

Transitions, Revolutions, and Reinventions: Discourses on Human Capabilities and World Configurations



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EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

Transitions, Revolutions, and Reinventions: Discourses on Human Capabilities and World Configurations

This issue of *SPECTRA: The Social, Political, Ethical, and Cultural Theory Archives* features original essays, book essays, and artwork by our contributors, on the theme of transitions, revolutions, and reinventions: discourses on human capabilities and world configurations. Using a wide range of scholarly strategies, the contributors raise questions on topics as diverse as political subjectivity, the power of material commodities to bring normalcy to international relations, and the possibilities of fostering changes to capitalism from within the very fields of management studies that have long advocated the economic model. We consider ourselves fortunate to have these scholars share their work with our readers.

Claudio D'Amato draws on various facets of social contract theory, namely the work of John Rawls as well as Charles Mills's theory of racial contract, to raise questions about certain proceduralist and universalist preconditions for the critique of racism. In his essay, "Human capabilities and the racial contract," he contends that a capabilities approach, notably the ideas developed by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum, support and advance Mills's original arguments.

In "Reflecting on the Politics of Piety" Michele C. Deramo applies the works of Michel Foucault and Judith Butler to questions of self, agency, and configurations of political subjectivity among women in Muslim society, predominantly in Egypt. Deramo makes a comparative analysis to two 19th century case studies in the United States: the Christian Patriarchy movement and the emergence of Women's Clubs. In both of these cases, Deramo argues, movements have been catalysts for social reform.

Throughout “Iranian Energy Policy towards the South Caucasus from the Perspective of Neo-Liberalism Theory,” Arman Gasparyan argues that the commodity status of energy takes priority over religious ideologies in Iran’s diplomatic relations with neighboring societies. As Gasparyan explains, the material value helps meet the nation’s achievement goals in a way that transitions power away from the commonly shared religious convictions and, in turn, fosters so-called normal relations with other countries.

Eli C.S. Jamison aims to introduce an interdisciplinary audience to the critique of capitalism emerging out of Critical Management Studies (CMS), a field of thought described by the Academy of Management as a resource for fostering environmental and social welfare. Here, Jamison contends that CMS holds potential for reinventing scholarly attempts to de-center economic capitalism and, therefore, to challenge social/cultural structures of domination.

One of the ongoing conversations engaged in this issue is the importance of international and particularly geopolitical constellations. In this vein, SPECTRA hosted a conversation with Harry Gould, Professor for Politics and International Relations at Florida International University, and Brent Steele, Professor for Political Science at the University of Utah. In the interview conducted by Francine Rossone de Paula, Jennifer Lawrence, Kent Morris, and Anthony Szczurek, Gould and Steele followed up on several issues raised previously in a symposium on “Thinking and Writing Critically in International Relations.” During the conversation, reprinted here in full length, particular emphasis was put on questions of state responsibilities and their privatization, accountability and its conceptual and practical alternatives in the field of international relations, as well as national and international security in the 21st century.

We present two book reviews, each addressing human capabilities and world configurations, one in the context of Olympic athletes and Cold War politics, and the other in terms of human-cyborg technologies. In “Where are the Laughter and the Tears,” Anthony Szczurek review’s Philip D’Agati’s 2013 *The Cold War and the 1984 Olympic Games: A Soviet-American Surrogate War*. The book explores an alternate explanation for the Soviet boycott of the 1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles, California, differing from traditional “retaliation” arguments made in most analyses of these games. Instead, D’Agati, employing game theory, argues that the 1984 boycott was a rational, strategic decision on the part of the Soviet Union to cause as much damage to the Los Angeles Games as had been wreaked upon the 1980 Moscow games. Szczurek offers a counter-opinion, calling the reader’s attention to the importance that emotions play in the political, and the implications for the decisions of states acting on the world stage.

In “Donna J. Haraway’s *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, Reinventing Nature as a Revolutionary Re-appropriation of Knowledge” Melissa R. Schwartz focuses on two main contributions within Haraway’s 1991 text: objects of knowledge and situated knowledges. Schwartz’s review is not only a critical analysis of Haraway’s main theses and arguments but also shows careful attention to the style and structure of the book itself. Haraway uses a strategy of interconnectivity to place her thesis throughout the book: that socialist-feminist scientists have a responsibility to recreate the categories in which Western science has divided the world, often based on a Western, male-centric, earth-as-instrument beliefs. Instead, Haraway believes that these binaries must be stricken from science, as these categories have led to the shaping of how female scientists now interact with their own world.

Finally, the editorial team invited Alec Clott to contribute his photograph entitled “Luminescence” as the cover art for this issue. This photo contains a scene taken just after nightfall in the old medina of Marrakech, Morocco in September 2013. Here, an adult and child arrange and light lanterns with the hope of selling them to throngs of international tourists, most of whom come to Morocco from wealthy, industrialized nations. Many consider Morocco a “developing nation,” and yet the nation is a major player in the economic, cultural, and political dynamics of the region -- and also home to the oldest university in the world. As we compiled the contributions to this issue under the theme, we felt that the photograph provides a moment to consider how human capabilities and world configurations may take people down different paths of transition, revolution, and reinvention. Wherever the lanterns started out, which hands made them, and wherever they go next, they hang for just a moment here in the care of these two people who share our world.

We thank the contributors for expanding the scope of analytical, literary, and artistic topics at play in SPECTRA. Likewise, we thank our reviewers and the editorial team who have helped to bring this issue to life. As always, we welcome feedback and suggestions and will gladly put readers in contact with authors and contributors.

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Human capabilities and the racial contract: Avoiding the epistemology of ignorance of liberal contractarianism

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Abstract: Global relations are largely shaped by what Charles Mills calls “the racial contract”: the sometimes explicit and sometimes unspoken agreement that social arrangements must favor whites over nonwhites. This bias is strong among white political philosophers and especially in the liberal contractarian theories of Hobbes, Rousseau, Locke, Kant, and, most recently, Rawls. While these theories pay lip service to nominal equality in the name of universalism, they also ignore the inequality and disadvantage that nonwhites suffer at the hands of whites, and thus they contribute to epistemic obscurantism and racial domination. In this paper, first, I strengthen Mills’s argument by providing an even more convincing objection against the procedural requirements of John Rawls’s theory of justice; second, I argue that this objection gives us a good reason to distinguish between Rawls’s liberal contractarianism and other theories in white political philosophy that are far more sensitive to Mills’s critique; and, finally, I offer a partial defense of Martha Nussbaum’s and Amartya Sen’s capability-based approach, which I think is uniquely situated to address the inequalities of the racial contract.

Keywords: *race, ignorance, ontology, justice, social contract, Mills, Rawls, Nussbaum*

1. Introduction

Liberal social contract theories in Western analytic philosophy usually conceive of persons as abstract political subjects united by a common humanity and a

common participation in a mutually beneficial social arrangement. Critics like Charles W. Mills, however, counter that these views ignore that the actually existing contract is far from being one of mutual advantage, but is instead designed to enforce economic and sociopolitical relations that heavily favor whites over nonwhites; Mills calls this actually existing contract the “racial contract.” In his book *The Racial Contract*¹ he contends that as long as white philosophers defend theories of justice that are blind to the existence of the racial contract, they help cultivate an epistemology of systemic ignorance that threatens the recognition of nonwhites as full persons and propagates a neoliberal model for quiet racial domination.

I think that Mills’s argument is fundamentally correct, and the most prominent liberal contractarian theories, from Hobbes to Rawls, may indeed foster an epistemology of ignorance. But, of course, there is more to white political philosophy than social contract theories, and other approaches are more capable to acknowledge the racial contract as a serious problem. One such approach is Martha Nussbaum’s account of basic human capabilities, which she defends in collaboration with Amartya Sen. Here I contend that the capability approach to justice is not vulnerable to the theoretical failings that Mills finds with liberal contractarianism, specifically the propensity to foster an epistemology of ignorance by silencing the political voices of the oppressed. As I agree with most of Mills’s conclusions, this paper ought not to be construed as arguing against his claims. Rather, it contends that his critique of liberal contractarianism is one good reason to reject it in favor of a capability-based approach to justice.

Section I discusses Mills’s argument and makes explicit his account of racial, particularist, and communitarian social ontology. Section II shows why Mills’s

argument thus strengthened constitutes an even stronger objection than Mills's to John Rawls's liberal contractarianism. Finally, section III shows why, in light of the above, we should prefer a capability approach over Rawls's liberal contractarianism.

2. The racial contract

Once more, Mills argues that the racial contract is the "actually existing contract" that regulates the global interactions of people and peoples, as opposed to abstract ideal arrangements. For Mills, the actually existing racial contract has three main features. First, it is *historical*, for it is born from white domination and reinforced through the narrative propagation of white self-entitlement. Much white folklore still reinforces the European colonial ideals of cultural and technological superiority as the rightful catalysts of global supremacy.² Second, the racial contract is *metaphysical*, perpetrating the Eurocentric claim that nonwhite spaces are actually nonspaces. To see extra-European peoples as crops ripe for the reaping is to deny that they occupy a unique metaphysical space of their own. This denial is geographic ("undiscovered" lands), cultural (the ideas of savagery and barbarism), and individual (non-Europeans are persons only as members of a savage undiscovered nonwhite nonspace).³ Finally, the racial contract is *epistemological*, for the historical and metaphysical white lore is propagated through an epistemology that actively fosters ignorance of the actually existing racial contract. By remaining unaware of it, most people (including philosophers) are accomplices to the subsistence of its injustice. The problem concerns both whites and nonwhites, the former having a vested interest in preserving the status quo and the

latter being either deliberately kept in the dark or having “learned their place” and submitted to a slave mentality of oppression.⁴

Underlying these claims is a certain view of social ontology that Mills does not make as explicit as he could, but which is nonetheless crucial to his argument. To begin, his definition of race is anti-essentialist: terms like *race*, *white*, and *nonwhite* are to be understood as historically contingent and, therefore, “not really a color at all, but a set of power relations,” by which he means the colonial histories of white domination.⁵ Mills is not anti-realist: race is a real social kind for him, but it is not determined by biology, ethnicity, tradition, or culture. Rather, it is born from power struggles and repeatedly redefined in those terms. Indeed, Mills concedes that membership into white or nonwhite “clubs” fluctuates depending on contingent local historical constructions of whiteness and nonwhiteness, and of course also on the “official” partitioning of these spaces dictated by the dominant hegemony, those who self-identify as “pure” white. Thus, personal identity is grounded in race, and race is grounded in the social and economic arrangements that have shaped the course of human history. Sensible as it is, this account of social ontology is also what makes it possible for an epistemology of systemic ignorance to subsist in the first place: locking people in racialized identity claims whose terms are defined by the dominant groups is an efficient method for the oppressors to broadcast their theories and silence the rest.

I think these claims are well grounded and receive ample evidential support beyond Mills’s own discussion. The epistemological claim is especially well-taken, as ignorance of the racial contract is propagated by many cultural staples of recent Western (and especially American) culture: segregation and miscegenation laws,

misguided reparation efforts, racist textbooks, culturally blind literary canons, the insistence of mainstream Western media on “white guilt stories,” etc.⁶ Together, these tell a convincing story of how we actually form false beliefs that misrepresent our racial reality. But this is so only if we understand epistemology as a primarily social rather than personal activity.

The idea of a social epistemology, so central to critical theory, is also neither new nor especially controversial to the pragmatist and analytic traditions; indeed, most contemporary Western epistemologists do admit of some social dimension to knowledge. But an epistemology of ignorance demands the centrality of the social dimension. Individuals by themselves may have no means and little interest in producing or promulgating ignorance—but groups do. To borrow an example from feminist epistemology, Lorraine Code argues that since each gender identity has special epistemic access to certain facts and facets of the human experience, there are no such things as genderless, neutral, objective knowers.⁷ Human knowers are male and female, situated in space and time, and deriving their beliefs (or at least the inputs of their belief-forming practices) from their social milieus. In other words, knowers are specially situated in non-generalizable ways. Similar arguments apply to class, race, ethnicity, age, religion, sexual orientation, and other sources of situatedness.

Epistemologies of ignorance thrive especially well in these conditions, because a social epistemology provides the means and the motives for error to be created and propagated. Individual knowers are the sole obtainers of their own experiences and judgments. While vulnerable to Cartesian evil geniuses, they are mostly immune from the experiences and judgments of other knowers, save for using them as foils

or terms of comparison. And even then, traditional “S knows that p ” epistemologies—which are the formulaic and quasi-scientific standard of analytic philosophy—see ignorance only as a roadblock, or at most a latent skeptical pitfall to avoid along the path to knowledge. But if knowers are situated and knowledge is socially acquired and evaluated, the door opens to radical misinformation, because our epistemic practices derive in large part from sources we cannot control. To paraphrase Alcoff, epistemologies of ignorance construe error as central, both quantitatively and qualitatively.⁸ Error is the main epistemic desideratum of a belief system, not an accidental deviation; and only groups, not individuals, can systematically enforce misrepresentation of this magnitude. This is not a conspiracy theory of powerful echelons emanating faulty epistemic *diktats* from smoky rooms, but a simple and sensible story of how historically dominant groups (in this case whites of European descent) mistake their own socially construed epistemology for absolute knowledge, promulgate it as such, and ostracize the alternatives as “mistaken” or “illogical.” This is both easy and palatable to whites, as it operates by the same mechanism that led to white domination in the first place.

I can turn now to the primary target of Mills’s critique, the liberal contractarian tradition that is dear to many white Western philosophers. Mills discusses primarily Hobbes, Kant, and Rousseau, but I will focus on Rawls instead, given his popularity among 20th-century white political thinkers, showing how Mills’s argument is especially powerful against Rawls’s brand of liberal contractarianism.

3. Rawls's liberal contractarianism

To many moral-political philosophers, the charge that white political philosophy seldom recognizes the existence of the racial contract, let alone engage it cogently, will just seem false. Many thinkers argue along the lines of Mills's own historical claim. The better known may be Thomas Pogge, who echoes Mills in arguing that a theory of justice is incomplete unless it engages the systemic privilege that whites have created and maintained.⁹ Martha Nussbaum,¹⁰ Peter Singer,¹¹ Richard Rorty,¹² and Thomas Nagel¹³ have made similar cases as well, though reaching different conclusions, from enforcing strong (indeed neocolonial) famine relief efforts to endorsing non-interventionism. In general, the fact that current sociopolitical and economic inequalities directly result from sustained European ethnocentrism is such an obvious historical truth that it is hardly a groundbreaking revelation in philosophical axiology.

But Mills is right that even when these inequalities are addressed, they are rarely said to be specifically *racial*, and the epistemic component of the racial contract is rarely taken seriously. Many of the aforementioned theorists, white and nonwhite alike, often couch their arguments in the supposedly race-neutral geopolitical language of "the West" and "the Third World." Even if we could remap these semantics onto a race discourse—and it is not obvious that we can—they still betray an unwillingness to acknowledge that discourse frontally. And even when theorists do acknowledge the fact of the racial contract, they seldom elaborate on it at length or cast it as the conceptual core of their theories.

Mills's argument goes deeper than accusing a few philosophers of being color-shy. He claims that the vast majority of work in the social contract tradition, always

a stalwart of white sociopolitical philosophy, ought to be dismissed because all social contract theories are rooted in racism. The works of Grotius, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Kant, and to some extent even Marx are tainted by their explicit endorsement of racist assumptions about non-European nonwhites. For the vast majority of its history in the intellectual tradition of the white West, the signatories of the social contract have been white males, and these theorists have provided little or no indication that their work was to mean anything else. Of course, theories of justice need not explicitly endorse the racial contract in order to support it. All they need to do is not acknowledge the existence of the racial contract and suggest social arrangements that either do nothing to abrogate it or that actively support its propagation.

Among liberal contractarian theories, Rawls's Kant-inspired deontological constructivism fits this profile especially well. Rawls thought that the representatives of free and equal citizens, in an original position of initial fairness, will concur on a political conception of justice that everyone can and will endorse regardless of social standing. Even though persons privately endorse different reasonable comprehensive doctrines—religious, philosophical, traditional, historical, and moral—each doctrine yet comprises the theoretical elements needed to support a public and political conception of justice. Thus, when deciding the principles of justice to regulate their society, citizens must focus on this overlapping consensus and deemphasize their individual contingencies, stashing them away behind a “veil of ignorance,” lest they render the terms of the contract biased or unequal. Stated differently, people need not agree on anything except on what they find themselves agreeing upon after a process of fair bargaining. If it should be impossible for a

person to support a political conception of justice from within his comprehensive doctrine, then that person's comprehensive doctrine is unreasonable and he ought to be dismissed from the bargaining process. Rawls's substantive claim is that those holding strong considered convictions about freedom, democracy, and equality will in fact also hold reasonable comprehensive doctrines and be able to support the political conception of justice.¹⁴

On the face of it, it seems surprising that this is a white man's theory. One might think that whites would very much like to reject it, for why would those who have the upper hand in racialized historic relations agree to abandon them? Why would whites accept to disregard their historical privilege behind a fictitious veil of ignorance once they are made aware of it? But I think it is nonwhites—and everyone who is aware of the racial contract—who are most keen to reject Rawls's theory, because his proposed equality is the wrong *kind* of equality. For one, to demand that the signatories of the contract disregard their individual socioeconomic contingencies is to propose a kind of censorship. Many philosophers have already criticized Rawls on these grounds, arguing that the ontological and moral demands imposed by the veil of ignorance are undesirable or even unattainable; Michael Sandel and Martha Nussbaum are notable examples. If the moral and social makeup of nonwhites is defined, even partly, by their nonwhiteness in a white-dominated world, then to demand that they ignore their nonwhiteness in the original position is to repress the key elements of their identity. Of course, this argument assumes (as the racial contract also does) a decidedly particularist social ontology that counters Rawls's universalist essentialism.

