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Front cover image by Linda Ainouche (*Dreadlocks Story*)

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LIVING IN IRON, DRESSED IN BRONZE:  
METAL FORMULAS AND THE CHRONOLOGY OF AGES<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract.** Names of important metals such as gold, silver, iron, and bronze occur many times in the Homeric Epics. We intend to look at them within the framework of oral poetry, with the purpose to determine if they form a more or less coherent set of “formulas”, in the sense defined by Milman Parry and the *Oral Poetry Theory*<sup>2</sup>, and to test a possible link with the stages of the evolution of humankind. Though several specialists criticized some excess in Parry’s and Lord’s definitions of the formula, we deem the theory still valuable in its great lines and feel no need to discuss it for the present study<sup>3</sup>. The frequent use of bronze in epical formulas for arms, while the actual heroes fight their battles with iron equipment, and the emphasis of gold in the descriptions of wealth may reflect a deep-seated linguistic memory within the archaic mindset of the *Ages of Mankind*. With Homer’s language as our best witness, metal formulas testify to the importance of the tradition of the *Ages of Mankind* in understanding the thought patterns and value-systems, as well as some linguistic usages of the Homeric Epics.

**Keywords:** oral poetry, the Myth of Ages, metals, gold, bronze, iron, metaphors, anthropology

We shall here study the possible coherence or opposition between linguistic and literary artefacts in Homer and Hesiod on one hand, and archaeological or historical data on the other. We have first to prevent a naive approach, which would consist of equating the periods named after the main metal in use with the periods mentioned in myth as if it were an objective and realistic succession. In the civilizations concerned, iron was already known in the so-

called Bronze Age and, reversely, bronze was still in use in the Iron Age, now better called the Geometric period<sup>4</sup>.

The status of metal metaphors, along with other materials like stone or wood, is also an important feature in approaching the ancient views on the qualities of those materials used as models for analysing phenomena that cannot be directly expressed in common language. The *Oral Poetry Theory*, confronted both with the chronological order in the Hesiodic myth and the stratigraphy of metaphors, will lead to some conclusions on the relative chronology of the poetic language of Archaic Greece.

The main interest we took in this study is anthropological: the language of the Epics shows how heroes are supposed to live in a world built mainly on bronze, iron being rarely mentioned for material goods. However, some phrases and images, either in the characters' language or in that of the poet, suggest that they fought with iron, which was the material able to provide an image of heart-hardness. The poet of the *Odyssey* uses a metallurgic image of a smith working iron, not bronze, for Odysseus piercing Polyphemus' eye: language leads us then to conclude that iron was of common use in real life (of both the poet and its audience, and maybe also in the hero's life), but despised as such, probably because of prestige reasons.

## 1. MATERIALS IN THE HOMERIC WORLD: A LINGUISTIC APPROACH THROUGH FORMULAS

If we trust a statistical account leaning on an inquiry based on the TLG, the main metal used by the characters of Homer is bronze, with more than 300 items attested: it is used for arms, as well as for several tools in everyday life. The Homeric language thus reflects the world of the Mycenaean warriors<sup>5</sup> rather than the world of the Geometric period<sup>6</sup>. This does not mean that iron is unknown or of no use in Homer: the word for it - *sidēros*, though much less attested,

is often of high valuation, for instance, when iron is offered as a gift, as can be seen in Book 23 of the *Iliad*. Moreover, the Greek word σιδηρος, usually translated as “iron”, actually corresponds both to iron and steel, as shown by Robert Halleux (2007). Thus, the numeric pre-eminence of χαλκός in the text is more impressive.

Gold and silver are also mentioned, though less frequently than bronze, and constantly as of a great price, attached to gods or the distant past of heroes. Materials such as tin, amber, lead, copper, ivory are also known, but their marginality seems to appear from their nearly total lack in formulas, comparisons and metaphors. On the other hand, formulas show a high degree of proximity between precious materials, especially gold and silver, and gods: several formulas imply various compounds built with χρυσο- and ἀργυρο- and, as shown below, the formulaic status of metals appears in the traditional epithets for gods: compare the formula<sup>7</sup> at the end of the verse: χρυσόθρονος Ἥρη - in the nominative, χρυσοθρόνου Ἥρης - in the genitive<sup>8</sup>. In the terms defined by Milman Parry, this is a “fixed” epithet, specific of the goddesses Hera, Eos, and Artemis, since the nominative also occurs with Artemis’ name, in a different metrical configuration: *Il.* 8. 533 καὶ γὰρ τοῖσι κακὸν χρυσόθρονος Ἄρτεμις ὄρσε.

See the analysis by Parry, who did not specifically study this case of epithets concerning metals:

(...) there is only a small number of noun-epithet formulae which have the same metrical value with another noun-epithet formula used in the same grammatical case for the same character. It should follow that with a few exceptions the poet uses the same epithet every time he uses a formula of a given length. If all epithets in Homer were distinctive, an investigation into the choice of epithets would have to stop there, and we would have to declare ourselves satisfied with this first proof of the traditional character of the epithet. For most of the epithets applied to the gods, this is true. [...] It is otherwise with the epithets used for the heroes. Here the distinctive epithet [...] is comparatively rare, and epithets employed indifferently for two or more heroes are far more numerous and occur with far greater frequency (Parry 1971, 83-84)

We may still note that these metals mentioned in the typical epithets for gods (especially goddesses here) may refer either to the mental representation of gods themselves or their statues<sup>9</sup>. A rationalizing view could hold that men used precious metals for making statues of gods and, therefore, imagined them after the model of these statues. But the reverse may also be said: men made images of their gods wearing gold and silver because they imagined them in gold and silver form, especially because the formulas from the traditional poetry motivated them to do so.

Thus, the formulaic style has χρυσόθρονος Ἥρη / Ἥως at the end of the verse and χρυσόθρονος Ἄρτεμις with a third trochaic cut. The simple adjective χρυσή seems, in contrast, devoted to Aphrodite in several cases of the declension (nominative excepted); acc. χρυσήν Ἀφροδίτην, gen. χρυσέης Ἀφροδίτης, dat. χρυσεῖη Ἀφροδίτη. We also note that the compound epithets χρυσήλακατος and χρυσήμιος seem specific of Artemis<sup>10</sup>, χρυσάορος of Apollo, χρυσόπτερος of Iris, and χρυσόρραπις of Hermes. The analysis could be extended to objects and animals, as χρυσάμπυκας for horses. The specificity of epithets also occurs with compounds in ἀργυρο-: compare the verse-ending ἀργυρότοξος Ἀπόλλων with different associated goddesses (*Il.* 5.760 Κύπρις τε (...); 7.58 Ἀθηναίη (...), and the usual verse-ending Θεῆτις ἀργυρόπεζα (2x), with a variant in the acc. εἰς Θεῆτιν ἀργυρόπεζαν, and another one that seems specific of *Il.* 1, ἀργυρόπεζα Θεῆτις at the beginning of the verse.

All this seems to fit with the analysis of epithets by Milman Parry and the use of fixed epithets for gods. Notice that absolutely no compound is found in Homer with the name of iron, which could be interpreted as a lower integration of this metal in the traditional language of the poet than gold and silver. But we shall see later on that the metaphorical usage shows an image in strong contrast with this first provisory conclusion, and it will be necessary to think about this contrast later in more depth.

Thus, in *Iliad* 5.721-731<sup>11</sup>, the narrator follows the goddess Hera

in preparing her chariot with the help of Hebe, and numerous materials are mentioned in a luxurious exhibition:

Ἡρῆ πρέσβα θεὰ θυγάτηρ μέγαλοιο Κρόνοιο·  
 Ἡβῆ δ' ἄμφ' ὀχέεσσι θοῶς βάλε καμπύλα κύνκλα  
 Ἰῶν ἦτοι χρυσεῆ ἵτυς ἀφθιτος, αὐτὰρ ὕπερθε  
 χάλκε' ἐπίσσωτρα προσσαρηρότα, θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι·  
 πλήμναι δ' ἀργύρου εἰσι περιδρομοὶ ἀμφοτέρωθεν.  
 Δίφρος δὲ χρυσεοῖσι καὶ ἀργυροῖσιν ἰμᾶσιν  
 ἐντέταται, δοῖαι δὲ περιδρομοὶ ἀντυγες εἰσι.  
 Τοῦ δ' ἐξ ἀργύρεος ῥυμὸς πέλεν· αὐτὰρ ἐπ' ἄκρω  
 δῆσε χρύσειον καλὸν ζύγον, ἐν δὲ λέπαθνα  
 κάλ' ἔβαλε χρύσει·

[Hera] the mighty, went away to harness the gold-bridled horses (χρυσάμπυνας ... ἵππους),

Then Hebe in speed set about the chariot the curved wheels eight-spoked and brazen, with an axle of iron both ways. Golden is the wheel's felly imperishable, and outside it is joined, a wonder to look upon, the brazen running-rim, and the silver naves revolve on either side of the chariot, Whereas the car itself is lashed fast with plaiting of gold and silver, with double chariot rails that circle about it, and the pole of the chariot is of silver, to whose extremity Hebe made fast the golden and splendid yoke, and fastened the harness, golden and splendid, and underneath the yoke Hera.<sup>12</sup>

The Homeric text seems here to keep the memory of the brilliant techniques of alloy and inlay, which we can see in some luxurious Mycenaean objects thanks to archaeology.

Some formulas combine several metals (and other possible materials, precious stones for instance): they seem to obey very strong constraints on word order and metrical forms, implying a kind of rhetoric of the materials). Thus, we meet “gold, red bronze, and fair-girdled women, and grey iron”:

Il. 9.365-367

ἄλλον δ' ἐνθένδε χρυσὸν καὶ χαλκὸν ἐρυθρὸν  
 ἠδὲ γυναικίαις εὐζώνους πολίων τε σίδηρον<sup>13</sup>

Gold and silver: *Il.* 10.438

ἄρμα δέ οἱ χρυσοῦ τε καὶ ἀργύρου εὖ ἦσκηται

Gold, silver and ivory: *Od.* 23.200

δαιδάλλων χρυσοῦ τε καὶ ἀργύρου ἠδ' ἐλέφαντι.

Bronze and iron: *Il.* 7.473-4

ἄλλοι μὲν χαλκῶ, ἄλλοι δ' αἰθωνι σιδήρῳ,

ἄλλοι δὲ ῥινοῖς, ἄλλοι δ' αὐτῆσι βόεσσιν

Though in *χαλκός τε χρυσοῦς τε πολύμητος τε σιδήρος*, “bronze is there, and gold, and difficulty wrought iron” (*Il.* 6.48; 10.379; 11.133; *Od.* 14.324, 21.10), bronze is mentioned first, then gold and iron in the second part of the verse receives much importance with the adjective *πολύμητος*. Formulas most usually ordinate metals on a clear scale going from the most precious to the most usual. Some exceptions may come from pragmatic reasons: in *Il.* 8.15 *ἔνθα σιδήρειά τε πύλαι καὶ χάλκεος οὐδός* - from the usual priority of the door compared to the threshold when one enters a house. In Hephaistos’ blacksmith, does the necessity of various degrees of heat explain why the god first puts into the fire bronze and tin, secondly gold and silver?

*Il.* 18.474-5

χαλκὸν δ' ἐν πυρὶ βάλλεν ἀτειρέα κασσίτερόν τε

καὶ χρυσοῦν τιμῆντα καὶ ἀργυροῦν αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα

θῆκεν ἐν ἀκμοθέτῳ μέγαν ἄκμονα

He cast on the fire bronze which is weariness, and tin with it and valuable gold, and silver, and thereafter set forth upon its standard the great anvil (...)

The rhetoric mentioned above is particularly striking when the alliteration on *khi* coincides with an anaphora on compounds in *πολύ*, as in:

*Il.* 10.314-5

ἦν δέ τις ἐν Τρώεσσι Δόλων Εὐμήδεος υἱὸς

κήρυκος θείοιο πολύχρυσος πολύχαλκος (...)

But there was one among the Trojans, Dolon, Eumedes' son, the sacred herald's, a man of much gold and bronze (...)

Il. 18.289

πάντες μυθέσκοντο πολύχρυσον πολύχαλκον·

[mortal men would speak of the city of Priam] as a place with much gold and much bronze.

The particularized epithet, so frequently met for the Akhaioi, χαλκοχιτών – “bronze-armoured”, could owe its frequency from this taste for sounds, as well as from its descriptive quality: second hemistich with gen. ≠ Ἀχαιῶν χαλκοχιτώνων, 25 ex./ with acc. ≠ χαλκοχίτωνας Ἀχαιοῦς (once: *Il.* 10.287); ≠ Ἐπειῶν χαλκοχιτώνων (once: *Il.* 4.537) / Ἐπειοὶ χαλκοχίτωνες (once: *Il.* 11.694); with Argeioi instead of the usual Akhaioi: one item only,

*Il.* 4.285

Αἴαντ' Ἀργείων ἠγήτορε χαλκοχιτώνων, *see* also with Kreton

*Il.* 13.255

Ἴδομενεῦ, Κρητῶν βουληφόρε χαλκοχιτώνων;

whereas one item only is found for the Trojan side, *Il.* 5.180 Αἰνεῖα Τρώων βουληφόρε χαλκοχιτώνων, with the same pattern (addressed with a vocative and an epithet intertwined with the genitive of a people's name and its epithet), while Trojans and Achaeans usually contrast each another as “Trojans breakers of horses” vs. “Bronze-armoured Achaeans” (Τρώων θ' ἵπποδάμων καὶ Ἀχαιῶν χαλκοχιτώνων).

Of course, we cannot succeed in justifying expression that we met, like *Od.* 13.136 (apart from the alliteration) χαλκόν τε χρυσόν τε ἄλις ἐσθῆτά θ' ὑφαντήν.

These formulas show how important metals were in the real world to which the Epics allude: they are sometimes combined

together in inlaid or alloyed objects, or imagined as associated in the “real world” of heroes.

When several metals occur in a series, as noted above, the succession in the word-order generally corresponds to that of the *Myth of the Ages of Man* in Hesiod, except in the occurrences quoted above (for instance, when one sees “iron doors and bronze step”, which could come from the priority of the door over the step). Another apparent inversion of the apparently “chronological” order, *Od.* 21.61 (...) ἔνθα σίδηρος / κείτο πολὺς καὶ χαλκός, seems to be motivated by the enhancing value of word-order, as the enjambment could testify.

Craftsmen specialized in working with metals appear in the Epics and, once more, the narrative language, starting from the name χαλκεὺς deriving from χαλκός, seems to reflect especially bronze, never iron:

*Il.* 4.216 corr.

(λύσε) ζῶμά τε καὶ μίτρον, τὴν χαλκῆς κάμον ἄνδρες.

[He slipped open the war belt and the flap beneath it] with the guard of armour that bronze smiths wrought carefully for him.

*Od.* 3.432-4

(...), ἦλθε δὲ χαλκεὺς

ὄπλ' ἐν χερσὶν ἔχων χαλκήϊα, πείρατα τέχνης,

ἄκμονά τε σφυρᾶν τ' εὐποίητόν τε πυράργον,

οἷσιν τε χρυσὸν εἰργάζετο<sup>14</sup>

(...)The smith came,

holding smith's tools in his hands, implement of his art,

anvil, hammer, and well-made tongs,

with which he worked gold.

The traditional language may clearly correspond to a different reality, where the same craftsman may work in iron as well as in bronze - and rather rarely gold - as Mycenaean and Geometric archaeology show and as occurs in modern languages (*see* the vocabulary of *orfèvrerie* in French, coming from *or* - “gold” and lat.

*faber* – “metal-worker”). It appears then that technology progressed or evolved while language remained the same, archaic words corresponding to the old and recent material at the same time. As S. West remarked, the tools brought by the workman are more appropriate to iron than bronze, though the poet explicitly says he worked in gold, in verse 435. In *Iliad* 18.410-3 and 476-7, Hephaistos uses the same equipment (410 ἀπ’ ἀκμοθέτοιο “from the block of the anvil”, 412 φύσας “bellows”, 476 ἀκμοθέτω, ἄκμονα “anvil”, 477 ῥαιστῆρα κρατέρην “the ponderous hammer” and πυράγρην “the pincers”). Though no note comments this point in Edwards’ commentary, the tools are the same (the hammer and pincers).

Moreover, the context of *Od.* 9.391-4 in the *Kyklopeia* explicitly shows Odysseus practising a very accurate surgery on Polyphemos’ eye, as a χαλκεὺς working iron, in one of the most interesting similes of the *Odyssey*:

ὥς δ’ ὅτ’ ἀνήρ χαλκεὺς πέλειον μέγαν ἠὲ σιέπαρον  
 εἰν ὕδατι ψυχρῷ βάπτῃ μεγάλα ἰάχοντα  
 φαρμάσσω· τὸ γὰρ αὐτε σιδήρου γε κράτος ἐστίν·  
 ὥς τοῦ σίξ’ ὀφθαλμὸς ἐλαϊνέῳ περὶ μοχλῷ.

As when a smith man plunges a big axe  
 or adze in cold water to temper it, and it hisses  
 greatly for it is how it has again the strength of iron,  
 so his eye sizzled around the olive-wood stake.

The comparison reveals here the practice of common life, as if the poet forgot for once the convention of bronze-armoured men, because he is speaking of Polyphemos’ eye pierced by an arm made from an olive-tree and not of forging noble arms for warriors. Alfred Heubeck saw the importance of this passage for pondering the relation between language and *realia*, as well materials as technical knowledge and practise:

The eye hisses (σίξ’ 394) like a hatchet or σιέπαρον (v. 237) plunged by a χαλκεὺς (Myc. ka-ke-u/khalkeus) into cold water to harden. Φαρμάσσω

(hapax) is a technical term ('treat with a *φάρμακον* (here, liquid to temper the metal); harden'). Τὸ γὰρ (...) ἔστιν (*cf. Il. IX 706*): 'for the strength of iron depends on this hardening process'. While the poet elsewhere consistently archaizes (he equips his heroes exclusively with bronze weapons and tools) he includes in the similes pictures of the contemporary world. The technique here described was introduced in Greece around the ninth century BC. (R. Forbes, *Archaeologia*, K, 26, 32) (Heubeck 1989, 34)

The Epics also refer to the ancient craft of working gold: a *chrusochoos* is even mentioned by his proper name, *Laerkes*, in Nestor's realm (*Od. 3.425*). He is in charge of pouring gold on the horns of oxen for a sacrificial ceremony. Archaeology shows that this practice had a close correspondence in the Mycenaean world.

The skill to lay various precious materials into a work of art is well-known, as shows the scene of manufacturing the shield of Achilles by Hephaistos (18.474-8) - bronze, tin, gold and silver, and though the craftsman is a god, we see there the very tools a real workman needs for such a work, already mentioned above with the passage of *Od. 3: akmon, rhaister, puragre*.

A simile met in *Od. 6.232-4* attests the same craft consisting in pouring gold on silver, and also refers to this craft as a divine power of gods, either Hephaistos or Athena, or here both gods<sup>15</sup>:

ὥς δ' ὅτε τις χρυσὸν περιχεύεται ἀργύρῳ ἀνήρ  
 ἴδρις, ὃν Ἥφαιστος δέδασεν καὶ Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη  
 τέχνην παντοίην, χαρίεντα δὲ ἔργα τελείει,

As when someone pours gold around silver, a skilful man  
 whom Hephaestus and Pallas Athena have taught  
 every kind of art, and fashions pleasing works,  
 [so she poured grace upon his head and shoulders.]

It may appear interesting that we thus come to a conclusion similar to that reached by Glenn Most in a paper published in 1997, whose point of departure was different from ours<sup>16</sup>.

## 2. COMPARISON WITH *THE MYTH OF AGES* IN HESIOD

As well-known, in his famous mythical narrative from the *Works and Days*, Hesiod mentions five successive races: gold, silver, bronze, heroes, and, finally, iron, in his terms our pitiable age. Well-known is also the fact that the mention of the Age of Heroes may be intrusive, relevant for a period later than the other ages, as a personal invention of the individual author<sup>17</sup>, a remodelling of an old mythic tradition that probably came from Eastern sources, if we believe the parallels given by Martin L. West (1978, 172-175)<sup>18</sup>, who concluded that there was a probable common origin of the myth in Mesopotamia (West 1978, 177):

WD 109-10

Χρύσειον μὲν πρότιστα γένος μερόπων ἀνθρώπων  
ἀθάνατοι ποιήσαν Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχοντες.

128-30

Δεύτερον αὐτε γένος πολὺ χειρότερον μετόπισθεν  
ἀργύρεον ποίησαν Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχοντες,  
χρυσέφω οὔτε φυὴν ἐναλίγιον οὔτε νόημα·

143-146

Ζεὺς δὲ πατήρ τρίτον ἄλλο γένος μερόπων ἀνθρώπων  
χάλκειον ποίησ', οὐκ ἀργυρέφω οὐδὲν ὁμοῖον,  
ἐκ μελιᾶν, δεινόν τε καὶ ὄβριμον· οἷσιν Ἄρηος  
ἔργ' ἔμελε στονόεντα καὶ ὕβριες, οὐδέ τι σίτον

150-1

τῶν δ' ἦν χάλκεια μὲν τεύχεα, χάλκαιοι δὲ τε οἴοι,  
χαλκῶ δ' εἰργάζοντο μέλας δ' οὐκ ἔσκε σιδήρεος.  
[race of heroes]

174-178

Μηκέτ' ἔπειτ' ὄφελλον ἐγὼ πέμπτοισι μετεῖναι  
ἀνδράσιν, ἀλλ' ἢ πρόσθε θανεῖν ἢ ἔπειτα γενέσθαι.  
νῦν γὰρ δὴ γένος ἐστὶ σιδήρεον· οὐδέ ποτ' ἤμαρ  
παύσσονται καμάτου καὶ οἰζύος οὐδέ τι νύκτωρ  
φθειρόμενοι· χαλεπὰς δὲ θεοὶ δώσουσι μερίμνας.

Some of West’s expressions (“entirely alien to the general Greek view of the past”, for instance) seem absolute. But we might now more frankly disagree with him about the origins of the Myth: “The use of metal symbolism is most likely to have originated in the Near-East, where the technologies of metal-working were most highly developed” (West 1997, 312)<sup>19</sup>.

Most’s paper helps much in being more cautious about this question. Though Hesiod may have borrowed a great deal from the West, Most shows that the tradition of the *Myth of Ages* can be traced back to traditions that may be found in Homer if we accept his anteriority:

Evidently, he not only had some contact with oriental myths—they seem to have made an important contribution to the succession myths of the Theogony—but was also intimately familiar with the Greek epic traditions. [...] How much of the whole myth of the races in the Works and Days could have been derived from a thorough familiarity with the traditions of Greek epic? The answer is: a surprisingly large amount.

The Homeric epics often suggest a three-part view of the course of human history. On the one hand, they look back upon the heroes as a race of men stronger than those alive now. [...] On the other hand, the Homeric heroes themselves look back to a wild race of even greater and stronger men with whom most of them would not dare to contend. (Most 1997, 121)

Apart from the *Myth of Ages*, we find in Homer and Hesiod several allusions to the first human beings’ birth from wood (oaks or ashes, when a specific species is named) and stone. They occur in proverbial sentences, most often spoken by the characters as if the form used was near the common language of their time.

*Il.* 22.126-8

οὐ μὲν πως νῦν ἔστιν ἀπὸ δρυὸς οὐδ’ ἀπὸ πέτρης  
τῷ ἀαριζέμεναι, ἅ τε παρθένος ἥϊθέος τε  
παρθένος ἥϊθέος τ’ ἀαρίζετον ἀλλήλοιν.<sup>20</sup>

There is no way any more from a tree or a rock to talk to him gently  
whispering like a young man and a young girl, in the way  
a young man and a young maiden whisper together.

*Od.* 19.163-4

ἀλλὰ καὶ ὧς μοι εἰπὲ τεδὸν γένος, ὀππόθεν ἐσσί·  
οὐ γὰρ ἀπὸ δρύος ἐσσι παλαιφάτου οὐδ' ἀπὸ πέτρης.

[But even so, tell me of your race, where you're from]  
for you're not from a rock or from an oak of ancient story.

In his note *ad loc.*, Joseph Russo (1992) speaks of a “proverbial expression”, referring to “the myths of human origins from trees or stones”.

An address of Patroklos to Achilles might also enter this group. *Il.* 16. 33-36: he accuses Achilles of being born from the sea and stones, instead of from Thetis and Peleus. If entering our series, “you’re the son of the stones” might have been an idiom:

νηλεές, οὐκ ἄρα σοί γε πατήρ ἦν ἱππότηα Πηλεΐς,  
οὐδὲ Θέτις μήτηρ· γλαυκὴ δὲ σε τίκετ θάλασσα  
πέτραι τ' ἠλίβατοι, ὅτι τοι νόος ἐστὶν ἀπηγής.  
εἰ δὲ τίνα φρεσὶ σῆσι θεοπροπίην ἄλεσίνεις

Pitiless: the rider Peleus was never your father  
nor Thetis was your mother, but it was the grey sea that bore you  
and the towering rocks, so sheer the heart in you is turned from us.

In his note to this passage, Richard Janko mentions a fragment of Alcaeus that shows how this passage of the *Iliad* impressed the Greek poetic tradition<sup>21</sup>:

πέτρας καὶ πολίας θαλάσσης τέκνον (Alcaeus fr.. 359)

And he speaks of a riddle about a limpet!

If these facts are put together, adding the various mentions of the birth of humanity in both Hesiod’s *Theogony* and the Epics, what picture may arise? Hesiod tells, in an explicit way, that the Iron race came from the Nymphs of the ashes (*WD* 145 above: ἐκ μελιᾶν<sup>22</sup>). The succession of ages in the myth might thus somehow delete the origin of mankind from wood (and stone?), to mention only the current material used for earning their livelihood. Otherwise,

mankind in the Iron Age would be born from stone and wood, as the above-mentioned proverbs attest.

### 3. CONFRONTATION WITH THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA

If we trust the data coming from excavations, it appears that bronze and gold for precious objects are mostly found in graves of Mycenaean times, corresponding roughly to the time of the Trojan war and, thus, of Homer's heroes, whereas iron becomes the predominant material in the Geometric period, corresponding to the formation of the main body of the Epics, the time Hesiod recognizes it explicitly as *ours*.

The list of objects occurring in the Homeric epics may be compared to the list of objects found by the archaeologists: since Gilbert Murray, in 1905, Miss Lorimer, in 1950, Miss Gray, in 1954, among others<sup>23</sup>, several specialists made this study. They first concluded that Homer describes the world of his heroes; later on, with Moses Finley<sup>24</sup>, that he rather alludes to his own world. In the recent interpretations, the Homeric world is actually neither the Bronze nor the Iron Age, but a mixture of both, just as its language combines very archaic features and even linguistic forms with a number of Aeolian forms and a mostly Ionian dialect.

Anthony Snodgrass's *The Dark Age of Greece* addresses the question about the relation between Hesiod, the memory of the past, and the historical modern terms, thus opening the way to a wider study.

Both the *Myth* and archaeological terminology actually rely on a coherent succession of the main metals in use: bronze/iron. The Hesiodic *Myth of Ages*, on one hand, adds the precious silver and, above all, gold to refer to an age of wealth and happiness, and the Age of Heroes Hesiod may have invented whereas he found the other Ages in the Eastern tradition. Archaeology, on the other hand, adds technical terms, but in the current tradition, the public still

retains the mention of the Stone Age. We shall see that the metaphorical uses of metal names may also refer to a parallel tradition, thus confirming the opinion that scientific terminology emerged from a common knowledge that might trace back to the popular language and thought coming from Homer through Vergil to the Middle Ages and modern times. Metals are a keystone for this study because they well survive the injury of time, whereas other materials like wood or linen have disappeared. We may note, in passing, that Homer does not allude to vase-paintings. He apparently kept the memory of Mycenaean jewellery and sculpture, not of the magnificent paintings that were seen on vases and walls. Though Homer may allude to the skill of pottery in a comparison (*Il.* 18.600-1), he does not refer to those kinds of Geometric paintings that were probably contemporary to the Epics and which gave the scientific name to this period in the historical terminology.

