

THE AMATEUR WRITES BACK:

**NEW THEORETICAL DIRECTIONS FOR PROGRESSIVE
LEFT POLITICS AND SOCIAL POLICY**

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ABSTRACT

This work develops an opportunity for transgressive resistance to discursively formed structures of material and theoretical power and closure, based on a methodology of amateurism. The concept of amateurism draws heavily on the writing of Edward Said. This work synthesises Said with a broader corpus of postcolonial theory, following a theoretically postcolonial trajectory which applies the lessons from that referent to an engagement with traditional theoretical and cultural closure. The central thesis of the engagement follows a critique of strong ontology and vertical epistemology, or of expertise. Through an examination of health policy around birth, and sociological approaches to health, that critique is deployed to invigorate a new critical direction for the Left with a focus on subjectivity, social policy, social democracy and substantive citizenship.

DECLARATION

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published except where due reference has been made in the text of the thesis.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University library, being made available for photocopying and loan.

Ian Goodwin-Smith.

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1/ INTRODUCTION

Don't be too proud of this technological terror you've
constructed. The ability to destroy a planet is insignificant next to
the power of the Force.

- *Darth Vader, Star Wars Episode IV-*

This work attempts to develop an opportunity for transgressive resistance to discursively formed structures of material and theoretical power and closure, based on a methodology of amateurism as an instructive theoretical premise for a meaningful new Left politics and criticism. A practice of amateurism draws heavily on the theoretical work of Edward Said, and follows Said's practical scholastic style. Accordingly, it is no coincidence that the structure of the formative part of this work in large part adheres to a near-chronological engagement with a number of Said's key publications, being *Orientalism* (1978); *Culture and Imperialism* (1993); *The World, the Text and The Critic* (1983); *Representations of the Intellectual* (1994); and *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* (2003).

Said has been much criticised for his transgression of theoretical boundaries - blurring the lines between literary criticism and political theory and melding together unwilling bedfellows such as Foucault and Gramsci, whilst refusing to be pinned down as this or that kind of scholar. His work has always been haunted by an orthodox backlash, but his transgression of tradition in the academy and in the broader world of his operation has blazed spectacular new theoretical trails. This work seeks to unleash a similar (and often similarly paradoxical) panga attack on traditional theoretical and cultural closure. In doing so, it seeks to expand the remit a of postcolonial theoretical methodology as an exercise in reinvigorating and rediscovering progressive, pragmatic and tenable directions for the Left. That concept of the Left is conceived of here as a broad field of ideas which pay attention to the politics of structure, contingency and collectivity. It is not taken

to be a self-identifying, or coherent, or homogenous group. It is very important to note, as such, that this work makes no attempt to pin the Left down, to tease out its nuances, its disjunctures and its internal debates. It simply opens up a theoretical and practical space by noting that the Left represents a field of political views which, whilst diverse, are underpinned by certain active and historical central tenets.

Within this foregrounding of basic tenets, particularly structure, in loosely defining the Left, there is an imperative to move through the ennui of the post-structure, and to reinvigorate the centrality of structural issues and the possibility of an effective agency. This work apprehends and constructs that possibility through a prism of postcolonial subjectivity, amateuristic methodology and a politics of social identity.

The project of that construction - the configuration of the argument here - describes an hourglass shape. The paper begins broadly, canvassing issues of theory which affect and afflict political agency and the Left. At that level, it identifies problems, and makes significant theoretical inroads in terms of forging a forward direction and an effective momentum. The substance of that momentum is then squeezed through a test against a material, empirical and grounded study of health policy and the politics, protocols and procedures which surround birth, especially after a previous caesarean section. Following that test, the discussion then broadens out again to canvass the political implications of the argument and the relevance for policy, governance and citizenship at a more macro level.

The engagement with Said in this work underpins a significant dimension of the architecture of the formative parts of the argument, and the reading of Said and other theorists throughout the formative sections constitutes the substantive theoretical dimension of the work. That theoretical foundation sets up the latter sections. The first of these constitutes the substantial and aforementioned application of theory to policy, and the second of these sections constitutes the subsequent expansion and broadening of the logic of that application to social policy and politics at large.

Following the introduction, the second chapter engages with the problems of stagnation, bewilderment and inertia which have beset the Left since the fall of the socialist dream and the nightmare of the postmodern encounter. The chapter

seeks to engage with, unpack and illustrate the nature of that nightmare and stagnation, and to embrace some of its form and content - it embraces a disenchantment with modernity and grand, universalising narratives, but it seeks to move through the stalled turgidity which such an embrace has the capacity to effect. To this end there is a supplication within this work to smaller things, less ambitious narratives, and humble artefacts. There is an attention to and celebration of weak ontology.

In furthering and reinforcing a commitment to smaller, weaker things, chapter three teases out, articulates and critiques the problematic epistemic and ontological commitments which afflict modernity, rationality and expert systems of thought and knowledge. It makes a case for framing the methodological and theoretical shortcomings of universalising rationalism as problems of the limitations and self-aggrandising foolhardiness of expertise and specialisation. The chapter examines the self-invested technologies of this foolhardiness and foolishness through an analysis of the ontological reinforcement which is effected by the exclusive boundary constructing discourses of professionalism. From an analysis of discourse, the chapter makes the next step of teasing out the implication of the phenomena of expertise, specialisation and professionalism in the privileges of knowledge and power.

The project of examining the construction of knowledge and the representations which interweave with manifest dynamics of power, and which inhere within the discursive and material construction of institutions of expertise, is one which lends itself to and which requires an engagement with the question of identity, and the third chapter attends to this project by way of articulating and examining the phenomenon of modern, liberal subjectivity, upon which the post-Enlightenment, Cartesian machinations of modern thought and expert analysis, institutions, presumptions and methodologies are predicated. This attention to identity provides some insights around the concepts of nation, culture and hegemony, all of which are central to an apprehension of modern ontological technologies, epistemic commitments and a general modern malaise of alienation, subjugation and domination. These phenomena – these questions of identity – are analysed with the assistance rendered by insights gained through a reading of Said's *Orientalism* (1978). Ultimately, through a problematisation of the binarisation

and demarcation which separates the self from the other and the legitimate from the illegitimate, the modern discursive technologies which seek to contain orthodox and hegemonic epistemologies within dominant, strong ontological boundaries of professional expertise - and those boundaries themselves - are suggested to constitute nothing more than an untenable pretension. An investigation of identity is the primary vehicle for exploring a world of interactions, contingency and interconnections which render separation and ontological security as being untenable and pretentious. It is a continued engagement with identity which moves this work into its next phase.

Chapter four takes, as its remit, an engagement with postcolonial theory. Further, it is anchored in a reading of Said's *Culture and Imperialism* (1993). The chapter deploys a postcolonial theoretical approach to develop, strengthen and underpin a sense of agency and political purpose. It explores the postcolonial possibility of a new, hybrid and reclaimed subject and subjectivity. The chapter imagines and deploys a new, contingent and unfixable post-liberal subject, which augments and gels with a rising sense of agency within this paper. That agency is reconceived in postcolonial terms and is argued to constitute a pulse and an impulse within the Left which brings history back to life.

The terms which postcolonial thinking and theory apply to a reconstituted subjectivity add rigour to an otherwise incomprehensible and unpalatable soup of subjectivities in which an endless array of micro narratives would otherwise jostle for position in the contest to fill the vacuum left by the implosion of modernity. That rigour is derived from the traditions of the Left, which anchor postcolonial theory. Postcolonial theory helps us to reconceive subjectivity in politicised ways because of its attention to the identity-led referents of collectivity, culture and structure. This is not the identity politics and the nationalism of the modern, liberal project, based narrowly on some imagined sense of race or exclusive community, but rather an identity-led political attention to the manifest facts of structural disadvantage, born of a contingent sense of humanity, responsibility and love. It is, to borrow a key term from Said, a concern for worldliness. The substrate and location of any situation, issue or text is anchored in the intersection, intertwining and overlap of innumerable structural moments. This overall moment – this worldly point of hybridity – is something which postcolonial

theory apprehends well, and for postcolonial theory, the subject exists within that moment and can therefore be politically conceived by reference to the structural dimensions of that moment. It is through this conception that a new responsibility to structure and community is born.

A sense of worldliness and a postcolonial conceptualisation of hybridity ignite a sense of connectivity, intertwining and overlapping, and open up a space in which we can appreciate transformative cultural impulses and interactions. In this sense, postcolonial theory attends to the subject as a culturally transformative and *constitutive process* and overlaid, complex interaction. This complex subjectivity serves as a demonstration that the complex and the worldly require attention via soft, local stories and artefacts which are sensitive to the limited, elliptical and shifting micro dynamics of unique moments and structures. This demonstration reinforces and shows that a complex world is no place for modern expert narratives: it is no place for the expert.

Chapter five furthers an engagement with the concept of worldliness, and engages with the hopeless miscalculations of expertise which an attention to worldliness reveals. This attention and engagement follows a reading of Said's work, *The World, the Text and the Critic* (1983). Conceding that experts fail us, chapter five moves forward, exploring new ways of constructing epistemological frameworks and a meaningful ontology. It does this by proposing a methodology of amateurism as a commitment to soft ontology, vertical, affiliative epistemology, small, local and artefactual practices and technologies, and worldly apprehensions of the situation as text. These theoretical manoeuvres employ and engage with insights developed throughout Said's *Representations of the Intellectual* (1994).

The argument here proposes a methodology of amateurism as one which is preferable to other Left formulations around a kind of worldly humanism which are on the market. As such, the latter parts of chapter five wrestle with Said's *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* (2003). This work suggests that amateurism constitutes the form of discombobulating transgression which is best placed to effect a diffuse, organic, dialogical, and effective horizontal democratisation and dynamic of knowledge. It frames this dynamic and this dialogue in terms of an elevation of an *agape* sense of horizontal speech and accountability over a filial sense of vertical accountability. It is through this

dialogue and under the auspices of this *agape* that the amateur writes back and deploys a heretical responsibility to structurally defined community. Amateurism is about *agape*. Amateurism is about love, in other words, and this is a point about which this work provides significant elaboration and clarification. But amateurism is not about abstract feelings of wellbeing and ethereal theory. Amateurism is about policy, outcome optimisation and the gritty, dirty business of getting the job done right.

Chapter six gets down to the business of outcomes, employing, testing and evaluating a model and exemplar of amateuristic methodology to assess its utility in optimising outcomes in terms of both effectiveness and appropriateness. The chapter examines the heresy of amateurism on the ground and at work as it is pitted against hegemonic practices and institutions. The vehicle for this examination is birth, and the chapter deploys an engagement with a social model of health, or health sociology, to tease out and problematise the discourse, the expertise, the culture and the knowledge which alienates us from and theologises this mundane event. Further, this deployment and problematisation seeks to address the reduction of birth into specialities and components which fracture, fragment and obscure its profundity. The sociological approach to health weakens the authority of modern, expert systems of medical specialisation and Cartesian logic, instead foregrounding the contingent, the social and the human dimensions of being. Such an approach opens the floodgates to love, and to horizontal epistemological challenges to hegemonic authority. That hegemony and that authority are cast here in terms of technoscience and technocracy, and the discourses and protocols around that culture and that institution are something that we cast in terms of mythology and ritual, and as being pretentious as far as any claim to being more than merely artefactual goes.

This assailing of the sanctity of hegemonic authority - and of the faith, investment and theological prescriptions which inhere within the certainty of the myth and the discursive power of the ritual - is the horizontal incursion, the writing back, and the resistance of the other - the native - as an amateuristic and heretical transgression of the exclusive perimeters of expertise and expert ontology. The chapter casts this kind of organic and transformative movement in terms of resistance to a material and imagination-producing colonisation of culture and the

mind. As such, it casts expertise in terms of colonial administration, and casts expert practices and protocols in terms of being ritualistic exercises in subjugation, self-legitimation, ambivalence, desire and control. The argument from there is a straightforward one. The logic and execution of colonial administration - the determination of the affairs of those who are represented as other - is the logic and execution of expertise. The logic and execution of expertise, by this analysis, is that of domination and subjugation, and it is the logic of alienation. Such practices and systems are manifestly suboptimal in the production of outcomes for the administered, both in an historical and contemporary context, but through a deployment of postcolonial *agape*, the malady can be apprehended as broader than that – the suboptimisation of outcomes for the administered is, in those terms, a depletion of the fund of human wellbeing and potential which diminishes us all. The chapter looks at protocols, administration and outcomes around birth, demonstrating that expert systems of administration and control of the affairs of the subjugated are not only suboptimal, but inappropriate and, consequently, of counter productive and impotent affect. The chapter demonstrates how measurable health outcomes can be optimised by amateuristically destabilising the locus of authority around expert systems of diminishment, and by allowing the restless natives in, to write back, to self determine, and to speak the truth to power.

Prior to the concluding remarks presented in chapter eight, chapter seven picks up the idea of diminishment, casting the foregoing notion of the depletion of the fund of human wellbeing in terms of sustainability, or unsustainability as the case may be. It elevates the issue of sustainability as being the core business of the amateur and the Left, and it grafts this idea of sustainability to a progressive model of social democracy as the vehicle which is best positioned to effect a postcolonial love and enrichment of humanity. In that operation, the chapter reclaims the idea of advocacy for the disadvantaged and reinforces the presence of that impulse within the social democratic tradition, at once foregrounding a sense of social justice and responsibility to community whilst rearticulating the notion of *agape* or love. This responsibility, this reclamation and this rearticulation resonate with, demand and require the denunciation of inhumanity. They call for sustainability through humanity, and this call is worldly in its logic, requiring attention to situation and circumstance via a proactive focus on affirmative social policy as the

main game of the Left. And if the amateur, the heretic or the native are ever to find a voice to speak the truth to power or to write back, it is precisely that sort of worldly and affirmative attention to (and advocacy of) the production of substantive citizenship which is pivotal. This advocacy and attention is what a responsibility to community is all about. But it's a funny business. It is an uncanny business, and the chapter grapples with this spectre of the uncanny.

A commitment to resistance and amateurism - or resistance through amateurism and participation and the democratisation of knowledge and attenuation of exclusions - requires a full, uncanny equality of substantive citizenship, as any heretical attempt at writing back is impotent unless it is undertaken with the master's pen as a kind of strategically uncanny mimicry which underpins the conditions for transformative epistemological discombobulation. That uncanny mimicry is necessarily a parodic performance within the dominant terms and frame of reference, but from within that framework, that amateuristic performance sets about resisting, restructuring and retelling stories of legitimacy and authority.

2/ THE POSTMODERN PROBLEM: INERTIA AND THE LEFT'S END OF HISTORY

2.1/ An End of History

The post-isms, broadly represented by the common central tenets postmodernism and poststructuralism at their most general levels, pose a problem. The posts are – since 1989's definitive rebuttal of any appeal to a Leftist grand narrative – where the Left has gone to die. This post-graveyard is the Left's own, ironic, post-ideological end of history, and it is a notable juxtaposition that the Left's end of history is a sad ironic paralysis as opposed to the invigorated and invigorating triumphalism enjoyed by the Right. Such graveyard catatonia makes it hard for the Left to espouse either direction or agency. Whilst the Right – in spite of anything but meekness – has inherited the earth, the Left has languished in irony, bereft of the kind of reclaimed agency which might allow it to step up to the crease. As defined and recognised here in the broadest of terms, the Left is a complex and cosmopolitan field of ideas which embraces the politics of structure, contingency and collectivity. What that embrace historically effects, from Marx onwards, is a focus on liberation, resistance and emancipation. The crisis of the Left is that, in spite of the inspirational work of theorists such as Hardt and Negri (2000), the overall momentum of narratives of liberation, resistance and emancipation which it has produced has been largely ineffectual in terms of overcoming critical issues which the posts raise, or in terms of gaining significant political traction in a global climate of neo-liberal political economy.

The posts, whilst motivated by a recognition of the structural contingencies which have always been central to any Left critique of power and inequality, and whilst concerned with the identical project of such critiques, suffer from a crisis of political impotence. They have absorbed and employed much of the Left's critical and intellectual energy, but delivered little political return. The consideration which stems from this state of affairs surrounds the issue of overcoming the posts: of how to effectively re-harness critical energy and

resurrect an agency and a workable epistemology from this crisis without ignoring the instruction that such a crisis has to offer.

From the anti-foundationalism of Rorty (1979), and Lyotard's (1984) opposition to meta-narratives, through poststructuralist accounts of the world (see, for example, Derrida, 1978, and Foucault, 1977) and, in fact, since the prior musings of numerous other theorists (see, for example, Nietzsche, 1974, and Heidegger, 1962), the posts have problematised the way in which theory is conceptualised. They have challenged modernist concepts such as rationality and truth. Paradoxically, however, these posts are unable to escape the logic of the very structures to which they claim to be antithetical, and the challenges which they mount turn upon themselves whilst they develop and establish a new narrative and foundationalism.

These theoretical projects of emancipation and engagements with closure, hegemony, discourse, knowledge and power structures have thus far without fail ended up in a position of self-defeating and self-antithetical contradiction. This is the case with modern and postmodern manifestations of theory. In its killing of the Cartesian subject and objective truth, postmodernism encounters problems regarding its invocation of a new foundationalism - a dead truth as a truth token. This is where theory, under the general auspices of the posts, revisits old paradoxes and points of analytical closure. Far from being a radical departure from a modernist paradigm, postmodernism can be seen as a logical and filiative progression - as a contradictory and self-antithetical counter narrative.

Theory, in whatever form, continues to reproduce itself in a filiative, autoreferential and homotextual way, which renders the radical contained by the orthodox, and which renders anything beyond the parameters of that containment thus far unattained. Theory in a postmodern form remains guilty of the charges levelled at it in its modern form - that it is by and for someone and some purpose, that it is ideological and a form of discursive and silencing truth regime.

Postmodernism as post-modernism, the filiative child of modernity, becomes hopelessly entwined in contradiction, and in the paradoxes which have plagued theory at least since the Enlightenment. But postmodernism as a critique of theory is emblematic of some important critical lessons. The critiques of objective truth, foundationalism and god-systems which postmodernism has

raised seriously challenge and problematise any project which might advocate a return to modern narratives. Theory is mated - inert, nihilistic and stagnant.

Postmodernism, it seems, stands as testimony to Nietzsche's epigram,

God is Dead; but given the way of men, there may still be caves for thousands of years in which his shadow will be shown. And we - we still have to vanquish his shadow, too (Nietzsche, 1974, p.167).

Theory seems doomed to achieve, at best, a re-invocation of a dead god as a god token - the reincarnation of the beast in the guise of its opposite form, still held by the logic of the grand-narrative and the totalising system. These are problems which postmodernism as emblematic god-shadow has never adequately addressed.

In wrestling with postmodernism, and in confronting or acknowledging and attempting to move past this shadow, we come face to face with the nihilistic experience - a dead shadow, a dead subject, a twice-killed god. The question at this point is quite easily articulated: how can theory proceed in the face of a twice-killed god? Is the only tenable theoretical stance for the Left – for theories of resistance and emancipation – one of inert and ironic indifference? As Strong says,

If everything that we can do or say or think, if the very stuff of ourselves in the world is all indelibly coloured by the same tincture of nihilism, then all attempts at liberation or escape must also manifest this stain. The more one tries to escape the chains which bind one in, the more imprisoned one becomes, for what appear as the tools of freedom will in fact only increase the strength of that which holds us prisoner (Strong, 1976, p.241).

These are problems which postmodernism as god-shadow has never adequately addressed. Postmodernism has followed Nietzsche closely in terms of its assassination of god-systems, but it falls short of Nietzsche in never having fully and effectively embraced nihilism and indifference.

2.2/ Embracing the Elephant.

But if we do embrace the nihilistic elephant in the room, if we acknowledge that all pretensions of truth or, consequently, antitruth are complicit with a will to power, or at best inadvertently entwined with a discursive system of power, then how can theory progress? Or to put it another way, how can theory be political? How can theory tend towards a goal such as political struggle or emancipation without sliding back into nihilistic contradiction? The following quotation is worth consideration in that regard:

The reduction of truth to value (or to a "perspective", to use Nietzsche's term for "belief"), then, cannot in turn lead to the discovery of a new truth or a new foundation for thinking, for the world of difference is the only world there is. The philosophy of difference concentrates on the dismantling or deconstruction of all metaphysical truth-claims and all metaphysical systems of logic, but at the same time denies the possibility of a new truth and a new reason that could take the place of what has been done away with: there is no exit, for twentieth-century humanity, from a world of contrasting and often conflicting interpretations (Snyder, 1988, p.xiii).

The dead subject and disintegration of truth has left in its wake an array of difference and atomised subjectivities divorced from the objective separateness which defines the Cartesian subject/self. These differences and disparate values present themselves as being of equal value to each other in the absence of any god or objective truth which could give precedence to any of them. We can follow through from this observation to see how important instruction obtains in the thought of the Italian philosopher Vattimo.

In his work, *The End of Modernity - Nihilism and Hermeneutics in Post-modern Culture* (1988), Vattimo begins his observations by using an engagement with Nietzsche and Heidegger to suggest that whilst each thinker called into question the culture and filiative tradition of modern European thought, and notwithstanding any acceptance of nihilism, they both "refuse at the same time to propose a means for a critical "overcoming"" (Vattimo, 1988, p.2). It is suggested by Vattimo, as explained in Snyder's well-developed analysis of and introduction to Vattimo's thought, that,

Because of the double bind and the conceptual cul-de-sac into which it leads, there can be no clear break with, or dramatic overcoming of, modernity for either Nietzsche or Heidegger (Snyder, 1988, p.xvii).

We are constrained by the paradigmatic tools of conception which we have inherited from modernity. The use of those tools keeps us within a modernist project, and Nietzsche and Heidegger fail to supply us with any means of overcoming that paradigm, or with any process or artefact untainted by the errors of the existing system. It is from this point of analysis that the crux of Vattimo's argument is developed. Again, Snyder teases out the kernel of things:

What does the disappearance of metaphysical truth and being signify for philosophical thought today? The necessary first step in this inquiry is to recognise that Being has been reduced to "exchange-value" in modernity, and that nihilism itself is in fact none other than the reduction of being into exchange-value. The implications of this are more far-reaching than simply the reduction of traditionally "strong" Being into value (that is, belief) through nihilistic analysis. Insofar as there is no longer a highest value, such as God, to which all other values may refer as their foundation, then all values must be said to stand in a relationship of universal equivalence where each value is equal to all other values and can be converted into, or exchanged for, any other given value (Snyder, 1988, pp.xx-xxi).

Vattimo suggests that Nietzsche's death of God and objective truth - if taken to the degree where the shadow dies too, leaving no dead god as a god token as has been the case with the post-isms - results in all value being reduced to exchange-value. All subjective perceptions, differences, interpretations and evaluative methods are exchangeable for a host of equivalent values, none having pre-eminence. It is here that Vattimo begins to suggest that the death of God - as Nietzsche has told us all along in his way - is a constructive and liberating rather than paralysing phenomenon.

In Snyder's analysis of Vattimo, he goes on to say,

The infinite interpretability of reality is what allows us today to speak of the "weakening" of metaphysical Being and truth (Snyder, 1988, p.xxii).

It is perhaps with this notion of choices that we first begin to see an opening for strategic manoeuvres which allow us to overcome the nihilistic experience.

Referring to the weakening of formerly strong notions of truth and being, Vattimo calls on us to allow ~~a~~ fictionalised experience of reality which is also our only possibility for freedom” (Vattimo, 1988, p.29).

2.3/ Weak Thought.

At this point we encounter the concept of hermeneutic ontology, or ~~w~~weak thought” (Vattimo, 1988). After an immersion in the nihilistic experience and an acceptance of the disintegration of strong truths and god-systems, weak thought becomes a means of beginning to forge a strategic praxis. Vattimo’s idea is to accept the structures of containment which theory has always inhabited. But Vattimo does not propose a simple return to the past in an uncritical sense. Instead he posits his own inflections on what a critical postmodernity, as he calls it, might look like. As Snyder explains,

To remember and recollect the tradition, to think of it and to traverse it once again, does not mean to return uncritically to it. Rather, Vattimo turns back to ... tradition ... in order to try to distort and dissolve that tradition from the inside, erasing the vestiges of metaphysical thought still present in it, while at the same time - inevitably, but this time with self-conscious irony - prolonging it as well. This recollecting or rethinking (*Andenken*) is thus always accompanied by an act of *Verwindung* (Snyder, 1988, p.xxvi).

Verwindung is a term and a concept of key importance, and it requires some elaboration. Clearly, Vattimo has borrowed the concept from Heidegger. It is, in a sense, a designation for a form of overcoming. As Snyder puts it,

... it means to go beyond metaphysics by accepting it and being resigned to it, while seeking at the same time to be cured of metaphysics by twisting it in a different direction in order to drain it of its strength (Snyder, 1988, p.xxvi).

Vattimo proposes a return to certain inevitable structures, but in a critical, self-conscious, ironic and weakened way. Weak thought does not attempt the impossible project of escaping from contradiction, but returns us to conflicted structures without the strength of truth. Weak thought makes no pretensions regarding a total move away from ideology or theoretical tradition. It accepts being always complicit with traditional structures in a self-aware, ironic,

weakened and strategic way which elevates a notion of pragmatism and design over that of truth.

Theory remains by and for someone and some purpose, but not of or for some strong truth. It is weak, it is contestable, and it is this weakening which gives weak thought or a weak theory its strength in terms of allowing a space for post-nihilistic criticism and praxis. As Snyder says,

It is a repetition with ironic difference, then, for although [Vattimo's] postmodernity inevitably prolongs the categories of modernity and must resign itself to them, it also tries to twist them in another direction and to turn them against themselves ... The *Verwindung* of modernity is a fundamentally ironic gesture that rejects any heroic or romantic posture vis-à-vis the Western tradition. The decline of modernity, however, also opens up the opportunity for a new - but weakly new - beginning for thought, and this is what permits us to consider philosophical nihilism a responsible, rather than a despairing, response to the crisis of the contemporary world (Snyder, 1988, p.1).

Through weak thought, Vattimo assists us in mobilising theory and in traversing the terrain of nihilism. The argument is cogent in that, to put it quite simply, it is guided by an acceptance of error and nihilism which, if avoided, must surely render theory impotent or strongly affected by error in the sense of an eternal repetition of the structures and consequent problems of the past vis-à-vis political theory as always a same-but-in-a-new-guise re-articulation of power. The argument is not entirely new. It is not at odds with Nietzsche. But it does take up more effectively where Nietzsche left off before his flirtation with the concept of eternal return. The underpinning of Vattimo's thinking - that nihilism is responsible, not despairing - is what Nietzsche has told us all along. It seems that Vattimo proposes what Nietzsche might have hoped for by way of a practice of a "gay science" which is "superficial - out of profundity" (Nietzsche, 1974, p.38).

However, Vattimo's use of the concept of *Verwindung* does make his version of what one might call a "gay science" significantly more sophisticated than anything articulated by Nietzsche. Nietzsche's views on the issue merely constitute a justification for the status quo, or for any state of affairs or being. Unlike Nietzsche, Vattimo's concept of weak thought allows us to rethink the past differently. The logic of the narrative may be justified, but only ever as a weak

little-narrative, and never with the unassailable assuredness of the metanarratives of the past. Whilst Nietzsche suggests laughing at life's purposelessness and inherent paradoxes in order that we might affirm it on its own terms, Vattimo is inclined away from maniacal paralysis, and more towards a functional sense of ironic humour.

This ironic humour allows Vattimo the possibility of proposing a move away from a perpetual repetition of filiative tradition – it allows a break, in other words, with history. Once the legitimising truth regimes of dominant discourses and power structures are weakened by virtue of a lack of ability to autoreferentially locate themselves within the strong framework of a homotextual, non-secular, and filiative history, then a historicism which is predicated upon notions of filiative progression is undone and one is faced with a “genuine heterogeneity of discourses” (Bellamy, 1987, p.729).

The key to manoeuvring amongst a heterogeneity of weak discourses in the post-historical moment is to associate with the heterogeneity of discourses in a non-filiative way. It is to return to a world where, as Vattimo has suggested, there are only interpretive choices, and to make choices strategically, employing weak and pragmatic associations with discourse, theory and disparate subjectivities in a manner which is *affiliative* and which allows a space for criticism and praxis. Such affiliation dissociates theory from the genealogical and homotextual purity which the will to a system, or system of historicism, might demand. Affiliation allows a transcendence of pure filiative disciplinary boundaries and permits a space for exploring and accepting the affiliative contingency of historically disparate disciplines.

It is no longer appropriate, in the post-historical moment, to think of the world and of the self in the modern mould as something detached from and able to objectively observe a single, understandable form of reality. Noting the death of objective truth and of the Cartesian subject, a postmodern critique of modernity would question the foundationalism of perceived objectivity, as well as an objective separateness from a single, observable and quantifiable form of reality and consequent narratives of truth and knowledge. Such a critique would emphasise contingency and subjectivity instead, collapsing the self and the world, and producing or exposing contingent, overlapping and subjective realities. A

weak, affiliative theoretical method advocates a strategic manoeuvring which is attuned to such contingency in that it weakens the boundaries between realities and truths. It seeks to discover agency through contingency against the circular paralysis which has beset stronger manifestations of theory

2.4/ Smaller gods.

The new gods of the weak method are, to borrow Roy's phrase, those of small things (Roy, 1997), those which avoid grand abstract stories and which compel us with little, weak narratives to recover a politics grounded in specificity – to recognise that in attending to a situation we should not seek to will ourselves towards a system which can account for all such situations. Attention to the smallness of things grounds politics in the specificity of the world. It connects agency to the real nexus of contingent variables which obtain in a particular situation at a particular moment – it gives pause to appreciate the specificity of the local, whilst realising that the local is caught up and bound in the limitless, overlapping and chaotic contingency of the world. This move away from a master plan allows a functional and pragmatic recognition of the unpredictability of any particular spatial or temporal event in the world. This is where postmodernism is most constructive in instructing agency – in directing it towards the limited but effective realm of specific applications, in all of their messy reality, and away from the grandness and the blandness of dislocated and dehumanised regulations and schema.

The weakness of small things is methodologically useful in mitigating the errors which – almost by definition – obtain in grand narratives and master designs. If one size is supposed to fit all, then that supposition accepts a margin of error identical to the degree to which all are not the same size. This is always going to be an error which is uncomfortable and unsuitable for a high degree of application, and completely untenable for some. A smaller application of less ambitious designs is useful in overcoming such discomforts and the blanket paternalisms which such broad applications and discomforts tend towards.

It is perhaps old hat to point out that the errors of grand design have been historically manifold, but it is useful to remind ourselves of how such design obfuscates and smothers the potential and the specificity of diverse and dynamic imaginings which are more micro-applicable and which, if allowed to flourish in

the absence of a broader foreboding, and if apprehended as weak and limited, form the wealth of a bank of smaller knowledges. Any application, undertaking or endeavour starts with a thought, and that thought exists in and as an imagination. The imagination is structured by theory. Theory constructs the appropriate boundaries of imagination in its filiative construction of hegemony. It stretches and limits what is possible, not only in terms of structuring the way in which things are imagined and the parameters within which they are imagined, but also by defining what is appropriate and profitable to imagine - or to know - in the first place. Theory produces a culture of the imagination. This is a culture which will always congratulate itself because, in itself, it is what imagines and produces theory. The unconstructive thing about a macro application of totalising theories is that the presupposed and pre-structured parameters of an inbred imagination cannot always be supposed to fit across the spectrum and throughout the strata of time, culture and space.

2.5/ Contingency and Purposeful Artefacts.

The undoing of strong ontological categories, or of hegemonic and totalising imaginations, is a project attended to by an array of emancipatory theories from the latter part of the last century and into the present, a postmodern attack on the nature of objective truth being emblematic. Attacks on strong ontological categories and hard facts are well illustrated by Rorty's observation that there is no such thing as a "scientific" hard fact, but only "the hardness of the previous agreements within a community" (Rorty, 1991, p.52). This is illustrative of the classical postmodern rejection of Cartesian separatism and the dis-connected observation of the world which such un-contingent separation allows. Where a critique of the disconnected modern method is most acute though, rather than in the abstraction of postmodern thought, is where it comes as a criticism from those (or as a criticism pertaining to those) who have suffered dispossession at the hands of such method. It is most acute in the hands of those who have been the object of enquiry, and those who have been spoken for by the process and outcomes of that enquiry, due to that enquiry's power and capacity to define the parameters within which dialogue can take place. As such, feminist critiques of strong ontology are instructive. Accordingly, and in alignment with the foregoing

comment by Rorty, Tuana's following remark speaks to a feminist critique of strong ontological categories, boundaries and methods. She says,

Science is a cultural institution and as such is structured by the political, social, and economic values of the culture within which it is practiced (Tuana, 1989, p.xi).