The sort of nominal equality proposed by Rawls is a fantasy. Legal egalitarianism is a convenient escape route for whites to not be held accountable for their oppressive policies. Among the contingencies disregarded in the original position are not only individual ones, but also historical ones, including past and present social events. For instance, the facts of European colonialism and American slavery are deemed irrelevant to the present arrangement of justice, so again, insofar as those historical facts are ontologically relevant to the psychosocial makeup of nonwhites, crossing them off the rulebook is a form of censorship. Likewise, the desire for reparative measures harbored by certain nonwhite groups will never even be addressed in the original position. This has nothing to do with the moral permissibility of reparation and everything to do with its stifling: all reparative demands would be dismissed *a priori* on purely procedural grounds. And while we may charitably read Rawls and other contractarians as proposing a contract that would work in “ideal” conditions, the fact remains that the actually existing conditions are not ideal and that it is not up to them to wipe the slate clean to *make* them ideal.

If this argument is accepted, the proponents of the racial contract have a stronger reason than Mills’s to reject Rawlsian constructivism. The problem is not that Rawls’s argument is grounded in racist theories written centuries ago, nor that it is an instrument of oppression because the proposed equality is only *pro forma*. Instead, the problem is that the proposed equality is *theoretically* unachievable and runs the risk of *systematically* silencing nonwhite voices. Consider the phrase “We the People,” where “People” referred only to white male landowners. The problem is not that it *could not* be made to refer to all persons, but that the rules by which it

was reached *in fact did* exclude nonwhites, non-males, and non-landowners from what counted as a “person” (the three-fifths compromise, etc). These were never given a voice in the establishment of the contract, just as nonwhites are not given a sufficient voice *as nonwhites* in the establishment of a Rawlsian society.

Far from rejecting an epistemology of ignorance, Rawls institutionalizes it by making the donning of a veil of ignorance the procedural centerpiece of his theory.¹⁵ Even if the resulting Rawlsian society eschewed the traditional media of ignorance propagation (say, by avoiding white guilt stories), the terms of the contract would still be agreed-upon by silencing certain voices and ignoring certain past events. Recall that the original position is not an actual point in time when freedom-loving people make decisions “from scratch,” but a thought experiment to guide our choices of justice from a historically specific and political mindset. Past events are likely to play a significant role in the culture and mindset of many groups and individuals—and yet, in a Rawlsian society, ignorance of them would be enforced at every turn, and when brought up they would be deemed irrelevant. Perhaps Rawls’s theory was never meant to uphold the status quo, but it does have the unpleasant consequence that the privileged enjoy their privilege thanks to the very rule by which they silence those who question it.

Thus, with specific regard to social epistemologies of ignorance, Rawls’s deontological constructivism contains a significant theoretical flaw that Mills does not fully appreciate but that would strengthen his argument for the pervasiveness of the racial contract. This theoretical flaw also distinguishes Rawls’s liberal contractarianism from other Western sociopolitical theories that are not vulnerable to the same objections and can instead openly discuss and work toward the

elimination of the racial contract. Thus, we can use Mill's argument against Rawls to show at least one significant way that liberal contractarianism is inferior to at least one of its main rivals. In the following section I will focus on the capability approach to justice championed by Martha Nussbaum and Amartya Sen.

4. The capability approach

Originally, the capability approach is rooted in Sen's analysis of the concept of development in deeply impoverished economies. Many Westerners see development as an increase in wealth or living conditions, but Sen understands it as an increase in *capability*, defined as the realistic opportunity to achieve self-determined or socially determined life goals.¹⁶ All people have life plans, and ways and means to attain them, so Sen asks whether the environment in which one is born and lives is conducive to a realistic opportunity to achieve those life plans. Formal equality of opportunity is not enough, nor is Rawlsian fair equality of opportunity, as both are institutional and unlikely to obtain fair results. What Sen looks for is a person's *actual* capacity to pursue her goals with relative ease and freedom, unhindered by oppression or extreme deprivation, and without necessitating heroism or inhumane sacrifice.¹⁷

Nussbaum then builds on Sen's model to propose a full-fledged political theory of justice grounded in the concept of capability. Whereas for Rawls justice is procedural fairness, for Nussbaum, justice is measured in the actual availability of human capabilities. To specify which aspects of human life are essential and thus constitute "basic capabilities," Nussbaum borrows Rawls's idea of an overlapping consensus. She believes that we can reach a lasting agreement on which

capabilities must be guaranteed for justice to exist, not from an abstract original position, but from concrete negotiation that values contingencies (past and present, collective and individual) instead of hiding them. Nussbaum thus proposes a list of ten basic capabilities that, she says, virtually everyone will endorse: being able to live a full biological life, the right to bodily integrity, being able to determine one's emotional life, and so forth. She takes pride in pointing out that this consensus was itself reached through extensive dialogue and negotiation among privileged and underprivileged people of all classes, races, and ages, and that as such it is sufficiently representative of the disenfranchised and humanity as a whole.¹⁸

I will not attempt to analyze Nussbaum's project in its entirety or discuss whether the ten capabilities are in fact sufficiently universal to be endorsed by all. Here I assume that such a project can be defended in its own right. If it can, then it can also welcome the postulations of the racial contract. First, and most importantly, it can address the epistemological claim. Whereas social contract theories propagate an epistemology of ignorance by silencing nonwhites, the capabilities approach does the opposite by promoting an *epistemology of openness*, which in turn exposes the historical and metaphysical falsehoods that allow a racial contract to persist. When procedurally unfettered dialogue is permitted and encouraged, the racial contract is likely to be the key subject. As Mills also argues, there is a deep Nietzschean divide between the sociopolitical philosophies of whites, which tend to focus on abstract justice; and those of nonwhites, which usually center on white oppression and variously racialized social arrangements (similar remarks also apply to other socially oppressed groups: refugees, women, children, persons with disabilities, etc). Nussbaum's approach would help gap this divide by

forcing whites to deemphasize abstract conceptions of justice and acknowledge the actually existing racial contract.

The capabilities approach is even more successful in addressing the social ontological claim of the racial contract. For one, far from being seen as nonwhite nonspaces, nonwhites occupy the same exact metaphysical place as whites: full people with full social identities and the full capacity to establish life paths and work toward their achievement, unhindered by oppression. The particularist social ontology dear to constructivists is thus vindicated, for the concepts of race determined by Eurocentric power relations are now brought to light and allowed to be part of the debate. Once the epistemic veil of ignorance has been lifted, all claims are again fair game, and what was censored under the *pro forma* egalitarianism of universalist essentialism now becomes viable.

Of course, this prospect does not dispel all worries. A most obvious obstacle is a strong resistance by whites themselves, philosophers and laypeople alike. After all, whites are the primary targets of the systemic ignorance propagated by their own dominant group; most nonwhites are well aware of the existence of a racial contract, but most whites are reluctant to acknowledge it. Even if they should acknowledge it, whites have no interest in actively working toward its suppression; and as under the capability approach they would lack the procedural epistemic shield of the veil of ignorance, they might find other ways to protect white privilege and enforce new versions of the racial contract. Some may be subtler; others may be overt and violent. Here one might protest that if this is what we think of whites—purely self-interested creatures who will always attempt to dominate regardless of circumstances—then one wonders why we should bother with constructive dialogue

or theories of justice in the first place. Some may prefer a solution where nonwhites surge and revolt, violently or not, to take back equality after a half millennium of oppression.

A similar worry is that even if the capabilities approach were to yield positive results and genuinely address the terms of the racial contract, it may be seen as (and it may also *be*) just another instance of nonwhites getting their liberation at the hand of whites. After all, even those who are sensitive to the oppression of systemic ignorance still postulate that liberation is only possible only if whites agree that it is. It takes two to tango, so to speak, and the theory's staunchest defenders are a white Jewish philosopher (Nussbaum) and an Indian-American economist who works in Western academia (Sen). The critic may thus complain that even this way out of a racial contract is just imperialism in a new guise. My pragmatic answer to that objection is to ask what the alternative is. If it is agreed that the capabilities approach properly addresses the negative claims of the racial contract—then to dismiss it on these grounds means (again) to say that nonwhites must liberate themselves and forcefully affirm their own voices and their own social epistemologies. Nothing in Mills's writing indicates that he would favor this option, though it is possible. I have nothing to say about it here, except that it is strongly intuitively unappealing. Whether that is because I have been raised a privileged white and still don a veil of ignorance despite myself, or instead because revolt is revolting on objective moral grounds (if there are such things), I cannot say.

¹ Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1997).

² *Ibid.*, 19-27.

³ *Ibid.*, 41-46. Ironically, the very term "nonwhite" defines them by what they are *not* instead of by what they *are*. Like a poem's white space or the granite that falls off the block while sculpting, non-whites are defined by their lack of whiteness, the black space left over **by**

white typeset. (I don't blame Mills for using the term "nonwhites," though: it's semantically elegant and captures with irony the Eurocentric sentiment of singling out the Others).

4 Ibid., 17-19.

5 Ibid., 127.

6 Annalee Newitz, "When Will White People Stop Making Movies Like *Avatar*?" *io9*, last modified December 18, 2009, <http://io9.com/5422666>

7 Lorraine Code, "Taking Subjectivity into Account," in *Feminist Epistemologies*, ed. Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter (New York: Routledge, 1993), 15-48.

8 Linda Martín Alcoff, "Epistemologies of Ignorance: Three Types," in *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance*, ed. Shannon Sullivan and Nancy Tuana (New York: SUNY Press, 2007), 39-57.

9 Thomas Pogge, "'Assisting' the Global Poor," in *The Ethics of Assistance: Morality and the Distant Needy*, ed. Deen K. Chatterjee (Cambridge UP, 2004): 260-288.

10 Martha Nussbaum, "Human Capabilities, Female Human Beings," in *Women, Culture and Development: A Study of Human Capabilities*, ed. Martha C. Nussbaum and Jonathan Glover (Oxford UP, 1995): 61-104.

11 Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 1, no. 3 (1972): 229-243.

12 Richard Rorty, "Who Are We? Moral Universalism and Economic Triage," *Diogenes* 44, no. 173 (1996): 5-15.

13 Thomas Nagel, "Poverty and Food," in *Food Policy: The Responsibility of the United States in the Life and Death Choices*, ed. Peter G. Brown and Henry Shue (Free Press, 1977): 54-62.

14 John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice: Revised Edition* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1999).

15 That is, if the particularist social ontology is true. One can object on universalist grounds that our identities are *in fact* not socially constructed, in large part or at all, and that particularism is simply false.

16 Amartya Sen, "The Concept of Development," in *Handbook of Development Economics, Vol. I*, ed. Hollis Chenery and T.N. Srinivasan (Elsevier, 1988): 9-26.

17 Ibid.

18 Nussbaum, "Human Capabilities."

"Reflecting on the Politics of Piety"

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Abstract: This essay reflects on Saba Mahmood's book, *The Politics of Piety, The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*, which analyzes conceptions of self, agency, and politics among the female practitioners of Da'wa in Egypt. Mahmood draws upon Judith Butler and Michel Foucault to demonstrate that the manner by which practitioners inhabit the norms governing their lives, is the source of their agency and influence in Islamic society. I provide a feminist analysis of the Da'wa conceptions of agency by drawing parallels with two distinct North American phenomena: the emergence of Women's Clubs in the 19th Century as purveyors of social and moral reform, and the Christian Patriarchy movement promoting the doctrines of complementarianism and pronatalism.

Keywords: Saba Mahmood, Da'wa movement, agency, subjectivation

This essay is a reflection on Saba Mahmood's book, *The Politics of Piety, The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (2005) which analyzes conceptions of self, agency, and politics among the female practitioners of Da'wa, or women's mosque movement, in Egypt. The movement is a part of the larger Islamic Revival occurring since the 1970's, marked by increased "religious sociability" across the sociocultural landscape. Mahmood's project is prompted by the uneasy relationship between feminism and religion, particularly Islam, and the question of why women may choose to involve themselves in socio-religious movements that further their subordination. Mahmood's analysis draws upon Judith Butler and Michel Foucault to demonstrate that the manner by which practitioners inhabit the norms governing their lives, is the source of their agency and influence in Islamic society. In

response, I draw parallels between Da'wa conceptions of agency with two distinct North American phenomena: the emergence of Women's Clubs in the 19th century as purveyors of social and moral reform, and the Christian patriarchy movement promoting the doctrines of complementarianism and pronatalism.

Mahmood begins her inquiry with an interrogation of the subject of freedom. She challenges the notion of freedom and the desire for freedom that are embedded in Western secular-liberal philosophical traditions as universal and transferable to the Islamic context. According to Mahmood, the secular-liberal tradition, of which Western feminism is a part, is posited on the assumptions that freedom is innate and universal to the human condition, and tied to conceptions of autonomy that situate the individual as the ultimate authority in determining his or her destiny. These traditions suggest two distinct kinds of freedom: negative freedom which is the absence of obstacles to self-guided choice and action, and positive freedom which is the capacity to realize one's will through self-mastery and self-governance, unencumbered by the regulations of custom, tradition, transcendent will, and so forth. Central to both kinds of freedom is the concept of individual autonomy, or the ability to choose one's desires regardless of the content of the desire.

The emphasis on individual autonomy is clearly a point of conflict with a poststructuralist feminist reading of the Da'wa movement (or of liberal conceptions of freedom in general). The prevailing discourse on autonomy fails to account for the emotional, embodied, and embedded character of people. From a poststructuralist feminist perspective, the idea of total autonomy is illusory because the individual is never absolute. In fact, the emergence of self occurs in relationship

to community, and exists in a continual tension to it. Women allied with the piety movement are exercising agency insofar as they make a choice for participation and, in making that choice, adopt practices and virtues that give public expression to their internal beliefs. Their mode of agency is distinct from the forms of autonomy that eschew tradition in the cultivation of selfhood, because the teachings and rituals and performance of ritual practices are what actualize the self. Thus, agency in Da'wa is found within the practice of piety to which the subject subordinates herself.

Ah—but here is the problem for feminists: how can the concept of agency coexist with that of subordination? Why would women choose to adhere to traditional virtues that are associated with their subordination in social and political life? Is the piety movement in fact a subversive movement that manipulates structures of hierarchy and patriarchy in order to open pathways for positional power and resistance against oppressive norms that dictate and delimit women's place in the world? Mahmood warns readers against imposing their Western feminist agenda of resistance/opposition into the motivation of Da'wa practitioners. Instead, Mahmood appeals to the theoretical configurations of Michel Foucault and Judith Butler to examine the agential capacity that is inherent in the movement. Mahmood's position here is that we must detach agency from the goals of progressive politics, which privileges resistance to norms, in order to discover instead how we inhabit norms.

Mahmood elucidates two key insights from the work of Foucault in this regard. The first insight is that power cannot be understood solely on the model of domination, but rather as a strategic relation of force that is productive of new

desires, discourses, and so forth. The second insight is that the subject is produced by rather than precedes these relations. Thus, the paradox of subjectivation is that the very processes and conditions by which a person is subordinated are the means by which she becomes a self-conscious identity and agent. Mahmood elaborates further through Butler's theory of performativity whereby the destabilization and resignification of power discourses occur through the reiteration of the practices that act to constrain. The act of doing (in contrast to the act of resisting) is productive of new discourses, and therefore agentic.

These insights are brought alive in examples from Mahmood's ethnographic research of six neighborhood mosques populated by Da'wa practitioners and teachers. Her examples demonstrate the deliberations of women who are striving for actualization within secular or nationalistic climates that challenge this identity. The issues with which they grapple are not theological abstractions, but real concerns that impact their daily lives: how to deal with anger; how to cultivate habits of shyness or modesty when these don't feel natural; how to handle a husband who drinks alcohol and views pornography; how to work in close physical contact with men; and so forth. In particular, the example of Abir and her wayward husband, Jamal, shows how women have inhabited the norms for Islamic women in a way that empowers them to reach for a higher moral status in their homes and in society. Abir appealed to the transcendent will of God and the traditions and rituals of piety as the grounds for her authority, which included an ongoing struggle over her attendance at mosque classes. Mahmood writes that

Abir's ability to break from the norms of what it meant to be a dutiful wife were predicated upon her learning to perfect a tradition that accorded her a subordinate status to her husband. Abir's divergence from approved standards of wifely conduct, therefore, did not

represent a break with the signifiatory system of Islamic norms, but was saturated with them, and enabled by the capacities that the practices of these norms endowed her with.ⁱ

What is it that women like Abir want? What are the new desires and discourses produced through subjectivation? Mahmood makes it clear that Abir and Da'wa practitioners are seeking not to change gender relations so that men and women are "equal" in a social sense of the word. Neither do they seek to change Islam as a theological system. Instead, the Da'wa movement aims to transform society by closing the gap between religious beliefs and daily conduct, with ritual and devotion as the means by which this transformation occurs. Mahmood's adaption of an Aristotelian view that ethical acts are good only if they achieve their goals in a prescribed behavioral form, posits that bodily acts are critical markers in the embodiment of agency.

Mahmood's explication of the Da'wa movement establishes a lens for interpreting the instrumentality of religious practice and belief in achieving agency. As I read *Politics of Piety*, I drew parallels between the Da'wa practitioners and their North American counterparts from the 19th century who established Women's Clubs as vehicles for self-development and social reform. The Club women were acting within their sphere of influence (which was a very limited sphere considering that social convention deemed their proper place to be the home); and they were driven forward with a moral charge based in their Christians beliefs. The Club women formed associations as a way of strengthening society by extending their ordained "civilizing" influence beyond the home. I see a similar influence with the piety movement, although there are also significant historical differences between the

two. The Club movement segued women's entrance into the public realm and their eventual demands for political inclusion and radical social change.ⁱⁱ

It is at this juncture that the Club movement and the Da'wa movement diverge, and Da'wa joins hands with the Christian Patriarchy movement. The Patriarchy movement, like Da'wa, is prescriptive in promoting piety in daily life, primarily through the doctrines of complementarianism and pronatalism. Christian complementarianism, based in a literal interpretation of Biblical text, believes that men and women realize full and equal humanity only through acceptance of their proscribed roles. Men are deigned as the leaders, protectors, and providers and women are the helpmates and nurturers of the family. Pronatalism in the Christian patriarchy context shuns any form of family planning (including natural family planning), requiring that women accept all children God gives to them as a demonstration of radical faith and obedience. Further, a family's fecundity is its means for expanding God's kingdom by having more children than their adversaries.

