by these hostile impulses and in his mind destroys the mother's goodness and love, they feel not only persecuted by her, but also guilty and bereft of the good object. Although Wishwood is the locus of guilt for Harry (Hamalian, 1977), his return may show his

desire to retrieve the good object. Despite his intention to thwart Harry's urge to investigate the mystery of his family, Warburton's statement accidentally revives Harry's dire memory of family and strengthens his resolution to find out the truth.

WARBURTON. Harry, there's no good probing for misery. There was enough once: but what festered
 Then, has only left a cautery.
 Leave it alone. You know that your mother
 And your father were never happy together:

They separated by mutual consent
 And he went to live abroad. You were only a boy
 When he died. You would not remember.

HARRY. But now I do remember. Not Arthur or John
 They were too young. But now I remember. . .

In his effort to curb Harry from probing into the mystery, Warburton unwittingly helps Harry to express his trauma. From Klein's point of view, the children's early feeling of not knowing has manifold connection. Not yet fully developed intellectually, the overwhelming questions children encountered are only partly conscious by them. Even when they are conscious of the questions, they still cannot adequately express them in words. Klein further construes that this feeling of not knowing accentuates the Oedipus complex. Deprived of the father figure to identify with, Harry cannot resolve his Oedipus complex. The sole presence of Amy enhances the disruptive feeling caused by the disparity between the good and the bad object, because affects, which should be directed to the father transfer to

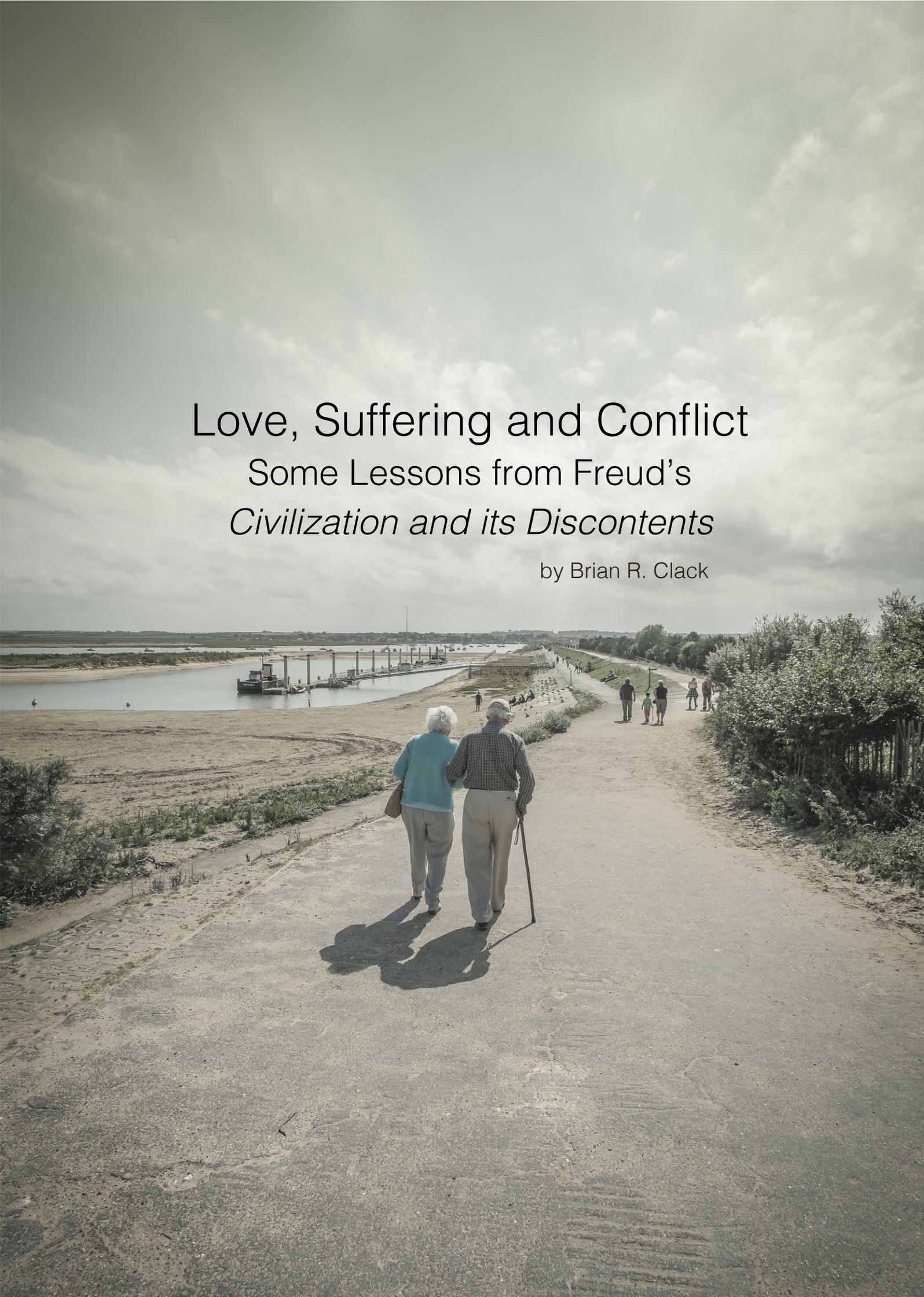
her. After getting closer to the core of the mystery, Harry shows his craving to know whether he shares likeness with his father: "Tell me / Did you know my father at about my present age?" By knowing more about his father, Harry can create a clearer image of the father. Thus, Harry can transfer the affects, which should be directed to his father back to this imaginary paternal image. Without being tainted by the affects, Harry can begin to see Amy in the more justified way. Amy is actually a worn-out mother with only her strong will to keep her going on, and Harry's reparation need to resort to the substitute maternal object.

During the *tete-a-tete* between Agatha and Harry, Agatha reveals to him the hidden family secret, which he searches for a long time. Agatha even admits that she feels Harry in some way hers, because without her help Amy might probably be killed by Harry's father. Agatha stands in as the good object to make the reparation possible and she also brings this dark family secret into the full conscious. Harry's destructive impulse toward his wife is actually the replication from his father, once he knows the origin of this impulse he is freed from its influence. The Furies, which are the embodiment of Harry's inner feelings reappears as the Eumenides, and their transformation shows that Harry is purged from his destructive impulse and finishes his reparation.

Professor Ken Chang teaches at National Cheng-Chi University, Taiwan.

A fully referenced version of this article can be received by contacting the Editor at Eye Magazine.





Love, Suffering and Conflict
Some Lessons from Freud's
Civilization and its Discontents

by Brian R. Clack

Freud's great book *Civilization and Its Discontents* is permeated by a profound pessimism and an attention to the extent and unavoidable presence of suffering and conflict in human life. According to Freud there are three principal sources of suffering. It results: (1) from our own body, doomed to decay and dissolution; (2) from the external world (Freud is here thinking of diseases and natural disasters); and (3) from our relations with other people (we are threatened by their cruelty, violence and faithlessness). (As we will see, our relations with others are actually of an ambivalent nature, since human beings have the capacity both to support us and to bring us low.) Reflection upon these multi-directional sources is enough to make us realize that it is impossible to avoid suffering, and this significantly undermines the very possibility of achieving a state of happiness: 'Life, as we find it,' he writes, 'is too hard for us; it brings us too many pains, disappointments and impossible tasks' (Freud, 1961). What is it that human beings typically do in the face of this unavoidable existential pain? Freud's suggestion is that people adopt one or more of a number of possible strategies that serve to soften the worst blows of life. He refers to these as 'palliative measures', a term, which highlights the essentially hopeless and incurable nature of the human condition: a palliative, after all, is something that *relieves without curing*, something that lessens the effects of far-advanced, severe and curative-unresponsive illnesses.

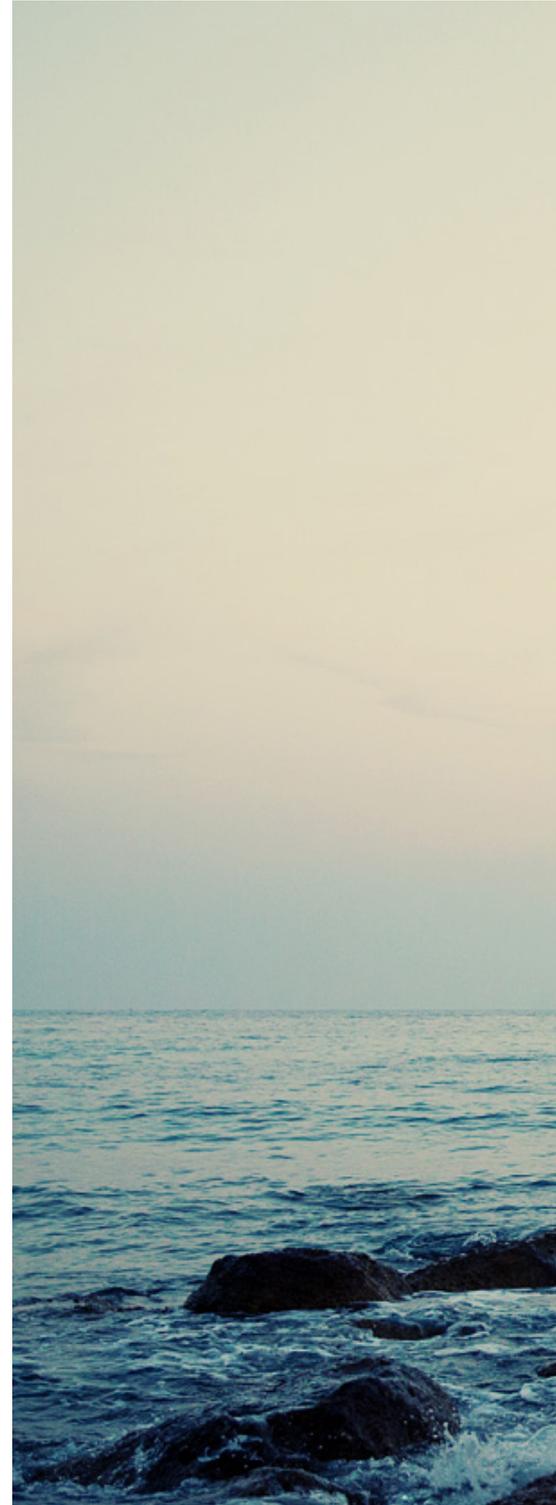
Freud mentions four palliative measures utilized in the total arena of human existence. Firstly, *intoxicants and drugs* (of one variety or another) are employed either to numb oneself to the troubles of existence (narcotics and alcohol can be seen to serve this function) or else to introduce a degree of stimulation into a life felt to be colourless and dull (hallucinogens and stimulants such as cocaine might in this capacity be used). The second strategy is the adoption of *religion*, which (at least on the Freudian interpretation) palliates the most painful aspects of life by, as it were, *re-creating* a picture of the world, so that its 'most unbearable features are eliminated and replaced by others that are in conformity with one's own wishes'

(Freud, 1961). The third palliative is the enjoyment of *art*, the pleasures of which can be felt to diminish the problems of life – or at least to add some kind of value to one's world – though Freud feels that the intensity of aesthetic pleasure is really too mild to make us forget our misery. It is the fourth palliative measure that is to be our principal focus here, and is the one that is, for many, the most treasured of all: *romantic love*. It is the nature, the potential success, and the problematic limitations of love's palliative function that this paper addresses.

I want to say at the outset that I will have nothing to say here about the famous (indeed, the notorious) speculations made by psychoanalysis about the determinants of love in infancy and childhood. I address these matters elsewhere (in my book *Love, Drugs, Art, Religion: The Pains and Consolations of Existence* (Clack, 2014)). My concern, rather, is with a very specific matter: if love has (among other things) the promise of a palliative quality, in what does that quality consist, and are there unpleasant reverberations of love (and of the quest for love) that counterbalance, undermine and even negate its palliating elements? A palliative measure, even in the medical field, need not be an unequivocally beneficent thing, since it is possible that hazardous side-effects flow from it (within palliative medicine one common concern regards the negative effects of the use of opioids). The strategies for coping outlined by Freud have their good points and their bad ones too: the use of a drug may bring intense pleasure (there's no point denying *that*) and yet, as everyone knows, it can lead to physical debilitation and addiction; religion may bring a great sense of comfort, and yet if Freud (and others) are right, it does this at the expense of critical thought and the preservation of an accurate representation of reality. Where then does love stand with regard to its benefits and costs?

We can start with the benefits of love. Freud himself stresses how, in our search for pleasurable experiences, it is sexual love that 'has given us our most intense experience of an overwhelming sensation of pleasure' (Freud, 1961), and that the attainment of this kind of love can therefore be seen to

add considerably to the sum total of a person's enjoyable experiences, thereby counterbalancing the inevitable pains of life. One may find Freud's thinking here base and overly physical, but it is hard to deny that the experience of falling in love – and indeed of remaining in love, *standing* in love – is one of life's most ecstatic feelings, producing in the lover a sense of euphoria and perhaps even a reconciliation to the world as a whole. This point needs to be emphasized. When a person is in love (or has the comfort of a loving relationship) the world seems to



them a better, friendlier place, a glow is cast over the world, and its difficulties and trials seem somehow now more manageable. Contrast that with the experience of one who has no love, or has lost love, in the throes of some dreadful break-up, say: for that person the world is painted in darker colours and obstacles may seem insurmountable. We may remind ourselves of Wittgenstein's famous observation in his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*: 'The world of the happy man is a different one from that of the unhappy man' (Wittgenstein, 1961). It is one of

love's most remarkable qualities that it has this capacity to transform our perception of the world, transforming it – even with all its faults – into something wonderful. Small wonder, then, that people should ardently seek that transformative power of love.