Although *ekphrasis* is a very well-established tradition, tracing back to ancient rhetoric<sup>25</sup>, Homer does not really “describe” objects but often narrates their history. By tracing back to the first craftsman who made a shield or cut off an ash in a forest for making a spear (I’m thinking of Hephaistos and Cheiron) or to the first owner of a sceptre, a cuirass (chest armour) or a helmet, and citing the names of their successive owners down to the current one in the Trojan War, the poet enhances those objects with an aura and splendour that come from the very far past<sup>26</sup>. See Agamemnon’s sceptre or Odysseus’ bow, mentioned in an oral communication by Øivind Andersen, as well as Achilles’ spear or the *panoplia* offered to Peleus as a marriage-gift by Cheiron. Book 18 of the *Iliad* shows a different case: we follow Thetis in Hephaistos’ forge and look at the shield in the process of construction during the night, in a marvellous and exciting *chiaroscuro*<sup>27</sup>.

Several uses, in Homer, of *τάλαντα* + *χρυσοῖο* and the more frequently formula *χρυσοῖο τάλαντα* as a verse-ending raise the important question of the pre-monetary status of the Geometric period. Some objects are actually considered as values recognized by

everybody. The gold-talent (actually a certain amount of metal) is one of them. As it refers to a significant weight of a valuable metal, it is a kind of a standard reference to the world of the heroes, and to a wealth which seems largely exaggerated for the *basileis* in the Homeric world, as we may better appreciate now.

*Il.* 9.120-4 (122-264)<sup>28</sup>

ἄψ' ἐθέλω ἄρεσσαι δόμεναί τ' ἀπερείσι' ἄποινα.  
ὑμῖν δ' ἐν πάντεσσι περιλυτὰ δῶρ' ὀνομήνω  
ἔπτ' ἀπύρους τρίποδας, δέκα δὲ χρυσοῖο τάλαντα,  
αἴθωνας δὲ λέβητας εἴκοσι, δώδεκα δ' ἵππους  
πηγούς ἀθλοφόρους, οἳ ἀέθλια ποσσὶν ἄροντο.

I am willing to make all good, and give back gifts in abundance.  
Before you all I will count off my gifts in their splendour:  
seven unfired tripods; ten talents' weight of gold; twenty shining cauldrons  
and twelve horses, strong race competitors.

On Achilles' shield, Hephaistos places a scene of trial, where two talents put “in the middle” show the value at stake between the litigants:

*Il.* 18.507<sup>29</sup>

κεῖτο δ' ἄρ' ἐν μέσσοισι δύο χρυσοῖο τάλαντα,

and between them lay on the ground the talents of gold, to be given [to that judge who in this case spoke the straightest opinion].

19.247-8

χρυσοῦ δὲ στήσας Ὀδυσσεὺς δέκα πάντα τάλαντα  
ἦρχ', ἅμα δ' ἄλλοι δῶρα φέρον κούρητες Ἀχαιῶν.  
Odysseus weighed out ten full talents of gold and led them  
back, and the young men of the Achaians carried the other gifts.

*Cf. Il.* 9.125-6

οὐ κεν ἀλήϊος εἶη ἀνήρ ᾧ τόσσα γένοιτο,  
οὐδέ κεν ἀκτῆμων ἐριτίμοιο χρυσοῖο,

That man would not be poor in possession, to whom were given all these  
have won me  
nor be unpossessed of dearly honoured gold, were he given [all the prizes]

The *katalogos* of wealth pieces met in *Il.* 23.549-50 seems to value metals more than cattle, and female servants among cattle:

ἔστί τοι ἐν κλισίῃ χρυσὸς πολὺς, ἔστι δὲ χαλκὸς  
καὶ πρόβατ', εἰσὶ δὲ τοι δμοφαὶ καὶ μώνυχες ἵπποι·

there is abundant gold in your shelter, and there  
is bronze there and animals, and there are handmaidens and single-foot  
horses.

Let us think of the “standard” consisting of oxen, in *Il.* 6.137 and further on. The Homeric society appears, thus, as a pre-monetary one, up from the *Iliad* where characters constantly value the war or contest-prizes, as well as the ransom for a prisoner or a corpse in terms of metal, objects, slaves or animals.

#### 4. THE MYSTERY OF METAPHORS

In a study published in 2004 (Létoublon-Montanari), an intriguing formal fact appears: in the discourse of characters, the metals are constantly used with a proverbial connotation to underline a “hard heart”<sup>30</sup>. But in strong contrast with the above analysed, the frequency of realistic uses of the words for gold, silver, bronze, and iron is statistically dominant in the metaphoric language, with an interesting “grammar of formulas” or variational paradigm<sup>31</sup>.

The main facts are the followings: σιδήρεος/ σιδήρειον appears in the second hemistich in a series of examples, plus two times in the *Odyssey* with a rhythmic variant in the first hemistich:

*Il.* 22.357  
πεῖσειν· ἦ γὰρ σοὶ γε σιδήρεος ἐν φρεσὶ θυμός

[I could not] persuade you, since indeed in your breast is a heart of iron.

*Il.* 24.203-5  
πῶς ἐθέλεις ἐπὶ νῆας Ἀχαιῶν ἐλθέμεν οἶος  
ἄνδρὸς ἐς ὀφθαλμοὺς ὃς τοι πολέας τε καὶ ἐσθλοὺς

υἱέας ἐξενάριξε· σιδήρειόν νύ τοι ἦτορ.

How can you wish to go alone to the ships of the Achaians  
before the eyes of a man who has slaughtered in such numbers  
such brave sons of yours? The heart in you is iron.

*Il.* 24.519-21 5

πῶς ἐτλης ἐπὶ νῆας Ἀχαιῶν ἐλθέμεν οἶος  
ἄνδρός ἐς ὀφθαλμούς ὃς τοι πολέας τε καὶ ἐσθλοὺς  
υἱέας ἐξενάριξα· σιδήρειόν νύ τοι ἦτορ.

How could you dare to come alone to the ships of the Achaians  
and before my eyes, when I am one who have killed in such numbers  
such brave sons of yours? The heart in you is iron.

*Od.* 23.171-2

ἄλλ' ἄγε μοι, μαῖα, στόρεσον λέχος, ὄφρα καὶ αὐτὸς  
λέξομαι· ἦ γὰρ τῆ γε σιδήρεον ἐν φρεσὶν ἦτορ.

But come, nurse, spread a bed for me, so I can lie down by  
myself. For, yes, the heart in this one's chest is iron.

*Od.* 4.292-3

οὐ γὰρ τὸ γ' ἤρκεσε λυγρὸν ὄλεθρον  
οὐδ' εἴ οἱ κραιδίη γε σιδήρεη ἐνδοθεν ἦεν.

It's worse, for this in no way kept sad destruction from  
him, nor would it, even if he had a heart of iron inside him.

*Od.* 5.190-1

καὶ γὰρ ἐμοὶ νόος ἐστὶν ἐναίσιμος, οὐδὲ μοι αὐτῆ  
θυμὸς ἐνὶ στήθεσσι σιδήρεος, ἀλλ' ἐλεήμων.

For my mind is righteous, and I myself  
don't have a heart of iron in my chest, but one of compassion.

Thus, a formulaic analysis in one and the same model is possible:

σιδήρε(ι)ον/ς ἐν φρεσι(ν) νύ τοι ἦτορ/ θυμός

*See also Od.* 12.279-81:

σχέτλιός εἰς, Ὀδυσσεῦ, περὶ τοι μένος, οὐδὲ τι γυῖα  
κάμνεις· ἦ ῥά νύ σοι γε σιδήρεα πάντα τέτυκται

You're a reckless one, Odysseus, with surpassing strength  
and limbs that never tire. Indeed, you're completely made of iron,

where the whole person of Odysseus is meant (Eurylochus addresses Odysseus), not his heart only, whatever translation is chosen for the initial adjective.

Gold and silver do not occur in this kind of formulas<sup>32</sup>, probably because they do not fit the image of hardness as a mental process describing both a quality and a dark side (in the *Iliad*, it concerns mainly Achilles in Hector's words, and Priam in Hecabe's and Achilles' words). It might thus correspond with the generally positive meaning of gold, silver and bronze in the Hesiodic myth. But bronze occurs in such a metaphoric use at least once, in the poet's famous address to the Muse, asking for help with the memory of the list of names before the Catalogue of ships:

*Il.* 2.489-90

οὐδ' εἴ μοι δέκα μὲν γλῶσσαι, δέκα δὲ στόματ' εἶεν,  
φωνή δ' ἄρρηκτος, χάλκεον δὲ μοι ἦτορ ἐνεῖη.

Not if I had ten tongues and ten mouths, not if I had  
A voice never to be broken and a heart of bronze within me.

Aristarchus judged the hyperbole in verse 489-90 as “typically Homeric”<sup>33</sup>, as said in the note of the *Cambridge Commentary to the Iliad*: but nothing is said about the very specific χάλκεον (...) ἦτορ. However, Virgil and Ovid, with other less known Latin poets, show us that one isolated phrase in Homer may well have generated a whole tradition<sup>34</sup>. An accurate look at the scholia may be worth. We actually read in the scholia edited by H. Erbse:

Ariston. οὐδ' εἴ μοι δέκα μὲν γλῶσσαι<-ἦτορ ἐνεῖη>: ὅτι ἡ ιδιότης τῆς ὑπερβολῆς Ὀμηρικῆ. καὶ ἐν Ὀδυσσεΐα "οὐδ' εἴ οἱ χεῖρες τε εἰκόσι καὶ πόδες εἶεν" (μ. 78). ἡ δὲ ἀναφορὰ πρὸς τοὺς περιγράφοντας τούτους τοὺς στίχους. A 2.490.1 D <φωνή δ' ἄρρηκτος:> διὰ {δὲ} τοῦ εἰπεῖν φωνή δ' ἄρρηκτος δηλοῖ ὅτι σῶμα ἢ φωνή. ATil

Aristonicus tells us that his master, Aristarchus, saw here the rhetorical process of *hyperbole*, and defends the authenticity of the text against *chorizontes*. Importantly for us is that the scholiast comments the value of numbers, classifying the figure as an exaggeration, whereas the second part of line 490, with the metaphor of bronze heart, remains without a word of commentary<sup>35</sup>.

This sole example of a “bronze heart” might show that to the value of hardness brought by the usual iron, the nobler bronze adds a more positive quality of nobleness, a kind of poetic chivalry attached to this metal and its weight of “nostalgia of the past”, to refer to Boardman’s title (Boardman 2002).

We also meet the metaphor of stony-heartedness in two passages of the *Odyssey*, thus appearing an idiom in Greek as it is in English, though stone occurs in apparently more isolated passages than iron. In *Od.* 19.494, Eurykleia addresses Odysseus just after the recognition:

ἔξω δ’ ὡς ὅτε τις στερεὴ λίθος ἢ σίδηρος  
and I’ll hold as solid as any stone or iron

(in the wake of 493 οἶσθα μὲν ἐμὸν μένος ἔμπεδον οὐδ’ ἐπιεικτόν, “You know how my spirit is steady an unyielding”), whereas in *Od.* 23.103 Telemachos addresses his mother<sup>36</sup>:

σοὶ δ’ αἰεὶ καρδίη στερεωτέρη ἐστὶ λίθοιο  
“[...] But your heart is always more solid than stone”.

This probably implies an idiomatic status of καρδίη στερεή ὡς λίθος. Another phrase in a war context, in *Il.* 4.510, implies that one could speak of a “stone or iron skin” (at least a possible metaphor):

ἐπεὶ οὐ σφί λίθος χροῦς οὐδὲ σίδηρος.  
“surely their skin is not stone, nor iron”.

What conclusion can we draw from such facts? Iron seems to come more easily to the mind of the poet as a metaphor of a mental reality, whereas he preferably mentions bronze as the actual material in the world he describes. This may have been an idiomatic metaphor in the time of the fixation of the text, the period of the dominance of the Ionian dialect, if we leave aside the discussion on diffusion/phases stratification of the text as well as that of its mode of fixation<sup>37</sup>.

Stone and bronze occur rather seldom in these metaphors<sup>38</sup>. Nevertheless, these occurrences might be archaic and testify to the very old habits of language, somehow old-fashioned and reduced by the more recent formulas to a marginal status, as do often proverbial phrases in modern languages.

Thus, the Epics may show in those metaphors a kind of memory of the Ages of Mankind, less conscious than the Hesiodic wisdom literature but perhaps quite a good testimony to the representations of chronology in archaic minds. Everyday language shows how deep the presence of iron was in the time of the poet, whereas he gives an image of his heroic world dominated by gold for wealth and bronze for arms. As Stephanie West orally remarked, the episode called the *Removal of arms* in the *Odyssey* also shows the importance of iron arms in the *World of Odysseus*, to use Finley's title<sup>39</sup>. As the commentary by Joseph Russo quoted above shows, the narration usually sticks to the convention of bronze weapons corresponding to the Mycenaean or heroic world. But the poet seems sometimes to forget it uses the iron-language of his own time.

The famous passage about the exchange of arms between Diomedes and Glaukos, in *Iliad* 6, might give the last word: verses 235-7 tell that Glaukos "lost his mind" (Γλαύκῳ φρένας ἐξέλετο Ζεύς) since he gave Diomedes gold for bronze (τεύχε' ἄμειβε / χρύσεια χαλκείων). Kirk's commentary insists on the fact that nobody - be it in Antiquity or in the modern period - understood the meaning of this strange passage:

The valuing of golden armour at a hundred oxen's worth, bronze armour at nine, makes a neat and epigrammatic conclusion but throws little light on the main problem. The ox as a standard of value is familiar throughout the epic: each golden tassel of Athene's aegis is worth 100 oxen at 2.249, Lukaon was sold in captivity for the same sum and ransomed for three times as much at 21.79f [...] One suspects an arbitrary element in these equivalents, as well as some influence by metre. [...] Such considerations preclude any literal and realistic understanding of the exchange.

Of course, no gold armour could ever be used for fighting except in myths, whereas bronze arms did exist in the Mycenaean period, and traditional poetry kept the memory of this fact. In Homeric times, warriors were wearing iron arms anyway, see the compound verb *σιδηροφορεῖν* used by Thucydides in the passage mentioned by Snodgrass<sup>40</sup>, and the kind of *lapsus* that the narrator had in *Odyssey* 19 about the *Removal of weapons* mentioned above. The mention of an exchange of iron against bronze in Temessa (*Od.* 1.183-4)<sup>41</sup> may thus correspond to a reality of the Homeric context much more than the bond between Diomedes and Glaukos, which partakes of a fantasy, as Kirk noted, of a norm of hospitality that is no longer understood in the poet's time and thus deemed foolish. One might consider the meaning of a fundamental inequality of value in the ritual exchange between hosts, such as Benveniste mentioned<sup>42</sup>. Andersen takes into account the poet's interpretation and judgment<sup>43</sup>, whereas Benveniste thought of an archaic tradition of exchange (*mei-* in *ἄμειβε* as well as in Skr. *mitra*, as a common or proper name), no more understood by the poet. As far as chronology is concerned, we can now more surely say that Greeks had in the Geometric period of our texts a good sense of the past ages, associating different metals to each one, and placing them in a chronology that starts from the most precious gold (which fits well enough with a later representation of Mycenaean wealth) and goes to the most common iron in their own time. This notion of a succession in time appears directly in the *Myth of Ages* told by Hesiod, who probably forged the Age of Heroes, which fits his

peculiar vision of the time just preceding iron; but it also appears indirectly in the idiomatic uses of materials in metaphors for psychology. The most common use is then the name for iron, whereas bronze is currently mentioned as the material used for objects in everyday life. This proves that Homer was more impressed by the image or memory of Mycenaean times than Finley thought. Iron is used in the common language of the characters as a metaphor, proving thus that it was the material they commonly used or rather the material best known by both the poet and the audience of the Epics. The poet seems to value bronze and undervalue iron when he deals with material goods, whereas the real dominance of iron in his actual world appears as soon as metals enter an imaginary world, where they provide images and proverbial idioms. We might perhaps say that Finley was right about the world of reference for the poet, not for heroes like Odysseus: they were actually immersed in the Iron Age reality and thought themselves magnetically drawn by iron, which is expressed in a significant amount of idioms, proverbs and metaphors, and in an important simile. However, when the poet controls the image of the world of his heroes, he almost systematically undervalues iron and shows people living with bronze, in a kind of “nostalgia for the past”<sup>44</sup> much more close to the Mycenaean world than the Geometric one. Thus, as far as Homer’s language is our best witness, Achilles, as well as Odysseus, felt themselves living in a world of iron, though the poet dressed them in bronze.

#### Notes

1. The first version of this paper was orally presented at the conference of Oslo on Relative Chronology in Greek Epic Poetry, held in June 2006. My colleague Isabelle Ratinaud made many remarks. Barbara Graziosi also read a version of it and gave me precious advice. An enriched version was presented at the University of Prag, in March 2016. I feel very grateful to Professor Dagmar Muchnova and the audience for their remarks. Steven Rojcewicz read the last version, corrected my English, and occasioned

- several endeavours. To all of them, I express my gratitude. I remain responsible for any error that could still meet there.
2. See Parry 1971, Lord, 1991, 1995, 2000, and the works of J. M. Foley, G. Nagy and J. Russo in the bibliography.
  3. See also Létoublon 1989, 1997, 2001, 2014, and Létoublon – Montanari 2004.
  4. A useful general account on metals in the Bronze Age is found in Harding 2000. Blakely 2006 is interesting for the comparison between the *daimones* of metallurgy in Greece (Daktyloi, Telchines and Kabeiroi) and in Africa.
  5. See an account on the Mycenaean world in Castleden 2005, an archaeological account on Bronze Age in Dickinson 1994 (including the Mycenaean world into the Aegean one), and Harding 2000 mentioned above.
  6. The famous analysis by Moses Finley proves thus exaggeratedly schematic and even “false”, as far as arms are particularly concerned.
  7. Definition of the formula by Milman Parry (1971, 13): “In the diction of bardic poetry, the formula can be defined as an expression regularly used, under the same metrical conditions, to express an essential idea”.
  8. (...) χρυσόθρονος Ἥρη (verse ending) - Il.1.611; (...) παρὰ χρυσοθρόνου Ἥρης - 15.5. Other schemes: Ἥρη (...) χρυσόθρονος (...) - 14.153; χρυσόθρονος (...) Ἥως - *Od.* 10.541, 15.56, 250, 20.91; (...) χρυσόθρονος Ἥως - *Od.* 14.502; χρυσόθρονον Ἥῶ (...) - *Od.* 19.319; χρυσόθρονος Ἄρτεμις ἀγνή - *Od.* 5.123, and one isolated example of (...) χρυσόθρονον ἠριγένειαν - *Od.* 23.347 without a proper name (Ἥῶ was awaited for and would fit metrical conditions).
  9. As suggested by Lorimer 1936.
  10. This epithet seems rather strange for Artemis, if it corresponds to the name ἠλακάτη with the usual meaning of “distaff”, since this goddess is not usually linked to weaving, like Athena. In the *Odyssey*, when Helen appears to Telemachus, she is equipped with a golden basket containing a golden distaff, and in the context, she is compared to χρυσήλακτος Artemis, which shows that the link between the tool and the goddess is active to the poet’s mind. Of course, the poet of the *Odyssey* may have forgotten that ἠλακάτη has in the compound another meaning, as “stick” or “arrow”, as suggested in S. West’s note to *Od.* 4.122. As far the golden distaff is concerned, I do not agree with her interpretation of 4.125: “Like Arete (vi 305 ff.), Helen does not intend to sit idle when she joins her husband to entertain his guests” - a golden distaff does not seem to fit with an actual work, it may be rather a luxury article intended, as several details in the description of the palace show, to flaunt one’s wealth.

11. G. S. Kirk thinks that the whole typical scene “seem[s] to have been adapted and elaborated from the bk 8 scene – either that or some closely similar archetype” (1990, n. at 5.719-21). It does not matter so much for our purpose than the remarks on technology in the following notes - 5.722-3: “Chariots were stored indoors with covers over them [...], often with wheels removed” as 8.441 also implies. The Linear B chariot tablets show this to have been regular Mycenaean practice (Ventris and Chadwick, *Documents*, 361-9). “[...] The eight-spoked wheels are a great rarity” (Lorimer, HM 319), probably a pious exaggeration likewise, since nearly all Bronze Age and Early Iron Age depiction of wheels show four spokes, a few six. 5.724-6: “The tires were of bronze, the felloes (i.e. the rims inside them) of gold. Real felloes were of wood” - see the simile at 4.485-6 with n.; the formula θᾶῦμα ἰδέσθαι refers primarily to gold rather than bronze. For a parallel in the Rigveda cf. M. L. West, JHS 108 (1988), 155. The silver πλῆμνα of 726 - the hubs or naves; they are περιδρομοί, that is, they revolve, see also next n. fin. 724-6 on δῖφρος: “Here it is ‘stretched with gold and silver straps’; the materials replace mundane leather –but does this mean that the floor is made out of straps under tension, or that the front and the sides are so constituted? Critics differ: artistic depictions, rough and ready for the most part (cf. Lorimer, HM 310ff.), show various types including the latter. The former is surely impracticable since the leather would stretch and a foot finds its way through somehow. As for the two rails, ἄντυγες, running around (περιδρομος has three different applications in its three *Iliadic* occurrences, cf. 726 and 2.812), that may again be a divine doubling of the usual single rail; or it may count each terminal (often looped) as a separable unit, which is not implausible if the derivation of δῖφρος is right”. This derivation implied δῖς+φέρειν.
12. We constantly use the English translation by Lattimore for the *Iliad*, Huddleston for the *Odyssey*, offered by the *Chicago Homer* website.
13. Note that the names of gold and bronze allow a high number of alliterations with a *kbi* in these examples. See similar remarks on Hesiodic use in Most (1997, 110). He also compares Homeric and Hesiodic formulas (1997, 121-4).
14. See the note by Stephanie West *ad loc.*: “the terms are used, as elsewhere, to cover metalworking in general; cf. ix 391 ff., where the χαλκῆς works with iron. Here the tools which the smith brings (434) are more appropriate to iron-working, which alone requires the heavy hammering of red-hot metal; gold is hammered cold, with a light hammer. The poet was evidently impressed by the spectacular and mysterious processes of the blacksmith’s forge and imported the equipment into a context where it has no place. The

- only way in which the horns of a living ox could be gilded is by affixing gold foil. [...]” - with a reference to D. H. Gray 1954.
15. Heubeck 1988. 308: “χεῦειν expresses the act of pouring a material out of a vessel and its consequence: here ‘pile up’ a heap or ‘spread’ one material over another. The word gives no clue to the technology - of which the poet was ill-informed if he supposed that anvils, hammers, and tongs were required” (see iii 433-5): on the techniques (probably involving the use of gold leaf) see D. H. F. Gray, JHS lxxiv, 1954, 4). See particularly Gray’s n.23: “Both gilding nor plating, however, involves the pouring of gold in liquid form, and the aptness of the simile depends on the result, not on the process”.
  16. G. W. Most respectfully quotes M. L. West’s commentaries on Hesiod, though he does not adopt his chronology.
  17. We roughly follow the analysis of J.-P. Vernant, including his detailed discussion of Defradas, Goldschmidt, and Walcot: the four first races, gold, silver, bronze, heroes, are based on the alternance of dyke/hubris and a violent cut shares them from the iron race, in Hesiod’s own time (Vernant 1990).
  18. The parallels mentioned in West 1978 are: 1) the vision seen in the lost books of the *Avesta* by Zoroaster: a tree with four branches, one of gold, one of silver, one of steel; p.e. of iron alloy; 2) Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, in the *Book of Daniel*, of a large statue with a head of gold, breast and arms of silver, belly and thighs of brass, legs of iron, feet of iron mixed with clay; 3) the *Yugas* mentioned in Indian literature, i.e. the world four ages (without metal symbolism). A common element to Sumerians and Babylonians is “the progressive shortening of man’s life”. See the discussion of these parallels in Most 1997.
  19. There are many studies on Hesiod and this peculiar question. Among them, see the commentary of Tandy & Neale 1996 and Lambertson 1988. People interested in the history of the question of this passage may refer to Heitsch 1966, who republished the papers on Weltaltermythos: Bamberger (1842), Roth (1860), Meyer (1910), Reitzenstein (1924), Heubeck (1955), Lesky (1955) and Rosenmeyer (1957), and also “Pandora, Prometheus und der Mythos von den Weltaltern” by K. von Fritz (1947).
  20. See the note by N. Richardson *ad loc.*: “[...] the general point is presumably that any attempt at exchanging words of friendship with Akhilleus is a waste of time. [...] It may be relevant that the Hesiodic context [Th. 35] has some resemblance to ours. [...] In Hektor’s case his earlier thoughts of a treaty with his enemy now suggest to his mind the conversation of two lovers

‘from oak or from rock’: this too may be irrelevant, trivial, fanciful, or perhaps simply long and rambling”.

21. “The sea and cliffs evoke the habitats of Akhilleus’ parents, in a ‘reversal of personification’” (Edwards, HPI 257).
22. West 1978 notes (lines 145-6, 187): “he is thinking of the Meliai nymphs. [...] They are mentioned in *Tb.* 187 as born with the warlike Gigantes and Hesiod may have considered them the mothers of men. He thinks the lineage of men with that of the Gigantes in *Tb.* 50. There are other traces of a myth that men were born from ash-trees (*Tb.* 187 n.) and which is essentially the same as being born from tree-nymphs. *Od.* 19.162 f. [...] may allude to a similar account. See also [Hes.] fr. 266 (a) 9 (the Pelasgian’s mother is the oak), Zonaras epigr. 7.6 (A.P. 9.32); Virg. A. 8.315, Stat. *Tb.* 4.276-81, Juv. 6.12; Roscher’s *Lexikon d. gr. u. rom. Mythologie* V. 500.1. Thus, the Bronze race’s origin from trees or tree-nymphs identifies them with the first men known to ordinary Greek tradition. [...] But Hesiod does not go as far in systematizing mythology in the framework of the Ages as sch. Vet., who equate this third race with the Gigantes and the fourth with the descendants of Deucalion and Pyrrha, the two ages being divided by the Flood. Similarly Apollod. I.7.2. Hesiod’s third age ends differently”.
23. Lorimer 1950, ch. 3, 2 Iron, 111-121; P. 1959, ch.. 6 “Mycenaean Relics in Homer”, 218-296; Stubbings 1962. Gray 1954 offered a good account of metals in Homer, with many fine detailed analyses and excellent tables showing the numerical differences between them, their uses, the objects they are used for etc. She was not interested in the formulaic aspect of the problem we are dealing with.
24. Not much later than Lorimer, since *The World of Odysseus* was first published in 1954, the same year than Gray’s paper in *JHS*. Of course, the authors of the *Companion to Homer* published in 1962 ignored Finley’s book. But Finley does not take into account either arms or tools and the language of metals: he mainly dwells on social relations, wealth and work, domain, family, and community. Though Stubbings 1962 appears nowadays a strong separatist, the three chapters of the *Companion* mentioned in the bibliography yield a good amount of data on the question of metals in Homer.
25. See *φάλαξι* in the scholiast’s comment of *Il.* 18.610, and the modern tradition based on Lessing’s *Laokoon* originally published in 1766 (see Létoublon 1999).
26. Page DuBois 1982; Létoublon 1998; Von Reden 2003; Crielaard 2003; Bassi 2005.
27. Létoublon 1999, with references.