Consider these words from Nancy Leigh DeMoss, Christian radio host and advocate of the True Woman movement:

I began to wonder what might happen in our day if even a small number of devoted, intentional women would begin to pray and believe God for a revolution of a different kind—a counterrevolution—within the evangelical world... Unlike most revolutions, this counterrevolution does not require that we march in the streets or send letters to Congress or join yet another organization. It does not require us to leave our homes; in fact, for many women, it calls them back into their homes. It requires only that we humble ourselves, that we learn, affirm, and live out the biblical pattern of womanhood, and that we teach the ways of God to the next generation.ⁱⁱⁱ

According to DeMoss, the religious sociability of the evangelical counterrevolution is signified by a prescriptive biblical womanhood of caregiving and

homemaking. However, anyone living in the United States knows that what is implied in this call to liberation through submission is hardly confined to the home or family. As the evangelical movement organizes, its political impact grows and becomes apparent in the enactment of policies and institutions that jeopardize the freedoms of women outside the Patriarchy movement. It is possible for me, as a feminist, to regard the work of the Da'wa movement in Egypt with generosity. Frankly, my physical and material life is not immediately threatened by their moral project. But what about my counterparts in Egypt? Women who, like me, do not align with a theologically conservative movement that upholds gender subordination, however it is justified? What recourse do these women have, especially when we imagine the combined effects of Da'wa, Arab nationalism, and political Islamism? Egyptian women whose relations with their husbands and extended kin are less than satisfactory may find empowerment and agency through the practice of Da'wa. In these instances, Da'wa sustains women if they choose to "endure," or enables them to muster the courage to leave. But are the choices of enduring or leaving enough? What about the rest of us? The (im)possibilities leave me feeling quite undone.

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 - ii Kaminer, Wendy. *Women Volunteering, The Pleasure, Pain, and Politics of Unpaid Work from 1830 to the Present* (Norwood, MA: Anchor Press, 1984).
 - iii DeMoss, Nancy Leigh, *Biblical Womanhood in the Home* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books 2002), p. 13.

Iranian Energy Policy towards the South Caucasus from the Perspective of neoliberal IR Theory

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Abstract: This paper examines the energy policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran towards the South Caucasian states from the perspective of Neo-Liberal IR theory. Significant attention is paid to energy because the trade of this commodity is the most crucial part of bilateral relations between Iran and the countries inhabiting the South Caucasus. The main argument of this paper is that material state considerations, not Islamic ideology define Iran's energy policy in the South Caucasus. Neo-liberal theory, which favors the achievement of goals with the help of soft power and gaining comparative advantage for all parties, over absolute advantage for one side, is used as the main method for discussing the relations. A short background is provided to Iran's relations with each South Caucasian country, followed by an extensive review of the current state of affairs of the relations. It is demonstrated that Iran has managed to preserve normal relations with all the three countries, which supports the initial argument.

Keywords: Energy policy, Trade, Iranian Foreign Policy, South Caucasus, IR Theory

1. Introduction

The era of globalization brought substantial changes in the relations of different countries. Old indicators of state behavior are no longer existent, they are simply unsustainable. Currently, soft power gains advantage in most of the regions of the world. Countries try to overcome their problems through dialog and negotiations, rather than by using force. Absolute gains are favored over relative gains. Less than

twenty years ago only a few would have imagined that almost half of the world's population would now have access to the Internet. This is an example of old standards vanishing and being replaced by new ones. Iran (officially called Islamic Republic of Iran or IRI) has become one of the crucial actors in the South Caucasus recently, largely due to its geographical location and political-economic capabilities. The country plays a major role in the economic interactions of the South Caucasus. The relations between Iran and the South Caucasian countries are developing constantly, largely due to the changes discussed above. Iran, being a religious state cooperates with its secular neighbors. Moreover, for a long period of time it has favored Christian Armenia over Muslim Azerbaijan in its foreign affairs. It should also be stated that the country maintains good relations both with Azerbaijan, with whom it had territorial disputes (the problem of Iranian Azerbaijan) and conflicts on the oil market and with Georgia, which is an ally of the United States, Iran's major rival in the world arena. It should also be stated that the trade of energy sources is the most crucial part of bilateral relations between Iran and the countries inhabiting the South Caucasus. The aim of this paper is to discuss Iran's foreign relation with the South Caucasian states regarding energy issues, paying serious attention to Iran's bilateral relations with these states and avoiding external factors (the role of the US, Russia, Turkey etc.).

That main argument of this article is that Iran's relations with the South Caucasian countries can best be discussed from the perspective of neoliberal IR theory of International Relations. The main contribution to the field would be a change of discourse considering the foreign relations of Iran, from describing the country as a player which uses hardball tactics to one that is more open towards

finding common solutions with its partners. This change of discourse would better equip researchers as well as policy practitioners when dealing with situations that are similar to one discussed below. This paper will begin with discussing the theory itself as opposed to other major schools IR theory and will proceed with stating why this theory best explains Iran's bilateral relations with the South Caucasian states that are going to be presented in more detail below.

2. Neoliberal Theory in International Relations

Neoliberalism, which is often referred to as 'neoliberal institutionalism,' is one of the major theories of IR. Like Neorealism, it encompasses features of both Liberalism and Realism, which makes these two theories more flexible than the formers. As mentioned by Robert Keohane and Lisa Martin, two of the main proponents of the theory, the common ground between Realism and Neoliberalism is the assumption that there is absence of a sovereign authority which is capable of creating and enforcing agreements. It suggests that states advance their own interests, while also making it difficult for them to cooperate with othersⁱ. Not excluding contention between states, Neoliberalism, like Liberalism, favors achieving goals with the help of soft power. It argues that the importance of anarchic character of the international system has been overstated by Realists and Neorealists and that the latter underestimate the possibilities of cooperation within such a systemⁱⁱ. As we will see below, the situation in the South Caucasus is quite close to this assumption of Neoliberalism. Another cornerstone of Neoliberals is the statement, that modern countries favor absolute gains over relative gains, which primarily means denying the zero-sum game and favoring comparative advantage

through which all states would expand their wealth. Finally, what makes Neoliberalism different from Liberalism, together with the acceptance that international system is anarchic, what Liberals do not accept is the role that most Neoliberals give to institutions as mediators of cooperation and brokers of peace in international system. This idea was largely defended by Keohane, whose recent argument is that “many well-informed commentators view the multilateral institutions that have emerged from all this work as providing important support for the contemporary world orderⁱⁱⁱ. One of the principal theories of Neoliberalism that will be recalled below is the theory of Complex Interdependence suggested by Keohane and Nye^{iv}. They argue that in an international arena there is no hierarchy among issues, as Neorealists claim. Another major argument is that in the modern international system states are interdependent as they can’t survive alone and that use of military force among these states is not exercised due to prevailing complex interdependence^v. It will be shown below that Iran’s relations with all three South Caucasian states are a perfect example of Complex Interdependence on a regional level.

3. Iran’s relations with Armenia

The bilateral relations of Islamic Iran and Christian Armenia are a great example of Neoliberalism. An old indicator of state behavior, i.e. Islamic ideology, can no longer be applied. The main factor defining Iranian policy is the possibility of achieving economic gains on both sides. This cooperation is mutually beneficial, as it allows Armenia to get out of the economic embargo and blockade imposed by Turkey and Azerbaijan due to the war over Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, while Iran

is seeking its way out of isolation through partnership with Armenia^{vi}. Iranian–Armenian economic relations are based on the four areas of gas, electricity, trade and industry, the centerpiece of which is Iran’s gas exports to Armenia^{vii}. This cooperation is of strategic importance, because it allows Armenia’s energy security and creates a transit road for Iran’s gas exports to Europe possible at the same time. Iranian energy policy played a significant role in the improvement of the relations between two states. In this sense the inauguration of Tabriz-Sardarian gas pipeline by Presidents Ahmadinejad and Kocharyan, in March 2007, was of significant importance. In 2010 the two countries expanded this cooperation. “The agreement is signed for 20 years. For each cubic meter of the Iranian gas, Armenia is to deliver to Iran 3 kWh of energy”^{viii}. This project provides Armenia with an opportunity to become the main exporter of electricity in the Caucasus region, and fosters its economic growth. The bilateral cooperation on electricity supplies should be characterized in two areas: the creation of power plants and an opportunity of Iran–Armenia–Georgia trilateral cooperation^{ix}. Another indicator of Armenia’s strategic importance for Iran is the fact that Iranian businessmen hold one of the largest numbers of joint ventures in the country. The priority areas for them are energy sources and energy transportation. Annual trade between Iran and Armenia doubled to \$200 million, between 2002 to 2006^x. The two sides have agreed on the construction of a third power transmission line which would connect Armenian and Iranian power grids. The leaders of the two countries are planning to build a large hydroelectric plant on the Arax River flowing along the Armenian-Iranian border, increasing their annual trade volume up to \$105 million^{xi}. In May 2011, Armenia and Iran signed a Memorandum of Understanding to increase cooperation in the

energy sector. An agreement was reached to build a 500-800MW power line to interlink electricity grids of both sides^{xii}. Another major agreement was reached to build a 365-kilometer-long pipeline delivering oil from Tabriz to the Armenian town of Yeraskh. The construction of the pipeline is scheduled to be completed by 2014. This agreement, coupled with the construction of a 470-kilometer railway connecting the two countries is believed to further strengthen the cooperation between Iran and Armenia^{xiii}. It should be added that the outlook on Iranian-Armenian relations is generally optimistic. Both sides gain serious advantages from cooperation and are prone to increase it. It will affect the amount of monetary transactions and will increase the mutual trust. Each side believes that the interactions will continue over a long period of time. Drawing on what was mentioned in previous section, this belief is equally shared by the scholars of Neoliberalism, while it also loses some crucial aspects when trying to analyze from the perspective of other major theories^{xiv}.

4. Iran's relations with Azerbaijan

Though these two countries share cultural and religious affinities, their relations are not as friendly as the Iranian-Armenian relations. This is, due to large extent to the fact that Iran and Azerbaijan are competitors on oil and natural gas markets. This is another example of unsustainability of aforementioned old indicators. Another fact should also be given serious attention. Though the two countries have grievances towards each other on what percentage of the Caspian Sea they would get, there has never been an ambition to use hard power on any side. This means that Iran and Azerbaijan favor achieving absolute gains, i.e. economic stability in

the region and trade of the goods they possess, over relative gains. Building up on what was discussed above it should be restated that the bilateral relations between Iran and Azerbaijan should also be analyzed from the perspective of Neoliberalism. Iran uses soft power against Azerbaijan, which means that the country fulfills its goals through cooperation rather than coercion^{xv}. Despite major problems there have also been several strategic agreements between these countries, the most important of which was the agreement for implementing electricity projects signed in August 2004^{xvi}. Another agreement to build a hydroelectric dam on the Arax River was signed in December 2006, which would give possibility to use the river's water equally. The third major agreement was signed in early 2006 and implemented in August 2006, according to which electricity from Iran would flow to the Azerbaijan Republic via the Astara border^{xvii}. However, due to the absence of an agreement on the percentage of the Caspian Sea each country would get the bilateral relations remain rather tense. What should be added is that the trade of energy is also quite crucial for Azerbaijan as its exclave of Nakhchivan is totally dependent on Iranian natural gas. It is anticipated that when some of the ongoing projects are completed the flow of electricity between the two countries will triple, from 200 to 600 MW^{xviii}. The collapse of the Soviet Union brought substantial changes to the South Caucasus. Both sides are exchanging information and trying to cooperate on issues of mutual interest. Scholars belonging to the Neoliberalism school largely favor these exchanges and claim that when two countries communicate with each other the likelihood of a conflict is very low^{xix}.

5. Iran's relations with Georgia

Unlike Armenia and Azerbaijan, Georgia does not have common borders with Iran, which limits the bilateral relations between the two countries. It should also be noticed that Georgia is an ally of the United States, the relations of which with Iran are rather tense. However, Iran and Georgia reached several agreements regarding trade of energy sources, primarily of natural gas. This is also an important indicator of Neoliberal concepts implemented in practice. It should be added that Neoliberals believe that “there are many mutually beneficial arrangements that states forgo because of the fear that others will cheat or take advantage of them, they see important gains to be made through the more artful arrangement of policies”^{xx}. In this sense it could be said that Iran and Georgia managed to overcome their fears. Bilateral relationships were established in 1992 and are dictated by the economic aspect. It was reported on this occasion that Georgia would receive 200 billion cubic meters of gas from Iran, providing chemicals, minerals and other raw materials^{xxi}. After President Saakashvili's visit to Tehran in July 2004, an agreement was reached according to which Georgia would export mineral water to Iran in exchange for gas^{xxii}. Due to the fact that Georgia was experiencing problems with gas because Russia declared that it would double the price of its exported gas to Georgia from 2007, Iran would find a reliable economic partner. After Russian gas was cut off in early 2006, Iran exported 30 million cubic meters of gas to Georgia, which is an indicator of Iran's importance in Georgia's foreign relations^{xxiii}. “In June 2005, during President Saakashvili's visit to Tehran a memorandum of understanding for \$2.5 million development aid from Iran was signed”^{xxiv}. It was reported several times that Georgia paying serious

consideration to joining the Iranian–Armenian energy cooperation^{xxv}. In January 2006, Georgia reached an agreement with Iran for emergency natural gas supplies as Georgia suffered its worst energy crisis. Russian high level officials were regularly accused of imposing an energy blockade on Georgia. The last meeting between these two countries took place In January 2010, when “Iranian officials discussed the terms for building two hydroelectric power plants in Georgia with a combined capacity of 36 megawatts”^{xxvi}.

6. Conclusion

Iran’s energy policy in the Caucasus should be understood by material state considerations and not by ideology. However, there is room for expanding the cooperation between Iran and the South Caucasian republics. Taking into consideration how important South Caucasus is for Iran’s national interests after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Iran, being a regional power, has not pursued as active a foreign policy towards its northern neighbors as it could. However, over the past twenty years Iran has been active in expanding its presence in the region and gaining influence by reaching agreements on economic cooperation and extending economic ties with South Caucasian republics. One of Iran’s primary goals is to become one of the most influential actors in the South Caucasian economy. If Iran manages to fulfill the goal, it will recover its geographical-economic status as the north–south and east–west corridors for connecting various regions to one another, such as Europe, the Middle East, and West and East Asia. It was demonstrated above that Iran tries to maintain good relations with all three South Caucasian states, though the degree of bilateral cooperation has not reached desirable levels.

The focus of Iranian energy policy towards all three states is the trade of natural gas. The country has reached high-level cooperation in the sphere of electricity, as well. From a theoretical perspective, as was noted several times above, these relations, largely based on mutually beneficial trade, could be best understood from the perspective of Neoliberalism. Neoliberalism, unlike other major schools of International Relations theory, has enough capacity to describe all the nuances of these relations in a grasp manner, without losing any key points.

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ⁱⁱ Evans, Graham, and Jeffrey Newnham. *The Penguin Dictionary of International Relations*. London: Penguin Group, 1998: 29

ⁱⁱⁱ Keohane, Robert O. "Hegemony and After: What Can Be Said About the Future of American Global Leadership?" *Foreign Affairs*. Volume 91 No. 4, 2012: 2.

^{iv} Keohane, Robert O., and Joseph S. Jr Nye. *Power and Interdependence*. New York, San Francisco, Boston: Longman, 2001.

^v Keohane, Robert O., and Joseph S. Jr Nye. "Power and Interdependence in the Information Age." *Foreign Affairs*, Volume 77, No 5, 1998: 83.

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^{ix} Ibid, 397

^x Ibid, 397

^{xi} Sadeh-Zadeh, Kaweh: "Iran's Strategy in the South Caucasus." *Caucasian Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 2 (1), Winter, 2008: 37-38

^{xii} Varun Vira and Fitzgerald, Erin: "The United States and Iran: Competition Involving Turkey and the South Caucasus." Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2011: 24

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- xiv Jervis, Robert. "Realism, Neoliberalism and Cooperation: Understanding the Debate." *International Security* 24:1, 1999: 52
- xv Keohane, Robert O. and Nye, Joseph S. Jr.: "Power and Interdependence in the Information Age." *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 77, No. 5 , 1998: 86
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- xvii Ibid, 403
- xviii Balla, Evanthia. *Turkish and Iranian interests and policies in the South Caucasus*. Policy Brief, Norwegian Peacebuilding resource Center, 2013: 2
- xix Jervis, 51
- xx Ibid, 48
- xxi Hafezian, E. K. and Mohammad H., 406
- xxii Ibid, 406
- xxiii Sadegh-Zadeh, K., 40
- xxiv Hafezian, E. K. and Mohammad H., 407
- xxv Ibid, 407
- xxvi Ibid, 407

"Possibilities for Changing Capitalism from Within: Perspectives on Critical Management Studies"¹

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Abstract: Scholars in the humanities and social sciences have given considerable attention to the deleterious effects of neoliberal, capitalist systems; however, the critique of capitalism does not emanate singularly from these academic areas. There is also an active and growing critique of capitalist systems from within the field of business by critical management studies theorists. This essay introduces the contemporary perspectives of Critical Management Studies (CMS) to an interdisciplinary audience for its potential to bridge some perceived ideological gaps between those disciplines that likewise offer critique of the systems of power that perpetuate the neoliberal state. I argue that CMS has a potentially important political voice to offer because of its inherently critical consideration of the normalized assumptions of organizations that reflect the aims of economic capitalism. Additionally as a political resource, CMS offers additional possibilities to de-center neoliberal discourse because of its academic location within the discipline of business. I suggest that CMS could be a vehicle for providing analytical focus on, and an accessible public voice to, those power structures of domination that populate the capitalist market system. This essay also provides a brief demonstration of the potential intersection of interdisciplinary and CMS scholarship through Clegg's circuits of power model.