Love is held in such high esteem that philosophers and creative writers have articulated the most dramatic images to capture its beauty and intensity. The classic case is that found in Plato's *Symposium*, in the speech of Aristophanes, in which love is described as

'the desire and pursuit of the whole', two incomplete and broken individuals finding ecstatic wholeness in the experience of *merging* with each other. Aristophanes' account evidently has the character of a myth, original human beings being of an eight-limbed form, and when split in two by a troubled Zeus, each half searches for that part which will restore them to completeness. The view that love constitutes a kind of merging is not the preserve of poetry and myth alone, however. Some important contemporary philosophers (notably Robert



Nozick (1995) and Robert Solomon (2006) have also advanced the view that love is a form of *shared identity* in which two individuals merge together into one united being. (I suppose this has a Biblical warrant: *And they two shall be one flesh* (Mark 10:8).) For our purposes, the most relevant of

ing to one's own' (Singer, 1987). It is clear to see how a loving relationship, modestly thus conceived, could function in an effective palliative function, softening some of life's most keenly felt sufferings. As Nozick has written, 'love places a floor under your well-being; it provides insurance in the face

away. No, the problem with love is that it not untypically *contributes* to suffering. Freud stresses this point when he tells us why it is that 'wise men of every age' have warned against the pursuit of love: 'It is that we are never so defenceless against suffering as when we love, never so helplessly unhappy as when we have lost our loved object or its love' (Freud, 1961). The palliative promise of love is compromised, that is, by the vulnerable position we occupy once we have attached ourselves, and the fate of our happiness, to another person. This situation can produce the most profound suffering. The most extreme of the pains engendered by love would appear to be the conspicuous disturbance of one's mental stability it brings, that feature that has led so many thinkers to describe love as a rather specific kind of madness (in Stendhal's words, as a 'disease of the soul' (Stendhal, 2004)). (One may also wish to add here Plato's depiction as the lover as a person 'who from the very nature of things is bound to be out of his mind' (Plato, 1973).) Beyond that general state, there are the many particular kinds of pain associated with love. Some of these – such as the specific vulnerability produced by opening ourselves up to another and placing our happiness at their mercy – we have already noted, but more can be added. There is, for example, the experience of jealousy in which a disagreeable emotion such as panic ensues from the understanding or suspicion that one's love object has developed (or is in the process of developing) a romantic attachment to another. Then we have the whole range of small anxieties so brilliantly dissected by Roland Barthes in *A Lover's Discourse*: the rising sense of alarm caused by waiting longer than expected for a phone call or at a rendezvous, for example, or the obsessive attention to pauses and phrases in the object's speech, the lover trying to discern whether these indicate a diminution of interest. Other relationships – notably friendships – do not cause such alarm. On the other end of a scale having frenetic anxiety and dreariness as its polarities, one encounters the peculiar pains of domesticity, that setting in which the electrified interaction of two physical beings must, as Balzac noted, 'incessantly contend with a monster which devours everything, that is, familiar-

The most extreme of the pains engendered by love would appear to be the conspicuous disturbance of one's mental stability it brings, that feature that has led so many thinkers to describe love as a rather specific kind of madness (in Stendhal's words, as a 'disease of the soul'). (One may also wish to add here Plato's depiction as the lover as a person 'who from the very nature of things is bound to be out of his mind'.)

the merging accounts is that provided by the psychoanalyst Erich Fromm in his book *The Art of Loving*. Fromm argues that love is best regarded as 'the answer to the problem of human existence' (Fromm, 2006), the thing that uniquely overcomes the pain of our separateness from others, meeting the 'deepest need of man ... to leave the prison of his aloneness' (Fromm, 2006). For Fromm, love *heals* us: the full answer to the unbearable suffering of a separate, disunited existence lies in 'the achievement of interpersonal union, of fusion with another person, in *love*' (Fromm, 2006).

Accounts of the role of love in the mitigation of suffering need not be so dramatic as to stress fusion, of course. One might choose to speak more prosaically of a *joining* of interests (see Singer, 1987) and this, more than the ideal of merging, actually seems to present the truth of love as best experienced: two distinct persons, retaining their identities, and yet joining intimately together in a shared experience of life, each one supporting the other through struggles, false steps and illness, each one celebrating the other's joys and triumphs, each taking pleasure in the other's mental and physical being, and (as Irving Singer puts it) 'in general attend[ing] to the being of a person reciprocally attend-

of fate's blows' (Nozick, 1995). This 'floor' would seem to be achieved both by the presence of another who takes an active role in securing our comfort and by the creation of a secure little world – a home – functioning as a shield against life's troubles, 'an island of coupled safety in a lonely world' (Appignanesi, 2011). The at-homeness thus experienced contrasts markedly from the cold and sometimes dangerous nature of the world outside and serves as a refuge from it. Beyond that, it may just be – as attachment theorists such as John Bowlby (1971) say – that human beings in the main seek the closeness of another person, such closeness instilling both comfort and a greater happiness in pleasant experiences. Hume's thoughts are here pertinent. Noting that the mind is insufficient for its own entertainment, and that the pleasure of the company of an intimate causes the heart to be elevated, he saw how vital the need for a companion is, in days both happy and sad: 'Every pleasure languishes when enjoy'd a-part from company, and every pain becomes more cruel and intolerable' (Hume, 1888).

Before one gets too carried away, however, it needs to be noted that love is not an unequivocally joyful experience, nor is its relation to suffering unambiguously that of taking our pains



ity' (Balzac, 2005). Finally, hovering in the background of even the most successful of relationships, there is the grueling recognition that this love will one day come to an end, when death separates two people who longed so fervently never to part. 'Remember all along', Joseph Brodsky hauntingly tells us, 'that there is no embrace in this world that won't finally unclasp' (Brodsky, 1995).

The problems of love ultimately come down to the ambivalent nature of our relations with other people, something touched upon at the very beginning of this paper. It was the great pessimistic philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer who best caught the character of this ambivalence in his parable of the porcupines:

'One winter's day, a number of porcupines huddled together quite closely

in order through their mutual warmth to prevent themselves from being frozen. But they soon felt the effect of their quills on one another, which made them again move apart. Now when the need for warmth once more brought them together, the drawback of the quills was repeated so that they were tossed between two evils [i.e. the cold of loneliness and the pain of togetherness]' (Schopenhauer, 1974, volume 2).

This seems to me to sum up quite perfectly the problem of human relationships. We seek support from other people, and hope to receive from them comfort when we encounter pain in our lives. Very often we receive that support, that comfort, that love. And yet people – particularly those people in whom we have invested love – have within their power the most dreadful ability to hurt us. And they frequent-

ly do. How many people are broken up by love? How many novels, poems, and songs are dedicated to that theme? As Freud rightly points out, if our desire is to escape from pain, or at the very least to palliate it, then the pursuit of love may not be the right option: it is, after all, a high risk strategy. We might do better to immerse ourselves in the more reliable, less volatile, joys of friendship, or of art. As Napoleon memorably observed, 'In love, the only victory is *escape*'.

Dr. Brian Clack is an Associate Professor at the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of San Diego. His research has focused predominantly on issues in the philosophy of religion. He is the author of *Love, Drugs, Art, Religion: The Pains and Consolations of Existence* (Ashgate, 2014).

Japanese Subs for Australia



The Abbott Liberal-National Party (LNP) Coalition government of Australia is currently in search of a replacement for the controversial Collins-class conventional submarine fleet of the Royal Australian Navy (RAN). Coincidentally, defence ties between Australia and Japan have become ever closer in recent times, particularly under the respective conservative governments of Prime Ministers Tony Abbott and Shinzo Abe. Following the signing of the *Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of Japan Concerning the Transfer of Defence Equipment and Technology* in July 2014, prospects are increasing that Japanese Soryu-class submarines may be exported to Australia in future.

Buying submarines from Japan would

be the most expensive single military procurement in Australian history, and would break an election promise by the LNP to continue the manufacture of submarines in Australia. The issue has thus already generated considerable political conserversy. If it goes ahead, this decision will have important implications for the domestic politics of both Australia and Japan, and for the strategic geopolitics of the region. Before exploring these ramifications further, the historical background of the procurement of submarines for the RAN will be examined.

History of the RAN Submarine Fleet

Following the foundation of the RAN in 1911, two 'E-class' submarines, HMAS AE1 and AE2, were added to the complement of the new Brit-

ish-supplied Australian fleet in 1914, just before the breakout of the First World War. The AE1 was lost on September 14th 1914 with all hands, when she disappeared during a patrol off the Duke of York Islands, during the campaign to take German New Guinea (Foster, 1977: 19-20).

The AE2 participated in the beginning of the Gallipoli campaign in April 1915, managing to penetrate the Dardanelles and disrupt Turkish shipping. However, she was soon damaged by Turkish defences, and was scuttled by her crew, who were captured. These two actions therefore brought an early end to Australia's fledgling wartime submarine fleet; the AE1 and AE2 were the only vessels lost in action by the RAN during the Great War (AWM, 2014). To replace

Developments in Australian Defence Procurement/Japanese Defence Export Policy

BY CRAIG MARK



the lost submarine fleet, Britain supplied five 'J-class' boats postwar, deployed between 1919 and 1924, before they were scrapped to save costs (RAN, 2013).

Australia found itself under threat from the submarines of the Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN), most famously an attack by midget submarines on Sydney Harbour (and at Newcastle) in May-June 1942 (Ham, 2010: 289). 23 allied ships were sunk in Australian waters in 1942-43 due to the IJN's anti-shipping campaign. The RAN did not operate any submarines during the Second World War. However, the United States (US) Navy based a large number of boats at Australian ports, particularly Brisbane and Fremantle, as part of its highly successful campaign to blockade Japan (Ryan,

2013: 70-71).

During the Cold War, with Australia involved at the height of the Vietnam War, the Australian government decided to reintroduce the Submarine Service of the RAN, again supplied by Britain. Six 'O-class' boats were ordered, and eventually deployed between 1967 and 2000 (Johnman & Murphy, 2003:166, 174-176). The Oberon-class submarines were fitted with very quiet diesel-electric engines, and were later fitted with US-supplied weapons systems, including the Harpoon anti-ship missile. As well as their main deterrence role of potentially interdicting enemy shipping and maintaining naval superiority in the approaches to Australia, the O-class boats conducted surveillance and intelligence gathering patrols in

East Asian and Southeast Asian waters (SIA, 2014).

The Collins Class Saga

The procurement project to replace the O-class boats followed the defence policy concept of improving defence self-reliance, developed under the Hawke Labor government. This had the aim of reducing Australia's reliance on foreign-supplied military equipment and weapons systems, while strengthening the base of the domestic manufacturing industry. Maintaining such an industry thus brought political as well as strategic and economic advantages, allowing governments to publicise their role in promoting Australian manufacturing jobs. In pursuit of this goal as the Cold War wound down, in 1987 the Australian Submarine Corporation

(ASC) was established in Adelaide, South Australia (SA), as a government-owned corporation (Fruhling, 2014: 541).

The design selected to replace the O-Class was termed the Collins Class, designed by Swedish company Kockums, to be constructed by the ASC. The Collins was the second-largest conventional boat at the time, with a crew complement of 58, a range of 11,500 nautical miles, and an endurance of 70 days. Construction of the Collins began in 1990, with the first boat delivered in 1996 (under the Howard Coalition government). The final sixth boat was delivered in 2003, at a final cost of \$5.071 billion, making it one of the most expensive Australian defence procurement projects. The Collins class is due to continue service until 2025, necessitating the current search for its replacement (Davies, 2007: 65,67).

However, the Collins class project soon became plagued with technical faults, which led to delivery delays, and damaged the reputation of the ASC. There were faults in the US-designed Rockwell combat system software, defects in the hull's welding, persistent engine failures, and most worrying for a submarine, a high noise signature. Repairing these faults saw each boat being delivered well behind schedule, ranging between 18 and 41 months late. Crewing the boats has also been a constant problem, with a shortage of trained crews, reflecting the higher standards required and more difficult conditions endured in the Submarine Service, long considered an elite arm of the RAN. The lack of available personnel meant that only three boats out of six could be fully manned at a time, with only two boats fully operational at a time on average. Nevertheless, once its problems were finally rectified, the Collins proved to be a highly capable diesel-electric submarine, enabling the RAN to have a long distance patrol capability of up to at least a month on station (Harrap, 2012).

In 2009, the Rudd Labor government

issued its Defence White Paper, outlining plans to acquire twelve submarines to replace the Collins (Crane, 2011:70). This highly ambitious and expensive goal of doubling the RAN's submarine fleet was confirmed in the follow-up 2013 Defence White Paper. While not yet embarking on a tender process to select a replacement design, the Labor Party committed to continuing domestic construction of the replacement submarines by the ASC (MfoD, 2013).

Australia-Japan Security Cooperation

The election of the Abbott LNP Coalition government in 2013 has seen a major policy shift in the replacement process for the Collins, with the prospect of submarines being bought directly from Japan emerging as the most likely option to be pursued. This potential development has emerged as part of the growing trend of closer defence and security cooperation between Japan and Australia in recent times, a generally bipartisan policy which has been boosted even further by the Abbott government.

Following the beginning of cooperation between Australia and Japan in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations in the 1990s, the Trilateral Strategic Dialogue (TSD) talks between Japan, Australia, and their mutual core ally the US were first held at the senior official level in 2002. This was upgraded to ministerial level TSD meetings in 2006, and leaders' meetings from 2009. The Japan-Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation (JDSC) was then signed in March 2007, followed by regular '2+2' talks between defence and foreign ministers (Walton, 2012: 22-23). The Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) was signed between Australia and Japan in May 2010, further increasing the level of defence and security cooperation, which by this stage included regular joint military exchanges and exercises, particularly in maritime operations (Tow, 2012 : 152). The Information Security Agreement (ISA) followed

in May 2012, upgrading intelligence sharing and cooperation between the two countries (Anno, 2012: 53-54).

Diplomatic, trade and security ties between Australia and Japan then deepened ever further, following the election of conservative governments in both countries: Shinzo Abe returned as Prime Minister in December 2012, leading the LDP, and Tony Abbott in Australia from September 2013. Abbott's visit to Japan in April 2014 finally saw the conclusion of a Free Trade Agreement (FTA), the Japan-Australia Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), which saw a partial reduction in a range of tariffs. The EPA was complemented by a concurrent Defence Technology Sharing Treaty, confirmed during Abe's reciprocal visit to Australia in July 2014 (DFAT, 2014).

Soryu For Australia?

The way was therefore opened up to potentially allow Australia to purchase Japanese military equipment, including Japan's latest model submarine, the Soryu class. The Soryu (Blue Dragon) is considered one of the most advanced conventional boats in the world, with five in service with the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) since 2009, and five more planned (out of a total submarine fleet of 18 boats). It has a complement of 65, with its range and endurance still classified, but estimated to be greater than that of the Collins. The lithium-ion battery-driven propulsion system is of particularly exceptional pioneering quality, allowing a greater operational range than standard diesel-electric propulsion. The Soryu is jointly manufactured by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries and Kawakasi Shipbuilding Corporation in Kobe (Ryan, 2012: 27-28).

Should the Coalition government proceed with the purchase of the Soryu, this would break a 2013 election campaign promise, made by then Defence spokesperson Senator David Johnston, that submarines would continue to be constructed in Australia.

lia. Upon election, the Abbott LNP government stated that the decision on which model to replace the Collins could take up to 18 months, and has so far yet to be confirmed (Barnes-Jenkins, 2014).

As well as the Soryu, potential tenders for local construction by the ASC could possibly come for European models, from Sweden, France, Germany or Spain. The 'nuclear option', of purchasing American nuclear-powered submarines is not really viable, despite the strategic advantages this could bring; apart from the expense of purchase, maintenance would have to be done in the US, given the lack of facilities to service nuclear reactors in Australia. Overshadowing these obstacles, having nuclear submarines in the RAN's fleet would be too politically controversial (Radford, 2013).