Tuana's characterisation of science as a cultural practice opens a space within the imagination to presume that it can be practiced in other ways. The political dimensions of Tuana's work demand that it *must* be practiced in other ways. It is within this notion of an alternative practice that we begin to search for agency, and Tuana's linking of practice to cultural values – be they political, social or economic – reconnects us to Vattimo's notion of exchange value. It further reconnects us to an elevation of the quest for weak method attuned to the specificity of the world. It demands a recognition that theory *is* connected to the world and that pretensions of objective strength which deny the reality of that political and social connection are a strong and artificial ontological *pretension* – an artefact. A recognition of the contingent nature of theory and the world allows space for a more purposeful and limited set of artefacts.

In her feminist analysis of the fact making enterprise of the natural sciences, Hubbard characterises such strong endeavours as social enterprises. She says,

Natural scientists attain their objectivity by looking upon nature ... as isolated objects. They usually [fail to acknowledge] their relationship to the "objects" they study ... The way language is used in scientific writing reinforces this illusion because it implicitly denies the relevance of time, place, social context, authorship and personal responsibility. When I report a discovery, I do not write, "On a sunny Monday after a restful weekend I came into the laboratory, set up my experiment and shortly noticed that ..." No; proper style dictates, "It has been observed that..." This removes relevance of time and place, and implies that the observation did not originate in the head of a human observer ... by deleting the scientist-agent as well as her or his participation as observer, people are left with the concept of science as a thing in itself, that truly reflects nature and that can be treated as though it were as real as, and indeed equivalent to, nature (Hubbard, 1989, pp.125-126).

We can read Hubbard as contending that the scientific fact-making enterprise produces facts that are simply unfactual or *artefactual*. To put this another way, she demonstrates that fact and fiction are synonymous, and that such synonymousness is a product of strong ontological pretension. She goes on to argue that,

The problem is that [this] context-stripping ... [ignores] Heisenberg's uncertainty principle in physics: the recognition that the operations the experimenter performs disturb the system so that it is impossible to specify simultaneously the position and momentum of atoms and elementary particles (Hubbard, 1989, p.127).

2.6/ Conclusion: Resurrecting Softness.

It is the disturbances, the relationships between subjects and objects, which demonstrate that theory and fact are contingent upon the specificity of the world. It is that demonstration which connects Hubbard to the notion of limited practices which we have extrapolated from Tuana's work, and which opens the door to a soft methodology of small things and local artefacts. It is through this softness and locatedness - this weak agency - that theory is able to work through and profit from the lessons of postmodernism. Such a weakness allows theory to, in Chatterjee's words, "resurrect the virtues of the fragmentary, the local and the subjugated" (Chatterjee, 1993, p.xi).

This is a theme which this work will constantly resurrect and reincarnate throughout the exploration of the postcolonial, the development of the concept of amateurism, and the critique of expertise, which together constitute the substantive and analytical project here. It is a theme - following Vattimo's instruction - which provides some forward direction for that analysis, and for, in other words, this chapter's opening consideration around how to resurrect an agency, a workable epistemology and a politically effective theoretical position from the crisis precipitated by the post-isms.

3/ QUESTIONING EXPERTS: UNIMAGINING A RATIONAL WORLD

3.1/ Science's Reductive Tendencies: Problematic Epistemic Commitments.

Science's reductive tendencies, its methodological impulse towards micro-analysis and specialisation, and its attempts to extrapolate universal meanings and true formulae from reductive observations, constitutes a practice which can be read in terms of a Nietzschean will to power – the will to create knowledge systems that are sufficiently powerful to account for the universal truth, and to impart such knowledge and power to its students. In an exploration of the intersections between chaos theory, complexity theory and a postmodern science - all of which reinforce and connect to the critical project of questioning scientific orthodoxy and tendencies - Sardar illustrates this with an example, stating that,

Deconstruction of the human condition into its genome ... is an expression of the will to dominate and possess all (Sardar, 1994, p.665).

A weak ontological practice of small things suggests a focus on the problems of the particular by virtue of a recognition that the interplay of worldly variables at any specific point and moment is unpredictable and that – in other words – by contemplating the complexity of the whole we realise the uniqueness of the specific. On the other hand, the strong ontological dictates of traditional science suggest the opposite – that an observation of the specific can be extrapolated to provide a reductive understanding of the whole and, consequently, of the universal nature of all similar specifics and situations. This Cartesian view of the world pays little heed to the contingent nature of theory and the world, or to the complex interrelationships between parts of the whole. From public policy to proctology, the fact making enterprises - which inform and which are enacted upon their human audiences - are open to charges of missing complexity, of simplicity, and of ontological pretension.

Interestingly, in an examination of the patriarchal culture of the Harvard physics community, Keller links the pretentious and reductive Cartesian methodology of

science to precisely the worldly connection between theory and the world which such a methodology ignores. She suggests that such context stripping is, ironically, contextual. As Dugdale succinctly explains in her account of Keller's work,

Keller points out that the fragmented, shortsighted and often destructive knowledges and technologies produced by the physics community of the 1950s and 1960s were neither inevitable nor produced in a realm from which politics had been excluded. They were, she argues, the result of the ascendancy of a masculine operational view of research physics as the tool of experimental success. Other more contemplative and holist[ic] perspectives were available within the physics community but lost credibility in the pressure cooker atmosphere of post-sputnik, American research physics. Keller identifies the negotiation of dominant world views within the physics community as evidence of the political nature of scientific knowledge construction, showing how both external and internal political forces shape the representations of the natural world produced by science (Dugdale, 1988, pp.118-119).

The point is that representations of reality which are infected with the pretension of strong ontology are exactly that – representations derived from context specific methodologies and practices. The problem with this is not that representations are representations *per se* – working representations are necessary for a functional apprehension of situations and the world. The problem is that strong pretensions surrounding a single knowable and objective truth obscure the politics and power of methodologies and practices, and the ideological dimensions of such, as much as they dominate and obfuscate other weak representations and their potential to be applied to other situations.

These are precisely the kind of points that Haraway picks up on in her revisionist work, *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (1989), and which have characterised much of her work, especially in regards to the theme of the dominance of masculinity in scientific culture (see, for example, Haraway 1989 and 1991). Similarly, Harding (see, for example, Harding, 1991, 1998 and 2006) has contributed the problematisation of scientific culture, critiquing the monocultural nature of the scientific community and its exclusions of feminist and postcolonial epistemologies.

Adding further to the literature on science's epistemic obfuscations, exclusions and ontological closure, Visvanathan's work is exemplary. For all of Visvanathan's scholarship and insights, one line stands as emblematic of his contribution to an understanding of the nature of science, and it stands as an emblematic comment on the imperialistic and overbearing history and culture of science, its exclusions and its intolerant, domineering closures. He says,

The Museum is the recognition of the Other but always through the smell of formaldehyde (Visvanathan, 1996, p.312).

This concept of dominant, colonising forms of expert knowledge as being imperialistic expressions of power over - and containment of - local, ~~native~~ "knowledges" is paralleled in Prakash, who takes a subaltern studies focus to the issue of suppressed local knowledge (Prakash, 1994. See also Prakash, 1999). This is a theme which resonates throughout the next section and the general body of this work, and that resonance orbits around the fact that discreet, exclusive and expert representations and pretensions apprehend and portray the world in terms which are so reductive and simplistically partial as to be a will to misapprehension as much as they are a will to power. And misapprehensions have material effects.

In an examination of the problems of expert knowledge systems, in which an attempt is made to re-capture a space for lay-systems of knowledge, Wynne makes the following observations surrounding strong expert ontology's implication in such material effects. He says,

It has been a frequently remarked feature of the environmental issue that it is so strongly characterised in scientific terms, even though the modern cultural reflex to do so may be seen as part of the deeper roots of the ~~environmental~~ "problem" (Wynne, 1996, p.44).

Wynne's point is that scientific expertise, or the concept of expertise more generally, entails ~~problematic~~ "structural" or epistemic commitments" (Wynne, 1996, p.68). That science's methodological and practical insistence on imagining, proving and describing a rational world is illustrative of an ontological and epistemic malaise inherent in expert representations, practices and systems of knowledge, is a profound indictment not only against modern systems of knowledge, but against the expert as the quintessential modern agent.

3.2/ The Specialist, the Expert and the Problem.

It is within Mitchell's magnificent work, *Rule of Experts* (2002), that the critique of expertise and the rational, reductive imagination of the expert agent is undertaken *par excellence*. The precedence of expert over lay knowledge, and the unassailable sanctity of the expert – the foundation upon which the lofty pedestal which permits the Cartesian gaze is predicated – is underpinned and captured by axiomatic caution that “a little bit of knowledge is a dangerous thing”, the implication being that we are safest as docile bodies and beings in the hands of those with a lot of knowledge, or an expert knowledge base. We could read Mitchell's central thesis as suggesting that technical, specialist, or specific expert solutions to complex whole issues are a folly of expertise as, in the context of contingent and worldly wholes, expert knowledge and scholarship can only ever constitute a limited “little bit of knowledge”. What makes expertise different to lay knowledge in this sense is not its epistemological or ontological supremacy *per se*, but its strong pretensions in that regard, and its arrogant ignorance of a wealth of complex and situational variables.

Mitchell engages with the architecture of the ignorance of expertise. In his introduction he poses a series of rhetorical questions which sketch the limitations of expertise and which illustrate the complicity of expertise in the art and science of limitation – limitation of knowledge, limitation of outcomes, and limitation of method. He sets out to problematise the hard and strong boundaries which encircle discreet and separated objects and categories and which honeycomb our apprehension of the world, overlaying a view of a fluid and contingent reality with multiple discursive parentheses. Mitchell starts off with a significant target in his sights, taking a shot at the economy as a strong ontological category and expert realm. He says,

The economy must ... operate as a series of boundaries, distinctions, exceptions and exclusions. For example, the economy depends upon, and helps establish, boundaries between the monetary and the nonmonetary, national and foreign, consumption and investment, public and private, nature and technology, tangible and intangible, owner and nonowner, and many more. How are these boundaries and exceptions

made? What calculations do they make possible? What problems arise and what costs are incurred (Mitchell, 2002, p.9)?

Mitchell critically problematises these boundaries – the categories, separatisms and binaries which underpin modern, rational thought processes, and their uncertain foundations. These foundations are demonstrated to be the foundations of expertise, and the processes of separation and categorisation reveal themselves to be the applied technologies of the expert. Such technologies and expert systems are a hallmark of modernity – of that particular logic and style of thought – and are most notably manifested within paradigms of linear growth and development centred around the impulses of techno-science.

The paradigm of techno-science, as per modernity, tends to separate and isolate units of analysis into discreet, observable and *manageable* categories. There is, in this, the humanistic impulse to not only separate the human subject from the natural world, but also to adopt this separation as an opportunity for mastery over that world. Just as this impulse and method is predicated on a Cartesian separation of the subject and the object, so that logic - which gives a pre-eminence to the human subject and which is at odds with allowing a concept of a chaotic, contingent, unmasterable world - is applied and extrapolated to effect the separation of parts of the object, producing multiple categories of the observable whole which require discreet and specialised expert analysis and observation. Mitchell provides an intricate portrayal of this process and method of separation in his account of an Egyptian history of war, disease and agriculture. That account dissects the modern separatist illusion to reveal a contingent interplay between parts of the whole, and a consequent complexity which problematises unwholistic expert analysis. Mitchell breaks down the specialised, discreet categories upon which strong modern perceptions and expert knowledge systems are predicated, weakening the strong boundaries between categories by emphasising the strength of the connections which transcend and transgress those boundaries. He says,

The connections between a war, an epidemic, and a famine depended on connections between rivers, dams, fertilizers, food webs, and ... several additional links and interactions. What seems remarkable is the way the properties of these various elements interacted. They were not just separate historical events affecting one another at the social level. The

linkages among them were hydraulic, chemical, military, political, etiological, and mechanical. No one writing about Egypt in this period describes this interaction. There are studies of military tactics, irrigation methods, Anglo-Egyptian relations, hydraulic engineering, parasites, the sugar industry, and peasants. But there are no accounts that take seriously how these elements interact. It is as if the elements are somehow incommensurable. They seem to involve very different forces, agents, elements, spatial scales and temporalities. They shape one another, yet their heterogeneity offers a resistance to explanation (Mitchell, 2002, p.27).

The incommensurabilities which Mitchell describes portray expert analyses of the world as a cacophony of discreet monologues which fail to connect in a productive conversation and which fail to account for the consequent limits of their practical efficacy. A system of expert monologues is suboptimal in terms of outcome potential, and as such it is suboptimal as a basis for methodology and policy. Mitchell's comments on incommensurability demonstrate a separation between the natural and social sciences, and multiple sub-incommensurabilities too. Most importantly, the value of Mitchell lies in the fact that he provides a detailed empirical or applied analysis of the unnaturalness of that incommensurability, and of the paradigms and methodologies which such assumptions underpin. He suggests that,

Each of these [incommensurable subsets] has its own science, which identifies the agents, time lines, geo-spatial scales, and modes of interaction appropriate to its analysis. This tends to leave them isolated in their separate sciences. The isolation may be appropriate for the task of a particular science or technical expertise, but its limitations are striking as soon as one begins to ask about the kinds of interactions [which exist between the subsets] (Mitchell, 2002, p.28).

Mitchell's thesis is underpinned by an applied analysis of these interactions, demonstrating the necessary connections between such diverse concerns as entomology and military logistics. The theoretical lessons which we can distil from that analysis are those which cast modern paradigms of expertise as methodologically inadequate, and as misleading exercises in the binary separation

of strong ontological categories. Of these methodologies and paradigms, Mitchell states,

Instead of developing the kinds of analysis that might address these interactions, responding to the techno-scientific transformations of the twentieth century, social theory is still largely trapped in the methods and divisions of labor of the nineteenth century (Mitchell, 2002, p.28).

Mitchell does allude to a causal link between these methodological inadequacies and the externalising tendencies of the logic of humanism and modernity more broadly (Mitchell, 2002, p.29), reinforcing the criticisms of Cartesian abstraction raised here. He also runs a parallel critique which mirrors our previous misgivings around attempts to extrapolate universal meanings from reductive observations – attempts which overstate the efficacy and the applicability of methodologies of specialisation and generalising extrapolation. He states, in his critique of such extrapolations, that,

... social theory typically operates by relating particular cases to a larger pattern or process. Events in a place like Egypt are explained as the local occurrence of something more general ... (Mitchell, 2002, p.28).

What we see in Mitchell's critique, in broad terms, is a comment on the limits of the purposefulness of the energy which surrounds a will to a totalising system and a will to power, a will manifested in the desire for a humanistic mastery and control via expert narratives and techno-scientific paradigms of development and monodimensional growth. Of this mastery, Mitchell suggests,

... no individual ... submits the world to their intentions. More often there occurs a series of claims, affinities and interactions, all of which exceed the grasp or intention of the human agents involved. Human agency and intention are partial and incomplete products of these interactions. This incompleteness ... means that no single line divides the human from the nonhuman, or intentions and plans from the object-world to which they refer (Mitchell, 2002, p.34).

The expert, then, is partial and incomplete and, as we have observed, only ever in possession of "a little bit of knowledge". Expertise is, in other words, a pretence. But there remain charges that the pretence of techno-science is useful – that it achieves numerous and manifest results which, whilst partial, are of practical

utility. Does this in some way vindicate the Cartesian posture as an appropriate stance? Far from justifying an abstraction of expertise from the contingency of the world, Mitchell sees these events, these discoveries of useful artefacts, as suggesting the utility of a more locally specific method of apprehending and engaging with the world and as proof positive that the externalising tendencies of modern paradigms do not obtain, that actors and the objects which they seek to act upon are intimately connected. He says,

... one would have to acknowledge that science did not direct [this] work as a preformed intelligence. The projects themselves informed the science (Mitchell, 2002, p.37).

This is an inversion or at least a subversion and a collapsing of the classical humanistic way of apprehending the world, suggesting an interconnection in which the production of human artefacts needs to be informed - and is unavoidably determined - by the specifics of particular situations. The agent, via this logic, derives their usefulness from their *willingness* to act as a pawn - their agreement to harvest the profits of circumstance - rather than their *desire* to be king or queen. The move away from a will to power and mastery entails an abandonment of a strong and artificial ontological pretension, and directs us towards remembering a case for a more purposeful and limited set of softer artefacts.

Mitchell describes the hard artefacts of expertise in the following terms:

[They are] an alloy that must emerge from a process of manufacture whose ingredients are both human and nonhuman, both intentional and not (Mitchell, 2002, p.42-43).

This is a useful analogy. The concept of an alloy gives us scope to imagine the possible softness and weakness of theory or artefacts – to imagine smaller things – in terms of pliability and as being wrought of a supple, malleable and *willing* cocktail of harder base elements. This willingness and openness to dialogue, as opposed to the arrogant pontification of a closed monologue, is at the heart of the difference between a strong and weak ontology. The other key word to pick up on in Mitchell's analogy is ~~manufacture~~, and it pays to remind ourselves of the pretentious nature of any claim to objectivity in expertise, and to remind ourselves that knowledge is an ideological manufacture. Local applications of specific

artefacts are platoons of mitigation - islands of biodiversity - when it comes to undoing the strength of ideology's colonising tendencies. From a point of view of artefactual ecology, there is a strength and a wealth in malleable weakness and diversity.

The locust-like and rapacious colonisation of the broad ecology of ideas by modernity – the progress and development of rational expertise – is something which Mitchell characterises as occurring through a regime of violent and wilful misapprehensions, ignoring the interconnections and contingency of the world (Mitchell, 2002, pp.52-53). For Mitchell, this violence - this act of separating out and subjugating or subordinating and burying elements of equations and dimensions of the world - inheres in the silences which secure the dominance of positivist and universalising accounts of the world. As he says,

In the positive accounts of law and economics, the genealogy of what is taken to be a universal system of rules is *not open to investigation*. This is inevitable, for if the axiomatic had its origins in particular histories and political acts, its claim to universalism would be lost (Mitchell, 2002, p.55, emphasis added).

The point is that, relative to other knowledges and histories - as postmodern and postcolonial lessons tell us - and due to the discursive denial of multiple interrelated dimensions or contingent aspects of any body of knowledge - as Mitchell's poststructural regard for the role of discourse informs us - expert knowledge systems masquerade as higher truth systems in spite of their partiality and in spite of their subversion of truth. These systems of specialised and objective analysis of the world – these fact making enterprises – are methodologically compromised by the processes of demarcation and delineation which make them possible, which give them separated identity as areas of endeavour, and which contain the object of enquiry as an observable, manageable, predictable and masterable entity. Mitchell comments on the infinite interminability – the sheer impossibility – of these processes of delimitation and expert methodology:

Any attempt to set the limits of the technical operations of calculation must first establish and understand those limits. This opens the problem of calculation to an interminable difficulty, the need to know all those

other social, agricultural, and legal practices out of which the object to be mapped is constituted (Mitchell, 2002, p.119).

In other words, there is always a difficulty, a tension and a falsehood to the practices of specialisation and expertise. To effect a rational world, a calculability and a measurable and observable reality, knowledge is corralled, categories of relevance and irrelevance and technologies of inclusion and exclusion are manufactured, the world is divided and compartmentalised, the connections between things are severed in the modern imagination, and the fluid dynamics - or the "alchemical meeting point of ... disciplines" as Giri (1998, p.379) beautifully describes it - between parts of the whole are frozen, cracked, and replaced by strong and artificial barriers and parentheses around categories of specialisation. Such are the preconditions for expertise. Such are the preconditions for the management and mastery of a modern, rational world. But the boundaries, of course, are not absolute. Whilst they exist within the pages of atlases, in the planning of modern university campuses, and in systems of modern accounting, they do not exist on any satellite imagery, they do not obtain in any ecology, and they do not inhere in the human subject whose expert or professional ability and practice is informed by their personal fortune, and whose personal fortune is dependent upon a chaotic and unpredictable relationship with a physical and social world through which - just to cite the tip of the iceberg - the agency and accident of other human and non-human subjects is chaotically brought to bare, and vice versa.

One of the more evocative and visually rich problematisations and critiques of strong ontological boundaries and the expertise which they contain, demand and facilitate is provided by Howitt (2001), in a piece on geographical frontiers and the hegemony of exclusion in Northern Australia. Taking to task what would seem to be the ontologically unassailable and linking a critique of the ontological security of the physical landscape to a comment on theological epistemology and a related problematisation of bureaucracy - or managerial and administrative specialisation and expertise - Howitt is worth quoting at length:

In northern coastal areas, the inadequacies of frontier images are often laid bare. For most non-Aboriginal Australians, the distinction between 'land' and 'water' is an ontological given. Nothing is so fundamental as the separation of the land from the water. It is privileged as one of the

‘big stories’ of Genesis in the Bible, and it is easily mistaken for a ‘natural’ distinction – a ‘natural’ boundary, an ontological given. Yet when one comes to fix this ontological divide in space and time, it is indeterminate and shifting. The tide constantly redefines the position of the frontier; heavy sediment loads produce muddy estuaries with shifting muddy tidal meanders that are colonised by mangroves and flattened by cyclones; the Wet season regularly inundates coastal plains so that the ‘land’ looks very much like a swamp whose continuities with estuarine environments are at least as notable as their continuities with terrestrial ones. Sea, sky and land mixes up as Country; saltwater, freshwater and the land entwine and interpenetrate in a complex and fecund embrace of coexistence, rather than [being] confined in zones of exclusion and non-interference ... [I]n these same places there is not only ecological complexity, but simultaneously a bureaucratic and administrative complexity imposed by the state’s efforts to manage biodiversity conservation – often badly (Howitt, 2001, pp.239-240).

Conceptual boundaries are not constructed of concrete, nor of pre-ordination, nor of fact. Such boundaries and the objects they *contain* are constructed of discourse. The expert imagination – modern rational thought – is predicated on a network and a lattice of discursive boundaries and exclusions and an imaginary built of discursive manufacturing technologies. As Mitchell reminds us,

Objects of analysis do not occur as natural phenomena, but are partly formed by the discourse that describes them. The more natural the object appears, the less obvious this discursive manufacture will be (Mitchell, 2002, p.210).

Using the economy as an example and a category of expert specialisation, Mitchell elaborates on the impossible tensions which underpin processes of discursive manufacturing. He says,

The constraints, understandings, and powers that frame the economic act, and the economy as a whole, and thus make the economy possible, at the same time render it incomplete. They occur as a strange phenomenon, the constitutive outside. They are an interior-exterior, something both marginal and central, simultaneously the condition of possibility of the economy and the condition of its impossibility (Mitchell, 2002, p.291).

Mitchell contends that categories of specialisation exist because of the acts of exclusion which they engender – this is how they separate themselves as strong, discreet and manageable units of analysis. But this process of exclusion in the formation of the workable category is a constitutive and formative move which renders that which is included as constituted by and *as contingent upon* that which is excluded and the act of exclusion. In other words, the objects and processes of expertise may align with workable representations of the world, but to transpose that discursive representation onto a macro canvass or to further represent it as anything other than temporally, spatially and culturally local and specific is to allow a pretentious and violent act of ignorant exclusion and arrogant subjugation.

3.3/ Discursive and Exclusive Boundaries – the Expert as Professional.

The discursive and exclusive boundaries which surround categories of expertise are exemplified by the genre of professional boundaries, academic disciplines and generalised fields of certified specialisation. One of the qualities which defines these areas is their self-reinforcing vigour and the way in which they internally validate, congratulate and legitimate themselves to effect an automatic and tautological self-perpetuation of their epistemological and ontological strength. In his examination of science as a site of power, Aronowitz observes,

Since the “truth” claims of science are tied to the methodological imperative ... science must be held immune from the influences of social and historical situations. Science, therefore, is truth and can, for this reason, represent itself by means of its procedures, by which the objects of investigation are apprehended. Hence, the self-criticism of science is conducted within the boundaries of its own normative structures. Further, science insists that only those inducted, by means of training credentials, into its community are qualified to undertake whatever renovations the scientific project requires ... [*S*]cience, no less than art or any other discourse, legitimates its power by claiming self-referentiality (Aronowitz, 1987, p.viii, emphasis added).

Whilst a brief acknowledgement is required here of Aronowitz’s key position in the *Social Text* controversy in which, by way of his infamous hoax, Sokal (1996) critiqued the dubious internal validation of Aronowitz’s own scholarly field (see Aronowitz, 1997, for his involvement), the point here is that homotextual self-citationalism – narrowly disciplined professionalism, or professional disciplinarity

– is an essential genealogic tool of legitimacy for the modern expert and author, and is the process by which legitimacy and knowledge are contained, developed, progressed and limited. It is a key technology of the fact making enterprises, manifested in such professional exercises and safeguards as certification and the *nihil obstat* of peer review. It is the authority, the power and the foundation of the fact. It is the self and the fulfilment in a self-fulfilling methodology - a *filial* reflection in the infinite mirror. As Latour suggests, “the status of a statement depends on later statements” (Latour, 1987, p.27). But - in her work on the Western liberal subject’s construction and the complicity of that process in a politics of Indigenous exclusion - it is Rose that articulates the author-constituting phenomenon best as part of the process of expertise:

The self sets itself within a hall of mirrors; it mistakes its reflection for the world, sees its own reflection endlessly, talks endlessly to itself, and, not surprisingly, finds continual verification of itself and its world view. This is monologue masquerading as conversation, masturbation posing as productive interaction; it is a narcissism so profound that it purports to provide a universal knowledge when in fact its practices of erasure are universalising its own singular and powerful isolation. The pole of ‘self’ is both a deformed and deforming power: deforming because it seeks to bend all else to its will, and understands all else in terms of itself; deformed because it thinks (or gambles) that its will is the will of the universe (Rose, 1999, p.177).

In a piece on insiders and outsiders within the academy, Schipper discusses this self-congratulating and inbreeding culture of the imagination and the rigidly discreet, autonomous categories which result, linking the “drawing of demarcation lines in culture and academia” (Schipper, 1997, p.122) to broader notions of self and other and the boundaries of “civilised mankind” (Schipper, 1997, p.122) from which innumerable local histories have been excluded. Schipper draws more than an abstract analogy, directly implicating one exclusion with the other, noting the role of the modern scientific project in the exclusion and subjugation of disparate peoples and histories from and in the processes of knowledge production and the legitimisation of power which such discursive productions underpin.

But it is not just the disciplines on the side of science which attend to the modern project of exclusion and the demarcation between us and them. The humanities and social sciences follow the same patterns and logic. In their critique of the modernist discourse of the expert discipline of International Relations, Ahluwalia and Sullivan draw our attention to that field's practices of discursive demarcation, and to the involvement of such exercises in subjugating local and smaller knowledges by excluding them from the realm of the legitimate and relevant. They say,

... International Relations exists as a discipline in two senses. First, as it identifies itself and, secondly, in terms of what it excludes. We wish to argue that its exclusionary discursive practices discipline knowledge of the world in such a way that International Relations is an imitation of what it claims to be, ... (as) knowledge of the world is to be found beyond the disciplinary boundaries, in what International Relations excludes (Ahluwalia and Sullivan, 2000, p.2).

It is within considerations of such exclusions, especially in the way that Schipper links them to the us and them dichotomies which underpin human history, that we are brought back to Mitchell's concepts of the interior-exterior and the constitutive outside. These concepts hint to us that we need to engage with identity politics if we are to better comprehend the concept of expertise, its operations, its fortifications and its implications with regards to power.

Ashcroft frames the concept of the boundary - the fortification - in a way that can be read as tying it to liberal concepts of identity or, more directly, to being a consequence of the logic of the liberal gaze and of a modern privileging of that gaze. He says,

Boundaries are fundamental to European modernity, deeply implicated in the Western privileging of disciplinarity. The regulation of space by physical boundaries is a metonymy for the regulatory practices of Western epistemology itself. The philosophy of enclosure, like the creation of the map, is related to a perspectival view of space. It is not simply a rationale for dividing land but reflects a fundamental aspect of Western thinking. The ocularcentrism of Western discourse is marked by the complimentary, though opposed, concepts of horizon and boundary. Whereas the horizon adumbrates the region of imaginative

possibility which the method of thinking attempts to regulate, boundaries organize visual space in ways that enable the method of perspectival vision to dominate thinking ... Boundaries ... are crucial because they explicitly defer the 'will to truth' which dominates Western discourse (Ashcroft, 2001, p.164).

Elsewhere, and in terms of engaging with identity politics by way of apprehending modernity, expertise and power, Ashcroft adds his voice to the loose amalgam of dissent which attends to the business of problematising disciplinarity. He produces some interesting concepts around the development of disciplines as part of the exercise of professional identity formation, or as – in other words – part of the modern subject-constituting exercise. Ashcroft makes the observation that the discipline of English as a study of literature is only around one hundred years old. He makes the prediction that it will no longer exist in another one hundred years, simply because the boundaries which the discipline erects to delineate its turf do not obtain from any other perspective or angle, and so the claim to (or fact of) any substantive form of such barriers is ultimately untenable and unsustainable. Viewing the discipline in this way, as a passing and ephemeral movement, gives Ashcroft scope to treat the discipline as partial and questionable rather than as pre-ordained, unassailable and natural. Ashcroft finds space to view the discipline as a discursive formation – here, now, made up for some purpose. Ashcroft investigates that making process and, in his examination of professional identity, observes how the act of making informs and constitutes the identity of the subject or the maker. He puts it this way:

... an important ... question is —How are we to locate our own professional enterprise”, that is, how are we to locate ourselves ... —What do we think we are doing?” We, all of us, whether students or teachers, are so engrossed in the task of gaining control of our subject that we cannot see how it has invented us. We have become the object of our subject, for that is its discursive function, to construct us into social identities which gain not only their character but even their substance from the professional task which has fixed us and the disciplinary ideology which has interpellated us. Nowhere is this more obvious than in those individuals most effectively socialised by the discipline, its professional elites (Ashcroft, unpublished, p.1).

The spirit of Ashcroft's analysis casts professional elites or experts as almost imprisoned by their disciplines. In Ashcroft we see that expertise is more than a methodological problem – it is a metaphysical problem: strong ontology is not just an abstract theoretical problem – it defines and limits the human agent. Under this analysis, it is English Studies *per se* that is culpable for its excesses and for its involvement in the quintessential exemplar of the power and the colonising tendencies of modern ideology - the subject constituting process of the colonial project. Culpability does not lie with the practitioners of English Studies – they simply had no choice and no control, as the discipline mastered their agency. This would be a benign issue – the ineffectual and impotent self absorption of the expert would be merely inane and amusing – if indeed areas of specialisation were autonomous and self contained, but their connection to the world means that experts invariably and inexorably get swept along in the chaos of worldly events, and their endeavours produce an action on the world to which any reaction is unpredictable. In this sense, we can remind ourselves of our axiomatic touchstone – a little bit of knowledge is a dangerous thing. And we need to remind ourselves, too, that such danger is only an effective danger when grafted to an arrogance and strength which allows an overly ambitious imagination of such knowledge's utility, relevance or applicability.

In his work on transdisciplinarity, Giri posits similar concepts to those presented by Ashcroft, reinforcing Ashcroft's themes. He says,

Academic disciplines provide not only a cultural frame to us but also social identity and locations in the institution of knowledge. Academic disciplines not only help us classify the world but also classify ourselves. And both of these functions and objectives are fulfilled by the erection of rigid boundaries among them (Giri, 1998, p.380).

Reconnecting us to Rose's foregoing comments on narcissism, monologue and masturbation, such observations on professional development reinforce the depth, the degree and the strength of the homotextual containment of expert knowledge, and give us some insight into the nature of the modern arrogance of such systems of knowledge – it is a product of limitation, of the fact that it is all their practitioners know, as their lonely practitioners are constituted by their practice.

3.4/ From Discourse and Knowledge to Power.