Keywords: critical management studies, power, poststructuralism, interdisciplinary, capitalism, organizations, circuits of power

1. Introduction

Scholars in the humanities and social sciences have given considerable attention to the deleterious effects of neoliberal, capitalist systems; however, the critique of capitalism does not emanate singularly from these academic areas. There is also an active and growing critique of capitalist systems from within the field of business by critical management studies theorists. This essay provides an overview of the contemporary perspectives of Critical Management Studies (CMS) and, specifically, its attention to power in organizations.

The CMS body of scholarship is varied, rapidly growing, and unified in its commitment to understanding systems of domination perpetuated within and across organizations; its calls for heightened reflexivity in scholarship, and its examination of how operations of power can create oppressive systems. The reason to introduce CMS to an interdisciplinary audience is for its potential to bridge some perceived ideological gaps between those disciplines that likewise offer critique of the systems of power that perpetuate the neoliberal state. One of the stated objectives of the CMS division of the Academy of Management is “to build bridges to progressive social movements to contribute to positive change for social and environmental welfare.”ⁱⁱ By introducing CMS to a broader interdisciplinary audience, this essay contributes to the bridge-building and offers an example of how redeploying one view of power within a CMS framework may help yield transformative social change.

A key reason for interdisciplinary scholarship to consider CMS resources is that CMS scholars offer additional political resources for change by virtue of their academic location from within the field of business. Given this location, critique of

capitalism may reach those scholars and practitioners enabling and reinforcing oppressive systems of management more directly. Though CMS' institutionalization within business schools has been critiqued as diluting its radical, liberatory potential,ⁱⁱⁱ I suggest that the existence of this location creates a recognized space for critique from *within* the business disciplines that would be otherwise inaccessible for scholars from any discipline. In fact, the Critical Management Studies division of the Academy of Management is explicit in its desire to serve as a space for "expression of views critical of established management practices and the established social order."^{iv} As an example of their efforts to reinforce and expand this space, the 2013 Academy of Management (AoM) Annual Meeting, which is generally recognized as one of the premier academic conferences within the discipline of management, was entitled "Capitalism in Question?" and was organized by the CMS division.

CMS, as with other critical disciplinary studies, identifies theoretical roots from Critical Theory and scholars of the Frankfurt School.^v However, CMS intentionally expanded its theoretical commitments such that the CMS Workshop^{vi} organizers originally self-described its approach as a "big tent,"^{vii} and it takes seriously its commitment to different epistemologies that challenge the positivist assumptions of "objectivity" and managerial thinking.^{viii} CMS counts among its critical theoretical resources the redeployment of mainstream scholarship such as classical sociology, contingency and resource dependency theories, and Marxism, as well as embracing more contemporary approaches found in postmodernism, pragmatism and symbolic interactionism, feminism, and environmentalism.^{ix} This interdisciplinary base provides multiple opportunities for interdisciplinary scholarship.

CMS is also explicit about its political commitments, which align well with interdisciplinary scholarship concerned with emancipatory politics. CMS can trace its origins out of the Labour Process Theory (LPT) scholars with its distinct, leftist political tradition. This leftist political commitment remains visibly evident as a tenet of CMS as reflected in their current goal statement:

We observe that management of the modern firm (and often of other types of organizations) is guided primarily by the interests of shareholders and other elites. We are critical of the notion that the pursuit of profitability will automatically satisfy society's broader interests. Such a system extracts unacceptably high social and environmental costs for whatever progress it offers. We believe that other priorities, such as justice, community, human development, and ecological balance, should be brought to bear on the governance of economic and other human activity. The overall goal of our research, teaching, and extra-curricula activities is to contribute to the creation of better organizations, more humane societies, and a viable world system.^x

However, CMS is a highly contested arena for scholars and practitioners, particularly with regard to the current state of its political efficacy in creating actual social change. Simply put, critics question the applicability of CMS solutions to real, contemporary issues. Other, related critiques of CMS frequently comment on the inaccessibility of the language by scholars, a lack of self-reflexivity of CMS by CMS, the institutionalization and power relations of CMS, the lack of politically actionable outcomes, and lost relevancy to lived experiences.^{xi}

Generally, CMS subdivides its broad field according to the epistemological premises of the scholarship (i.e., standpoint epistemology, poststructuralism, or critical realism), and then further by its radical or reformist aims.^{xii} However, CMS appears to have reached broad agreement on at least one thing: the theoretical intent of CMS is to create a transformative impact on current management practices both in the field and emanating from the academy. After this general

consensus, agreement becomes partial at best. CMS is broadly varied and tends to be embroiled in levels of contestation as to what CMS *is* and what it should *be/become*, not to mention concerns over its overall effectiveness in making an impact. Despite (and more likely because of) the variations within CMS, it has emerged as a recognized “field” in the academic spaces of management, organizational theory, and other related social science interests in a relatively short span of time. The critical voice CMS offers in the academic arena has resonated with a growing body of interdisciplinary scholars in its direct critique of the majority of recent organizational literature that uncritically succumbs to “managerialism” and largely fails to respond to the broad demands and human concerns created by the framework of global capitalism/neoliberalism.^{xiii} As a result of these and other issues, CMS is an on-going and growing area of inquiry for scholars working in organizational and managerial fields.^{xiv} With this backdrop in mind, this essay’s purpose is twofold. First, I aim to provide a general introduction of CMS to an interdisciplinary audience that is well equipped to engage in and further the discussions of power and domination central to CMS, particularly as connected to the impact of global capitalist systems. Second, I briefly present one possible intervention to address the critique of CMS, namely its lack of applicability.

One particular criticism of CMS has been its inaccessibility and its inability to create actionable, practical workplace impact, due in part to the esoteric language and theory deployed by post-structural scholars, but also from the privileging of an academic “publish or perish” mentality over transference of CMS through public practice.^{xv} This “lack of applicability” is the criticism that this paper will specifically address through the consideration of organizational power analysis. The next

section provides an overview of the history of CMS and the academic streams that have emerged in the CMS scholarship. This is followed by a brief discussion of the fundamental epistemic differences of CMS from mainstream organizational theory work and an explicit positioning of my paper's epistemic positionality for this analysis. Finally, I argue that the incorporation of Clegg's model of circuits of power into the CMS framework enables a CMS scholar to potentially meet two goals. It first provides an approach to conducting an analysis of organizational and institutional power structures that could be publicly accessible and actionable, while also meeting the larger CMS goal of creating an opportunity for transformative, radical critique that, if acted upon, could improve the work lives of targeted segments within organizational power networks.^{xvi}

2. The Historical Overview and CMS Streams

A common attribution for the "moment" around which CMS seemed to have coalesced, at least as a branding acronym or acknowledged label, is the 1992 release of the Alvesson and Willmott edited book, *Critical Management Studies*.^{xvii} Although earlier strands of humanist-type critique of capitalism and bureaucracy are evident as theoretical predecessors in the literature of multiple disciplines, this book provided a critique of management as not simply a technical function, but by utilizing critical theory, repositioned management as a complex social function. This marked a key moment in the continuum of problematizing CMS thought.^{xviii} This book entered as a counter to the instrumentalist approach of managing people singularly to achieve ever more efficient, productive outcomes, which had become the pervasive unquestioned paradigm in both theory and practice as reflected in the

late 1980s adoption of the term “human resources” in the field and emergence of “managerialism” in the academy. To this end, scholars from around the world, though particularly concentrated in the United Kingdom, resonated with the call for a radical critique of the discipline of management under the label CMS put forward by Alvesson and Willmott, and gained cross-disciplinary steam throughout the 1990s, becoming an established presence in the United States by the late 1990s.

The CMS presence continues to be stronger in the U.K., though it has established a solid, if more tenuous, presence in the U.S. today.^{xxix} In its evolution, CMS took another critical turn, and further distancing itself from LPT, in 2000 when Fournier and Grey identified three core elements specific to CMS as “de-naturalization,” “non-performativity,” and “reflexivity.”^{xxx} This scholarship was another important moment in CMS for the on-going problematizing of management scholarship that it represented, and opened the floor to the contestations within the field about the defining characteristics of CMS.^{xxxi} However, Fournier and Grey’s work remains critical in the CMS body of literature in establishing a framework within and against which the field has responded, and in so doing, further institutionalizing CMS as a legitimate field of inquiry.

Establishing the aims of CMS is also a challenge because of the breadth of the scope under its “big tent,” although multiple authors have explicitly addressed this project.^{xxii} Very generally, the concerns of CMS are the broad economic and social system that reproduces social injustice in the workplace, and based on the evidence from this lens, CMS advocates for radical critique of these systemic processes that moves organizations toward emancipatory goals.^{xxiii} For most CMS participants, the source of this inequity is directly attributable to the centering of the capitalist

market system and the well-established systems of domination that are connected to this economic model and that reproduce these systems of domination. “CMS proponents argue that so long as the market is the dominant mechanism for allocating resources in our societies, community and government influences are forced into a subordinate role.”^{xxiv} This is problematic because capitalistic market forces have no mechanism to incorporate the outcomes of counter values (e.g., justice, community) that reflect the needs of the social systems within which an organization operates.^{xxv} This imbalance results in systemic social injustice. CMS scholars further assert that these systems of domination are enacted through the role of management; not individuals in management, but through systems of “business and management that reproduce this one-sidedness.” To this end, Adler et al. describe the motivation of CMS proponents as stemming from a “concern with the role of management in the perpetuation and legitimation of unnecessary suffering and destruction, especially in the spheres of work and consumption,” and a belief that this suffering is “remediable.”^{xxvi}

Although this section presents a somewhat cohesive goal for CMS proponents, it is by no means a cohesive, uncontested field. As a basic tenet, CMS encourages a breadth and diversity of interpretations for pursuing these lofty ambitions that, at its extreme end, intend nothing less than the dismantling of “business” as an academic discipline and the deconstruction of the current capitalist economy. At the other extreme, the CMS strategy is dedicated to change through a reformist critique that challenges existing capitalist structures from within the same systems of domination.^{xxvii}

Though still a relatively small area within the broader field of management, the

speed with which CMS appears to have made inroads into the global academic organizational and business communities is remarkable. Although the United Kingdom is generally recognized as the hub of CMS scholarship, there has been significant growth around the world, even in the United States where the commitment to the assumptions of the capitalist economy remains strongest. For example, the CMS interest group in the Academy of Management (AOM) is the fastest growing.^{xxviii} This suggests that CMS, as a relative newcomer to the business stage, is gaining “traction” within the Academy. This is also evidenced by its growing and institutionalized presence in the world’s business schools. This kind of “domestication” or “taming”^{xxix} is an important point of concern for many CMS authors interested in the future of CMS, and much attention has been given to this positionality and the opportunities, politics, and challenges to scholarship and education processes that result from it.^{xxx}

Independent of, yet related to, this concern about CMS’s institutionalized situatedness, the key authors in CMS are reluctant to define CMS as a “field,” as this process in itself is antithetical to the radical critique intended to broaden and transform the academic disciplines engaging in organizational and managerial theory and practice. Nevertheless, recent attempts have been made to synthesize the greater body of CMS works. This synthesis reveals a field that is multidisciplinary and pluralistic and encompasses a broad range of perspectives. Nevertheless, these perspectives tend to reflect distinct, identifiable streams within the CMS literature.^{xxxi}

The influence of Fournier and Grey can still be seen in the common CMS streams, though they have broadened to reflect the expanding scope of the field.

According to the overview of critical management studies in *The Academy of Management Annals* (2007), these common themes include: “Challenging Structures of Domination” (e.g., feminist scholars, critics of bureaucracy and market structures, critical realists), “Questioning the Taken for Granted” (e.g., neoinstitutional theory, de-naturalization, critical theory), “Beyond Instrumentalism” (e.g., non-performativity), “Reflexivity and Meaning” (e.g., critical epistemology), and “Power and Knowledge” (e.g., critical scholarship, critiques of managerialism).^{xxxii} The examples provided here for each theme provide only a small fraction of the kinds of work being done within each theme. CMS scholars have drawn on many theoretical traditions to build the field. Some are represented above, but also include regulation-oriented/structural theories, classical sociology, Marxism (particularly in its descendants of Labor Process Theory and the Frankfurt School for critical theory), Pragmatism, Postmodernism, Feminism, and Environmentalism.^{xxxiii}

It is worth noting that, arguably, the most significant, recent, theoretical cleavage within CMS is between those scholars aligned with poststructuralist versus Marxist theoretical and political traditions. Furthermore, many of the divisions within CMS mirror the same debates and divisions of the same theoretic camps within the social sciences.^{xxxiv} As critical as these theoretical themes are to understanding CMS, it is perhaps more important to emphasize CMS scholars’ commitment to a different epistemological grounding than that of the predominant, noncritical, management scholarship because it is upon this different epistemic foundation that CMS deploys its theoretical approach.

3. Epistemological Considerations for CMS

A primary consideration for CMS proponents is the epistemic assumptions upon which authors premise their transformational critiques. The notion of radical critique within CMS is itself a contested notion, and this is reflected in the epistemic positions evident in the resulting scholarship. Despite differing epistemic positions, all of the primary epistemological approaches of CMS in some way seek to interrogate and complicate the notion of unquestioned “neutral” knowledge that emerged from the positivist and liberal tradition of scientific knowledge and that the management scholarship of the 1970s and 1980s embraced.^{xxxv} This most certainly can be identified in the predominant discursive streams in the business literature. In their overview of the CMS literature and trends, Adler, Forbes, and Willmott assert that there are primarily three epistemological approaches for CMS work: standpoint, poststructural, and critical realism (2007). Although fundamentally different approaches, each calls into question notions of scientific objectivity that ultimately reveals “Truth” through a scientific approach based in “facts.” Nevertheless, each epistemic position enables fundamentally different critique and can lead to outcomes that vary from radical to merely reformist in the pursuit of undermining systems of domination.

Put differently, each set of epistemic assumptions provides both strength and weakness to CMS’ ability to serve as a resource for the transformative actions that undermine systems of domination, such as neoliberal forms of capitalism. To that end, the power analysis in the final section of this paper is situated in a poststructural epistemological approach to CMS through the work of Stewart Clegg’s Circuits of Power model; however, it is moderated by a nod toward a critical

realist epistemology, which will be addressed later.

Poststructural epistemology primarily engages notions of language and its role in power constructions; the shift in understanding of the subject/object of knowledge as well as the contextual positioning of the “knower,” and a position of anti-essentialism characterized by “modesty of truth claims and reflexivity about the position of the observer world.”^{xxxvi} Although this too is contested, this was the basic framework that was intended to enable CMS to access new views into organizational and managerial theories and provoke opportunities for “radical critique” that would break the bounds of traditional epistemic conditions.

This epistemic position is appropriate for a consideration of CMS and power analysis for several reasons. First, poststructuralist epistemology decenters the knowledge production process to enable a better understanding of the whole by actively engaging the view from the margins. The margins are those moments that become available through the deployment of *proximal* rather than *distal* thinking in methods. Essentially, proximal thinking undoes the assumptions of a structured, “fixed” organization and mobilizes the notion of an organization as existing in a state of *becoming* [from Cooper (1986) as described in Adler et al, 2007]. This shift enables a richly contextual, temporal and contingent understanding of power in its particular circumstance. Second, the use of discourse analysis is critical to understanding not only episodes of power (to be discussed in the circuits of power) but also how the use of discourse continually constructs the broader network by which any power episode is governed and interpreted. Finally, poststructuralism pays explicit attention to the infusion of power throughout a knowledge system. It epistemically “centers” power, not other organizational signifiers that represent the

status quo.^{xxxvii}

For all its benefit, much scholarship based in poststructural epistemological approaches has been roundly criticized for the inaccessibility of the language as well as relativistic and highly theoretic findings that do not produce actionable outcomes applicable to lived work experiences.^{xxxviii} To address these criticisms in this project, the poststructural epistemic position is moderated by an epistemic facet characteristic of critical realism (within CMS) – ironically, one that poststructuralists specifically criticize. Critical realists contribute the epistemic conception that though there are empirical observations of objects made by science, these objects in fact have a “real existence” independent of this observation (and the observers), and critical realists seek to understand the structures that interconnect these “real objects.” Critical realists contend that ontologically there is an actual “layered reality” existing beneath the empirical layer: it presupposes causal powers motivating all observations.^{xxxix} Although the poststructural objection to this is the implied concession of a discoverable objective “fact,” the critical realist suggests that this is actually an opportunity to open the discourse in and among the scientific community about contesting “fact” and in this way, open the knowledge process to movement towards “more true” knowledge.^{xl} To this end, I see a bridging of poststructural and critical realist epistemic positions as important complements in addressing the criticism that CMS scholarship generates theory with little, to no import for real, transformative change.

Based on this epistemological frame, I suggest that by deploying the Circuits of Power Model, as introduced by Clegg, within this epistemic frame, CMS can address the criticism of public applicability and accessibility.

4. Circuits of Power

As stated earlier, CMS is characterized by the breadth of ideas it attempts to address within the landscape of critical thought. Therefore, individual scholars have attempted to enhance the utility of CMS by finding additional theoretical and methodological approaches that, when combined with CMS, provide a new lens of analysis otherwise inaccessible through current CMS scholarship. Analysis of networks of power through a CMS lens could be enhanced through the application of Clegg's Circuit of Power model. Stewart Clegg presented the full conceptualization of his Circuits of Power model in 1989 in his book *Frameworks of Power*.^{xli} In fact, the circuits of power model could be considered an unusual CMS vehicle, if for no other reason than its *practical* value as an analytic tool of power for post-structural theory. Furthermore, Clegg may actually contest being categorized as a CMS scholar given the current state of the field.^{xlii} However, I argue that the intention and design of this model is an exemplar of what CMS might represent in considering organizational power relations.