The purchase of Japanese submarines would probably be the cheapest option, estimated at around \$20 billion, instead of potentially up to \$36 billion, if an overseas tender is locally constructed; even so, it would still be the most expensive single military purchase in Australian history. Japan therefore remains the mostly likely favoured option for the Abbott govern-

ment, for economic, as well as geostrategic and alliance reasons (Herman, 2014).

Any decision to purchase submarines directly from Japan, instead of producing them locally, would confirm the trend of the overall decline in Australian manufacturing, with subsequent job losses; an inevitable development without ongoing government subsidies. The ASC would then have to shift to maintenance, and surface warship construction, to remain viable. The question remains whether the domestic shipbuilding industry of Australia is ultimately economically unviable in the long-term, as proved the case with the (multinational-owned) car industry (Cowan, 2014).

Domestic Australian Political Implications

An inquiry into the prospective Japanese submarine purchase was held by the Australian Senate in October-November 2014, hearing statements from various interested parties. The ASC claimed that overseas sourcing of submarines would be an overall economic loss to Australia's GDP in the long term, eventually undermining any short-term savings that

might otherwise be made. The majority report, made by non-Government Senators, ultimately recommended that submarine construction remain in Australia, after a competitive tender process. The dissident minority report, by government Senators, called to keep the Soryu option open (Senate, 2014: 34-35, 81-84).

The Japanese option has thus always been strongly resisted by the Federal Opposition's Australian Labor Party (ALP), and its traditional support base in the trade union movement, particularly the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union (AMWU), whose members are most numerous employed by the ASC. Reflecting the divisions this issue has opened up within the Coalition, Liberal MPs based in South Australia have also been pressing for the Australian option to be pursued, citing the benefits that infrastructure investment will deliver in the long-term, offsetting higher initial construction costs compared to a direct overseas purchase. Also, local servicing would provide greater strategic security, reducing dependence on offshore supply and maintenance (Siegel, 2014).

For his part, Prime Minister Abbott





has stated that he wants the ‘very best’ submarines, ‘at the best possible price’, where the country of origin should not have priority over quality and cost; indicating favouritism towards Japan. This favourable direction was given further weight during a visit to Japan by then Defence Minister Senator David Johnston in October 2014, where a formal request was made for Japan to cooperate with Australia on a range of military technology, potentially including submarines. Former Japanese Defense Minister Akinori Eto reciprocated this request, claiming that Japan wished to proceed further in deepening its overall defence and security cooperation with Australia, as it was a ‘special relationship’, needing ‘special support’ (Carney, 2014).

Following this trip, Johnston said there was no progress on overseas tenders for locally produced submarines, indicating that the release of the next Defence White Paper due in 2015 would confirm the decision for the Collins’ replacement. However, Johnston’s position was severely weakened after making a gaffe during a Senate Question Time, when he declared he would not trust the ASC ‘to build a canoe!’ (Norman, 2014)

While Johnston quickly apologised for

this statement, claiming it was merely a ‘rhetorical flourish’, it was a likely contributing factor towards a defeat for the Coalition in a by-election for the South Australian parliament soon after; this result secured majority State government for the ALP. Johnston was further undermined by admissions he had not attended meetings of the National Security Committee, as he ‘had nothing to offer’. Details were also leaked of expensive dining bills incurred by his office at taxpayers’ expense, while the Abbott government was pledging deep cuts to the Federal budget, including subinflationary increases to the real wage levels of Australian Defence Force personnel (a decision later overturned, under pressure from the public and minority party Senators) (Taylor, 2014). Pressure on the Abbott government has particularly come from South Australian Independent Senator Nick Xenophon, who is demanding an open tender to ensure local production of European models. Xenophon has effectively accused Abbott of already making a deal with Abe, which would be a violation of the open tender process, as well as breaking the 2013 election promise guaranteeing local production of submarines (Kerin, 2014).

Treasurer Joe Hockey has declared an

open tender will not happen, because there is ‘no time’; a remarkable statement, given how tenders are usually such a long, drawn-out and carefully-considered process. Hockey’s claim for the necessity of a truncated tender decision has been contradicted by the AMWU, the Australian Industry Group (the major manufacturing industry lobby group), and other defence industry commentators. In order to buttress their case for local production, they have raised doubts that the larger Soryu is not the most suitable for Australian conditions, with the smaller European boats being more preferable for the continuing mission of the RAN’s Submarine Service; maintaining an interdiction capacity in the approaches to Australia’s sea lanes, and covert reconnaissance and intelligence gathering in Southeast Asian waters. European manufacturers have also maintained their tenders would be price competitive with the Japanese (APDR, 2014).

Being consistently behind in opinion polls, particularly after the poorly-received and unpopular Federal budget, in an attempt at a political circuit-breaker, Abbott carried out his first Cabinet reshuffle on December 21, 2014. Johnston was unsurprisingly dumped, given his poor handling of

the submarine issue, and his lacklustre performance overall, ending his ministerial career. Former Social Security Minister Kevin Andrews now holds the Defence portfolio; considered a hard-right social conservative, Andrews has already made an embarrassing start, with revelations of past admissions he had 'no interest' in defence affairs (Aston, 2014). The appointment of Andrews as Defence Minister is not likely to change the preference for Japan to supply submarines, as the process is generally considered as being driven by the Prime Minister's Office, with Prime Minister Abbott having a close interest in continuing to deepen Australia's security relationship with Japan, aided by his personal friendship with Prime Minister Abe (Woodley, 2014).

The Labor Opposition is likely to continue to try to block any decision to purchase the Soryus, by legislative means if possible. Labor has so far used the Senate's processes to attempt to force the government to accept an open tender. If the ALP and the minor parties and Independents are able to legislate for a tender in the Senate, Abbott might then be forced to resubmit legislation in the Lower House of Representatives, in order to continue with a truncated tender process which could quickly allow the Soryu purchase to go ahead. Should the ALP return to government following national elections due in 2016, Labor would also likely break any contracted agreement the Abbott LNP government makes with Japan. This political uncertainty could be enough to put the Soryu purchase in doubt (News Ltd, 2014).

Political Implications for Japan and the Region

The potential sale of Soryus to Australia also has great significance for Japanese politics and foreign policy. Securing the sale would be the first postwar export of a major combat weapons system by Japan, confirming its shift towards a more active role in international security affairs. The long-held 'Three Principles' restric-

tions on military exports, self-imposed due to the pacifist Article 9 clause of the constitution, started to ease under the previous Democratic Party of Japan government; these have further loosened under Abe's LDP government. Sales of defence equipment, particularly technology transfers such as advanced sensors and communication components, have already been made to the US and UK (BBC, 2014). After decades of supplying the SDF as their sole customer, Japanese weapons manufacturers have been longing to expand their share of the global arms market (McNeill, 2014).

Easing defence exports is merely part of Shinzo Abe's overall direction towards allowing more active deployment of the SDF. His avowed policy of reinterpreting the constitution to allow Japan to participate in collective self-defence with allied countries has already been approved by Cabinet, and has been claimed as part of the LDP's ruling mandate, re-confirmed by winning the early snap election recently held on December 14, 2014. However, public opinion in Japan remains dubious about proceeding down such a path of an expanded overseas role for the SDF, and also about any related increase in military exports (Mainichi, 2014).

This more assertive Japanese defence and foreign policy is firmly supported by Japan's primary ally (and mutual ally of Australia) the US, which is encouraging the sale of Soryus to Australia. Closer security ties between Australia and Japan complements the American goal of a 'pivot' of the majority of its armed forces being deployed to the Asia-Pacific region, to ensure ongoing regional hegemony. Such cooperation has already been seen in development and servicing agreements for the multi-national F-35 Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) project (despite concerns over the JSF's cost overruns and capability), confirmed in the latest leaders' meeting of the TSD, on the sidelines of the last G20 Leaders' Summit in Brisbane (Nikkei, 2014). There are also concerns that Japan's

potential entry into the international market for advanced weapons systems will only fuel the increasing conventional arms race under way in the Asia-Pacific region (Bateman, 2011: 73-77). From the perspective of Japan, the US, security partners including Australia, and ASEAN states such as the Philippines, Singapore and Vietnam, an expanding SDF and Japanese defence export industry would contribute to countering the rapid military buildup of China's People's Liberation Army, whose Naval branch includes a 71-strong submarine fleet. North Korea has also launched its first ballistic missile submarine, raising fears about escalating proliferation of its nuclear weapons. (Business Spectator, 2014).

Conclusions

The potential export of Japanese submarines to Australia therefore has extremely important implications, for Australian and Japanese domestic politics, as well as for strategic stability in the Asia-Pacific region as a whole. If it goes ahead, the sale of Soryus to Australia would be first major weapons systems export from Japan since the Second World War. Such a move is defended by allies of Japan, particularly the US and Australia, as improving general security cooperation and the interoperable capabilities of their armed forces, which will deliver greater regional security overall.

However, this view discounts the potential for an escalating arms race ultimately undermining the peace and stability of the Asia-Pacific. It also raises important questions over the political integrity of the Abe and Abbott governments, if they proceed with a defence procurement policy which clearly violates the wishes of their respective electorates, and undermines the general public interest.

Craig Mark, is an Associate Professor at Kwansai Gakuin University, Japan. Dr Mark is the Editor of the IAFOR Journal on Politics and law and is a member of the IAFOR Advisory Board.

The 10000 Hour Rule and What it Means for Language Teaching

By Frances Shiobara



How many times have parents of bilingual children been told how lucky they are? “Children just pick it up, don’t they?”

How is this picking up taking place – through osmosis?

Although it must seem that there is something in the genes, in fact, there is no magic formula, it’s just down to practice – hours and hours of practice. There is no special skill needed to become an expert at a language. According to Noam Chomsky (1965) we are predisposed to learn language, in his Innateness Hypothesis he states that even children with an IQ of 50 can acquire a language. If human beings grow up under normal conditions (not conditions of extreme deprivation), then they will always develop a language (Chomsky, 1965). Although this appears to be true for the first language, it is certainly not true that

all human beings acquire a second language. The problem is how second language teachers can best recreate the conditions under which all children acquire their first language. Erikson, Prietula, & Cokely (2007) studied experts across many fields, they found that whatever the field of expertise one thing was identical; all of the experts had put in about ten years of “deliberate” practice. Ten years was translated into 10,000 hours of deliberate practice. This was later popularized by Gladwell in his book *Outliers* (2008). And more recently Syed (2011) applied this idea to sport. In this paper I would like to examine what this means for learning a second language. What is meaningful practice? How many hours of meaningful practice do you need to become fluent in a second language? With this knowledge instructors and learners can gain insight into the best way to become an expert in a second lan-

guage.

What is an Expert in a Second Language?

Native-like proficiency in a second language might be construed to be an expert, but this is an unrealistic goal, and very few language learners need to attain this level of language learning. Jackson and Kaplan (1999) refer to “language proficiency” as the ability to get things done in a foreign language. Other researchers have defined proficiency as “functional bilingualism” (Archibald et al, 2006 cited in Eaton, 2012). For the majority of Japanese students of English, the ability to get things done in a foreign language is a good goal.

How Many Hours Do You Need to Learn a Second Language?

Malcolm Gladwell (2008) stated in his book *Outliers* that 10,000 hours are needed to become a specialist at

anything. Gladwell was actually using the 10,000 hour rule to show how some people succeed in becoming extraordinary, what he calls an outlier. Gladwell hypothesizes that the huge number of hours of practice that Bill Gates put in as a child was what made him a genius computer programmer. In his book *Bounce* (2011) Matthew Syed says that 10,000 hours of meaningful practice are needed to become an expert athlete. It is not realistic to say that everyone needs 10,000 hours to become an expert language learner, it is also clear that in language learning students have different goals and gaining native speaker like second language ability is not realistic for most learners.

There are many variables, such as distance from the native language, age and language aptitude. In terms of foreign language learning, Jackson and Kaplan's (1999) definition of proficiency as "The ability to get things done" is a good one, in this way it is possible that our students do not need 10,000 hours of practice to become experts. Jackson and Kaplan (1999) estimated that with native English language speakers in The Foreign Service Institute it could take as little as 600 hours to become proficient in languages closely cognate with English, such as French and German, but exceptionally difficult languages such as Japanese and Chinese could take 2200 hours. It should be emphasized that the students in The Foreign Service Institute are all highly motivated with prior knowledge of more than one language (Jackson & Kaplan, 1999). I would like to show that in language learning anyone who practices enough will become proficient. Archibald and a team of researchers at the University of Calgary found that "Learning a second language for 95 hours per year for six years will not lead to functional bilingualism and fluency in the second language. Expectations must be realistic." (Archibald et al., 2007 cited in Eaton, 2011) This is roughly equivalent to Japanese Junior and Senior High School students. Although it is probable that Japanese learners

of English do not need as much as 10,000 hours, they need more than 2000 and a lot more than the 720 hours that they receive in Junior and Senior High School at present, even if we assume that the time spent in the classroom is meaningful input.

It is very difficult to estimate how much language practice a child gets in their native language, and this will vary greatly depending on their environment and upbringing. For ease of calculation, let's say that a baby spends about ten hours a day listening to a language, and trying to produce it. In a year they would spend 3650 hours practicing a language. To get to 10,000 hours of practice would take about 3 years. The majority of children by the age of three are communicating quite fluently with caregivers and friends in their first language. They have also internalized grammatical structures and are creating original language, not just repeating what their caregivers have said. What is more, they accomplished all this whilst learning a plethora of motor skills from walking to catching a ball.

When talking about learning Chinese, Ollie Linge (2012) states that we cannot say that someone has been learning a language for six years. The number of years is irrelevant, we must measure the number of hours of language study. If you are going to a language class once a week, you can expect it to take about two hundred years to get 10,000 hours of practice. It is not only hours, but also frequency of study. People remember things better the following day than one week later, so that intensive study is better than once a week. When people bemoan the fact that they are studying a foreign language, but they are not making much headway, the answer is simple math, they are getting there, just very slowly.

What is Meaningful Practice?

The second argument that Syed (2011) makes is that it is not just any practice, but 'meaningful practice', that makes the difference. Meaning-

ful practice is when you are constantly pushing yourself to improve. Syed (2011) uses the example of Olympic athletes training, constantly trying to run faster or hit the ball harder. On the other hand he uses the example of driving a car as non-meaningful practice. Many people have spent 10,000 hours driving a car, but at some point they stop getting any better, this is because although they are driving, it is not meaningful practice, in that they are not trying to get any better. With young children in their first language 'meaningful practice' is made meaningful by the fact that children really want to understand and to communicate their desires. Very quickly this interaction becomes more complex with the children negotiating with their caregivers to get what they want. The interaction is meaningful and endlessly varied. Children will start a sentence not really knowing how they will finish it. In struggling to do better we improve in everything especially language. In a classroom environment, the activities are carefully controlled so that students can practice structures that they have already learned, but what they really need is to be pushed to produce more than they believe possible. Jackson and Kaplan (1999) found that there is no one right way to teach (or learn) languages, nor is there a single right syllabus. Spolsky (1989) states that different ways of teaching and activities work with different groups of students and students' needs change over time. Thus the teaching methodology is probably not the deciding factor in whether or not students become fluent in a foreign language.