28. Cf. the note by J. B. Hainsworth to *Il.* 9.122: “the weight of the Homeric talent (mentioned only as a measure of gold) is unknown but hardly comparable to the classical standards (25.86 kg for the Euboic, 37.8 for the Aeginetan talent). Two talents of gold were the fourth prize in the chariot race (23.269), less than a λέβης in mint condition. W. Ridgeway, *JHS* 8 (1878) 133, argued that the Homeric talent was equivalent in value to one ox”.
29. See M. E. Edwards’ note *ad loc.*: “δύω χρυσοῖο τάλαντα are the fourth prize in the chariot-race (23.269, 23.614), ranking after an unused cauldron and before a two-handled jar: see 23.269n. The talents are usually taken to be contributed (one each) by the parties in the suit, as an award for the one who ‘speaks a judgment more straightly’ (δύνη as at 16.542 and *Od.* 11.570, ἴθυς as at 23.580, *HyDem* 152, Hesiod, *Erga* 36). [...]The equivalence in value to the chariot-race prize is reasonable enough [ref. to A. L. Macrakis] but, of course, by standards of the classical period, this is an enormous weight of gold, even if it were the recompense which the defendant pointed to in 550. The matter has not yet been explained”.
30. It will be seen later that the parallel English idiom “stone heart” (stony) corresponds to two occurrences of gr. λίθος.
31. In his already mentioned article (Most 1997, 124-5), G. Most mentions these metaphorical uses of metals and sees the link with the Ages of Mankind. But he does not see that iron is the metaphorical idiom, whereas it is not so frequent in the “real life” of the Homeric heroes.
32. It may nevertheless be idiomatic in other languages, see French “un cœur d’Or”. It may be noted that the high value of gold seems, then, more important than hardness, which might be crucial for the Homeric occurrence of a bronze heart.
33. See Kirk’s note *ad loc.*: Aristarchus (Arn/A) judged the hyperbole to be typically Homeric and compared *Od.* 12.78, where Scylla’s cliff is unclimbable “even if a man had twenty hands and feet”. Kirk analyses the reasoning in his following note, which is too long to be quoted here.
34. See Hinds (1998) on this topos in Latin poetry. As shown in Létoublon 2003, a formulaic tradition of the hero’s monologic deliberation could give place to an exceptional phrasing, such as *Od.* 20.18 “τέτλαθι δὴ, κραδίη”.
35. I thank Franco Montanari for his comment on this point.
36. Heubeck 1992, *ad loc.* comments as if the expression was common in Homeric phraseology: “Telemachus concludes by repeating, in the form of an unfair generalization (αἰεῖ) his initial reproach (cf. 72); this is the climax and summary of his reproof”. See also Heubeck’s commentary to 105-7: “Her θυμός is neither ἀπηνής (t97) nor ‘constantly hard’ (αἰεῖ στερεωτέρη,

- 103): but for the moment it is stunned by surprise (τέθηπεν: cf. τάφος 93 and 91-3n.). Thus, she is unable to react in the way that is expected of her”.
37. For this problem, which we cannot develop here, refer to Haug 2003.
  38. No mention of such metaphoric use of the references to metals in Kurke 1999, though a chapter called *The Language of Metals*, with a first part on the archaic period called *Forging the Language of Metals* might have led to a mention: the author focusses on *nomisma* and *basanos*, with a good analysis of the first metaphors of pure vs. impure precious metal and touchstone.
  39. *Od.* 19.3-40. See particularly line 13 αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐφέλκεται ἄνδρα σίδηρος, with the note *ad loc.* by Russo: “iron of itself draws a man to it’, apparently a proverb, used here to add persuasiveness by an appeal to traditional wisdom [...]. Although meant as a warning against the temptation to resort to weapons in a drunken quarrel [...], this proverb may have older origins in an awareness of the magnetic, and hence magical, properties of iron. [...] The use of iron as the word for an unspecified weapon, instead of the more normal ‘bronze’ (cf. xi 120, xix 522, xx 315, and throughout the fight in xxii), is criticized by Lorimer, *Monuments*, 510, as an ‘unexampled breach of epic convention’ (but see 119-20 for what she admits as ‘partial exceptions’), but this is hardly an adequate reason for doubting the line’s authenticity”.
  40. *Thc.* 1.6 Πᾶσα γὰρ ἡ Ἑλλάς ἐσιδηροφόρει, see Snodgrass 1971, 7-8.
  41. See the note by Heubeck about this trading.
  42. In his chapter on hospitality, Benveniste 1969, I, 99, quoted by Andersen 1978, 110, n. 21. See also Craig 1967, and Calder 1984 for a survey of publications on the problem before Kirk’s commentary.
  43. See the reference in the former note above: “Dass Πινέγαλιté de valeur entre les dons est voulue [...] entspricht nicht der Auffassung des Dichters”.
  44. Boardman 2002.

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THE MYSTERY OF POWER IN THE PHILOSOPHY  
OF GIORGIO AGAMBEN

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**Abstract.** This article examines the so-called post-Foucauldian genealogy of power undertaken by the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben. His basic interest is why and in which ways power assumed the form of economy, which, according to Foucault's genealogical research, means the "government of men". For Foucault, the origin of managerial-administrative power is the paradigm of a pastorate, in which the main objective is to subjugate, control and govern the soul of every human being. For Agamben, the time horizon determined by Foucault is not sufficient. Therefore, he developed a theory of bio-power and bio-politics through the paradigm of economic theology, using a wide range of materials from the early medieval period to the 20<sup>th</sup>-century theology. Using archaeological and genealogical methods, this investigation aims to show the process of a paradigm shift from political to economic theology within the context of power relations. Moreover, it tries to verify whether Agamben's assumption is correct. By analysing certain concepts such as *divine anarchy* and *collateral effect*, I intend to question whether the Christian economy, as action and administration, is an archetype of the modern form of power or not.

**Keywords:** ontology, economy, Michel Foucault, Giorgio Agamben, anarchy, power, Erik Peterson

## 1. INTRODUCTION

*The Kingdom and the Glory: For a Theological Genealogy of Economy and Government*<sup>1</sup> is a complex, fundamental and original works of the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben. The author's main purpose is to analyse the metamorphosis of power in the social and political tradition of the West. Agamben's basic interest is why and in which

ways power assumed the form of economy, which, according to Foucault's genealogical investigations, means the "government of men". Agamben characterizes Foucault's archaeology/genealogy as a methodological tool that casts a shadow that reaches back from the present to the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. For Agamben, this shadow is even longer and goes back to the medieval and ancient intellectual history (Agamben 2011). In his previous work on what he calls *the state of exception*, Agamben delineates the bipolar structure of power; that is, he differentiates between legal power (*potestas*) and authority (*auctoritas*), which is based on the (im)personal virtue of the sovereign. This binary opposition, characteristic of Agamben's *Homo Sacer* project, continues in *The Kingdom and the Glory*. Such oppositional structures are being and praxis, sovereign and minister, economy and ontology.

To understand the structure and essence of modern power, we shall try to efface the classical paradigm of the sovereign in order to represent its transformation based on an economic model. In doing so, we will better understand the central nervous system of Agamben's project. The "empty throne, the hetoimasia tou thronou that appears on the arches and apses of the Paleochristian and Byzantine basilicas", he says, "is, perhaps in this sense, the most significant symbol of power" (Agamben 2011, 12).

Agamben tries to restore and revitalize some forgotten problems and concepts in a modern discourse. He does this, in part, by a kind of Foucaultian problematization of the historical fact but also through a (re)construction of paradigms very similar to Walter Benjamin's methodological approach from his *Arcades Project*:

For the materialist historian, every epoch with which he occupies himself is the only prehistory for the epoch he himself must live in. And so, for him, there can be no appearance of repetition in history, since precisely those moments in the course of history which matter most to him, by virtue of their index as "fore-history," become moments of the present day and change their specific character according to the catastrophic or triumphant nature of that day (Benjamin 2002, 474).

The same can be said about Agamben himself, for whom the early medieval texts and problems are significant insofar as they maintain some link with contemporaneity.

How is it possible, more specifically, that church fathers and, more generally, late ancient and early medieval philosophical-theological thought that it can explain the functioning of modern secular society and disclose the impersonal character of power? To be contemporary is much more distrustfulness and distancing from its time, rather the kind of attitude and benevolence toward it. The *contemporary*, as Agamben calls him, is he who sees and contemplates his own time, its inner consciousness of the past, which, viewed on its own, is more than the mere unity of facts. According to Agamben:

Naturally, this noncoincidence, this “dis-chrony”, does not mean that a contemporary is a person who lives in another time, a nostalgic who feels more at home in the Athens of Pericles or in the Paris of Robespierre and the Marquis de Sade than in the city and the time in which he lives. An intelligent man can despise his time, while knowing that he nevertheless irrevocably belongs to it, that he cannot escape his own time. Contemporariness is, then, far from it. More precisely, it is that relationship with time that adheres to it through a disjunction and an anachronism. Those who coincide too well with the epoch, those who are perfectly tied to it in every respect are not contemporaries, precisely because they do not manage to see it; they are not able to firmly hold their gaze on it (Agamben 2009, 41).

## 2. AN ARCHAEOLOGY OF *OIKONOMIA*

A strategic feature of Agamben’s thinking is that the centre around which different structural elements are revolving almost always remains unnoticed and only appears when formal-historical research reaches its final point and when the solid ground is prepared for the representation of the main problem. One of Agamben’s main objectives is to demonstrate the interchangeability, antinomy and, at the same time, functional interconnectedness of political and

economic theology. The historical-theoretical ground for both paradigms is Christian theology. The source is the same but the interpretations are different. The theoretical foundation of political theology is ascribed to the German jurist and Catholic Carl Schmitt, whereas the theologian Erik Peterson, who was Schmitt's theoretical opponent, has ventured to apply the idea of a *Trinitarian Economy* to refute the former paradigm<sup>2</sup>.

Political theology founded the profane sovereign power on the idea of transcendent God, while economic theology replaces the notion of transcendence with the concept of immanence. The main differential sign of immanence is not the sovereign intervention or being, which is modelled on the image of the father, but the administration and ordering of the life of humans.

At first glance, in *The Kingdom and the Glory*, Agamben's archaeological research appears to be emptied of any political flavour, a detailed but innocuous analysis of theological-exegetic problems. However, it is oriented toward the critique of the modern form of power; in particular, a critique of administrative-managerial reason. Agamben's approach to theology plays an important instrumental-functional role in his many works. In fact, one could argue that his theologically oriented works are not theological at all and that he actually instigates a new use for theology, as some scholars suggest<sup>3</sup>.

Agamben uses theological tradition in such a fashion and to such an extent that, through it, he can broaden the problem field and construct new possible paradigms. I submit that, in Agamben's works, theology is the servant of philosophy, and his approach to theology is much like that of Walter Benjamin, who said:

My thinking is related to theology as a blotting pad is related to ink. It is saturated with it. Were one to go by the blotter, however, nothing of what is written would remain (Benjamin 2002, 471).

Agamben's work relies upon many of the archival texts that

investigate one of the most significant concepts of early Christian theology, namely *oikonimia*. Including especially the linguistic-semantic analysis of the term found in the monographs devoted to early church fathers. Agamben describes the work of Josef Moingt, *Theologie trinitaire de Tertulien* as an example of this kind of treatment. In addition, he frequently cites the relatively new research of Gerhard Richter, which represents the fundamental analysis of the meaning of words within the theological tradition. However, as Agamben writes, despite Richter's detailed theological investigation, we still lack an adequate lexical analysis that supplements Wilhelm Gass's useful but outdated work *Das patristische Wort oikonomia* (1874) and Otto Lillge's dissertation *Das patristische Wort 'oikonomia.' Seine Geschichte und seine Bedeutung* (1955) (Agamben 2011, 2).

The work of contemporary French philosopher Marie-Jose Mondzain, *Image, icône, économie: Les sources byzantines de l'imaginaire contemporain*, should be mentioned separately. It had been published several years before Agamben published his own. Mondzain limits the field of her investigation to determining the meaning of the term *oikonomia* and its usage during the period of iconoclasm in Byzantine sources, while Agamben's theoretical and historical horizon is much broader and encompasses texts from the early patristic period to the theological traditions of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Carl Schmitt wrote in his early work on political theology: "All significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized theological concepts" (Schmitt 1985, 36). If we consider these famous words in the context of Agamben's hypothesis concerning the existence of two paradigms, then, following up on his own assumption, Schmitt's theory is false. For proving this idea, Agamben invokes the works of marginalized theologian Erik Peterson, for whom political theology is theologically impossible. If, for Schmitt, an idea of political theology is based on the analogy of God and King, then, by actualizing the Trinitarian conception of God, we encounter the legitimacy problem of political theology. If we look at the theological Trinitarian dogma through the lenses of

philosophical criticism, it is easy to realize that, in everyday, mundane human experience, there is nothing that can correspond to the Trinitarian principle. For the inhabitants of the profane space, it is paradoxical, even impossible, to conceive of and to imagine, something like *homoousios* or the consubstantiality of the person of Trinity. For this reason, there is no possibility that something, even the King, to be represented as an image of God. In his work on the *state of exception*, Agamben criticizes Carl Schmitt, preferring Benjamin's theory of sovereignty and violence.

This, according to which the economy could be a secularized theological paradigm, acts retroactively on theology itself, since it implies that from the beginning theology conceives divine life and the history of humanity as an *oikonomia*, that is, that theology is itself 'economic' and did not simply become so at a later time through secularization. From this perspective, the fact that the living being who was created in the image of God, in the end, reveals himself to be capable only of economy, not politics, or, in other words, that history is ultimately not a political but an "administrative" and "governmental" problem, is nothing but a logical consequence of economic theology (Agamben 2007, 15).

The general context and its political implications raise questions about the link between theology and economy. The former can be conceived of as the science/theory of God's being/existence, the latter as a discourse on God's action. However, existence and action are functionally interconnected with each other; more exactly, they do not exist one without the other.

## 2.1. PRE-CHRISTIAN ECONOMICS

In ancient Greece, the term *oikonomia* designated the structure of the household. Aristotle, in his *Politics*, distinguished between the public life in the polis, where one could realize himself and achieve freedom, and the household, which was run by the *despot* (the head of the family) and in which any possibility of freedom was excluded,

even for the head of the family. According to Aristotle, the *despot* cannot be treated as a free man, because his attitude toward the other family members and slaves was hierarchical and asymmetrical. As it is well known, the slave was considered only as an *organon*, an inseparable vital instrument or extension of the hand of the master. For obtaining freedom, he must participate in common deeds of the polis where everyone is equal<sup>4</sup>.

According to Marie-Jose Mondzain, in Christian theological tradition, the term assumed different meanings and, thus, should be translated by considering the specific context in which it is used. Mondzain enumerates those denotations and equivalents that express the meaning of economy: incarnation, plan, design, administration, providence, responsibility, duty, compromise and deceit<sup>5</sup>.

## 2.2. FOR A THEOLOGICAL MEANING OF *ECONOMY*: THE STRATEGIC REVERSAL

According to the established view of church historians and theologians, the modification of the traditional meaning of the term *economy* and its inclusion in the theological vocabulary is linked to the Epistles of St. Paul. It is often claimed that he was the first who used this term with a theological meaning. However, Agamben's investigations have disclosed that the theological rendering of economics should not be associated with St. Paul but with Tertullian and Hippolytus. For a better understanding of what is at stake in this theorization, we have to examine the Pauline usage of both *economy* and *mystery*. Their interconnection has a particular significance for Agamben. To rebut the hypothesis by Moingt and Gass<sup>6</sup>, he meticulously analyses several fragments of Pauline epistles to show its non-theological usage.

According to Agamben, Paul used the notion of economy in its Aristotelian sense, which originally meant the structure of the

household. The words slave (*doulos*) and servant (*diakonos*) also belong to this sphere, words that Paul used for describing his function and condition within the general practice of the worship. Agamben refers to several cases in which Paul used the word in the above-mentioned sense. According to Agamben, “the mystery of economy is patently a contraction of the phrase used in Colossians” 1:25 (“the *oikonomia* of God, the one that was given to me to make the word of God fully known, the mystery hidden for ages and generations” (Agamben 2011, 23). Even in this context, economy has the meaning of the task, assigned to Paul by God. Correspondingly, speaking about the extension of the meaning of this word and transcending it from the sphere of administration is too early.

The strategic transformation of its meaning is an achievement of Tertullian and Hippolytus. In their texts, economy becomes the technical term through which they try to articulate Trinitarian theology. According to Agamben, one reversal had a fundamental strategic function: the transformation of Paul’s the mystery of economy (*οἰκονομία τοῦ μυστηρίου*) into the economy of the mystery. Hippolytus, in *Contra Noetum*, elucidates the relationship between Father and Son, and thus changes the position and general meaning of the words. “But in whom is God, except in Christ Jesus, the Father's own *logos* and the mystery of the economy [to *mysterioi tes oikonomias*]?” (Agamben 2011, 38). For Hippolytus, economy designates the general history of salvation, from the beginning until the eschatological end of the world. It should be noted that after Hippolytus, it was Tertullian who put the same meaning into the term. He translated it to Latin as *Dispositio* and *Dispensatio*. The Trinitarian economy is an accomplishment of God’s action in time and space, its embodiment or representation in the spatial-temporal dimension. Particularly, *Logos* and the Holy Spirit are the manifest, visible parts of the invisible substance. Respectively, as Mondzain puts it, we have to speak about the Trinitarian and Christological forms of economy. Mondzain and

Agamben based their judgment on the same source; however, their aims are not identical. For instance, while analysing the Trinitarian economy, both recall the works of Hippolytus, according to whom:

If he desires to learn how it is shown still that there is one God, let him know that his power is One. As far as regards the power, therefore, God is one. But as far as regards the economy, there is a threefold manifestation (Mondzain 2005, 25).

I won't dwell on the Christological meaning of economy here, because my aim is not the reconstruction of the theological tradition of the term. We need genealogical and archaeological research for better understanding Agamben's intention and see the legacy, or somewhat latent and implicit link, between Christian theology and modern bio-politics. Christian economy, as action and administration, is an archetype of modern, intangible, administrative power. However, it is legitimate to ask the question about the legitimacy of this relationship. On the other hand, to what extent would it be just to say that Agamben's post-Foucauldian archaeology is an effort, which ties together unconnected and conceptually remote problems?

### 3. DIVINE ANARCHY

Economics has no foundation in ontology  
and the only way to found it is to hide its  
origin.

Blaise Pascal

How the government and anarchy are connected? In this particular context, what does the word *anarchy* mean? We do not have to identify it with political ideology or its modern meanings. Agamben's archaeological research and, as it has been shown, new instrumental use of theology leads to very interesting assumptions. Agamben's text is, despite its polyphonic and complex form,

structurally coherent and consistent. Therefore, his interpretation of economics, Providence, theology or anarchy are densely interconnected with each other and construct one unified theoretical system. The third chapter of *The Kingdom and the Glory, Being and Acting*<sup>7</sup>, is the shortest but most problematic chapter. Agamben tries to reconstruct the paradigm of divine anarchy. This issue is the problematic part of Trinitarian and Christological theories. It directly refers to the relation of substance and praxis, which was a serious puzzle for the early church fathers. For this reason, Agamben quotes the word of Hippolytus, according to whom God is one according to its essence (Hippolytus himself used, for potentiality, the Greek word *dynamis*) and triune according to its economy. In addition, Tertullian, in *Against Praxeas*, expresses the idea that divine substance is not divided but its differentiation happens only on the level of economy and not on the level of ontology<sup>8</sup>.

According to Agamben, distinguishing between God's essence (*being*) and action, ontology and praxis, is one of the fundamental problems of economic doctrine and Christian theology. Classical Greek identification of *Being* and *Language* in Christian theology have been sublated by the thought that *Logos*, as the realization of the divine plan of salvation, as praxis and economy, as a consequence of Arian controversy, was declared anarchical – that is to say, without foundation and beginning. The ancient Greek picture of the world implies indifference and identity of being and action. For example, the Aristotelian unmoved mover moves the heavenly spheres out of necessity, according to the immanent law of its nature, and not because it wants this. He is identical with himself. The Greek world is harmony and unity of being and action.

The doctrine of the *oikonomia* radically revokes this unity. The economy through which God governs the world is, as a matter of fact, entirely different from his being, and cannot be inferred from it. It is possible to analyse the notion of God on the ontological level, listing his attributes or negating one by one--as in apophatic theology--all his predicates to reach the idea of a pure

being whose essence coincides with existence. But this will not rigorously say anything about his relation to the world, or the way in which he has decided to govern the course of human history... For this, God's free decision to govern the world, is now as mysterious as his nature, if not more; the real mystery, which "has been hidden for centuries in God" and which has been revealed to men in Christ, is not that of his being, but that of his salvific praxis (Agamben 2011, 70).

Agamben draws attention to, and meticulously analyses, the debates around the heresy of Arianism, whose historical, political and theological meanings should be investigated further. We have to orient ourselves to the problem of the beginning, upon which Agamben's interpretation sheds new light. As Agamben emphasizes in this debate on *arke*, one should not think about the chronological beginning. Arius and his opponents agreed that the Father generated the Son, and this act of generation took place before eternal time (*pro chronon aoinion*).

The beginning could not be temporal because the Son, as Arius insisted, is born out of and without time (*achronos*). The main issue which interests Agamben is the relation between the Son and God. Agamben quotes the letter written by Arius to Alexandre, in which Arius wrote the following: "We acknowledge One God, alone Ingenerate, alone Everlasting, alone *anarchos*" (Agamben 2011, 58).

Correspondingly, Arius is against the anarchical character of Christ, and he founds his existence entirely in the Father. For Arius, qualitatively, the Father is superior to the Son, despite the presupposition that he was generated before all things and outside time. Against Arius, in the first Nicene Creed, the Son was proclaimed as consubstantial with the Father (*homoousios tōi patrī*), who is begotten and not generated by the Father. Another problem is the difference between being begotten and being generated, on the one hand, and the idea, on the other, to what extent the separation of their meanings excludes the possibility of the Son being considered as unfounded (*anarchic*) like his Father, so Christ also does not have a beginning. Arians did not see the principal

difference between the two. Eventually, in the Creed, the Son was declared co-eternal with the Father and thus unfounded. Agamben cites the words from a historic assembly of bishops called on by Emperor Constantine, that The Son “reigns together with the Father absolutely, anarchically, and infinitely (*pantote, anarchos kai ateleutitos*)” (Agamben 2011, 58). The Father begets the Son, but he is co-eternal with him. On the one hand, then, he has his foundation in the Father as a human being, and, from another perspective, he has no foundation in the Father as *Logos*, and thus he is also anarchical. In a move that cannot be called other than radical, Agamben writes:

If we do not understand this original "anarchic" vocation of Christology, it is not even possible to understand the subsequent historical development of Christian theology with its latent atheological tendency, or the history of Western philosophy, with its ethical caesura between ontology and praxis. The fact that Christ is "anarchic" means that, in the last instance, language and praxis do not have a foundation in being. The "gigantomachy" around being is also, first and foremost, a conflict between being and acting, ontology and economy, between a being that is in itself unable to act, and an action without being: what is at stake between these two is the idea of freedom (Agamben 2011, 59).

What can be the common ground for an investigation of the theological archetype of anarchy and modern political discourses? What is the relationship between government and anarchy? If we trust the already elaborated genealogy of anarchy, then, following Pier Paolo Pasolini and Walter Benjamin, we can easily identify latent or obvious anarchical grounds for bourgeoisie society. According to Agamben,

Benjamin was in this sense right when he wrote that there is nothing as anarchic as the bourgeois order. Similarly, the remark of one of the Fascist dignitaries in Pasolini's film *Salo* according to which ("the only real anarchy is that of power" is perfectly serious" (Agamben 2011, 64).

#### 4. "THE KING REIGNS, BUT HE DOES NOT GOVERN"

The unusual and interpretive reading of early medieval theological texts is an inseparable part of Agamben's general methodological task. By searching the theological-economic foundations of modern political categories, it seems that Agamben tries to refute the classical paradigm of sovereignty, derived from political theology. However, if our observation and remarks are correct, Agamben's critique of Schmitt and his disclosure of economics as the structure of governmental forms are the development and problematization of something that remains unsaid and hidden in the works of Erik Peterson. The article *Monotheism as a Political Problem*, which Peterson wrote in 1935 (after his conversion to Catholicism) is implicitly the critique of Schmitt's political theology, which was responded to by Schmitt himself in his *Political Theology II: The Myth of the Closure of any Political Theology*. Schmitt's response structurally resembles Derrida's critique of Heidegger's and Husserl's project of overcoming the traditional metaphysics within the continental philosophical tradition of the West. According to Derrida, despite the effort to overcome traditional metaphysics, both Husserl and Heidegger were trapped in the linguistic and problematic field of that metaphysical tradition. Schmitt also suggests that Peterson's critique of political theology does not go beyond the boundaries of political theology itself. Agamben, who is aware of this, quotes Schmitt: "It is exactly this interpolation, in this context, which is the most intriguing contribution that Peterson – maybe unconsciously – attributed to political theology" (Agamben 2011, 72).

What kind of contribution or interpolation of Peterson into political theology did Schmitt have in mind? Before analysing the pure metaphysical-theological problems, which is a necessary precondition for understanding Agamben's project, it seems that we have to devote some time to the formula that determines the identity and difference between Peterson, Schmitt, Foucault and Agamben. Usually associated with Adolphe Thiers, the formula that will

become the subject of reflection for all above-mentioned thinkers is as follows: *le roi regne, mais il ne gouverne pas*. Foucault, for instance, in his lecture *Security, territory, population*, which Agamben cites, writes:

While I have been speaking about population a word has constantly recurred... And this is the word “government”. The more I have spoken about population, the more I have stopped saying “sovereign”. I was led to designate or aim at something that again I think is relatively new, not in the word, and not at a certain level of reality, but as a technique. Or rather, the modern political problem the privilege that government begins to exercise in relation to rules, to the extent that, to limit the King’s power, it will be possible one day to say, “the king reigns, but he does not govern” (Agamben 2011, 111).

The division between government and reign, as we have already seen, was accomplished, according to Agamben, in the Trinitarian economy, in which being and acting were separated. As it is well known, Agamben considers himself the developer of the field of problems circumscribed by the works of Michel Foucault. For this reason, Agamben’s objection against Foucault does not aim at the negation of Foucault’s theory but its amendment and confirmation. Foucault, in contrast to Agamben, confines himself to the pattern of pastoral power and leaves patristic the Trinitarian economy unnoticed. He is interested in the modern forms of power and government and their historical structures. Therefore, *the government of men*, as a bio-political technique in the case of Foucault, is linked to the pastoral paradigm. Foucault explains the pastoral power as follows:

Pastorate does not coincide with politics, pedagogy, or rhetoric. It is something entirely different. It is an art of “governing men,” and I think this is where we should look for the origin, the point of formation, of crystallization, the embryonic point of the governmentality whose entry into politics, at the end of the sixteenth and in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, marks the threshold of the modern state. The modern state is born, I think, when governmentality became a calculated and reflected practice. The Christian pastorate seems to me to be the background of this process (Leshem 2016, 5).

Agamben briefly examines the characteristics of Christian pastorate and entirely relies upon the works of Foucault. According to Agamben, one of the main functions and tasks of the pastorate is the *government of souls* (*regimen animarum*) and, respectively, it should be mentioned as the *technique of techniques*. For Foucault, pastoral power became the hidden *matrix* or *model* of political government. The binding concept of the *government of men* and pastorate is *economy*, which Foucault finds it in the works of Gregory of Naziansus. Foucault defines pastorate as *oikonomia psychon*, which one can understand as an affection or the government of souls and, at the same time, as the care of it. At first glance, this last interpretation of economy is much more relevant but one should be more patient with respect to disclosing its mystery for contemporary politics. What is the relationship between the pastorate, which means care of individual souls as well as care of the whole of humanity, and economy? If the function of the pastorate is defined as the care *omnes et singulatim*, then it should be extrapolated on the field of politics. As Marie-Jose Mondzain noticed, “The pastoral economy is the mimesis of the providential economy” (Mondzain 2005, 37).