By adopting the epistemic positioning of both poststructuralism and critical realism, Clegg's Circuits of Power becomes a lens through which CMS goals might be achieved. This model interrogates the systems of power by beginning with recognition that the fundamental unit of analysis, an episode of power, is part of "complex and evolving" systems that are richly contextual. Therefore, the question becomes "whether episodic outcomes tend rather more to reproduce or to *transform* [my emphasis] the existing architectonics – the architecture, geometry and design – of power relations."^{xliii} This explicit interest in the transformation of existing power relations places this approach within the broad interests of CMS and

potentially aligns with the transformational goals suggested by CMS within a poststructural epistemology.

The circuits of power model, which is designed to consider power at a specific “focus” and a particular “level of circuit,” specifically engages situational and contextual elements required to integrate individual agency as well as capture the broader power implications at social network levels. Clegg’s interpretation of power is both a critique of the prevailing organizational theory scholarship of the time (in the late twentieth century), and a critical response to the development of power concepts more broadly. Clegg conceived of power as the variable outcome of the organization of social relations. It therefore only exists within “a relational field of force.” In other words, agents can only “‘possess’ power in so far as they are relationally constituted as doing so.”^{xliv} Generally, his overview of power is that it is non-causal (rather than a causal force occurring only in specific power episodes); it can be a positive, productive force (rather than a coercive force as a feature of illegitimate or informal organization), and the conditions of power are not *a priori* as they are conditioned on existing social relations. This last feature was a departure from the dominant view from the contingency perspective (as it was connected to resource dependencies) in organizational theory.^{xlv} Furthermore, Clegg’s conception of power is not of singular, post-structural theorizing. For example, he is aligned with the views of Braverman (labor process theory) in linking power to the division of labor, though he believes Braverman under theorizes the roles of resistance.^{xlvi} Clegg also aligns with Marxian theory with its analytic emphasis on economic domination and the relations of production.^{xlvii} In Clegg’s conception of power, relations of meaning, in addition to relations of production, are also of central

concern.

However, Clegg parts company from neo-Marxian approaches that assert that the division of labor is an outcome of historical power processes and serves as a causal mechanism, that is typically ahistorical. Instead, Clegg states “almost any phenomenon can be a resource [for power] in the appropriate context.”

Furthermore, Clegg does argue for an embodiment of power relations through the translation of the Marxist ‘species-being’^{xlviii} as one “who constitutes, and is constituted by, a moral universe of meaning.”^{xlix} Through this embodiment, Marx’s ‘species-being’ becomes a person who then, in the analytics of power, is gendered, ethnicized, nationalized, etc. This conception of power allows for broader possibilities of agentic capacity of the person entering into circuits of power. Clegg’s ‘person,’ when entering into organizational relations of power, “is irremediably social” as an individual and as part of a collective organizational unit.ⁱ

It is important at this point to avoid overstating a theoretically “ecumenical” approach here. Though Clegg sees potential connections in a variety of theoretic traditions, Clegg’s understanding of power is fundamentally Foucauldian, and this is infused in the Circuits of Power model. In particular, Clegg’s notion of power is deeply affected by Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish*. Foucault argues that the power of “the gaze” creates embodied knowledge that then disciplines the actors of the society without physical intervention from the institution/state.ⁱⁱ It is this kind of structural power, the disciplining of the body of the citizenry --a biopower that exists in all organizations, that is representative of the field of power envisioned in the operations of the circuits of power. However, while Foucault tends to neglect the subject in the systems of power, Clegg keeps an analytic focus on the individual

agent within his model through his theorization of episodic power and resistance.^{lii}

Deployment of Clegg's approach could achieve the goals of CMS by questioning the accepted role of power relationships within existing structures that constitutes the epistemic foundation of much organizational scholarship, while also addressing some of the existing critique. One of the criticisms of CMS has been its "esoteric post-structuralism" that serves only to cloud organizational issues in incomprehensible, and circuitous theories that lead away from productive discussion of workplace power struggles. This theoretic obfuscation creates barriers to a leftist politic. A group of scholars associated with post-Braverman Labour Process Theory (LPT) has been vocal in their view that CMS, particularly in the streams that emerged in connection with Michel Foucault, is guilty of "fetishization of managerial dominance at the cost of meaningful study of employee agency."^{liii} The circuits of power model directly engage this criticism with explicit consideration of individual agency and organizational dominance within a contextualized frame of power. Through this model, the systems of power that frame individual political structures can be represented in individual episodes of power, while recognizing that it is the series and culmination of episodes themselves that create the governing power framework. This approach utilizes a Foucauldian post-structural episteme by recognizing the creation of power-knowledge through the discursive events and resulting structures. However, recognition of the episodic nature of power displaces the ubiquity of power that Foucault advocated and places the individual as *a priori*, embodied social "facts" within a circuit of power.^{liv}

By displacing this notion of perpetual power construction, another criticism of CMS is addressed – its applicability. CMS is tenuous as a field in part because of its

current failure to move out of business schools and into public discourse.^{iv} This challenge has emerged from the inability to translate post-structural rhetoric into both methods and language that can make sense to the public about publicly observable phenomena (e.g., the global financial meltdown or corporate environmental damage). The circuits of power model creates frameworks for analysis that a skilled practitioner or a serious student of business can actually work with in order to assess the power structures that limit or enable the actions of an agentic actor, organization, or network of organizations.

Since its introduction in 1989, scholars from a variety of fields have redeployed the circuits of power model to analyze and explain organizational power issues at multiple scales. Hutchinson et al. used the circuits of power model to explain how episodes of power within a particular workplace of nurses created and perpetuated systemic workplace bullying.^{lvi} Clegg et al. deployed the model to explain how the Nazi party was able to develop and perpetuate a system that created the Holocaust.^{lvii} To demonstrate its potential utility to CMS, I briefly consider a planning study originally conducted by Bent Flyvbjerg in Aalborg, Denmark, which was reanalyzed by Clegg et al. through the circuits of power model.

The original study analyzed the 1977 Aalborg Project, which was a plan by Aalborg officials to limit car use. This Project ultimately generated significant conflict among multiple stakeholders with the ultimate result leading to wholly negative outcomes such as increased car traffic, disconnected bicycle paths, and increased fatalities in car accidents. Flyvbjerg concluded that the greater the power of a stakeholder, the lesser the need for rationality in decision making. Clegg et al. further analyzed the same case through the circuits of power model to determine

how the outcomes identified by high-level Aalborg officials were changed through the process. In so doing, Clegg et al. reveals how within individual episodes of power, the habitus of agents (i.e. city officials and other stakeholders) leads to reproduction of power systems, rather than enabling attention to transformative possibilities (i.e., stated goal of reduced car use).^{lviii}

The outcomes of this analysis have potential connection to the emancipatory aims sought by CMS scholarship. For example, one of Flyjberg's key findings was that there are ramifications for agencies when power and knowledge are intertwined. Specifically, the "means justified the ends" and power holders had less responsibility for rational grounding for their actions.^{lix} CMS scholars could use the findings about power revealed in this case to consider impacts on civic policy and discourse, and to develop theoretical as well as pragmatic methods for identifying and disrupting hegemonic discourse as manifest in episodes of power. This could lead to political and social activism by CMS scholars in ways that directly address criticism of the field.

Another project based on these data could be research about the creation of new forms of engagement that enter into a circuitry of power with emancipatory intention. This could have immediate relevance, for example, in the mobilization of community voices in "Public Meetings" that are used to collect opinions of coming public projects, by centering the voice of the community, rather than centering the position and response of the government, developer, or other powerful interest group. These suggestions would build on the understanding of power as being layered, richly contextual, and dependent upon the discursive constructions built by a community.

Another opportunity for CMS is the expansion of its consideration to move beyond management of a single organization and into the realm of the management of resources, networks, and institutional systems.^{lx} To this end, CMS must also have an analytic tool capable of scaling up its analyses to address the domination within and between networks of power. Deployment of the circuits of power model within the framework of CMS emancipatory aims enables this kind of view in that an actor in the circuit of power model is not limited to the individual, but also can exist as an organization. Further, an individual or organization can be connected to multiple circuits through the juncture of “obligatory passage points” through which power must pass in the circuits of power model. Alvesson et al. (2009) suggests the utility of CMS in the Global Justice movement, for example, as scholars have already identified the privileging of property rights over human rights in some global institutions through the use of corporate lobbying. In other words, reanalyzing power in a global justice framework, through the circuits of power model, would reveal the actors present and absent in the obligatory passage points of power (e.g., corporate lobbyists instead of human rights organizations).^{lxi} The identification of the actors influencing power outcomes affords the possibility of new strategies to affect better outcomes for justice.

5. Summary

CMS has a potentially important voice to offer in management studies because of its inherently critical consideration of normalized assumptions of organizations that reflect the aims of economic capitalism. However, unless these theoretical critiques can migrate into publicly accessible impacts, the future of CMS is

vulnerable to marginalization through the same processes that have enabled its rapid emergence on the organizational scene. Further, the critical moment for CMS to make this move may be now, in the face of evidence of global capitalist meltdown that gripped the U.S. and many Western-European countries. There is potentially a distinctive receptivity to this critique in the academic community at this moment. CMS could be a vehicle, from within the business disciplines, for providing analytical focus on and accessible public voice to the implicated nature of power structures of domination that populate the capitalist market system.

ⁱ This essay benefited significantly from the insightful comments provided by the peer review of this article and for which I am very appreciative.

ⁱⁱ CMS Division, 2014, CMS at the Academy of Management: Domain Statement, In, ed. Academy of Management, Critical Management Studies (CMS) Division, http://group.aomonline.org/cms/about_us/Domain.html (accessed January 16, 2014, 2014).

ⁱⁱⁱ M. Rowlinson, and J. Hassard, "How Come the Critters Came to be Teaching in Business Schools? Contradictions in the Institutionalization of Critical Management Studies," *Organization* 18 (2011), 673-689; Mayer N. Zald, "Spinning disciplines: Critical Management Studies in the Context of the Transformation of Management Education," *Organization* 9 (2002), 365-385.

^{iv} See Note 1 above.

^v A. Scherer, "Critical Theory and Its Contribution to Critical Management Studies," in *The Oxford Handbook of Critical Management Studies*, eds. M. Alvesson, T. Bridgman and H. Willmott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 29-51.

^{vi} The CMS Workshop was first organized in 1998 as a pre-conference forum to discuss critically oriented research interests. It continues to meet at the Academy of Management Annual meeting and is in 2007 became an official special interest group of the Academy of Management.

^{vii} Paul Adler, "Critical in the Name of Whom and What," *Organization* 9 (2002), 387-395.

^{viii} A. Scherer, "Critical Theory and Its Contribution," 29-51; M. Alvesson, T. Bridgman, and H. Willmott, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Critical Management Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, USA, 2009); Paul S. Adler, Linda C. Forbes, and Hugh Willmott, "3. Critical Management Studies," *Academy of Management Annals* 1 (2007), 119-179; C. Grey and H. Willmott, eds., *Critical Management Studies: A Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, USA, 2005).

^{ix} Adler et al, "Critical Management Studies," 119-179; Adler, "Critical in the Name of Whom and What," 387-395.

^x See Note 1 above.

^{xi} Brewis, and Wray-Bliss, "Re-searching Ethics," 1521-1540; S.R Clegg, D. Courpasson, and N. Phillips, *Power and Organizations*: (London: Sage Publications Ltd, 2006); Fournier and Grey, "At the Critical Moment," 7-32; Hancock, "Critical Management Studies: An Introduction," *Critical Sociology* 34 (2008), 9-14; Heiskala, Risto, "Theorizing power: Weber, Parsons, Foucault and Neostructuralism." *Social Science Information* 2, no. 40 (2001):241-264; A. Tatli, "On the Power and Poverty of Critical (Self) Reflection in Critical Management Studies: a Comment on Ford, Harding and Learmonth," *British Journal of Management* 23 (2012), 22-30; P. Thompson, "Brands, Boundaries and Bandwagons: A Critical Reflection on Critical Management Studies," in *Critical Management Studies: A Reader*, eds. C. Grey and H. Willmott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 364; M. Voronov, "Toward Engaged Critical Management Studies," *Organization* 15 (2008), 939-945; David Grant, Rick Iedema, and Cliff Oswick, "Discourse and Critical Management Studies," in *The Oxford Handbook of Critical Management Studies*, eds. M. Alvesson, T. Bridgman and H. Willmott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, USA, 2009); Adler, "Critical in the Name of Whom and What," 387-395; Rowlinson and Hassard, "How Come the Critters," 673-689; Zald, "Spinning disciplines" 365-385.

^{xii} Grey and Willmott, *Critical Management Studies: A Reader*

^{xiii} Ibid.; Adler, "Critical in the Name of Whom and What," 387-395

^{xiv} Grey and Willmott, *Critical Management Studies: A Reader*; Voronov, "Toward Engaged Critical Management Studies," 939-945; Alvesson et al, *The Oxford Handbook*;" Adler et al, "3. Critical Management Studies," 119-179.

^{xv} Voronov, "Toward Engaged Critical Management Studies," 939-945. Hancock, "Critical Management Studies: An Introduction," 9-14; Phillips, "The Adolescence of Critical Management Studies?," *Management Learning* 37 (2006), 29-31; Rowlinson and Hassard, "How Come the Critters," 673-689.

^{xvi} Voronov, "Toward Engaged Critical Management Studies," 939-945.

^{xvii} Adler et al, "Critical Management Studies," 119-179; 119-179; Alvesson, Bridgman, and Willmott, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Critical Management Studies*; M. Alvesson, and H. Willmott, eds., *Critical management studies* (London: Sage, 1992).

^{xviii} Adler et al, "Critical Management Studies," 119-179; Alvesson et al, *The Oxford Handbook of Critical Management Studies*

^{xix} Adler, Forbes, and Willmott, eds., *Critical Management Studies*, 119-179; Alvesson et al, *The Oxford Handbook of Critical Management Studies*; Rowlinson and Hassard, "How Come the Critters," 673-689.

^{xx} V. Fournier, and C. Grey, "At the Critical Moment: Sonditions and Prospects for Critical Management Studies," *Human Relations* 53 (2000), 7-32; Rowlinson and Hassard, "How Come the Critters," 673-689; Zald, "Spinning disciplines" 365-385.

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Global Configurations of Violence and the (Im)possibility of their Mitigation: An interview with Harry Gould & Brent Steele

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These questions were put together in coordination with some ASPECT students in response to some of the articles that Brent Steele and Harry Gould have shared for the purpose of the seminar “Global Configurations of Violence and the (Im)possibility of their Mitigation”, that took place on October 18, 2013. Steele and Gould were interviewed in the afternoon after this seminar. We wanted to take the conversation we had earlier that day and the conversation we had the night before in the ASPECT symposium on Geopolitics titled “Thinking and Writing Critically in International Relations” and to expand it for the purpose of the SPECTRA journal. The interview explores issues and concepts situated particularly in the field of International Relations, while it also speaks to a larger audience interested in the discussions on state responsibility, violence, alternative forms of accountability and the different facets of American national security in the twenty-first century.

Kent Morris: Harry Gould, Brent Steele, thank you for being here for this ASPECT interview for SPECTRA.

Jennifer Lawrence: How might traditional IR (International Relations) theory, which embodies the state with ideas of responsibility and intent, inform

contemporary public policy which is burdened by special interests? Do you think it speaks to a larger anxiety of where to locate responsibility and intent in a dislocated global economy where corporations play a role as political agents, in addition to states? How is agency changing? In what ways is this anxiety expressed and this displacement resisted by states?

Harry Gould: One thing to immediately bear in mind is that this role of special interest is in no way uniquely contemporary. It is something that traditional IR theory just simply bracketed. It was there. There was just a conscious decision made on the grounds of method to set it aside. This way you would get the early split in the field between IR theory and foreign policy theory. There was always that recognition that the State is not in fact a unitary monolithically rational actor. But a deliberate decision was made to treat it for certain purposes as if it were one. And then people who were not interested in doing that, but rather in opening the black box (a phrase that Ferguson and Mansbach use in *The Elusive Quest*), were understood to be doing something slightly different. They were not doing IR theory. They were doing foreign policy analysis or foreign policy theory. So, traditional IR theory has at least been aware that there are competing interests from within the state. Morgenthau acknowledges that pretty plainly.

When you look at the ideas of state responsibility and state intention, of course that's part of a very long trajectory of thinking in the West. And even there, Morgenthau arbitrarily uses Hobbes for that. He even shows that these varying voices are still there. They are just sublimated and they are subjected to the will of the sovereign. And the will of the sovereign is the will of the state. Of course, in a modern state this is much more complicated than simply wanting a correlation

between one person's will or one person's intention and that of the apparatus of the modern state.

In terms of what traditional IR theory has to tell us, it is really hard to say, because there is a bit of a disconnect that is still there. For the most part, say like neoclassical realism, the people like Michael Williams who are looking at classical realism in their own ways are still not especially interested in prying open these internal decision mechanisms. The idea of state responsibility, which is something that the realists have sort of agonized over because it is a logical extension of the idea of state personality, is something that they do not necessarily buy into. That opens a lot of interesting doors.

There is this desire, not necessarily related to traditional IR theory, to be able to ascribe responsibility. It is a fairly universal impulse. Am I getting in any trouble by talking about the universals of humanity? There is a fairly general human impulse to want to ascribe responsibility for wrongs that happen, for injuries suffered. Of course that responsibility is not always negatively formulated. It is not responsibility just as blame, as if one has an obligation to do something.

Brent Steele: As responsibility to protect?