The constitutive homotextuality of disciplines underlines and demonstrates a process of discursive construction in their development, and suggests discourse analysis as a tool for examining their power. Throughout his work, this is precisely the methodological logic which Mitchell (2002) employs. It is also a logic which Ahluwalia and Sullivan borrow from Said in their examination of International Relations, and which similarly inflects Ashcroft's work. But, of course, whilst Said (1978) arguably used discourse analysis to greater effect than any other practitioner, and whilst the aforementioned theorists stand on his shoulders, the concept slightly predates his use. Its father was Foucault. And we reconnect with Foucault here in other ways too when we think of the interconnections between what Giri describes as "both of these functions and objectives" above, for these interconnections are the subject-constituting substance of what Foucault would describe as power (see, for example, Foucault, 1980). Mchoul and Grace draw the link between a Foucauldian analysis of discursive power and the relationship between the constituted and the constituting:

[Power] consists of determinate discursive practices which may equally well be on the side of writing as of reading. For it is essentially these practices which not only produce texts but also constitute the conditions of possibility for reading. Foucault's concept of discursive practice – and this may be one intellectual debt he owes to structuralism – effectively eliminates the distinction between the "subject" and the "object" of discourse. Since Foucault, discourse can no longer be relegated to the sphere of ideology; and yet neither can it have the certitude that Marxism would give to the economy and other "real" orders (Mchoul and Grace, 1993, p.23).

As the poststructuralists have always known, an analysis of power problematises knowledge, and a discursive analysis of knowledge problematises the "real". If Foucault makes us question the nature of order and the ordering of nature, or the relationship between knowledge and the real, then there exists in his work a fundamental link between the expert, their disciplines, and power. It follows, then, that a critique of what Giri calls "the rigidification of boundaries" (1998, p.382), or "specialization and monopoly" (1998, p.382), or "a modern academic division of labour" (1998, p.382), not only connects us to a wholesale postmodern

critique of the modern enterprise, but also to the tools of poststructuralism which Foucault affords us.

Discipline, as the subject-constituting inside, has the strength to constitute the subject because it exists as something tangible that can be identified with, because it has a knowable, delineated identity, defined by what it contains and what it keeps out, or by what it is by virtue of what it isn't – by virtue of the constitutive outside. Discipline - as a Foucauldian double entendre - identifies the expert via a process of professional apartheid, and it is through a model of discursive theoretical apartheid that we can conceptualise power, not at the level of the deliberate and the understood, but at a saturating and cultural level, as the recalcitrant clumsiness of everyday life. Giri captures the clumsiness of modernity well as a "system" of colonisation and erasure. He says,

... a modernist equation of knowledge and power gives rise to the deification of the professionals and technical experts in the human condition who systematically erase alternative traditions of thinking about knowledge, for instance, knowledge being concerned with understanding, love and selfless devotion to humanity (Giri, 1998, p.386).

The alternative traditions of knowledge which Giri describes are necessarily predicated on a deep sense of contingency and involvement. Love – as a concept which slips the knot of rational and reductive analysis, but which describes a deep connection – could easily be taken for or applied as a synonym for the interconnections and contingencies which inhere in the world, or for a tradition which is sensitive to those conditions. In this sense, love is an apprehension of or relationship to the world which is intricate and complex. Giri links this idea of love to the Hindu concept of *bhakti* – a spirit of unconditional and transcendental devotion. The reverse of such a concept of love, transcendence and interrelated complexity is the Cartesian standpoint and the revelation of modernity, rationality, expertise and strong ontology as the deities of erasure and the clumsiest of gods.

Power is the negative image of love. The latter is a current and a force – a mode of being – which is dependant upon worldly contingencies and connections, and which is dependant on recognising, at a super-rational level, these contingencies. Power – in a Foucauldian sense – is predicated upon exactly the same lattices of

interconnection, but with an ontological confusion and clumsiness which does not obtain in love. It is the discursive construction of strong, blundering ontology which underpins power and which has relegated love to a modern status well beneath that of the hard, partial fact. Expertise is the gatekeeper to that hardness of the fact, and discourse - and the discursive construction of identity - is the key.

3.5/ The Question of Identity.

3.5.1/ National Identity.

That the boundaries which contain and define strong ontology, disciplines, facts and expertise are discursive is established – the subject/object constituting technologies of exclusion and homotextual validation are technologies of identity, of the discursive practice of imagining and inventing the self. If we wish to shed further light on the nature of specialisation and the architecture of the specialised and discreet, then some elaboration on the technology of identity is instructive.

Identity, as an area of theorising, provides an interesting intellectual vantage point from which to view the nation as a marker of discreet autonomy and separation. If we can make a quick conflationary excursion through the term “~~nation-state~~”, identity provides a perspective on the state as an articulation of hegemony within the nation as spoken through democracy (to engage an important and workable example of a system of modern governance), and on policy as a product and articulation of the state. Identity provides an interesting view of modernist units of analysis – of discreet organisational categories: the self, the nation, the state, the object of belonging. And nationality becomes, in this light, a useful tool of analogy and allegory as a signifier of belonging and collective cultural identity. In other words, the nation is synonymous with culture, and that sense of culture or nation operates on multiple and varied sites, from the discipline and the profession to the broadest sense of community.

Paramount amongst contemporary articulations of discursively formed hegemonic, modern and exclusive modes of closure, or imagined national/cultural referents of identification (or ostensible identity) is - for all its definitional nebulosity - a modern nation-state which is, to varying degrees and as a product of the ongoing processes of globalisation and hybridity, increasingly multicultural in either manifest terms, terms of policy, or both, and which is the quintessential

exemplar of the processes of identity. This observation provides an appropriate backdrop against which to examine and tease out the nature of one such articulation with reference to the issue of Australian national identity.

Cochrane and Goodman say of Australian national identity,

... in the Menzies era ... we would have had a statement of good government, cultural homogeneity and consensus. The idea of the nation, then, was ontologically secure. Today we are part of a very different social and political landscape, one that may require a new paradigm of national representation (Cochrane and Goodman, 1988, p.21).

It seems fair to suggest that any current idea of Australian national identity is far from ontologically secure, and that Australian identity defies any such relaxed and comfortable security. It is certainly arguable that Australian national identity - with reference to debates around refugees, a republic and reconciliation - has moved away from ontological security to a period of contestation and flux. We might apply the suggestion of Ashcroft and Salter that,

... the heart of the problem is a paradox shared by all settler cultures in their frenetic and ambiguous passion for identity (Ashcroft and Salter, 1994, p.71).

Teasing out the nature of the ambiguity of identity which underpins flux and freneticism - the ambiguity which inheres within discursive forms of passionate exclusion - Ashcroft and Salter go on to say,

[These ambiguities] are not only racial; they include a range of behaviours or characteristics which fail to conform to certain stereotypical male patterns. But the idea of racial purity in an immigrant culture is the key to the absurd rigidity of a central discourse ... [T]he notion of defining such boundaries involves the concretisation of the limits of perception and conscious existence (Ashcroft and Slater, 1994, p.81).

In considering ambiguities of identity in flux, we ought to first take instruction from Hall, and think of identity,

... as a —roduction” which is never complete, *always* in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation. This view

problematizes the very authority and authenticity to which the term “cultural identity” lays claim (Hall, 1990, p.392, emphasis added).

Hall brings us nicely back around to the strong ontology of the boundaries around objects, disciplines and subject, casting that strength as authority and authenticity. He also refocuses our attention on the fiction, or the discursive construction, of that authenticity, as a production within representation.

It is reasonable here to conflate the terms “cultural identity” and “imagined nationality” to illustrate how the nation is process, and how the closure of national identity is - rather than preordained and natural - a product of contestable and unsettlable identification within an imagined community, such as Anderson would have it (Anderson, 1993). If we can see cultural/national identity, in this light, as more a process of identification than a product of nature - not an essence but a positioning” (Hall, 1990, p.395), then we cast those modernist, essential boundaries which define strong categories of the separate and discreet as imagined and constructed through a process of discursive representation. And we are left with the task of considering the technologies or processes of that representation.

In her work on the other in national identity, Triandafyllidou ponders an issue which gives us an opening to thinking about discursive technologies. She says,

The double-edged character of national identity, namely its capacity of defining who is a member of a community but also who is a foreigner, compels one to ask to which extent it is a form of inward looking self-consciousness of a given community or the extent to which the self-conception of the nation in its unity, autonomy and uniqueness is conditioned from the outside, namely through defining who is not a national and through differentiating the ingroup from others (Triandafyllidou, 1998, p.593).

Bringing us back to Mitchell’s concept of the “constitutive outside” (Mitchell, 2002, p.291), Triandafyllidou goes on to answer her musings, noting that nationalism and national belonging “presupposes the existence of other nations too” (Triandafyllidou, 1998, p.594). It was with his work on the presuppositions of otherness that Said first came to prominence with his 1978 publication of *Orientalism*.

Said's work is pre-eminent amongst theory which engages with the processes of national imagining, and the force of his work lies in the fact that, through his examination of the colonial project and the complicity of the culture and logic of the Western academy in that project, he articulates these discursive processes very directly as technologies of material and manifest power. As an analysis of the dynamic between discourse, knowledge and power (or of the power of representation) which resonates with poststructuralist impulses, Said's work opened up the field of colonial discourse analysis as a rich political exhibition of the modalities of discursive and manifest power. The focus on discourse which Mitchell (1991 and 2002) exposes us to forms a significant part of the genre of colonial discourse analysis too, and together with many other important contributions to the debate such as work by Young (1995) and Pratt (1992), forms a formidable corpus of analysis of discursive power which very directly attends to Ahluwalia and Sullivan's previously canvassed concerns regarding the exclusions which inhere in the discipline of International Relations. Not only does colonial discourse analysis provide us with the tools to understand the exclusionary practices of International Relations and such disciplines, but it is precisely these sort of tools which the discipline excludes. That which speaks of or reveals the excluded other is other itself – such is the power of hegemony to doubly exclude: to not recognise protestations of exclusion unless they are articulated from within an included space. It is the discursive construction of hegemonic exclusions and representations of the other to which Said directly attends.

3.5.2/ Discourse, Culture and Hegemony.

Said's work on orientalism follows Foucault in its consideration of discourse, and - having already made considerable allusions to the term - we should unpack that line of theorising further before shading in any greater detail or canvassing Said *per se*. Said adheres to a Foucauldian concept of discourse as a kind of textuality wherein we can see the text, in the form of any interpersonal transmission of knowledge, as having cultural dimensions of meaning which are surplus to those intended by the author. The term textuality embraces all of these surplus dimensions of a text, which are passed from person to person and generation to generation, to become a cumulative and self-citational way of knowing or conceptualising reality. The textual construction of reality contains all of the

dimensions of representation and marginalisation which define and prejudice our ways of knowing, and which privilege the hegemonic status quo. These representations and prejudices are manifested in language as constituent parts of a discourse of privilege and marginalisation, and of knowledge and power.

As a system of representing and building reality, discourse produces an imagination of the real, an identity of the self, and a community to identify with. As colonising ~~technologies~~ "technologies of knowledge", discursive representations of truth - of sense, logic, right, wrong and so on - are organically passed from person to person and generation to generation until they accumulate to become what is taken as *the* truth. This construction of truth involves defining and representing not only *what* is right and wrong, or included and excluded, but *who* as well. So, we discursively manufacture undesirability, deviance, disadvantage and the like through the representations we carry in our language and communication.

A dominant body of community knowledge or discursive truth, is - to follow Said - a cultural hegemony. If, as per Williams, we see culture as being a ~~way~~ "way of life" (Williams, 1982), or a way of knowing, then dominant culture, common sense and hegemony become interchangeable concepts. Common sense constructions or linguistic reflections of common sense carry hegemonic or dominant political truths or taken-for-granted structures of power and imbalance. It is those taken-for-granted structures which define culture as a common sense way of life and which define hegemonic truths, assumptions and reality. But the cultural power of discourse or the text is not only a positive product of the politics which it transmits or carries, but a negative product too, determined by what it does not give carriage to. The cultural power of the text lies not only in its transmission of knowledge, but also in its inevitable omission of transmissions. On this level, an important facet of discourse is that it works not just by talking about, but also by defining what is and isn't talked about, by considering that which is outside of the dialogical boundary or barrier as being outside of the substance of the conversation. That which is outside of the boundaries becomes beset by silences as the place where relevance doesn't exist. Johnson articulates this point well, in her investigation of race, class and sexuality based narratives of identity. She says,

... identities, like the nations of which national identity is a part, are in some sense an imagined community ... They also involve narratives ...

However, in order for identities to function smoothly there are things that it is easier *not* to imagine ... These are often alternative narratives that disrupt a narrative about an identity by questioning its goodness. They are narratives that precisely ask one to empathize with the other; to imagine alternative stories about the past and alternative futures and presents (Johnson, 2005, p.42).

Said uses a marriage of Foucault to Gramsci in his investigation of the narratives of identity. He suggests that - as we have already noted - hegemony is formed discursively: that a Gramscian hegemony of knowing, a cultural way of life, or community of consensus and common sense, is established discursively, or textually, in a manner which can be understood in terms of Foucault. As formative agents of a Gramscian consensual hegemony, we can view textuality and discourse in a Foucauldian sense, as colonising technologies of knowledge and power. What is important about the cultural hegemony which results from and exists within a dominant discourse, is that discursive truths manifest themselves as systems of rules and governance, of inclusions and exclusions, based on constructed knowledge. The knowledge of truth legitimates the power to enforce behaviour which corresponds to such knowledge. Hence the triplet, discourse, knowledge and power.

An idea of false consciousness demonstrates a traditional Marxist analysis of how a form of cultural hegemony can be formed by coercion, but using a Gramscian concept of hegemony or a Saidian concept of discursive hegemony provides access to an illustration of a much more powerful and complex formation by consent. Such a formation is less conspiratorial and top-down than the idea of a coercive construction, and shows how we are all entwined in the processes of reflecting and directing discourse and hegemony, even those who would seek to coerce.

Williams says this of consensual hegemony:

It is Gramsci's great contribution to have emphasized hegemony, and also to have understood it at a depth which is, I think, rare. For hegemony supposes the existence of something which is truly total, which is not merely secondary or superstructural, like the weak sense of ideology, but which is lived at such a depth, which saturates the society to such an extent, and which, as Gramsci put

it, even constitutes the substance and limit of common sense for most people under its sway, that it corresponds to the reality of social experience very much more clearly than any notions derived from the formula of false consciousness. For if ideology were merely some abstract, imposed set of notions, if our social and political and cultural ideas and assumptions and habits were merely the result of specific manipulation, of a kind of overt training which might simply be ended or withdrawn, then the society would be very much easier to move and to change than in practice it has ever been or is. This notion of hegemony as deeply saturating the consciousness of a society seems to me to be fundamental (Williams, 1973, p.8).

Williams characterises hegemony as a deep saturation and, indeed, the common sense surrounding our sense of self and the identities and categories which we employ to apprehend the world is deeply saturating. It is precisely this sort of saturation which we have previously encountered when describing the common sense of modern expert knowledge systems and a Foucauldian sense of power as the negative image of love. If one thinks of hegemony in a democratic way, such that it is the common sense of civil society (the consensus of micro senses) and the power and discourse of democracy, then – despite a certain intellectual vulgarity – a Foucauldian notion of power and a Gramscian sense of hegemony become reconcilable as different articulations of the same sense of deep saturation: hegemony is perpetuated by and contains the logic of the discursive content of the micro relations and interactions which underpin a Foucauldian sense of power. There is, nonetheless, a distinction here which is critical to some theorists, and which would make a use of the concept of hegemony more applicable than a strict adherence to Foucauldian scholarship to someone like Said. Williams puts this best. He says,

... hegemony has the advantage over general notions of totality, that it at the same time emphasizes the facts of domination (Williams, 1973, p.37).

It is arguable that this is a dubious claim – understood as totally saturating, hegemony is as totalising as any notion of power, and properly so: to presuppose a prince who stands outside of the constraints of culture is to presuppose a

genuinely material Cartesian separation which presumably cannot obtain. Nonetheless, Williams has a point, if only a semantic one or one of evocative traditionalism – the word “hegemony” does moor us to a tradition of resistance as opposed to an acquiescent acceptance of inevitable and unassailable power. Whereas power (as a theory) can be charged – as implicit in the forgoing quote by Williams – with a tendency towards a postmodern/poststructural sense of ennui, hegemony (as a theory) demands to be understood as a conceptual artefact of resistance, if only by virtue of its Marxist associations. But hegemony should be understood as deep, saturating, totalising and *powerful*, as much as it should reinforce a tradition of resistance. And it is that tradition to which we will attend.

The intersections of discourse and hegemony, of hegemony and power, and of Gramsci and Foucault do reinforce the saturation which Williams refers to, and they underscore the validity of Said’s introduction of each theorist to the other too. Said is not alone in his consideration of the discursive dimensions of hegemony though. To support the sense of deep saturation which Williams points to, it is useful to make at least a passing allusion to Laclau and Mouffe (1985), who implicitly reinforce the Saidian marriage in their work, and who are pre-eminent in elaborating on Gramsci in a fashion which articulates the saturating quality of hegemony. Pessoa picks up on this in a succinct, relevant and critically important way, using the notion of deep saturation available from their work to counter debates which favour a concept of posthegemony. He says,

[Posthegemony] seems to associate hegemony solely with ideology ... The theory of hegemony is about how a social element can discursively transform its particular social boundaries into the boundary of the community. Ideology here merely plays a role in such construction, especially in the demonization of a socially excluded entity that formalises the outer political boundaries of hegemonic discourse. Equally, it should be understood from the theoretical elaboration of Laclau and Mouffe (1985) that the concept of hegemony incorporates a notion of discourse that transcends the distinction between linguistic and extra-linguistic meaning intrinsically associated with ideology (Pessoa, 2003, pp.486-487).

Of those theorists who are critical of an extrapolated, fully saturating concept of hegemony, Hall is pre-eminent, critiquing the diffuse and uprooted concept of

power which the micro architecture of discourse describes. Hall is directly critical of Laclau and Mouffe's discursive concept of hegemony, and implicitly posits a theoretical disjuncture between the potential for deploying Foucault and the potential for deploying Gramsci (Hall, 1988). For Hall, there remains a princely site of power – the state. It is this adherence to a reading of Gramsci, which falls on the side of an attraction towards remnants of traditional Marxist thinking, which leads Wood to comment that,

I believe that Hall's argument against discursive 'dissolution' reveals an important source of his ambiguous commitment to a state-centred view of politics (Wood, 1998, p.404).

In contrast, Laclau and Mouffe champion a dissolved, discursive reading of hegemony (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985). Wood argues that the discursive dispersal of power across multiple sites which Laclau and Mouffe describe is akin to a fracturing which superimposes naturally on Hall's reading of identity as fractured, multiple and incomplete, citing the lack of superimposition (or desire to superimpose) by Hall as a point for critique in Hall's logic (Wood, 1998, p.405). Wood characterises Hall's stance as one which eschews the notion that hegemony is formed discursively, subverting this formulation such as to indicate that discourse is contained and controlled by a hegemonic prince. Alluding to a dynamic of social relations which we could understand as being ultimately controlled - or at least contorted - by the state, he says,

According to Hall, then, it is not just that hegemony partially fixes the meaning of the social but also the other way round: the social patterns hegemonic meaning (Wood, 1998, p.405).

There is a point at which this is of little more relevance or intellectual interest than a challenging game of chess, and we can employ that petulance to suggest that, despite the nuances of any content, the terms of the argument and the structure of the debate itself demand that discourse and hegemony – notwithstanding which constitutes cause and which constitutes effect – are caught in a web of intimacy, and it is the mere presence – the sheer presence – of that intimacy which demonstrates not only the relevance of a relationship, but also the deep and diffuse saturation which that relationship describes. That is sufficient background

against which we can proceed to hang a working argument that the state exists within civil society. This is a point to which we will return.

3.5.3/ Orientalism.

To bring these considerations of discourse, hegemony and power back to Said, we can start by noting that the central idea behind explorations within colonial discourse analysis is that beneath the *process* of colonialism lay a *discourse* of colonialism, which provided much of the colonial project's impetus and justification. That idea begins in his work, *Orientalism* (1978). To reduce Said's argument, he suggests that Western culture was instrumental in creating a hegemonic imagination of the other, the Orientals and the Orient, as entities which existed across a gulf of diametric opposition from everything Occidental or Western.

A Eurocentric conception of the other as inferior, uncivilised and backwards was built upon generations of accumulated Western discourse about the other. This discourse had its foundations in the logic of a Western position and in Western paradigms of progress and development, which never necessarily had the vocabulary or the perspective to hear or see the validity, relevance or existence of other ways of life, or the fact that such ways of life do not necessarily easily fit or translate into Western paradigmatic frames of reference.

Orientalist discourses of the type examined by Said tended to create a juxtaposition of ~~us~~ to ~~them~~ in Western thought, where ~~they~~ were the conceptual and textual constructions of ~~our~~ accumulated knowledge and self-citational characterisations, *representations* and descriptions about ~~them~~. Said suggests that this orientalist body of knowledge gained a Gramscian consensual hegemony within Western civil society. To the extent that a small borrowing from the Jungian perspective can be used to inflect this explanation, these representations and this hegemony might be thought of as casting the other as a shadow brother – the creature onto which the demons of the self are projected and which facilitates a dissociation of the self from such demons.

Colonial discourse often represented and represents the other and their environment as chaotic, untamed, uncivilised, natural and unimproved, as opposed to being in an improved and orderly state. What is critical here is that

discursive colonial representations of difference required a simultaneous assertion of sameness and commonality - the juxtaposition of ~~us~~” to ~~them~~”, of primitive to civilised, of natural to improved, contained an element of universality. There was the implication that ~~we~~” have moved from a position which ~~they~~” now inhabit, that we have undergone a history of evolution or civilisation through numerous stages along a unilinear continuum, and that they are still in a primitive and early stage of that process. If history may be considered to be a process of change, the other - via a representational appeal to degraded sameness - was defined by this logic as culturally ahistorical or, more bluntly, acultural or, even more bluntly, as not existing in any significant sense which could be afforded respect.

Western representations of the other as absence and deficiency, when linked to dominant, deaf and arrogant paradigms of progress as a good and benevolent force, established a legitimating ideology for colonialism in the form of the civilising mission where ~~they~~” are represented as not only wretched, but as being in need of rescue too.

It is this mission - which required the juxtaposition of ~~us~~” to ~~them~~”, and a concrete oppositional identity of both parties - which is often seen as being the mandate which underpinned colonialism, and which continues to be discursively relevant to imperialism, foreign policy and international relations theory today, with the notion and discourse of ~~civilisation~~” being replaced with new categories such as ~~development~~” and ~~modernisation~~” (See, for example, Rostow, 1960). Human rights discourses are interesting in this regard.

The critical thing to observe from considerations of representation is that we construct an identity of the other discursively, as not being ~~us~~”. It is through this process of othering, of representing the other, that we create oppositional hegemonic imaginings of who we are. And it is not hard to extricate negative representations from pretensions to reality and to locate them as being one amongst multiple subjectivities – one could reasonably assume, for example, that few Muslims think of themselves as Non-Catholic, though they are non-Catholic, and few Buddhists think of themselves as Non-Mormon, though they are non-Mormon.

3.5.4/ The Constitutive Outside: the Presence of the Other in the Construction of the Self.

The irony involved in the discursive manufacturing of the other is that, as we create an oppositional identity based on the exclusion of the other, we at once include and involve the presence and the fact of the other in the construction of the self. A process of “othering”, of creating an identity of the self and an existence of the other, underpins a hegemonic, common-sense imagining of who we are and who we aren’t, and of who is and isn’t a part of “us”. A discursive, identity-constituting process of representation is a knowledge making exercise or a fact making production in and through which hegemonic imaginings of discreet, separated ontological categories are constructed. The discursive construction of hegemonic exclusivity, specialisation, disciplinarity and expertise occurs through a delineating process of othering, and that discursive process can, as such, be seen as underpinning not only the colonial project – the quintessential example of modernity on the loose and in action – but also modernity at a broader level, nationalism, Cartesian dualism and the modern liberal subject. Discourse, in other words, is central to the organisation of modernity, its apprehensions and misapprehensions, and the modalities of power which it enacts and underpins, and discourse operates, in this endeavour, through a politics of identity and a process of othering.

The ability of discursive oppositions to underpin power comes from the binaries which they produce. When the whole is discursively split into parts which establish their identity from their opposition to each other, then these opposed and oppositional, separated parts – these positive and negative images – stand in contrast to one another. From colonial discourse analysis, we learn that this juxtaposition is rarely benign, but that the project of opposing self to other – the process of othering – carries with it the issue of who has the power to identify, or of which side of the identity binary is dominant and able to impose its logic. It is because of that dynamic that the representation of the other in negative terms – or terms of absence – has political consequences and is related to issues of power. The juxtaposition of us to them is hierarchical and unilinear in logic, and the logic of that hierarchy is the discursive and cultural mandate which underpins power.

Whilst keeping us in touch with Mitchell's "constitutive outside" (Mitchell, 2002, p.291), the bifurcating and binarising fact-making production which ironically involves the other in the identification of the self requires some elaboration, by way of problematising modern hierarchical logic and manifest dynamics of power. The best way to do that is to briefly think through the notion of civil society, which we have previously cast as the hegemonic crucible of the democratic machinations of power.

Let us suggest that contestations over identity, over how to define membership to and exclusion from a discursively formed imagined community or discipline (vis-à-vis nation-centred imperial grand narratives), are never too far away from issues pertaining contestations over the establishment of hegemony as a discursive formation (vis-à-vis sets of common sense values which allocate power). It might also be suggested that this form of hegemony is what describes and articulates culture, and the culture of theory. There is a little conflation of the ideas of culture and civil society occurring here. Beyond the relative merits or intellectual shortcomings of this, what is important is giving some form of designation to the cultural place where contestations over hegemony take place. The best way to do this - following Williams' *Base and superstructure in Marxist cultural theory* (1973) - is to construct a culturalist concept of civil society which does not relegate issues of culture to the Marxian realm of superstructure.

A definition of civil society as the popular place where contestations over hegemony take place may seem to do a scholarly injustice to civil society, but it seems to suffice as a bottom line. The issue of hegemony does, however, complicate orthodox notions of civil society - it can be seen to effect the collapse of the public and the private (and everything, therefore, in between), or the society and the state. A deep and logically extrapolated concept of hegemony suggests that each component of the foregoing dyads is contained and constrained by the same hegemonic constructs/processes.

If hegemony is formed discursively, and discourse has some genesis in the growth of civil society, then civil society may be seen as the womb of hegemony. The intention here is to provide scope to imagine that the state exists *within* civil society. This allows us to conflate or collapse the two terms linked in the nomenclature of the "nation-state" dyad. The concept of hegemony is useful in

allowing us to perform these acts of conflation, or of synthesising the otherwise opposed components or binarised members of dualistic or dyadic systems of conceptual organisation and rational compartmentalisation. Lending some weight to this concept, Ben-Eliezer examines the historical Israeli case so as to critique the idea that the state and civil society are separate entities, and to undo the binary model which opposes state to civil society. From his investigation of hegemony and the Israeli body politic, Ben-Eliezer concludes (in harmony with Gramsci) that, “state and civil society ... are merged into a larger suzerain unity. They are one and the same” (Ben-Eliezer, 1998, p.372).

We are not alone with Ben-Eliezer in this view. As suggested, a conflation of state and civil society is broadly consistent with Gramsci’s final concept of hegemony, and Ben-Eliezer acknowledges a debt to an earlier work by Mitchell, wherein Mitchell pursues a similar logic to effect a problematisation of statist approaches to political thinking (Mitchell, 1991a). Via this logic, we might then suggest that the state is contained by the nation, that it is an articulation of it. Further, we could say that the nation is the dominant imagined community within civil society - that is, the identification with which those whom the dominant hegemony subsumes identify, or an imagined community where the victors of contestation are bound by the common imagination of what constitutes common sense.

Hegemony is present in civil society, and the dominant nation - of which the state is an articulation - represents it. There is, then, a homogeneity to the nation, but fragments are ever-present, represented by the marginalised and silenced voices of the losers of contestation, who nonetheless exist under the auspices of the state as the apparatus of manifest power which the dominant nation uses to speak for them. This leads us to Ahluwalia and Sullivan’s comment,

... the national is also the universal. While speaking for itself, it speaks for others, but not necessarily the many —“other” ... [This leads us to] reflect upon Chatterjee’s critical question of Anderson’s “Imagined Communities” - whose imagination (Ahluwalia and Sullivan, 2000, p.354)?

Civil society, the nation and the state contain and always have contained a dialectic of homogenisation and fracture. Civil society, then, is macroscopically

monolithic in that hegemony is present, but it is microscopically fissured and contains interstices, in that other voices are silenced. The fact that the construction of the self involves both the technologies and discourse of that silence, as well as the fact that the self involves the presence of the silenced, illustrates that the construction of the self involves the imprint and the presence of the other. Further, the modern liberal organisational categories which are used to contain and explain the self, the body politic, and the engagement of each with the world are undone, connected and conflated through an identity-led investigation of hegemony and civil society.

The nation as an imaginary cultural referent, and the state – as its articulation of power (and as “determinate discursive practices which may equally well be on the side of writing as of reading”, to re-quote Mchoul and Grace (1993, p.23) in their description of Foucauldian power) – are inscribed by difference, and the cultural discourse they use to present a front of uninflected unity and absolute Cartesian separatism is born of an inscription or subject/object interaction which renders transculturation always and already present in an imagined community, and which shows how the “I” is present in “thou” and vice-versa. Hall comments on this ubiquity when he says,

Understood in its global and transcultural context, colonisation has made ethnic absolutism an increasingly untenable cultural strategy. It made the “postcolonial” world, always-already “diasporic” in relation to what might be thought of as cultures of origin (Hall, 1996, p.4).

We are at a point where we are rethinking culture – we are rethinking the nation and other imaginary referents of identity, and the structures of power which sit atop these discursive formations. We are rethinking the absolutism, the essentialism and the truth of these constructs, and the common sense assumptions which suggest that there are in fact absolutely disparate or separated cultures or nations in an other-than-represented sense.

In other words, we are apprehending contingency through investigating identity. We are apprehending the fact that the other is always present in the formation of hegemony for the self and vice-versa. We have illustrated the presence of inscriptions, enabling us to deconstruct some of the technologies of culture –

technologies which prop up power and hegemony, and which obfuscate presences and interconnections whose existence must challenge hegemonic assumptions.

The project of investigating subjectivity and problematising the subject/object divide is not a new one. It was a project which gained significant philosophical traction throughout the nineteenth century and through some notable key thinkers. As Ashcroft *et al.* explain,

... the most influential contemporary shift in this Enlightenment position began in the thinking of Freud and Marx. Freud's theories of the unconscious dimensions of the self revealed that there were aspects of the individual's formation that were not accessible to thought, and which thus blurred the distinction between the subject and object. Marx ... made the famous claim that 'It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness.' The combined effect of these two thinkers upon twentieth-century thought was radically to disturb the notion of the integrity and autonomy of the human individual (Ashcroft *et al.*, 1998, p.220).

Marx and Freud were well aware of the presence of the constitutive outside, and the liberal subject has been disturbed ever since. This disturbance is critical to an understanding of the politics of identity, and it is an investigation of identity which ties this disturbance to a sense of cultural contingency, or to a worldly interconnection of being and the social, as well as to a critique of the modern identity-based technologies of separation within being.

Sarup lends the following inflection to a comprehension of separation and identity as the modern and humanistic discursive substance or technology of boundaries between binarised entities, noting that,

Identity ... is a mediating concept between the external and the internal, the individual and society, theory and practice. Identity is a convenient 'tool' through which to try and understand many aspects – personal, philosophical, political – of our lives (Sarup, 1996, p.28).

Sarup's poststructuralist comments are resonant of a Derridean deconstruction of binary structures and a problematisation of inside-outside dichotomies which facilitate a modern order of things. If identity is a 'mediating concept', then the

product of such mediation is the consensus of the hegemonic imagination and its assumptions, which casts Sarup's characterisation of identity as a conceptually useful one.

All of these conceptual tools - these investigations of culture and identity - can be applied to an analysis of the culture of theory, casting the concepts of discipline and field as forms of identification and constructed hegemony. Always-present interconnections, the presence of cultural inflections and the presence of the self in the other and vice-versa, along with the formative/transformational impulse of that presence, attests to the latent and inherent transdisciplinarity of theory. And they bring us back to Mitchell's problematisation of the authority of expertise, reminding us that, "human agency and intention are partial and incomplete products of ... interactions", and that "incompleteness ... means that no single line divides ... intentions and plans from the object-world to which they refer" (Mitchell, 2002, p.34). We have seen that Hall hints at the need to understand these interactions in a manner that is postcolonial, and this is a point to which we will return.