In 2013 Japan was ranked 22nd out of 54 countries on English proficiency, (EF EPI, 2012) this is one of the lowest rankings among industrialized countries and very poor considering the amount of money spent on language education in Japan. The biggest difference between Japan and the five top ranked countries (Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark and the Netherlands) is that in those countries nearly all television programs are

shown in the original language, which is usually English. Much of the reading is also done in English rather than translate into their own language. In this way, Scandinavians and the Dutch get far more input than purely classroom time. Not only that, but the input they are receiving is meaningful, they want to understand what they are reading and they want to enjoy their favorite television shows.

Problems with Japan's English Education

Most children in public Junior High School study English for about three hours a week, which adds up to 360 hours over 3 years. High School is a similar amount, so by the end of High School we can see that students have studied English for about 720 hours. This is woefully short of the 2200 hours necessary to get things done in a foreign language (Jackson & Kaplan, 1999), and the equivalent amount of input of a 3-month-old baby! Even if you assume that they spend time at home studying English, it will not be near the necessary amount of hours. When looking at these numbers it is no longer surprising that there are not many people who become fluent in a foreign language by studying at school, it is a miracle that there are any at all!

Some students do become proficient, but they have presumably spent many hours studying on their own at home or through extra-curricula English classes.

When we start looking at meaningful practice, we see that this is also lacking. The vast majority of Junior High School and High School teachers are still using a form of grammar translation, which provides little motivation or negotiation. Compared to a child trying to persuade their mother to let them play in the park, students have no desire or need to communicate. Most classes are made up of repetition and grammar explanations given in Japanese.

Krashen (1982) said that for students to acquire a language that the input needs to be at a level of $i+1$, which means that the input should be slightly more difficult than the students can currently understand. The curriculum in Japanese Junior and Senior High Schools advances much too quickly for the majority of students, making the input too difficult for most students, who lose interest and stop studying.

Solutions

The situation seems hopeless. The vast majority of English teachers enthusiastically try to teach students and prepare effective materials, but if at the end of it all students will have less than one tenth of the input needed to become proficient, what hope is there? Perhaps the language classroom should be regarded as an area in which students can be introduced to new concepts, explicit grammar teaching and error correction, but the bulk of their language practice must be done outside the classroom.

Ellis (1991) found that students learnt language rules and were more successful using them when taught explicitly. A combination of explicit teaching and implicit learning is probably most effective. As educators we need to find ways to encourage and motivate our students to study outside the classroom, rather than focusing on classroom activities. Autonomous learning is becoming increasingly popular in universities, but it needs to be pushed more. Some teachers do not give homework due to the extra work it will create for the teacher, but without studying outside the classroom, any language learning efforts will be slow and inevitably unsuccessful. Learning a language needs to be viewed more like learning a musical instrument than studying a subject. Without practice you cannot become proficient. Teachers must encourage this practice, it is a rare case that anyone, let alone a child, will study without encouragement and some sort of external motivation.

Autonomous Learning and Self-Access Centers

In the last few decades more and more emphasis has been placed on autonomous language learning. To aid autonomous learning many universities have set up self access learning centres. Dincer, Yesil Yurt, and Goksu (2010) found that classrooms have rules that sometimes do not match with student preferences. By allowing students to study autonomously, students can find their own best learning style, although learners need some help to learn autonomously, which is where self-access learning centres are important as they give these students opportunities for autonomous learning. This autonomous learning can take many forms, but the most common are extensive reading, extensive listening and online practice.

It has long been shown by the work of various researchers that extensive reading programs can make a huge difference in the proficiency of language learners (Cutting, 2011). In a study of university students by Williams (2008) it was found that students who participated in an extensive reading program for a year gained on average 33.5 points on the TOEFL test. It is hard to know how many hours of extensive reading students did, but we can certainly see that the gains are significant. If a student is reading a graded reader for 30 minutes every day this means they can get about 180 hours in a year. If this were done over six years of Junior High School and High School the amount of meaningful input would double. The reason I call this meaningful input is because of the nature of reading, the effort to understand the ideas of the story and put your own interpretations on it make the experience meaningful. It is probably not as good as the negotiation that takes place between a child and caregiver, but it is a definite improvement on translation.

Recently there have been more and more proponents of extensive listening. I would say that this has the

same advantages as extensive reading, although there is not as much quantitative evidence for extensive listening. More time spent with meaningful practice the better you will get. In the literature this has focused on students listening to stories, often audio recordings of graded readers, I would like to suggest that watching television could also be a valuable form of input. Listening to stories for 30 minutes each day also leads to about 1000 hours of meaningful practice during the Junior High School and High School years. A close friend of mine with two Japanese parents is very fluent at English despite having never lived in an English speaking country for more than a few weeks. She told me that as a child her father bought her and her sister some Disney videos. These were from the United States and were only in English. He said that if they wanted to watch television they would have to watch these English videos. The children loved the videos and would rather watch them in English than not at all, so spent hours and hours of extensive listening. By High School she and her sister were winning English speech contests. The University of Michigan Health System (2012) estimated that children ages 6-11 spend about 28 hours a week in front of the television. I am not an advocate of children spending hours in front of the television, but if they are doing it anyway, could we not encourage some of it in a foreign language and use it to their advantage?

Study Abroad

Studying abroad is a very effective way to get many hours of foreign language practice. Freed (1995) stated that there are numerous versions of studying abroad, with or without formal language tuition. Other important factors are whether the students spend time with fellow L1 speakers, and whether students stay with a host family, but for the purpose of this article I am just going to assume that students have access to English for the entirety of their period abroad. Studying abroad will give you a possible fifteen hours of practice a day,

including class, chatting to friends and communicating with your host family. One month in a homestay program could be the equivalent of your entire time at Junior High School. This is also super powered input as it contains all the negotiation and motivation that a young child feels when trying to communicate with their caregiver. As Swain (1985) argues “production will aid acquisition only when the learner is pushed.” Swinton (1983), reported a 52.3 (12%) total point gain on the TOEFL test for students enrolled for a semester (i.e., approximately 15 weeks) in an intensive English program at San Francisco State University. Although Ellis and Tanaka (2003) found that the average TOEFL improvement in a 15-week study abroad program was only 18.55 points on the TOEFL test, they put this down to students staying in monolingual settings and inevitably not practicing English as much outside the classroom. This is still a significant improvement, and it supports my hypothesis that it is hours of practice that is the deciding factor in students’ language improvement. The students who were not practicing English outside the classroom did not improve as much on their TOEFL scores. This also emphasizes the need to put students in a multilingual setting when they study abroad. Students need to be placed individually in homestay families with maximum opportunities for meaningful English practice. Sending students abroad to study in monolingual classes and stay together in dormitories will result in very little more than studying in an intensive English course in Japan.

I have listed three of the most common and easily accessible ways to spend many hours practicing English. There are many other opportunities, especially on the Internet, using Second Life and other virtual environments, playing online English-computer games and just surfing the web in English. Whatever motivates students to practice for copious hours and in a meaningful way will help students to gain the necessary practice to

become proficient at English.

How Many Hours of Practice Do You Need?

Generally speaking, the many hours of practice necessary in Extensive Listening, Extensive Reading and Study Abroad to achieve language mastery is 10,000 hours. This demonstrates just how much continued, long term and extensive practice is needed in order to become proficient. There are no short cuts, but including all or at least some of these activities with your students will have a significant effect. In comparison, the total hours of study in Junior and Senior High schools in Japan is yet to reach over 7500-hours of Study.

Conclusion

I acknowledge that there are many other factors that affect language acquisition, for example age and language aptitude, but within the constraints of the Japanese education system there are many things that teachers could do to help with language acquisition. There are many excellent teachers and teaching methodologies, but what needs emphasizing is that rather than focusing on the style of teaching, we need to get the hours in. The number of hours that Japanese school children study English is not nearly enough for them to become proficient. If we want the level of English ability to improve in Japan, students need to spend far more hours in meaningful practice; in the classroom, extensive reading, and extensive listening or study abroad programs. I certainly believe that a combination of formal and informal study is the ideal. Although including all these aspects will not necessarily bring you to the level of native speakers, it must bring you much closer. Practice is the key to proficiency in everything including language learning.

Frances Shiobara is an Associate Professor at Kobe Shoin Women’s University, Japan.



I Love You, Bro

BY MARY JANE S. CAMARADOR

So what is a Boy Band?

According to the popular culture website wisegeek.com, a boy band is defined as a musical act composed of at least three young men who can sing and dance. They do not necessarily play instruments, which sets them apart from a 'band' we typically know. They fall into different genres like rhythm and blues, pop and hip hop. Young female audiences are the usual target market of boy bands. Boy bands started during the mid-1950s though the term 'boy band' was then called the hep harmony singing group.

The Characteristics of a Boy Band:

There are templates incorporated with these boy bands for why they are called as such. In another website cleverworkarounds.com that explored boy bands, some of the characteristics or criteria that are found in a boy band were: (1) they have pretty faces, (2) they have five members, (3) they can dance, (4) the playing of instruments is not permitted, (5) they are fashion setters, (6) they do not write their own songs, and (7) they are under the supervision of record company management. Most of these definitions, if not all, are seen within the list of boy bands

mentioned above.

The Formation of One Direction:

To know how modern boy bands are created, one only has to look at the formation of current Boy Band superstars One Direction. Formed in 2010, One Direction started their career when Niall Horan (19), Zayn Malik (20), Liam Payne (19), Harry Styles (19), and Louis Tomlinson (21) individually joined the seventh season of X Factor, a United Kingdom based TV talent contest. They did not qualify in the solo performer category but instead they were



The [Mis]Representation of Male-Bonding in Boy Bands through their Music

brought back to form as a group under Simon Cowell, house judge for the X Factor show. With their talents and charm, One Direction captured the attention of not only the judges but also the British viewing audience. They won third in the finals and eventually invaded Europe through their music. Since 2010, they have already produced four albums: *Up All Night* (2011), *Take Me Home* (2012), *Midnight Memories* (2013), and *Four* (2014) where they received several awards, topped hit charts and sold out albums worldwide. Their music styles are variations of pop and rock.

Theory of Homosociality

The concept of masculinity and male friendship was not static during the 19th century. In American culture, there existed a continuum between homosocial and homosexual bonds. During the mid-19th century, men could express emotions with fervor and openness. Upon the late 19th century, intimacy between men became indistinguishable from the images and language of love (Rolf, 2011). It is also important to note that during Victorian America, homosexuality was a taboo. However, at the duration of the 19th century,

what is acceptable and unacceptable forms of male friendship changed.

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, an American academic scholar, who specialized in queer studies, coined the term 'homosocial' and made a distinction between homosocial and homosexual desire. In her book, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (1985), she explains that there is a male homosocial desire existing among males (be it overt heterosexual to overt homosexual) that is not necessarily romantic. She coined the

term homo- to challenge the existing concept of hetero- and bi- and be able to distinguish from one another.

Male bonding is not a new term to be exact. Even Aristotle wrote a classical description of friendship around 330 BBC saying, “It is those who desire the good of their friends for the friends’ sake that are most

Menudo being gay—these are some indications of the imagery and the realities happening within the boy band world.

One Direction, a British boy band, is setting a new trend in terms of male bonding in the boy band culture that is prevalent in their songs and music videos. Songs like What Makes You

On a heteronormative perspective, this is a song of a man who loves his girlfriend enough for him to disregard her flaws, that despite these little things, he still loves the girl endlessly, (as what the lyrics say). On the other side, a queer reading about the song will create a totally different meaning. Instead of a song of a man to his girlfriend, it can be a song of a man to his man. In case of One Direction, this can be their song for themselves.

Famous Boy Band Timeline:
The Monkees (1966-1971)
The Jackson 5 (1970s)
The Osmonds (1970s)
Menudo (1977)
New Edition (180s)
New Kids on the Block (mid 1980s)
Boyz II Men (early 1990s)
Backstreet Boys (mid 1990s)
NSYNC (mid 1990s)
Hanson (late 1990s)
Jonas Brothers (2005)
Big Time Rush (2009)
One Direction (2010)

Analysing the text closely, it reveals a subtext emanating among the members. That is, it is a song that refers actually to their co-members. Boy bands live closer together due to their tight schedules and various commitments. With this proximity, it is possible that each one of them can notice even the tiniest details of their co-band members.

First point of this song is that each member has a part sang individually. This suggests that every one of them has a say—a chance of expressing themselves. Second point, ‘little things’ are enumerated in the lyrics: size of the hand, freckles on the cheeks, crinkles in the eyes, dimples near the butt, sleep mannerisms and even the body weight. Here, space and time play a major role. The context implied a closed proximity between the two individuals—a scenario that is applicable among boy band members. That scenario may look like this: men living together in a single roof or even sharing a room (space); they are always together during rehearsals, shows, or tours (time); thus, the level of knowledge for personality differences are high.

truly friends, because each loves the other for what he is, and not for any incidental quality.” This definition is the counterpart of what we called “bromance.”

Bromance is a portmanteau of the words brother and romance. Coined by Dave Carnie, editor of Big Brother (American Skateboarding magazine), in 1990s. He referred it to the relationship developed between skaters who spent a great time together. Bromance is a non-sexual relationship between two or more men.

The Homosocial on the Little Things Lyrics

Boy bands have been criticized even before that homosexuality is suggested in their songs and music videos. The effeminate image of Nick Carter of the Backstreet Boys, the song writing partnership of John Lennon and Paul McCartney of the Beatles and the revelation of Ricky Martin of

Beautiful, One Thing, Live While You We’re Young and Kiss You hit the UK music hit chart.

Little Things is one of the songs from their second album Take Me Home. There are a lot of critical responses and reviews from the music critics. It is perceived as problematic especially from the boy band’s target audience who are females in their teens, according to Grady Smith of Entertainment Weekly. Fantasizing the female body is not appropriate at an early age, which may also affect One Direction’s image.

Little Things is a song about overseeing the imperfections of a person and loving her despite of. Flaws like freckles on the cheeks, crinkles in the eyes when smiling, sleeptalking, and even weight concerns—these little things do not matter for people who are in love.

Little Things Music Video

The music video of Little Things also reveals a subtext based from a queer perspective. Factors which had presupposed to a queer reading include space and time, gestures and facial expression, and editing style.

Space and Time

Coincide with the lyrics of the song, the way the music video is made used only one space—the recording studio. This is the only music video of One Direction that has no attempt to change the space or the milieu. Prior to the analysis of the lyrics of the song where men can be living together under a single roof or sharing a room, the music video substantiates that interpretation. In addition, no other individual exists in the entire video aside from them. A sense of territoriality (space) and belongingness happened among male friendship.