As we already emphasized, Agamben wants to develop further the problems delineated by Foucault and to determine how they are grounded in the intellectual tradition of the West. His analysis of the theological genealogy of government and bio-political managerial power makes him differentiate between reign and government, which at first appear to represent nothing more than politically loaded concepts. However, as Agamben’s investigation shows, functionally and by content, they are related to the metaphysical and theological picture of the world. For this reason, I would prefer to characterize Agamben’s *Homo Sacer* period of writings as metaphysical-political. What is the meaning of the formula *the king reigns, but he does not govern*, which became the unresolved puzzle for the historians of political thought, theologians and philosophers? Agamben’s thesis concerning the double structure of power and government is fed up by the late antique and early medieval texts.

First, we do not have to be surprised that before the construction of the basic categorical apparatus of political science and positive law, particularly in the theological tradition, we can find the terms and concepts relating to the divine government of the world, which now constitutes the cornerstone of the political vocabulary. Before the separation of executive and legislative powers in the secular-profane sphere, as it is shown by Agamben, the concepts *ordinatio* (*ordering*) and *executio* (*execution*) emerged during the period of articulation of general and particular providential theology. God does not only govern the world, but he also takes care of it: this is the structure of a providential machine, which presupposed both elements. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, Aristotle's commentator Alexander of Aphrodisias wrote against the Stoics that God does not care about tiny details in the world and, therefore, He does not govern directly, but through mediation. He establishes the universal and transcendent laws through which the world is governed. According to Alexander of Aphrodisias,

The providence exercised by a king over the things he governs does not proceed in this way: he does not take care of everything, universal and particular things, continuously or in a way that none of the things that are subjected to him--and to which he would dedicate all his life--would slip his mind. The mind of the king prefers to exercise his providence in a universal and general way: his duties are indeed too noble and dignified for him to take care of these trivialities (Agamben 2011, 116).

In Agamben's view, that something, which in Christian theology becomes *providentia generalis* and *providentia specialis* in the writings of Alexander Aphrodisias, appears as *kat' hauto* (by itself) and *kata symbebekos* (accidental) forms of Providence. However, as Agamben puts it, and which for him has a paramount importance, Alexander did not confine himself to the dichotomy between general and particular providence. Following him, Agamben seeks the answer to the question "what is this particular intermediate nature of providential action-involuntary, yet not accidental?" (Agamben

2011, 117). This question is not limited to Providence by itself, nor to accidental providence. Agamben finds this kind of intermediary nature of providence in the writings of Alexander, which by their structure resembles an argument justifying the existence of Evil. Aphrodisias calls it *collateral effect that is calculated* (Agamben 2011, 118).

What is the meaning of *collateral effect* in the context of the divine government of the world? Is it possible that the divine plan, or providence, contains in itself unintended collateral effects? On the one hand, we have the idea of an almighty and omnipotent god and, on the other, we are facing the problem of justification of Evil, which the double structure of Providence serves to solve in addition to the idea of the collateral effect. Here, our main interest is the problem itself and not the formal historical narration, which does not go beyond the boundaries of certain traditions and theories. Agamben is a true archaeologist who, by meticulously reading the texts, unearths concealed concepts and problems and tries to use them for the sake of the genealogy of the present. Apart from Alexander of Aphrodisias, he finds the theme of *collateral effect* in the writing of Philo of Alexandria. Philo's work is about providence and he writes that:

Hail and snow-storms, and other things of that kind, are {collateral effects} (epakolouthei) of the cooling of the air. And, again, lightning and thunders arise from the collision and repercussions of the clouds ...And earthquakes, and pestilences, and the fall of thunderbolts, and things of that kind... (Are not primary works of nature, but follow necessary things as concomitant effects (Agamben 2011, 119).

Agamben pays attention to the idea that collateral effects determine the general structure of the divine government of the world, and that they are inseparable parts of it. If we take into account Agamben's overall purpose, the motive of his interest in the theme of providence becomes clear. By the force of structural-historical analogy, he criticizes the political constellation of modern states,

which are the so-called bio-political machines exerting their violent influence over individuals. For Agamben, the relation between sovereign power and bare life is mediated by the concept of *exclusion*. If, for Foucault, the process of subjugation happens through *inclusion, control* and *surveillance*, in the case of Agamben, *inclusion* is replaced by *exclusion*. Precisely through this exclusion, sovereign power is able to include the citizens or non-citizens in the sphere of its control. In one of his public lectures, Agamben said something that was latently implied in *The Kingdom and the Glory*. Before quoting Agamben, we have to say that it is extremely unusual for him to use empirical facts and evidence. We can only apply his complicated theoretical edifice to concrete empirical phenomena in order to see them from a different angle and, at the same time, to check the validity of his often-provocative theoretical claims

When today, military strategies give the name collateral damages or in French *bavure* to the calculated effects of military interventions which can result in the destruction of cities, and in human casualties, they unwillingly develop this very old theological paradigm. But – if our hypothesis is correct – also in this case, the collateral effect is not something secondary or something casual but defines the very essence of an act of governance. There are no casualties in the act of governance. Because the act aims to collateral effects. In a way, the American military says: We killed one thousand persons. This was just a collateral effect of an actually good act. We have to reverse: It is true, but the collateral effect is the way in which the act of government is realized<sup>9</sup>.

Theologians ascribed the name of ordination to these universal laws. Particular Providence is hierarchically situated on the second level, in which angels perform the function of execution. In accordance with the bipolar structure of the divine government of the world, *ordinatio* and *executio*, cannot exist without each other. In modern political discourse, implicitly based on those theological premises, the crisis of parliamentary and legislative power is obvious. The main power is concentrated in the hands of the executive, and it has clear primacy over the legislative. If Agamben's intention is the critique of Schmitt's political theology and the theory of sovereignty

and, therefore, the further development of Peterson's and Foucault's ideas, he unwillingly finds himself in contradiction and in a vicious circle. Economic theology, as the paradigm or anticipation of modern neo-liberal administrative-managerial power, does not exclude the perhaps unwilling and unaware similarity of Agamben to Schmitt. Despite the difference in the main problems, Schmitt's thesis concerning secularized theological concepts is somehow "shared" by Agamben but without acknowledging it. If, for Schmitt, economics is a secularized theological concept, Agamben thinks that:

The thesis according to which the economy could be a secularized theological paradigm acts retroactively on theology itself, since it implies that from the beginning theology conceives divine life and the history of humanity as an *oikonomia*, that is, that theology is itself "economic" and did not simply become so at a later time through secularization (Agamben 2011, 3).

For both, the condition of political experience is theology. The distinction between executive and legislative power is founded in theology and linked to the idea of general and particular providence. Considering this, Agamben's strategic choice is not quite different from that of Schmitt. Both attempt to find theological paradigms of political phenomena. However, if, with Schmitt, we get an idea of politics based on transcendent sovereignty, in Agamben's case we have to deal with economic theology, which structurally, and by meaning, is different from his conception. We have to search for the difference between reign and government before their articulation in a political context, namely in theological tradition. Reign and government can also correspond to the theological paradigm according to which God's being and praxis, his existence by and in itself, and general history of salvation, aporetically are intertwined in the form of a Trinitarian economy. We should also recall the twelfth book of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, without which it is impossible to speak about Aristotelian *theology*; especially Aristotle's view of God as the unmoved mover, thought of thought and form

of form, which Will Durant describes as *the king reigns, but he does not govern*:

Aristotle's God never does anything; he has no desires, no will, no purpose; he is activity so pure that he never acts. He is absolutely perfect; therefore he cannot desire anything; therefore he does nothing. His only occupation is to contemplate the essence of things; and since he himself is the essence of all things, the form of all forms, his sole employment is the contemplation of himself.<sup>3</sup> Poor Aristotelian God!—he is a *roi faineant*, a do-nothing king; "the king reigns, but he does not rule. (Durant 1926. 82)

A structural analogy of the binary opposition between reign and government can be found in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, namely in the passage concerning the idea of good, which has a transcendent and immanent character toward the world and which did not avoid Agamben's attention.

We must now consider also in which of two ways the nature of the universe contains the good or the highest good, whether as something separate [*kechorismenon*] and by itself [*kath' hauto*], or as the order [*τάξις*] of the parts. Probably in both ways, as an army [*strateuma*] does. For the good is found both in the order and in the leader [*strategos*] and more in the latter; for he does not depend on the order but it depends on him (Agamben 2011, 80-81).

This quite complicated passage from Aristotle's *Metaphysics* speaks about the functional interconnection of transcendence and immanence. Agamben adds:

In it, transcendence and immanence are not simply distinguished as superior and inferior, but rather articulated together so as almost to form a single system, in which the separated good and the immanent order constitute a machine that is, at the same time, cosmological and political (or economic-political)" (Agamben 2011, 80).

In Aristotle, it can be said that the immanent interrelation of different elements refers to the relational and not the substantial character of order. Therefore, for all beings as such, their principal of immanent order is directed and linked with the transcendence of Good. In fact, only a few lines later,

Aristotle quotes Homer's words, which will be referenced by Peterson in his article on *Monotbeism as a Political Problem*. This idea is crucial for understanding the tradition of political theology. "The rule of many is not good; let there be one (sovereign)" (Agamben 2011, 8).

However, it is also pertinent to recall Peterson's analysis of the pseudo-Aristotelian treatise *De Mundo*, in which the transcendent Aristotelian God is compared to an invisible mover of the marionettes and to the Persian king, who is locked in his palace and governs, from there, through ministers and servants. Peterson writes:

Here, the crucial question for the image of divine monarchy is not whether there are one or more powers (Gewalten), but whether God participates in the powers [Machten] that act in the cosmos. The author wants to say: God is the precondition for powers to act in the cosmos (he uses the term *dynamis*, adopting a Stoic terminology, but he means rather the Aristotelian *kynesis*), yet, precisely for this reason, he himself is not power: *le roi regne, mais il ne gouverne pas* (Agamben 2011, 70).

The theological doctrine of Trinity, which makes up a significant part of Agamben's investigation, has much the same structure in which God's being (*ousia*) and his participation in the general history of salvation or praxis differ from each other. The functionally interconnected binary opposition of being and action corresponds to the theological-political paradigm of reign and government, in which God (king) reigns, but does not act. The same figure of a non-potent sovereign can be found in Walter Benjamin's *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, where he criticizes Schmitt's sovereign who decides on the state of exception by representing the baroque sovereign who, when needed, cannot make a decision. Both Peterson and Agamben pay a lot of attention to the gnostic tradition, in which there is a passive God (*deus otiosus*) and an active God (*deus actuosus*). Interestingly, with respect to the distinction between reign (kingdom) and government, is the Platonic philosopher Numenius, who differentiates between a transcendent,

self-sufficient and inactive absolute and a second God who is busy governing the world. Ontologically, the first God is supreme and, according to his pure being, he does not act; rather, its actions are exclusive functions of the second God. There is a fragment in Numenius, preserved by Eusebius of Caesarea, which both Agamben and Peterson cite:

For it is not at all becoming that the First God should be the Creator [demiourgein]; also the First God must be regarded as the father of the God who is Creator of the world. If then we were inquiring about the creative principle, and asserting that He who was pre-existent would thereby be preeminently fit for the work, this would have been a suitable commencement of our argument. But if we are not discussing the creative principle, but inquiring about the First Cause, I renounce what I said, and wish that to be withdrawn [ . . . ] the First God is inoperative [argon] with regard to all kinds of work and reigns as king [basilea], but the Creative God [demiourgikon] governs [hegemonen], and travels through the heaven (Agamben 2011, 77).

It should be noted that Numenius strictly distinguishes between intelligible and sensible worlds (he also differentiates a third God, which Agamben does not mention). First, it is the world of good and absolute transcendence of God, and second, it is the world of a creator (*demiurgos*). The first God is inert and simple, and its being has ontological primacy over the second. Numenius also calls it a first intellect. We can see some contradictions in his theory and, thus, ask some critical questions that are directly connected to Agamben's project. For example, if the first God is unmoved, inert and isolated, how is it possible for him to be the cause of everything? On the other hand, if he is a thinking being, can it be absolutely inert? It would be reasonable to say that Agamben's reign (kingdom) is like an inert God and Benjamin's baroque sovereign. Is the classical paradigm of sovereignty really effaced from political discourse? Perhaps the sovereign is Benjamin's hunchback, who remains invisible while pulling the strings of a puppet that wins all chess games.

## 5. CONCLUSION

In Agamben's *Homo Sacer* project, the book *The Kingdom and the Glory: For a Theological Genealogy of Economy and Government* is one of his most comprehensive and complex works. Agamben, according to his methodological choice, did not want to complete the work by "solving" some problems but, instead, he recovered something unsaid and developed it further, without any ambition to finally bring it to completion. In this article, through an analysis of theological economy, ontology, anarchy, reign and government, being and acting, I have tried to demonstrate Agamben's main thesis: power, in Western culture, assumed the form of economy, which, according to Foucault's bio-political theory, means *the government of men* and administration.

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### Notes

1. Giorgio Agamben, *Il Regno e la Gloria: Per una genealogia teologica dell'economia e del governo, Homo sacer*, 2, Neri Pozza Editore, 2007.
2. Erik Peterson was a German Protestant theologian who, in 1930, converted to Catholicism. Peterson's name in theological circles is well known and it can be mentioned together with Karl Barth, Rudolf Harnack, Hans Urs Von Balthasar and Juergen Moltmann. In philosophy, Giorgio Agamben revitalized his name in his post-Foucauldian genealogy of political sovereignty. He often refers to Peterson's works.
3. Colby Dickinson, *Agamben and Theology*, T & T Clark International, 2011; Colby Dickinson and Adam Kotsko, *On the Coming Philosophy: New use of theology*, Rowman@Littlefield, 2015.
4. See also: Hannah Arendt, *What is an Authority*.
5. See Mondzain 2005, 13.

6. Both Wilhelm Gass and Josef Moingt assumed that the theological usage of *economy* first appears in the epistles of St. Paul. However, Moingt also speaks about the traditional meaning of the term and its use even in the Christian tradition.
7. An Italian word for the English verb *to be* is *essere*, which is rendered differently, according to context. In that case, I prefer to translate it as *essence*, because the Greek *ousia* was translated by Agamben as *essere*. And it simply means *essence*. I found it problematic to translate into English as *being* due to its ambiguity in which the main sense and author's intention disappear. In the German translation, the term is rendered as *Sein*.
8. See Agamben 2011, 53.
9. The source can be found here:  
<http://www.pubtheo.com/page.asp?pid=1566>.

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“AFRICAN- AMERICAN GIRLS ARE BETTER TAUGHT TO REACH STARS”:  
SUBVERTING GENDER AND RACIAL STEREOTYPES  
IN LORRAINE HANSBERRY’S “A RAISIN IN THE SUN”

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**Abstract.** Hansberry raises racial and gender issues by putting on stage an African family whose female members have gone through an alienating experience because of gender inequality and racial denigration. This article studies the double marginalization of women within a community of white Americans. The play encompasses three generations of African American characters who, although do not share the same mindscape, have the same goal of debunking stereotypes. The first generation is represented by Mama Lina, who strives to achieve her dream of racial integration. She debunks the traditional image of black mummies who used to be servants. The second generation is embodied by Ruth, who goes out of the domestic sphere and helps her husband in achieving the American dream of financial success. The third female voice has a more revolutionary spirit. Beneatha is the paragon of female intellectual talents. She is constantly looking for self-definition and has a fervent wish to become a philanthropic doctor. She celebrates her African roots after she meets her Nigerian lover. She wears traditional African cloths, uses the Yoruba dialect, learns about the glorious history of the ancient continent “Mama Africa”, and loves her nappy hair. In order to study the subtle review of the masculine discourse of power, as made by the playwright, this paper will be divided into two parts. The first discusses the historical background of the condition of African American women in the aftermath of the Second World War, and the policies of the Truman administration regarding black women. Then, a thematic study will be conducted. I will analyse the way in which each of the three women dismantles the racial fetters.

**Keywords:** assimilation, protest, the discourse of power, integration, female identity, the American dream

Before analysing the way in which female identity is staged by the African American playwright, it is pertinent to outline the situation

of black women after the Second World War, and the physical abuses they were subjected. Vincent Harding delineates their continuous struggle by stating: they are “flowing like a river, sometimes powerful, tumultuous, and rolling with life; some other times meandering and turgid” (qtd. in Armstrong 2002, 9). The common point between the river and the African American citizens is the oscillation between protests and defeats. The image of the river adds optimistic beats and alludes to the winds of change during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There was a change from using violence to resorting to a civil movement. For example, they moved from reacting to violence with violence to raising their voices of dissatisfaction in journals and condemning white rapists. In this context, *New Folk Journal and Guide* blamed society for not punishing the white rapists who “got the foundation from their homes, churches and schools. Here of all places, they were taught that the proper place for their foot is on a Negro’s neck. (...) They probably have never on their lives been punished for anything they had done against a Negro” (qtd. in Dorr 2004, 22). It is obvious that racism has been engraved within the American community for centuries and the exploitation of African women raised during the 1950s when six men were set free for raping a young black lady. The long path of black resistance to thralldom will be presented by Mama Lena, who is nostalgic for the five previous generations. The conflict between Lena and her offspring embodies the relationship between Mama Africa and her citizens, who are swinging between assimilation or preserving their native roots.

Physical violence triggered a sense of resentment in the African women who participated in the outburst of the Civil Rights Movement (1954-1968). This movement witnessed the appearance of black female activists, who called for a better representation of African women within the American social fabric. In this respect, Rosa Parks declared: “racism is still with us. But it is up to us to prepare our children for what they have to meet, and, hopefully, we shall overcome” (qtd. in Webster 2010, 189). The tone of eagerness

evokes the firmness of the female activist and reflects her desire to change the position of African women from submission to independence and resistance. Rosa Parks managed to become an African American icon and made her voice of protest audible. She proved to be a decision maker when she refused to give up her seat to a white citizen. She was congratulated by the members of her African community, who were impressed by her audacious attitude. She was respected and “so famous that people would come by her office to meet her, not [her boss]” (qtd. in Hanston 129). Her brave act remains a remarkable turning point in African American history. In the 1950s a change in terms of female activism was produced, along with the presence of intellectual ladies who used to have a voice of their own.

What is specific about African American women after the Second World War is their support by the members of the mainstream culture. President Truman, for instance, was known for the support he gave to African American female activists and for opposing to racism. In one of his speeches, he declared: “I created the civil rights committee because racial and religious intolerance began to appear after the Second World War. They threatened the very freedom we had fought to save” (qtd. in Grander 2002, 139). The inclusive “we” mirrors his dedication to abolishing slavery in public institutions. His sympathy for the marginalized is further manifested through his disapproval of the discrimination of blacks within the military service. “It is hereby declared to the policy of the president that there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, colour, religion or national origin” (Executive Order 2014, 9981). Truman was obviously trying to capture the attention of his voters by promoting equality and promising to guarantee well-being for all citizens regardless of race and gender. His belief in equality shall be noticed in the following statement: “African American women [with] the opportunity of reaching the highest levels in all fields of human endeavour” (qtd. in Hanson 2001, 125). The use of the

superlative form highlights the firm promise to improve the situation of African women and help them get considered in different fields of activity. In this respect, the president used to admire the rebellious mindset of some African women and he accepted to be accompanied by a black journalist. Alice Allison Dunningan was the first African female journalist to assist the president. The lady confessed: “My ego was inflated by the thought that the president of the United States would show interest in an insignificant newspaperwoman, and would take time out to express his concern. This, to me, was an indication of a great man” (qtd. in Grander 2002, 130). The lady was impressed by the humble attitude of the president and appreciated his continuous support. Besides Dunningan, Charlotta Bass is another female journalist who “is thought to be the first woman to won and publish a newspaper in this country. (...) Bass was the Progressive Party’s Vice Presidential candidate in 1952, another first for a black woman” (Smith 2013, 143).

African women were pioneers in the field of journalism in America, as they resorted to writing as a tool for resisting both gender and female stereotypes. In this context, Bass affirmed: “win or lose, we win by raising our issues” (qtd. in Moore 2001, 229). The female activist was keen on raising her voice of revolt in national newspapers. In short, the 1950s were good years for blacks because many African American women succeeded to acquire a better educational level and intellectual development.

They did also resort to the stage to deconstruct both gender and racist stereotypes that were attributed to them. Indeed, “[they] discovered in the theatre a powerful device for analysing and presenting their anxieties in a public arena, for placing at the centre of dramatic attention those formerly relegated to the margin, economically, socially, politically and theatrically” (Bigsby 2000, 317). Choosing drama as a vehicle to externalize the inner plight was not a random choice. Female playwrights aimed at targeting a larger audience. They invited theatregoers and readers to rethink their

position in society and perceive black women as fully developed creatures. What is specific about them is that they have gone through a process of double marginalization related to skin colour and gender. Accordingly, black women used to be marginalized and to be excluded from the world of theatre, which was considered as a male space. Not only did black women suffer from racial discrimination by the members of the white Western society but they were also segregated by the members of the black patriarchal community, especially during the Black Liberation Movement. The misogynist attitudes can be exemplified through the following statement of Amiri Baraka: “we do not believe in the equality of men and women. We cannot understand what the devils and the devilishly influenced mean when they say equality for women. We could never be equals. (...) Nature has not provided thus” (Baraka 1970, 8). Black women were frustrated because of this sexist ideology and they formed a new movement to rage against sexist and racist oppression. Black Women Feminist movement was an attempt to open new horizons for them. It was led by artists like Lorraine Hansberry, whose play *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959) is one of the first plays written by a black female and performed on Broadway. “[It] is also the first play featuring black characters and their concerns to be embraced not only by black audiences but by predominantly white Broadway audiences” (Kolin 2007, 83). During the play, Hansberry raises issues such as housing discrimination, the American dream of racial integration, abortion and the female ambition to gain independence. The eldest male in the play has affinities with Hansberry’s father, who fought in court for the right of his family to move to a white neighbourhood in Chicago. “The supreme court of Illinois upheld a lower court injunction that supported the restrictive covenant, and Hansberry, with the assistance of the NAACP, appealed the case in the US supreme court” (Williams 2011, 349). She was clearly an ambitious woman who did not limit herself to the world of art, but she was also politically engaged. In addition to writing plays to stage female

identity, she wrote articles for a political magazine entitled *Freedom* and called for female political freedom. “In 1951, Hansberry joined the staff of freedom and quickly rose to a position of authority” (Effong 2006, 32). The female playwright and political activist attempted to verbalize the social exploitation of black women, voice their needs and challenge the gender and racial prejudices.

The title of her play alludes to the long path of oppression. The metaphor of a raisin that has been exposed to the sun for a long period suggests the bitter situation of black citizens, who have gone through many hindrances.

The playwright borrows this visual image from Langston Hughes’ *Harlem*, where he asks a critical question: “What happens to a dream deferred?” The speaker of the poem answers this question by raising another one: “Does [a deferred dream] explode?”. He is implicitly foreshadowing the explosion or future social discontent of the African American generation in the wake of the Second World War. Hughes is a precursor because his augury came true during the civil rights movement. The poem has a universal scope because it encompasses the dreams of African American citizens without mentioning gender or age. The revolutionary aspect of the poem has inspired Hansberry to borrow the metaphor of *a raisin*. She explores this image to stage the long journey of women towards independence. The three women in the play are oscillating between complicity and resistance. Though different, the three generations share the same fatigue and condition of being victimized by gender stereotypes, which are excluding them from social activism. The idea of exhaustion is made explicit through the opening stage directions and the furnishings that “have clearly had to accommodate the living of too many people for too many years and they are tired” (Act 1, 7). Like the worn-out furniture, the female characters are life-weary because they have been denied the possibility to develop. This denial is noticed through the interplay between light and darkness (and the prevalence of the latter). The opening scene takes place in “a dusky

morning light” (Act 1, 7). The dark morning gives hints at the dismal reality of segregation and may reflect the disturbed inner *psyche* of the African American characters (in particular, of the three female characters). However, light denotes that the young ones share the hope of improving their situation. This attitude will be traced through the characterization of the mother and the motif of the plant which adds positive vibes. The mother is different from the rebellious Beneatha and the submissive daughter-in-law in the sense that she sticks to her dream of racial integration. The next analytical part will be devoted to the way in which each female character reacts to gender and racial stereotypes.

**“BEING A COLOURED WOMAN, I GUESS I CAN’T HELP MYSELF NONE”**

*Female plight* can be investigated through the character of Ruth and her dangling between the traditional rules of Mama Lena and the liberated mind of Beneatha. Ruth is set in between and she accepts female stereotypes in order to debunk them at the end of the play. She embodies the image of the traditional wife who is engrossed in domestic activities and in looking after her husband and child. In the first scenes, Ruth is introduced as a passive woman who is prevented from having a voice of her own, especially when “[she] yawns, in a slightly muffled voice” (Scene 1, 9). Yawning suggests the life-weariness of Ruth and her inability to exteriorize her inner frustration. She is frustrated as she is going through a process of double marginalization. Not only is she the subject of female stereotypes but she is also vilified because of her colour. In the vein of double marginalization, Ruth is humiliated by her husband, who uses the following discriminatory terms: “the first thing a man ought to learn in life is not to make love to no coloured woman first thing in the morning. You all some evil people at night o’clock in the morning” (Scene 1, 11). The husband is irritated because Ruth invites him to be more pragmatic whenever he tries to imitate the

white dream of financial gain. His misogynist behaviour incorporates the denigration of Ruth because of her sex and race. Walter seems to internalize the mainstream ideology of excluding the other. He is obviously going through moments of self-denigration: instead of glorifying the African woman, he keeps belittling her. Indeed, “white women are seen as submissive, docile and feminine. The message black women often receive is that they cannot be feminine in the right way like white women. Internalizing this message may lead to a sense of self-hatred and inferiority” (Gaertner 2004, 119). The same ideology is adopted by Walter, who gives little interest to his wife. Self-denigration triggers continuous conflicts between Ruth and Walter. The higher walls of disharmony are also made evident through verbal battles. Walter minimizes his wife when he tells her “who’s fighting you? Who even cares about you” (Act 2, 71). The black woman is denied freedom of speech and is ignored by her husband, who displays a haughty attitude. His indifference comes from his belief that women of colour are “silly” and they lack the intellectual depth of white women. Accordingly, they do not deserve to be treated equally. The wife rages against her husband by reminding him of their dismal reality and the dysfunctionality of their family: “there ain’t so much between us, Walter. Not you when you come to me and try to talk to me. Try to be with me a little even” (Act 2, 72). We infer through her supplication that she is calling her husband for self-revision and she is inviting him to support her in her journey for self-improvement. Ruth is realistic in the sense that she makes an effort to survive instead of being immersed in delusions. She debunks his stereotype of considering black women as poor in terms of communication when she blames him for his irresponsibility and for not having steady steps in the ground of reality.

Ruth challenges the stereotypes against women of colour when she proves to be an independent and responsible woman who does not rely on her husband as the breadwinner of the family. In this respect, she teaches her son the values of self-reliance and instructs

him: “I want you to stop asking your grandmother for money, you hear me?” (Scene 1, 12). She is implicitly asking her son not to imitate his father and to be responsible instead of waiting for the check to improve the miserable situation. The check may stand for the passivity and for dreaming without making any effort. It is the case of Walter, who believes in the existence of miracles. On the other hand, Ruth is among the active black women who have significant roles inside and outside the domestic sphere. In reality, “the traditional housewife model has never fit most African American women. (...) African American women have worked higher rates than white women because their family are burdened by family income inequality and two incomes are necessary for familial economic survival” (Simen 2006, 26). What is specific about Ruth is that she subverts traditional gender roles when she quits the domestic sphere and bears to provide her son and husband with the basic financial needs. Unlike the husband, who is characterized by his lethargy, Ruth works even when she has health problems: “I got to go in. We need money” (Scene 1, 27). She feels that working outside the domestic space is an obligation and she strives to be financially independent.