3.6/ Alienation and Domination.

The salient question at this point is why, in light of such problematisations and constant struggles against the grain, is there a consensus around the dominance, hegemony and preponderance of modern paradigms of separation, specialisation, boundaries, binaries and enclosed identities, and around the systems of expertise which they effect? At least part of the answer could well inhere in the quasi-religious or faith-based provision of meaning which such paradigms allow. Hegemony has always ridden on the back of the fact that none of us know what the hell is going on, yet we believe - in accordance with the modern, humanistic, rational tradition - that such a knowledge is possible, despite the fact that the world is more shifting, elliptical, complex and contingent than that. So we rely on the pretence of a clerical network of experts to explain the truth, without the framework, the tools or the will to ask whose truth, because the opiated certainty and unassailability of a constructed and discreet fact is better than none. But as Marx had it all along, the cost of opiated intoxication is alienation, or a separated disconnection from the world - an alien unworldliness. We are disconnected from the discreet facets of our lives to which others are expertly attached via a

culture of credentialisation. There are industries which attend to our bodies and industries which attend to our minds. There are industries which attend to our souls, our finances, our environment, and which mediate our connection with the social world. We are amateurs in the knowledge of ourselves, disconnected from the whole and alienated not only from what we effect, affect and produce, but from what produces us too. Hence the modern malaise of work-life imbalance as a *gesellschaft* disaffection with the world: a busi-ness of discreet, professional attending and being attended to. Heroux expands on aspects of this well, teasing out and extrapolating from a traditional Marxian working of the concept of alienation. He says,

Alienation is a separation between human activity and its own products; it is also a situation where our products come back to us as something separate; it is a separation from active participation in the social production of values, from awareness, *from oneself*, from nature, from use-values, from the process of labor, from that work we do in order to produce ourselves; and it is a separation from each other. In Marx's analysis of capitalism, these aspects are all interdependent and due to the economic mode of production ... Alienation is not to be reduced only to economic exploitation if we cleave to Marx's early manuscripts. Alienation can conceivably be the result of other separations between our labor and its product – i.e., the lack of any participation in decisions about the labor process or about production in general or about how our communities are run. Today everyone continues to live under various regimes of generalized separation. Some of us know this, some of us feel this, and the rest of us do not – because they have been *alienated from the means of knowledge* (Heroux, 1998, emphasis added).

Alienation, then, is a state of fragmented separation – a state of separatedness – between entities which are, on further analysis, contingently related. Alienation is the identity enabling oppositional demarcation – the Derridean slash – between self/other; old/young; male/female; work/home; adult/child; life/death; public/private; subject/object; specialist/specialist – the litany is infinite. A state of separatism creates the need for expertise through a process of alienation from the whole, the means of knowledge, and the self. A *gesellschaft* out-sourcing, farming-out and relegating of facets of our lives to institutional expert management systems results, wherein the subject attends to their specific expert

role whilst acting as the object to multiple other expert-subjects. And it is not in the intrinsic nature of this arrangement to apprehend the margin of error which inheres in the fact that the whole is significantly different to the sum of the parts, nor to apprehend the limits of predictability and agency which interactions, intersections and trans-dialectical transculturations bring to bare on expert authority, to render it flawed, partial and incomplete. From this critical logic, it is arguable that a corporate organisation of humans-as-resources or separated experts will always produce sub-optimal and flawed outcomes which represent themselves as efficient within the framework of a hegemonic imagination which is habitually inclined to externalise the inevitable costs of partiality and limitation as unrelated and aberrant, rather than as intrinsic (which the illustrations provided by Mitchell (2002) demonstrate that it is). As Mitchell shows us, discreet expert systems produce consequences and ramifications from their actions and endeavours which are not contained by imagined expert jurisdictions and which cross into other apparently unrelated expert realms. It is the apparent-ness of the lack of relationship – the representation of discretion – which renders consequences and outcomes invisible and unknowable to systems of expert knowledge.

But we need to remember too that the sister malaise of Cartesian compartmentalisation and modern separation – the sibling to alienation and misadventure – is domination. This is, again, a traditional Marxist interpretation of the world, and one which we borrow from Derrida as well (see, for example Derrida 1978 and 1986), noting that binaries are hierarchical structures. Of all of the alienating divides - as our investigations of the subject-constituting process of the discursive manufacturing of identity show us – the divide between —*si*’ and —*hem*’ is paramount. And the history of that divide is a history of power and domination. It is, in effect, the divide between self and other, between order and chaos, presence and absence, legitimacy and illegitimacy. It is the loveless apartheid, the strong and blundering ontology, which bolsters and shields the legitimacy of modern homotextual expertise, knowledge and power. Said’s investigations of the marriage between the material and discursive dimensions of colonialism demonstrate that such self-legitimising expertise and such divides authenticate their own authority to produce a nexus of discursive and material domination which subjugates the authority of subaltern knowledges and

subalternises the other in an overall project of alienation, and of misapplication of the partially conceived.

One of the discursive terrains upon which the divide between self and other - and the interplay between discursive and material domination and between identity, separation and power, as well as authenticity and legitimacy - is played out is around the language and policy of multiculturalism. Tolerance is a key trope within that discourse. The concept of tolerance, as it is deployed within multiculturalism to effect a national cohesion via a concept of unity-in-diversity, is confined by the positionality of the paradigmatic parameters of the value system of the dominant identification, and it works to protect the hegemonic identity from identifications with value systems which challenge the limits of perception and the position of that identity. Mirchandani and Tastsoglou articulate this point:

... to “tolerate” and to be “tolerated” involves an unequal relationship. To tolerate ... implies that the tolerator has the authority or the power to not tolerate ... At the same time ... to “tolerate” is to entrench the opposition between a national “self”, and groups or individuals constructed as “other” ... To ensure continued “tolerance”, the majority “self” is seen to take on the responsibility for setting limits [or bounds] to tolerance (Mirchandani and Tastsoglou, 2000, p.48).

It is that notion of taking responsibility which is synonymous with establishing legitimacy or permitting authority – with establishing the boundary between the legitimate and the illegitimate in a manner which clearly illustrates that the construction and fact of such boundaries contains a dynamic of power and domination. Mirchandani and Tastsoglou go on to unpack this domination. They say,

Implicit in the social construction of the “national self” in opposition to the “other” is the assumption that it is the “self” who is thought to have the right to establish the threshold of tolerance – that is, to decide what behaviour or attitude will be tolerated and who the “other” is toward whom tolerance will be practiced. This challenges the notion of the equality of groups embodied in the multiculturalism rhetoric, and instead clearly shows that norms and values reflect the interests of the dominant ethno-racial groups. The construction of the tolerant “self” (tolerating an “other”) implies a particular standpoint defining the range of the

acceptable within the dominant groups, and it is from within this standpoint that the ceiling to tolerance is established (Mirchandani and Tastsoglou, 2000, p.58).

Tolerance is the boundary which keeps out the other-within to effect a strong and coherent sense of “us” whilst de-legitimising any challenges to the authority and logic of the dominant culture. Bhabha says of the multicultural nation’s attempts to maintain hegemony and hegemonic identity,

... discourses on multiculturalism experience the fragility of their principles of “tolerance” when they attempt to withstand the pressure of revision. In addressing the multicultural demand, they encounter the limit of their enshrined notion of “equal respect”; and they anxiously acknowledge the attenuation in the authority of the Ideal Observer, an authority that oversees the ethical rights (and insights) of the liberal perspective (Bhabha, 1996, p.54).

Ahluwalia and McCarthy make some comments on how this revision is withstood in the Australian case, and to how the homogenising principles of national identity maintain the dominant hegemony and structures of power via a discursive representation of common sense regarding what ought to be politically correct. They say,

Conformity is now around a new political correctness of Western superiority which seeks to contain the challenges of difference and hybridity by asserting a hegemony around an Empire history of Australia expressed by the English language and the English cultural tradition. A closure is sought by tying this tradition to an Australianness which cannot be questioned and thereby closing off debates over marginality and oppression within Australia (Ahluwalia and McCarthy, unpublished draft).

In other words, the obfuscatory tendencies of liberal multicultural discourses of nationhood - in their many forms - illustrate that, in Bhabha’s terms, “the universalism that paradoxically permits diversity masks ethnocentric norms” (Bhabha, 1990, p.208). Ahluwalia and McCarthy cite the sharp end of the spectrum of such discourses, wherein the permission for difference is clearly at its most constrained, but this discourse too, with its effective tendencies towards broad assimilation and the vilification of otherness, does nonetheless exist under a

mantle of the rhetoric of tolerance and multicultural harmony. This is a rhetoric which, as Donald and Rattansi put it,

...tend[s] to reproduce the *‘saris, samosas and steel-bands syndrome’*. That is, by focussing on the superficial manifestations of culture, [it] fail[s] to address the continuing *hierarchies* of power and legitimacy that still [exist] among ... different centres of cultural authority. By exoticizing them, it even collude[s] in their further disenfranchisement. Despite its apparent relativism, in practice it define[s] alternative centres of cultural authority primarily in terms of their difference from the norm ... not in their uniqueness and their discontinuities ... Multiculturalism thus remain[s] within the political logic of assimilation (Donald and Rattansi, 1992, p.2).

Donald and Rattansi go further, suggesting that this assimilationist impulse – rejecting as it does other cultural practices – is demonstrative of “a *new racism* based not on ideas of biological superiority, but on the supposed incompatibility of cultural traditions” (Donald and Rattansi, 1992, p.2). Whilst there is nothing especially new about the characterisation of a form of “*multiculturalism*” as a new racism, it is interesting and revealing to frame multiculturalism as a technology of such a classical logic of xenophobia.

If public policy is an articulation of the state which is in turn an articulation of a dominant national identification, spoken and imagined as identity through democracy (with “*public*” as dominant and silencing identification), then multiculturalism as policy is a self-reinforcing, closed, modernist construct and legacy. It is a discursive enunciation from a dominant positional and hegemonic identification which encloses that hegemonic construct of the nation and hides the ambiguities, differences and exilic identifications which exist within and across the margins, interstices and commonalities in identity. Multiculturalism as identifying nomenclature for the nation, as exemplar of discursive closure, and as policy, illustrates the discursive process of identity formation and of corralling identity from the other. It is demonstrative of a technology of separation and domination which strengthens and reinscribes the strong ontological divide between the legitimate and the illegitimate – that which will and won’t be tolerated. Tolerance, as hegemony’s discursive boundary, exemplifies the technologies which underpin the legitimacy of modern homotextual expertise,

knowledge, power and domination. It is a multicultural logic which keeps such homotextuality effectively pure, and which reinforces the universality of that purity by appealing to a pretension of inclusivity. Critically, the lesson to be drawn from an investigation of multiculturalism is that the hegemonic establishment of closure and homotextual legitimacy not only miscalculates and alienates, but dominates and subjugates too.

3.7/ Legitimacy/Illegitimacy.

Raiter gives the notion of domination a particular inflection and an interesting Foucauldian twist, which reinforces the connection between multicultural separation of the other-within, discursive domination, and expertise as an exercise and authority in classification and quantification. He says,

Typically, the dominant discourse is not part of an authoritarian device: it never excludes, always includes. Its strength lies not in the suppression of other discourses but in being able to classify them, to measure their verisimilitude (Raiter, 1999, p.92).

The authority to classify and quantify – the question of certification and permission – is one of professional accreditation, affiliation and association. Professional boundaries are quintessential exemplars of the limits of tolerance between legitimate and illegitimate knowledge systems - between, for example, a refereed journal and a non-credentialed internet blog. But a critique of expert systems and fact-making enterprises would suggest that such an authority to rank, rate and tolerate is predicated on nothing more fundamental than a partial and subjective comment on agreed standards and verisimilitude, and the circumstantial dominance of a *culture* born of othering. Whether the other is excluded or included-excluded as other-within, the cost of being other is subjection to a measurement against an imposed standard, and a classification in terms of legitimacy against that standard. This is a central tenet of the discursive construction of identity which colonial discourse analysis tends to illustrate well.

A perfect example of such an expert analysis, standardisation and construction - of hegemony's self-reinforcing logic and power and self-fulfilling terms of reference - is the South Australian case of the Hindmarsh Island Bridge Royal Commission (1995). The Commission was, in crude terms, an inquiry into the veracity of secret women's business surrounding an Indigenous claim to a sacred

status of the island, which would have been violated by the construction of the bridge. Pritchard succinctly and powerfully captures the self-satisfying circular logic which characterised the commission as an exercise in establishing authority and legitimacy. In a compelling analysis of the commission, he says,

For the commissioner, the tradition can be recognized as legitimate only if its secrecy can somehow be revealed or exposed to the commission. This requirement, a symbolic demonstration of the power and authority of the commission, as arbiter, judge and truth commission, demands that recognition be achieved in its own terms ... A juxtaposition of the commission's concerns with disclosure, exposition and the pursuit of truth against the silence of the secret ... not only accentuates the differences between [non-Aboriginal] Australian legal practices and Aboriginal cultural practices, but also powerfully demonstrates the extent to which Aboriginal beliefs and practices are not recognized in their own terms but, rather, are given representation through the terms of the law or the commission (Pritchard, 2000, pp.3-4).

Pritchard goes on to employ the work of Gelder and Jacobs (1998) within *Uncanny Australia: Sacredness and Identity in a Postcolonial Nation*, to produce a theoretical elaboration on the above observations. Linking to our comments surrounding the notion of a subjugating and ~~in~~“inclusive” multicultural containment vis-à-vis Raiter's allusions to an other-within, Pritchard offers the following remarks on the manufacturing of strong ontology and identity, and on the destabilising effect on that strength and identity of the strangeness of the presence of a supposedly archaic relic in the present. He suggests,

... the more strongly and strenuously the nation is defined and the more clearly it seeks to contain its others, the more it issues up destabilizing forces within its own boundaries and limits. Borrowing from Freud, Gelder and Jacobs name this [re]emergence of the Aboriginal sacred within the bounds of the nation the uncanny ... [A] novelty of the notion of uncanny ... derives from the way it evokes a notion of doubling, which addresses and describes both the emergence of the unfamiliar within the familiar [the other within the self] and the incessant, indeed pathological, need to represent this unfamiliar in order to overcome and master its traumatic effects (Pritchard, 2000, p.4).

The notion of the uncanny is one to which we will return. For now it is sufficient that Pritchard's remarks are instructive as a reinforcement, and in teasing out some further nuances, of the architecture, processes and impetus entailed in the discursive construction of boundaries, identity, expertise, power and legitimacy.

3.8/ Conclusion: Untenable Pretension.

It is those discursive nuances and that overall architecture - the discursive blueprint of power - to which we have thus far committed our attention. We have observed some of the shortcomings of modern logic and of modern expertise and the strong ontology of such cultural constructs. This has allowed us to cast those constructs as ideological representations predicated on and perpetuating the imagination of a rational world. It has further permitted us to reclaim a space for a softer, more malleable set of smaller and weaker artefactual stories and practices. We have observed that the interconnections and contingencies which permeate the boundaries between ontologically separated and strongly specialised areas undo such discreet autonomy and problematise knowledge systems and any expertise which is predicated on a precondition of that autonomy. Such autonomy – such inbred homotextual and humanistic disciplinarity and professional separation – is constructed of an untenable and self-citational pretension. A critique of this pretension, and an attention to the problematisation of homotextual expertise, lends itself to an acceptance of smaller artefacts and their specific locatedness in a world which is too complex and elliptical to fix in universal and categorical terms. Those terms – the strong, hard narratives of expertise – have been critiqued as partial and miscalculating. From that critique, we have proceeded to unpack a little more of the function and architecture of the hard, the strong and the universalising, reinforcing the problematisation of such, and linking a problematic partiality to concepts of discourse, hegemony, domination, alienation and power.

The alienating dominance of certain identities, communities, discourses, hegemonies, paradigms and knowledges - the bifurcated and dichotomous relationship between legitimate and illegitimate; professional and layperson; insider and outsider - perpetually begs a rhetorical question: whose expertise? But if an acceptance of the world as a complex, contingent and consequently unpredictable place problematises the role of the expert and casts them as

uncomfortable in a world of small things, then we can start to undo that dominance. Such an acceptance and undoing demonstrates that the dominance of the expert is discursive rather than based on a genuinely privileged - in an epistemological sense - apprehension of the world. It is the discomfort of the expert - the fraudulent fit of the clothes borrowed from the emperor - and the acceptance of contingency that beg questions which are anything but rhetorical: who else? How else should we reconceive agency and subjectivity?

In sum, we have problematised a modern binarised order of things in line with post-theorising at its broadest, critiquing exclusive, discursive boundaries and identities as a loveless apartheid. Accordingly, we have cast expert systems of knowledge as being cultural and infinitely improbable systems of governance via the error and incomplete miscalculation inherent in a modern epistemic malaise. It is this particular malaise which appears to be intimately entwined with subjugating systems of dominance and alienation, which are hegemonically saturating, and which serve no real purpose apart to provide a monological mask of ontological security which obfuscates the potentiality for more optimising agency and dialogues, and which further serves to benefit the interests of those who are invested in the monologue and its processes of cost externalising and overall sub-optimisation.

The optimising dialogue - the process of taking the agency inherent in smaller, softer and weaker and contingent things seriously, and of attending to (and being attentive to) a process of resistance to the mechanics of alienation and functionalist manifestations of power - is one of turning modernity on its head. The process of deconstructing the Cartesian subject and the modern expert is one of total paradigmatic inversion, moving away from the paradigm of the separated and discreet. But that inversion should be construed as a new way of doing, not as suggestion that we're done. There is a space here which we can weakly utilise to move beyond a postmodern sense of ennui, or a culturally and ideologically located point of inertia. It is a space in which we can - and will - proceed to tease out rather than ignore the connectivity - the moments and the movements - between things, and in which we can explore Ahluwalia's suggestion that there is something which "makes the 'post' in post-colonial different from other post-formulations" (Ahluwalia, 2000, p.41).

It was Mitchell's problematisation of the authority of expertise which reminded us that, "human agency and intention are partial and incomplete products of ... interactions", and that "incompleteness ... means that no single line divides ... intentions and plans from the object-world to which they refer" (Mitchell, 2002, p.34). An investigation of identity has been our primary vehicle for exploring those interactions, and exercising that vehicle – via a direct engagement with Said's work in *Orientalism* (1978) – has kept us in a constant and flirtatious contact with Ahluwalia's different post. Indeed, Mitchell's work itself – as a pre-eminent illustration of contingency and as a critique of expert systems – is directly connected to his own Saidian engagement with colonial discourse analysis, which is a fundamentally postcolonial concern. However, for our purposes, it was Hall who first hinted at the need to understand Mitchell's interactions - and to understand a paradigmatic inversion and rearticulation of the subject - in a manner that is transcultural and postcolonial. The postcolonial is an issue to which we must now turn.

4 / POSTCOLONIAL THEORY: STRENGTHENING AGENCY

4.1/ A Different Post and the Left's Undead.

The modern subject apprehends a world through a bifurcating lens in which –I’ is separated from –thou”, –self” from –other”, –legitimate” from –illegitimate” and so on. The binary structure of these pairings is the architecture and the structure upon which a Cartesian view of the world is predicated, and upon which the grand and discreet ontologies of specialisation and the technologies of expertise depend. The problem for these ontologies is their underlying epistemic malaise: innumerable critiques of objectivity (from an unquantifiable corpus of general post-theorising) demonstrate that dichotomised textual and discursive structures are processes of mutual inscription. This problematisation of objectivity and the object is the lesson of the posts, but it is also their great weakness, as it problematises and kills the subject too, leaving us with a turgid theoretical inertia. But we have worked through that, claiming a space for the small, the local and the artefactual, and recognising that inertia itself is ideological. We have, via a critique of strong ontology, recognised that any extrication from post-turgidity, and any post-inert exercise in theory, agency or resistance, needs to be conceived in terms of a celebration of interconnections, locatedness and contingency.

Such a celebration is the project to which the theoretical referent that we have termed –a different post” attends. Within that terminology, we recognise Ahluwalia’s pre-eminence in articulating this different post’s uniqueness – the unique place, space and power of this particular theoretical referent. Ahluwalia is an important figure in articulating postcolonial theory’s *political utility*. For Ahluwalia, this utility and uniqueness is all about contingency and interconnection. Providing a simple introduction to the concept of postcolonial theory, he states:

In current debates, the post in post-colonial no longer accepts the mere periodisation of the 1970s debates that signalled a new era after decolonisation. Rather, the post-colonial seeks to problematise the

cultural interactions between both the colonised and the colonisers from the moment of colonisation onwards (Ahluwalia, 2000, p.40, emphasis added).

Having outlined the importance of an attention to interactions, or contingency in other words, Ahluwalia focuses on the ways in which such an attention has been obfuscated by modern logic and paradigms. He turns his attention to the modern linguistic logic of the imperial binary structure, stating,

Just as feminist theory has demonstrated that binarisms operate within Western patriarchal thought where reason is associated with masculinity and emotion and hysteria with femininity, there is a similar binarism that operates within developed and developing ... countries (Ahluwalia, 2000, p.41).

Ahluwalia notes - with a nod to Hegel - that the juxtaposition of “developed” to “developing” follows the classical binarising logic in which not only is there a clearly delineated opposition, but where there is also the construction of a clear and unequal hierarchy, “... replicating the master / slave relationship” (Ahluwalia, 2000, p.41). We need only to remind ourselves of Said’s suggestion that the colonial project was one in which material and discursive power (or inequality) were inextricable, to see the implications of such discursive structures in terms of manifest power. Importantly, Ahluwalia casts development as the “social signifier” of rationalism and the logic of modernity (Ahluwalia, 2000, p.40). The unilinearity and the colonising dominance of such a dichotomous paradigm and logic embeds the hierarchical and delineated nature of binarised modern structures – the progress from one state and development into an elevated other state being the unequivocal unidirectional movement from A to B which reinforces the conceptual separation of each from the other. The possibility of the unilinear journey requires the imagination of a contradistinction as a prerequisite. It is this distinct separation which, for Ahluwalia, and for postcolonial theory more broadly, cannot obtain. To explain this further whilst fleshing out Ahluwalia’s comment on a different post- formulation, we should allow the following elaboration:

... post-colonial theory ... endeavours to breakdown [sic] the tyranny of imperial structures and binaries which seek to dominate the subject. In post-colonial formulations, such dichotomies are no longer adequate. By

seeking to disrupt imperial binarisms, post-colonial theory investigates the *interstitial space* arising out of the post-colonial condition that raises the possibility of an ambivalent and hybrid subjectivity. It is this that leads to the possibility of social transformation. This sense of agency makes the post in post-colonial different from other post- formulations. An important dimension of such disruptions is that, while imperial binaries suggest a unilinear movement of domination from coloniser to the colonised, post-colonialism opens up the possibility of movement in both directions (Ahluwalia, 2000, p.41, emphasis added).

For Ahluwalia, there is the possibility of a new, hybrid subjectivity born of interstitiality. In other words, an apprehension of the interstitial space – the zone of interactions, contingency and dialectical conflation and collapse – provides the conditions for a reclaimed sense of agency. As strong ontology dies, the strong object does too. As the strong object dies, it drags the subject down with it. If we weakly reconsider the object in new and contingent and unfixable ways, then we at once reconsider and re-imagine a new, post-liberal subject. And though, arguably, ~~subject~~” might be entirely the wrong word, there is a post-liberal agency revealed by postcolonial theory which is demonstrative of, and which adds flesh to the bones of our notions of soft, pliable specificities and artefacts. Such cultural agents and artefacts refuse to let history end. They refuse to let the Left die. They are the Left’s undead.

4.2/ But what is Postcolonial Theory?

4.2.1/ The Subject of Culture.

The postcolonial is a moment, a movement, a description, a critique and a state of being, all of which are contested and hard to pin down. There is a host of literature which undertakes the project of conflating postcolonialism and postmodernism (see Ahluwalia, 2005, p.139, for a succinct account of good examples). Whilst there is no intention here to deny the fact of a certain amount of common ground between these two post-isms, the assertion here is that such projects miss a very significant point. The difference is, as Ahluwalia informs us, in the way which the two posts set about the project of reading subjectivity. As Ahluwalia elaborates elsewhere,

The liberal humanist conception of the unified autonomous subject who had the capacity to determine his or her destiny is one that has been challenged by post-structuralism ... However, the notion of the subject is one that is central to post-colonial theory, for it affects the manner in which colonised peoples come to terms with the conditions which entrap them. It is this perception of their conditions of domination which is vital to their being able to develop strategies of resistance. Hence, Martina Michel (1995) has pointed out that post-colonial theory effectively has reformulated the postmodern notion of the subject [as one focussing on subject formation] (Ahluwalia, 2001, p.70).

The split between the posts occurs at a point where postcolonial theory leaves behind the project of emancipating the subject from its very existence *à la* postmodernism, and attempts a celebration of the efficacy of investigating the identity of the subject rather than rejecting it. In other words, there is a central notion of identity politics in postcolonial theory which entails a move away from postmodernism's death of the subject towards a ~~death of the death of the subject~~" (Laclau, 1995, p.95). The subject, however, is reconstituted, not merely redeployed, by and within this move. Such a reconstitution marks a point at which it is appropriate to conflate postcoloniality with the nebulous concept of cultural studies, and to remove the nebulosity from cultural studies by recognising the indelible and necessary postcoloniality of the field. We become bound in the cultural issues of imagination which inhere in representation and consequent forms of oppositional identity, and with forms of discursive and manifest structures of power, ideology, identity, exclusion and common sense vis-à-vis the key notion of imagination inherent in Anderson's concept of an imagined community (Anderson, 1991). What we have here with our newly deployed subject, to name the interstitial and hybrid space, is what Bhabha calls *the subject of culture*" (Bhabha, 1995, p.50, emphasis added). The subject of culture is the Left's post-liberal agency – *the Left's collective undead*.

We have moved a long way from dominant liberal formulations of the subject, but the subject-centring project of investigating identity could still be said to hold us within a modernist paradigm. Perhaps this illustrates that the imprints of modernity cannot be fully overcome - except with a sense of *Verwindung*. In a move of weak acquiescence we have strategically returned to certain hegemonic

structures as critics free from the strength of the self-citational and homotextual constraints which define modernity, and with an irony which allows the strategic move of simultaneously embracing and transcending the paradigm in a pragmatic and post-inert way. It is in this light that Dallmayr refers to a need to “capture the subtle dialectical move of both embracing and transgressing identity” (Dallmayr, 1997, pp.52-53). This move helps us to address concerns such as those articulated by Grossberg in the following:

I want to contest ... theories of identity on ... [the] grounds ... that they have failed to open up a space of anti- or even counter-modernity. In other words, they are ultimately unable to contest the formations of modern power at their deepest levels because they remain within the strategic forms of modern logic (Grossberg, 1996, p.93).

Recognising that “an appeal to particularism is no solution to the problems that we are facing in contemporary societies”, and that “the universal is no more than a particular that at some moment has become dominant”, Laclau (1995, p.94) suggests that the death-of-the-subject / death-of-the-death-of-the-subject dialectic means that the simultaneity of place from which the unsettling impulse of an identity investigation can be spoken is somewhere “between an essentialist objectivism and a transcendental subjectivism” (Laclau, 1995, p.94). In terms of the Left’s critical tradition, it is somewhere between the logic of a Marxist humanism and a poststructuralist anti-humanism (Gandhi, 1998). That soft and useful interstitial somewhere – via a postcolonial methodology – is the Left’s new critical space.

The postcolonial approach applies its focus on culture and identity politics within that space. There it reconsiders the issue of subjectivity as a strategic means of reinvigorating agency and engaging with issues of power. In so doing, it draws on the fluid, the interactive, and the shifting. To tease this out further - to augment our understanding of postcolonialism and to underscore its particular utility - some exploration of the idea of postcoloniality needs to be undertaken. There is no intention to explore or engage with the rudimentary concepts, critiques and ambiguities here - the postcolonial versus the post-colonial for example. Nevertheless, we do need a little clarification on what certain concepts mean for our purposes.

With an embarrassingly overarching appearance at first glance, postcoloniality may be considered to be a defining feature of the contemporary period. As Snyder puts it in his analysis of Vattimo,

The process of Westernisation of the planet ... now appears as ... [a] homologation of the earth (Snyder, 1988, p.xiv).

Postcolonial theory seeks to investigate this process and fact of homologation – this weakening of authentic disparity. To this end, Snyder's and Vattimo's analyses might have something to them. Regarding a compatibility with the idea that colonialism and imperialism affect culture as subject-constituting projects, they're also on track, but they miss the mark in characterising this process as simply one of Westernisation as opposed to one of a more complex and hybridised postcoloniality. It is in articulating the nature of this postcoloniality - this variously attributable assertion that a complex postcolonialism is everywhere (see, for example, Venn, 2006) - that Said is particularly instructive.

4.2.2/ Culture and Imperialism.

Said's examination of orientalist discourse, as an exercise in colonial discourse analysis, provides an exemplary illustration of the subject constituting process in the colonial encounter. In *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), Said picks up on this project, providing significant elaborations on the nature of the subject-constituting process, and underlining the importance and ubiquitous centrality of the colonial experience in that process and as a quintessential and archetypal - yet lurking and disrupting - determinant in the experience of modern identity. In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said capitalises on the insights outlined in *Orientalism* regarding the nature of the discursive mutual inscription of self and other upon each other as a product of representing identity. He teases out the mutually constitutive process by exploring the material fact of cultural hybridity, which the colonial encounter and imperial relationships precipitated and perpetuate.

The more salient points in Said's *Culture and Imperialism* can be succinctly, if reductively, stated. Said seeks to undo separatist and essentialist views of culture and history to show that,

... partly because of empire, all cultures are involved in one another, none is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogenous, extraordinarily differentiated and unmonolithic (Said, 1993, p.xxv).

If there is a key word to be drawn from this it is ~~hybrid~~”, and Said’s point is that the relationship between colonies and the metropol has been characterised by and has constituted a dynamic of cultural exchange resulting in a hybridity born of encounter, diasporic experience, the processes of othering and ~~the~~ globalized process set in motion by modern imperialism” (Said, 1993, p.xx). The chief elaboration on his project of investigating the subject-constituting process which Said reveals in *Culture and Imperialism* is one pertaining to a globalised hybridity, or post-binarised impurity. It is this illustration and elaboration which gives a broad and global pre-eminence to postcolonial theory and postcoloniality in terms of respectively describing and determining the disintegration of dialectical identities, the subject/object collapse, and the involvement of the other in the construction of the self.

By calling on us to view culture and humanity as hybrid, Said invokes us to view those entities through the framework of a globalised paradigm in which,

... as C.L.R. James used to say, Beethoven belongs as much to West Indians as he does to Germans, since his music is now a part of the human heritage (Said, 1993, p.xxv).

Culture, in this light, becomes seen as a creolised and multi-inflected hybridised space which is described and effected by a condition of postcoloniality, and which defies notions of pure and disparate authenticity. The subject-forming process, whilst partially constituted by numerous other variables - issues of gender, for example, are well documented - has the universal and pre-eminent characteristic of postcoloniality. What is important about this notion of hybridised postcoloniality, and what gives it a universality and defies simple notions of Westernisation with the concept of always-present inflections, is the relationship between subject and object in the colonial, post-colonial and postcolonial encounter/space. A defining feature of the subject-constituting colonial encounter and post-colonial cultural interactions - which Said alludes to in the foregoing comments - is the way in which meetings leading to postcoloniality and the postcolonial condition in the post-colonial world are characterised by an action and interaction of both subject and object as active, inflected and affected/effected parties. Both are reconstituted as post-dialectical and mutually permeating entities in the hybridising encounter. Said’s work in *Culture and Imperialism*

does much to expose the folly of modern binaries by facilitating a recognition of contingency through examining the transformative and inflective processes of a ubiquitous hybridity. In this sense, Said's scholarship follows a broadly similar trajectory to Mitchell's, beginning with an investigation of discursive technologies, identity and epistemological commitments through colonial discourse analysis (Mitchell, 1991 and Said 1978), and culminating in works which provide a postcolonial focus on contingency and the fallibility of authentic and strong ontology (Mitchell, 2002 and Said 1993). Together, and in the company of a raft of postcolonial scholarship, these works place postcolonial considerations at the forefront of a critique of dominant ontological and epistemological structures. They do this not only by virtue of demonstrating the manifest and material relevance, pre-eminence and ubiquity of the postcolonial, and not just by an adherence to the tangible, the practical and the illustratively amenable. They do this by virtue of their relationship to postcolonialism's refusal to let go of a notion of resistance – an engagement with the topographies and an acknowledgment of the facts of the colonial encounter, imperialist realities and abject subjugation do not allow the kind of abstract detachment and attenuated political commitment which characterises the other posts. Hence writers such as Said remain deeply politically committed. Hence too a reinvigorated focus on culture, identity, specificity and agency, and an attention to a different post and the unburying of the Left.