Gestures and Facial Expression

There are also gestures, facial expression and eye contact that would indicate a homosocial desire—an explicit act of male-to-male fondness for each other. Zayn Malik is tweaking Harry Styles on the cheek. Contrary to the previous music videos of boy bands especially during the 1990s, no such act of ‘intimacy’ was shown to the public. Louis Tomlinson’s gaze and smile to Liam Payne and

their physical distance would suggest ‘comfortability’ with each other.

Editing Styles

The editing—relations between shots—speaks so much in the making of music videos. The way juxtaposition is applied to create a narrative or non-narrative gives meaning and a lot of interpretation.

The first sequence of the music video is an instrumental. Among the series of shots shown, Zayn is smiling (Shot A) followed by Harry Styles (Shot B) looking. Shot B is considered a reverse shot of Shot A for it follows the 180 degree rule to achieve continuity. That is Zayn is on the right side of the frame while Harry is on the left side of the frame.

Another example is Louis and Zayn having a shot/reverse shot with the audio and “it’s you” paralleled to the video. Below is Niall singing as “I love you” followed by the shots of Zayn and Harry in a rack-focus technique (deep focus on a foreground while blurred on the background and vice versa).

Conclusion

Over the years, the perception of masculinity and male friendship has changed over time. During the 20th century, American culture characterized three themes of masculinity. These are: American men are trying to control themselves; American men are projecting their fears to others; and American men are attempting to escape when feeling pressured. The result is that they fear that American culture is being too feminized, too over-civilized, and too Europeanised (Kimmel, 2006).

Homosociality at present is more conspicuous than before, particularly among men. Boy bands are just one discourse among others where homosocial desires do exist. One Direction has set a different trend from the list of boy bands before where masculinity is one of the show-offs. They show a new perspective showing a different side of sexuality that is social; and a different direction by One Direction.





Princess Robot Bubblegum Critiques “Cool Japan”

An illustration of the impact of Japan’s Soft Power movement through a cross-cultural, cross-media response

By Christina Bethel

As an anime fan, I was particularly intrigued by *Princess Robot Bubblegum*, an anime parody found in the video game *Grand Theft Auto IV* that has stirred controversy in both video game and anime fan communities. Some members recognize the parody’s alienation as a critique of Japan’s attempts to build cultural capital and soft power; others argue that the episode illustrates how humor can be used to foster global connectedness.

To examine this situation, I have begun to conduct a cultural and rhetorical analysis of the parody through the lens of Dani Cavallaro’s concept of anime synergy (2007). I argue that the inclusion of this parody in one of America’s most popular video games illustrates Japan’s soft power success. I will explore what Japan’s anime success means to Japanese and American culture in terms of connectedness and alienation by focusing on how *Princess Robot Bubblegum* parodies five values commonly treated by anime and the

practice of incorporating fan service that has become popular in anime.

Animerica: Anime Synergy in Action

But first, let’s develop a shared vocabulary and some common contextual ground. For content, I’ve focused on four key terms common in the anime community and two abbreviations common in the gaming community that I’ve been asked to define in academic conversations, and for theory, I’ve focused on concepts I’ve been aware of for a long time as a fan but that I’m only now building the academic vocabulary to analyze and discuss as a scholar. Anime is the term that has been most widely accepted by both the fan and the academic communities who discuss the medium of Japanese animated films and television shows. Anime differs from other popular animation in American culture in many ways, but most notably in depth and complexity of cultural, thematic, and character exploration,

and in animation style. Literary scholar Susan Napier (2001) includes a detailed historical analysis of the term in her appendix to *Anime from Akira to Princess Mononoke: Experiencing Contemporary Japanese Animation*.

Hentai is the adult erotic genre of anime being parodied in *Grand Theft Auto IV*. As Mariana Ortega-Brena (2009) explains in “Peek-a-boo, I See You: Watching Japanese Hard-core Animation,” hentai often gets conflated in with pornography in both perception and popular use. However, as she also explains and as I have discovered through my fan experiences, hentai is erotic art, not pornography. Japanese writers and animators seem to use this art form to explore social and cultural issues with a depth and complexity that deserves much more scholarly and popular attention than it currently receives. Historian Andrew McKeivitt (2010) in the article, “You are Not Alone!': Anime and the Globalizing of America,” identi-

fies that otaku is a long-time slur that referred to socially inept individuals obsessed with anime who become reclusive and focus all of their energy on fan activities.

However, Ortega-Brena and McKeveitt agree that the term seems to have been appropriated by fan communities, particularly in the West. And this appropriation has not gone unnoticed by the artists, who demonstrate a keen rhetorical awareness of their audience by using fan service to create and nurture fan communities. Fan service is the practice of including generic elements and allusions designed specifically to appeal to long-time audience members. This practice has become common across multiple media platforms because it illustrates artists' appreciation for their audience members. Fan service also illustrates the social, dialogic nature of art and is one of the avenues where we can observe anime synergy in action.

I discovered this instance of anime synergy through observing game play of *Grand Theft Auto IV*. *GTA IV* is the abbreviation used in both fan and academic communities to refer to this internationally popular video game. Over 50 articles have been published in English about this particular video game, and according to Forbes.com, it has sold over 22 million copies since its 2008 release. And TBOGT is the abbreviation used to refer to "The Ballad of Gay Tony," a set of additional playable missions that were released after the initial game, in which players may continue to experience the world of Liberty City from the perspective of a new character. This downloadable content is where the episode of *Princess Robot Bubblegum* originally appeared.

"Cool Japan" and Japanese soft power: Exploring Potential Motivations for Japan's Quest to Foster Anime as a Global Phenomenon

In *The Future of Power*, Joseph Nye (2011) argues that, "states are no longer the only important actors in global affairs; security is not the only major outcome that they seek, and force is not the only or always the best instrument available to achieve those outcomes". One of the types of power Nye describes that influences global affairs is "soft power," which he de-

fines as "the ability to affect others through the co-optive means of framing the agenda, persuading and eliciting positive attraction in order to obtain preferred outcomes".

American scholars such as anthropologist Anne Allison (2009), sociologist Jonathan Abel (2011), and historian Andrew McKeveitt, all writing for international, cross-disciplinary audiences, discuss Japan's efforts to gain soft power through strategic production and international distribution of anime. Scholars and fans agree that anime's unique success as a medium comes from its versatile appeal to wide audiences. "Cool Japan" is the most common term I have found used in academic research to refer to the movement to explore the cultural power that Japan has gained through creation and distribution of Japanese cultural material internationally. Jonathan Abel defines "cool" using two categories of meaning: First, the historical meaning "of cool as form of cultural production,... a style of art that maintains a particular stance towards society. And second,... cool as affect in cultural reception,... a mode of desire for that which resides at the limits of comprehension". He both critiques and perpetuates use of the term "Cool Japan," explaining that by studying something, it loses its coolness, but he also recognizes the cultural power that Japan has gained by fostering intercultural competency and global connectedness.

One of the ways this connectedness manifests itself is through widespread, active fan communities that are international, intercultural, and interactive. Napier analyzes these fan communi-

ties, and in the same appendix where she defines anime, she presents a profile exploring the cultural identity of the anime fan. Myron Lustig & Jolene Koester (2010) define cultural identity as "one's sense of belonging to a particular culture or ethnic group... formed in a process that... involves learning about and accepting the... [shared] beliefs, values, norms, and practices" of a particular group. Rebecca Black (2008) also explores the cultural identity of anime fans in *Adolescents and Online Fan Fiction*.

Cavallaro's concept of anime synergy makes perfect sense when we consider the prevalence of these communities and the potential soft power they represent. In Chapter 11 of *Anime Intersections: Tradition and Innovation in Theme and Technique*, Dani Cavallaro defines anime synergy as the ability to "persistently engineer[s] fruitful exchanges between disparate geographical areas, their cultures and histories, as well as between discrete media and genres". According to this definition, anime is a cultural tool being used to foster intercultural competence, and the existence and fan response to *Princess Robot Bubblegum* illustrate part of the tool's effects.

The GTA franchise has also become interesting to cultural studies because of the value of its genre as a potential acculturation tool. Marjorie Zielke and her colleagues (2009) use *GTA IV* as the example to introduce and define the term "living world game" in the article "Serious Games for Immersive Cultural Training: Creating a Living World." They define "living world" as an immersive 3D video game that develops a shared set of be-



Houser and Lazlow (2008) also explore the Japanese desire to both preserve traditions and adapt them for modern contexts, as well as the treatment of sexuality as both something exotic through incorporation of fantasy and technology, and something mundane through what seems to many to be a gratuitous focus but seems to better mirror the realities of how humans experience sexuality than traditional Western media treatment.

liefs, values, norms, and practices for characters within the game that the player must learn to succeed within the game world. They assert that “living world” games are valuable tools for teaching culture.

Before we look more carefully at *Princess Robot Bubblegum* as an example of anime synergy, it will be helpful to briefly explore the history of anime in America. Andrew McKeivitt asserts that historians have only begun to explore “the impact of global economic and cultural exchange within U.S. borders through histories of consumption and globalization” and uses “the case of anime...as one tangible illustration of the impact of cultural globalization” in the past 35 years. The earliest anime introduced into U.S. popular culture in the 1960s and ‘70s, through series like Osamu Tezuka’s *AstroBoy* and *Speed Racer*, was barely recognizable as Japanese. In the 1970s and ‘80s, the animation style shifted to what Japanese literature scholar Susan Napier refers to as “nonculturally specific.” McKeivitt acknowledges that the “nonculturally specific anime style’ appealed to American audiences... because it was aesthetically transnational – its apparent nonethnic style facilitated its diffusion across borders,” and he adds that “the mingling of Japanese and Western aesthetics, genres, and racial and gender categories... permitted anime to be a truly hybrid global product”.

But it was not only the visual style of anime that appealed to wide audiences. McKeivitt also demonstrates how anime distribution in the U.S. reinforced the development of activist fan communities as a further illustration of Japanese soft power over U.S. cultural evolution. When he explains *Robotech*’s success in U.S. syndication during the 1980s, garnering syndication in 90% of the U.S. market, he argues that it was “likely teenage boys watched for the fast-paced action

sequences...while adult women and men appreciated the mature ‘space opera’ storylines about friendships, romance, and the tragic social consequences of war”. Anime’s tendency to explore complex social issues through a combination of engaging character development and interaction, imaginative plots and settings, and exotic yet familiar visuals seem to have contributed largely to what McKeivitt calls “anime fandom’s most conspicuous characteristic[:]...its emphasis on activism within the community”. Through his explanation of fan activism’s three primary forms, “fan clubs, conventions (or ‘cons’), and...an underground, self-published, English-language literature on anime,” McKeivitt argues that this fan activism allowed anime fans to foster a sense of community among themselves and begin to develop a cultural identity.

Across several texts, Napier (2001) seeks to develop a dynamic profile of the anime fan community as “an increasingly diversified audience, expanding from its original core of university students to include professionals in high tech industries, finance, and law...a thoughtful, intelligent, and articulate group of people”. Napier developed a fan profile survey in response to what she saw as stereotyping being perpetuated through scholars’ tendencies “to see fans in somewhat narrow terms,” which Napier saw as an injustice to fans whose interaction with anime she saw as “deeply engaged, transcending issues of national boundaries, content, style, or ideology”.

McKeivitt, Allison, Napier, and Abel describe a variety of forms of fan activism across different contexts, illustrating the potential and real ways in which anime can be and has been used to further Japanese political, economical, social, and cultural agendas through agenda-setting, persuasion, and positive attraction, Nye’s three

criteria for building soft power. Anne Allison even establishes a link between the Cool Japan movement, which she refers to as J-cool, and the concept of soft power, using the example of political activist Amamiya Karin to explain Japanese affective activist rhetoric. Her purpose is to demonstrate a causal link between the Japanese cultural “shift towards immateriality” and Japan’s reproductive crisis as well as to “consider the subversive potential” of what she calls “affective labor,” a type of Foucauldian biopower with an ultimate purpose of exploring “J-cool” as a subversive cultural tool in the context of modern Japanese youth activism being used to combat a global trend into “care deficit”.

As I mentioned before, I came to anime as a fan. My parents met in Okinawa, where my mother became pregnant with me. Because of their affinity for the culture and the somewhat unique context of how I came into this world, Japan has always held a special place in my heart. When I was young, my mother recorded one of Tezuka’s Unico films for me when she saw it on American television because she recognized it from her time in Japan. I watched the tape so many times during my formative years that I wore it out. For many years, I searched and was unable to find a copy to watch, but the beauty of the characters, the animation style, and the message stayed with me.

Since beginning to research anime and cultural identity, I’ve come to realize that the title character’s values and actions have heavily influenced my own identity formation. I was lucky to be able to attend a Tezuka exhibit in Kyoto in 2008 as part of a Fulbright-Hays Group Project Abroad where, although I was unable to obtain a copy of the film, I purchased several Unico-related items, including a change purse with the following message printed on it: “Unico is a little uni-

corn that does not take to human beings usually but he takes to one with a pure, honest and gentle heart, with a sense of security. Unico can show his magical powers for people being kind to him and once he takes to someone he shall bring eternal happiness to that person.”

Because of my intimate emotional and implicit cultural affinities for Japanese culture, I realize I must work hard to develop a critical distance from the subjects I study relating to Japan. Abel’s explanation of how “conscious fetishism” and “Japanophilia” become problematic modes of inquiry when they “articulate [themselves] through a privileged point of [false] authority

celebration of gratuitous violence and organized criminal behavior, I discovered that while I could see why these controversies emerged, this game develops a rich, complex argument about the state of American culture. I realized that this game deserved not only my, but the academy’s, attention.

My first encounter with *GTA IV* in academic publications was in Zielke et al’s article. Marjorie Zielke and her colleagues claim that “as a major strategy of the game, players spend time learning Liberty City’s culture” and that video games with “living worlds” like *GTA IV* can be successful as cultural tools because of “the veracity of the 3D environment...and immer-

who have been marginalized by society – immigrants, African-Americans, GLBT individuals, criminals, and so on – and who struggle to survive and thrive in a world indifferent to their struggles.

GTA IV incorporates all three of the functions of humor described by Claire Dormann and Robert Biddle in the article, “A Review of Humor for Computer Games: Play, Laugh and More”: “Superiority theory suggests the social aspects of humor, while relief theories address emotions, and incongruity theory is related to the cognition and mechanisms of humor”. Dan Houser, British writer and developer of the *GTA* series, and Lazlow,



[that]...still contains an unquestioned preserved point for the coolness of Japan” reminds me to keep my bias toward Japan in check as I transition from “fan” to “responsible researcher”. Analyzing the parody *Princess Robot Bubblegum* has helped me develop a stronger critical distance, along with a new appreciation for genres within anime and video games that I previously dismissed.

As I observed *Grand Theft Auto IV* game play more critically for my research, my feelings about the game started to change. *GTA IV* was a game I had purposefully avoided until I learned about *Princess Robot Bubblegum* because of the controversies surrounding the game’s apparent

sion...learning tools”. Adoption of video games as cultural training tools by the U.S. military demonstrates the U.S. government’s acceptance of interactive media’s effectiveness as an acculturation tool.