Ruth is the subject of female stereotypes at home and the victim of racial stereotypes outside. She is looked down by her white manager, who treats her as a working machine without paying attention to her needs. She murmurs to her mother in law: “I can’t stay home. She’d be calling up the agency and screaming at them, ‘My girl didn’t come in today. Send me somebody! My girl didn’t come in’” (Scene 1, 27). The use of the possessive pronoun “my” foregrounds the dehumanization of members and the African American community, as well as their treatment as sheer properties. The master is described as a stone-hearted lady, as she is indifferent about the health of her black workers. On the other hand, Ruth internalizes the Manichean discourse and considers herself as a minor creature compared to her white boss. Her awareness about racial inferiority is the outcome of the “separate but not equal”

culture, which stands as a hurdle for socio-economic mobility. The myth of racial integration is criticized by Jesse Jackson, a prominent civil rights movement leader, who declares: “I hear that melting pot stuff a lot, and all I can say is that we haven’t melted” (*Melting Pot* 2007). It is the case of Ruth, who feels embarrassed when Mama informs her about the decision of moving to a white neighbourhood. She comments in a tone of stupor: “Clybourne Park? Mama, there ain’t no coloured people living in Clybourne Park” (77). Her reaction underlines the deception at the choice of the house’s location and further indicates the dislocation of the African American family in Washington’s white neighbourhood. Ruth can be criticized for her limited enthusiasm and the lack of determination compared to her sister-in-law, who displays a firm protest against female and racial stereotypes. Although Ruth succeeds at giving a bright image concerning the African American woman who becomes the breadwinner of the family and challenges the appalling socio-economic conditions, she fails at reviving the African glory. The idea of celebrating the African roots will be examined through Beneatha’s quest for resistance.

**BENEATHA AND THE QUEST FOR SELF- EXPRESSION:**

**“MR. ASAGAI, I WANT VERY MUCH TO TALK WITH YOU. ABOUT AFRICA. YOU SEE, MR. ASAGAI, I’M LOOKING FOR MY IDENTITY”**

Unlike Ruth, who gives the audience an insight into the struggle of domestic women, Beneatha presents another category as she is ambitious and seeks for pursuing her medical studies. Her independence is noticed when she criticizes her brother for relying on his mother’s fortune and does not yield to the principles of hard work and perseverance. She addresses Walter: “that money belongs to Mama, Walter, and it’s for her to decide how she wants to use it. (...) I don’t care if she wants to buy a house or a rocket ship or just nail it up somewhere and look at it. It’s her. Not ours. Hers” (Scene 1, 21). Through the use of the possessive pronoun “hers”, Beneatha

insists on achieving female financial independence. Verbal irony also shows Beneatha's self-reliance and her indifference about the Mama's money. She is implicitly challenging her brother, who is plunged into slumber and dreams without making any effort. Walter has a patriarchal vision as he perceives that women have to be submissive and he reminds his sister that marriage is the destiny of any female creature: "go to be a nurse like other women or just get married and be quiet" (Scene 1, 22). Beneatha goes beyond the stereotype of reducing women into housewives when she participates in some artistic activities and experiments into different fields. She utters with enthusiasm: "I don't flit! I will experiment with different forms of expression" (Scene 1, 32). Self-expression is meant to debunk stereotypes and reconstruct female identity. Beneatha reshapes female identity when she declares that the female self should be freed from social confinements and that the destiny of a woman should not reside in constructing a family and getting married. Accordingly, she is keen in becoming a doctor and in being engaged in philanthropic activities. The interest of Beneatha in medicine shows that African American women started to have access to better educational chances. In fact, "after the Second World War, the more lucrative sectors of speciality medicine became available as training opportunities began to be open up for African Americans" ("African American Physicians"). The intellectual side of Beneatha makes her a socially distinguished woman who is not intimidated by the patriarchal or racial agenda. She informs her misogynist brother: "I'm going to be a doctor. I'm not worried about who I'm going to marry yet if I ever get married" (Scene 2, 34). Beneatha is different from the other female characters of the play in the sense that she does not consider marriage as a social institution. She succeeds at deconstructing the stereotypes against women of race. Not only does she rebel against the traditional mindset, which is based on restricting female freedom, but she will also revise African identity by celebrating Africaness and giving a positive image about African glory.

Reviving the African roots will be examined by focusing on the relationship between Beneatha and Asagai. Indeed, “Beneatha expresses Hansberry’s knowledge of and pride in her African heritage. Beneatha’s Afrocentric spirit is nurtured by her relationship with the African Asagai” (James 32). Beneatha’s lover invites her to find out the components of African glory and grasp the African history, values and customs. She is impressed by Asagai as he “does not care how houses look. (...) He’s an intellectual” (Scene 2, 40). He does not pay attention to appearances (or skin colour), and he is rather interested in cultural development. In this respect, he instructs Beneatha that Africaness should not be linked to backwardness and barbarity. The future doctor is convinced by his message and she informs her mother: “It’s just that people ask such crazy things. All anyone seems to know about when it comes to Africa is ‘Tarzan’” (Scene 2, 41). It is obvious that Beneatha starts learning from Asagai that the African American Adam is a civilized creature who seeks for continuous progress. Instead of being a symbol of savagery, Beneatha invites the audience to think twice about the image of Tarzan and to recognize that the African continent is the cradle of all the other civilizations. She also renovates African glory when she puts a colourful Nigerian robe and Asagai flirts with her: “This is not so much a profile of a Hollywood queen as perhaps a queen of the Nile” (Scene 2, 46). The royal imagery is meant to highlight the supremacy of Beneatha and her attractive African style, which makes her a distinguished lady. This style is not accepted by the assimilationist George, who loathes the African self and disdains Beneatha when she opts for the African style. She reacts “angrily Yuk, Yuk, Yuk!” (Scene 2, 48). Her reaction shows that she mocks the assimilationists who abandon their roots and embrace the values of the mainstream society. This ironic attitude is directed against some assimilationists who accept to be dominated by the whites and are ashamed of family pride. Accordingly, Beneatha beckons George to admire African women dress styles: “you are looking at what a well-dressed Nigerian

woman wears. (...) Enough of this assimilationist junk!” (Act 2, 60). In this way, Beneatha re-examines George’s denigrating speech and informs him that he misses the honourable chance of understanding his African origin and considering Africa as a barren land where sterility reigns supreme. Beneatha counters his view by arguing that Africa is the source of cultural richness, especially when she foregrounds the good manners of some Nigerian citizens. She appreciates the generous way of welcoming others and respecting guests when she imitates the African folk dance: “It’s from Nigeria. It’s a dance of welcome” (Act 2, 61). Beneatha can thus be considered as a culture vulture since she is ambitious and eager to learn about her origins. Her ambition is reflected through her language and her eagerness to decipher the meaning of some African words and familiarize the hearer with the Yoruba African dialect. For example, she insists on knowing the meaning of the word “Aliayo”, and Asagai explains: “It means... it means One for Whom Bread-Food-Is Not Enough.” (Scene 2, 49). Asagai describes Beneatha as an “Aliyio” because she contributes to consolidate African cultural heritage and to represent black identity as a source of empowerment. Beneatha can be criticized for her fervent wish to go back to Africa because returning back to the past will lead to the negation of the present. Hansberry seems to be opposed to the idea of going back to Africa. That is why Beneatha is left undecided at the final scene and she hesitates whether to go back to Africa or not. The aim of the playwright is to show that cultural identity should be hybrid as it does not necessitate the existence of a pure African self or a fully assimilated self. The idea of integration is better understood by Mama Lena, who strives to achieve the dream of racial incorporation.

**MAMA LENA: “THERE IS ALWAYS SOMETHING LEFT TO LOVE. AND IF YOU AIN'T LEARNED THAT, YOU AIN'T LEARNED NOTHING”**

Though the Youngers are introduced as a powerless family enclosed in a ragged space, Mama Lena enlightens flames of hope through

her plant. In the opening scene, Mama confesses that her plant needs to “[get] more sun than it’s been getting” (Act 1, 24). The image of the sun confers an optimistic mood and helps the audience comprehend that the plant stands for hope. Indeed, Mama Lena takes care of it and seeks for its vividness. She keeps the plant alive the same way she sticks to the dream of moving from the slum to Chicago white neighbourhood. In fact, the Youngers have been squeezed in ghettos for three generations and they feel they are entrapped in a “rat trap” (Act 1, 28). Accordingly, Mama Lena indulges in a quest for upward mobility and struggles to improve the social status of her family, despite the pressure exercised by Linder. Linder is in charge of convincing the Youngers to drop the idea of moving to a white neighbourhood and to be satisfied with their position in the unsanitary ghettos, to which they belong. He argues: “For the happiness of all concerned that our Negro families are happier when they live in their own communities” (101-102). His biased demand shows his racial attitude and that he tends to humiliate blacks because he feels that whites have a higher rank. Linder is thus the paragon of the snobbish whites who “want to preserve their authority and purity by making their argument seemingly reasonable through moral lessons” (*A New Born Identity*, 65). His lesson is not accepted by Mama Lena, who keeps being obsessed with the dream of racial equality and preserving African American identity. She is the strongest female character in the play for she is gifted with a sense of patience and sedulity. Her strength lies in her didactic role, especially when she asks Walter to instil in his son the germs of African pride and human dignity. Thus, she confesses:

Son, I come from five generations who was slaves and sharecroppers but ain’t no body in my family never let nobody pay’em no money that was a way of telling us we wasn’t fit to walk the earth. We ain’t never been that poor. We ain’t never been that dead inside (127).

She declares that African American citizens should be proud of their ancestors, who are known for their harmony and cultural richness.

The five generations have been going through the same conditions of exploitation and they have not given up the mission of attaining freedom. Family pride and the assertion of black unity are the major features of black identity. The mother deconstructs the image of the submissive mammies whose major concern is the upbringing of white children. What is specific about the black mammy is that “[she] was not a protector or defender of black children or communities. She represented a maternal ideal, but not in caring for her own children. Her love, doting, advice, correction, and supervision were reserved exclusively for white women and children” (Barnes 88). It is not the case of Mama Lena, who challenges the stereotype of black mammies and who is obsessed with the education of her children rather than the nurture of the white offspring. For example, she asks Walter to instil in his child the principles of self-reliance and confidence: “why don’t you let the child explain himself” (Act 2, 74). She believes that independence starts from within and recommends self-expression as the tool for reaching racial freedom. Not only does Mama call for a better treatment of her children but she does also invite Walter to reconsider his attitude regarding women. She orders Walter: “you still in my house and my presence. And as long as you are, you’ll talk to your wife civil. Now sit down” (Scene 2, 55). She invites her son and the audience to ponder over the position of African American women and respect them. Mama Lena is respected by the members of her family because she succeeds to fulfil her dream and to pave the way for cultural exchanges after moving to the white neighbourhood and creating a synthesis between two diametrically cultural poles.

**CONCLUSION: “WHEN THE WORLD GETS UGLY ENOUGH, A WOMAN WILL DO ANYTHING FOR HER FAMILY. THE PART THAT’S ALREADY LIVING”**

This paper has studied how the three generations of African American women face the same process of marginalization and their

different reactions to female stereotypes. They give a bright image of the African lady who wants to have a special place inside and outside her family. The thematic analysis has shown that racial stereotypes are cultural and they need to be revised. This shows that the playwright intends to celebrate female independence and racial freedom and to transform the tragic moments of marginalization into sweeter moments of national pride and female freedom. The three female characters do not belong to the same generation and do not share the same intellectual level. Ruth gives the image of a self-reliant wife who overturns the traditional roles by choosing to be the breadwinner of her small family. Despite her struggle, she is naïve compared to the other female characters because she remains (in some instances) dominated by her husband. She supports him when he imitates the white dream of accumulating wealth. On the other hand, Beneatha is a rebellious doctor who tries to give a positive image of African women by embracing the African style. Dreaming to go back to her motherland, she fails to recognize that African American identity cannot be shaped without creating a close link between the African and the American selves. Ruth, Beneatha and Mama succeed at reviving Africaness, but Mama remains the paragon of female African pride since she imposes the existence of African citizens within a white neighbourhood and recommends the importance of designing a subtle compromise between the African and the American entities. By the end of the play, Mama moves from the margin to occupy a central social position and breaks free with gender and racial structures.

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## MUSIC AND THE SOUND: A PHILOSOPHY OF PERCEPTION

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**Abstract.** How can someone have the right perception of sound and its nature? We hear sounds everywhere: we hear the wind, the accords of a piano or a loud bang. How can we tell which of them is music, and which is a mere sound? To say what music is, we must first understand how it is possible that something like harmony to be recognised. This article aims to define the unity between music, conscience, and natural things.

**Keywords:** music, perception, judgement of taste, sounds, phenomenology, acoustic hermeneutics

### I. INTRODUCTION

From the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century until today, the world of music has undergone a continuous revolution. A so-called *realistic aesthetic* was advanced to substitute the classical theories, starting with atonalism and continuing with minimalism and post-minimalism. In the following, I will focus on the aesthetic of music from a philosophical point of view. The perception of sound is different from a conscious act. In the writings of Kant, Merleau-Ponty and Husserl, the idea of a conscious feeling was not explicitly formulated. They wrote about the consciousness of perception associated with a judicative interpretation but the idea of the consciousness of feeling as an emotion was not approached. Music, above all, is feeling. This is the first premise from which we should start.

Musicology, beginning with Ancient Greece, classical European period to the contemporary post-tonality theory had the same

perspective regarding the essence of music: it creates emotions, feelings, destroys the walls of loneliness, calms the panic, approaches our souls to the transcendent and brings happiness. This is how we relate to music. We do not think how it is made, how the sounds are thought or if there are philosophical or mathematical concepts that are implied. Music reveals both our ontical and non-ontical essence. Sometimes, music can express the non-seen: in some Celtic rituals, the birds of the deity Rhiannon were meant to sing in such a way to lead the people more easily into the final world (into death).

Secondly, our aesthetic inquiry is intended to advance two new philosophical terms: “the critique of subjectivism” and “the pure reason of perception”, as formulated by the phenomenological investigations.

Edmund Husserl developed and justified, in his 6<sup>th</sup> Investigation, a doctrine of the judgement of perception. In appreciating the sound, we shall start from nature, where we can first hear sounds. Then, we should think of them with the faculty judgement. The latter has an important role in developing the sense of sounds. It is well-known that music influences our lives. Besides this, it also has a major role in sculpting our perception of the world. The unity between perception and things was named, by philosophical hermeneutics, “apperception”, which, if related with the essence of music, reveals some of its ontical characteristics.

## **2. THE LYRICISM OF SOUNDS AND FEELINGS**

Songs were often included in the lyrical arts. They were related to harmony. The essence of music resides, however, in the unity of the transcendental Ego and the ‘I’. The perception of sounds defines the becoming of music in an ontical way, as in the case of Being. Sounds unify my perception with my inner world and the world in general.

The term “lyrical” was also used to describe “the expressive character of music. Lyricism captivates us through the intensity of the emotion” (Firca 1967, 26). In other words, lyricism is a way of expressing feelings in a creative and intensive manner. The sound has the major role to improve the power of lyricism because it directly affects our sensations. We can cite, in this purpose, Merleau Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*, where it is indicated that singing involves not only profound emotions but also has the major role to coordinate our body:

During the rehearsal, as during the performance, the stops, pedals and manuals are given to him as nothing more than possibilities of achieving certain emotional or musical values, and their positions are simply the places through which this value appears in the world. Between the musical essence of the piece as it is shown in the score and the notes which actually sound round the organ, so direct a relation is established that the organist's body and his instrument are merely the medium of this relationship. (Ponty 2002, 168)

We can propose, thus, the original idea of the embodiment of sound, which means that a sound can be incarnate, as saying felt with its all intensity. A musical work puts us in front of the dualism “style – lyricism”: both work together to harmoniously complete the work of art. Elements of “Klangfarbenmelodie” (Firca 1967, 27) exist in Enescu's music. In painting, they were exercised by Kandinsky. The sound must have a colour. Each sound corresponds to a colour, as in the poem *Correspondence* of Baudelaire (Baudelaire 2005). The idea of sound as colour is present in many other creations. Moreover, the sound has also a psychological function. We think, for instance, of Gilbert Durand, who said that we can talk about the symbolism of the sound in a “daily” and “nocturnal” regime (Durand 2016, 197-199).

The lyrical elements are correlated to pure music. One of them is the calm immobility of the sounds. Silence comes out from the correct succession of the sounds in a peaceful way.

We can easily observe how the art of some musicians is throbbing, nervous or lyrical. It depends on the fact that sounds

meet themselves in a variety of harmony, which is equivalent, in philosophy, with the unity of apperception. Some sounds are loud and explosive since the fragment has to express the gravity of feelings and emotions. Others are in piano, to express tenderness.

A second principle is the idea of decorating and designing the sound, which means that there are some other sound-effects able to ornate the musical fragment, as in the case of an *art nouveau* building. The ornamental sounds play an important role in designing the entire harmony. Executed with precision, they vibrate in the most amazing way. Jules Levallois said that nature is above imagination (Levallois 1895). Music is the pure manifestation of naturalness and spirituality.

Talking in *abstracto*, the objects with the varied combinations of the lines, planes shadows, and colours, constitute a mysterious language, but miraculously very expressive, which you need to know if you want to be an artist. (Hautecoeur 1942, 222)

This is also true in the world of music. Due to the persistence of lyricism in music, we can say that each song is a classical one because it expresses the values of humanity: goodness, beautiful, silence or sadness. As Guy de Maupassant said: we must look inside us and let every feeling shout out.

A sound does not close to itself but opens to the whole universe. Let us think of the songs composed by Maverick, Havasi, Ólafur Arnalds or Sarah Brightman. Music is in itself the most intimate universe of ourselves. The form of the sound must be something compact and it is used by the musician to combine different types of volumes and tonalities. We can say that exists a cosmology of sounds or a topologically form to arrange them in a harmonically manner.

Music creates a report of dependence to the world, it creates the flow of life. The Universe is the becoming of our inner voice and perception. Music means listen to the most silent sounds. It has to be lyrical to be capable to touch our perceptions and being received

through our faculty of judgement. Music moves the soul because, in each of us, lives a *homo musician*, thirsty for sounds and spiritual food.

### 3. THE CRITIQUE OF SUBJECTIVISM AND THE MUSICAL PERCEPTION OF SOUNDS

The human being is defined by subjectivism: it perceives the external world through its faculties of knowledge (Kant). Therefore, suppressing subjectivism it is not possible. It is our consciousness that works with both kinds of given facts - subjective and objective data. Thus, the critique of subjectivism refers to observing the subjective elements produced by our senses. What objectifies them is the faculty of judgement.

Clarity is not, as the logicians say, the consciousness of a representation; for a certain degree of consciousness, which, however, is not sufficient for memory, must be met with even in some obscure representations, because without any consciousness we would make no distinction in the combination of obscure representations; yet we are capable of doing this with the marks of some concepts (such as those of right and equity, or those of a musician who, when improvising, hits many notes at the same time). Rather a representation is clear if consciousness in it is sufficient for a consciousness of the difference between it and others. To be sure, if this consciousness suffices for a distinction, but not for a consciousness of the difference, then the representation must still be called obscure. So there are infinitely many degrees of consciousness down to its vanishing. (Kant 1999, 449)

Music transcends the unity of our mental representations and, at the same time, provoke our consciousness. The “obscure representations” of which Kant was talked about are the unfulfilled acts of our consciousness. Music helps us access them. The faculty of judgement correlates natural sounds with their musical representation. Each note represents a sound-concept and it is a representation of our consciousness. The last is moving all the time. It is always opened to the sensations that it receives from nature.

If we take the above propositions in a synthetic connection, as valid for all thinking beings, as they must be taken in rational psychology as a system, and if from the category of relation, a starting with the proposition. “All thinking beings are, as such, substances” we go back through the series of propositions until the circle closes, then we finally come up against the existence of thinking beings, which in this system are conscious of themselves not only as independent of external things but also as being able to determine themselves from themselves (in regard to the persistence belonging necessarily to the character of a substance. (Kant 1999, 450)

Furthermore, if human beings are related with substance, the latter is subjectivism, as the relationship between the ‘I’ and the selfhood of things. Kant said that we can hear sounds in three particular ways: “as a subject, as an identical subject and as a simple subject” (Kant 1999, 450). From this, we infer that there are three different, but similar, hypostases of the listener. It is the subject himself who puts his headphones and listens. But this person becomes similar to the person who composed the song because the composer is also an “I”: a person, a first-person. Thus, we observe that the first-person prevails over the song. Then, the song itself became a self.

For the historian, time is not an undifferentiated continuum, as it is for the physicist, but a hierarchically ordered network of moments, incidents, episodes, memories, epochs, eras, etc., whose conceptual boundaries are determined by the nature of the events or the processes occurring within them. Similarly, for the musician, a piece of music does not consist merely of an inarticulate stream of elementary sounds, motives, phrases, passages, sections and movements, whose, perceptual boundaries are largely determined by the nature of sounds and the sound-configurations that are occurring within them. The temporality of a song implies different levels of “temporal-units” (Tenney & Polansky 1980, 205). Music respects the perceptual unity of sounds. In the field of music, the so-called “objects” from phenomenology are sounds:

To look towards the nature of the objects as itself [in our case the sounds] is to find the nature of the objects towards themselves, to find at least the objective nature of the language [in our case the sounds] in which stays the

imperfect nature of the humanity. The fact that it gets towards a poem [in our case the song] of transitivity this is the mood of how the things function. Due to their true transitivity of the communication, there is something which starts with the inner nature of the things (Crăciun 2009, 202).

We observe, thus, that objectivism is an effect of subjectivism related to our inner emotions and feelings. Since it is not possible to separate subjectivism from objectivism, in music, just like in painting or ballet, we talk about the transitivity of things in themselves towards their inner world. Transitivity designates the relationship between the subjective form of human nature and the objective and subjective forms of things. In the phenomenological field, all things have both subjective and objective parts. Adorno considers that, if we think of music in technical terms, as *Gesamtkunstwerke*, as a totality, we fail. (Adorno 2005, 91). On the other hand, Phillip believes that music must be understood in emotional terms, as drama. (Phillips 2015).

We can argue that “the matter founded on other matter” is the substance mentioned above by Kant. Therefore, we should ask ourselves if we perceive music as a totality of matters. These matters are to be found in the *matter-as-totality*, which is the equivalent of the essence and naturalness of music. Furthermore, Husserl insists: “The original source resides anywhere in the fact that any simple matter (any matter which does not include a material fundament) is a nominal one”.

Music is a nominal function of our inner acts. The sound perceived is a representation of what “is reproducing through it” and it is “the difference between the imagined subject and the reproduced object” (Husserl). The “reproduced object” is the sound and the “imagined subject” is the song itself - music, harmony. All these forms are subjective because only their reproduction by tonality produces something objective.

According to Dan Zahavi, “selfhood” means something that is correlated with an “experiential dimension” (Zahavi 2005, 117), which introduce a difference between judgement and intuition. How

can we correctly understand the concrete connotation of the subjectivist doctrine in the acoustic hermeneutics, which now is a recent field of phenomenological investigation? Since the appreciation of natural things is connected with their natural essence, it is necessary to be capable to correctly distinguish between intuitional knowledge (which is part of the intellect) and “experiential” knowledge, which is related to common feelings. The “experiential” dimension of existence is reflected in this type of subjectivism. Thus, we should give, through the “experiential” dimension of music, a new reflexive interpretation of the world, people, intimate feelings and thoughts.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

It is not enough to introduce a critique of subjectivism in the judgement of perception because feelings are more powerful. In music, they are subjective but we can objectivate them in conscience due to the fact that the act of perceiving them unify the perception of sounds with what we hear or the manner in which we hear a song. We can go further to investigate various examples of melodies that are capable to produce in ourselves “winged knowledge”

In terms of musical aesthetics, it is necessary to introduce an acoustic hermeneutics capable to show the connection between the ontological plane and the existential one: the sound is *Being in becoming* but, on the other hand, it can be timely delivered to the Being. This time stolen by Being through the temptation of the sound is existential time. Music is medicine for souls. It is incredible how it has the ability to heal injured souls and create unity between the listener and the Universe. For hundreds of years, humanity is expressing the deepest dilemmas about Being through music.

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## NIGERIA'S SECURITY CHALLENGES AND THE CRISIS OF POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN NORTH AFRICA

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**Abstract.** This study examines the various challenges associated with Nigerian security and the crisis of political development in the North African region. It interrogates the efficacy of such involvements, as they have deteriorated rapidly due to different factors such as armed conflicts, terrorism, migration, unconstitutional changes in power, transnational crime, refugees, civil wars, drought, famine, drugs, and human trafficking. Conflicts and insecurity are not only formidable barriers to development but can undermine nations and their values. Instead, we recommend bilateral and multilateral agreements based on intelligence and military cooperation, freezing of financial assets for terrorists and their sponsors, democratic consolidation, and eradication of sight-tight syndrome, among others. This study adopts the security governance theory as a theoretical framework to address security problems related to the management of threats, defence policies through the state, political and civic organization.

**Keywords:** coercive diplomacy, national development, security, state fragility

### INTRODUCTION

Many African countries are either embroiled in conflicts or have just emerged from them. There is scarcely any part of Africa without its share of major conflicts either ongoing or recently resolved. It is possible to identify conflicts of succession, of ethnic sub-nationalism, self-determination, military intervention, and land ownership agitations. The dominant perspective in the literature is of armed conflicts characterizing the political process in African states. (Adetula 2014, 13). Also, until recently, very little attention has been paid to regional and global dynamics in terms of the way

they interact with the causes, conducts and resolutions of armed conflicts. African conflicts and the resultant security challenges continue to be of utmost concern to the international community and the continent. The perspective that African conflicts are often related to the crisis of African states is fast gaining prominence (Ibid, 14).

The Horn of Africa experiences conflicts that set states against states, communities against communities, resulting in political turbulence and human tragedy. This situation resides in the inability of states to pursue rational policies that call for social reforms (Wasara 2002, 39). Since the 1990s, the states of North Africa have experienced radical changes, which seems to be the harbinger of an uncertain future both domestically and in terms of their relationship with the wider world (Joffe 2014, 9)

During the past few years, security challenges have undoubtedly increased. They are highly concentrated in countries such as Sudan, South Sudan, Algeria, Egypt, Libya Tunisia, Western Sahara, Morocco - in the North Africa, and Nigeria in the west. These challenges have taken the shape of conflicts between sectarian, ethnic insurgent groups and state governments, civil wars among various coalitions of warring groups fighting for the control of the state itself, as well as challenges on political and economic issues, crisis on the distribution and consumption of scarcest resources allocation with intra- and inter- societies (Strauss 2016, 5)

Many African conflicts have their roots in domestic politics. However, these conflicts have affected more than just the countries where they occurred. Insecurity in Africa has not only made the pursuit of economic and political development difficult. It has hindered the development of regional integration. Peace and security promote regional integration just as the process of security integration can serve to consolidate peace and development (Adetula 2005, 395).

The newly unstable regional environment has created an array of challenges for Nigeria policymakers. Most prominent, jihadist

groups have flourished in post-revolutionary North Africa, capitalizing on state weakness to carry out several spheres of influence. Libya's descent into civil war has provided a further boost to regional jihadist groups and the proliferation of jihadist actors. The political instability that has beset North Africa in the years following the Arab Spring also undermines Nigerian strategic and economic interests in broader ways. North Africa has quickly descended from being a bastion of continuity and consistency into disorder and fragility. It's economic and political potentials have harmed Nigerian trade with its northern neighbours. Parts of North Africa have become strongholds for criminal networks, including drug traffickers and smugglers, who have used this region as a base from which gain entry into Europe (Gartenstein-Rosseds 2015, 7).