Harry Gould: Yes. The problem with that is that it is actually a mal-formulation, because it really is an obligation to protect. At least in legal terms, and that is really where that comes out of. Responsibility arises from violation of obligations. So, colloquially we talk about responsibility in terms of "one is responsible to do something." But here, more strictly speaking, that does not really work. But the point still stands that it is a widely, if not universally, felt impulse to want to be able to ascribe blame or responsibility, and you guys get at the heart of

it in the way you formulated the question. It is much harder to do so in a globalized economy, in a globalized world, where actors are not anymore as easily treated as discrete separate entities in their own space, or their own space of mutual interaction. The level of interconnection is too great.

Of course, IR people have been saying that since the sixties. It comes in and out of fashion all the time. The interest in corporations was big in the sixties and the seventies, faded out, came back in, faded out again. If you look back at some of the literature published before any of us were born, there is a theme about the disappearance of the state, not quite a Marxist language, but the withering away of the State, and an assumption that these other transnational actors were going to supersede it. So far they haven't. But what they have become able to do has increased in scope. Back in the fifties and sixties, if you were in South America or in Central America, there were certain American corporations you didn't want to get on the bad side of. You wanted to stay on ITT's good side, United Fruit's good side, Anaconda Copper's good side, or you would no longer be in power. But, even then, they were corporations pushing around individual governments of individual countries. In the case of United Fruit, the brother of one of the people on the board was the director of [the] CIA. But now the scope that corporate behavior can have, or the effects of corporate behavior, or even just things that happen to corporations are much more global. ITT never had the same kind of power globally that megabanks have now to upset the entire world economy. Whether it is a matter of responsibility, because they have done something improper, or responsibility for some sort of malfeasance, or just that if something bad happens to them they drag everybody down.

Kent Morris: What do you see states doing as a way of combatting this? Or are they embracing it?

Harry Gould: There is definitely push back. And I think the locations of that resistance are largely the same as they were in the sixties and seventies. It is the less developed world, the America-Sur states, whether it is through overt means that were used back then, like nationalization, expropriation, or whether it is just in genuinely "you're not welcome here, your money is not welcome here, your influence is not welcome here." But I don't think that more globally, there is that kind of push back. I think that corporations are too deeply implicated in the economy as in the governments of the wealthier nation-states for them to view it as a reasonable possibility of pushing back against their presence.

Kent Morris: So, rather than a conflict, you would say it is a partnership?

Harry Gould: Yes, not always a happy one, of course. We are seeing in the United States and the Republican Party now that big business is starting to have some reservations about the people they put into office three years ago

Kent Morris: The coming of age of corporate political power?

Harry Gould: I think they are just realizing that they may have backed the wrong horses in 2010. You know, there has been for a long time, at least since the Reagan years, an alliance between the GOP and big business. But now that the GOP is so fractured, that partnership is under some strain.

Kent Morris: A side question: Sovereignty is claimed to be waning by many theorists, Wendy Brown included. I would say maybe that it's more like Hardt & Negri's notion of sovereignty being transformed in a way, or transferred, which kind of goes against the whole notion of sovereignty. The point is: do you see a sort of

transfer of sovereignty to these non-state corporations? Maybe they have such great influence and impact that they are directing global affairs more so than traditional states have in the past.

Harry Gould: There has definitely been flirtations with it, but I don't think that there is a willingness outright to transfer all functions of governance to corporate actors. There is this discourse in the US that government should be run like a business. But all one needs to do is go back to whatever economist in the liberal tradition, even the Vienna tradition, to remember that the market is not the best solution to all problems. I think that there is not yet any willingness to go that far. I mean, there are sort of these dystopian visions of a world where governments have been supplanted by global corporations.

Jennifer Lawrence: Maybe there is not so much of a transference of sovereignty, but an allowance of sovereignty. There is a book that came out called *Private Empire: ExxonMobil and American Power*, which argues that Exxon is allowed to operate as a sovereign.

Kent Morris: I wouldn't say transference. I would say the equivalent of acting and having the effect of being sovereign.

Harry Gould: If we shift the language, there are parallel regimes. Sovereign states decide, whether truly voluntarily or under economic coercion, not to exercise certain of their rights and authority vis-à-vis corporations. They just decide not to bind them to the rules or not hold them to some standards. I guess, in certain parts of the world, like the Niger Delta, where corporations are effectively controlling territory. But that's not new. The various East Indian Companies controlled territories, and most of the American colonies were originally corporations. It is not

a new phenomenon. Obviously, it differs in extent. But I think it is important to bear in mind the example of East Indian Companies. That level of outright control of all facets of sovereignty over a chunk of territory is something we are not yet seeing.

Francine R de Paula: From your perspective, what are the circumstances whereby states grant private mercenary armies the right to wage war against state actors? What are the implications for state sovereignty as a result of the practice of outsourcing what is traditionally understood as the duty of the state to non-state actors? If the state outsources the use of force, what language has been created, and through what practice has it been created, to legitimize the use of force by private security companies?

Harry Gould: There are a couple of things going on here. One immediate response before looking at the historical relationship between privateers and governments is that outsourcing might be loading the dice. Maybe authorizing is a better and less prejudicial term. Connotatively, outsourcing is looked down pretty negatively. Historically, governments have authorized private actors to use force on their behalf, simply when they, for whatever reasons, didn't have the resources to fund the military or, more importantly, fund the construction of the military hardware. Why did the early US republic authorize privateers? It was because it is cheaper to pay people to do it than to train and equip people to do it and build ships for them. I think, generally, it is a resource matter. And today, Private Military Companies (PMCs) are a huge concern, though in the last couple of years, I suppose corresponding to the US withdrawal from Iraq, they have become much less visible, and much less problematic.

That line of work is actually becoming much less lucrative for these corporations. In recent US usages of PMCs, to the best of my knowledge, they haven't been utilized against other states. They've been utilized against non-state actors, whether it is Al Qaeda or whether it is a different Sunni insurgency in Iraq or a Shia insurgency in Iraq. We've used them to supplement the army or the military against non-state actors, for example by putting PMC personnel on ships in pirate prone waters. Now, obviously, if this were to become a more widespread problem, our contemporary understanding of sovereignty would be challenged in a lot of ways. But if we look at the US use of privateers, it is still in the United States' Constitution. Congress can still authorize us if we can all go in together in a nice boat. We can still be privateers if Congress grants us letters of marque and reprisal. But remember that, for a good chunk of the Renaissance and early modern period, a lot of states didn't have standing armies and they paid mercenaries to do their fighting for them.

I think that a lot of what is at work in this question is really some Weberian prejudice. Or maybe prejudice is too strong. But states are still monopolizing the legitimate use of force. They are not exercising it, but are the ones who are doing the authorizing. So if you have the monopoly of the legitimate use of force, it doesn't mean you have to do the fighting. It means you get to say who legitimately uses force. I don't think there is any necessary or definitional reason why modern states couldn't do that and still be viewed as fully sovereign, if they were to choose to not have their own citizens to do the fighting. France still maintains the Foreign Legion. They have their first class military, but they also have the Foreign Legion.

In terms of the language of legitimation, I am actually not too familiar with what the discourses have been surrounding the deployment of PMCs. My inference would be that it has to do with 'not expending American lives', even though many soldiers in PMCs are U.S. ex-military. I think it is generally presented as somehow less offensive to the sensibilities of the public if mercenaries are getting killed on our behalf, even if they are Americans, than if good soldiers from the Corps of Cadets are giving up their lives. Their lives are important and sacred, while the lives of mercenaries are expendable. Talking about the valence of terms, you use mercenaries once in the question and switch to private security companies, and of course those companies strenuously avoid the use of the word mercenaries.

Ultimately, my point is that is it not any sort of necessary challenge to our understanding of sovereignty for a modern state to employ mercenaries. It is built in the US understanding of itself. There is a long history of it. What we are (or were) doing in Iraq is not necessarily that novel, except maybe in scope, because that was really the Americans' first largely privatized war. It wasn't just corporate actors doing some of the fighting, but all of the other stuff as well. It was a war fought by Cheney's big Company Halliburton. That was not America versus Iraq, but Halliburton versus Iraq with the US providing some additional resources. But the food services and all the logistical training were privatized. I actually sometimes think that the phenomenon of that stuff being privatized is almost more interesting than the war fighting being privatized, because the war fighting part of it is not new, but the privatization of everything else is more novel.

Francine R de Paula: Do you think that the fact that most contemporary conflicts have been categorized as intra-state conflicts could more easily enable the

delegation or the authorization of the use of force to private military companies, since there are no direct national interests in the fight, as in the cases of humanitarian interventions?

Harry Gould: If we switch gears to international law, the law there is very clear that if you send them [private military companies], they are an extension of you for legal purposes, whether they are mercenaries, or the Contras in 1980s. So maybe in terms of public relations back home, it is easier to do it when you are not sending your citizens to die. In terms of the other external aspects of sovereignty, and the issues of obligations related to the external aspects of sovereignty, for those purposes, it is really irrelevant whether they are regular uniformed military, mercenaries, or just nationals of that same country equipped and supplied and sent by you.

Kent Morris: I was thinking of Machiavelli.

Harry Gould: Yes. There is the idea in Machiavelli that mercenaries are not trustworthy. It was Rousseau who called them useless and flabby. "They will fight and die for you as long as there is no fight going on". Now we have this phenomenon that you get the guys who are all 'gung-ho' about killing without having any of the restraints that they would have as normal uniformed military.

Kent Morris: Dr. Steele, I would be interested in hearing how you came up with the idea of "aesthetic insecurity," the moments, points, or events when you began to develop a clear vision and application of the concept. How might this concept help explain the discursive construction of "national security," "insecurity," and "crisis," which are dominant discourses in US identity formation?

Brent Steele: I don't know where the hunch developed, but I think for me the function of developing this perspective of aesthetic insecurity came as an initial response to the neo-conservatives in the early 2000s, and their influence on U.S. foreign policy. If not ubiquity, at least the high frequency with which I heard references, maybe not voiced in this language, to what the U.S. looked like when they were doing something and how they couldn't look like. And if that's the case, that's an interesting move that we had not, at least up to that time, properly recognized.

Kent Morris: That America can't look weak.

Brent Steele: Exactly. So it is not whether America is weak. We have no discussion of what the ontology of weak and strong is. We have a discussion on how they are represented. I was reading Foucault's late work on aesthetics, and a little bit of Dewey on aesthetics. And then I started looking at some of the intellectual writing by some of these neo conservatives - not necessarily the ones who were working in the Bush administration, but those who were writing in the 2000s and who had been writing since the 1960s, like Norman Podhoretz. If you look at some of his writings in the 1960s, you see these very bizarre things. He wrote this famous essay on "Our Negro Problem." He has an overarching argument of being a Jewish kid growing up in Brooklyn or the Bronx and getting beaten up by African Americans. Now, he does claim that the way in which you overcome this "Negro Problem" overall is that America needs to not segregate the "negros" in certain areas and move out to white suburbanite areas, but that one needs to engage the "negro" perhaps in a more collaborative way. When you read through that essay, he has some of these bizarre references. He talks about watching the

"negro" dance on the dance floor and aching with all of his body that he wished that he had the grace, the style, and the beauty of it. And you think: where is he coming from here? But there was sort of an aesthetic sentiment that he was developing, and you will see it also in the 2000s when he makes references to how the United States can't withdraw from Iraq in a column entitled *America the Ugly*. And all of this is coming out by the time I was writing *Defacing Power*. And the idea is not that the United States needs to withdraw or stay because of what is happening in Iraq, but because you don't want it to look like 1975 in Saigon.

Kent Morris: Or Carter in the Iranian hostage crisis.

Brent Steele: These are aesthetic memories of past history when we looked weak. So we can't look weak again and withdraw from Iraq.

Kent Morris: Carter was weak and Reagan was strong.

Brent Steele: Exactly. Even though Carter was the one who gave the 'go ahead' to that secret operation. It just didn't go well. But again, the way in which they construct this aesthetic security through language, discourses or rhetoric is using historical images as either a negative representation of what the United States was and how it has to combat that with what it needs to look like in the here and now. And the concern is that it will even translate into a physical security. They never ever detail how this would happen, and then it became an end in and of itself, that aesthetic security was security. There wasn't "you can't look weak, because that will lead to the barbarian hordes knocking down our walls." It is just that you can't look weak, because you can't look weak.

So there is this sense in the 2000s, especially when it came to the conduct of the Iraq war, when there are all these aesthetic representations that could be

inherently challenged, because you idealize them. If you think about the cosmetic angle to it, it is making you look like something else than you think you are. You have an idealized representation of what you should look like and you're constantly trying to strive for that. But just like supermodels and airbrushing or whatever else, there is no way you can strive for that all the time. So you are inherently set up to be insecure, and that's the meaning of insecurity. It is a special type of insecurity that is a little bit different from our typical understandings of insecurity. But an insecurity that I think is, if not prevalent, as much of a factor. Maybe not a cause or an intent, but as much of a factor in the security practices, violent practices and reactions of the United States, especially in the 2000s, than a typical sort of national security drive for power interests as described by political realism. That's not happening in the 2000s, but nobody seems to be noticing that move, that this seems to be what war is about, or what violence is about. It is about what you look like, and not what you are. That was interesting to me and it provided an opportunity.

I see rhetoric and discourses of it in the construction of national security and insecurity. When you think about crisis in terms of aesthetics of security or insecurity, it is a crisis over representation and how you look. If that's the case, you look insecure, because there is no way that you're going to be able to overtake a hegemon physically, theoretically. This also leads toward the intersections with classical realism that we are coming from. Some of the classical realists were very agent-centered, arguing that the only thing that has really unsettled hegemons was hubris, and not tragedy. It was their own agency that got in the way. And that's what is happening here with a formulation of security as connected to aesthetics.

You're easily manipulable. It is easy to tweak someone that has this idealized understanding of who or what they are. It is harder to tweak someone at an individual level who doesn't really give a damn about what he looks like. But you can inherently and quickly, momentarily at least, tweak or cajole or securitize an actor that focuses on crafting an aesthetic self. So, in that case, the United States looks on the one hand "powerful" and, in the 2000s, it also looks inherently powerless because it could so easily be manipulated.

We forgot the contractors from Blackwater that hung from the Fallujah bridge. We don't talk about them as even being contractors, because there is immediately the construction of the historical images... This is Blackwater Down! And they substitute the references of Black Hawk Down at the time of the situation at the Fallujah to the idea: Black Hawk down. This is what we looked like being dragged through the street of Mogadishu and we went through. We can't do that, so we have to react to that vision. And they are not even really reacting to the vision of Fallujah, they are reacting to a hallucination of what was going on in 1993 represented in the form in 2004 of what we need to do, because that's what we did before. And we need to do something different now. So we look different, we look more powerful.

To me, that's something that gives you empirical leverage, because the operation that they had after the initial Fallujah contractors situation in the Spring of 2004 went on, it blew up a bunch of stuff, and then it went through and they ended up handing over Fallujah to a former Iraqi General under Saddam Hussein. And you have all these military journals, saying that this didn't make any sense. No, it doesn't make any sense if you think of military objectives as being connected

to some sort of operational goal. But if it is all about looking like something, it makes perfect sense. It is abhorrent, but it makes perfect sense.

Kent Morris: More so than just the objectives of the state, how strong or relevant do you think this is for securing a sort of fixed and set identity for Americans and their perception of domestic legitimacy and authority?

Brent Steele: I think it is inherently important. Some of my work is just springboarding from this. I would never put it in the same category of some persuasive, effective books, like David Campbell's work on America in *Writing Security*, about it being the ultimate imagined community. His interpretation of American security policies was basically that it is somewhat decentered and can't go about doing all of these things and trying to securitize what America identity is. He shows in his dataset all these weird national security memos that were supposed to be classified, but they are still using these discourses to try to securitize American identity. I am kind of springboarding from that and saying that this inherent groundlessness also can be manifested even more in an America subjecting itself to an aesthetics of insecurity. Some of the critiques I received from friends, like David McCourt, have been about "I am British and I get it. It sounds really American. You've got the US in 2000s paid. But sometimes we speak the language of social sciences and if we don't consider ourselves social scientists, how can we extrapolate or generalize about the others." I think there are aesthetic elements of it. But the aesthetics of insecurity, the ramping and hyper aesthetics of insecurity is really something that is prevalent in the US American experience, and some of it goes back to where Campbell is coming from in that book.

Harry Gould: McCourt just missed it by a few decades in the U.K.

Brent Steele: You're right. He is doing work on the Falkland Islands war. For me, this is interesting because that's the first war I remember as a kid. When I teach Intro to International Relations, I always ask all the students, freshmen and sophomores, to write down the first international event they remember. Some of them put Pearl Harbor. I don't think they've heard the question right. I specify that it is in their lifetime. Some of them put really strange answers. Some of them put princess Diana dying, which I guess is an international event. But a lot of them put 9/11. I always ask what they think mine was, and they say: "Vietnam?" I get a little concerned about that, not necessarily because they think I am old, but because I don't really think they know when the US experience with Vietnam was. But for me, that was the Falkland Islands war. I remember having one of those globes and asking my dad: where is the Falklands? He used to show me: down here, by Argentina. And I wonder: Why is this country ruling all the way down here? That was my first experience of an understanding of security interest that was almost completely devoid of any material content and that had to be representational. So, MacCourt's work showed that the roles that Britain was embodying were connected to British identity after World War II. This was an explanation for the Falkland aesthetic, recasting the British role as being a defender of the status quo rather than a former colonial power, even though it was going all the way down to Argentina and occupying these Islands. I think that's interesting and instructive. I actually do think that there is an element of aesthetic insecurity. I don't want to say it's inherent in all countries and even in nonstate actors. But there is an element of it that is inherent in the crafting of security practices.

Kent Morris: You have argued that the “scars of violence” constitute their own powerful form of accountability. However, this is mediated because some meanings are inscribed while others are silenced. Which raises attention to the legitimacy of the author who is inscribing accountability. How, then, can the scar expose the responsibility of the perpetrator, rather than displace responsibility? Could environmental degradation, or poverty, for example, be seen as scars, which might expose that these wounds are created by those who appear to heal them?