If we take into account *GTA IV*’s international success in the gaming community - the 22 million copies estimated to have been sold is a highly conservative estimate of population impact – it becomes important to ask the question “What do players learn from *GTA IV*,” but that’s a question for a much larger project. For now, all I’ll say on what we learn in *GTA IV* is that the subtitle captures the theme well: “Where the American Dream Goes to Die.” You play and meet characters

an American radio personality who has also become the dominant radio personality in *GTA*’s Liberty City, are masters of humor and rhetoric. Much of the humor injected into the game takes the form of in-game media, which includes a dynamic variety of radio and television stations with limited content conceptualized and scripted by Lazlow, an radio talk show host reminiscent of Howard Stern, and Houser.

According to Dormann and Biddle, humor plays an important role in making “games richer, more engaging, as well as fun...[by drawing] on the functions of humor in the real world for enhancing communication, learning, and social presence”. Dani



Cavallaro's purpose in defining and illustrating anime synergy is to illustrate the positive and powerful impact of anime on art forms and genres, such as video games, in order to argue anime's value as a cultural tool with similar aims. By including an anime parody in its living world's radio and TV programming, *GTA IV*'s creators acknowledge the ubiquity of anime in American media as well as the cross-cultural connections between anime and gamer fan communities. While the sometimes "hostile" jokes in *Princess Robot Bubblegum* exhibit mostly superior and incongruous humor, the authors also incorporate tension relief significantly by addressing common taboo anime topics.

Princess Robot Bubblegum as Cultural Identity Critique: A Scathing (and Dated!) Reaction to Japan's soft power success

One of these taboo topics is Princess Robot Bubblegum herself: the star character of the series is an orphaned young woman who, in the reflexivity characteristic of anime that Ortega-Brena (2008) describes, stars in a hentai series. *Princess Robot Bubblegum* is, on the surface, a scathing and dated critique of Japan's efforts to build soft power and cultural capital through international distribution of anime and related entertainment media and products. The title character is a princess who practices a school of martial arts that incorporates sexual practices

as moves. The episode's existence itself illustrates the game developers' understanding of the cultural identity of their fan base.

GTA IV authors Houser and Lazlow (2008) use the episode to explore several Japanese value paradoxes, including: the affinity for peace and preserving honor through the use of what seems to many to be gratuitously and graphically violent scenes; the dual affinities for preserving the environment and adapting both the environment and the self through technology; and the desire to promote globalization and global connectedness while privileging Japanese cultural values. On the surface, *Princess Robot Bubblegum* is a scathing and dated critique of Japan's efforts to build soft power and cultural capital through international distribution of anime and related entertainment media and products. The game seems to argue through the anime parody against the capitalist element to "anime video game synergy[, which] has been deeply affected by commercial imperatives" (Cavallaro, 2010).

Napier recognizes the partial validity of the critiques levied against anime here. She criticizes Pointon and Newitz for their narrow framing of the anime and hentai fan, but she admits that "both critics are correct to a degree when they suggest that a prime audience of young males often find a

'fantasy escape and source of identification' within anime's graphic violence, voluptuous female characters, and politically incorrect male-female relationships" (*Anime* 241). However, seven years before *GTA IV* and *Princess Robot Bubblegum* were released, Napier emphasizes the limited validity of such arguments when considering "that anime's attraction for Westerners is far broader and more diverse" than this narrow critique implies (*Anime* 241). Other outdated critiques relate to localization, translation, and animation quality issues that, while they still exist, have lessened considerably over the past 30 years, mostly due to fan demand and activism.

Princess Robot Bubblegum opens with a collision of unexpected images: a battle in futurist Tokyo is implied by four *Power Rangers*-esque characters taking flight amid neon skyscrapers. Then cut to Princess Robot Bubblegum lying in bed, only shoulders and arms exposed as she reads a copy of *Restoring Honor for Idiots* while half-heartedly reassuring her tentacular monstrosity of a bedfellow about his lack of performance. This image presents the princess as an empowered though anti-heroic female character. Their dialogue is interrupted by the princess receiving a call from "Master Hentai," her martial arts trainer, chiding her for being late for training. She replies by equivocating: she tells him that she has been "tending the garden," an apropos double entendre. The humor here plays on an allusion to the Victorian sexual metaphor of the garden and the literal sexual encounter with an anthropomorphized plant.

The developers also include shockingly realistic visuals reminiscent of the incongruous yet meticulous attention to detail in anime that often illustrates the paradoxical blending of nature and technology in Japanese environments. For example, as Princess Robot Bubblegum exchanges dialogue with her radioactive tentacular plant monster partner, a fly buzzes around them, and a train rolls by the apartment window. The game seems to argue through the anime parody against the capitalist element to "anime video game synergy[, which] has been deeply affected by commercial imperatives" (Cavallaro, 2010).

Houser and Lazlow (2008) also explore the Japanese desire to both preserve traditions and adapt them for modern contexts, as well as the treatment of sexuality as both something exotic through incorporation of fantasy and technology and something mundane through what seems to many to be a gratuitous focus but seems to better mirror the realities of how humans experience sexuality than traditional Western media treatment. One of the fan service elements of *Princess Robot Bubblegum* is the tentacle rape scene that Ortega-Brena notes has become a trope in hentai but has a rich, complex history in Japanese erotic art. The scene is an allusion to the first hentai film to become popular with Western audiences, to which Ortega-Brena, Napier, and Cavallaro all make reference: *Urotsuki-doji*, or *Legend of the Overfiend*. This blend of science fiction, slasher horror, and gratuitous sexual violence seems to be the most often-cited example of hentai in current scholarship. She explains, though, that the first recorded instance of erotic art involving tentacles was Hokusai's 1814 woodblock print *The Dream of the Fisherman's Wife*, a depiction of an obviously consensual sexual encounter between a human woman and two octopi (2009). This connection is new for me, so I have only begun to explore the significance here.

Brad Rice of *Destructoid.com* reinforces the datedness of the critique in the 2009 news article "GTA IV isn't helping anime with *Princess Robot Bubblegum*," and as an anime fan, he feels the need to defend the improvements to anime against the outdated critique. However, I don't think that the significance is lost on the episode's writers. Houser and Lazlow mark themselves as members of the fan communities they criticize by demonstrating an intricate understanding of both the source medium and their fan base. Based on the quality of character and cultural development in *GTA IV*'s living world, the writers are most likely aware that their critique of anime is both narrow and outdated. They likely realize that fans like themselves, and like me, will appreciate the nostalgic nature of the critique instead of interpreting it as a critique of current anime, and they are capitalizing on the common anime trope of incorporat-

ing fan service.

Anime creators successfully build soft power through fan service by increasing and blending use of popular genres and archetypal characters. In their anime parody, Houser and Lazlow combine multiple genres as well: hentai, science fiction, fantasy, shojo, and traditional martial arts generic elements are all easily identifiable within the 11-minute episode. And the characters Princess Robot Bubblegum, her tentacular bedfellow, Master Hentai, the blind samurai, and the princess's animal sidekick Saki are all representative of archetypal anime characters. As fan service, they also incorporate references to popular Japanese cultural elements through Tokyo, dojo, and nature scenery and a plethora of visual and auditory references, like the otaku boys waiting in line at the panty vending machine that transforms into a mech robot. It's also common to find fan service referencing other popular culture phenomena through intertextuality, and including specific and sometimes gratuitous hyper-sexualized scenes, like the training montage reminiscent of *Sailor Moon* and the tentacle rape scene, which Princess Robot Bubblegum refers to jokingly as "monster, monster rapey-time," implying that the scene is both a tired trope and an expected fan service scene.

Embracing *Princess Robot Bubblegum* and Learning to Laugh at Ourselves

Globally we need to build stronger awareness of how popular media actively participates in the framing of political, economic, and cultural agendas. Nye recognizes that "in an information age, communications strategies become more important, and outcomes are shaped not merely by whose army wins but also by whose story wins". And Japanese stories have been winning international audiences, and particularly American audiences, for decades, inspiring other artists to respond. But if Houser and Lazlow are critiquing anime as nostalgic fan service through their parody, what are the real issues they're trying to address, and should viewers, particularly members of anime and gaming communities, be offended?

I would like to suggest that *Princess*

Robot Bubblegum is more likely designed to act as an example of the kind of subversive affective labor Ann Allison describes. When I hear the princess complain about her sexual martial arts training or her less-than-ideal working conditions, I interpret it not a scathing critique of fetishizing anime but a complex and layered argument against practices in the American sex industry and an illustration of the value of animation as a medium for exploring human rights issues in ways that will captivate audiences without compromising the rights, safety, or security of live human beings. Their argument is nuanced and connects dynamically to the theme of oppression, in this case, of laborers in the sex industry.

Princess Robot Bubblegum is an example of the kind of subversive affective labor Allison describes in "The Cool Brand, Affective Activism and Japanese Youth". *Bubblegum*'s mundane and reserved attitude about having a consensual sexual encounter with her on-screen rapist, being continually objectified by Master Hentai who also acts as the father figure for the orphaned princess, and engaging in competitive conversation with the blind swordsman of Teppanyaki about whose occupation is worse seem to illustrate Houser and Lazlow's desire to promote more ethical treatment of sex workers than to illustrate a need for genre reform in anime.

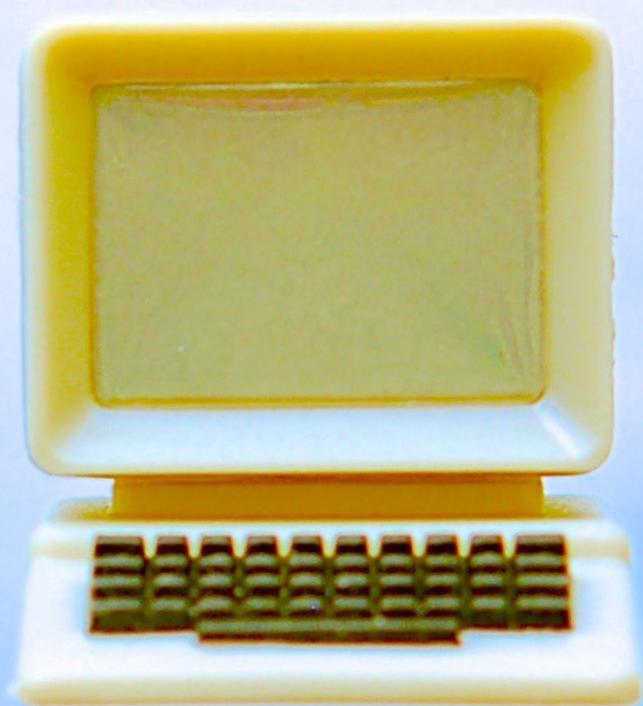
And by examining responses to *PRB* from anime and gaming fans, we can observe at least two affective responses to the Japanese attempt to secure cultural capital through US popular culture: from a few, validation of the critiques the writers make; from some, recognition that the critiques are superficial and outdated; and from others, recognition that even if some of the critiques are valid, the amount of time and effort Rockstar put into developing such a high quality parody illustrates their love for anime and reinforces the need to be able to laugh at ourselves.

Christina Bethel is a doctoral student at East Carolina University, USA. A fully referenced version of this article is available from the editor at publications@iafor.org

Cloud Computing for Collaborative Knowledge Construction

A Case for Google Drive

By Gary Ka-Wai Wong



The usage of mobile technology in our daily lives has been developed to such an extent that it is now a part of the everyday culture in many countries. This is especially so in our large metropolitan centres.

With advanced technology development and the high connectivity to the Internet through school based wireless networks, it is now common and preferred for both teachers and students to bring their personal mobile devices (e.g. smartphones, tablet computers, and laptop computers) into the classroom and even prefer to use their own devices whenever it is possible. However, often it can be a distraction.

This had led to a few of key questions that need resolving as it has been challenging for many teachers to engage their students in classroom teaching environment when students bring their mobile devices to class.

How then can we take the advantage of this mobile technology for our classroom teaching and learning, and enhance the student engagement in our classroom instructions? In addition, how can teachers provide a better learning activity to help students explore and discover new knowledge through their own effort? What learning activities could provide reflective experience to the students? Finally, what are the learning theories behind these practices in the classroom?

Among many current cloud-computing solutions on the Internet, Google Drive is one of the most common public cloud platforms to provide Software as a Service (SaaS). Although this software is not made to target an educational use, teachers can be creative in making use of this popular platform and turn into an educational technology easily.

Google Drive supports both browser and native mobile operating systems (e.g. Apple iOS and Google Android). In my point of view, the choice of the technology tool heavily depends on the popularity and commonality of

the tool.

Making a right choice of educational technology in the classroom can have a high sustainability and penetration rate. In my own teaching situation, I tend to ask students to bring their mobile devices to use (or use the iPads provided by me) because the lecture hall we use was not designed to use computers. With their own mobile devices ready on hand, we can immediately engage students in the lecture.

My own classroom teaching of how to bring Google Drive and its application into my classroom started with a lesson plan that was designed based on the idea of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) developed by Lev Vygotsky, a Russian psychologist in working on sociocultural learning theory. In my view through the collaborative knowledge construction approach, students can be more engaging in my classroom discourse and create a learning community. Therefore, with technology, I believe students are no longer required to be locked in a classroom; but instead their minds can be unlocked to accept further knowledge.

Cloud Computing as Educational Technology

As previously mentioned, Google Drive is a cloud computing platform which allows users to connect and access information through the cloud servers anywhere at any time as long as the Internet connection is provided. With wireless network connectivity, users can use their mobile devices to access their information stored on the Google Drive while on their move. Originally, Google Drive was previously called Google Doc, and it was developed so as to provide office suite applications such as word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation. A few years ago, Google enhanced the features in this platform as a cloud storage to store these documents as well as other types of files. Thus, Google Doc changed its name to Google Drive.

One of the features Google promotes is the collaboration through

the platform. In Google Drive, it allows creators to collaborate a working document with others without synchronization issues. For example, suppose two students want to collaborate on a field trip proposal. If these students are asked to work on it separately, then they have two files existing in their own computers. When they finally want to put it together, they may realize there are duplicated ideas and it is difficult to consolidate these two separate files into one. But if they use Google Drive, they will be able to work on the same file at the same time, and they can see who is editing on which parts simultaneously. This will significantly reduce their time in collaborating on the same topic and document. More importantly, users can access to Google Drive through their smartphones or mobile devices.

Apple iOS or Google Android system.

Another way to collaborate is through the Google Form in the Drive. Google Form allows the non-technology savvy user to create online submission form instantly without knowing how to program with HTML codes or other languages. It provides a quick way to collect data from multiple users at the same time. When someone submits data using the pre-designed form, the data will be stored in a separate spreadsheet file as a database for further analysis. To help quickly offer instantly feedback to the form creator, Google Form also provides a “Summary of Responses” readily to present statistical figures or tables.