Postcoloniality, then, is broader than something which concerns the cultures of formerly colonised societies. It is something which speaks of an interconnection between, constitution of, and inflection upon all culture. Postcolonial theory - its decentring attention to hybridity, contingency, *everywhereness* and the constitution of subjectivity - can be captured by a rhetorical polemic: *who in the world is not diaspora?* As Hall suggests, the notion of postcolonialism,

... direct[s] our attention to the many ways in which colonisation was never simply external to the societies of the imperial metropolis. It was always inscribed deeply within them - as it became indelibly inscribed in the cultures of the colonised ... [T]he ... cultural effects of the "transculturation" which characterised the colonising experience proved ... to be irreversible. The differences, of course, between colonising and colonised cultures remain profound. But they have never operated in a

purely binary way and they certainly do so no longer ... It is precisely this —double inscription”, breaking down the clearly demarcated inside/outside of the colonial system on which the histories of imperialism have thrived for so long, which the concept of the [postcolonial] has done so much to bring to the fore (Hall, 1996a, p.246).

So, there are cogent reasons for undertaking a study of culture through postcolonial eyes and, as we have seen, the process of strategically reconstituting the subject as the subject of culture has a cogency about it too. But, by way of underscoring the utility of postcolonial theory as a theory which is some way —other”, it pays to remind ourselves further of not only the ideological practices, but also - by revisiting Ahluwalia’s remarks regarding the need for a notion of subjectivity in confronting conditions of domination - of the bourgeois lament which obtains in the ennuitic concerns of the other posts. Hutcheon’s articulates this concern:

The current poststructuralist/postmodern challenges to the coherent, autonomous subject have to be put on hold in feminist and post-colonial discourses, for both must work first to assert and affirm a denied or alienated subjectivity: those radical postmodern challenges are in many ways the luxury of the dominant order which can afford to challenge that which it securely possesses (Hutcheon, 1994, p.281).

If postcolonial theory reinvigorates the Left, it does so in that gritty, applied and worldly way which is critical to a project of resistance. The concept of worldliness is one to which we will return. For now, we will allow Bhabha to underscore the connections between domination, abjection and the critical project of the Left:

Various contemporary critical theories suggest that we learn our most enduring lessons for living and thinking from those who have suffered the sentence of history - subjugation, domination, diaspora, displacement. There is even a growing conviction that the effective experience of social marginality - as it emerges in noncanonical cultural forms - transforms our critical strategies. It forces us to confront the concept of culture outside *objets d’art* or beyond the canonization of the —idea” of aesthetics, and thus to engage with culture as an uneven, incomplete production of meaning and value (Bhabha, 1995, p.48).

4.2.3/ Globalisation and Transformations.

We have mentioned the manifest and material relevance, pre-eminence and ubiquity of the postcolonial, and by way of underscoring that point and attesting to the broad relevance of the postcolonial theoretical project, the synonymousness of the concepts of postcoloniality and globalisation ought to be explored. In short, postcoloniality is the defining feature, the prerequisite and the product of globalisation, and the global is the postcolonial. The collapse of binaries and structures of separation which postcolonialism highlights is a demonstration of the process of cultural convergence which describes the phenomenon of globalisation. The hybrid postcoloniality of culture aligns with this convergence. But it aligns with a pattern of complex and overlapping yet local creolisations too. This chaotic interplay of complexification and simplification constitutes an interesting dialectic of homogenisation and fracture which we have previously cast as defining the nation, the state and civil society, and as being demonstrative of the homogenised dominance and silenced fractures which inhere in the construction of the subject. As stated, the liberal categories which are used to contain and explain the self and the body politic are undone, connected and conflated through an identity-led investigation of hegemony and civil society. They are, as Hall forewarned us, blurred and reconstituted through the postcolonial prism.

As we have noted, civil society, the nation and the state contain and always have contained, silenced, or been predicated upon the dialectic of homogenisation and fracture: civil society is macroscopically monolithic (hegemony is present), but it is microscopically fissured and riven with interstices (other voices are silenced). This fissure, this fracture at the micro level, as demonstrated by fin de siecle upsurges in nationalistic skirmishes, is taken by some as evidence of the impossibility of a globalisation of civil culture and – by extension – as a potential refutation of the concept of a global postcoloniality.

What is clear however- at the risk of labouring the point - is that illustrations of fragmentation (the resurgence of nationalism) do not deny the process of cultural globalisation, or processes of homogenisation. The formation of a global culture can be expected to be characterised by and to contain this dialectic of homogenisation and local fracture in the way that smaller national cultures always have. This goes some way to assisting in a refutation of arguments such as the

following by Wallerstein, which we can take as an early and foundational example and as emblematic of a strain of scholarship which has attempted to conservatively recapture old assumptions of national/cultural and statist fixity since the fall of the wall (as an aside it ought to be noted that this argument can be refuted on other grounds, most saliently with reference to Jameson's (1991) idea that global capitalism subsumes and requires difference):

There seems clearly to be some deep resistance to the very idea (of a global culture). It takes the form on the one hand of the multiple political chauvinisms which constantly seem to resurface around the globe. It takes the form as well of the multiple so-called countercultures which also seem to surge up constantly, and whose rallying-cry, whose *cri de coeur*, always seems to be the struggle against uniformity (Wallerstein, 1991, p.94).

In a similar vein, we might cast a critical eye upon the following comparable remarks:

Is there a global culture? If by a global culture we mean something akin to the culture of the nation-state writ large, then the answer is patently a negative one. On this comparison the concept of a global culture fails, not least because the image of the culture of a nation state is one which generally emphasises cultural homogeneity and integration (Featherstone, 1991, p.1).

If we accept - by virtue of the forgoing arguments and refutations of national/statist fixity - the existence of a global postcoloniality, and if we extrapolate this to suggest the burgeoning presence of a hybrid global civil society, then we need to remember civil society as a dynamic space of contestations over hegemony. Ashcroft (unpublished) presents an interesting slant on the creolising contestations which occur within that hybrid global space. For Ashcroft, globalisation is a phenomenon of multidirectional cultural interplay, in which structures of dominance do obtain, but do not suggest simple unidirectional inflections upon culture. Ashcroft is sympathetic to the concept of mutually constitutive relationships within the globalising encounter. For Ashcroft, the globalising encounter is one of imperial yet rhizomic transculturation. He reconciles the notions of rhizomic interplay and imperialism, reminding us that

historically and in the contemporary setting, it has always been the case that, as he puts it:

The rhizomic reality of colonial space continually subverts the hierarchical and filiative metaphors of colonial discourse (Ashcroft, unpublished, p.6).

What is interesting for Ashcroft is the hybridising transcultural dynamic which rhizomic patterns of culture produce. For Ashcroft, the insights which postcolonial theory provides into the hybridising process afford an invigorating means of apprehending that dynamic, and for locating resistance within that dynamic. For Ashcroft, resistance to the global process of homologation (the weakening of authentic disparity) is not about an impossible isolationist xenophobia enacted against dominant and colonising cultural forms, but should be conceived instead in terms of an “engagement and transformation” (Ashcroft, unpublished, p.7), capitalising on what Ahluwalia described for us earlier as an inflective “movement in both directions” (Ahluwalia, 2000, p.41). As Ashcroft puts it:

... the act of resistance against the ... force of global culture does not often fall into obvious models of resistance. The diffuse and interactive process of identity formation proceeds in global terms in much the same way as it has in post-colonial societies and it is the model of post-colonial appropriation which is of most use in understanding the local engagements with global culture (Ashcroft, unpublished, p.7).

A post-colonial or postcolonial appropriation could be thought of in terms of demonstrating the unique way in which post-colonial or non-dominant cultures strategically take up and employ aspects of dominant and colonising culture, ripping up the master narrative and reconstituting it as a softer, more pliable story whilst adapting, subverting and discarding various aspects of the tale. Ashcroft articulates it this way:

[This is] the principle of transformation, which distinguishes itself from a simple binary structure of oppositionality and can be seen to be a key of post-colonial societies’ conversion of imperial discourse into various identifying local discourses (Ashcroft, unpublished, p.7).

Ashcroft cites the phenomenon of writing back from the former colonies as the perfect example of the process of transformation in action, and as an act and process of resistance which “appropriates the dominant language, transforms it, and employs it as an evocative medium of cultural representation” (Ashcroft, unpublished, p.7). This kind of transformative appropriation demonstrates a postcolonial agency which permeates, subverts and contests hegemony from within, and as an active force, rather than as the passive subjugated and ineffectual partner in an unequal binary pairing. That subversive permeation casts a transformative resistance in the global moment as a hybridising, yet local, cultural and artefactual interstitial agency. It constitutes - in its deliberate manifestations and as a theoretical methodology - a *powerfully acquiescent* (and often commodified) form of Gramscian resistance: contesting hegemony from within – working through the channels which hegemony has wrought in the substrate of culture – is the only way to maintain significance and to locate and interact with the platoons of civil society which are the sites of the contests for hegemony and consciousness.

Ashcroft and Ahluwalia contribute to an understanding of transformations. They say,

A central problem with the ideas of resistance is the overly simplistic conflation of resistance with oppositionality. This assumes that in the fraught and vigorous engagement between imperial discourse and the consciousness of the colonised, the only avenue of resistance is rejection. But post-colonial analysis has revealed ... that such opposition, far from achieving a successful rejection of the dominant culture, locks the political consciousness of the colonised subject into a binary relationship from which actual resistance is difficult to mobilise. Those forms of resistance that have been most successful have been those that have identified a wide audience, which have taken hold of the dominant discourse and transformed it in ways that establish cultural difference within the discursive territory of the imperialist. An example of this occurs, for instance, when writers appropriate the colonialist language and literary forms, enter the domain of ‘literature’ and construct a different cultural reality within it (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 1999, p.105).

But away from the deliberate and methodological, we need to remember the concept of transformations and the transformative or inflective moment – just like Said’s related concept of the contrapuntal moment (Said, 1993) – as being broadly descriptive of the global dynamic rather than as just prescribing a resistance strategy. It is from this position that Ashcroft adds weight to our critique of strong ontology and modern expertise, and it is from this position that, as a critique of such strength, Ashcroft sets up the conditions and does the reconnaissance for broader acts of resistance against the expert systems of the modern liberal subject. This is a broadening - a transcending of the limitations of counter hegemonic movements - to which we will return.

Ashcroft does brilliantly capitalise on the undoing of fixity and on the fluidity which morphs and squeezes strong ontology, drawing on the dynamic, slippery and mutable properties of the construct of language. In terms of confronting hegemony from within (or non-oppositionally), of using the master’s tools to dismantle the master’s house (to subvert Lorde, 1984), and of the deliberate and theoretical possibilities which exist in the creolising moment, Ashcroft elaborates on that kind of acquiescent and transformative agency. Again, he picks up on the concept of “writing back”, with which he is famously associated by virtue of his contribution to the book, *The Empire Writes Back* (Ashcroft *et al.*, 1989), and through which he coined the term “post-colonial”. In a piece entitled “language and race”, and against the logic of the rules of strong ontology which have colonised the imagination of resistance, Ashcroft sets about (at least partially) addressing Spivak’s concern that “the subaltern cannot speak” (Spivak, 1988, p.308). He writes,

It is not just advisable but crucial that post-colonial intellectuals realise that language has no race (its identity is not fixed), for the consequence of this link – when it leads to rejection of tools of discursive resistance such as the English language – has been to imprison resistance in an inward looking world. The ultimate consequence of the belief that language embodies race is the deafening of a rage that cannot be heard (Ashcroft, 2001a, p.326).

In other work, Ashcroft similarly addresses assumptions of stasis, fixity and security as defining principles of culture, in a manner which could be seen to untie

the bonds between culture and the strong ontological category of race or, in other words, to suggest a weaker model of culture. He says,

Many critics have argued that colonialism destroyed indigenous cultures, but this assumes that culture is static, and underestimates the resilience and adaptability of colonial societies. On the contrary, colonized cultures have often been so resilient and transformative that they have changed the character of imperial culture itself. This transcultural effect has not been seamless or unvaried, but it forces us to reassess the stereotyped view of colonized peoples' victimage and lack of agency (Ashcroft, 2001, p.2).

In *English Studies and Postcolonial Transformations* (unpublished), a work which pre-dates Ashcroft's rupture of the bonds of language, Ashcroft again teases out the notion of strategically appropriating the terms of dominance and prevailing conditions to effect a resistance methodology of the possible. He notes - drawing on Said (1994) - that post-colonial resistance writing, like any political act or cultural production, exists within the shadow of the auspices and authority of the state and the associated and particular worldly conditions, possibilities and constraints which obtain within a particular spatial and temporal context. He canvasses the facts of market forces and publishing requirements, along with the authority of the state and the cultural swallowing of the author, as being amongst these worldly determining forces which are part of the architecture of the moment of resistance (Ashcroft, unpublished, p.17). He notes,

... the value of what we can call post-colonial cultural production lies not in its freedom from these conditions of production, but from the fact that its containment is so glaringly obvious. No writer picking up a pen to write in a colonial language, can avoid at some stage coming to terms with the irony of this practice. No post-colonial intellectual, no artist, no critic can avoid the fact that this production is occurring on some already determined discursive space. The terrain is not just contained by the nation state but by the continuing imperial reality of global capital. The post-colonial intellectual cannot avoid ... the defining conditions of ... production (Ashcroft, unpublished, p.17).

For Ashcroft, though, these forces are not paralysing. He suggests that this situation is one of a precondition for autoreflexivity, and one which unavoidably

demands that kind of reflection, such that post-colonial intellectual production maintains an ironic attention to its hegemonic containment. In short, Ashcroft - in the spirit of an active and vital post-theory - points to the transformative power of ironic acts and gestures of contained and permitted resistance from within a hegemonic framework. He says, with an allegorical focus on the discipline of English Literature:

Such gestures have been important ways of transforming the field of literary study, and whatever the rhetoric surrounding them they are never simply oppositional but profoundly transformative (Ashcroft, unpublished, p.18).

We might read Ashcroft as suggesting that the transformations which ramify from the process of writing back have shaken the ontological foundations of the canon and of the discipline of English Literature – that such transformations constitute an impulse and an energy which permeates the membrane protecting and surrounding canonical wisdom and fixity, destabilising its ontological integrity and swelling it beyond the limits of its elasticity. Ashcroft paints a compelling picture of the transformative and globalising impulses which problematise assumptions of fixity and undo the ontological security of modern organisational units such as discipline and nation. From the contests and dynamics within the disciplinary hegemony of English studies, to broader national issues of the globalised and globalising dynamic of culture, Ashcroft gives a particular postcolonial inflection to the dynamics of power and resistance.

The existence or possibility of a hybridised and transforming dynamic of culture and global civil society implies, by virtue of a refusal of stasis by the processes of culture and hegemony, that these dynamics of transformation and contestation will continue to be played out beyond the establishment of some new hegemony, and that hybridity needs to be understood as a ceaseless process rather than as an end point. As Gramsci says,

... hegemony must be constructed, contested and won, on many different sites, as the structures of ... society complexify and the points of social antagonism proliferate (Gramsci, cited in Hall, 1987, p.17).

It is for this reason - for the fact of ongoing permeation and proliferation - that assumptions of fixity and of durable, universal expert systems are never credible.

It is this complexification and dynamic transformation which needs to be apprehended in fluid postcolonial terms, and here Ashcroft is instructive. To consider Gramsci is to reinforce a Left tradition of resistance, and a consideration of postcoloniality reinforces that tradition's connection and applicability to a globalised world. To consider globalisation reinforces the fact that postcolonialism is relevant to, and informs, any concept of culture and resistance, and its sophistication in terms of apprehending culture means that – with reference to our different post – postcolonialism, or a postcolonial logic, is essential to a project of reclaiming a contemporary transformative agency.

4.3/ The Contortionist.

No truly sophisticated understanding of the Left's critical, cultural space could be claimed without at least a cursory reading of queer theory. Whilst we have claimed a pre-eminence for the utility of postcolonial theory in reclaiming agency, much of the queer project is - to put it crudely - theoretically analogous, and it adds nuances to the debate which enrich any apprehension of the contingent, interstitial cultural space, and a new subjectivity born of interstitiality. As a broad and overarching statement regarding the queer project - for all of its diverse complexity - Whittle provides some interesting introductory comments which augment any attack on strong ontological categories. He says,

Queer theory is about the deconstruction and the refusal of labels of personal sexual activity, and it is also concerned with the removal of pathologies of sexuality and gendered behaviour. It concerns gender fuck, which is a full-frontal theoretical and practical attack on the dimorphism of gender- and sex-roles (Whittle, 1996, p.202).

The queer project – as per postcolonial theory since its inception as colonial discourse analysis – seeks to legitimise difference and the incommensurable, and seeks to forge a dignified space for difference to be apprehended *in its own right*, rather than accepting the characterisation of difference as deviance and accepting its toleration, or the relegation of deviant difference to the pathologised –shadow brother” negative side of the binary in fixed, bounded and bifurcated hierarchical structures. It is that search for dignity which defines the common ground underpinning the critical projects of the Left.

Whittle expands on the nature of this search, and its casualties, for and within the transgendered community, and his observations reward attention as they augment our problematisation of binary structures and our critique of separation and of discreet, fixed, observable and measurable categories. He says,

The transgendered community and its individual members has a large amount of personal experience of hitting the brick walls of the main foundations of this binary paradigm – the dualities of sex and gender. For many this led to a process of self-apologia and attempted explanation which caused self-identified transsexuals to adopt the stance of being a woman trapped inside a man's body (or vice versa). Cross-dressers and transvestites upheld a view that there was a feminine side to their masculinity and maleness, rather than challenge the actual construction of their gender role. It was as if, without genital reconstruction, personal gender roles could not be changed, and even with it, that reconstruction provided the point of change. A transformation took place, and the idea that gender was signified through the genital was repeatedly upheld (Whittle, 1996, p.204).

Transgender undoes modernity *par excellence*. We have cast critical projects of resisting alienation and domination as constituting a turning of modernity on its head and a paradigmatic inversion. The queer – the difference which will not fit – has its own powerful place within this inversion. And - drawing on the work of Foucault - from the moment of the success of 1970s campaigns for the removal of ~~“homosexuality”~~ from the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, the queer has problematised and laughed at the ludicrous stance and all of the absurd epistemological and ontological claims of the expert, at the reductive tendencies of expertise, at ignorance of the fluid and the interstitial, and at fixed, normative concepts of strong identity.

Underscoring and exemplifying our critique of the architecture and mechanisms of boundaries which contain the strong ontological subject - such as the aforementioned discursive and exclusive technologies of professional delineations and accreditations, as well as multicultural and nationalistic machinations - postcolonial theory problematises the imagination of space as a category to which we assign and ascribe identities. This project can be understood as one which entirely analogous to the queer critique of the imagination of gender as a category

to which roles are ascribed. Postcolonialism contorts space, just as Whittle suggests queer theory contorts (or ~~–fucks~~) gender (Whittle, 1996, p.202). As the spatial categories which contain identity are defined nationally (Ahluwalia, 2001, p.70), it is fair to say that postcolonialism plays with and contorts the nation. In this sense, Giroux (1988) offers a concept of ~~–border pedagogy~~, which can be thought of as an injunction to learn the interstitial lessons - the lessons of shifting fluidity - which inhere in categorical margins. Where queer theorists might practice a contorting kind of ~~–gender-fuck~~ (Whittle, 1996, p.202), Giroux – to adapt his writing – points to the utility of a similar, subversive and contorting engagement with borders and with the nation. And there is some merit to messing with space and national boundaries, as our critique of such modern and bounded liberal categories as strong ontology, strong identity and expert systems suggests.

It is through this process of contorting the nation that postcolonial theory becomes both instructive and interesting. It is through the process of contorting the strong boundaries between self and other, legitimate and illegitimate, dominant and marginal, that postcolonialism opens the door to the silenced fractures within hegemony – the voices other than those of the dominant, the privileged and the expert. As Ahluwalia observes,

[P]ost-colonial theory ... suggests that there are other narratives, other histories which have been subsumed and which need to be recovered (Ahluwalia, 2001, p.71).

Ahluwalia goes on to state that, as such, postcolonialism demands a theoretical approach which – as suggested by Said – is less like that of the potentate and more like that of the traveller, crossing borders with disregard for territory and custom (Ahluwalia, 2001, p.71; Said, 1991, p.81). For Said, like Ahluwalia, it is the nation which is the foremost dominant category and structure of strong identity. It is the nation which is the pre-eminent normative authority. It is the nation which must be resisted and overcome. Said's proposed resistance via an international crossing over and transcending constitutes a transnationalism which ties Said's postcolonial traveller very closely to the transsexual experience which demands that categories of containment be transgressed and contorted. Said's traveller – as a messenger of the postcolonial lesson – is a contortionist who twists and turns and interweaves multiple national positions. But it is not this contortionist which

is important in and of his or herself. It is the possibility for the agency of smaller narratives which is revealed after the strong categories have been contorted which postcolonial theory's problematisation of and refocusing on identity allows. It is this possibility which is important, and the postcolonial conditions of that possibility.

The thing about these disruptive, destructive and uprooting styles of travel is that they are self-perpetuating: they create the impossibility of arrival. To transcend - to apprehend the postcolonial conditions of that possibility - is to open up the world as a transnational space. In regards to any sense of national, discreet or authentic belonging, the transcendental experience creates the impossibility of arrival and the impossibility of going home. This is the postcolonial experience - the experience of travel, of border pedagogy and of what Ahluwalia calls "the border intellectual" (Ahluwalia, 2005, p.151). Said elaborates on the unhappiness of this experience in his book, *Representations of the Intellectual* (1994), and this is a point to which we will return. Ahluwalia comments on the experience too, making the observation that the sense of limbo which defines the transcendental experience is the same state which underpinned poststructuralism's roots. His thesis, to paraphrase, is that poststructuralism required a contorted postcolonial experience - a postcolonial transcendence, or twisting, turning and interweaving of positions - as a precondition. Using the example of Cixous and Derrida, he states,

The sense of departing but not arriving in the case of both of these border intellectuals ... illustrates the transformative nature of post-colonial societies. It occludes the distinctions between the coloniser and the colonised. It speaks of the kind of globalisation that implicates different cultures within each other. It helps to break down the binaries such as metropolitan/colonial, developed/underdeveloped, civilised/primitive. By drawing on what I have termed elsewhere post-colonial inflections, we see how post-colonial subjects confront their colonial legacy and define their post-colonial future (Ahluwalia, 2005, pp.151-152).

The inflections, the transformations, which the postcolonial produces - the Algerian disruption, to cite the foregoing examples - are what Ahluwalia casts as the prerequisite for the other posts. Poststructuralism, by this logic, is a product

of a postcolonial and post-colonial interweaving, twisting and contortionism. It is, again via this logic, postcolonialism which is at the heart of critical engagements with modernity. And it is postcolonialism which offers the chance to recapture the agency which has been the casualty of such critiques. The contortionist - or the logic of contortionism - is at the heart of the critical project of the Left, and the contortionist is an essentially postcolonial creature. Further, it is postcolonialism which revives the contortionist's undead.

4.4/ Overlapping Histories, Intertwined Territories.

In the absence of the imposition of what Ashcroft has termed an "ocularcentric" (Ashcroft, 2001, p.164) liberal logic onto a contingent, complex world which slips and eludes the liberal gaze, boundaries are mitigated, smudged and contorted. Their superintendents – their professionals, their bureaucrats, their specialists and their experts: their key holders, gatekeepers, architects and industries are similarly compromised. Under a postcolonial logic, boundaries are weak, fluid, permeable, elastic and mutable. They rarely delineate categories which are mutually exclusive, and they are unable to support the logic of the binary structure of the object in juxtaposition to its opposite or antonym.

A postcolonial analysis allows us to reconsider and collapse the bifurcation that cleaves - amongst a world of binaries - mundanity from profundity. A postcolonial analysis refuses the simple dichotomy which renders these descriptors as two dichotomously opposed poles on a hierarchical spectrum. Such a postcolonial analysis and reconsideration lets us sensibly attend to considering the utility of soft, weak and smaller things, reminding us that the limited and the local are profoundly useful, often subjugated, stories, artefacts and strategies. They transform the master narratives which shout over them, whilst at the same time offering the rigorous opportunity for a less universal epistemology, a weaker sense of ontology, and a post-liberal sense of subjectivity and artefactual agency.

Where the liberal subject sees delineation, separation and distinction marking a strong sense of ontological certainty and a world in which a modern epistemology obtains, the postcolonial approach sees these ideological and cultural practices and products as being intertwined with the constitutive outside, and sees the objects which modern logic categorises and describes as overlapping and interconnecting in a swirling, intersecting, worldly interplay of self, other, subject

and object. This is postcolonialism's fluidity. This is postcolonialism's insistence on twisting things together and on contortionism, and this is at the heart of a postcolonial sense of hybridity.

As we have seen, Said articulates and illustrates this sense of interconnection and hybridity with the analysis of culture, encounter, history and the imperial present and past which he covers in *Culture and Imperialism* (1993). The cultural hybridity and mutually constitutive impulses which Said's analysis describes problematise the foundations of strong identity, such as integrity, authenticity and fixity, suggesting instead that the world is wrought of a dynamic, transformative hybridity in which the boundaries and categories which inhere in binarised structures collapse and overflow. This sense of hybrid and multiple intersection is captured in the phrase, "overlapping territories, intertwined histories" which Said employs as the title of the first chapter in *Culture and Imperialism* (Said, 1993), and on which we make a clumsy play here by way of reinforcing the multifaceted and elliptical complexity of the shifting fluidity of the world.

Amongst the numerous obituaries which followed Said's death, Williams crafted one in which he - perhaps almost formulaically - ties this notion of the overlapping and the intertwining to Said's life in the world, unpacking the complexity of the life of the man and the complexity of the man. But Williams achieves this succinctly and he extrapolates it well. This portrait of the man - the intellectual - as contorting every which way is probably a relatively standard way of apprehending Said, but there is profundity in the mundanity: the analysis underscores and reinforces - by way of the quintessential example - Ahluwalia's thesis that a postcolonial experience is at the core of the critical energy of the Left. And - again by way of example - the portrait illustrates the worldliness of the man *as a man* - it speaks to the postcolonial human condition, turning a portrait of the individual into a broader cultural comment. Williams puts it this way:

In the final paragraph of *Culture and Imperialism*, Said says, "No one today is purely *one* thing", and for him, concepts of unitary, essentialized or monolithic identities, not least in the form of racist or xenophobic nationalisms, were the root cause of much suffering and oppression. Such insistence on plurality might seem to come very easily to someone who was himself so many things - Arab and Christian, Palestinian and American, teacher and writer, political analyst and political activist,

music critic and performing pianist – but Said’s point is a very serious one about the nature of human existence. For him – rather than the ideological constructs offered by discourses or institutions like Orientalism emphasizing cultural difference and hierarchy, or the reactive and reductive politics of identity which results in embattled, often bitter, separatism – humanity is formed in and by the complexities of *‘Overlapping Territories, Intertwined Histories’*, as one of the section titles of *Culture and Imperialism* has it (Williams, 2004, p.170).

It is this refusal of binaries and this apprehension of hybridity, this insistence on the complex, the fluid and the worldly – this insistence on the multidimensional overlap – which is at the heart of Said, and at the heart of a postcolonial analysis of the world, its refusal of fixity, and its applicability to the project of critiquing strong ontology. It is within this worldly analysis of - and focus on - culture that postcolonial theory finds its agency and a reconstituted subjectivity. Said unimagines a rational and modern world and – as the founding father of that postcolonial unimagining – it is Said’s analysis of culture which contributes the initial effort to disinter the Left’s undead. It is this concept of culture as a dynamic of overlap which is critical to postcolonial theory’s utility as an analytical and *political* tool, which links postcolonialism to the critical project of critiquing strong, modern ontology, and which problematises the applicability and functionality of strong, universalising and unworldly expert systems.

This postcolonial overlapping and intertwining is something which Gupta and Ferguson had already brought to the attention of the field of anthropology as early as 1992. Given that the core business of anthropology – investigating the other and investigating culture – was precisely the sort of industry at which Said’s earlier critique of representations of otherness had been aimed in *Orientalism* (1978), it is perhaps not surprising to note that practitioners within the industry – roused by the critique – had stated to track along related theoretical lines to Said as he neared the publication of *Culture and Imperialism* (1993). Drawing on a sophisticated sense of postcolonial interrelation, Gupta and Ferguson articulate a notion of overlap and intertwining as a phenomenon which demands a perspectival shift. They put it this way:

The move we are calling for ... is a move from seeing cultural difference as the correlate of a world of “peoples” whose separate histories wait to

be bridged by the anthropologist and toward seeing it as a product of a shared historical process that differentiates the world as it connects it. For the proponents of “cultural critique”, difference is taken as a starting point, not as end product. Given a world of different societies, they ask, how can we use experience in one to comment on another? But if we question a pre-given world of separate and discrete “peoples and cultures”, and see instead a difference-producing set of relations, we turn from a project of juxtaposing preexisting differences to one of exploring the construction of differences in historical process (Gupta and Ferguson, 1992, p.16).

This should not be mistaken as advocating a licence to represent, but as an interesting and very postcolonial analysis, drawing on a postcolonial sense of intertwining and overlap. It avoids universalising the human experience, whilst successfully elevating a sense of agency around the category of humanity over a sense of closure around the category of nation. For Gupta and Ferguson, those simple boundaries and those binaries which separate self from other do not adequately represent a world which could be suggested to be far less monodimensional than that. They illustrate that idea this way:

... the distance between the rich in Bombay and the rich in London may be much shorter than that between different classes in “the same” city. Physical location and physical territory, for so long the *only* grid on which cultural difference could be mapped, need to be replaced by multiple grids that enable us to see that connection and contiguity ... vary considerably by factors such as class, gender, race, and sexuality, and are differentially available to those in different locations in the field of power (Gupta and Ferguson, 1992, p.20).

Gupta and Ferguson reinforce the multidimensionality of the nexus of intertwining and overlapping social determinants of culture, identity, subjectivity and being which inheres within the dynamics between histories and between territories, and which Said describes. They recognise that modern categories of identity and ontology such as space and nation are contorted in the complexity of the postcolonial moment, and they suggest a “move” towards a postcolonial epistemology. They call for – as we have suggested, they elevate – a sense of non-paternalistic, non-universalising agency around the category of humanity. This sense of agency around humanity is something which we need to tease out

further, but before we canvass its political utility, something of its theoretical value merits examination.

The point which Gupta and Ferguson make, regarding multiple intersections within, determinants of, and grids and factors which produce subjectivity, is crucial to staying on top of critiques of the concept of hybridity as a theoretical tool, which centre around its sometimes limited and exclusive remit of referencing the ethno-cultural grid, field or frame of reference. In her piece entitled “New hybridities, old concepts: the limits of ‘culture’”, Anthias (2001) captures the spirit of this broad critique. Anthias notes the contribution which the notion of hybridity has made to undoing static models of culture and identity, as well as cultural assumptions of fixity, but she regards the marriage of the concept to an ethno-cultural analytical axis as being problematic, suggesting that this adherence limits the theoretical utility of a notion of hybridity. Anthias prefers the word “translocational” to hybrid (Anthias, 2001, p.260). For Anthias, this rearticulation constitutes a gesture of recognition towards other categories of belonging such as class, and towards the multidimensional nexus of multiple grids and linkages which constitute the sum of worldly connections, contiguities and fields of power to which Gupta and Ferguson refer.

But, against Anthias, it seems reasonable to suggest that a focus on hybridity does not logically demand an ethno-cultural limitation, and the logic of postcolonialism, far from providing a point of closure, invites and demands extrapolation, bastardisation, and a general and ongoing contortionistic impulse. Postcolonial theory invites a general permeation and penetration of the subject and a general problematisation of dichotomous liberal structures, which reveals complex fields of interconnection and contiguity. This is precisely what postcolonial theory’s nation contorting allows, and it is what lies at the heart of Said’s observation that “No one today is purely *one* thing” (Said, 1993, p.407).