Nigeria's approaches to the sub-regional and continental security of Africa have been largely influenced by the national role conceived in terms of international relations by its leaders. This role conception has become the defining paradigm for foreign policy engagements. Accordingly, Nigeria is the natural leader of Africa with a manifest destiny and the responsibility to promote and protect the interests of Africa and black people everywhere. It is also believed that the country's security is tied to that of the other African states because of cultural and historical experiences and transnational security issues, which are defined by the way in which the security of a nation is affected by what happens in its neighbouring countries (Alli 2012, 5).

Nigeria's perceptions on security are framed in the West African view and have been historically characterized by three interconnected elements: the sense of vulnerability; a strong representation of the connection between national and (sub) regional security, and the necessity to be the guarantor of West Africa's stability and its leader. There is evidence of an established nexus between national and regional security. Conversely, (sub) regional security is deemed as having a potential effect on national security and stability (Haastrup and Lucia 2014, 1).

According to Bello (2012) and Obad (2013), cited in Haastrap and Lucia (2014):

Nigerian national defence policy objectives as including the security and stability in the West African sub-region through collective security, regional security by way of combative terrorism and other trans-national crimes being of strategic interests to Nigeria, internal fragilities, illegal trafficking piracy, unreported and unregulated fishing, oil theft and pipeline vandalism, as well as insurgency often transnational in nature (Ibid, 2)

Security policies are dealing with the broad issues of the management of the multiple threats to the core specific values in the international system. It is in this context that the national security policy of Nigeria provides the framework with which the calculation of instrumental responses (military, economic, health. etc.) to these multiple threats must proceed and resolve. Nigeria could find justification not only to contribute but also to provide leadership, including the use of its military to control any instability in the sub-region as a way of protecting her interests (Alli 2012). According to Gambari (2010), cited in Alli (2012):

In Africa, the lack of sustainable development has been linked directly to the proliferation and intensity of conflict situations and war, which, in turn, have hampered development efforts (...). The threats to peace in a neighbouring country, if not carefully managed and resolved, could lead to a massive exodus of refugees, weapons proliferation crimes, and a general insecurity that could threaten other stable polities and compromise national economies (Ibid, 10).

## **CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS**

### **Coercive Diplomacy**

It seeks to resolve crises and armed conflicts without resorting to full-scale war (Jakobsen 2017, 277). Coercive diplomacy is the exercise of a threat when it is imperative, the limited use of force designed to make an opponent comply with the coercive wishes. It uses short of brutal force in the attempt to achieve a political

objective as cheaply as possible. It has been used to respond to acts of aggression, halt weapons of mass destruction programmes (WMD) and stop terrorism. It involves the use of threat and/or limited force in order to convince an actor to stop or undo the actions already undertaken (Ibid, 278).

It is a rather diplomacy of the threat than relying on negotiation (*Conflict Research Consortium* 2005, 3). It puts pressure in a manner and magnitude to persuade an opponent to cease the aggression rather than force it into stopping its ambition (Jentleson 2006, 2).

### Development

A process by which people participate in defining and achieving higher levels of civilization. It is a self-propelled growth or improvement in people's welfare. Development is not just an economic process, it is also a political and social one (Asobie 2012, 7). It implies the systematic use of scientific and technical knowledge to meet specific objectives or requirements.

Moreover, it is a process of economic and social transformation, which is based on complex cultural and environmental factors and their interactions. It connects research, experience, activism and alternative thinking in the purpose to provide a unique resource and point of reference for the dialogue between activists and intellectuals committed to the search for an alternative path of social transformations towards a more sustainable and just world (Grasa and Mateos, 2010, 27).

### Nationalism

The belief that a particular group of people is a natural community, which should live under a single political system. Nationalism is often linked to the struggle for independence and political self-determination. It can also be a convenient tool for political leaders to mobilize support and overcome opposition by stressing internal or external threats to national unity, as it has been a common

ingredient in numerous international and civil conflicts (Chaturvedi 2016, 205).

### Security

This concept implies freedom, no fear, anxiety or danger. The government should have as a primary objective to assure favourable national and international political conditions for the protection or extension of vital national values against existing and potential adversaries. It implies the capability of a nation to contain and ward off such threats and vulnerabilities that are acute enough to cripple or weaken its national values boundaries and institutions, as well as the overall well-being of its inhabitants (Okereke and Arres 2009, 37). A threat to national security is an action or sequence of events that is possible to degrade the quality of life of the inhabitants of the state or significantly restraint the range of policy choices available to the government or to private non-governmental.

National security is concerned with the ability of a legitimate national government to protect both the collective interests and the interests of individual citizens and groups. This implies having a national government strong and effective enough to deter and defend itself and its people against external aggressions (Omoweh and Okanya 2005, 299). Security means protection from hidden and harmful disruptions (Otto and Ukpere 2012, 676).

### State Fragility

A state becomes fragile when its structures lack the political will and/or the capacity to provide the basic functions needed for poverty reduction, development and to safeguard the security and human rights for the population. A state in a situation of fragility is a state with limited capabilities to govern or rule, and to develop mutually constructive relations (Grenoble 2010, 2).

Such states have weak institutions of governance, with precarious capabilities to deliver good services to their citizens, and lacking resilience when they are facing conflicts or political instability. We

are dealing, thus, with a complex phenomenon having multiple layers of causality and which, therefore, requires multiple layers of engagement (Uzoehina 2008, 7). It implies authority, services and legitimacy failures (Stewart and Brown 2009, 3).

### Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the security governance theory at its theoretical framework. It provides and takes full account of the changing security challenges and the rapid rise of a trans-organizational network. It also addresses the security problems from global to regional aspects, and from traditional military security to the newly rising non-military security management. Security governance theory is the application of this theory and a process aiming at strengthening the security capability by the means of governance mechanisms (Liao 2011, 2).

Security governance provides a framework for analysing policy-making and policy implementation in the security field, clarifying and capturing group challenges. It allows understanding of the concept of security beyond the issue of defence and, above all, it encompasses the more diverse, less visible and less predictable nature of security in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The framework of security governance facilitates understanding of interactions between states and regional institutions and how they individually and/or collectively manage not only international and regional crises but also a variety of threats to national and regional security (Kirchner 2014, 3). It covers threats that have to do with potential or actual violence, terrorism, war and counterinsurgency, ethnic cleansing, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, massive human right violence, and organized crime, as well as issues related to natural disasters, famines, pandemics, cyber warfare and even financial crimes and crises.

Security governance is a post-cold war phenomenon. It breaks the link with the realist and liberal ways of managing security in international polities. It is predicated on the belief that the new

security threats of the post-cold war era cannot be effectively addressed by inherited realist and liberal practices. It shifts the management of security from state-centric approaches and formal institutions towards more diverse actors and more flexible ways of working. It involves individual actors working in new ways and using new techniques to gather and analyse information and to communicate, negotiate, implement and evaluate policy responses to security threat (Bevir and Hall 2014, 31) Proponents, writers, theorists and authors on security governance theory include the following: Blike Krahmman (2003), Webber (2004), Hooghe and Marks (2001), Kirchner and Sperling (2007), Dorussen (2009), Dominguez (2011), Bossong (2008), Erikson (2011), Friesendorf (2007) Hollis (2010), Christou Croft Ceccorulli and Lucarelli (2010), Rhodes (1997) Slaughter and Hale (2011), Hohenstein (2007), Duffield (2001), Berir (2010), Osita Eze and Hehmann (2005). All of them insist on the following (Krahmann 2003:18):

- (i.) the geographical dimension, which suggests a movement from government to governance and the enlargement process that has contributed to the creation of a variety of new geographical arrangements that differentiate between members;
- (ii.) the functional dimension which, due to the broadening of the concept of security from military to human security issues, changes the scope of the functions and institutions associated with security policy;
- (iii.) the distribution of resources;
- (iv.) interest dimensions;
- (v.) normative dimensions;
- (vi.) the process of decision-making; and
- (vii.) policy implementation.

The connexion and relevance of security governance theory to this study is to provide solutions to the challenges confronting Nigeria’s security with respect to North Africa, which is beclouded with series

of internal political social and economic crises. Equally, it is relevant in the areas of integrating security governance into general democratic principles and the strengthening of regional cooperation in conflict prevention. Moreover, it provides a framework for analysing policy-making and policy formulation in a multi-actor and multi-level setting. It facilitates understanding of the interactions between states and regional organizations and how they individually and/or collectively manage the regional crises, as well as a variety of threats against Nigeria and its regional security.

Like any other theory, security governance has its own shortcomings, as proved by many scholars:

- (i.) the overemphasis on non-state functions might weaken the role of the state, which needs to be strengthened in the process of modernization;
- (ii.) the potential and practical absence of accountability and the cooperation with those non-state actors in the process of security governance;
- (iii.) its utility lies not only in directing the forces of security studies towards these theoretical and practical issues but also in suggesting future research on possible solutions by encouraging companions with the development of governance in the other areas.
- (iv.) it also suffers from logic scepticism as an alternative paradigm
- (v.) it is not an all-compassing framework capable of better dealing with all tricky problems. It largely depends on the regulations and orders designed by the security governance structure.

#### **ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH NIGERIA'S SECURITY CHALLENGES FROM THE CRISIS OF POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE NORTH AFRICAN REGION**

The political instability that has beset North Africa in the years following the Arab Spring swept through the Middle East and

North Africa and radically reshaped the region’s political and security environment. North Africa has quickly descended from being a bastion of continuity and consistency into a basket case, forcing the Nigerian government to carefully monitor threats so as to limit spill over into West African Sub-region. Indicators for Nigeria’s vulnerabilities to security include terrorism, insurgency, civil wars, refugees, drought, porous borders, drug, human (slave trade) and arms trafficking (Gardenstein-Ross et al. 2015, 17).

### Terrorism/Insurgency

At present, the most pressing security challenge, according to Nigerian officials and as presented in the official documents, is terrorism and insurgency. It refers to the national dimension of terrorism and insurgency citing the activities of the Islamic sect Boko Haram in the North East of the country. The local transnational dimension is especially evident in Nigeria, where there is a close connection with Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb operating in the Sahel and, lately, ISIS in the Middle East (Haastrap and Lucia *op. cit.*). Force fighter returnees represent the greatest threat to Nigeria as they came back from North Africa to launch attacks and train local terrorists. As the returnees are likely to be better trained in weapons and explosion than their home group counterparts. They have featured in actual attacks or foiled plots in Nigeria, which have destabilizing effects on the country’s security (Gartenstein-Ross *et al., op.cit.*)

Nigeria’s Chief of Army Staff stated during the 2017 Annual Conference:

The scourges of cross-border crimes like human and small arms trafficking, drugs peddling, smuggling, banditry, cyber threats, money laundering espionage, terrorism and many others have created an interest for non-state actors that must be decimated by combined international efforts. The Nigerian Army Leadership in concert with the grand strategic focus of Mr President has continued to devise means of engaging our neighbouring countries towards tackling common threats in order to meet considerable

international obligations for the overall promotion of global peace and security (TY. Buratai 2017)

### Human Trafficking (Slave Trades)

Human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery that involves the movement of thousands of Nigerians women, men and children mainly through land routes to some North African countries, with the ultimate aim of taking them to Europe for slave labour and prostitution. According to UNGA (1999), cited in Adoba (2004):

Human trafficking is the illicit and clandestine movement of persons across national, international borders, largely from development countries in transition with the end goal of forcing with the end goal of forcing women, children into sexually or economically oppressive and economically oppressive and exploitative situations for the profit of recruiters, traffickers, crime syndicates as well as all other illegal activities related to trafficking such as forced domestic labour (Adoba, 2004:38)

The resistant effect of political instability in North Africa has given rise to poverty, which is systematically linked to human trafficking. Recently, slave trade resurfaced in Libya with Nigerians rational as victims of such practices. The Libya government has deported hundreds of Nigerians back to the country. More than 6000 persons have been deported last year and another 400000 are still held up in the North African countries, where the slave trade flourished (Momoh, 2017). According to Eze and Ezeobi (2017) cited in *This Day News Paper*:

More Nigerians have been saved from slavery and trafficking in war-tone Libya, as another 275 citizens were airlifted to the country a few hours after a batch of 144 Nigerians were returned Tuesday night on 7th December 2017 while no fewer than 1, 295 Nigerians were rescued in Nigerians were rescued in November 2017 alone (*This Day* December 7, 2017, 4)

It portrays Nigeria in a bad light as it creates the erroneous impression that the country is incapable of providing employment

and social welfare for its citizens, which makes them end in North Africa where are forced to face persecutions and humiliations.

### Illegal Arms Trafficking

The proliferation of small and light weapons is another major security challenge which Nigeria is facing. Illegal trafficking and wide availability of these weapons fuel communal conflicts, political instability and pose a threat not only to national security but also to sustainable development. 640 million small and light weapons are in circulation worldwide, of which 100 million are estimated to be in Africa, about 30 million in sub-Saharan Africa, 8 million in West Africa and about 10 million in Nigeria. Proliferations came from North Africa, as a result of being a militarized region before, during and after the Arab spring revolution (Uwa and Anthony 2015, 8). The pervasiveness of small arms all over Africa is viewed by many as being linked to the intensity of various types of conflicts within and between the African states (North Africa), of which Nigeria is not exempted. The *Small Arms and Light Weapons* (SALW) trafficking nourishes the conflict in the Niger Delta, where most of Nigeria’s oil is located. All the crimes concerning oil (smuggling, theft pipelines vandalism) committed by militant groups have their source of illegal weapons from North Africa’s political instability (Haastrup and Lucia *op. cit.*)

### Instability in North Africa and Oil Price

North Africa has the largest oil reserves and, in normal time, they provide 95% of the export revenues of entire regions, thus keeping the economy afloat. But the Arab spring revolution has shattered the economy, leaving the population almost wholly dependent on revenue generated overseas. The fragile political situation in North Africa continues to have an impact on production levels (which saw another year-to-year decline in oil production in the region - 22%. Libya; in the throes of civil war, saw production declined by 50%) (Steyn 2015, 5).

The effect on the political development in Nigeria is that oil is also shifting with a fall in price, the naira has fallen dramatically eroding foreign reserves, cut government spending high rise in inflation and the highly popular subsidy on public consumption of fuel (Campbell 2014, 6). Cross-referencing specific export and import of goods with their market share for West Africa (Nigeria) provide a more comprehensible understanding of the West African sub-region.

### Porous Borders and Drug Trade

Nigeria continues to face serious security challenges due to the cross-border or trans-border criminal activities. There is hardly any criminal act or violence in Nigeria that could not be traced to North Africa, by which armed gangs enter and exit through the 149 national borders. People from North Africa have infiltrated these areas on account of inter-marriage, spillover of the crisis in North Africa, share similar cultures, practice and worship together (Asiwaju 1992, 33). The porosity of Nigeria's borders has given rise to illegalities, which have the resulted in drugs trade, refugees issues, importation of contraband goods, transmission of diseases, cyber and organized crimes, including smuggling. All these have created fertile land (Nigeria) for transnational criminal networks (Gartenstein-Ross *et al.*, *op. cit.*)

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance are necessary for understanding, tracking and targeting terrorist networks and should be the main component of North African countries counter-terrorism strategy. Deployment of Nigerian troops to other countries to combat terrorism and insecurity. Freezing of financial assets of terrorists and so-called sponsors. Bilateral and multilateral agreements based on military cooperation. *Security Sector Reform* (SSR) will help counterterrorism efforts while addressing continuing

organizational and accountability deficits. It is a term for a number of policies to improve security practices and outcomes in developing and democratizing countries.

The establishment of the National Agency for the prohibition of human trafficking (NAPTIP) by the federal government and in collaboration with some organizations to stem the tide. In 2005, the NAPTIP Act which criminalized the keeping of brothels and the use of children as domestic house helps was amended. The properties of the offenders of this amended have become targets for seizure by the government. The Federal Government has encouraged NAPTIP to establish a national investigation task force (NITF), and the victims of human trafficking are to be portaged during the rescue and rehabilitation period. National campaigns for awareness should be organized across the country. The anti-human trafficking campaign should be strengthened in a wider scope.

The government should reinforce the country’s borders through surveillance and patrols. It should exist a close and effective coordination among intelligence and security agencies. The national government should impose tighter borders control to prevent illegal immigration.

A paradigm shift that calls for an integrated and sub-regional approach to conflict prevention, x-raying the challenges opportunities and benefits of the early warning and early response system established under the ECOWAS protocol should be undertaken. Nigeria’s current foreign policy should assume transformations, in order to put its people in the centre. Also, a change in the policies of dominant global powers toward Africa would enhance human emancipation and eliminate the numerous insecurities confronting the people.

## **CONCLUSION**

It is imperiously necessaire that the security of Nigeria to be systematically sustained. This aims the approach whereby the

security of the individuals, the state and the international system are fully integrated and pursued collectively. It demands that all sub-systems of the national security be inseparable. Nigeria needs to promote democracy, political and social integration in the various independent states of the sub-region. Moreover, it should intensify the application of diplomacy and related non-coercive approaches towards conflict resolution to avoid catastrophes such as mass exodus, famine or bloodshed.

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## THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE FRESHWATER CRISIS IN MONGLA, BANGLADESH

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**Abstract.** Bangladesh is the lower country of three important international rivers<sup>1</sup>, which, along with rainfall and groundwater, are the main sources of freshwater of the people on the coast. However, the effects of climate change, such as salinity, arsenic, drought, and cyclone, have generated a severe water crisis. Moreover, the ineffective management and governance, rather than solving, aggravated it. Based on my fieldwork experience in 2016-17, I aim to investigate the role of each of these sources, as well as the socio-economic problems arising from the failure of the government and other stakeholders involved in water management, in Mongla, Bangladesh, to solve it. The water crisis produces social threats like unemployment, an increase of working hours for women, the lack of marriage, migration, reduced income, high medical costs and drop out of school.

**Keywords:** climate change, freshwater crisis, unemployment, water management

### INTRODUCTION

Water is a vital element for human development (Mustari and Karim 2016, 695). According to the United Nations, one-third of the world population lives in areas affected by the water crisis, of which 1.1 billion have no access to safe drinking water (Shaw and Thaitakoo 2010). The global water consumption is doubling every 20 years. Given this rate, at least 3 billion people will live in areas where fulfilling basic water needs will be very difficult or even impossible (*Concern Worldwide* 2012). Some authors assume a natural link

between water shortage and acute conflicts (Wolf 2001, 29), which lead to severe political tensions, and even to war (Westing 1986, 9).

The water-related crisis is occurring especially in Asia, as the population growth and urbanization rate are high (Abedin et al. 2014, 111). Although Bangladesh is one of the most irrigated countries in South Asia (150%) - followed by Sri Lanka (150%), India (133%) and Pakistan (110%) (Weligamage et al. 2002), it faces a severe water crisis generated by the effects of climate change. Its geographical position plays an important role, as it comprises the biggest part of the delta of Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna (GBM) (Zahid and Ahmed 2006, 27). The agriculture, biodiversity, livelihood, and culture of Bangladesh rely on water, and the supply of water largely depends on the multiple rivers system (74% of total water supplies) (Ahmed and Roy 2007, 39). However, the flow of these rivers is controlled by various diversion projects in the upstream country - India, a fact which affects the socio-economic development of Bangladesh.

The effects of climate change impacts, such as drought, erratic rainfall, salinity intrusion, higher temperature, cyclone, and storm, have both a direct and indirect effect on water resources and many people are struggling to access freshwater supplies especially in coastal Bangladesh (IPCC 2007, 472; Rabbani et al. 2013, 272-273). Although there are important resources of groundwater, salinity intrusion and arsenic contamination make them vulnerable (Mallick and Roldan-Rojas 2015, 93; WHO and UNICEF 2010). This crisis produces many socio-economic problems. For instance, millions of people use insecure drinking water, which causes diarrhoea, typhoid, parasites, cholera (Curry, 2010, 103), and malaria. A direct consequence is an increase in unemployment.

The following questions will be discussed below: (a) On which water sources should Bangladesh rely on? (b) Which role each of them plays in fulfilling the needs of the community? (c) What socio-

economic problems does the freshwater crisis create, and how could they be solved?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The demand and competition for water are increasing between countries due to the population and economic growth (UNDP 2006). There are 76 Upazila (sub-district) in 19 coastal districts of Bangladesh that are seriously affected by the rise of sea level (MoWR 2005). Freshwater is crucial for the coastal people not only for agriculture and industry but also for drinking and other household activities (Mustari and Karim 2016, 695). Many sources are available in the coastal region of Bangladesh, including groundwater, small ponds (with or without pond sand filters), rainwater and rivers (Mallick and Roldan-Roja 2015, 93). But they cannot supply a sufficient volume to meet the demand (Quazi, 2006, 3). This is because of inadequate freshwater aquifers at suitable depth (Islam et al. 2010, 3988; Kamruzzaman and Ahmed 2006, 377). Moreover, the deep tube wells do not work properly due to salinity and arsenic (Abedin et al. 2014, 111). There are no municipal reservoirs and the storage capacity for rainwater is not sufficient to fulfil the demand over the whole year (Ansari et al. 2011; Mallick and Roldan-Rojas, 2015). 30 million people are not able to collect freshwater. Half of them are forced to drink saline water (Hoque 2009, ix).

Surface water is also contaminated with salinity (Islam et al. 2013, 532) due to both natural and human causes. (Huq and Ayers 2008, 4; Mahmuduzzaman et al. 2014, 8-9; Rahaman and Bhattacharya 2006, 4-5). Among the first, the rise of sea level, cyclone, tidal surge, and floods are the most influential (Chong et al. 2014, 1585; Mustari and Karim 2014, 13; Shamsuddoha and Chowdhury 2007, 13-14). Unfortunately, by the year 2050, in the southwest areas of coastal Bangladesh, climate change might still increase the salinity of rivers

and groundwater (Dasgupta et al. 2014, i). The following table shows the rates of salinity level in the coastal districts of Bangladesh:

**Table 01:** Salinity level in the coastal districts of Bangladesh

District	Salinity in surface water in ppm
Bagerhat	5 - >10
Barguna	1- 5
Barisal	0
Bhola	1-10
Patuakhali	1-10
Pirojpur	0-10
Satkhira	5->10
Khulna	5->10

(Source: Islam 2004)

All of this makes the development of society stagnate (Huq and Ayers 2008, 7; Lal 2000, 57-58; Mustari and Karim 2016, 12-13): “Climate change deteriorates the situation significantly and reduced access to freshwater will lead to a cascading set of consequences, including impaired food production, the loss of livelihood security, large-scale migration within and across borders, and increased economic and geopolitical tensions and instabilities” (Abedin et al. 2014, 1).

The coastal community of Bangladesh is highly relying on fishing, rice, paddy farming, and aquaculture (Chowdhury 2010, 34; FAO 2009). The culture of shrimp has increased over the last 20 year, a fact which negatively affects the quality of ground and surface water (Datta et al. 2010). An “intentional flooding of lands by brackish water for shrimp cultivation makes the inhabitants of the area more vulnerable in terms of freshwater access” (Sultana et al. 2014,1 ), as shrimps need salt water to breed.

This scarcity causes tremendous socio-economic vulnerability and problems like an increase of the working hours of women,

health problems like cancers, cardiovascular diseases and skin lesions, and the decrease of the economic production (Joseph et al. 2015, 541; Rijberman 2006, 6; Vorosmarty et al. 2000, 284; Watkins 2006, 30; Mustari and Karim, 2016, 13-14). Women are carrying the duty of water collection in many developing countries (Mallick and Roldan-Rojas 2015, 92). It is internationally estimated that 64% of water collection is made by women (WHO and UNICEF 2011). Khan et al. (2011, 1) found that preeclampsia and gestational hypertension is prevalent among the women in the coastal areas than in the others. The lack of freshwater not only creates health problems but also is responsible for losing the opportunity for education, which affects the development of both individuals and the community (UNDP 2006).

#### **RESEARCH MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The present study was conducted in Chila village, Mongla Upazila<sup>3</sup> (22°29'N 89°36.5'E), in Bagerhat district of Bangladesh, during May and June 2017. The total population of this village is 7502 people, and the average household size is 4.1 (BBS 2015). The community is facing a freshwater crisis due to arsenic, salinity, and climate extreme events like cyclone, sea level rise, and drought. The crisis is acute in the dry season and generates many socio-economic problems.

This multidisciplinary study uses qualitative and quantitative research methods. The data were collected through Focus Group Discussions (FGD<sup>4</sup>), a survey of 80 households, and Key Informant Interview (KII<sup>5</sup>). Structured and semi-structured questionnaires and random sampling technique were used to gather data from these households. FGD was held before and after household survey in order to get knowledge and about the crisis, its related socio-economic problems, and their resilience. Five key informants were selected based on the age, socio-economic position, and literacy

level. The data were collected by the author with the assistance of trained university students in southern coastal Bangladesh during, June 2017. Collected data were analysed by using software like SPSS and NVivo.

## FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

### The socio-economic background

Respondents' characteristics such as gender, marital status, age, number of children, occupation, and ownership of land help to identify how the freshwater crisis affects their development.

Socio-Economic Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	43	53.75
	Female	37	46.25
Marital Status	Married	69	86.25
	Unmarried	3	3.75
	Divorced	7	8.75
	Separated	1	1.25
Age (in years)	20 - 29	14	17.5
	30 - 39	31	38.75
	40 - 49	25	31.25
	50 -59	6	7.5
	60 - 69	2	2.5
	70 - 79	1	1.25
	80 - 89	1	1.25
Number of Children	0 – 2	44	57.14
	3 – 4	27	35.064
	5 – 6	4	5.19
	6+	2	2.59
Literacy Level	Illiterate	11	13.75
	Less than 5 <sup>th</sup> degree	35	43.75

	5 <sup>th</sup> to 10 <sup>th</sup> degree	18		22.50		
	SSC – HSC	11		13.75		
	BA-MA	5		6.25		
Occupation	Primary	Freq.	%	Secondary	Freq.	%
	Fishermen	20	25.00	Day laborer	27	33.75
	Housewife	29	36.25	Fish farming	5	6.25
	Fisherwomen	3	3.75	Fisherwomen	11	13.75
	Day laborer	6	7.50	Rearing livestock	19	23.75
	Small business	4	5.00	Fishermen	7	8.75
	Trader	7	8.75	Rickshaw puller	3	3.75
	Farmer	3	3.75	Small business	8	10.00
	Driver	2	2.50			
	Fish farmer	5	6.25			
	Doctor	1	1.25			
Ownership of land (in bigha)/ Type of land	Bigha					
	0.1-3.0/Freq.	%	4-6/Freq.	%	7-9/Freq.	%
House	53	66.25	2	2.5		
Cropland	5		1	1.25	3	3.75
Landless	17	21.25	-	-	-	-

(Source: The author)

### FRESHWATER SOURCES AND THEIR ROLE

Chilla community has the following freshwater sources: rainwater, rivers, groundwater, sweet ponds, and water traders. People are relying particularly on rainwater, which is however insufficient for the whole year, especially because they don't have the financial and technical capacity to stock it. Groundwater is contaminated with arsenic and salinity, so they cannot use it. Salinity also affects the rivers most of the year. Moreover, they have a direct connection with the Bay of Bengal, therefore it is unsafe to use it as a source. They can use rivers' water only during the monsoon because extreme rainfall reduces the salinity. Sweet ponds are a good source but they are not everywhere in Chilla. The distance from the study site to the first pond is five miles. Thus, people need to spend almost a whole day to collect water from it. There are water traders that collect water from this sweet pond and sale to the community. However, bottled water is the least viable option for this community because it is very expensive for them, considering their economic situation.

As Chilla is located in the coastal zone of Bangladesh, on the bank of Passur River, it is highly vulnerable to climatic phenomena like cyclone, tidal surge, and floods.