Brent Steele: I actually think that the second question somewhat anticipates or helps me to answer the first question. The first thing I should mention in answering the second question is that I am aware of the conceptual limitations of the scars I am looking at, because they are not covering some of these forms of human deprivation that can sometimes be much more prevalent, empirically general and happening out there, and much more violent in terms of their effects on human beings, like environmental degradation and displacement.

These understandings of human security, if we want to call it that, are really not covered by the types of scars that I am focusing on. But that being said, the point that I was trying to make with the scar was that, because it is open, because it is a mark, it is temporary and permanent, the opportunities for going in and providing an account are seemingly endless. It resists one dominant reading, rendering and covering over it, excluding others. That doesn't mean it doesn't happen. One of the cases I look at is the Emmett Till case. We are still not 100% for sure what happened in the Emmett Till case, even though the FBI had this huge investigation in 2004 and it was also investigated in the 1950s. And that's in the domestic

hierarchical settings of the US where we should be able to come up with some form of accountability and an account of what happened.

But this is a problem, because we are not then able, getting back to the basis of this question, to locate the perpetrator responsible for it. But it is also an opportunity, because it means it focuses on some type of reflection, and not just a matter of who is responsible for this. There is a response to the scar. That's my understanding of responsibility with autonomy that I am teasing out. If we respond to it, we don't identify just one person. We might have a possibility of reflecting on other processes besides just the initial perpetrator that did it, that could be responsible for, if not causing that particular scar.

I am writing this in the wake of the 2000s and, to me, it feels that there is no form of accountability going on, for the people who tortured, the people who gave the orders to torture, the people who initiated the Iraq war that became a catastrophe. It doesn't feel they are being held accountable, with the exception maybe of what we call vertical accountability in terms of the voting booth. But for me, when this sort of aspect of accountability really came through – and again I am using bodies of others to do this, which is problematic in and of itself – it was roughly in 2006 or 2007 at the University of Kansas, which is fairly close to Fort Leavenworth, which has a huge military presence, obviously. So, we are used to seeing students who are in the military and also students walking around sometimes in their uniforms. There was one day when I was in the library and I saw a student walking by and everybody was looking at him. And it was someone who was far younger than I was, roughly the age of the students I was teaching at the time, and he was injured with a scar in his face and his leg was partially

amputated. What is interesting to me is the reaction that this stimulated amongst the students who were walking across campus. Because then the scar is right there, and yes, maybe you can provide the clichés, the reasons for why that person had to go over to Iraq. But when the scar is open and it is contestable, you might have to resist that sort of simple explanation. We can do that when it is not in front of us, but it is more difficult when it is in front of us. That felt to me like a possible way for an alternative type of accountability, that we don't recognize, that actually could be, I think, in some ways, more poignant and powerful at a ground level than even formal mechanisms of accountability could be. Even though we feel more satisfied, satiated, or gratified by the formal accountability mechanisms: somebody being tried by a jury and then executed, or whatever. But, sometimes, there are these other forms that I think are important.

But it is a problem, too, because the most effective part of this alternative form of accountability, for me, is when the perpetrators haven't been held to account. Even in formal accountability practices, like truth commissions, you see a lot of references to scars, where people have to face down the people whom they impacted. So there is an element of speaking or narration that is there that provides a particular account that challenges what might have produced the violence in the first place. Including the perpetrator, who is primarily perhaps responsible for it, but also the community within which these things happened, and who are responding to it. So when I see all those students on campus reacting to this, the idea is not just "oh, this is one or two people that sent that person over there." But there were a lot of people driving around with flags saying "Let's Roll" in the back of their cars in 2003. And it wasn't just Bush and Cheney. So it is

socializing responsibility a little bit, which is problematic, because it doesn't locate a person or individual. And I know where he [Harry Gould] comes from in terms of what should be held accountable and what should be criminalized and what can't be criminalized, but at least in terms of forcing a response and what is facilitated and made possible, Iraq and the re-inscriptions of why it was necessary, the community also has to be involved in that as well and reflect on its role in doing that. For me, that's also the purchase of that kind of accountability, even if there is a problem with it in terms of socializing responsibility.

Kent Morris: The notion of scars I think it is interesting in terms of environmental degradation as well. I kept thinking fracking, mountain top removal. You see these aerial photos, especially from lower western Virginia, southwest Virginia, and that there are really scars on the face of the planet and the ramifications of fracking on water. I think that what you're doing with the scars could be a good avenue for discussing this in a larger understanding of accountability, implicating communities and perpetrators, specifically companies that engage in these practices.

Brent Steele: When you read a little bit of what was supposed to be the progenitor, or at least the literature basis, of some of the green political theory like Aldo Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac*...

Jennifer Lawrence: ...which is a romanticized version...

Brent Steele: Exactly. But I mean, that fact that you have the sense of what the landscape looked like. And I do engage landscape scars, the ones that are there [in the book] are related to bombs. I don't deal with this, but I think you can deal with this very persuasively.

Jennifer Lawrence: Borders have also been used as an example of a landscape.

Brent Steele: Yes. Oded Löwenheim wrote a book called the *The Politics of the Trail*. It is his new book with Michigan Press. It was about riding his bike in the hills of Jerusalem. Everyday he had to ride the bike to Hebrew University and he'd seen the fence every single day, being built and being constructed between the Palestinians and the Israelis. I think there is an effect and it is a different content of effect when it comes to architecture and landscape than it is perhaps with bodies. There you actually can do interpositioning. You can actually get inside the empty space that is both a presence and an absence. But then there is also the scar on the sort of landscape or panoramic view that you notice immediately. So you can see one angle of this coming down and that's an obvious scar. But then [there are] also [hidden scars]. Whenever you go past Mount St. Helens, you know that it is there, that it is a volcano, and that it erupted even if it was thirty years ago. You can tell, when compared to Mount Rainier, that in Mount St. Helens something has happened.

And that's our perception of mountain top removals, it is obvious. It is obvious that something was removed and something was done to that. On the one hand, it is very powerful, in terms of the effects that we see visually. On the other hand, does it generate enough of a response to contest and problematize all of the things that might be responsible for that mountain top removal and all of the people that are embodying the practices that lead to that as well? I am not sure. I would hope so. I would hope it would the same way that some of the scars on the bodies of people I look at in the *Scars of Violence* generated some resistance or mobilization.

But I don't know enough about environmental issues, or environmental politics and processes, to be able to test that.

Kent Morris: But maybe more so than companies as perpetrators, it would implicate all of us, because of our desire for energy and the demand of the system which allows for this...

Brent Steele: Patrick Hayden has written a book on political evil where he draws from Arendt. Arendt is always trying to be cautious and say "we can't all say that we're responsible, because then nobody is responsible." But then Hayden also represents environmental degradation and global neoliberal economics as forms of evil, or of the banality of evil. While, rhetorically, this is a little bit sensational or provocative, I think there is also some purchase in that in terms of the ways in which we can at least both socialize and individualize responsibility by recognizing questions we should ask: why are we consuming so much? Why do we need this energy? It is not just the how is it possible, but about the why questions that this can generate which I think is useful. But again, that's under the understanding that formal mechanisms of accountability for this are never going to happen. So you're pretty much surrendering that for an alternative form of accountability that might leave a lot of people fairly unsatisfied.

Kent Morris: What tactics or strategies do you use in your scholarship to avoid discursive traps whereby the ideas that you are trying to unsettle become reinforced through your writing?

Brent Steele: If you look at a couple of articles I published in 2005 and 2006, one in the *Review of International Studies* on ontological security and Britain not intervening in American Civil War after the Emancipation Proclamation was issued,

and the other I wrote with Jack L. Amoureux on the human rights panopticon in the form of human rights NGOs. If I say that to you, ASPECT students, you would say that this sounds really provocative and exciting. But if you look at the way that we constructed the arguments, they're almost like a different version of rational choice theory using that language. I was trying to say that there is a different form of rationality that is out there that is connected to identity. And if you put it in those terms, you are reinforcing through these discursive traps that which you want to unsettle. I was saying that everything is rationality, and we need to understand a different kind of rationality. I try to argue that being humanitarian is rational because it is connected to identity, and so instead of just physical security, you have ontological security and rational policies that uphold ontological security. That's inherently problematic. And I was also writing by the time I was a graduate student and some of that was strategic because I was thinking that I needed to use a certain language if I wanted to get published in a particular journal.

So in terms of strategies or tactics that I use in my scholarship now, I look at my old scholarship and see the extent to which I did that and I try to chasten my language. And another thing that I am doing is to use quotation marks. I am using quotation marks to say "this isn't mine, this is somebody else's understanding of power. And by the way, I don't think that's a very good understanding of power, because it can almost be inverted and become powerless or less powerful." That's one of the other things I do, but if you're doing that, you can play that game all day long and every word in the entire book is in quotations. Language and writing are inherently intersubjective, and there are power relations in writing as well. Inherently, you are already giving in to some of these traps that have been set

before you, if you want to define an audience or to get things published. It is really like a competition between courage and caution, and it goes down to the level of how we write.

Harry Gould: Bearing in mind what I said last night, I have not generally thought of myself as a critical scholar *per se* until I got the invitation to this event. I haven't generally been as reflective as I might be or should be about how I write. If I think about the ways in which I often write, pulling apart accumulated layers of meanings, and reminding readers that there are these layers and each of them brings certain burdens and certain histories. I guess the only potential trap I see is just that that work is not complete, even though I am taking the step to say: hey, there is this stuff you've missed, and it still has influence down to today. But the door is still open that I've missed some of it and somebody can come along and say: yes, and you've missed all of this. But I don't know if that is a discursive trap *per se* or that I am reinforcing what I am trying to criticize, other than that recognition that when I am pointing out that people before me were careless, if I am then missing things, I am myself then careless and showing that just calling people out for lexical errors or carelessness has its own risks. I think the structure of Brent's work is much more attentive to these issues just in terms of thinking about how he writes.

Francine R de Paula: In a way, wouldn't your way of de-essentializing meanings by separating denotations and connotations be a good way to not fix any meaning to some terms and avoid these traps?

Harry Gould: Sometimes I may still find myself trying to work out, not a fixed meaning and not even an operational meaning, but I do reach some points. For

instance, in the book on prudence that I am writing, I am trying to put forward an understanding of prudence. And it might be read as me offering “here is the definition,” which I am going to great pains not to do. But I suppose that ultimately by saying “here is how I think we might most fruitfully conceptualize these,” even though I have those caveats, the door is still open for me to try to essentialize it.

Kent Morris: Are there aspects of traditional international relations that are still relevant for post-positivist IR scholars? What concepts remain foundational to the field of IR so that post-positivist readings of international relations remain distinctly recognizable as IR scholarship?

Harry Gould: Intention.

Kent Morris: For instance, what should we take from Waltz or Morgenthau?

Brent Steele: What is traditional international relations? That's an open question and it provides opportunities.

Harry Gould: We are not going to want to throw out concepts. We are going to throw out conceptions and conceptualizations. Nobody is going to say: “let's not talk about power anymore.” The problem isn't with the concept.

Jennifer Lawrence: What do you have to do to be part of an IR “club” as opposed to IPE or something else?

Brent Steele: The discipline provides some material to begin to construct your own arguments by referring to other presentations and representations of that traditional IR scholarship in the past. I have been part of the movement of the last 10 years of reengagement with classical realism, of resurrection of Morgenthau, Niebuhr and Herz. All of these realists who were writing in this very delicate time, in the 1940s and 1950s, started to be represented as being “scientific” enough by

neorealists, as the only thing we need to know about traditional IR scholarship before the 1979. You had people who were not satisfied with that in the late 1990s and especially in the 2000s, that were embodying realists as a frame of reference to springboard into more postpositivist or poststructuralist types of arguments. Michael Williams says in some of his conference interventions that the reason he uses Morgenthau, Carr and Hobbes instead of Foucault is that people listen to you if you use classic realists. What is great is that that unsettles our understanding of what traditional IR scholarship was. A little bit of this people don't like because it is not considered scientific, but it is more like intellectual history when you go back and try to establish the context in which they wrote.

You have critical scholars, even Robert Cox did this with Carr, re-embodying some of that work or those voices of classical realism for their own purposes in particular contexts. That to me is one function of traditional IR. And the concepts themselves, at least they provide a frame of reference from which to do the same thing, say 'this is how anarchy is conceptualized... it is not a core concept, but it is conceptualized in different readings' and then you go from there. The one thing I would get rid of is the neo-neo debate. This is a debate that can be represented to freshmen in college in a 2X2 matrix.

Harry Gould: Absolute versus relative gains.

Brent Steele: Yes. Done. They spent so much time in the 1980s dealing with that. Those neo-neo debates should be in the dustbin of history.

Harry Gould: We can't de-familiarize concepts without using them. While they are still current, they still give us something to play with. There is still a lot to be said about traditional concerns, about how we understand the state or sovereignty

or power, or more recently, the questions of agency and structure, about the system. There are still reasons to keep them in the vocabulary. They are still part of a common vocabulary. There are still things left to be said about them. There are problems with revisiting all these authors, too. I was in a panel on 2010 and there were three people presenting different perspectives on Morgenthau; three papers proposing: Morgenthau + a specific reading = real Morgenthau. After a point, one gets a little tired of it. When Vendulka Kubalkova reread Carr as a constructivist, that was pretty novel, versus the notion that “we really need to read more of Morgenthau according to French writings of international law to understand what he really meant.”

Brent Steele: As long as you set up why you're doing a rereading, you get the idea that there is never going to be an original or right way to interpret it. Do you have the ability to persuade people that this is another account or reading that comes out of Morgenthau or Carr? For me, Laura Sjoberg's recent move toward a structural theory and systemic theory from a gender hierarchical perspective has and produces the punch because of the comparison to Waltz, and in this sense, Waltz is still useful. What she is doing is provocative, because then if you read Waltz's understanding of structure as being a distribution of power, it turns out to be an oversimplification of what the world is. Here, Waltz is a reference point that then provides a very creative basis to springboard into another way to represent, understand, and theorize the world. And I think the classics do provide that function as well. The one thing I always resist though is when people say that what you say has already been said. That's a form of power. It excludes what you are saying for being similar to what is there. I think it also can be lazy. I really see this

with other generations of IR scholars that have been saying to the way that I read Morgenthau or my take on the world, that we were all having these debates in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. And then when I ask what those debates are, there is no resemblance to the arguments I just made. So I think there are those simplifications being made, but also regimes of authority that are problematic. But keep in mind what Harry just said. If you're making Morgenthau into everything, you're making him into anything.

Harry Gould: I want to dissent just a little bit. I agree with the overall comment, but sometimes people really are reinventing the wheel. It is not necessarily lazy to tell them that, because sometimes the fact is that they have not done their homework, they have not read the history of the debates. They are not aware that the conversation has been explored in a lot of other ways they are not looking at.

Brent Steele: It is only going to get harder to teach graduate students how to be graduate students, because there is so much more scholarship out there, so many readings and alternative readings that cannot be covered in graduate school. We were learning 10 or 15 years ago in our graduate program that there was a lot that had been done in the previous 15 years. Now you need to graft on all of that in addition to everything else.

But then to the extent that you are saying something is different from what was said before, you are presented with the counterargument that you are saying what somebody else has already said. If this is not the case, then at least you are forced to provide a finer point about how your work, if not unique, is a little bit different or modified compared to the arguments presented before you.

Harry Gould: If you say that to somebody [that their arguments are not new], in your role as some sort of disciplinary authority, you have an obligation to not just say “it has been done before, don't bother,” but to tell them who did it and what they did with it. You can't use that as dismissal. By invoking that power, you are placing yourself under an obligation to tell that person.

Brent Steele: Which is why a good discussant or chair at a conference, or a reviewer or editor of a journal would do that. Those are the spaces where this tends to happen.

**Donna J. Haraway's *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*,
Reinventing Nature as a Revolutionary Re-appropriation of Knowledge**

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1. Introduction

So how do simians, cyborgs, women, and the reinvention of nature, from the similarly titled work by Donna J. Haraway, function in the conceptualization of her major argument, that “[s]cience *is* culture,” but that it must be contestable and often contested, in order to leave space for political affinities that empower women and *others*?ⁱ The concept of reinventing nature provides the first key to interpreting this collection of essays. In much traditional, binary Western thought, nature is not invented; it exists as the essentialized, raw material of human life opposite the construction of culture.

Haraway reveals, however, that in the hands of scientists, objects from a scientifically produced category, *nature*, which includes society, can be and have been redesigned, “*in the image of a generally acceptable ideal*.”ⁱⁱ Introducing the possibility of nature’s re-invention by socialist-feminist scientists as a response to the “acceptable ideal,” therefore, becomes central to a set of powerful analyses by Haraway, which she uses to investigate the possibility of the female, or the *other*, being able to author her or its own existence. Her evaluation of the history of specific scientific experiments provides a ground for developing workable means for women’s production and reproduction of their lives. By reinterpreting scientific work that stands as objective, her analysis constitutes and engenders a re-invention of the Marxist concept of re-appropriating knowledge as a revolutionary practice.ⁱⁱⁱ

The ten chapters comprising the text are divided into three parts: *Nature as a System of Production and Reproduction*; *Contested Readings: Narrative Natures*; and *Differential Politics for Inappropriate/d Others*. Although each part pursues a particular problem related to science, to the legitimacy of constructions of narrativity, and to politics, many of the same characters: scientists, women, nature, and specific individuals appear throughout. The dual concerns of feminist mediations of scientific stories and empowerment through perspectivized scientific authorship permeate the text.

The structure of the book, by ordering the essays through lenses corresponding to the text's three parts, creates an intertextuality in which Haraway considers central questions about what could constitute a socialist-feminist science. While the order of the chapters moves from more scientifically technical essays regarding primates, through discussions of effects of language, with ever increasing momentum toward the accumulation of strategies for political empowerment, each essay supports and intensifies the nuances of the others.