An agency around or elevation of the category of humanity is best informed if that category is understood in a complex and hybrid way, and it is in illustrating that complexity – in demonstrating that that the subject is never one thing – that the notion of a postcolonial intertwined and transformative hybridity has its utility. This celebration of the *theory of hybridity* – this apprehension of complexity – is echoed, fittingly, in complexity theory as a branch of theoretical physics which

lends itself to a frequent application and misapplication to social critique. Eve *et al.* capture that echo well, whilst offering some persuasive words of caution applicable to the foregoing elevation of the category of humanity. They say,

Complexity theory views ... holism ... as just as problematic as the reductionism it normally opposes – the conventional systems theory holism is reduction to the whole. Holism typically overlooks the interactions ... whereas complexity theory pays attention to them (Eve *et al.*, 1997, p.10).

It is precisely these sorts of interactions that define the specificity of the local, and it is this dynamic complexity that our different post - a postcolonial view of hybridity - apprehends. But, to reiterate, postcolonial theory advocates a theoretical approach by virtue of that apprehension – it offers an avenue for critique and methodology. It does not, except at its most facile, advocate a celebration of the *state of hybridity*, and this is a point which is important by way of debunking real and valid concerns surrounding the application of the concept of hybridity, such as articulated by Hutnyk in the following:

My charge against hybridity is ... that it is a rhetorical cul-de-sac which trivialises black political activity ... in the UK over the past 25 years, diverting attention from the urgency of antiracist politics in favour of middle-class conservative success stories in the Thatcher-with-a-*bindi*-spot mould ... Theorising hybridity becomes, in some cases, an excuse for ignoring sharp organisational questions, enabling a passive and comfortable – if linguistically sophisticated – intellectual quietism (Hutnyk, 1998, p.414).

A postcolonial concept of hybridity, at least at its best, celebrates the transformative, not the transformed. A postcolonial concept of hybridity sees intertwining across multiple grids as a dynamic process, and it refuses ideas of fixity. It views culture and hegemony as processes open to influence and contestations, as our earlier remarks by Gramsci remind us. A postcolonial approach accepts no quietism. On the contrary, it demands agency, and finds it in the utility of the specific and the locally transformative and constitutive dynamic. It understands hybrid interactions – the worldly web of intertwining overlap – as the stuff of subject constitution: it is the stuff of rejecting the bounded liberal subject and of confronting a more complex cultural whole, where the collective

undead are viewed through a complex and multifaceted prism which reveals and the bands of colour inherent within subjectivity. These bands of colour correspond to the layers of collective overlap which are the constituent parts of the non-autonomous and ununified subject, and which are best visualised in terms of a multidimensional Venn diagram (commonly named after an English logician) model of culture, containing innumerable intertwining constitutive sub-sets such as religion, gender, age, sexuality and class, where overlayings and interfaces abound. The agency within postcolonial theory lies in its ability to softly and artefactually attend to the facts, facets and dynamic intersections of these constitutive structural sub-sets, and in its understanding that the interweaving of these colours and sub-sets in the subject constituting process illustrates the falsity of separate, discreet identities and separate, integral liberal subjects. In tackling the dominance of the liberal subject, postcolonial theory recognises that postmodernism never needed to kill the subject: postcolonial theory kills the liberal and lets the subject survive.

4.5/ The Category of Humanity (Ogres are Like Onions).

No-one is purely one thing. Subjectivity is an intertwining and everyone is intertwined. Everyone is – having reclaimed the complexity of the concept – hybrid. Everyone is human. This is an ontological formulation which is entirely irreconcilable with the liberal position that we are all individual people. Our intertwining and overlapping defies a discreet separation of people and cultures. As stated, this elevates a sense of agency around a dynamic and *complex* category of humanity, contorting the closure and fixity which corrals modern categories of the autarkical individual and the nation. What we have here is a concept of humanity which accepts the worldly interconnections between things, but which refuses to universalise those things under the totalising rubric – the grand narrative – of the essentially human. This is a concept of humanity that respects difference as much as it accepts commonality – it notices the local specificity of the dynamics between things, and it notices that these dynamics connect things whilst defining their specificity. Thus a postcolonial category of humanity can never accept the impulse to universalise the human condition, history and experience, and is mindful of the way that universalising, paternalistic and imperialistic impulses intersect around concepts of humanity and common

heritage, as colonial discourse analysis has shown us they do (see Spurr, 1993, pp.28-33). Postcolonial theory respects that for every local situation, a local constitutive nexus obtains, as does a local logic and the utility of a local story. A postcolonial concept of humanity refuses to allow the germination of a grand narrative from the seeds of small artefactual stories. Nonetheless, it does reinvigorate a certain kind of totality and it does problematise the exclusivity of those stories and suggests that they are everybody's business, and such a problematisation is a useful vehicle for agency.

Reinforcing the foregoing comments by Eve *et al.* (1997) in regards to complexity theory suggesting that wholism is as reductive and problematic a practice as specialisation, McLaren says the following of the reinvigoration and problematisation of the respective phenomena of totality and exclusivity:

... what needs to be abandoned is the reductive use of totality, not the concept of totality itself. Otherwise, we risk undermining the very concept of ... public life ... Difference needs to be understood ... as difference in relation, rather than dislocated, free-floating difference. Systems of differences ... always involve *patterns* of domination and *relations* of oppression and exploitation. We need to concern ourselves, therefore, with economies of *relations of difference* within historically specific totalities that are always open to contestation and transformation ... [Such] totalities shouldn't be confused with Lyotard's notion of universal meta-narratives ... This is not the harmonious whole' of canonic classicism, but rather the difficult whole' of a pluralized and multi-dimensional world (McLaren, 1993, pp.132-133, emphasis added).

The agency derived from a postcolonial concept of humanity - from the "difficult whole" - comes from the possibility of an advocacy which overcomes the paternalism of modern concepts of helping others that are predicated on a liberal logic of separation, binary structures and hierarchy: charity and altruism are mistakes of the modern subject. They facilitate a remove – a doing to rather than a doing with – which does not obtain in a world of interconnections. In such a world, a Platonic notion of *agape* as a form of highest love provides a better blueprint for agency than any concept of benevolence, philanthropy or spirit of volunteerism. A sense of *agape* points to an agency through being rather than through doing (to), and constitutes the new Left epistemology which Gupta and

Ferguson previously suggested moving towards. Postcolonial theory, in the final analysis, is a theory of love, *Bhakti* and worldly connections. It is a theory which raises a sense of an intimate and intricate connection to the world over a modern loveless apartheid which separates being from a world of hard facts, and the human agent from God, or from – as Darth Vader and popular culture would have it – the Force.

It is this sense of love, this sense of being entwined, twisted and contorted together, which underpins an apprehension of shared desires, shared anxieties and shared destiny. It is this sense of love which lends substance to the connections between injustice anywhere and injustice everywhere, and it is this sense of love which underpins the following variously attributed indigenous quotation:

If you have come to help us, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with ours, let us work together
(anonymous).

A postcolonial epistemology, a postcolonial agency, and a postcolonial sense of love, born of interconnected contingency and self-sacrificing (or self-effacing) *agape*, constitute a rationale for a process of advocacy – of speaking for – and not a legitimisation for the imperial project of speaking over. The refusal of a fixed, universal logic means that such a process is always limited and demands a dialogical and transformative attention to the local as opposed to a monological dictate from the expert's pulpit which hierarchical and dialectical relationships might allow.

This concept – this process – of advocating and speaking for, as a gesture of love, is dealt with by Alcoff in a piece entitled, "The Problem of Speaking for Others" (1995). Alcoff acknowledges the discomfort around speaking for others and the valid accusations of violence which strains of theory - especially (but not exclusively) within feminism and subaltern studies - raise and connect to the practice. However, Alcoff does provide a caveat for what we might think of as advocacy, demonstrating that the insistence on authentic credentials for authorship and speaking constitutes a reinscription of marginalising structures of power which inhere within a celebration of the sanctity and force of the anti-collective reasoning of the logic of liberalism and the bounded, individual modern subject.

To demand an authentic voice is to deny a post-liberal agency around contingency and connectivity. Alcoff puts it this way:

[The] general retreat position ... presumes an ontological configuration of the discursive context that simply does not obtain. In particular, it assumes that an individual *can* retreat into her discreet location and make claims entirely and singularly within that location that do not range over others' locations, situations and practices. In other words, the claim that I can speak only for myself assumes the autonomous conception of the self in classical liberal theory – that I am unconnected to others in my authentic self or that I can achieve an autonomy from others given certain conditions (Alcoff, 1995, p.108).

For Alcoff, and for any post-liberal or postcolonial logic, this is an untenable position which misapprehends the nature of being: it is an ontological mistake. Further, it constitutes a paradoxical justification for a certain type of speech – speaking by omission or *speaking in silence*. The worst charge against this kind retreat and against this kind of appeal to authenticity is that it is an illusory smokescreen which has the effect of shielding the (non-)interlocutor from criticism. As Alcoff says,

... there is no neutral place to stand free and clear in which my words do not prescriptively affect or mediate the experience of others, nor is there a way to demarcate decisively a boundary between my location and all others. Even a complete retreat from speech is of course not neutral since it allows the continued dominance of current discourses and acts by omission to reinforce their dominance ... The declaration that I “speak only for myself” has the sole effect of allowing me to avoid responsibility and accountability for my effects on others; it cannot literally erase those effects (Alcoff, 1995, p.108).

It is an astute observation that we cannot erase our effects on others by appealing to liberal ontological formulations and busying ourselves with rhetorical and epistemological concerns about authenticity. There is no conjuring trick which allows this slight of hand, or which hermetically seals the critic outside of a postcolonial nexus of humanity so as to quarantine their choices from effects on the world, and to absolve them from the responsibilities of this worldliness.

Alcoff is not insensitive to the realities of power relations or need for caution in advocacy. He says, —. anyone who speaks for others should only do so out of a concrete analysis of the *particular* power relations and discursive effects involved” (Alcoff, 1995, p.111, emphasis added). Nonetheless - with this reflexive caution in mind - there is an enormous amount of currency in an apprehension of the impossibility of hermetic removal and in an apprehension that the Force penetrates us all. It is precisely this realisation of the possibility to speak – the possibility of advocacy – which disables modern constructs such as altruism and modern choices around whether to be or not to be altruistic. It is this realisation and possibility which enables a postcolonial love, a Platonic sense of *agape*, a new Left agency and epistemology, and a *general sense of being*.

The way in which the liberal subject – or a liberal concept of subjectivity – defines autonomy is via a process of identity formation which allows it a separation from the other which it identifies itself in opposition to. This sense of liberal identity does provide scope for some sense of collectivity, though it must consider any collective in bounded, ontologically secure, national and effectively autonomous ways. This is because the process of liberal identity formation – of othering – is also a process of onioning. If ogres – as Shrek would have it, to invoke the popular again – are like onions, then liberal subjects are too: they have layers. The first point of identification for the liberal ogre is to draw an identity from the distinction which reads “I am not you”, but the successive steps of othering and identification which read “we are not them” progressively radiate out from that central “I”, giving the bounded liberal subject and autonomous ontological categories an onion-like ogerishness. A postcolonial sense of *agape* and the Force undoes this insularity. It undoes a choice around whether or not to behave altruistically. It releases the possibility of agency. It makes that agency an inescapable responsibility.

In killing the ogre, there is only room for a postcolonial sense of love in which the line between self-care and collective care becomes meaningless and blurred. This irrational love – this dissolution of the rational self – is apparent in any concept of love: it is something – a profundity – of which the mundane and irrational experience of parenting has informed our collective experience. This is why parenting is enriching – because the parent experiences an unbounded sense of

being. To expand the irrationality of the love of close others into a broader sense of *agape*, or to a rationale for a broader care for humanity, is simply a matter of peeling back the layers of the onion, of stripping away the boundaries of modern identity. It is a matter of making the destabilising postcolonial assertion that strong ontology constitutes - to adapt the metaphor - the ogre's new clothes.

4.6/ Conclusion: All You Need is Love.

There's nothing you can do that can't be done. There's nothing you can sing that can't be sung. There's nothing you can say but you can learn how to play the game. It's easy (Lennon and McCartney, 1967).

On the one hand, the lessons of postcolonial theory look like they've been done – like elaborations drawn from the general post-critique. And they are: postcolonial theory provides powerful elaborations on and illustrations of dimensions of such critiques, grounding much poststructuralist theory in real and worldly situations and examples. More than elaborations though, postcolonial theory provides significant augmentations. In this sense, a concept of hybridity provides a theoretical lift to a notion of soft ontological contingency, which the latter concept would be bereft without. Hybridity deepens a sense of connectivity, intertwining and overlapping, and opens up a space in which we can appreciate the transformative impulses of contortionism within a complex nexus of dynamic cultural grids. It is within these grids that postcolonial theory finds and enables a new agency and a new sense of subjectivity. And it is here that postcolonial theory is much more than an elaboration and much more than an augmentation. It is here that postcolonial theory embroils itself with the contortionist. It is here that postcolonial theory reveals itself as sitting at the heart of other post-formulations. It is here, in a web of worldliness, that postcolonial theory connects us to the global whilst reflexively grounding us in the local. It is here that postcolonial theory connects us to humanity, to care, and to agency, through a sense of *agape*. It is here, where the ogre has died, that postcolonial theory points us towards a kind of therapeutic connectivity – a sense of love and a sense of *being* – which respects both difference and commonality. Here, the specifically local nature of the dynamics between things simultaneously combines those things together whilst demonstrating their specificity.

Postcolonial theory provides a re-invigorating re-reading of subjectivity for the Left. It directs us towards the dynamic nexus of cultural interactions, and attends to the subject as a culturally transformative and *constitutive process* of contortionism. Postcolonial theory directs our attention towards that process as a new, soft, useful and interstitial critical space for the Left. As Obi-Wan Kenobi says of the Force in *Star Wars Episode IV*, "It surrounds us, penetrates us, and binds the galaxy together" (*Star Wars Episode IV*, 1977). It is within the riparian zone of interstitial cultural fluidity that the Force flows, weaving things together. And it is this weaving which revives the Left's undead – which gives them some power to harness. The Force gives the Left's collective undead the opportunity for resistance and transformative agency. The Force gives form to a reconstituted subject – *to the complex human rather than the bounded person*. This complex human – the undead collective – refuses the binarised hierarchies which master narratives dominate and dictate. Instead, the complex, worldly human requires attention via softer, local stories and artefacts. A complex world is no place for modern expert narratives: it is no place for the expert.

It was with *Culture and Imperialism* that Said contributed the initial analytical thrust in regards to unimagining a rational, modern world and re-imagining a worldly, fluid, postcolonial space. As such, and as we have noted, it was Said's analysis of culture which constituted the initial postcolonial effort to disinter the Left's undead and loose them on the strong, the modern, the imperialistic, their clerks, their rational experts and their claims. All that effort needed was love, and that effort – Said's critical vigour – repays further analysis. Saidian criticism has scope to further problematise liberal, expert systems of knowledge and to inform a new Left epistemology. And, as we work within a redeployed category of humanity, a further engagement with Said gives us a useful vehicle via which to deal with the haunting spectre of humanism too.

5/ WORLDLINESS AND AMATEURISM.

5.1/ Overriding Petty Fiefdoms: Intellectuals, Worldliness and Affiliation.

We have made frequent allusions to and use of the concept of worldliness, letting its meaning, or a sense of its meaning - as a concept, and as a nomenclature for contingent interconnections and the simultaneity of commonality and specificity - evolve throughout discussions of contingency, interconnectivity and post-liberal subjectivity, in a way which renders that meaning almost self evident. Yet the concept and the word are steeped in Saidian critical thinking and underpin the corpus of Said's work. As useful as it has been for our purposes to give a tangible and elucidating name to abstract and complex concepts, it is of further use - in drawing on the lessons offered by Said - to tease the concept of worldliness out further, and to explore Said's related concept of affiliation.

Sympathetic to the condition of postcoloniality - or sensitive to a postcolonial state of complexity and hybridity which problematises binary structures, strong ontological categories, nations, disciplines and authentic, autonomous histories and traditions - Said's work advocates a method of critical engagement which is informed by an apprehension of the hybrid and which is, in other words, a hybrid methodology. Said refuses the kind of homotextual, self-citational genealogy and identity which underpins orthodox and canonical knowledge systems and foundational certainty, dominance and fixity. Said refuses this kind of familial exclusivity - this dark manifestation of the power of community. For Said, these are modern separations of knowledge and demarcations of critical engagement which do not obtain outside of the recent, the random and the orthodox imperial imagination.

For Said, knowledge and history are as impure and interbred as they are overlapping and intertwined. Further, critical theory must necessarily be impure - free from the genealogical and homotextual purity which the will to a system or system of historicism might demand. Said articulates this point as a caution:

... the dangers of method and system are worth noting. Insofar as they become sovereign and as their practitioners lose touch with the resistance and the heterogeneity of civil society, they risk becoming wall-to-wall discourses, blithely predetermining what they discuss, heedlessly converting everything into evidence for the efficacy of the method, carelessly ignoring the circumstances out of which all theory, system and method ultimately derive (Said, 1983, pp.25-26).

According to this kind of Saidian analysis, critical theory ought to transcend filiative disciplinary boundaries and the self-fulfilling ontological and epistemological prophecies which they effect. Critical theory should operate in an impure, eclectic and affiliative way, accepting - throughout all strategic flirtations with multiple little narratives - the *affiliative* contingency of fictionally disparate disciplines.

Said developed the concept of an affiliative method as a judiciously eclectic methodological hybridity throughout his book, *The World, the Text and the Critic* (1983). The themes of interconnection and contingency – the constant presence of a criticism and theory underpinned by an ubiquitous hybridity – points to a concept of mutual inscription and discursive interdependence that Said carried over from *Orientalism* (1978), and carried through to inform his thinking within *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) and *Representations of the Intellectual* (1994).

As we have observed through our development of the concept of nation contorting as a transgression of strong and canonical ontological constructs, Said proposes a “travelling” theoretical methodology: an uprooted disregard for foundations, nations and specialisations. Said paints the spirit of the traveller by suggesting that,

Travellers must suspend the claim of customary routine in order to live in new rhythms and rituals. Most of all, and most unlike the potentate who must guard only one place and defend its frontiers, the traveller crosses over, traverses territory, and abandons fixed positions, all the time (Said, 1991, p.18).

Said hints at the critic’s obligation towards the eclectic and the contradictory, contrapuntal and impure with his juxtaposition of the traveller to the potentate. He implies that the critic or secular intellectual ought to be a traveller amongst

theory. It is in this travelling, crossing over and traversing - the abandonment of the pure, uninflected and non-hybridised moment and place - that the secular intellectual begins to act affiliatively and with a sense of "synthesis overriding the petty fiefdoms within the world of intellectual production" (Said, 1983, p.3).

Said's view is that the traveller in theory who oversteps disciplinary boundaries and steps outside of filiative intellectual purity transcends the "ethics by which the prevailing culture imposes on the individual scholar its canons of how ... scholarship is to be conducted" (Said, 1983, p.9), and therefore transcends the ideological god tokens which inhere in culture as "... canons and standards [which] are invisible to the degree that they are 'natural', 'objective', and 'real'" (Said, 1983, p.9). In this light it is curious that Said demonstrates a personal preference for academic disciplines himself (Ashcroft, 1996, p.15), but our interest is in the utility of the critic's contribution to theory, not the purity of the thesis of the man. Said, after all, is a creature of impurity and paradox, and this is a point to which we will return.

It is a recognition of contingency which most saliently reflects the lack of pure, filiative and historical lines of theory in any other-than-fictitious sense. It is this recognition and concept of contingency which therefore reveals the efficacy of an eclectic and impure affiliation and, in other words, the applicability of an association with disparate and conflicting narratives as pragmatic for-the-now and for-this-purpose truth tokens. In the wake of the collapse of previously strong and ontologically secure modes of discursively formed disciplinary analytical closure, and in the face of a weakened sense of objective foundationalism, it is the apparent contingency of the world which suggests a move towards an affiliative methodology. It is this recognition - this reinforcement - of contingency that brings us to the idea of worldliness.

The concept of worldliness is a defining characteristic of the critical engagements, weak methodology and soft agency which defines the type of travelling epistemology suggested by Said. The following analysis, by Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, articulates and elucidates a connection between a sense of affiliative contingency and the concept of worldliness, with specific reference to Said's methodological principles regarding literary criticism:

Said promotes affiliation as a general critical principle because it frees the critic from a narrow view of texts connected in a filiative relationship to other texts, with very little attention paid to the "world" in which they come into being ... For him, an affiliative reading allows the critic to see the literary work as a phenomenon in the world, located in a network of non-literary, non-canonical and non-traditional affiliations ... The consequence of an "affiliative" critical activity is that most of the political and social world becomes available to the scrutiny of the critic (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 1999, pp.53-54).

It is this freeing from the homotextual constraints of the filiative and fictitious sub-realities and specialisations effected by non-affiliative critical engagements with the text which gives what Said (1994) calls "secular criticism" its worldliness and which illustrates the worldliness of the text. Ashcroft and Ahluwalia bring this relationship of worldliness, criticism and affiliation together well. They say,

Worldliness, for Said, is affiliative and the tendency for the critic to be locked into some limited professional identity must be resisted at all costs because it removes the critic from the fundamental responsibility – to criticise (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 1999, p.44).

The recognition of the impurity of theory, and a self-aware sense of its place or location in the world, allows a space for resistance, or for pragmatic, political and theoretical manoeuvrings, affiliatively and within the affiliative reality opened up to the trans-disciplinary critic. The impurity of theory which is embraced by an acceptance of its affiliation with the world allows one to transcend the quest for filiatively strong theoretical - or non-secular and priestly - purity, and consequently to associate freely with strategically adopted, weakened little-narratives. One is permitted a reflexive, pragmatic, un-filiatively-fettered association with worldly and artefactual discourses, and this permission is a critical prerequisite for the process of resisting dominant, hegemonic and canonical cultural forms. Ashcroft and Ahluwalia speak to the strength of this kind of permission and smallness, or of this kind of worldliness and ontological weakness. They say,

Intellectuals ... are not theoretical machines, but [are] constantly inflected with the complexity of their own being in the world. It is this

worldliness that gives intellectual work its seriousness, which makes it matter' (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 1999, p.56).

In the mould of a postcolonial hybridity - recognising that no-one is and no critic (no intellectual) should be just one thing - the affiliative process of pragmatically allowing marginal discourses into an equal-exchange relationship with hegemonic or expert cultural and theoretical forms is the archetypal transformative, inflective and worldly critical methodology. It softly and weakly transgresses, transcends and resists the limitations of bounded, modern, filiative and priestly expert systems and structures of closure. It is here, in contemplating those closures and a new epistemology informed by postcolonial lessons and affiliative practice, that Barnett's summation brings things together. Barnett says,

... what is most significant about [postcolonial] theory's interventions in the contemporary academy ... [by] addressing colonialism and imperialism as discursive formations is [that] at the same time [it seeks] to address the very foundations of contemporary disciplinarity (Barnett, 1997, p.138).

If contemporary and canonical disciplinarity is a problem, then secular criticism is the solution. As Ashcroft and Ahluwalia suggest in their analysis of Said's work,

For Edward Said the whole institution of specialised intellectual work is exactly what is wrong with the academy, why it speaks increasingly to itself rather than the world of everyday life and ordinary need. Such specialisation he calls theological' in its tendency towards a doctrinaire set of assumptions and a language of specialisation and professionalisation, allied with cultural dogma ... (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 1999, p.4).

The problem, as Said sets it up, is one of the inherent methodological shortcomings of a theological approach to theory. Framed that way, the logical resistance to the dominance and limitations of doctrinaire disciplinarity is the secularisation of the work of the intellectual. Further teasing out the direct relationship between the concepts of affiliation and worldliness, Ashcroft and Ahluwalia pick up on and illuminate Said's advocacy of secular criticism as an antidote to academic theologism and non-secular knowledge systems. Commenting on Said's thinking in regards to negotiating textuality, they put Said's position on the textual construction of knowledge this way:

His consistently advocated preference is for a form of criticism that dispenses with such quasi-theological obscurity, a criticism he calls secular criticism, which contests at every point the confined and limited specialisation of much academic discourse. For him the text is something that maintains a vast web of affiliations with the world ... *all of which go to make up its worldliness* (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 1999, p.4, emphasis added).

Of great significance, and underlying the development of what we have termed ~~a~~ "different post" in Ahluwalia's thinking - or, in other words, underlying a reinvigorated sense of subjectivity in postcolonial theory - Ashcroft and Ahluwalia note the disjuncture which Said's deployment of worldliness forges between his theoretical approach and that of the other posts. They provide us with this useful reminder of that disjuncture which further contextualises the concept of worldliness:

... whilst post-structuralism dominated the Western intellectual scene, Edward Said clung to a determined and unfashionable view of the ways in which the text is located materially in the world. Worldliness is something that emerges from the struggles over his own paradoxical identity, a text that Said never stops writing (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 1999, p.4).

Whilst Said talks about a material locatedness, or a locatedness in the world, it is not the modern, liberal world of Cartesian, dichotomised separations which he is appealing to. Said's thinking does not constitute a pre post-structuralist conservatism. Rather, as the insistence on the themes of hybridity and contingency which weave through his works suggest, Said clings to the idea of a material locatedness in a nexus of *complex* worldly grids – within the precise conditions that obtain at the particular and structural, *contrapuntal* intersection of the global and the specific. But the reinvocation of materialism is important, and it is what anchors Said's affiliative practices in a sense of responsibility and purpose which Vattimo's concept of equal exchange falls short of articulating.

Said's particular view of the world is a view of what we have referred to previously as the soft and useful interstitial somewhere that is the Left's postcolonial and new critical space. We have characterised that space as existing somewhere ~~between~~ an essentialist objectivism and a transcendental

subjectivism” (Laclau, 1995, p.94), and between a Marxist humanism and a poststructuralist anti-humanism (Gandhi, 1998). Ashcroft and Ahluwalia tease out this ambivalent in-between-ness which inheres within Said’s concept of worldliness. They say,

The key challenge for Said is to negotiate between two attitudes of the text that in different ways misrepresent how texts have a being in the world. On the one hand, the classical realist position sees the text as simply referring to the world ‘out there’ ... On the other hand, a structuralist-inspired position sees the world as having no absolute existence at all but as being entirely constructed by the text ... The text [however] does not exist outside the world, as is the implication in both the realist and structuralist positions, but is a part of the world of which it speaks, and this worldliness is itself present in the text as a part of its information (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 1999, p.39).

Against that background, we can appreciate Said’s own phrasing of this idea of locatedness, and of the concept of an ambivalent, *overriding* and transcendent or “unprofessional” theoretical position. As Said states,

My position is that texts are worldly, to some degree they are events, and, even when they appear to deny it, they are nevertheless a part of the social world, human life, and of course the historical moments in which they are located and interpreted.

Literary theory, whether of the Left or of the Right, has turned its back on these things. This can be considered, I think, the triumph of the ethic of professionalism (Said, 1983, p.4).

However it is framed, and however we connect Said’s concept of worldliness to our new Left sense of agency around a reinvigorated subjectivity, the idea of worldliness always rides in tandem with that of affiliation as a critical and transcendent methodology. Affiliation, as a critical methodology and as a way of being, is predicated on an apprehension of and respect for the nexus of interweaving cultural grids that gives the world and the text their worldliness. The reverse perspective on this is that worldliness, as a way of seeing, is predicated on the apprehension of and respect for a world of interconnecting and contingent relationships which mean that the world is always and already affiliative. As a critical practice, affiliation is the licence to transcend filiative and

canonical closure, predicated on the postcolonial argument for a post-liberal and hybrid understanding of the world. As a way of being, affiliation is a similar transcendence of closure which problematises and critiques expert systems and alienations and the dehumanisation of everyday life, and which enables an ethic of care and a sense of humanity. There is a sense, in Said, that affiliation is a critical or epistemological liberation and a deeper ontological liberation. On an ontological level, affiliation enables an ontological ambiguity centred around a complex sense of being rather than a singular sense of doing. On a critical or epistemological level, affiliation is best summed up by Ashcroft and Ahluwalia as,

... the basis for a new kind of criticism, in which a recognition of the affiliative process within texts may free criticism from its narrow basis in the European canon (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 1999, p.42).

It is because the concept of worldly affiliation enables a sense of ontological ambiguity - of *being* and of complex humans which elude categorisation by professional roles - and a move away from the closure of specialised and professional expert systems, and it is because affiliation constitutes a move away from any "narrow basis" which provides the precondition for alienation, that aspects of Said's concept of affiliation can appear to be problematic. On first analysis, the foregoing definition of affiliation as an ambiguous and complex state sits uneasily with Said's assertion that,

Tönnies' notion of the shift from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft* can easily be reconciled with the idea of filiation replaced by affiliation (Said, 1983, p.20)

This appears to be perhaps too easy a reconciliation. Said has a point in that a shift to *Gesellschaft* broadens the range of interactions and takes interactions outside of the community, but it does so by reinforcing the narrow basis of alienating strong expertise and ontology. Under this analysis, the affiliative state is a state of multiple filiative relationships – the logic of filiation still obtains. It is arguable that a move towards *Gemeinschaft* would constitute a gesture which was more affiliative, more in line with a move towards a less bounded ontology and a more ambiguous sense of being which the undoing of filiation would seem to invite. This is where the concept of affiliation, and indeed the concept of

worldliness, can get a little bit slippery. This is where the critical space –somewhere in-between” needs to be reminded of a little rigour. It is where we need to remind ourselves that a reinvigorated postcolonial subjectivity attends to the specificity of the local and that such a specificity is defined by the particular interplay of multiple particularities. It is here that we remind ourselves of the need to draw on complexity theory to foreground a complex and hybrid humanity which pays attention to transformative interactions rather than reducing to the whole. This is not an acquiescent return to reductive liberalism. It is a move away from reductionism. And it is a distinction between a facile and a methodologically useful reading of affiliation. This is a critical distinction, and the usefulness of the methodology informed by that distinction is a point to which we will return. That methodology, like the category of humanity which avoids simplification, is one which is deeply ecological and sensitive to the particularities of local ‘biodiversity’, rather than one which is universalising and inherently paternalistic.

It is perhaps within an interview with Wicke and Sprinker that Said best teases out some of the nuances of his thinking around worldliness, which further shed light on the distinctions between facile and engaging readings of the concept, articulating his distinct position. Interestingly, to continue with the framework of a shift from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft*, Said lights the way for a reconceptualisation of community – for a new sense of secular and critical community – in a *Gesellschaft* and affiliative moment. For Said, it is a sense of particularity - of *locatedness* – that is the key to this reconceptualisation. Commenting on his politicisation as a Palestinian, it is locatedness and artefactual purpose which Said presents as the key to understanding worldliness. Shedding considerable and important light on his thinking, Said says,

When I talk about worldliness, I don't just mean a kind of cosmopolitanism or intellectual tourism. I'm talking about the kind of omniscient interest which a lot of us have that is anchored in a real struggle and a real social movement. We are interested in a lot of different things. We can't be confined by our identities as professional scholars of, say, English literature in the nineteenth century. Nobody's happy with that, but the alternative isn't to just get interested in more things ... The idea that you can sort of dip in and read *The Nation* and

the *New York Review of Books*, and then you listen to a little Mozart, and then you riffle through a volume of Cage's scores. That's not what we are talking about. What has been very important for me, providing a kind of discipline, is the sense of a community and a movement in progress to which I am committed and in which I am implicated. You take all the attacks that brand you, in my case as a terrorist or a kind of delinquent, as a criminal, etc. You pay a price, in other words. But also it imposes on me some sense of responsibility to a community which is not a specialized group (Said, cited in Wicke and Sprinker, 1992, pp.242-243).

In terms of elucidating an affiliative and worldly methodology in an applied way which again pulls us back from theoretical abstraction, and in a way which connects to the theme of analogies with societal networks and structures and, by extension, models and patterns of civil society, the following comments by Ife on the politics of community development can be taken to augment the foregoing Saidian sense of community, and to give us pause to contextualise the concept of affiliative method as an attention to non-paternalistic, horizontal knowledge systems which stronger, vertical systems of knowledge and expertise *are located within*, but which they are routinely delineated and separated from. Commenting on the particular brand of paternalistic filiative expertise and process which inheres within the bureaucracy as the apparatus of the state, and building on a wealth of empirical experience which suggests that such apparatuses are sub-optimal in effect, Ife reinforces our foregoing assertion that a complex world is no place for the expert. He says,

When central governments try to become involved in community development they tend to do so within traditional bureaucratic frameworks, which involve vertical communication, accountability upwards, the imposition of policies and the encouragement of uniformity. The community development perspective requires horizontal communication [learning from each other, not from imposed expertise], accountability to the community and the encouragement of diversity, and this applies as much to process as it does to knowledge, culture, resources and skills (Ife, 2002, p.216).