**Table 03:** Causes of the freshwater crisis in Chila (mutually inclusive)

Types	Frequency	Percentage
Drought	45	56.25
Flood (Tidal surge/storm surge)	57	71.25
Salinity	75	93.75
River Bank Erosion	19	23.75
Other (Specify) Storm	1	1.25

(Source: Islam 2017)

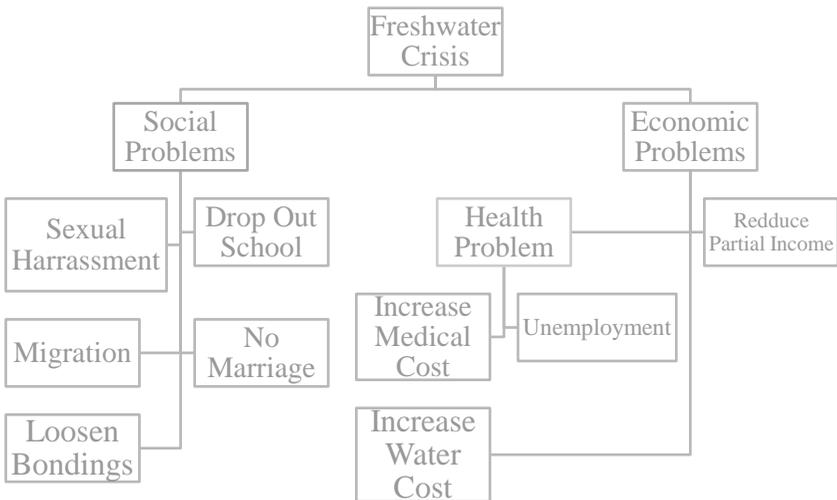
### Socio-economic issues

The freshwater supply system is different in coastal areas. There are authorities responsible for supplying water to the people but they

are missing in Chilla. This happens even if it is well-known that water is crucial for poverty reduction, health improvement, biodiversity, and economic development. Instead, the lake of freshwater creates many problems like sexual harassment, drop out from school, migration, unemployment, a decrease in the number of marriages, as well as many specific health problems (*see* Figure 1).

As women are generally responsible for collecting water and supplying it to their households, the present crisis raises grave problems for them. The household survey revealed that all respondents from Chilla either buy or collect water. The water from the sweet pond is free but it requires spending considerable time to get it because of the long distance and interminable waiting times in queues. Sometimes, they are sexually harassed during these journeys. As per the questionnaire survey, 18.92% of female respondents are sexually harassed at least once every year, whilst 81.08% of them were once in their lives during the journey of water collection.

**Figure 01:** Social and Economic Problems due to the Freshwater Crisis



(Source: The author)

Although the freshwater crisis is not directly responsible for drop out of school, it creates a situation so girls choose this option. The frequency of water collection varies from season to season but it reaches the peak in the dry season<sup>6</sup>. Because rainfall rarely occurs, sweet ponds and rivers are dried. These are the main factors for such situations. Firstly, water collection requires a good period of time, which make girls fail to attend the school. Secondly, they are under enormous pressure during the dry season. They are exhausted after a long and laborious journey and lose interest to study. If they go to school without learning their lesson, the tutor humiliates them in front of the other students. In many cases, they choose not to go rather than suffering this treatment.

Regarding marriages, the parents from other neighbour villages are not interested to send their children to Chilla because of this crisis. They assume that their daughter would need to travel this long distance to collect water. Moreover, the boys are not interested in the girls in Chilla because of their rough skin caused by drinking and using saline water. According to the household survey, 41.25% of respondents informed that they are facing marriage problems.

It is a very difficult task for females to ensure sufficient and safe freshwater supplies for the household. Consequently, some of them decide to leave their ancestor's place and start a new life somewhere else. According to the household survey, if the freshwater crisis persists in the next five years, 18.75% of respondents will migrate from Chilla.

In the dry season, women need to spend more time to collect water<sup>7</sup> and, in turn, they have less time for other household tasks. This fact creates tensions and conflicts and leads to domestic violence. It also creates distance in the relationship between husband and wife, which then leads to separation or divorce.

Regarding the economic development of the community, the freshwater crisis means more expenditure on health, less employment, and reduces income. Freshwater is important for health and our study found that the people from this region face

health-related problems like diarrhoea, skin problems, malaria, and dysentery, mostly in the dry season. A key informant, Arcona Roy, told us that, in 2016, she could not work for one month because of diarrhoea. She also needed to spend around BDT<sup>8</sup> 1700 (20.49 USD) for treatment. This is a direct expenditure. However, if she converts the time lost in monetary value, then the total loss would be BDT 8000 (96.4 USD). According to the household survey, 97.50% of respondents said that they are facing at least one of the above-mentioned health problems at least once during the dry season. This affects their employment possibilities and increases medical costs.

In Chilla, employment options vary season to season. They largely depend on the availability of fish in the river. As per the questionnaire survey, 98.75% of participants admit that they are involved in the fishing sector so that they have more opportunities for employment during the monsoon than in the dry season. Villages of the bank of Passur River catch fishes from the river and sell them in the market or work as day labourers for the fishermen who have a trawler and other materials for catching them in large quantities. Yet, they lose this opportunity if they are not physically fit during this period, a fact which depends on the water supplies. The survey indicated that 78.75% of participants lost it at least once during their life.

The members of this community also rely on various sources of partial income to fulfil their needs. Fishermen and boatmen are, for instance, busy in the monsoon and have free time in the dry season. During this season, they are trying to migrate temporarily (e.g. to Dhaka or other urban areas). As the freshwater crisis is prominent, they are facing more health problems, which makes them unable to look for a temporary job. Moreover, they need to stay home and help their families to collect water.

Rearing livestock is another good source of partial income. It is a traditional practice in coastal Bangladesh. Some of them rely on livestock even as their main source of income. They earn good

amount of money from selling livestock and eggs. This activity also meet the nutritious demand of the family. But rearing livestock is not possible during the dry season because they cannot share their hard work in collecting water with animals. Consequently, their income dramatically decrease.

As the existing freshwater sources cannot supply sufficient volume to the community, the last relies on water traders. But they do not supply it without charge. The price depends on the location of the household. If it is located in a place that water traders can easily reach, the price varies between BDT 20-25 (0.24-0.3 USD) for one jar<sup>9</sup> of water. If it is far away, they charge BDT 30-40 (0.3-0.48 USD) for the same volume. This expenditure, which significantly increases during the dry season, puts an enormous pressure on this low-income community. Sometimes, traders stop supplying water without prior notice because they do not get enough from the sweet pond.

In order to solve these problems, the government has taken several initiatives, such as increasing the navigation on Gorai River by dredging, install water treatment systems, or increase awareness about rainwater harvesting. Despite these efforts, the situation has not improved.

Besides the household survey, we also conducted FGDs and KII to get an overall idea about the causes and consequences of the freshwater crisis and identify viable solutions. Some recommendations are summarized in the following:

Water can be used for multiple purposes without needing treatment. People, for instance, can wash their hand and dishes in their vegetable gardens. This will reduce the water demand because they do not need to irrigate extra water. In this purpose, training and campaigns of sharing knowledge are needed. It is also important to find out who should benefit from training. The women and girls from rural areas are responsible to supply water to the families. They know how the freshwater crisis seriously affect the health and well-being of their relatives because if a family member suffers, additional

duties may fall on them. If they get training, it will be easy for them to bring efficiency in the domestic water use. Arcona Roi, a Key Informant, told us that she can use collected rainwater for four to five months for multiple purposes. For example, after eating, her family members wash their hand in a container. The water is then used to prepare food for chickens, ducks, and other animals. Before 2010, she could only use it for two to three months. In 2010, she got training from *World Vision* about collecting and the use of collected rainwater. Such training sessions should be provided for at least one member of each household, irrespective of their socio-economic position.

Installing rainwater harvesting systems (RHS) can be a good supplementary solution. The government should take the initiative to install such systems and create awareness among people about how to use them. This can be done by installing rainwater harvesting systems in all government offices, schools, colleges, and encourage the non-governmental organizations to install them in their offices. Moreover, it should take the initiative to provide poor communities like Chila with rainwater harvesting materials (e.g. large storage tanks, gutter pipes, switches, and others) without costs. For a long-term use of collected rainwater, people need knowledge and technical means for using and ensure the maintenance of RHS. For this purpose, the government should provide training to people, especially to women.

In order to make such projects sustainable, the government should undertake the following:

- (1) Working together with national and international NGOs. For instance, it should use the network of local NGOs to provide training to people. The government can also use the same for creating mass awareness through rallies, campaigns, and field meetings.
- (2) Make use of community knowledge and consider the local context in taking action. For instance, if the government initiates a project to supply shallow tube wells to people to withdraw water

from the ground sources, this project will not be viable because groundwater is contaminated with arsenic and salinity.

(3) Maintain good coordination with the local administration for managing the projects.

(4) Ensure transparency and accountability in the management of projects in order to the properly implement them at the grassroots level. Moreover, the government of Bangladesh should negotiate more frequently with India to ensure the equal share of transboundary river flow, following the existing treaty and international laws.

## **CONCLUSION**

Water is everywhere in the coastal region. However, it is not safe for freshwater purposes, as it is contaminated with arsenic and salinity. Along with contamination, the effects of climate change, such as cyclone, drought, groundwater depletion, floods, as well as the lack of long-term sustainable solutions aggravate the water crisis. The available sources cannot supply a sufficient quantity of water to the households.

This present multidisciplinary study revealed that different kinds of socio-economic problems (such as sexual harassment, migration, drop out from school, income decrease, unemployment, increase in health expenditures, etc.) are caused by the freshwater crisis in coastal Bangladesh. In order to solve them, authorities should supply a sufficient volume of freshwater. The socio-economic development is not possible in its absence. I also would like to express my wish that more depth multidisciplinary research on the freshwater crisis and its effect in the communities from coastal Bangladesh to be undertaken, so that authorities gain a clearer picture on this grave situation and take measures to improve it

## Notes

1. Ganges, Brahmaputra, and Meghna.
2. Water for bathing, cooking, drinking, and sanitation purposes.
3. Upazila is a sub-district of Bangladesh. It is the second lowest tier of regional administration in the country.
4. This is the main source of primary data, as it takes into account several people with similar or different backgrounds and reflects their opinions, ideas, beliefs, and experiences. Five FGD were held in the purpose of this study for gathering information about the types of social and economic problems arising from the water crisis, its causes, the role of the government, and to identify the sources of freshwater.
5. An in-depth interview with people who have knowledge about a specific issue. Face to face KII was used for this study.
6. The dry season begins normally in October and lasts until March. However, this situation is changing due to climate change.
7. Each trip involves half a day only to collect water.
8. Bangladeshi Taka.
9. About 20 litres.

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WITCH-HUNTS IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY:  
A SERIOUS CHALLENGE TO THE EMPOWERMENT OF RURAL  
TRIBAL WOMEN IN INDIA

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**Abstract.** Beliefs in witchcraft result in witch-hunts. Today, in many rural parts of India, if a woman is confirmed as a witch by the local *Ojha*, she receives all sorts of tortures: beating, burn injuries, insertion of different objects in the intimate parts, she is forced to walk naked through the village, eat human excrements or raped, her hair, nose or ears are cut and teeth are removed, her land and properties are destroyed or confiscated, she is forced to leave the village or killed. These acts of violence are occurring at an alarming rate in the villages of Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Telengana, Haryana, Orissa, Assam, and other rural regions. We are facing, thus, a serious threat to the empowerment of women in Indian society. The main objectives of this study are to identify the factors behind witch-hunts, the nature of witchcraft practices, and to provide some suggestions for eradicating such behaviours.

**Keywords:** witchcraft, witch-hunt, violence, empowerment, women, society, tribal, Dalit

## INTRODUCTION

Indian philosophical tradition has shown respect for women and their place in society. In Indian religion, there is no dishonourable or derogatory remark to them (Ghosh 2010, 15). The woman is regarded as a divine power called *Mahasakti*. Manu, the ancient social philosopher, said that God is pleased when women are honoured. In the Vedic period, the status of women was so high and they enjoined freedom in their life. The evidence shows that women of

those days were allowed to study *Veda* and fine arts. They were enjoying equal rights in social and religious life.

Women emerged as a distinct interest group in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, primarily because the democratic revolution of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries' bourgeoisie excluded them from the right to equality. Since then, they are facing different types of serious socio-economic and cultural challenges, such as domestic violence, trafficking, rape, witchcraft accuses and the continuous struggle for the recognition of their rights as human beings. All this time, they performed multilateral roles in society, as bread earners and caretakers of their families as mothers, wives and daughters.

#### **PRACTICES OF WITCHCRAFT**

Generally defined as a supernatural power, witchcraft is used to influence the health (longevity, sickness, drowning, and death) or behaviour of another person (the witchcraft's victim), as well as to cause various physical actions (*e.g.* drought, earthquake) or social events (unemployment, divorce, car accidents) (Adinkrah & Adhikari 2014, 315). Terms such as *daayan*, *tobni* or *chudali* are used to brand a woman as a witch capable of performing black magic or sorcery, causing harm to the human health (the term *tobna* designates the man wizards of the forest state of Chattisgarh) (Iqbal 2015, 111).

A present-day report shows that, over the last twenty years, more than 3000 Indian women have been killed because they were accused of witchcraft. According to Vernon, witch-hunts are most common in poor rural communities with reduced access to education and health services and long-standing beliefs in witchcraft. He also points out that, in these communities, when a person gets ill or is sick, the blame does not fall on a virus or crop diseases but on an alleged witch. It is obvious the witchcraft is still part of the rural culture of India. In the villages of Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, some pockets of West Bengal, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Gujarat,

Assam, and other North Eastern states, ostracism and severe violence against women accused of witchcraft are occurring at an alarming rate.

The hunt for witches or evidence of witchcraft often involved moral panic, mass hysteria and lynching mixed, as happened in different European regions, with legal debates undertaken during trials. It was believed that the power of witchcraft resides in a substance inherited or innate, located in the abdomen. It makes the person who possesses it to act, consciously or unconsciously, during the night, to harm the others and gives him invisibility or the capability to metamorphose himself. On the other hand, the sorcerer operates in daylight and harm his victims by using plant substances or performing evil rituals. He is able to transfer his power from one generation to the other.

Anthropological studies identify three types of witches in popular faith: neighbourhood (or social) witch, magic or sorcery, and supernatural or *night witch*. In many Indian tribal rural areas, witch-hunting usually results from the decision of the local *Ohja*. If a woman is declared a witch by the magicians of the village, she receives all types of torture, such as beating, burn injuries, and insertion of different objects in the intimate parts. She is forced to walk naked through the village, eat human excrements or raped. Her hair, nose or ears are cut and teeth are removed, her land and properties are destroyed or confiscated. Sometimes she is forced to leave the village, other times she is killed. A strange type of magical act is performed in the Bhil tribe to contradict the effect of epidemics. People hang pots and baskets in bamboo poles and run on the main street shouting "Toraka, Toraka". Hearing them, the other locals of the village come to help in carrying these objects out of the village. They are taken to the nearest river or in the jungle and, by throwing them, people think the epidemic itself has been thrown out into that river or forest.

The tribal society of India has a defining faith in *Mana*. The *Ho* and *Munda* tribes call it *Bonga*. Other such ancestral practices are

found among the *Santhals* and *Orans*. The *Korawa* tribe believes in a goddess of crops, one of the animals and other presiding rain. The tribal people try to please these gods and goddesses by offering them sacrifices of animals and birds. According to their animism, there is a mysterious, unknown, impersonal power behind all living beings. They also believe there is an animal spirit in all movable or immovable things. This type of animism is also found in the tribe of *Bihar*. For them, bones, beads, stones and feathers have living and magical powers. Stones are the children of Mother Earth and, therefore, they should be worshipped. Besides, they consider that the soul is not destroyed by the death of the body and requires food for a sufficiently long time. The *Nagas* and *Nicobari* believe that the skull of the dead man must be placed on a wooden statue because his soul passes from the skull to the statue. Thus, these statues are served like living human beings and efforts are made to fulfil all their needs. Such is the custom among the *Garo* tribe of Assam. The *Toto* tribe of West Bengal is also fully bound to tradition and people suffer from different superstitions. As such, they believe that the evil spirits are mainly liable for their diseases, and only by performing magical rituals they can get rid of them. Therefore, the *Baidangis* or exorcists still have an important role among the *Totos*.

A historical report mentions that, during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, 40,000 women were killed in Europe because of witchcraft accusations (Aditya 2015, 9). In India, the witch hunting cases are not registered due to remoteness and unawareness. Here, nearly 150 to 200 women are still killed in every year under witchcraft blame. A study by *Human Rights Law Network* reported that 2,500 women have been killed in the last five years. In Jharkhand alone, 500 such cases were reported. According to *Assam Home Department*, witch-hunting took 116 lives between 2001 and 2011. From 2006 to 2009, 50 people were killed in the name of witch-hunting in Assam, of which 22 were from the badly affected district Kokrajhar. But witch-hunts are organised in all parts of the country. Rural tribal women are the main victims.

**AN OVERVIEW OF WITCH-HUNTING ACROSS THE COUNTRY**

Rajgarh, Khargone, Badwani, Jhabua districts of Madhya Pradesh are badly affected by witch-hunts. In the tribal villages of this regions, *Ojhas* abuse their role and positions. Bhuri Bai, a woman of Jhabua district declared witch by the *Ojha* for the death of a boy, was brutally beaten by her neighbours and paraded naked through the village. Lalpari Devi, a 45-years-old Bihari Dalit women, was publically humiliated as she was tied to a tree, and her hair was shaved because *Ojha* declared her witch. Another woman, Mita Bai of Chhattisgarh, also declared witch by the village *Ojha*, was brutally beaten by her neighbours. Lata Sahu of Bijli Village, in Raipur District of Madhya Pradesh, was declared *Tonahi* witch by her sister-in-law. She was stripped of her clothes and paraded in the villages. In Tarra, Raipur district, another woman was hacked to death, being branded as a witch by her brother-in-law after she sought to obtain ownership of the land of her deceased husband. Ganadi Village, Rachi District, Jharkhand: two Dalit widows, Jeetan Devi and Dulshan Devi were tortured, one of them losing her life. Another two tribal women of Rachi District, Jharkhand, were declared witch by an exorcist. Villagers forced them to parade naked and shaved their heads. One of them was also raped. Five tribal women of Kanjia, Ranchi district, aged between 32 and 50 years, were beaten to death with sticks because they were accused of witchcraft practice. A 50-years-old tribal woman, Budhmaniya Nagasiya, was hacked to death at Ranikhola line of the Rangamati tea estate under Malbazar Police station, in Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal, on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2017.

A witch is called, by Santhals community in West Bengal, *fuskin*. Mahan, their leader, has the power to declare a woman *fuskin*. The murder of a *fuskin* is always preceded by deaths or instances of prolonged illness in the village or family (Biswas 2015, 283). North-eastern states are the most affected. Subhadra Basumatray (40 years old) - a Bodo woman in Tilapara, Goalpara district in Assam, was

deemed as a witch by the local *Ojha*, who claimed that she was responsible for the diseases in the village. Basumatray was dragged out of her house by a group of people and beaten to death. Laxmi Dev Barma, a tea garden worker from Tripura, was declared witch after her co-worker felt ill. She was murdered by the villagers. Sarala Brahma, 50 years old, of Samsaibari village in Kokrajhar, was hacked to death being suspected of black magic and witchcraft. According to a report published in the *Times of India*, another three women were murdered for black magic. The newspaper also reported that at least 200 people have been killed during the past five years for allegedly practising witchcraft, mostly in the tribal-dominated areas of Western and Northern Assam. Saniram Boro (67 years) of Banbari Thaikarkuchi and Hagan Boro (60 years), Sitalpur, were killed among them. Puleswari Boro, a 50-years-old woman of Baksa district, was declared witch and killed by villagers on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2010.

On 29<sup>th</sup> April 2011, Jugen Boro (65 years), and his wife, Alasi Boro (60 years) were killed on charges of practising black magic at Tikritola in Udalguri. On 15<sup>th</sup> April, Purni Basumatary (57 years), and Modani Boro (55 years) were brutally killed at Belguri Guabari under Serfanguri police station. On 16<sup>th</sup> April, Ram Narzary, 45 years old, and his wife of East Tengaigaon were also killed in that place. Suresh Narzinary, 50 years, and his wife, Laogi, 45 years, of Jalaishree Hatighar in Gossaigaon, were killed under Kachugaon police station.

#### CAUSES OF WITCH-HUNTING

There are researchers who showed that witch killings often have political, property related or gender motifs. According to K. S. Singh, the former Director General of the *Anthropological Survey of India*, the greed for properties is one of their main reason. Malabika Das Gupta states that witch-hunt became popular as an extra-legal method to deprive tribal women of control over the land. Economic inequality is another cause of this phenomenon.

On the other hand, the poor health infrastructure and the absence of qualified medical practitioners in rural belts make villages dependent on the *Kavirajs* or local *Ojbas*, the main responsible for these types of brutal humiliations and killings but who are also taking advantages of these situations. Poor law enforcement and the poverty of rural areas are other causes of witch killings. In addition, there are frequent situations when women reject the sexual advances of their male neighbours, a fact that cast upon them the accusation of witchcraft. Also, their ancient customs might be misunderstood and the devotion of women to traditions can be perceived as witchcraft.

Apart from the already mentioned causes, political apathy, police negligence, the lack of reporting by the media, and the absence of an institutional program to raise awareness of the population lead to the spread of these atrocities.

#### ANTI-WITCH-HUNTING LAWS IN INDIA

There are no strong anti-witch-hunting nationwide laws in India. The most affected states have taken initiatives to protect people, especially women, from this type of practices. The Assam Police launched the project “Prahari”, in 2001, and “Mother”, in 2011, to safeguard them. *Prevention of and Protection from Witch Hunting Bill 2015* provides from 3 years to life imprisonment for branding a person as a witch; 3 to 7 years imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 50000 to the *Ojba* who declares that a woman is a witch. Odisha *Prevention of and Witch Hunting Act 2013* provides 3 years in jail and a fine of Rs. 1000 for witch hunting, and from 3 to 7 years for the second conviction. The State of Bihar passed *Prevention of Witch Practices Act* in 1999, which provides imprisonment from 3 to 5 years for accusing a woman of being a *Dayan* and causing her physical harm. The State of Maharashtra passed *Prevention of and Eradication of Human Sacrifice and other Inhuman, Evil and Aghori Practices and Black Magic Act* in 2013.

It provides a jail term from 6 months to 7 years and a fine between Rs. 50000 and 50000 to the convict. The Government of Rajasthan has drafted, in 2011, a bill called the *Rajasthan Women (Prevention and Protection from Atrocities)*. As per this draft bill, whoever brand a woman of being a *Dayan, Dakan, Dakin, Chudial, Bhootdi, Chalavan, Opri* or *Randkadi* will be punished with 3 years of prison and a fine up to Rs. 5000. The Government of Chhattisgarh passed *Tonabi Pratadna Nivaran Act*, in 2005, which stipulates 3 years imprisonment for accusing woman as *Tonabi* or *Dayan*, and 5 years imprisonment for physically harming her. The Government of Jharkhand passed *Witchcraft prevention Act* in 2001 for the prevention of witchcraft practices. Except for these state acts and provisions, there is no national law to protect women from this age-old menace which takes each ear more and more lives across India. Its victims are always poor, vulnerable, tribal and other weak segments of society.

## CONCLUSION

Which-hunting is still part of the rural culture in India. Once a woman is branded as a witch, it is very difficult for her to get rid of this stigma. She can suffer severely the rest of her life, be hurt at any time and subject to public humiliations.

Education is an important way of abolishing such evil practices from society. It is, first of all, a dynamic process that makes people think logically instead of believing in magic. Various state-sponsored schemes already helped the rural regions. Moreover, we need to create strong national laws to protect women. At present, only a few states in India approved protective anti-witchcraft laws, which are still ineffective to protect women accused of witchcraft. Police actions, courtroom decisions and legal representation need improvement. A mass awareness programme against witchcraft practices should be initiated and introduced in all elementary schools of these regions, in order to save future generations from

such type of black practices. *Women Rights Commission* must take initiative for the protection of vulnerable helpless women from this menace. It already took positive initiatives in many cases. But it is necessary to pass a strong national-wide anti-witchcraft act. Besides, it is necessary to develop the communication infrastructure and transportation in the rural areas, as well the health system. Such programs will help to normalize this situation.

A violence-free environment is required. After all, it is necessary to change our patriarchal mind because patriarchy makes women vulnerable.

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*DREADLOCKS STORY* DOCUMENTING A “STORY BEHIND HISTORY”

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**Abstract.** This article speaks about *Dreadlocks Story*, a documentary that treats why the Indians are entangled in Jamaican society and how Hinduism is a source of inspiration for the Rastafari movement. Based on a history erased from collective memory, the movie creates a steady conversation between the filmmaker, interviewees and the audience. Three components are altogether shown: the Rasta movement’s own internal development of an ethos, the correspondence of Rastafari and Hinduism, and the rapprochement between Asian Indians and African descendants in wider Jamaican history.

What directly follows are the decision-making processes that guided the film’s production. How does one translate experience into images? Then comes a part that addresses the role of the film at the crossroads between anthropology, as an ideological system, and film, as a medium for communication opposite to entertainment or art. “What does it mean to have made this film?” implies “What were my relations with this topic, as director-producer and scientist?” The mixture of film and anthropology has proved to be fruitful in picturing the need to go beyond the intimacy of individual scenarios for the purpose of understanding their place in the global system.

**Keywords:** Jamaica, India, Hinduism, Rastafari, indentured labour system, colonialism, slavery, dreadlocks, documentary film, anthropology.

*Dreadlocks Story* covers the surprising roots of Rastafari culture, entangled in the Hindu tradition. In three years, it has been seen in more than 50 countries and rewarded with multiple international Best Feature Documentary awards. This story, which has never before seen on film, articulates several levels. One of them is the “object” to be represented. Indian culture, even Hinduism, is steeped into Rastafari. Another level corresponds to the relationship between the individual and the represented object. There is a similarity in ways of life among Sadhus in India and Rastas in

Jamaica, their behaviours and beliefs, as well as their relationship with the British Empire. The last level is the film’s act of inquiry. The film approaches two social identities, born out of the clear lack of documentaries about indigenous, Jamaican and Indian History. By embracing aesthetics of visual clarity, *Dreadlocks Story* explores the themes of identity, cultural heritage, human movement, discrimination, history and social stereotypes.

What does it mean to have made this film?

The human scientist has had to learn how to relate self-knowledge of him- or herself as a multi-sensory being with a unique personal history as a member of a specific culture at a specific period to ongoing experience and how to include as far as possible this disciplined self-awareness in observations on other lives and in other cultures. (Mead 1976: 907).

The movie explains a state of reality, exposes social injustice, lends a voice to the voiceless and challenges public stereotypes. It can be used to foster change in both attitudes and social behaviour, in an attempt to give a fresh impulse to popular education and the spread of culture, as well as to engage the participation of communities in tolerance. It can be also used to overcome the lack of discussions on the relationship between film and research.

*Dreadlocks Story* undertakes a multi and interdisciplinary approach to an encounter of cultures. As the director and producer, my background and knowledge are inexorably stamped onto its product, its process, and its production. The relationship between the subjects and the audience tie to my responsibility to make the world a better place whilst integrating knowledge, research, reflection, and practice. In encountering others, I also became responsible for them. Several perspectives are exhibited: the use of visual means, the concept of lifestyle, elements that are consistent throughout different belief systems, culture in its broadest sense, the anthropologic encounter, the weight of human relations, and the construction of history.

The movie was made with a ridiculously low budget for two primary reasons, one accidental and another intentional: a lack of funding from institutions, which reflects on the dearth of available resources for these topics; and as a way to avoid dependency on investor's needs, such as a particular profit. Having no predictable dilemma, *Dreadlocks Story* engenders enough bewilderment and concern. I was not willing to work on a piece that could have been ignored, rejected or tossed aside, with money made to be the explanation. I hence took charge of the production.