As a teacher, I desire to gather data from my students in a classroom, and summarize their data into information so as to become knowledge. In this case, if a teacher carefully designs the lesson, Google Drive can become a powerful tool to transform data into knowledge in a collaborative approach. To take the advantage of mobile technology, I also introduce the usage of QR code into the lecture so as to embed the link of my designed form into a QR code. That way, students can scan the QR code while on

their site and access to the form without typing the web address to their mobile devices.

Google Drive and QR code technology are both useful and commonly

for learning, teachers can easily turn them into powerful instruments for a better learning and engaging environment. In addition, it is more flexible and elastic when the technology is not particularly designed for a particular

multiple Intelligence (M.I.). In previous work, I discussed the importance of ZPD in the learning process of children (Wong, 2014). Vygotsky believed that children quite often stay in their cognitive stage where they could solve



known to the students. It is reasonable to assume students to be able to use the technological tool to assist their learning, rather than focusing on learning how to use the technology. Besides, teachers are able to create these tools quickly and easily anywhere they may be, and bring them to their classroom as long as the Internet connection is available. Although these tools are not originally designed

educational usage. Teachers can introduce their creativity and imagination into their teaching design and pedagogy.

The Underlying Learning Theory

Based on the learning activity designed for my lesson planning, there are mainly two theories behind the practice, namely the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and Mul-

problem independently. He called this stage as the zone of actual development. In contrast, children sometimes could solve problems under circumstances with external supports, and Vygotsky called this stage as zone of proximal development. From this point of view, he proposed that children's learning happens when they put efforts while in the ZPD. Children cannot handle and perform tasks

successfully in this zone, but they can succeed when they receive aids from peers and teachers. The following figure illustrates three different zones for children throughout their learning and cognitive process. Vygotsky proposed that children learn very little from performing tasks they can already do independently (Kozulin et.al, 2003; McDevitt & Ormrod, 2007). Instead, they develop primarily by attempting tasks they can accomplish only in collaboration with a more competent individual, which means the children attempt tasks within their zone of proximal development. In other words, when children are being challenged, this is when they can learn and acquire more knowledge.

In fact, we can now ensure how to make certain a student's understanding of ZPD and apply educational practices to help the student accomplish challenging tasks and activities with suitable assistance. One concept or technique is called scaffolding a term often used in construction and the analogy can be similar in that the scaffold is an external structure that provides support for the workers until the building is strong enough to support itself. After the building is stabilized, the scaffold becomes less necessary and is removed at the end.

Palinscar (1998) suggests that in the context of research about the negotiated nature of teaching and learning, ZPD with scaffolding is "probably one of the most used and least understood constructs to appear in contemporary educational literature." The term scaffolding in the educational sense is used to "describe the guidance or structure provided by more competent individuals to help children perform tasks in their ZPD" (McDevitt & Ormrod, 2007). In fact, Crane (2014) has mentioned, "In a traditional teacher-centered classroom setting, where the role of students is reduced to objects receiving instruction from the teacher who dispenses knowledge to them, social interaction is limited to a one-way dependency. In the model developed by Vygotsky, roles of

the teacher and student are interdependent and they both are subject to cognitive development. The role of a teacher is to serve as a guide or coach that provides assistance to a learner working on a challenging task within her or his ZPD. The teacher is needed to offer support, encouragement and design tasks to stimulate a learner's development." It is true that as a teacher we are obligated to know how to build a scaffold for students to guide and stimulate them through a challenging but feasible task. Thus, they will learn or discover a new knowledge based on their previous understanding.

Multiple Intelligence (M.I.)

American developmental psychologist Howard Earl Gardner came up with the theory of M.I. (Multiple Intelligence), which has had a strong impact on how schools can design their curriculum and instructions targeting the needs of the individual. (Chung, 2014)

Howard Gardner's theory has particular importance in the design of my teaching practice and is an interesting framework to help teachers understand the intelligence among individuals. Recognizing the uniqueness of individuals can bring advantages into a classroom teaching because new knowledge can be collaboratively constructed through social interactions with technology. Without the understanding of the importance of individuals, we may wrongly design a scaffold only targeting on individual needs, rather than on the learning community as a whole where everyone can contribute to the knowledge discovery or formation. Gruenkemeyer (2014) discussed that "M.I. is a social cognitivist theory based on the belief that every person possesses eight different types of intelligence. Gardner refers to M.I. as relatively independent mental faculties. No two people have the same intellectual profile; each person uses the combination of intelligences differently. The theory recognizes a broad swathe of human capacities, including ones from the arts and from the realm of human intercourse that have tradi-

tionally been considered non-intellectual and perhaps not even cognitive." No doubt, the theory suggests that the intellectual profile is formed by multiple types of intelligence. If we design a learning activity, which can gather effort and thoughts from different individuals, then we can fill in the gaps of others.

Gruenkemeyer's research also mentioned that, "Gardner argues that technology can be used in order to enhance and implement the M.I. theory in education. Particularly, Gardner believes that online learning opportunities are very beneficial and applicable to the M.I. theory and improve learning. The online experience is an active experience for motivated learners and is changing the way people take in information. Because of the wide range of resources available with technology, Gardner argues education can be transformed for the better, but only if the technology is used appropriately. Digital devices, according to Gardner, provide an engaging experience and can appeal to the eight different intelligences." Thus, learning collaboratively with the resources on the Internet can easily construct knowledge according to the theory of Gardner.

The Technology in Practice

This semester, I am teaching a general education course "Technology, Entertainment and Mathematics" formed by 15 students coming from math major and other. The course is about finding a relationship between mathematics and the latest technology development and entertainment encounters. Most of the students probably know that calculator is an invention of mathematicians, but they may not have thought that computer science is a field contributed mainly by pioneers who were mathematicians. Instead of me presenting the historical backgrounds of these mathematicians directly, I decided to distribute a list of these mathematicians through the Google Drive and Wikipedia. Students in the lecture hall were asked to access to the list through capturing the QR codes, and four of these math-

emicians linked to their Wikipedia pages were assigned to each student to read in class.

Then, they were asked to summarize their profiles into the following categories, namely Gender, Name, Origin, Date of Birth, Educational Achievements (both undergraduate and graduate studies), and Major Contributions in Computer Science. The summary was submitted to my customized Google Form, and then I was able to use the “Summary of Response” to present the collaborative results statistically. From the statistics, students could see clearly that the majority of the early pioneers of computer scientists are mathematicians with degrees in mathematics.

At the end, questions were asked to follow up on their reflections about the results, and students were able to agree together from their personal research experience instantly during the class.

Besides Google Drive and QR codes, I made use of mobile technology and other equipment in the designed lecture with intervention. Students were asked to bring their own mobile devices to the lecture and complete the activity by using their personal devices. I provided my department’s iPads to some of these students upon their request because their own devices might be too small or not fast enough. Also, the statistical results were constantly updated and shown on the projector screen so students can immediately see their contribution to the class. From my informal observation, students kept peeking on the interim statistic to see if their contribution made any difference. Meanwhile, I encouraged the students to discuss together about their own results when they were searching the information. During the lesson, no student reported that they had any difficulty to access to the Google Drive, use the QR code through their mobile devices, access to the WiFi network, and reviewing the information on the Internet.

Critical Reflection

The lesson approach made use of the idea of providing the cloud-computing platform as the scaffold to assist the students to use their learned skills and knowledge about mathematicians and conclude that computer science is a theoretical and practical field contributed by the early mathematicians. Instead of having a student or the teacher to summarize and analyze the profiles on behalf of the whole intelligences, the task was distributed to each one and used their intelligence to summarize, analyze, and present to the community. One idea implied by the M.I. theory is distributive and collaborative knowledge construction. Instead of believing that someone has all necessary intelligence, the idea suggests everyone can contribute to the knowledge base somehow. Although some students could not complete reading all the profiles of mathematicians during the class, the anonymity shown on the screen could help relieve the stress of students in completing every single task.

Furthermore, the cloud computing technology allows students to access to information even when they leave the classroom. After the class, I left statistical results on the Google Drive so students could access to it after class. Although I did not keep track of who completed all the submissions or accessed it again after class, the option is available for further design of the course. In fact, I could have invited the students to continue to submission after the lecture, and generate a completed figure. Since the objective of helping students recognize the contributions of mathematicians in computer science was achieved, I decided to keep the information as it was. Nonetheless, the students were actively engaged and they participated in the learning activity without seeking for extra credit. The motivation came from their intrinsic desire to contribute to the community rather than the extrinsic bonus. I think that is a good indicator that the built scaffold is successful to assist students walk through the ZPD and become independent

learners in this regard. Instead of the teacher serving as the assistant, the technology can serve as a major role in helping students complete an assigned task to build new knowledge as the outcome.

In my opinion, I believe that this activity is not suitable for students to complete individually outside of the classroom because the immediate discussion was necessary to reinforce the idea. Although it was possible to extend the distributed construction to outside of classroom, I wanted to make sure students can instantly read the statistic and discuss with me who also serves as a major assistant role in the ZPD.

Google Drive is mainly used in my intervention to illustrate the idea of ZPD and M.I. in the cloud environment. Originally, this cloud technology along with QR code is not originally designed particularly for education. Yet, it possesses every element that can be turned into an educational technology elastically. Certainly, some other cloud applications have been designed with pre-defined purposes, but the flexibility for customization is limited and it ends up with so many different apps for different purposes. If there was a unified platform where teachers can easily build new applications on it while commonly adopted by students using across platforms, it would be more useful and flexible. At the end, I think educational psychology is the foundation of the usage of educational technology for learning and teaching, and the underlying theories guide the designer and educators in technology aided learning. Through this experience, we can see that simple tool can be already the simplest way for success in helping students to learn effectively.

Professor Gary Ka-Wai Wong, teaches and conducts research at The Hong Kong Institute of Education, Hong Kong, China. He was a presenter at IAFOR’s ACE / ACSET 2014 Conference

Conflict Irresolution: Post-Postmodernism and the Legacy of Ironic Subversion

By Michael Heitkemper-Yates



Locating the Post-Postmodern

“Dear Gaston,” the narrator begins in Donald Barthelme’s (1977) letter to a fictitious literary critic, “Yes, you are absolutely right—Postmodernism is dead” The letter continues:

So we have a difficulty. What shall we call the New Thing, which I haven’t encountered yet but which is bound to be out there somewhere? Post-Post-Modernism sounds, to me, a little lumpy. I’ve been toying with the Revolution of the Word II, or the New Revolution of the Word It should have the word “new” in it somewhere. The New Newness? Or maybe the Post-New? It’s a problem. I await your comments and suggestions. If we’re going to slap a saddle on this rough beast, we’ve got to get moving.

And in the thirty odd years since the writing of Barthelme’s letter, he and his narrator have not been alone in this pronouncement. With tedious regularity, the death of postmodernism has been echoing through the halls of academia, strewn across the pages of countless critical journals, and publicly mourned at literature and cultural studies conferences for decades. But somehow the death of postmodernism seems to have maneuvered its own obituary into some kind of endless *mise-en-abyme* feedback loop of sudden passings and Lazarus-like reappearances. And yet in spite of these recurring reports of postmodernism’s demise, as Charles B. Harris writes in the *American Book Review*, “the corpse remains suspiciously lively. Like Barthelme’s Dead Father, it continues to walk among us, not only prompting frequent sightings (a new novel by Barth here, one by Federman there) but producing offspring” (Harris, 2002). And reminiscent

of the list of ungainly neologisms suggested by Barthelme’s critic, these “offspring” of the undead and undying fathers of postmodernism have had to put up with (or have coined for themselves) all manner of new propositions for the supposedly “New Thing” imagined as the successor to first-wave postmodernism: “Image-Fiction,” “Blank Fiction,” “Tragic Realism,” “Psychological Realism,” “Speculative Realism,” “Crackpot Realism,” “Avant-Pop,” “New-New-Post,” “PoPoMo,” “Long Modernism,” “New Sincerity,” and even “the [new] novel of intimacy.”

However, the category most generally attached to this contemporary generation of fictions (notwithstanding its lumpiness) appears to be “post-postmodernism.” But what does this second prefix entail? And where is the *post-* in post-postmodernism actually pointing?

While each of the previous categories varies significantly in the emphasis it places on matters of textual form, historical moment, and referentiality, throughout the contemporary criticism of post-postmodernism runs a recurring theme of “post-ironic sincerity.” This post-ironic sincerity, as articulated by critics and writers such as Samuel R. Delany, Lynne Tillman, Jonathan Franzen, David Foster Wallace, and Robert L. McLaughlin, describes a re-assessment of the ironic nature of the postmodern text and a movement toward a new set of aesthetic positions and political responsibilities no longer directly guided by ironic narrative forms and parodic constructs.

This paper represents an attempt to trace the development of this post-postmodern literature of post-ironic sincerity and briefly examine its formal and political relationships to the type of ironic fiction practiced by postmodern writers such as Thomas Pynchon, Robert Coover, Donald

Barthelme, and Ishmael Reed. It is proposed that the critical, self-reflexive, metafictional narrative forms explored by Pynchon, Coover, Barthelme, and Reed during the postmodern period of ironic dominance have led to an increasing tendency toward a more direct, unaffected mode of narrative. This post-postmodern mode of post-ironic sincerity not only signals a change in the cultural values and political crises of late twentieth and early twenty-first century America, this change also indicates that the ironic mode, with its matrix of playful linguistics, parodic subversions of orthodox ontology and epistemology, and its radical ironic indeterminacy, is no longer adequate to the task of confronting the problems faced in today’s post-postmodern world.

The End of Irony?

Despite the reactionary opinions of media pundits and journalists such as *Vanity Fair*’s Graydon Carter, who on September 18, 2001, famously announced that, “There’s going to be a seismic change. I think it’s the end of the age of irony. . . . Things that were considered fringe and frivolous are going to disappear” (Beers, 2001), actually, the “seismic change” declared by Carter had been rumbling through American literature since the late 1970s. Even in the mid-career works of the first-wave fathers of postmodernism a shift in narrative form and political focus is readily apparent. In claustrophobic works such as Coover’s *Gerald’s Party* (1985) and Barthelme’s *Paradise* (1986) it is clear that a new sense of isolation and contradiction had entered the postmodern mix by the 1980s. And comparison of Reed’s *The Terrible Twos* (1982) to his *The Terrible Threes* (1989), or Pynchon’s *Gravity’s Rainbow* (1973) to his *Vineland* (1990), provides a similar trajectory away from the maddening rush of complex, signifying rhetoric

But somehow the death of postmodernism seems to have maneuvered its own obituary into some kind of endless mise-en-abyme feedback loop of sudden passings and Lazarus-like reappearances.

that characterizes their early fiction towards an increasingly personal mode of revisionary historicism. In each of these works the prose is directed gradually further away from the grand histories and myths of the past, towards a more personal, domestic, if somewhat uncomfortably tense, approach to the grand histories and myths of the present.