Ife's comments on horizontal structures of knowledge connect directly to the call for literary criticism to adopt creolised, border-crossing methodological practices

which Quintana presents in her suggestion that an affiliative creolisation of critical or theoretical practice invites political purpose. Quintana's invocation of a creolised critical methodology is resonant of a Saidian approach to affiliative criticism and – by way of reinforcing the point – it is Quintana's appeal to material political connections which *anchors* her methodology safely away from the facile fate of becoming what Said calls, “completely adrift in self indulgent subjectivity” (Said, 1994, p.72). It is this anchor that gives affiliative critical theory its discipline, its responsibility, its community and its worldliness. Quintana deploys a model of creolisation as an articulation of the anchored affiliative method in the following terms:

By crossing cultural borders, comparing and interfacing emergent literary practices within current theories of cultural and feminist studies, critics can develop a creolized approach that will compliment the literary endeavours they discuss and help to cultivate new alliances and sensitivity among the disenfranchised. Reading literature in this way enables critics to connect political movements, avoiding reactionary compartmentalizing aesthetic practices that merely serve to suppress the political lines of affiliation between writers of colour, reducing them instead to essentialized, one-dimensional cultural subjectivities (Quintana, 1999, p.364).

By way of bringing things around and remembering where we started with Said and investigations of orientalism, identity and the processes of othering which inhere within the construction of strong ontology, Said reminds us, with a nod to his poststructural affiliations, of the way in which these processes underpin the logic of separation which demarcates and differentiates one filial, disciplinary or horizontal strand from another. Setting up his case for worldliness and worldly criticism in *The World, the Text, and the Critic*, Said says,

Even if we wish to contest Foucault's findings about the exclusions by European culture of what it constituted as insane or irrational ... we cannot fail to be convinced that the dialectic of self-fortification and self-confirmation by which culture achieves its hegemony over society and the state is based on a constantly practiced differentiation of itself from what it believes to be not itself. And this differentiation is frequently performed by setting the valorized culture over the Other (Said, 1983, p.12).

In this context, worldliness or worldly criticism, and affiliation, are simply the methodologies of refusing the loveless apartheid which represents a separation between the mutually constitutive self and other, and which is predicated on and which supports sub-optimal, binary and filial structures and *processes* of hierarchy. Further, in this context, the relationship between the modern, imperial binary and structures of filiation is clear, and this clarity is demonstrative of filiation's relationship to power. This relationship gives the worldly affiliation of the secular intellectual its utility as a transcendental resistance methodology. And in discussing transcendental resistance methodology, it is fitting to remind ourselves of Said's use of the idea of hegemony. Picking phrases like "cultivate new alliances" and "connect political movements" out of the writings of a Saidian writer like Quintana draws us into the language of the cultural battle for hearts and minds which defines a Gramscian war of position. In such a war – such a worldly and affiliative war – the cultural agent represented by the secular intellectual is one that is closely entwined with that fluid, networking, subversive creature that Gramsci called the organic intellectual. It is this type of model of an organic intellectual - a critic familiar to Gramsci's imagination, but methodologically inflected in a secular, worldly and Saidian way, such that they constitute a contrapuntal *rather than simply oppositional or counter-hegemonic* and expertise-reinscribing agent - that we can employ to effect a transcendental resistance. To play a counterpoint, after all, does not mean to play backwards. Of course, a war of position is a war of movement of a type: it is a war of the movement of ideas within the affiliative network as a "field of operation of hegemonic control" (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 1999, p.44). On such a war - by way of a comment on the Saidian notion of travel beyond the fiefdom - Said can have the final, if understated, word:

Cultural and intellectual life are usually nourished and often sustained by [the] circulation of ideas, and whether it takes the form of acknowledged or unconscious influence, creative borrowing, or wholesale appropriation, *the movement of ideas* and theories from one place to another is both a fact of life and a usefully enabling condition of intellectual activity (Said, 1983, p.226, emphasis added).

5.2/ Exile.

Said proposes that a deliberated, impure and possibly contradictory critical position better suits the role of the affiliative and worldly secular intellectual than a fictitiously strong sense of, and adherence to, canonical truths, as per the purity of filiative disciplinarity, expertise and solidarity (Said, 1983, p.28). It is with the eschewing of traditional belonging - with this advocacy of an intellectual homelessness - that we run into the notion of exile. For Said, the secular intellectual's position is an exilic one, located in the margins and between positions, but never fully entering the space of a solidarity, tradition and autoreferential purity and belonging centred around shared truth and unassailable bonds. For Said, there are shortcomings to the phenomenon of insular and uncritical belonging which define discipline and specialisation, just as there are insufficiencies in the separated, demarcated insularity of expertise for Mitchell (2002). The exile which Said speaks of is an exile from the bounded and priestly limitations inherent in the models of strong, homotextual expertise which Mitchell critiques. Bringing the themes of secularity, exile and worldliness together as central themes of Said's work, Ashcroft and Ahluwalia note,

The issues which stand out in Said's writing ... are; his concept of "secular criticism", by which he means a criticism freed from the almost priestly restrictions of intellectual specialization; ... a need for the intellectual's actual or metaphorical exile from "home", and his passionate view of the need for intellectual work to recover its connections with the political realities of the society in which it occurs, to recognize its "worldliness" (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 1999, p.40).

The homotextual insufficiencies and solidarity which Said refers to are those of nation, nationality and nationalism. They are those of strong identity and belonging. The exile which Said refers to is, often enough, literal in its reference to national belonging. It is literal in his own case, and it is literal - at least in the sense of manifesting itself as a permanent uprootedness - in the case of Ahluwalia's Algerian disruption, or the postcolonial unsettling which he suggests underpins poststructural theoretical possibilities. Nonetheless, Said's concept of exile - as he deploys it throughout his work in *Representations of the Intellectual*

(1994) - functions equally well as a metaphorical and methodological position. As Said suggests,

Even intellectuals who are lifelong members of society can, in a manner of speaking, be divided into insiders and outsiders: those on the one hand who belong fully to the society as it is, who flourish in it without an overwhelming sense of dissonance or dissent, those who can be called yea-sayers; and on the other hand, the nay-sayers, the individuals at odds with their society and therefore outsiders and exiles so far as privileges, power and honors are concerned ... Exile for the intellectual in this metaphysical sense is restlessness, movement, constantly being unsettled, and unsettling others. You cannot go back to some earlier and perhaps more stable condition of being at home; and, alas, you can never fully arrive, be at one with your new home or situation (Said, 1994, p.39).

Said's comments are resonant of the postcolonial experience (the experience of the postcolonial subject) which we canvassed previously – of the impossibility of arrival at a point of discreet and authentic belonging, and of how this possibility is effected by the nation-contortionist as a disruptive, uprooted and uprooting traveller. It is this impossibility of arriving home – of being comfortably and happily ensconced – that leads Said to suggest that the secular critic (or nation-contortionist) is compelled to exist in a state where “the intellectual as exile tends to be happy with the idea of unhappiness” (Said, 1994, p.39).

Said develops a synonym for nationalism as a model of autoreferential solidarity unbecoming the contrapuntal and secular intellectual. For Said, that synonym - which reverberates with an air of critical and theoretical expertise, closure and the insufficiencies of beholden happiness - is professionalism. Said is sceptical of comfortably housed and homeward-bound professionals as a manifestation of unworldly and detached –specialized experts addressing other specialized experts in a *lingua franca* largely unintelligible to unspecialized people” (Said, 1994, p.7). Here, Said characterises professionalism – that separated and corralled realm of human activity which speaks to and of itself in a language of its own homotextual making – as a significant threat to critical or secular intellectual activity and consequently, it could be added, to the projects of resistance and effecting a Left

political direction which such activities underpin. Describing professionalism in unworldly and compliant, limited terms, Said says,

The particular threat of the intellectual today, whether in the West or the non-Western world, is not the academy, nor the suburbs, nor the appalling commercialism of journalism and publishing houses, but rather an attitude that I will call professionalism. By professionalism I mean thinking of your work as an intellectual as something you do for a living, between the hours of nine and five with one eye on the clock, and another cocked at what is considered to be proper, professional behaviour – not rocking the boat, *not straying outside the accepted paradigms or limits*, making yourself marketable and above all presentable, hence *uncontroversial and unpolitical and 'objective'* (Said, 1994, p.55, emphasis added).

This idea of objectivity is crucial. It brings up the issue of standpoint, and the fact that to stand and to stay at home gives the observer a particular and singular view, whereas to be on the outside looking in, especially having arrived on the margin from elsewhere, puts things in quite another perspective. Said picks up on this point, articulating an opportunity or an efficacy within an exilic standpoint – within an unprofessional exilic methodology – in terms of an apprehension of contingency. In other words, Said speaks of a worldly view from a worldly critical position, which realises the possibilities inherent within worldliness in terms of overcoming and overriding the apparent modern naturalness and objective truth of limited and insufficient assumptions of fixity. He suggests,

[An] advantage to what in effect is the exile standpoint for an intellectual is that you tend to see things not simply as they are, but as they have come to be that way. Look at situations as contingent, not as inevitable, look at them as the result of a series of historical choices made by men and women, as facts of society made by human beings, and not as natural or god-given, therefore unchangeable, permanent, irreversible (Said, 1994, p.45).

In this light, the –exile standpoint” which enables a deconstruction of modern notions of natural order, discreet categories, fixity and objectivity, and which allows a view of the world as a series of intersecting subjective –choices” - which Said would suggest gives the viewed world its worldliness - is theoretically and

historically powerful. The standpoint of exile is the postcolonial dis-ease and position which provides the precondition for Ahluwalia's unsettling Algerian disruption – the disruption that Ahluwalia (2000 and 2005) casts as the catalyst behind post-theorising's problematisation of the modern and objective. This disruption, and this peripatetic, exilic perspective and position within a marginal, fluid and critical location is, for Said, the lot of the organic, contrapuntal and secular intellectual. It is here – persistently knocking but refusing to come in – that the secular intellectual refuses expertise and professionalism, and refuses to let the door comfortably close to partition off the expert and the professional. It is in keeping the door ajar that the secular intellectual allows the Force to organically permeate and unsettle and transform the field of operation of hegemonic control. It is this kind of highly unprofessional sharing of the love that is the work of the Left's undead. It is the work of the contortionist. And it is the work of a soft, complex, artefactual and affiliative kind of agent: it is the work of the amateur.

5.3/ Amateurism.

If the problem which Mitchell frames as expertise (Mitchell, 2002) can be framed by Said as a kind of priestly or even managerialistic professionalism, and if the critique of professionalism as a phenomenon which is emblematic of modern systems of inadequacy, insufficiency and inequity holds water – which our analysis suggests that it does – then this flags the possibility that the corrective or the solution to the problem (its antidote) is its antithesis. And the solution is amateurism. The amateur needs to be understood as inhabiting a secular and organic intellectual and critical framework, and this framework itself needs to be located in an exilic and interstitial space. The location and practices of the amateur need to be understood in worldly and affiliative ways, and as contrapuntal and peripatetic in nature. Navigating the fluid zone of contingency and structural connections, the amateur is well positioned to write back *locatedly* as the new Left artefact and agent.

In coining the concept of amateurism as a critical practice, Said frames it in the following terms. Amateurism, he says, is,

... the desire to be moved not by profit or reward but by love for and unquenchable interest in the larger picture, in making connections across

lines and barriers, in refusing to be tied down to a specialty, in caring for ideas and values (Said, 1994, p.57).

Amateurism, as Said frames it, is *agape*: it is the interconnection of love – it is the practice of interconnecting born of love. Interconnecting, as a practice, is an affiliative disregard for the strong boundaries which enclose and define areas of specialisation and expertise, and which confuse, inveigle and obfuscate the “interest in the larger picture” by making the practice of the husbandry of knowledge into an exclusive, closed and private regime of apartheid wherein entry requirements such as a proficiency in a specialist *lingua franca* make the discursive, cloistered institutions of specialised knowledge into members only areas.

Elaborating on a definition of amateurism, Said continues his focus on a derision of specialisation. He frames amateurism as,

... an activity that is fuelled by care and affection rather than by profit, and selfish, narrow specialization (Said, 1994, p.61).

We have canvassed the concept of professional boundaries in terms of being the fortifying technologies of specialised communities of strong identity, which are underpinned and delineated by processes of certification as much as they are by cultural keys and entry tests such as the songlines of language. Said remarks on the phenomenon of certification as a professional boundary technology. He says,

If specialization is a kind of general instrumental pressure present in all systems of education everywhere, expertise and the cult of the certified expert are more particular pressures in the postwar world. To be an expert you have to be certified by the proper authorities; they instruct you in speaking the right language, citing the right authorities, holding down the right territory (Said, 1994, p.58).

The point here is that professionalism is an autoreferential deference to authority. It is a deference to a nationalistic and imposed cultural code of conduct within a limited and predetermined field or jurisdiction of possibilities. It is precisely this vertical accountability, this imposed and unnatural limitation, and this nationalistic deference to power and territorial apartheid that amateurism seeks to counter. The relationship of intellectual or critical production to power - the relationship of knowledge to power and of power to the production, distribution

and availability of knowledge - is the key issue here, and Said confronts this issue through juxtaposing the professional to the amateur by way of a question which we can take as being rhetorical:

How does the individual address authority: as a professional supplicant, or as an unrewarded, amateurish conscience (Said, 1994, p.62)?

This is the question which is at the core of the heart of the kernel of things. The way in which Said frames the practice of the secular intellectual and a rationale for secular criticism, and so the way that Said frames a methodology of amateurism, and how such a framework and field of concepts relate to and are embedded within the broader corpus and thrust of his work, is by an appeal to a simple injunction. It is an injunction which is rich with and resonant of a vigorous and artefactual agency and a reclaimed, soft, purposeful and undead subjectivity. As one of the chapter headings of *Representations of the Intellectual* (1994) puts it, it is the simple injunction to attend to the business of “speaking the truth to power”.

The formula of amateurism, at its simplest then, revolves around the nature of the relationship between the agent and power. It is about the elevation of an *agape* sense of horizontal speech and accountability over a filial sense of vertical accountability. It is about a contrapuntal and worldly or located affiliation which reconstitutes a kind of particular responsibility and artefactual community born of complex and transformative interactions. It is not, as Said reminds us, about an inane kind of dabbling or banal inproficiency. Any etymological confusion which suggests that the professional has a monopoly on proficiency should be avoided. Proficiency is the business of the amateur, and a proficient attention to horizontal responsibility is an issue, in part, of style. Ashcroft and Ahluwalia have their own take on this. They say,

So, in a sense, amateurism is about clarity and accessibility. It does not mean incompetence or ignorance (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 1999, p.21).

For Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, it is the issue of clarity and accessibility which underpins the success of the melding of diverse proficiencies which constitutes the “polyphonic methodology” (Ahluwalia, 1996, p.72) of Said’s own amateurism. This proficiency without professionalism makes Said hard to tie down, and opens Said to disciplinary criticisms of impurity and theoretical

tension: Said builds on Foucault – to an extent he is Foucauldian, but his position is clearly irreconcilable with French post-structuralism; he is equally indebted to Gramsci, which is arguably irreconcilable with his Foucauldianism, and he is clearly not a neo-Marxist in any real sense. These are simple facts - facts of proficient exile - that are quite at odds with any attempt to contain Said's scholarly work within an academic area or discipline, and which are illustrative of the very real and immediate shortcomings of any such exercise of professional or expert demarcation. Said's amateurism, in this regard, is about judicious and purposeful or located pragmatism. Ashcroft and Ahluwalia capture his methodology with profound simplicity. Referring to Said's engagement with Foucault they say, with a clarity that is almost resonant of a child-like innocence, "he took from Foucault only what he required" (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 1999, p.23). In such simple terms, the utility of such an approach is inarguably compelling. And this approach characterises our use of Said. There is no argument against this scholarly position other than one which admonishes the scholarly child from the culturally socialised position of the adult scholar who has been absorbed into the common sense way of life of the logic, assumptions and structural dynamics of power which inhere within orthodox, traditional and canonical academia as a profession. The socialisation of the adult, in this regard, constitutes little more than the learnt inability to distinguish the wood from the trees and, certainly, if the child denotes a category of being which is innocent of the accumulation of such hegemonies, then the scholarly child is a model of the amateur *par excellence*. Again, leading in from a defence of Said's partial use of Foucault, Ashcroft and Ahluwalia offer a further illustration and reinforcement of the "innocent" amateurism of Said's own work which is demonstrative of the kind of secular intellectual practice which he advocates. Commenting on the impossibility of pigeon-holing Said, Ashcroft and Ahluwalia remark that,

When we look closely at Said's work, we find that it is difficult to connect him to any particular theoretical 'ism', such as 'post-structuralism' or 'post-colonialism', because his own work continually resists such partisanship. His theory is opposed deeply to any kind of dogmatic (or as he calls it, 'theological') party line, but he is concerned to criticise issues as they arise. Thus Said cannot be placed easily in a school or movement and his own theory appears to operate in a way in

which he thinks public intellectuals should locate themselves in contemporary society (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 1999, p.23).

At the heart of the utility and the methodology of amateurism, then, is a principle which we find demonstrated at the centre of Said's own work: a resistance to partisanship and dogma, and the judicious, hybridising and transformative insistence on taking only what is required. Said puts a claim on this position well:

I am inevitably criticized by younger post-colonialists ... for being inconsistent and untheoretical, and I find that I like that – who wants to be consistent (Said, cited in Ashcroft, 1996, p.8)?

A critique of this position - as a general critique as opposed to a specific critique of the particular utility of a piece of amateur work - is nothing more than a tautological reinscription of a modern obsession with purity, and a point that our analysis has laboured is that the messy ecology of the world is generally unamenable to such obsessive compulsions around theoretical cleanliness. Ashcroft and Ahluwalia capture the self-serving and tautological nature of this kind of critique for critique's sake. They say,

... criticisms that insist upon [Said's] inadequate or incomplete use of Foucault are criticisms more interested in Foucault than in Said (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 1999, p.28).

This is an excellent point. Said's work is highly impure, but to suggest that such an impurity constitutes a kind of intellectual incoherence is to miss the point, or to make an entirely irrelevant point about something else. The coherence in Said's work is not in its disciplinary context, but in its worldly locatedness. Drawing on the theme of paradox as a kind of emblematic impurity, Ashcroft and Ahluwalia go on to put this well. Casting identity as a fluid and pragmatic process or strategy, they hit upon a very important point, and that is the fact that the paradox and impurity which underpins amateurism is the paradoxical inevitability of soft, weak ontology. They say,

The coherence of Said's work lies in the very ways in which paradox and contradiction demonstrate his worldliness. For what these things reveal is that identity is a repeatedly articulated political act (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 1999, p.30).

Paradox, after all, is only strange – is only noticeable – from the logic of the modern position and from the perspective of the dogmatic or theological instance on the rectitude of vertical epistemology and ontological strength. Amateurism is, then, the often paradoxical refusal to adhere to the kind of theoretical and professional strengths which provide the structures of specialisation and expertise which, in turn, facilitate the “retreat of intellectual work from the actual society in which it occurs” (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 1999, p.34). Amateurism is a phenomenon and a practice which engages with a breadth of interest, which is not afraid to deploy itself homelessly, nor to pop up at inappropriate moments. It is a practice which is interested in an irreducible world which cannot be contained within narrow bands of specialisation. It is an organic and fluid, paradoxical practice which is untamed by accreditation, certification and the rules of expertise and legitimacy. But most of all, amateurism is a refusal to be vertically accountable to the “inwardly spiralling” (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 1999, p.47) arcane chatter of professional chains of command and power.

The thing about arcane chatter – the thing about the way in which it is tied to power – is the alienating *elitism* of its exclusivity. Within the vertical architecture of expertise is a narrow and elitist refusal of the more democratic impulses of horizontal epistemological networks. As Wynne puts it in his commentary on the expert-lay knowledge divide,

... the potentialities for new forms of political, moral and epistemic order - ones enjoying greater public identification, and reinvigorated democratic grounding - are significantly broadened by introducing the problematisation of ‘expert knowledge’ (Wynne, 1996, p.75).

A little bit of knowledge may be a dangerous thing, but as a critique of the modern, Cartesian framework of knowledge has taught us, there is only ever a little bit of knowledge, and expertise is no assurance to the contrary. Beyond the problems for experts presented by a critique of strong ontology and bounded epistemology, the lack of reassurance that expertise offers in terms of an avoidance of dangerous limitations is amplified in an information age where rates of publication per annum, to suggest just one measure of knowledge production, cast any claim of mastery and expertise as a spurious pretension. A little bit of knowledge may be a dangerous thing, but it is not this elitist obsession with size

that counts. The important thing - the critical issue that links the danger of epistemological limitations to power - is the question of who has the little bit of knowledge. In that sense, vertical structures of epistemological elitism and the strong ontological vessels which contain them, in conjunction with the fact that such ontology is grounded in *professional interests*, lead to an undemocratic obfuscation of truth by power. A democratisation of knowledge and power in this sense can only be achieved via the horizontal liberation that is the work of the amateur: via the death of greatness and grand structures of narrative and knowledge, and via the *agape* death of a traditional liberal celebration of ego which weaves throughout the lauding of the autonomous expert and individual. A democratic amateurism adheres us to a less ideologically strong love of smaller gods and of gods of smaller things. It is this sense of a resistance to power and to orthodox grandeur, interests and edifices – this sense of engagement with a modern conservatism – that gives amateurism its connection to the Left as a critical methodology and political practice. In its insistence on a horizontal democratisation, amateurism is predicated upon a persistent foregrounding and project management of contingency, and an apprehension of and engagement with contingency is an attention to connectivity, structure and collectivity – it is an attention to the structural dimensions of power, and such an attention is the core business of the Left. It is what Said would frame as a secular and affiliative responsibility to community.

Amateurism is a direction and a call to agency for the Left. Whilst a methodologically rigorous model of amateur affiliation avoids universalism and reduction to the whole, it does support - indeed it demands - the abovementioned attention to collectivity which is born of an attention to the connection between things. This kind of cultural analysis and postcolonial reconstitution of subjectivity will always involve a measure of essentialism, but of a type which is located, applied and strategic, rather than gratuitous and universalising. As Bahri says of this necessity and inevitability,

... a certain strategic essentialism, a “generalizing” of the self to engage a question of some importance while knowing that “one is not just one thing” is accepted by most postcolonial critics as ... necessary (Bahri, 1995, p.68).

It is just that, from time to time, certain facets, dimensions and aspects of the self are of greater strategic importance and political urgency and utility than others. Politically, it is useful to occasionally take only what is required, to reapply Ashcroft and Ahluwalia's comments on Said's use of Foucault.

The notion of strategic essentialism, of engaging with politics in a way that is strategically essentialising, provides a perfect example of the hows, whys and wherefores of the process of amateuristically engaging in a strategic and affiliative way with pragmatically selected weak narratives. In this light, and by way of labouring and underscoring something of our main themes of specificity and locatedness, it ought to be highlighted that, as Varadharajan puts it,

... strategic essentialism ... specifies the politics of location and functions precisely as a strategy rather than a theory (Varadharajan, 1995, p.50).

As a strategy of resistance, strategic essentialism escapes the closure and strong ontology of the purity of filiative theory. It illustrates an ambivalent and ambiguous relationship with the notion of essence which exemplifies the strategic impurity inherent in postcolonial theory and an amateur methodology.

As a significant advocate of strategic essentialism, Spivak is a great and archetypal amateur in her own right. Her work, in a move against "the direction of a unification church" (Spivak, cited in Grosz, 1990, p.15), eclectically and contrapuntally melds together the discourses of feminism, Marxism and deconstruction, notwithstanding the criticism which this invites. Eagleton is amongst those who are critical of this kind of impurity, casting Spivak's work in terms of a "gaudy, all-licensed supermarket of the mind" (Eagleton, 1999 p.x). But such critiques are more concerned with licensing and credentialisation than they are with Spivak. They are precisely the critiques which have been levelled against Said's amateurism. Casting her own light and logic on her strategic and amateuristic methodology and on her use and defence of strategic essentialism, Spivak reveals her sense of pragmatism. She says,

You pick up the universal that will give you the power to fight against the other side and what you are throwing away by doing that is your theoretical purity ... I think it is absolutely on target to take a stand against the discourses of essentialism, universalism as it comes to terms with the universal - of classical German philosophy or the universal as

the white upper class male ... etc. But *strategically* we cannot. Even as we talk about *feminist* practice, or privileging practice over theory, we are universalising. Since the moment of essentialising, universalising, saying yes to the onto-phenomenological question, is irreducible, let us at least situate it at the moment; let us become vigilant about our own practice and use it as much as we can rather than make the totally counter-productive gesture of repudiating it (Spivak, cited in Gunew, 1990, p.342).

It is this sense of impure and pragmatic post-repudiation in a return to essentialism which gives strategic essentialism the hallmarks of a weak association and affiliation with narrative - which, in other words, gives strategic essentialism its flavour of *amateuristic Verwindung*, from which a politically affirmative subjectivity and a focus on structure can be reclaimed. Implicitly casting this strategic post-repudiation in terms of a reflexive and *interrogated* return, Ang juxtaposes the concept of a strategic essentialism with the kind of modern essentialising impulses which are predicated upon and which help to shore up strong ontological representations of identity. In her support of a concept of strategic essentialism, she serves well to conclude our considerations of the concept as an amateur practice:

... what I am advancing is not a politics of identity based on uninterrogated assumptions of naturally shared interests (i.e. ontological essentialism), but directed towards the *sharing* of interests, i.e. strategic essentialism (Ang, 1994, p.75).

Tying back together the concepts of the amateur and the organic intellectual, Said characterises a responsibility to a kind of restless affiliation as an opposition to a more traditional model of intellectual endeavour, characterised by the priestly remove of the armchair standard bearers of truth. Drawing on the Gramscian position, Said paints the following picture of the organic intellectual, which serves as a perfect characterisation of the amateur as a kind of strategic, creative, intellectual or political entrepreneur. He says,

... organic intellectuals are actively involved in society, that is, they constantly struggle to change minds and expand markets; unlike teachers and priests, who seem more or less to remain in place, doing the same

kind of work year in year out, organic intellectuals are always on the move, on the make (Said, 1993, p.4).

This really underscores the impure, ad hoc and opportunistic tendencies which constitute the amateur. The amateur is not a creature of ivory towers, abstractions, predictable patterns and irrelevance. The amateur is a creature of strategy, of the trenches and of the world – of subaltern struggles through fearless critique, love (in part, as per Ang’s –sharing”) and advocacy. The amateur is the contortionist that gives history another chance.

5.4/ Overcoming Humanism: The Amateur Writes Back.

Said’s work on exile and secularity gives us access to a set of useful tools in terms of forging an ontological shift which aligns with the worldly and affiliative methodology of amateurism. Such a shift is invaluable in addressing cogent critiques of modern systems of expertise and professionalism as structures and institutions - as sites of belonging - which are implicated in the optimisation of traditional, canonical and conservative-liberal dynamics of power and an orthodox nexus of power and knowledge.

But somewhere in this exilic position, almost unexpectedly and despite Said’s insistence on unhappiness, there is a coming home. Said’s thinking is useful in foregrounding a model of affiliation which ties to the elevation of a complex category of humanity – a category which avoids simplification, universalisation and reduction to the whole, instead giving prominence to the interactions and transformations at the local and particular moment. Said’s concept of worldliness attaches him to those moments and gives him a political agency. That agency is, primarily, a manifestation of a horizontal responsibility to community.

Despite a sense of responsibility to community - or a *sharing* of responsibility - Said is steadfast in his resolve that there is ~~never~~ solidarity before criticism” (Said, 1994, p.24) – that there is never a settling in an insular, traditional place. But perhaps this is too brutal a position, and one which fits uncomfortably with Said’s sense of responsibility. Said does attend to this tension via a distinction between types of groups, characterising the sort of group which he is responsible to as a certain genre which is ~~not~~ a specialized group” (Said, cited in Wicke and Sprinker, 1992, p.243), but this quote is a very brief moment in theory, and this notion of types of groups needs teasing out.

To formulaically eschew nationalism in the name of criticism as a higher good misses the key point that there is an issue of genre – there are different types of nationalism. And there are different types of situation. Focussing on the specifics of Australian identity politics, and indeed Australian politics and policy at the broadest level, Behrendt sums up the concept of different types of nationalism in succinct and accessible terms. She says,

The notion of the nation is in some ways an artificial one. As Benedict Anderson has famously defined them, they are “imagined communities”, that bring together millions of people into a supposedly shared history, identity or fate ...

There are many types of nationalism, the worst being based on ethnic identity and a romanticised, shared ethnic history. We have seen this type of nationalism, in the conflict between the Serbs and the Croats and in Nazi Germany.

However, there are other types of nationalisms that are more hopeful and inclusive. They are *nationalisms built around a shared political creed*. That is a civic nationalism because they imagine a community of equal citizens who share the same rights regardless of race, gender or religion. An Australian republic is an opportunity to refocus on the building of this kind of civic nationalism and it has a special importance at a time when there is increasing fear in the general population that is making it more introverted and less trusting (Behrendt, 2006, emphasis added).

Behrendt articulates – and Said alludes to – a nationalism which constitutes a soft and strategic ontological belonging. This is a nationalism of fluid and paradoxical belonging and identity, and of identity as “a repeatedly articulated political act” (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 1999, p.30). In other words, this is a nationalism – a shared creed – based on what Ang calls the “sharing of interests” (Ang, 1994, p.75) inherent in strategic essentialism.

A politically vigorous continuation of history and a lively, reconstituted subjectivity – the substance which underpins amateurism – is based on a political attention to culture, collectivity and community. It is based upon a strategic attention to a creed and to a type of group and a type of sharing and nationalism. It is a vigour which demands solidarity. Paradoxically, amateurism – for all its secular and exilic impulses – demands comradeship. But - to use Gramsci’s terms,

and to evoke Said's application of Gramsci's schema - this is an organic, not a traditional comradary. It is the organic comrades who are the Left's collective undead. We need to note the utility of a kind of organic solidarity in attending to the following remarks by JanMohamed. As JanMohamed puts it, the danger in eschewing solidarity is irrelevance and political ineffectuality:

... the valorization of heterogeneity and a heterotopic site, of "homelessness", poses severe problems, for it tends to complicate the demands of and desire for identification and solidarity with the group from which the intellectual draws some of her or his power (JanMohamed, 1992, p.118).

The paradoxical simultaneity of demanding and refusing solidarity – the insistence to move with and against the grain in counterpoint – demonstrates the kind of tensions which exist in the contrapuntal moment, which is the reflexive well of strategic amateur criticism and resistance. And this paradox needs to be born constantly in mind, lest secular criticism ironically degenerate into a synonym for a liberal, individualistic denial of collectivity, structure and the very affiliative contingency upon which it is predicated. It is in this sense that the following rhetorical passage by Said ought to be viewed carefully and in limited terms, beyond which there is an ironic danger of reinvigorating the kind of modern, conservative and liberal impulses which underpin Said's paradoxical love of scholarly disciplines and the Western canon. These are Said's questions:

How far should an intellectual go in getting involved? Should one join a party, serve an idea as it is embodied in actual political processes, personalities, jobs, and therefore become a true believer? Or, on the other hand, is there some more discreet - but no less serious and involved - way of joining up without suffering the pain of later betrayal and disillusionment? How far should one's loyalty to a cause take one in being consistently faithful to it? Can one retain independence of mind and, at the same time, not go through the agonies of public recantation and confession (Said, 1994, p.79)?

The amateur's answer to these questions is that it's acceptable to enjoy a kind of civic nationalism and strategic solidarity as a horizontal responsibility to community. It is certainly acceptable to join a political party. Not only is it acceptable to join a political party, but at times it's acceptable within that context

to put solidarity before criticism – to preserve and nurture the strength of the very vehicle which provides the opportunity for an empowered political enunciation in the first instance. This is an act of solidarity over criticism which recognises the important distinction between internal or private and external or public dialogues, and which recognises the strategic possibility of internal (or intra party) criticism and the political imperative of public solidarity. To deny this solidarity and to suggest that one should always speak “the truth” would be a disingenuous and unreflexive recalcitrance of the liberal ego and of the critic as an intractable modern author-figure.