How does one translate experience into images?

When you are dealing with people whose sense of space, place, body movement, and event are different from your own, how do you know what you are looking at and when to turn the camera on or off? It is only possible to explore these questions in the field when the anthropologist is freed from the economic restraints of professional filmmaking and the need to produce a marketable product (Ruby 1998: § 9).

In the same way that the film was an exercise in visually portraying the intricate cultural processes embedded in community culture and cultural encounters, this paper records the very act of making it, the decisions that guided the production and examines the fluid journey between film and anthropology. The project pivoted on the agreed idea that Leonard Howell (1898-1981), recognized as the founding father of the Rastafari movement, used a Sanskrit pseudonym from the outset of his teaching to desperately poor Jamaicans trapped into mental slavery in the 1930s. The initial assumption was that the encounters between Indians and Afro-Jamaicans must be considered in terms of visual anthropology and thence unveiled as such.

#### **NO FICTION, NO TALE**

*Dreadlocks Story* was inspired by a true and doleful history that arose during the British colonial period and borne from the Trans-Atlantic

slave trade. Despite an erroneous impression on its topics, this 123-minute movie has been thought and made to underscore the ignorance of Indian enslavement to the Caribbean. Alongside African heirs living in the region, it introduces Indians under the spotlight as those who were turned into slaves by the British colonists. Three components are altogether shown: The Rasta movement’s own internal development of an ethos, the correspondence of Rastafari and Hinduism, and the rapprochement between Asian Indians and African descendants in wider Jamaican history.

For a considerable time, studies on the Indian diaspora in the Caribbean have been overshadowed by works focusing on the Trans-Atlantic slave trade and the brutality meted out to African slaves on the sugar plantations. Even today, historical works on the Caribbean tend to portray the region as predominantly Black, although Indians form a sizable percentage of the English-speaking Caribbean. It was only in the 1980s that scholarly attention was given to these enterprising people, coinciding with the 150th anniversary of their presence. In Jamaica, Ajai Mansingh and Laxmi Mansingh were the first researchers who did the spadework for embarking upon a larger understanding of Indian presence. *Dreadlocks Story* benefited deeply from their knowledge. Much of the analysis they provided was invaluable, as it has never been recorded on film.

When emancipation arrived in Jamaica in 1838, the British had occupied the island for almost two centuries and were well settled in the Indian sub-continent for more than two hundred years. Once African slaves were freed, the British faced a dilemma of the workforce on their whole Empire of sugar plantations. They invented an indentureship system to migrate the workforce population from India, which happened to be a “new system of slavery” (Tinker 1974: 18).

Indians were reluctant to go anywhere out of their motherland. Recruiters forced them to get on board, using nefarious methods

and outright deception. The oppressive British colonists and wily recruiters in India with the silent complicity cooperation of the Jamaican authorities sent a total of 36,312 people between 1845 to 1917 for working on sugar plantations, then later on banana ones across the island of Jamaica.

Indians represented a tractable, disciplined and accustomed labour force to plantation agriculture under harsh tropical conditions. The planters never stopped reiterating the importance of Indian workers in restoring the control they had exercised under the iniquitous Trans-Atlantic slave system, as well as in resuscitating the sugar and banana industries in Jamaica; they were necessary to prevent impending ruin.

Repatriation to India after a few years of service in Jamaica was a wrong persuading and motivational argument used by recruiters to convince unsuspecting workers. The colony was actually bankrupt and could not pay to charter the ships back to India. Indians had to pay to return home. Plenty of them so stayed in Jamaica, increasing de facto the Indo-Jamaican population by the time of the abolishment of the indentureship period.

Most of the Indians were Hindus, a low percentage (12%) were Muslims and three people declared to be Christian. Indian cultural persistence ensured the continuation of Hinduism. It created a sense of unity and solidarity and prevented the powerful plantation system from reducing them to mere puppets. Parochial Hinduism and its literature that nurtured the workers simultaneously became their mental and spiritual refuge just as well as their social and cultural cement in Jamaica. In establishing an independent collective state of mind and building up resources for surviving in the depths of oppression, Indians allowed a new social development to take place in Jamaican society. They bore a new life condition and befriended the Afro-descendants labourers. Indians introduced Hinduism and their mystical tradition to Jamaica, creating a cross-cultural intermingling that would come to have a profound influence on the development of the new cultural movement known as Rastafari.

Jamaican society had never been quiescent, neither in slavery nor freedom, but the 1930s saw a quickening of the people’s energy. The end of slavery did not entail the end of colonization. Slavery produced both a system and an attitude of mind. In the hundred years after slavery ended, one of its worst effects to almost all workers was around the issues of identity. Concomitantly, although Jamaica was still in the possession of the colonial authorities, some leading men were discovering themselves and their power to build the island anew. The most prominent of them was Leonard Percival Howell, alias “The First Rasta”. With a visceral refusal to be silenced and to co-exist with the tyrannical colonial government, Howell first initiated to speak about Rastafari.

Rastafari encourages a response from African heirs through which they could recover and rebuild their culture suppressed by brutal European domination. It also centrally promotes the belief that everyone is able and divine. With Rastafari, Howell challenged all forms of control. He struggled to establish black consciousness and cultural identity. He sought to empower and liberate his compatriots while pushing them to take responsibility to eschew dependency through self-sufficiency. A lot of people followed his enlightened lessons, in particular women and Hindus.

Besides immersing himself in Indian culture, interplaying with philosophers, Howell was assisted by Laloo, an Indian, concurrently a bodyguard and a sort of guru who is credited with helping him to stir an intermediate culture that borrowed from mystical Hindu beliefs, practices, and language. Howell also assumed a Hindu identity by changing his name to Gagunguru Maragh, “the Great Teacher who can see beyond the nature of matter”. He furthermore signed *The Promised Key*, a compilation of ideas found in Back-to-Africa movements that existed earlier, and possibly written when he was in jail then published once released in 1936, with this new name – shortened in “Gong”.

In 1939, Howell purchased a land called Pinnacle, designed to be a free self-reliant community for his followers. Ritual components

of Rastafari began to manifest there, marking a new stage in the movement, which solidified its ideas and tone until today.

Rapidly, Pinnacle became the subject of murky persecutions. Police raided it many times and arrested several of Howell backers. In 1958, the Authorities destroyed the entire community, causing an exodus of Rastas throughout Jamaica, then forcing many to settle into the slums.

From the start of his movement, despite all opposition, Howell never lost sight of the importance and responsibility of enhancing the people's mind through culture.

The consciousness of Rastafari forges a counterculture that triggered a dramatic cultural change, stamped with rejecting normative social conventions and physical markings to represent the history of struggle, survival, and contention. It offers a meaningful outlet inspired by Hinduism and a constructive release from oppressive social and psychological conditions while giving rise to new social coherences, chiefly by the way not interfering with nature.

Hindus operate in a system whereby the human being can become divine, if he lives well, through which rituals and sacraments create a communion with God. Quite similarly, Rastas believe that at the core of each individual there is a divine self, and this is exactly the initial teaching of Howell who alleged that all sons of slaves were not slaves, but children of God.

Under the horrors and burdens of slavery, forced migration, oppression and persecution, Indians and Afro-Jamaicans, who were treated as "objects", committed to creating a new form of self-expression, and to founding a new vision of identity, which led to transcultural awareness.

*Dreadlocks Story* contributes to the assertion that the links between Hinduism and Rastafari cultures are powerful symbols of perseverance and persistence against all forms of enchantment and stand out for an idiosyncratic individuality of oneness. The role

played by Indians in Jamaica importantly reminds that abducted people in the Caribbean have not come only from Africa.

The social acceptance of Indian culture in Rastafari raises points and counterpoints. If socialization is the process by which society achieves cultural continuity and perpetuates itself, then it is counterproductive to exclude elements of Hinduism from the framework that is imparted to Rastafari posterity. The historical documentation is significant enough that it would have been a grave misgiving not to show this relationship on film.

### **MAKING-OF**

The making of *Dreadlocks Story* occurred in two years’ time and across four countries: France, India, Jamaica, and the United States of America. The production has been shot in English, in French, in Hindi, and in Jamaican Patois by the way of four crews to whom I intentionally collaborated with, one in each country. Their involvement was critical for my reflexive directing. Plenty of other people have made their input, with up to 40 people composing the international production team.

Editing is the essence of filmmaking. Anything can be recorded. But the way the material is handled it is critical. Filmmakers need to find a balance between allowing the images to tell the story and providing an explicit context to the audience. There are different editing styles of all film genres like there are different ways to examine what happens to the footage once it is shot, which derives from how the realities are captured. Karl Heider, a visual anthropologist, speaks of distortion whatever those are in front of the camera and/or in the use of camera style and techniques and/or again in the use of editing. “Cinema has developed primarily as a medium for imaginative statements in which questions of scientific-type accuracy are often irrelevant” (Heider 1976: 7). Most anthropological filmmakers so suppose that the camera, properly handled, is the best means of objectively recording data free from

the subjectivity distortions.

*Dreadlocks Story* has been edited throughout a successive chain of people telling the story, speaking several languages, belonging to various cultures, embracing assorted beliefs, having values and expressing them at many levels of knowledge, either through experience or attainment. The interviewees exchanged their knowledge through the “static” camera, mounted on a tripod that does not tilt, pan, zoom or in any way move. This is assumed to be the most “scientific” technique and one that is less distorting and more “truthful” in the recording of “natural” behaviour than other camera techniques (Mead 1975: 10).

The film displays a horizontal construction of the similarities in ways of life between Sadhus and Rastas, enlivened by the context of Rastafari’s emergence and the reasons for Indian presence in Jamaica in the colonial era. The whole project called my authority into question. The challenge comes from having to defer to the cultural authority of the people about whom the film is being made. I had to win the faith in my integrity, honesty, and competence to discuss with them in front of a camera while placing my confidence into their hands in order that they do not interfere in the editing process.

The production has been materially conceived as a meshing between audio and image, subtitles-translation and speech.

SPEECH. The film has no voiceover. Thirty-eight interviewees evoked their standpoints directly to the audience with no linguistic counterpart. Each interview was videotaped in the simplest environment - as it was - without *mise en scène*, only using natural light. Each person had a distinct approach to feeling at ease in front of the camera (singing, smoking, laughing, responding directly or dodging my questions). All of this gives *Dreadlocks Story* a richer and more personal spin on history.

The casting is made of famous and rarely interviewed people (Sadhus, Sons of Howell, Elderly Rastas, pioneer researchers on

Indian presence in Jamaica). All brought together in this unrivalled piece must be considered as the first and unique archival document of their testimonies and knowledge.

The purposes of the interviews were to uncover how Rastas saw dreadlocks, how they regarded Hindu influences in Rastafari history, how they expressed their way of life, and what discriminations they had and still have to face as members of an indigenous group minority. The interviews chimed with how Sadhus in India talk about their way of life.

Writing a script for a documentary film before talking to the film’s participants is equivalent to thinking of the answers to the research project before initiating the actual cogitation. It makes the entire research process biased and, to a point, irrelevant. This is not to say filmmakers should not research, brainstorm, or develop potential shot-lists before travelling. *Dreadlocks Story* was not made on the basis of a script. Instead, the narrative generated itself in a natural way by allowing the interviewees to tell their stories.

Humour dissolves the barriers on sensitive and reactive topics. In *Dreadlocks Story*, it serves to negotiate both about the unknown and known revealed facts. Some of the charismatic and funny interviewees delivered messages with efficiency and effectiveness. The ability to achieve a comedic tone is not exclusive to the hilarity of the chosen subject matter. Nonfiction films should be amusing and witty. It is a means by which one imbues sensitive themes with expression and emotion. Laughter is a way to alleviate the pain, of what is known to be the truth. Laughter is further a highly sophisticated social signalling system, helping people bond, triggered by embarrassment and other discomforts.

I adjusted myself to the participants to let them express their story, as they desired. I minded getting a gender balance in speakers. The result pictures the reality of practices in India of Hindu asceticism and in Jamaica of Rastafari. Women sadhus are not many, and surely not used to talking in front of a camera. None have been interviewed. They refused to partake in an interview precisely in

presence of the camera. They nevertheless represent a real component of whom they incarnate in India. Although living on the outskirts of mainstream society, they are managed by groups of men, replicating the larger society driven by a prevailing patriarchy.

Generally, Rastafari is associated with a very traditional conservative patriarchy. The dominant discourse is that women are somehow not equal to men. I found myself in situations in which I had to obtain the approvals from husbands to possibly speak with their wives. I often ended up with refusals with unclear motives. This is a strong evidence that the Rasta movement had become discriminatory by gender.

On things considered, I had not faced difficult moments with anyone. I have collected anecdotes, which had no negative interferences or bad effects on the production. A husband had a hard time to understand why the idea to speak with his wife would make me thrilled without exchanging with him. We agreed that I could speak to both of them even though I sensed he wouldn't honour his word. I first talked with him to such a degree he conclusively decreed: "My wife would not have more things to add. I have told you everything!" There is always a high risk that people reverse their decisions in particular when the gender and position of each interlocutor are dissimilar or/and the interviewee seemed suspicious about the interviewer's intention. Whereas I hoped to get a gender balance of the Rasta population to depict a diversity of persons, this husband did shed light on the fact of this reality of male chauvinism being a component of Rastafari. Because *Dreadlocks Story* must show it as such, I spoke with five unmarried Rasta women. Fundamentally, working on such sensitive and taboo topics, the interviewer cannot and should not dodge both representation and incarnation of who s/he is for her/his interlocutors.

SUBTITLES/TRANSLATION. There is no narration. A succession of people tells the story in a "put-together" fashion. Giving a voice to

the “indigenous” to create a feeling of inclusion, reducing the commentaries, instead of distance, to beget a “us” versus “them” would have been basically counter-productive to my opinion of what a documentary can transmit. Though the voice-over ensures a function of commentary in documentaries, a rupture of style has emerged with Cinéma Vérité in the late 1950s, in developing, in principle, neither commentary nor voiceover. This privilege of captured sounds underscores the disappearance of voice-over.

Jean Rouch, considered as one of the pioneers of visual anthropology, said that oral commentary ages faster than images, which, on the contrary, acquire with time a greater documentary value. The editing choice of *Dreadlocks Story* without voice-over inherited this concept: spoken words are incapable of translating “intangible aspects of culture” captured by the camera. Spoken words cannot replace the richness of audio-visual communication. The film basically incorporates multiple dimensions of language and experience to the point that emotions and feelings participate in the elaboration of its meaning. Regardless, subtitling has been the recourse.

Subtitles enhance and bolster the audience to follow the voice-over free narrative, rather than negate images. Proponents of the subtitling method claim that this way of adaptation is more natural and realistic because it leaves intact the voices of the interviewees. Subtitling is different from other types of translations in many ways. It does not simply consist in translating a text from a source language into a target language. It also involves a shift from oral to written language. Shifting from one semiotic system to another, although problematic and limiting, subtitling is a major aspect of *Dreadlocks Story’s* creation.

Written words used for subtitles do not simply translate the spoken words, but else, at the same time, they allow to share the visual and audio to the audience. Subtitling increasingly intercedes for the integral element of the content. Space and time limits make the decisions hard about what to omit and how to do it. The

conciseness is essential while the subtitles must have an equal informational value as the original text (Koolstra et al. 2002: 327).

Titles cards appear intermittently throughout the film, notably marking the temporal and thematic passage from one sequence to another. In a similar way to subtitles, the titles cards are of use the audience to follow the voice-over free narrative.

IMAGE/AUDIO. The speeches recorded structure images, whilst what has been recorded overpowers the soundtracks (Chinon, 1994). In *Dreadlocks Story*, images and sounds can be distinguished whereas they illustrate new ideas. The film combines assorted images, snippets of newspapers and excerpts of archives, photography, videos, original designs, extracts of songs, poetry, musical tracks, and silence. This collection of images, sounds and footage generates a dynamic and engaging arrangement.

Sound carries the story. Audio even played a crucial part, more than anything else. It is composed of a variety of sounds and musical tracks from reggae, traditional music, melody, instrumental, world music, jazz and ambient music, performed by artists located around the world. Besides, gestures, gesticulations, and postures eased to illustrate some comments. A Sadhu is cooking vegetables when expounding the reasons for his vegetarian diet perfectly represents one of these moments (Aïnouche 2014: 44:38 - 44:59).

Distinct levels of aesthetic and conceptual complexity made filmmaking *Dreadlocks Story* inherently enjoyable. One of the joys of being a scholar and filmmaker is to craft meaning and understanding from material where significance is not immediately visible. Being able to layer these meanings in a visual mode/story was really one of the pleasures that I have had in processing the film. It is likewise akin to creating a puzzle, and only those “who have eyes to see” infer the meaning. Thereby, interrelating with levels of understanding gave me the feeling to speak to plenty of people.

## BETWEEN ANTHROPOLOGY AND DOCUMENTARY

A glance between anthropology and film disciplines, through the exemplification of *Dreadlocks Story*, gives reason to Ruby, who warns that “reflexive or methodological statements are lacking in anthropological film for the same reasons that they are absent from written anthropology: there is a conflict between what anthropologists do and the philosophy of science they espouse” (1980: 155).

### SLIPPAGES AND INCONGRUITIES BETWEEN DISCIPLINES

As the science of alterity, anthropology has much in common with filmmaking. It is a medium to visualize alterity. Anthropology and photography emerged around the second half of the 19th century. Historically, the anthropologic film was meant to serve instructional purposes. Visual research methods are not conventional in anthropology, much less in the cross-cultural anthropology. Many anthropologists regard film as an adjunct or marginal activity to mainstream science. Heider interrogates: “What is an ethnographic film?” The term itself seems to embody an inherent tension or conflict between two ways of seeing and understanding, two strategies for bringing order to (or imposing on) experience: the scientific and the aesthetic” (1976: ix).

Despite milestone slippages and incongruities between the two disciplines, there are some reassuring overlaps between (ethnographic) anthropology and (documentary) filmmaking fieldwork. Methodologies look to document and understand human experience through careful research and the willing participation of participants. Both struggles with issues of power and representation of their interviewees. Thoughtful anthropologists and filmmakers worry about the ethical consequences of the final product. The fusion of these strands is a central ethos, and indeed an ethical stance, which is characterized by creative and productive dialogues between participants and filmmakers as collaborators. Films can

play an instrumental role in the advancement of an academic discipline, adding to existing substantive knowledge and theory.

Academic anthropologists have for a long time turned to film, and more recently to digital video, to represent empirical knowledge. Scholars, however, have been unkind toward filmmaking as an interpretive practice. Filmmaking remains a marginal activity. Writing as a mode of communication is vastly thought superior to visual modes for the scope of transmitting abstract, conceptual, and theoretical material. Book and article writing is an infinitely more profitable career choice than film for academic anthropologists and ethnographers, emphasizes Henley (2000). Scholars have somehow viewed film with some scepticism - because of the inherent subjectivity and the semiotic limitations of the audio-visual mode (Pink 2006, 2007) - as of late more and more academic anthropologists have come to agree on film's remarkable potential to express matters otherwise difficult or downright impossible to convey through other modes (Bates 2014; Suhr and Willerslev 2012).

How could it have been foreseeable to listen to an elderly Rasta (who has since passed away) singing popular rallying songs from the 1950s in Jamaica on paper? *Dreadlocks Story* lends credence to the idea of filmmaking as an ethnographic tool, as it gave opportunities to the voiceless to be heard and equally preserves unique records for future generations, which alone will be massively important in bringing ethnological knowledge into the limelight.

There is possibly a technical difference between films made and produced by anthropologists, and films produced to be explicitly ethnographies. *Dreadlocks Story* is somewhere in between the two extremes of perspectives. By necessity of people's ways of life, the film is confined to nonfictional accounts and indebted to the documentary tradition. Involvement with the people being studied through fieldwork and interviews, empathic role taking, and proper contextualization is sufficient for a film to be considered anthropologic. Curiosity is the basic impulse that drives

anthropology, and in response to this query, *Dreadlocks Story* is “a film made with real elements”. Even during the post-production stage, the material was still spurring investigation, rather than conforming or purporting to have achieved sufficient knowledge about the subject. Whence, at all stages, this documentary engenders a conversation between the filmmaker, the interviewees, and the audience. The work content carries more importance than the idea of film as entertainment or art.

#### REFLEXIVE ETHNOGRAPHY

Every anthropologic documentary filmmaker is an educator. And, everyone who makes an ethnographic documentary film is on some level teaching about people and should be ethically accountable. Within this prism of accountability are the filmmaker’s own subjectivity and reflexivity. Ruby incidentally asserts that: “filmmakers, along with anthropologists, have the ethical, political, aesthetic, and scientific obligations to be reflexive and self-critical about their work” (2005: 34). He suitability applies the three tiers of producer, process, and product to the concept of reflexivity in documentary filmmaking. Being reflexive means to structure a product in such a way that the audience assumes that the producer, process, and product are a coherent whole. The producer unveils what caused him “to formulate a set of questions in a particular way, to seek answers to those questions in a particular way, and finally to present his findings in a particular way” (Ruby 1980: 156). These revelations of the producer on the process were infrequent until recently. They were deemed to be confusing and inappropriate to the audience.

“For whom, and why, have you made this film? Rouch, who I poignantly echo, answers “My first response will always, strangely, be the same: For me” [...] “Film is the only means I have to show someone else how I see him. For me, after the pleasure of the cine-trance in shooting and editing, my first public is the other, those whom I’ve filmed” (2003: 43).

This means that, as an anthropologist and filmmaker, I have the ethical obligation to anticipate such encounters and ensure that I am equipped with enough skills to negotiate with others in a way that, at the very least, does no harm.

How can certain stories, voices, and values be made powerful by documentary films? *Dreadlocks Story* mobilizes ethics. Its audiences feel differently about the social relation present that underpins Indian culture in Jamaica at the era of Rastafari's genesis, namely the presence and influence of Indians, and so act as a focal point for cultural scrutiny. The overarching goal of the film is to provide a glimpse into some of these social and cultural influences affecting the difference of opinions on the so-called "truest" intrinsic genesis of Rastafari.

Some scholars have opined, in contrast to Ruby, that anthropologic film consists simply of descriptions of social and cultural phenomena supplemented by their theoretical interpretation and analysis (Crawford and Turton 1992). *Dreadlocks Story* inherently rejects this idea, as the visuals are the product of both the director - (scholar) and the document of the subject's words, practices and culture. The participants did not take part in the editing process. This film is strictly a synchrony between audience and participants that reveals my relations to others or at least publicly presents information about the components of producer and process.

The documentary facilitates the encounter that opens space for the viewers to position themselves in the world under observation. *Dreadlocks Story* uses distinct strategies to avoid being a mere exercise in verification, revealing that there is a genuine lack of knowledge that it is seeking to resolve. As the filmmaking engages a re/presentation, *Dreadlocks Story* broadcasts a reflection of African and Indian descendants, encountered in a space, an ethnocultural space, that the experience of their ancestors intertwined histories allowed the creation of a new cultural system.

I aimed to give life to new learning opportunities that encourage

positioning oneself in relation to this world. Not only the words and images from the video were transmitted, but my own hopes on the importance of never forgetting, always honouring and continuously remembering those who have suffered and died at the hands of one of the most nightmarish treatments of human beings by other human beings in World History. In another way, *Dreadlocks Story* unfolds the conversation with different cultures to shake up the manifestly forgone conclusions of history and kindle another look at women’s access to sensitive male-oriented environments. I coveted to make an impression on stigmatization and awake a worldly curiosity about a history that involved four continents.

It is important to remind that, in intending act with reflexivity in my position as director, producer, and anthropologist of *Dreadlocks Story*, anthropology is viewed in this endeavour as an ideological system, and film as a medium for communication, as opposed to the idea that film is mere art.

For not simply collecting exotic “facts of others,” as anthropology is commonly defined, I needed to engage, to be reflective of my own cultural and life practices when discussing another culture through the way of film. “How much of my self-do I put in and leave out?” is the way Holman Jones (2005: 764) wondered the question. Auto-anthropology involves the use of cultural richness for self-reflection and understanding the nature of encounters.

With my few means, including my social responsibility and a low budget to produce the film, I could not change the world, and yet with this movie, I attempted to change the world of some people simply in defending, recognizing and respecting their dignity without enjoining from commercial objectives.

Giving a voice to the voiceless, to those who are stigmatized, was eventually one of the goals of which this film was made; to grasp “their” points of view and their relations to life; to realize their visions of their world; to contribute to their possibility to speak on discrimination and segregation in life as they have experienced them.

*Dreadlocks Story* can be an illustrative example of the way in which social identities and respective understandings have a bearing on what knowledge is produced and how it is produced. Thus, the encounter that the documentary facilitates grants space for the viewers to position themselves in the world.

## CONCLUSION

*Dreadlocks Story* is a story behind History that has barely been told and without a doubt never been seen in a visual manner. It is a story equally based on tragedy and hope, on the inflicted mistreatment of human beings towards other human beings and on the birth of a social and cultural movement built on the idea to restore people's proud and confidence led by a single man, Leonard Howell.

In *Transcultural Cinema* (1998), David MacDougall, an anthropologist and filmmaker, speaks about the slippage between filmed and written anthropology, each of them having its own blind spots, providing information and insight that the other cannot. *Dreadlocks Story* does not lay down a conclusion but recalls what it is based on History erased from the collective memory. What can it teach? This documentary is indicative of a concentration on the value of film as reasoning beyond knowledge and an act of thinking.

*Dreadlocks Story* aspires to set the story of a never before seen history surprisingly rooted in Asia, which weaves into a group's re-appropriation of an African heritage. It gives a voice to those who rarely had said what they experienced, and captures what is not easily accessible, and yet very important to those who embrace the Sadhu and Rasta ways of life. It highlights a unique cultural movement through the anthropological lens, focusing on hardly ever-expressed topics, such as kidnapped Indians in the Caribbean and Jamaicans oppressed by fellow Jamaicans.

Rastafari provides a means of individual mobility and is perhaps the only viable alternative lifestyles available to those living within

the narrow confines of what was a rigidly stratified society. Decades later, it may be wondered how Jamaican society could have been independent of Rastafari.

The film became a strategy for documenting the articulation of Rastafari and Hinduism. The multi-country framework is productive in conveying the experience of Rastafari’s adherence resulting from slavery to Jamaica that has internationally expanded and in visualizing the impacts of social and cultural processes of Indians related to the colonial British Empire. The alliance of film and anthropology has proved to be fruitful in picturing the need to go beyond the intimacy of individual scenarios for the purpose of understanding their place in the global system.

The intention was to make a film that straddles the world of documentary cinema and the traps of commercial filmmaking. I have focused on the fact that *Dreadlocks Story* casts a twin process: (1) it discovers Indian history in Jamaica, which is barely known for lack of research, interest and possible sources, and (2) underscores the complex attitude to culture in Jamaica but at large, like a real anthropological matter. I have focused on the sense and selection making of the interviewed people and the practices of letting them express the way they wanted.

*Dreadlocks Story* blurs the line not simply between participants and filmmaker but between participants, filmmaker, and the audience. I followed Karl Heider, who stated: “It is probably best not to try to define ethnographic films. In the broadest sense, most films are ethnographic – that is, if we take “ethnographic” to mean “about people” (1976: 1).

*Dreadlocks Story* has become an excellent pedagogical tool for drawing parallels with the Indian indentureship system in the Caribbean, the fight of Rastafari and the cultural and social process emerging from atrocious European imperialism. It articulates the trajectory of cultural internal and external encounters that prompt an ongoing articulation of Rasta identity. It is, in the end, a successful and intriguing addition to the literature and visual

discussions of this archetypal community.

Accordingly, the effectiveness of this essay illustrates the breadth and scope of *Dreadlocks Story*. The visual work provides a means to engage in anthropology because it is ethnographically descriptive, methodologically committed to observation and interviews, theoretically insightful, pedagogically useful and has potential application largely about unfairness.

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