This continual shift toward new narrative explorations of the experiential moment, toward innovative approaches to the depiction of personal and group identities, and toward the formulation of new narrative means by which to conceive of personal responsibility and agency, was brought to the forefront of American literature by the radical, ironic poetics of the 1960s and early 70s.

Through the parodic metafictional critiques of these early postmodern writers the hypocrisies of history and myth that exist throughout American culture and society were exposed through humor, deconstructive fragmentation, and an incendiary irony that sought to identify the gaps in all ontological and epistemological constructs through a self-reflexively critical approach to the language of narrative. Indeed, by looking at the inner workings of Western myth and American history through the ironic bullet-holes shot in them by the writers, artists, and other subversives of the early postmodern period, many of the dangerous ideologies hidden behind the self-privileging

constructs of Western society and culture are revealed and opened up for questioning. These revelations and questionings were made possible by means of a violently critical, highly ironic mode of parody.

As David Foster Wallace writes in his oft-cited essay, “E Unibus Pluram: Television and U.S. Fiction” (1993): “. . . irony—exploiting gaps between what’s said and what’s meant, between how things try to appear and how they really are—is the time-honored way artists seek to illuminate and explode hypocrisy”. That the first-wave postmodern writers and artists turned their ironic weaponry upon the “lone-gunner Westerns, paternalistic sitcoms, and jut-jawed law enforcement circa 1960,” Wallace argues, was due to the fact that these artificial idols and images of authority represented, celebrated, and perpetuated, “a deeply hypocritical American self-image”.

In “E Unibus Pluram,” Wallace argues that, “Irony in sixties art and culture started out the same way youthful rebellion did. It was difficult and painful, and *productive*—a firm diagnosis of a long-denied disease”. “The assumptions behind this early postmodern irony,” writes Wallace, were frank, idealistic, and very convincingly maintained “that etiology and diagnosis pointed toward cure; that revelation of imprisonment yielded freedom”. However, despite the intense idealism behind the politics of first-wave postmodernism, much of the tension and self-

awareness present in the literature of the 1980s is directly informed by the anxiety surrounding the disappointing realization that, while these 1960s and 70s “revelations” did manage to yield significant advancements in the actualization of artistic expression, these explosive attacks on American hypocrisy did not yield much freedom beyond the insulated bounds of the privileged sectors of American intellectual culture and the elite society of the American art world.

Rather than a new world order of free expression and unbridled creativity, with the deconstruction of pure ontological myth and pure epistemological history came the location of the economic and interpersonal mechanisms of power and control that continue to exert their influences on the course of world events. In response to the location of these new threats, the character of narrative irony also changed; flights of ironic fancy are replaced by a growing disaffection for the bounds of the prison-house of language that the early postmodern artists and theorists had identified and explored. In the 1980s, parody and self-reflexivity turn increasingly inward, and are often directed against the frustrating limitations of the *supposedly* autonomous object of the text and its linguistically mediated ontology.

In works such as Lynne Tillman’s *Living with Contradictions* (1982), Ntozake Shange’s *Sassafrass, Cypress & Indigo* (1982), Audre Lorde’s *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name* (1982),

and Kathy Acker's *Blood and Guts in High School* (1984), metafictional tactics of parody and narrative collage are brought to bear against the object of the text, the object of the self, and the place of these objects within an American culture of production and consumption. And in Acker's *My Death, My Life, by Pier Paolo Pasolini* (1983), these forms of objectification are investigated by the text's multiple narrators and ever-shifting angles of narrative approach. As one of the novella's many narrators states:

I'm an object. Do you, reader, know anything about human objects, what caused them: you with your clawings, your gripes, your gripes, your petty boyfriend complaints? This, all this, is object. Scream. I dream of being punished. Scream. I dream of torment that will carry me over the edge and make me act without considering the action. I dream of having a body and it and thinking being one monster. (Aker 1983, p. 281-82)

This terrible realization that all is only language creates a similar anxiety in Lynne Tillman's *Living with Contradictions*, especially in the collection's title story. Musing self-reflexively to herself on the nature of her limited, verbally constructed, commercially mediated experience, Tillman's narrator muses:

People are intimate with their analysts, if they're lucky. What could be more intimate than an advertisement for Ivory soap? It's impossible not to be affected. [...]
The manufacture of desire and the evidence of real desire. But 'real' desire is for what—for what is real or manufactured? (Tillman 1982, p. 121)

In decline is the flippant, satirical humor of Pynchon, Coover,

Barthelme, and Reed—the ironic absurdity gradually replaced by a growing sense of insecurity and self-contradiction. Indeed, in throwing back the curtain to reveal the verbal nature of all interpretations and articulations of experience, many of the characters and narrators of 1980s American fiction discover, as a result, that they share only as much stake in reality as an Ivory soap advertisement or a string of subject-verb agreements.

As apparent in the previous examples, the sense of insignificance that developed in the texts of the period also reflected an angst that many artists and writers were feeling in regards to their place within an American culture crowded with the false art of marketing propaganda, big-budget fluff, and commercialism. In other works of the period, such as DeLillo's *White Noise* (1984), Ellis's *Less Than Zero* (1985), Tim O'Brien's *The Nuclear Age* (1985), and Paul Auster's *In the Country of Last Things* (1987), the objectification of experience is portrayed as the source of a distinct denial of authenticity. This denial is interrogated in these novels through an ironic assessment of the disparate and often directly contradictory things that Americans buy—both materially and consciously—to confirm their success, assert their independence, and affirm their identity. In grueling detail, these works catalogue the loss of self that attends the expansion of popular culture into the lives of an American mass-market populace of paranoid, image-obsessed consumers.

The “image-fiction” that developed as a reply to this mass-market America, according to Wallace's analysis, followed the terms of a pop-centered narrative irony straight into the mirror that it held up to itself. In definition, Wallace writes:

Image-fiction is basically a further involution of the relations between lit and pop that blossomed

with sixties postmodernists. If the postmodern church fathers found pop images valid *referents* and *symbols* in fiction, and if in the seventies and early eighties this appeal to the features of mass culture shifted from *use* to *mention*, certain avant-gardists starting to treat of pop and TV and watching as themselves fertile *subjects*, the new fiction of image uses the transient received myths of popular culture as a *world* in which to imagine fictions about 'real,' albeit pop-mediated, public characters. (Wallace 1993, p. 171)

The advantage of the image-fiction approach to the problems of immaterial authenticity, “real” reality, and the late twentieth-century proliferation of the “fictual”, Wallace claims, is a “re-imagining [of] what human life might truly be like over there across the chasms of illusion, mediation, demographics, marketing, image, and appearance” (Wallace 1993). However, Wallace states with disappointment, in becoming one with the “passive, addictive TV-psychology” of consumer America, image-fiction does not move beyond the self-stifling constraints of its own irony-saturated discourse. Wrapped in the self-silencing entropy of ironic self-consciousness, the corporate worlds projected by the image-fictions of writers such as DeLillo, Ellis, O'Brien, and Auster in the 1980s, as well as those of Douglas Coupland, Mark Leyner, and Ricardo Cortez Cruz in the 1990s, according to Wallace's assessment, act more to support the expansion of neoliberal Capitalism than they do to secure the further advancement of new forms of individual expression and the creative renovation of American culture (Wallace, 1993).

For just below the surface of the simulacrum, beneath the objects of consumer capital that arrive already bearing the name of some designer or

some producer (as in Ellis's *Less Than Zero*, *American Psycho* [1991], and *Glamorama* [1998]), and within the myth of some resonant substantiality that a given object is said to contain, represent, or satisfy (such as the Dylar in DeLillo's *White Noise*, or the baseball in his *Underworld* [1997]), is nothing but desire and solipsism. As Jedediah Purdy interprets it in his analysis of post-postmodern irony in *For Common Things: Irony, Trust, and Commitment in America Today*, through the profound emptiness and paranoia explored in works such as these, "we [as reader] sense an unreal quality in our words and even in our thoughts. They are superficial, they belong to other people and other purposes; they are not ours, and it may be that nothing is properly ours" (Purdy, 2000). But how did the tables turn so completely on the idealistic radicalism that evolved during the postmodern period?

..... American hypocrisy did not yield much freedom beyond the insulated bounds of the privileged sectors of American intellectual culture and the elite society of the American art world.

According to Wallace and Franzen, the profound emptiness in much of the literature of the 1980s is due in part to the contemporary appropriation of ironic forms by popular media such as television and other market-driven vehicles of commercial advertising (Wallace, 1993); (Franzen, 1996). By evacuating ironic forms of their social purpose and refashioning them into flashy, multi-voiced tools of consumer appeal, irony becomes a highly effective weapon in the commercial battle to subvert consumer suspicion, create desire and, through

dissimulation and double-speak, to divert consumer attention from its own sales-pitch. Writers and critics such as Wallace, McLaughlin, and Christy Wampole make a very plausible case for this development, for the forms of ironic dissimulation and the self-denigrating reflexivity of irony do make the ironic mode of narrative an ideal mode for the creation of entertaining, persuasive pieces of advertising. However, as this shift occurs and pop-critical irony begins to become indistinct from simple pop-irony, its socio-critical purpose is replaced by a financial purpose and its subversive edge becomes dull.

That this is so, Wallace argues (with more than a trace of Kierkegaard in his analysis), is due to the fact that, "irony, entertaining as it is, serves an exclusively negative function. It's critical and destructive, a ground-clearing. Surely this is the way our

postmodern fathers saw it. But irony's singularly unuseful when it comes to constructing anything to replace the hypocrisies it debunks" (Wallace, 1993). To Wallace this negativity amounts to a kind of tyranny of emptiness and vacuity based on a rhetoric of, "I don't really mean what I say" (Wallace, 1993), and to Wallace and other contemporary American artists and writers such as Jonathan Franzen, Dave Eggers, Jonathan Safran Foer, and Jeffrey Eugenides, such a position runs counter to any form of creative expression that

consciously—and conscientiously—conceives of itself as other than a marketing tool.

Ironizing Irony, or, Sincerity in the Post-Postmodern Moment

As Robert McLaughlin writes in "Post-Postmodern Discontent," because the hyper-visual, sales-driven culture of American media has "co-opted postmodernism's bag of tricks to deleterious effect, writers of fiction, especially those who see themselves as the heirs of postmodernism, need to find a way beyond self-referential irony to offer the possibility of construction" (McLaughlin, 2008). In answer to this possibility, post-postmodern fictions seek to show that: "self-referentiality by itself collaborates with the culture of the consumer technology to create a society of style without substance, of language without meaning, of cynicism without belief, of virtual communities without human connection, of rebellion without change" (2008, p. 115). While this literary exhaustion was certainly not the intended socio-cultural consequence behind the writing of such self-reflexive texts as Pynchon's *V* (1963), Coover's *Pricksongs & Descants* (1968), Barthelme's *Snow White*, and Reed's *Mumbo Jumbo*, nevertheless, such is the character of "consumer technology" that the subversive nature of irony must *itself* be subverted in order for literature to remain subversive.

Wallace's suggestion in "E Unibus Pluram," repeated throughout his *Brief Interviews with Hideous Men* (1999), *Consider the Lobster* (2005), *This is Water* (2009), and woven into the rhetoric of his posthumously published novel *The Pale King* (2011), is the suggestion that the next step forward, towards

genuine substance and the negation of negative ironic negation, is precisely that—the construction of a counter irony, or, reverse “anti-irony” through an embracing of sincere forms of expression and “single-entendre values.” Wallace (1993) writes:

The next real literary ‘rebels’ in this country might well emerge as some weird bunch of ‘anti-rebels’ . . . who have the childish gall actually to endorse single-entendre values. Who treat old untrendy human troubles and emotions in U.S. life with reverence and conviction. Who eschew self-consciousness and fatigue. These anti-rebels would be outdated, of course, before they even started. Too sincere. Clearly repressed. Backward, quaint, naïve, anachronistic. Maybe that’ll be the point, why they’ll be the next real rebels.

Although it is, perhaps, too early to say what influence these proposed “anti-rebels” will have on the course of future literary developments, nevertheless, formally conservative, highly “sincere” novels such as Dave Eggers’s *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius* (2000), Jonathan Franzen’s *The Corrections* (2001), Jonathan Safran Foer’s *Everything is Illuminated* (2002), and Jeffrey Eugenides’s *Middlesex* (2002), have already made their collective mark on the American literary landscape.

Pushing the dominant literary mode ever closer to the realm of referentiality, these works have been lauded for

their genial humor, their mastery of observed detail, their earnest concern for human relationships, and their heartfelt attempts to articulate the paradoxes of daily experience. Convivial, full of quirky, carefully developed characters, and rife with uncomfortably awkward “real life” situations, these novels do not, however, represent the sort of rebellion one might expect as sufficiently radical to shake up the literary world and move it in a new direction. And yet, all evidence suggests that such a move is in the process of taking place. Whether this move simply represents a market fluctuation, or is actually indicative of a deeper transition is unclear, but one thing is clear, the difference in mode between the ironic fiction of the postmodern period and that of its post-postmodern successor is noticeable and significant.

With this return to character, emotion, and personal intimacy comes a drastic alteration to the rhetorical contortions of Coover and Reed. Likewise, the collage-narrative forms of Pynchon and Barthelme are critically revised in these post-postmodern texts and expanded into increasingly referential textual territory. And instead of heaping the trash of the world onto the reader—in the manner of Reed’s machine-gun signifyin(g) and Barthelme’s philosophical dreck—post-postmodern writers are far more likely to pick through the rubbish of contemporary experience and describe it to the reader in detail, itemizing every ingredient, enumerating its provenance, and proposing its potential function within a global

matrix of socio-cultural relations.

The current post-postmodern modal shift back towards the threshold of experience marks a departure from the realm of narrative abstraction and a distinct movement towards a more realistic mode of shared, interpersonal discourse, but is this emerging “post-ironic” mode actually any less ironic in its sincere approach? Might not the *post-* in post-ironic, like the *post-* in postmodern, be better thought of as a relational demarcation? Could not the post-ironic actually indicate a further advance in the evolution of irony as a mode of literature and discourse?

Obviously, it is far too early to propose an articulate reply to these post-postmodern questions. But if there is one thing that connects each of the authors, whether modern, postmodern, or post-postmodern, it is their enduring appeal to the continued exploration of language. As Ihab Hassan writes in *The Dismemberment of Orpheus*: “Language, after all, still remains the deepest habit of our mind, our most thorough inheritance from dead or vanished gods” (1971, p. 17). And like any inheritance, it is now up to its inheritors to decide the future of its use. For the question of language will always remain: which habits of use to discard and which habits of use are in need of further revision.

Michael Heitkemper-Yates is at the Graduate School of Humanities at Kobe University, Japan. A fully referenced version of this article can be sought by request from the Editor at publications@iafor.org



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Assistant Editor: Lindsay Lafreniere

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