2. Science of Simians as a Means to Domination

While the title's category of simians, as a group of higher primates, includes humans, the essays in Haraway's early chapters consider the motivations and methods behind scientific experimentation utilizing non-human simians by human simians. As studies of nature, *animal societies* form a basis for rationalizing and naturalizing "oppressive orders of domination in the human body politic" even as they claim to improve, or at least optimize human life.^{iv} Nature, considered something that initially exists without *invention*, is taken hostage by human control through its use within human social and cultural structures like family, division of labor, and reproductive orders.

This long-standing, Western, male-propelled, view of nature as a concrete, objectively definable entity, instrumental in sustaining human culture, has influenced women's personal and

political situations significantly, according to Haraway. For example, in chapter three, “The Biological Enterprise: Sex, Mind, and Profit from Human Engineering to Sociobiology,” Haraway highlights Robert Yerkes, a scientist who studied primates using comparative psychological methods for human engineering projects. Much of his work involved creating what he considered to be rational modes of social engineering. His methods, according to those in his intellectual circle, which included the Committee for Research on Problems of Sex (CRPS), was considered a liberating, rather than sexually repressive endeavor.^v

Haraway, however, interprets Yerkes’ and several other capitalist, male scientists’ work as exemplars of a long-held and entrenched view of nature in the scientific community and the effects of this view. By utilizing the purportedly objective scientific enterprise to uncover the *truth* about nature, the effect is the grounding of political rights in nature, specifically, in “one’s natural place determined by disinterested science.”^{vi} For the establishment of equality, therefore, dependence on life sciences as understood within traditional parameters, develops social constraints for women through specific applications of biological determinism, especially those dealing with divisions of labor based on traditional views that support different sexual drives based on biology.^{vii}

One of Haraway’s major contentions is that scientific practices considered disinterested are actually inspired by and situated in an environment that is patriarchal and capitalist and therefore, form dominating systems that maintain patriarchy by emphasizing competitive material reproduction.^{viii} Because predominant theories of nature fuel cultural-political domination, Haraway’s insistence on the obligation of socialist-feminists to develop their own science to inform a “new world,” rather than sustaining the traditional one based on domination, appears to be a valid perspective with a possible strategic solution.^{ix} If integrated into the practice of science, this approach could frame domination “as theory, not nature”.^x Furthermore, by pursuing the concept of domination as *merely* theoretical and highlighting changes that have

occurred in twentieth century life sciences, Haraway develops a question that resonates throughout the text: how can women create a socialist-feminist life science?^{xi}

3. Women as Revolutionary Reconstructors

In chapters four and five, Haraway discusses the imposition of conscious and subconscious rules governing scientific stories about primate behavior. The rules were meant to maintain a level of objectivity in scientific practice, but ironically, have led to subjectively contoured public myths and understandings of science that are considered neutral. Since male scientists have produced a majority of the rules that engender situated scientific stories, which nevertheless, retain a reputation as being objective, Haraway attempts to describe and re-invent the possible roles of feminist scientific responses. Her approach is to analyze the effects of the historical contingency of perspective on scientists, as well as to consider elements of the history of scientific production.

Since the rules are implicit, they establish an unacknowledged type of *invention* of nature that denies any operative level of construction within *disinterested* scientific inquiry. Haraway creates an imaginative framework, a scholarly 'patrilineage' of primatologists that functions as a genealogy of implicit, male mediations/rules for telling scientific stories. This framework reveals the constraints surrounding female scientists and the trajectory of their scientific work, which ultimately cannot conform to the inherited parameters of storytelling.

In chapter four, "In the Beginning Was the Word: The Genesis of Biological Theory," Haraway considers possible tactics for the creation of a politically effective feminist science. First, she notes a particularly challenging tension that comes from the uncovering by feminist scientists of epistemological problems of scientific knowledge based on historically contingent values. While analyzing these problems reveals some of the biologically deterministic elements of much scientific work, it also leads to corroboration of a constructivist approach in which all

science is fabrication.^{xii} Haraway insists that feminists avoid the consequence that “all scientific statements” function as historical fictions because feminists need and want to be able to “tak[e] a stand on the nature of things” in order to create a political common ground.^{xiii}

4. Cyborgs: Visions of Radical Feminism

When Haraway introduces the “Cyborg Manifesto,” she has already deconstructed primate scientific studies related to the *nature* of women’s place; discussed the issues of historically contingent perspective in public scientific story creation; asserted the necessity of avoiding essentializing women’s experience; and broached the considerations and pitfalls of conceptual reliance on the term ‘gender’ using theoretical—Marxist, feminist, linguistic— analyses.

The chapter, “A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century” addresses all of the previous concerns through a more radical feminist method: Haraway’s invention of an increasingly fruitful metaphor for feminist experience, the cyborg. It is the ingenuity of this new metaphor that magnetizes all of the elements in the text. Like the cyborg, Haraway advocates yielding to an un-resolvable quality within socialist-feminist science, as well as in feminist thought and experience. This un-resolvability, she argues should be utilized as a conceptual, tactical maneuver, which, due to the overlap between the essays and the ordering of the chapters, is mirrored back through the style and flavor of the manuscript as a whole.

The cyborg, imagination blended with material reality, forms a conceptualization that Haraway deems necessary for any prospect of transforming the trajectory of history to open up new feminist possibilities.^{xiv} The cyborg is a postmodern, post-gender fiction that can stand-in for woman by disregarding and rewriting the repressive historical narratives that have informed feminist politics.^{xv} Because the “cyborg is a kind of disassembled and reassembled,

postmodern collective and personal self,” it may remove the power of dualisms, such as nature/culture, to dominate women’s role in science and politics.^{xvi}

The use of the cyborg metaphor and the related development of cyborg writing by colonized and marginalized groups, engages with science and technology in order to transform structures, such as labor processes and class-hierarchies that often negatively affect women. By “seizing the tools to mark the world that marked them as other,” cyborg writing attempts to reprogram the technologies that consider women’s bodies as ‘code problems’. With the aim of survival and self-identification, feminists can undermine command and control style domination through their cyborg tales.^{xvii} Avoiding reference to a “founding myth of original wholeness,” the cyborg is freed from dualistic approaches to science and nature that inform culture, as well as women’s place within it.^{xviii}

Haraway’s final chapters ultimately problematize identity on two levels. The concluding chapter “boldly go[es] where no man has gone before” by discussing how the immune system, as an information technology, has become one more element influencing the modern understanding of identity through the concept of “what counts as a unit” in a world “of power-charged differences.”^{xix} At this point, Haraway reiterates many of the notions and incarnations of scientific constructivist and system design views of nature and of bodies, particularly those of woman, slave, and laborer that appeared in her previous essays in the text.^{xx}

Most importantly, however, these final chapters flesh out viable working solutions to the problems of traditionally understood *objectivity* of scientific practice that has functioned as the basis of women’s domination. Here she provides specific steps that socialist-feminist scientists can take in order to make scientific practice *truly* objective, while retaining a “critical relation to practices of domination.”^{xxi} Haraway asserts that “relativism and totalization both deny the stakes in location” and argues that a “split and contradictory self,” like the cyborg feminist, is

better able to question perspectives and positions in order to “be accountable” in an epistemological and ethical sense.^{xxii}

5. Multi-faceted Scientific Practice, Multi-faceted World

While creating a manuscript out of essays that include overlapping and repeated information is slightly jarring, the effect of the organization and content of *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*, intensifies Haraway's expression and purpose in a way that parallels her overarching conceptual undertaking: to acknowledge the un-resolvability of feminist identity. Especially important are two concepts: that it is necessary to view “objects of knowledge” as actors/agents, and that using situated knowledges, both particular and embodied, avoids the denial of a type of masterful vision that supports domination through its supposed capacity for “transcendence of all limits and responsibility.”^{xxiii}

Like the faceted reality of a cubist painting, Haraway's cyborg feminist and assemblage of essays speak to the power of a new feminist *objectivity* in which understanding critical positioning can unlock potential political affinities without essentializing personal identity through uncontestable scientific stories about nature. Her hope is that the title's simian, cyborg, and women entities can freely reinvent themselves while developing an empowering political affinity based on a ‘nature’ that encompasses embodied, situated knowledges. Allowing for reinterpretations of scientific projects formerly considered objective, while at the same time, avoiding positing all scientific endeavor as a fictional construction, could provide a strong ground on which those who have had less opportunity to create their own narratives can take a stand.

i D. J. Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 196, 230.

ii Ibid., 47; quoting Robert Yerkes' *Chimpanzees: A Laboratory Colony*.

iii	Ibid., 45.
iv	Ibid., 11, 46, 64-65.
v	Ibid., 49-50.
vi	Ibid., 56.
vii	Ibid., 53.
viii	Ibid., 68.
ix	Ibid., 68.
x	Ibid., 23.
xi	Ibid., 45.
xii	Ibid., 78.
xiii	Ibid., 78-79.
xiv	Ibid., 150.
xv	Ibid.
xvi	Ibid., 163.
xvii	Ibid., 175.
xviii	Ibid., 172, 175.
xix	Ibid., 205, 212.
xx	Ibid., 210.
xxi	Ibid., 186.
xxii	Ibid., 193.
xxiii	Ibid., 190-91, 198.

"Where are the Laughter and the Tears?"

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D'Agati, Philip. *The Cold War and the 1984 Olympic Games: A Soviet-American Surrogate War*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. Hardback, \$90.00. ISBN: 978-1-137-33061-1.

The 22nd Olympic Winter games taking place this year in Sochi, Russia have been beset by controversy. Notwithstanding its massive cost overruns in a country in desperate need of massive public infrastructure investment after years of neglect (the current estimate for the final budget is US\$51 billion, exceeding the cost of the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing by US\$7 billion), much has been made of Russia's recently passed laws banning the propagation of "non-traditional sexual orientations." In recent months, several NGOs have pushed for an outright boycott of the Games by states, their delegations, and global corporations to protest Russia's dismal approach to LGBT rights. This campaign has been less than successful. While several heads of state and government have said they will not be attending the Games, none has explicitly stated that their respective absences are a form of protest of anything, let alone of Russia's human rights record.ⁱ It seems unlikely that any of the groups attempting to use the Games as a frame of protest against Russia's government and its policies will be considered successful after the flame is extinguished.

As Philip A. D'Agati makes clear in his new book, *The Cold War and the 1984 Olympics: A Soviet-American Surrogate War*, the Olympics have been a fertile

arena for politics and protest since the resurrection of the Olympics in 1896, with some Games more overtly affected than others and the majority having decidedly mixed results. This review will begin by outlining D'Agati's admirably detailed history of the Games and their evolution into politicized forums. However, D'Agati's realist focus on statist "reason" and strategy leaves out the importance of understanding the place of emotion in international affairs.

Four Games have been outright cancelled owing to the ongoing First and Second World Wars, with the defeated states from each conflict being excluded for some years after their conclusion.ⁱⁱ The threat of a widespread boycott successfully forced the Nazi government to rescind its ban on Jewish and Black athletes in the 1936 Summer Games in Berlin.ⁱⁱⁱ Beginning in 1968, South Africa and its athletes were banned from participating in any Games in response to its apartheid policies; it reappeared at the 1992 Summer Games in Barcelona after the end of white-only rule.^{iv} D'Agati considers each of these instances of protest or censure, either by governmental or non-governmental agents, aimed at certain policies of the hosting state or the participation of offending states within the Games. In his account, the Soviet boycott (or "non-participation" as the USSR termed it) of the 1984 Summer Games in Los Angeles was different from all of these other examples of politicized Games because it represented an example of the surrogate war then existing between the two superpowers.

Contrary to the assumption that the boycott was simply retaliation for the American boycott of the 1980 Summer Olympics in Moscow in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, D'Agati relegates this motivation to one of secondary importance. His argument is that the primary reason for the Soviet

boycott was because it served the state's purpose in its ongoing surrogate war with the United States, namely within an arena of conflict that allowed for "direct contest between states in circumstances in which traditional concepts of war are either not practical or not possible."^v In other words, the Soviet Union was acting "rationally", seeking a line of action that would result in benefits that would outweigh the cost of boycotting. In proffering such an argument, D'Agati is attempting to bolster the rational choice framework that underlies realist dispositions in International Relations theory, namely the primacy of the State in terms of both peaceful and conflictual world affairs along with the tendency to divide actors and actions along a rational/irrational dichotomy. While the book offers a coherent analysis of the history of the issues leading up to the boycott, D'Agati ultimately does not make his case namely because its theoretical framework leads to a neglect of the place of emotion in international relations and the political in general.

For the Soviets, D'Agati claims, there were two overriding goals going into the 1984 Games. The first had to do with a relatively novel measure of competition among cities and countries to be deemed host. As opposed to the pre-war years, when cities had been simply designated as hosts (and often only begrudgingly accepted) by the International Olympic Committee, cities and by default states began to openly compete with each other for the honor of hosting by the early 1960s.^{vi} This competition was most acute between the Soviet Union and the United States and their respective allies. D'Agati argues that the Soviets were intent on proving that the privately run, "capitalist" 1984 Summer Games in Los Angeles were deficient in comparison to the 1980 Summer Games in Moscow. The 1976 Summer Games, held in Montreal, were largely viewed as a financial failure, and

the Soviets looked forward to the 1980 Games to show that communism offered a much better system within which to organize the Games and ensure their success. The December 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan led to the United States and sixty-one other states boycotting the 1980 Games, ending any hopes that the Games would be considered "the best ever." D'Agati describes this as a denial of the Soviets' opportunity to exhibit their organization and prowess as a political system worldwide; the second of their overriding goals. Thus in early 1984, despite many of the grievances submitted by the Soviet Olympic Organizing Committee to the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee (including issues regarding security and freedom of movement for the entire Soviet delegation, including journalists) being ameliorated, the boycott still went ahead. It caused much less disruption than the Western boycott did in 1980 however since only fourteen states joined the Soviet Union.^{vii}

In the end, D'Agati explains, the Soviet boycott of the 1984 Olympics was an act of rational, policy-consistent example of sabotage intended to ensure that the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics were similarly marred by political strife as the 1980 Moscow Olympics had been. As he puts it:

Ultimately, it creates the perfect comparison of the Cold War: Who hosts a stronger Olympics? Is it the socialist, government-centered, government controlled Games of the superpower of the Eastern Bloc or is it the capitalist, nongovernmental, private-sector Games of the superpower of the Western Bloc?^{viii}

Returning briefly to the standard explanation of "retaliation" or "tit-for-tat," D'Agati again dismisses it as playing anything but a minor role in reaching the final decision to boycott, and it is here that the limitations of this study are most acute.

The author continually makes clear that he considers retaliation, which he later compares to “petty bitterness,” an inadequate explanation of state actions. This view of politics, especially within the field of international studies, continues to remain dominant within the American political science academy (and therefore the world overall), which considers cost benefit analyses the best way to analyze the state as a political actor. Rather, any bitterness the leadership of the Soviet Union felt towards the United States for orchestrating the 1980 boycott was ultimately one factor among several to be taken into consideration once they decided on utilizing the 1984 Olympics as a surrogate battlefield in the larger Cold War. D’Agati considers analyses of these Games that insist on retaliation as the primary motivation for the boycott narrow and unsophisticated.

The end leaves the reader wondering why the consideration of emotion in explorations of the political should be thought of as simplistic. For example, let us consider the Soviet boycott in a different light. As D’Agati himself states several times, both the Soviet Union and the United States were engaged in various arenas of conflict intent on determining which form of the political would ultimately prove most lasting. Why? The leaders of each state obviously had material and strategic interests in continuing their respective ideological systems, but can we not go deeper than this? The reduction of politics to terms of rationality, irrationality, and cost benefit analyses excises any consideration of the individual’s standing within a larger political arena. If individuals derive at least part of their respective identities from their existence within the political realm (whether in opposition, alliance, deference, etc.) then political slights can be felt emotionally by the individual and group. If the leadership of the Soviet Union, many of whom we can assume

inherently believed their particular form of communism to be the best political form available, thought that they and their system had been unfairly denied the opportunity to prove their worth on the global stage, should not retaliation or bitterness be more closely considered?

If politics is understood this way, both the state and the individual are allowed a more expansive form of existence and therefore analysis. The ability of a scholar to analyze and critique the Soviet Union's decision would not be confined merely to considering the state's fulfillment of its "nature" as a rational actor, but expanded to reflect on an actor who felt bitterness after being slighted and who acted accordingly. This necessarily makes politics a much messier business, but simultaneously allows the analyst more avenues for understanding phenomena. In D'Agati's analysis, the Soviet Union can neither be criticized nor adulated for its decision – it was simply following its nature: a potential *carte blanche* that excludes questions of morality from political analysis. In contrast, the inclusion of emotion in the political allows the state to be a fuller subject that is not simply fated to follow its given nature. Similarly, understanding the failure of the boycott movement towards the 2014 Winter Olympics to gain widespread traction cannot simply be attributed to states acting rationally. Doing so only allows one particular understanding of the various state and non-state actors, their respective values and clout, and the emotions involved, i.e. what the "political" entails in its entirety. In the end, while *The Cold War and the 1984 Olympic Games* should be acknowledged for offering a cogent account of why the relevant actors acted the way they did, political analysis should not be confined to narrow analysis that excludes other avenues of understanding.

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- i Leonid Bershidsky, "Putin Plays Games to Salvage Olympics," Bloomberg, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-12-19/putin-plays-games-to-salvage-olympics.html>
 - ii Philip D'Agati, *The Cold War and the 1984 Olympic Games: A Soviet-American Surrogate War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 36-40.
 - iii D'Agati, *The Cold War and the 1984 Olympics: A Soviet-American Surrogate War*, 40-42.
 - iv Ibid., 44-46.
 - v Ibid., 19.
 - vi Ibid., 42-46.
 - vii Ibid., 81-89, 149-150.
 - viii Ibid., 154-155.