This is the paradox of resistance – that a refusal to implicate oneself in the grubbiness of the common logic and of what one opposes on many levels constitutes nothing more, in the final analysis, than an impotent and apolitical obsession with cleanliness and purity, and a reinscription of modern, liberal dynamics and intersections of knowledge and power. This is an obsession which is entirely at odds with what we have called the “gritty, applied and worldly” project of resistance and the project of the Left which a postcolonial sense of agency reinvigorates. It is an obsessive discomfort which is entirely at odds with the amateur’s happiness with paradox, and it is at odds with a postcolonial resistance methodology and agency centred around transformations, inflections and appropriations. It is at odds, in other words, with the kind of writing back – the picking up of the master’s tools – which Ashcroft proposes and which constitutes the type of amateur proficiency that, as we have cast it, “permeates, subverts and contests hegemony from within”. This grubby and gritty permeation is paradoxical, post-liberal amateurism at its best. This is how the amateur comes in from the cold and out of exile. This is how the amateur finds a voice and a *relevance*. This is where the concepts of relevance, resistance and worldliness intersect. *This is how the amateur writes back.*

To set up solidarity and criticism as being mutually exclusive in the event of a tension between the two is too simple, too ideological and too dichotomous an oppositional and binary formula. In other words, the metaphor of critical exile is too simplistic if understood as a literal analogy taken from a liberal concept of citizenship and the relationship between the citizen and the nation-state. It is too simplistic a formula if drawn literally and directly from the autonomous humanist

position which privileges the sovereignty of a modern critical or textual authority. The metaphor of critical exile needs to allow a sometimes paradoxical and dirty coming home to a different amateuristic type of subjectivity and nationalistic space. It needs to allow a little bit of love. Anything else could be argued to be a victory of liberalism.

Within Said's adherence to the project of humanism - an adherence which seems to invite a loveless liberal triumph - Ashcroft and Ahluwalia observe a concern and an impulse which resonates with the broader corpus of postcolonial theory. Offering a rationale for that concern and for an involvement with humanism, they say,

Despite their rejection of Cartesian individualism, post-structuralist views of subjectivity and identity by no means open the way for a theory of community. This rejection of enlightenment humanism runs counter to Said's concern for the human world and to his desire to generate a theory of community. It is in communities that individuals gain their most resonant material existence, it is within communities that political life is generated and it is in communities that ways to change societies and power structures are developed (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 1999, p.23)

But there is nothing in our analysis which should be taken from the foregrounding of a responsibility to community and a reinvigorated category of humanity to propose a return to the Cartesian remove. Such a conflation of humanity and humanism would be a bungle of etymological fundamentalism and a simplistic reinscription of and resignation to the triumph of the cold, hard and loveless Enlightenment tradition. It would misapprehend the distinctions between different types of nationalism and it would simply redouble the authority of liberal autonomy. It would misunderstand the organic comradeship and the absolute refusal of Cartesian and ontological strength which is insisted upon by the amateur.

Said's work centres around a worldly engagement with humanity, a commitment to community and an active sense of (structural) agency. As such, Said was always an unfashionable critic of what he called "French theory" (Said, 2003, p.9), which he cast as "shallow" and "facile" (Said, 2003, p.10). It is understandable then that, as a paradoxical act of resistance, Said found himself

camped out with the humanists. It is understandable, from that position, that in his book *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* (2003), Said paints his humanism in the following terms:

I believed then, and still believe, that it is possible to be critical of humanism in the name of humanism and that, schooled in its abuses by the experience of Eurocentrism and empire, one could fashion a different kind of humanism that was cosmopolitan and text-and-language-bound in ways that absorbed the great lessons from the past ... and still remain attuned to the emergent voices and currents of the present, many of them exilic, extraterritorial and unhoused (Said, 2003, p.10)

This thinking is entirely consistent with Said's work on secularity, worldliness and affiliation. It aligns with an acknowledgement and practice of what we have called the "distinction between a facile and a methodologically useful reading of affiliation", the former being a state "adrift in self indulgent subjectivity" (Said, 1994, p.72), and the latter being a located *gesellschaft* pragmatism which invites the contrapuntal interplay of multiple filiative relationships, but where the logic of filiation still residually and paradoxically obtains. But, at the end of his work and at the end of his life, Said seems perhaps a little too keen to get home, and returns deep into humanism and the Enlightenment, finding a footing in a kind of rationalistic fundamentalism. Said puts his position plainly:

For my purposes here, the core of humanism is the secular notion that the historical world is made by men and women, and not by God, and that it can be understood rationally according to the principle formulated by Vico in *New Science*, that we can really know only what we make or, to put it differently, we can know things according to the way they were made. His formula is known as the verum/factum equation, which is to say that as human beings in history we know what we make, or rather, to know is to know how a thing is made, to see it from the point of view of its human maker (Said, 2003, p.11).

Is a return by Said to this sort of traditional humanism a paradoxical full circle, or merely – in effect – a simple resignation to square one? Ultimately, it is probably nothing more than a wonderfully epithetic paradox, from which we should take only what we need. It is perhaps a shame that Said's final, posthumous word was to frame his notion of contrapuntal hybridity in terms of a new and yet traditional

humanism in his final book, *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* (2003), rather than to foreground a concept of amateurism – a concept which makes a much more powerful statement in terms of resistance and in terms of addressing the problem of strong ontology, and a concept which is entirely at odds with the logic of humanistic expert systems, and which still manages not to sacrifice agency. But then again, it is not a shame at all: it allows us to reject some of Said and to use him judiciously and selectively – proficiently and impurely – just as he always engaged with theory. If we reject humanism - if we reject Said's final word and focus on his more penultimate concept of amateurism - then we commit, it seems, a kind of paradoxical homage. And perhaps we've even arrived at much the same point as Said, except for semantics. We're just being more cautious about labels. That seems justified though, for whilst humanism might flag a sense of proficiency and agency, amateurism loses none of this, but manages to foreground the issue of power too. As we squirm through these distinctions and these issues, and as far as homages go, our squirming and theoretical reconciliations attest to one thing – we must concede that as a posthumous footnote to his life's work, Said leaves us with *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* as probably the most complex and challenging text of relevance to the contemporary project of the critical and progressive Left.

Against the kind of grandeur that strives for universality and permanence, one could call Said's humanistic position - in spite of its sometimes apparent traditionalism - a kind of worldly humanism. One could say that a notion of worldly humanism does align comfortably with our concepts of softness, love and humanity. Certainly, Ashcroft and Ahluwalia make that call around worldly humanism. They say,

Said is located in an interesting theoretical interstitial space: his humanism is not that of the Enlightenment, in that he sees identity as constantly in process, but his notion of the human does not homogenise cultural identities and difference, rather it contests the dehumanising and the rebarbative effects of contemporary post-structuralism ... This view of the human subject is shared by much of post-colonial theory: for while subjectivity may be constructed by discourse or ideology, that construction may be resisted, and indeed this capacity for resistance is the most significant location of the 'human' agency of colonised peoples.

Thus, Said's humanism is not enlightenment so much as oppositional, not homogenising so much as liberational, not theoretical so much as 'worldly' (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 1999, p.25).

But a position against grandeur, universality and permanence - a position against the human-as-god - *is no humanism at all*. There is no Cartesian omniscience, no ego, no autonomy, no expertise in such a position. There are, in these worldly positions, only gods of smaller things. There is only a god writ not in the human, but in the contingency of humanity. There is only amateurism.

This is a theoretical terrain traversed by contemporary postcolonial theory. Gilroy, for example, attends to many of these concerns around reinscribing something humanistic with his concept of conviviality (Gilroy, 2004 and 2005). Such work demonstrates a longing within postcolonial theory for a defensible, reinvigorated agency, and there are - of course - a number of takes on this theme. Such is the wealth of the field. But for our purposes, whilst worldly humanism and conviviality are complex and engaging lines of theorising, we remain committed to the simple ideas of softness and love which constitute the life force of the contortionist and of amateurism.

And what of it? What of amateurism? There remains the task of answering that question - of fleshing out the concept which, in our analysis and in Said's, remains largely undeveloped in any applied, *real* or worldly sense. There remains the further issue of considering the real nuts and bolts of exactly how the amateur writes back.

5.5/ Conclusion: Emancipation and Engagement.

We have examined notions of complexity, love, the Force and the Left's undead collective. We have canvassed the impulses and the ways of the contortionist. But it is through applying Said's critical and methodological framework - his concepts of affiliation, worldliness and exile - that we start to sharpen our sense of method and responsibility around these largely postcolonial, somewhat queer, and emancipatory concerns. It is through an engagement with Said that we are best able to articulate our response to the modern phenomena of strong ontology and rational epistemology, and to the institution of expertise. It is also through an uncomfortable and nuanced engagement with Said that we are best able to articulate a resistance to the structures and dynamics of power which are grafted

to and predicated upon those institutions of knowledge, and to set up an applied and worldly elaboration on such practices of resistance. In a word, that resistance, that methodology, that practice which Said exhibited so well in his work, his life and his theory, is amateurism.

All that remains is to extricate the paradoxical activist and agent – that agency – from the abstract realm of theory and to make some worldly sense of it all – to see what the strategic amateur looks like on the ground and in action as a practical artefact which is not restricted to the ivory towers of literary criticism and such scholarly endeavours, but which is about real material issues. All that remains is to see how the amateur writes back.

6/ HERESY AT WORK: AMATEURISM AND BIRTH

6.1/ Remembering and Reminders.

Amongst the most worldly and located of places, where the material determinants of people's lives intersect and the pressures of competing and contested interests are brought to bear, is the realm of policy development, and of the construction of specific policies for specific people and specific purposes, responding to the particular inflections inherent within a nexus of intersecting variables at a particular moment in space, culture, politics and time. Policy is located in the worldly and the particular, but (as a synthesis of Said (1983) and Mitchell (2002) reminds us) that locatedness runs hand in hand with a connectedness and a contingency. It is here, amidst this contingency and in missing the full array and the full potential of variables and interconnections – in missing the wood that is obfuscated by the trees of expertise and in missing the narratives that are obscured by the jurisdictions, boundaries and determinations of legitimacy and illegitimacy which expertise, specialisation and professionalism demarcate, enforce and determine – that policy is the pawn of the narrow interests and limiting concerns of modern author/textual systems and the specialists' hegemony.

It is against the specialists' hegemony and structures of power, dominance and marginalisation inherent in the modern, humanist endeavours of the professional and the expert, that amateurism deploys its particular brand of heresy. This deployment is one of resistance, one of advocacy, one of speaking the truth to power. It is about a horizontal responsibility to a structurally defined community, and that community's structural form is drawn from indicators of disenfranchisement and disadvantage. The amateur's responsibility to those communities constitutes the kind of advocacy that refuses the loveless liberal belief in the autonomous realm of "their business", predicated on an autarkical us/them dichotomy which the postcolonial impulses within amateurism allow us to strategically contort. The responsibility is about a contorting of strong liberal ontology and identity, be it personal or professional. The effect of that strategy is

to carve a space for a non-paternalistic and non-universalising agent, and a horizontal epistemology centred around the category of humanity. We need to remember that it is not an effect which constitutes a licence to represent, but one which instead invites a permission to transcend the closure of strong ontological or national belonging and to elevate a sense of soft belonging to a category of humanity within which a reinvigorated civic nationalism or creed of the contortionist's undead can be deployed.

This activity, this agency and this advocacy - this transcendence - is born of a sense of *agape* which comes from the collapsing of vertical, hierarchical and binary structures, and the folding of such into a horizontal, mutual entwining in which all liberties are bound up together. Within this transcendent *agape* and agency, there is a remembering too – a reminder that speaking by omission or speaking in silence constitutes a real policy statement and a position with real political effects. The love that remembers the effects of this silence, and which reminds us of our position, is the love which we have previously cast as killing the liberal ogre, and it is the Force which constitutes the agency of the Left. That agency and that politics or ethic of care, as deployed by the amateur, is as dialogical as it is horizontal, and it is opposed to the kind of normative monologue which the vertical epistemologies contained within strong ontological vessels allow. As an unsettling contestant within the process of hegemony, and as a democratising impulse within policy and civil society, this new and reinvigorated agency of the Left elevates and prioritises - to labour a couple of key words - a therapeutic and *dialogical* amateurism over expert regimes of paternalistic prescription, proscription and *normative* governance as “treatment”. An amateuristic civic responsibility recognises the politics of collectivity and the connectivity of subjects and circumstances which underpins structure. It is in the attention to structural inequality - in attention to the critical and emancipatory project of the Left in terms of politics, policy and governance at large - that the amateur practices the kind of dialogical therapies which have always been cast as heretical from the privileged position of the paternalistic and hegemonic custodians of knowledge and power.

6.2/ A Brief Introduction to the Sociology of Health.

6.2.1/ An Article of Faith.

Expert systems which are sufficiently well organised to achieve and enunciate legitimacy tend to become established within culture and lifeways as a kind of hegemonic common sense. Those systems can become synonymous with the very objects of their investigation, thus underscoring a kind of absolute authority, and realising a self-fulfilling permission to narrate.

Such is the conflation which collapses health and medicine in the popular and political imagination. Such is the conflation that elevates debates over health insurance to the otherwise empty top shelf of policy debate around health policy. The traditional political spectrum of health debate - of Left versus Right in a clash of political economy - constitutes, at its core, a debate over who should pay for medical attention – the individual or society? Within that framework and spectrum, the central logic - that we attend to health medically - is both given and discursively reinscribed within a Foucauldian moment (see, for example, Foucault, 1973 for elaborations). Foucault is a thinker to whom we shall return, but for now the important point is simply to note that the poles of the health debate have rarely, if ever, run counter to the above, or along the alternative axis of medicine versus some other option.

The hegemony of medical expertise is comfortably established within discourse and debate around health and health policy. Nonetheless, despite the rigidity of orthodox parameters of debate, there have always been heretical voices of dissent around the periphery of medicine's ontological security. Those voices breach medicine's integrity bit by bit and question the sanctity of technologies of certification, regulation and licensing which codify and enshrine orthodox cultural dominance and legitimise the silencing of dissent. Amongst these heretical protests, a social model of health or, broadly, a sociological approach to health - as a critique of traditional expert approaches to health and illness which sits in juxtaposition to the medical model or approach - tells us that there are problems with closed jurisdictions and expertise. There are problems to which vertical epistemologies are blind, and problems - not to mention solutions - which are obscured by aggressively strong ontological structures.

A sociological approach to health tells us that the shortcomings, assumptions and privilege of strong expert systems constitute, and are predicated on, ideological beliefs *as an article of faith*. As the amateur would always agree, a sociological approach to health tells us that faith in experts is always misplaced. That is by no means to suggest that great knowledge and proficiency are not invaluable in their utility, but it is to suggest that there are problems with technologies of conflation which manufacture omniscience. An investigation of the sociology of health suggests that the dominant ideology which underpins medicine as an approach to health, and which is reinscribed by that expert system, is the kind of liberalism which is largely ignorant of the issues of structure to which the Left attends. This investigation is best illustrated in the trope of population health as a critique of traditional approaches to health, which serves as an example of the methodologies of a sociological approach to wellness. As a part of and precursor to the broader realm of health sociology, and as the foundation to a concept of population health, the practice and thinking around social medicine constituted the first transgressive baby steps towards assailing the dominance of traditional medicine. Nobody is better positioned to guide us through that transgression than Turner, whose work is pre-eminent and seminal within health sociology. Turner's comments on social medicine can be read as bringing worldliness in: Turner juxtaposes an apprehension of worldly and contingent interconnections inherent in social medicine to the tradition of modern, specialised and liberal expertise which is the hallmark of an orthodox biomedical approach to health. Commenting on the phenomenon of specialisation as much as on the phenomenon of biomedicine and the critical movement of social medicine, Turner frames an introduction to the transgressive arguments central to the topic of health sociology well. He says,

... there is a tension between scientific and social medicine, because the former developed on the basis of a privatised relationship between doctor and patient to the exclusion of other professional intervention, and was based upon a monocausal view of disease grounded in the germ theory as the foundation of a medical model. By contrast, social medicine implied the development of an interdisciplinary approach to public illness based upon state intervention in the management and regulation of the environment rather than the medical management of the patient ... Scientific medicine also involves an increasing specialisation of knowledge and a division of labour often organised around

separate organs of the body rather than around an understanding of the whole person. There was also further sub-discipline specialization, for example molecular biology from biology ... The changing character of disease and the growth of the dependant population require a change in the medical curriculum ... because the scientific medical curriculum, with its emphasis on acute illness and heroic medicine, can no longer provide appropriate medical solutions to the changing character of mortality and morbidity (Turner, 1992, pp.132-134).

Social medicine and health sociology offer critiques of the biomedical tradition and an injunction to do business in new, innovative ways in order to maximise clinical health outcomes and general wellbeing. Turner's comment around "appropriate solutions" flags a central and empirically based tenet (to use the master's tools) of health sociology – that medicine is sub-optimal and unsubstantive in measurable outcomes, relative to competing approaches, in terms of managing the fund of human wellness (Turner, 1992). We will return to an example of this mismanagement, but for the present, Turner's comments provide a fascinating springboard in that they highlight the issue of "public illness" which forges an ideological departure from the liberalistic tendencies of medicine, towards a model of collective and structural health. They highlight, in other words, medicine's extrication of the individual – medicine's separation of the individual – from society, but not only that: Turner also highlights medical expertise's tendency towards a further de-humanising narrowing of the focus of specialisation. Following the loveless removal of the individual from society - a removal which is sub-optimising in outcomes and effect - the bereft subject is further stripped of their humanity via the modern processes of separation and expert specialisation. It is these specialisations and removals - this Cartesian remove - which Turner juxtaposes to "appropriate solutions" to the issues of health and wellness. It is this remove from the worldly situation that implicates medicine in the conservative and liberal projects of modernity and the Right, and it is this remove that a sociological approach to health is well positioned to critique.

6.2.2/ Critiquing the Remove.

When we look at health in terms of society and populations, it's the idea of structural connectivity which is foregrounded – the quintessentially Left-leaning idea that we're not just free floating individuals or biological entities, but that

we're caught in social structures which shape and contribute to the determination of our lives and our health. In other words, a model of and focus on population health - of studying and being responsible to practically, pragmatically and strategically defined populations rather than individuals - highlights the point that we are both social and sociological entities, and that our health and our health care need to be thought about sociologically.

The concept that there are social determinants of health - that there is a social *production* of health - suggests that social situations produce health patterns and that there are social determinants of patterns of morbidity and mortality. The very idea of a patterning of health is central to a population-based study of health, and whilst fields such as epidemiology might be sensitive to such patterns, highlighting the *socio-political* causes of such patterning is a significant step outside of the traditional remit of orthodox biomedicine and the individualism of the orthodox Right. It is an approach which departs from a biomedical focus on the individual body. It suggests that there is a lot about health which is to do with social structure and a person's social situation in the world. It is that structural situation which is the worldliness of the body-as-text, to graft the Saidian critical tool to a study of health.

Purely biomedical understandings of health tend to focus on how health is achieved within or by the individual body, using what Turner refers to as specialised or monocausal explanatory tools (Turner, 1992, pp.132-134). This kind of specialisation, with all of its apartheid and removes, all of its extractions, abstractions and specialisations, constitutes a profession of the body - a strong, expert ontology and a vertical epistemology - which divorces medical practitioners from an apprehension of the worldliness of the body-as-text. These tools of reductionism - these obsessions and compulsions around the econometrics of genetics and mechanical know-how - reach their apex and their grail with the Human Genome Project (see National Human Genome Research Institute, 2007). We have noted previously that these exercises in reductionism constitute a highly problematic epistemic commitment, and one of the problems which is paramount in a commitment to the quest for the grail which scientific and medical reductionism promises is the issue of normativity which haunts the cold, hard scientific fact, taunting it, deriding its claims of neutrality, and reminding us that

the scientific fact is a dubious product of the fact making enterprises of strong ontological pretension. We have noted, too, that following the removal of ~~“homosexuality”~~ from the American Psychiatric Association’s *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, there has long resonated a queer laughter at the absurd stance and claims of the reductive expert. In this light, the reductive search for answers to everything which underpins the logic of the Human Genome Project begs a question about diagnosis: what’s in a name? A homophobe by any other name still smells the same. And the smell of the Human Genome Project is a troubling one. As Hubbard and Wald caution in regards to the screening potential of the Human Genome Project,

Testing prospective parents to see if they are carriers of genetic defects’ leads to the labelling of large groups of people as defective’ ... such tests are usually considered to be altogether helpful because they increase people’s choices, but it would be a mistake to ignore the ideology that almost inevitably accompanies their use ... Any suggestion that society would be better off if certain kinds of people were not born puts us on a slippery slope (Hubbard and Wald, 1997, pp.24-25).

The sociological critiques of biological fundamentalism argue, simply, that reduction of illness to the level of the individual misses much of the story whilst propagating an ideological narrative. In his introduction to the field of health sociology, Germov puts this well. He says,

By ignoring the social context of health and illness and locating primary responsibility for illness within the individual, *there is little acknowledgement of social responsibility* – that is, the need to ensure healthy living and working environments (Germov, 2005, p.10).

From a policy point of view, this kind of unworldly ignorance is laced with implications and - from the point of view of the Left which aligns with a Saidian responsibility to community - it is laced with deficiencies. Similarly, other individualistic and fundamentalist explanations around health, and prescriptions for health maintenance which focus on individual behavioural patterns, link to the general logic of reductionism and reinforce some basic ideological assumptions around free choice and individuality. A critique of that position, which focuses on structure and a more complex textual analysis, is wary of the normative and victim-blaming impulses within such an adherence to ideology. It is wary of the

pretensions of expertise and professionalism which limit and simplify the scope of health practice at the point and the moment of complex, worldly dynamics which demand the complex, structural and contingent project management of wellness. That can only be facilitated by a non-hierarchical amateurism which insists on a commitment to horizontal democratisation and worldly ecology.

There is good reason to argue that health research and health policy should be directed to political, economic and cultural institutions that produce disease, rather than to individuals. There is good reason to argue, in other words, that health has social determinants and that the body-as-text is a worldly entity. Citing one important and emblematic facet of the socio-political dimensions of health, but one which is nonetheless only one amongst many, Turrell *et al.* provide a very basic and definitive statement attesting to the importance of sociological considerations for health. In summarising and synthesising a comprehensive review of research, literature and data pertaining to health inequality in Australia, they conclude that,

... persons variously classified as 'low' SES have higher mortality rate for most major causes of death, their morbidity profile indicates that they experience more ill-health, and their use of health care services suggests that they are less likely to act to prevent disease or detect it at an asymptomatic stage (Turrell *et al.*, 1999, p.33).

Turrell's assessment mirrors the thrust of the literature in population-based and sociological approaches to health, all of which make a statement of claims which are underpinned by a formidable pool of empirical research such as that provided by *A Social Health Atlas of Australia* (PHIDU, 1999), which constitutes an exhaustive compilation of Australian Commonwealth, State and Territory government information and data relating to social health. Reinforcing Turrell's comments, the introductory paragraph to the Executive Summary of the atlas captures the essence of its data and analysis well. It reads,

The information in this atlas adds to a convincing body of evidence built up over a number of years in Australia on the striking disparities in health that exist between *groups in the population*. People of low socioeconomic status (those who are relatively socially or economically deprived) experience worse health than those of higher socioeconomic status for almost every major cause of mortality and morbidity. The

challenge for policy makers, health practitioners and governments is to find ways to address these health inequities (Glover *et al.*, 1999, p.v, emphasis added).

In other words, similar socio-structural circumstances lead to similar patterns of disease and ill health. What Turrell *et al.* and the health atlas attest to is the point that there are demonstrable and evidence-based links between wellbeing as measured by social indicators, and wellness in terms of measurements of morbidity and mortality. Health is related to issues of equality and inequality such as, but by no means limited to, the kinds of inequalities demonstrated by socioeconomic disparity. It is interwoven with social structure to the extent that social inequality results in unequal health status. Health is a text - a narrative of wellbeing - which is written in worldly circumstances. Health – or social wellbeing more generally, or wellbeing and life opportunities even more generally – is overwhelmingly determined by structure and inequality. In other words, the suggestion is that (against an ideological thesis of free-floating individuality and autonomous authorship) we exist within and are contingently related to collective, worldly social structures, and that we need to be read as such. The important thing is that these structures are unequal in terms of producing stratified and stratifying health outcomes.

It is the intersecting, overlapping, competing and intertwining of the many socially stratifying variables which produces a multidimensional Venn diagram of collectivity and a dynamic interplay of circumstances which may enhance outcomes for certain groups whilst restricting positive outcomes for others. As we have previously noted in regards to a Venn description of culture, an artefactual and soft postcolonial agency is drawn from the ability of such to reconstitute subjectivity by softly and artefactually attending to the facts, facets and dynamic intersections and particularities of constitutive socio-cultural sub-sets. The basic message is that a sociological or population-based approach to health notices the groupings and sub-sets which a Venn diagram illustrates. It notices these structural inequalities. It notices that people occupy positions in health stories which are worldly and located: they are unique, yet connected to the stories of other people and to social circumstances. A sociological or population-based approach to health provides insights which are denied to an individualistic or biomedical approach to health, and these insights show us the fissure, the

contest, between different ideas about health and illness – the modern, liberal medical model and its processes of expertise, and the more worldly sociological model, wedded to an amateuristic methodology.

Current progressive movements in health policy demonstrate an acknowledgement that health needs to be understood in methodologically amateuristic, sociological and population-based terms. Such a belief underpins, is employed by, and is well illustrated in current South Australian health policy, which adopts an approach to health care which is not unique in the West. As the lead health policy document, South Australia's *Generational Health Review* (Government of South Australia, 2003) is designed to direct health policy in South Australia, and it strongly articulates a population health approach to health care. This is clearly a change from orthodox models of health care, which have tended to focus on acute care of individuals, rather than on the preventative care of - and responsibility to - communities. The approach recognises that health needs to be conceptualised in terms of health inequalities, and that such inequalities and their outcomes are structural issues. The *Generational Health Review* clearly sets out this approach and focus in its introduction, stating:

GHR identified a number of key themes critical to delivering the required health reform agenda. These themes formed the basis for the structure of this report:

- promoting a population health approach
- promoting a primary health care focused system
- accountability and transparency
- workforce development
- health inequalities and health as a human right
- implementation and change management

(Government of South Australia, 2003, p.xxv).

The Executive Summary and List of Recommendations of the *Generational Health Review* reinforces a focus on these themes, and is demonstrative of a kind of amateuristic project management. In part, the summary states:

From a service provider perspective, the following changes will be evident:

Current	Future
Service focus	Consumer focus
Resources aligned with institutions	Resources aligned with population need
Historic budgets	Budgets aligned to population needs
Institutional silos	Networked services
Professional silos	Multidisciplinary teams
Custom and practice	Evidence based practice
Intermittent planning	Planning cycles
Multiple and independent support systems	Shared support systems

Service providers would also see a balance between:

Statewide conformity and consistency	Local innovation
Economies of scale	Local responsiveness
Budget certainty	Budget flexibility
Statewide planning	Local planning
Acute hospital based care	Acute community based care
Competition	Cooperation

(Government of South Australia, 2003, p.xii).

As well as being predicated on a population-based view of structural contingency, there is a recommendation towards breaking open isolated and removed “professional silos”, which can be read as a direct acknowledgment of the capacity of closure and strong ontology to produce sub-optimal outcomes. The softening shift in identity away from a profession and towards membership in a “team” is a highly affiliative ontological shift. Further, the move away from “custom and practice” constitutes an epistemological shift of considerable significance, albeit one that still reinscribes a potentially unreflexive category of “evidence”. There is also a strong focus on locality and community, which are very worldly and amateuristic concerns.

Whilst the *Generational Health Review* might not be a panacea for the general malaise of expertise and modernity, it is a sophisticated document, and one which

illustrates - by reference to the Executive Summary by way of example - the intersections between facets (or outcomes) of contemporary project management thinking and postcolonial theory. This might well not attest to the overall enlightened and reflexive properties of the field of project management (that is not the project here), but it can be taken as speaking to the very practical utility of a worldly postcolonial amateurism and theory from a policy perspective.

In terms of forging a new and innovative utility, and by allowing us to move away from thinking about the acute care of individuals, the *Generational Health Review* provides an ongoing opportunity to shift the terms of debate around health away from the traditional debate about health insurance, and away from the expert conflation of health and medicine. The new terms allow a focus on health *per se*, recognising that biomedicine is not the whole story, and that narratives born of vertical epistemology are limited in utility and effect. These new terms of reference allow scope to investigate new health policies and practices – new policy areas and new, heretical policy narratives. The terms of reference produce the conditions for amateurism and demand that the Left, through an application of a methodology of amateurism, attends to the business of its traditional remit of addressing structural inequality and advocating for equality for disenfranchised collectives. This kind of amateuristic advocacy entails a movement away from the paternalism of expertise, and towards a liberated and empowered, horizontal epistemology.

The heretical critique of expert hegemony and the amateuristic impulses of a sociological approach to health, which examines the socio-cultural production of health, is of great importance when trying to assess determinants of health. A sociological model of health heeds the patterns which develop from these determinants and recognises that illness is more than something which occurs within the individual or the body. A worldly, sociological model of health recognises that health is not just about bugs, bodies and broken bits, not just about anatomy and physiology as fields of expert competency, but about culture, and about society, and about structure too. It recognises that health is complex and worldly. It produces the conditions for amateurism: as we have noted before, the complex world is no place for modern expert narratives, nor for the expert and a professional Cartesian remove. Complexity demands a softness, a

contrapuntality, and an amateurism. It demands an eclectic and transcendent horizontal epistemology.

6.2.3/ The Social Construction of Illness.

We have examined, in brief, the structural or collective dimensions of health and the idea of population health. We have looked at the sociology of health, and at the social *production* of health. Another interesting facet of health sociology is a focus on the *construction* of health and illness. We have already flagged this in part with reference to the ebbs and flows of diagnostic fashion and fortune around sexuality, and the cultural and socially normative dimensions of the medical fact, with particular attention to the categorisation and later decategorisation of homosexuality as a clinical illness. The important thing about the concepts of the social production and construction of health is that they should not be viewed as separate, dichotomised concepts. Rather, the social construction and production of health are woven together intimately and intricately, the health patterns that are produced within and by population groups often and potentially being material manifestations of constructed illness.

As Foucault (1965, 1970, 1972, 1973, 1977, 1978, 1980) has taught us with his thinking on discourse, knowledge and power, discursive power underpins and works within normative institutions of discipline, where those who are discursively constructed and categorised as abnormal and inferior according to the proper order of things are contorted and controlled to fit normality. The obvious example of that contorting, controlling or disciplining is with the insane. This kind of Foucauldian observation reinforces and underpins a critical view of medicine as a normative and powerful institution, the power and normativity of which is born of the logic of the specialist's apartheid and medical remove which makes possible diagnostic statements to the effect of "this is what you've got" rather than "this is who you are". That kind of logic flags an inevitability of proceeding via normative and authoritative treatment rather than through a dialogically amateuristic therapeutic approach which is respectful of difference. The issue of normativity is, in this light, the crucible in which the difference between treatment and therapy - the difference between expertise and amateurism, or between the technologies of the containment of difference and the techniques

of managing diversity - is revealed. It is the point from which we can start to problematise our common sense surrounding the idea of treatment.

Roach Anleu's work on the medicalisation of deviance is exemplary in canvassing the kind of intersections between biomedicine and power which feed into the institutional and normative control over the subject, and which link strongly to the conceptual framework which Foucault builds around the idea of biopower (Foucault, 1978). Roach Anleu's work focuses on femininity as deviance and irrationality, and on normative, patriarchal treatments and cures. Roach Anleu describes medicalisation, simply, as "the process whereby non-medical problems or phenomena become defined and treated as medical issues" (Roach Anleu, 2005, p.170). That, in essence, is a succinct definition of the process of the construction of pathology. Roach Anleu elaborates on this definition with some further introductory remarks which ground the concept of medicalisation in her work on deviance, and which help to consolidate the intersection between a political or postcolonial critique of expert systems and power, and a sociological analysis of deviance and social control:

The medicalisation thesis posits that physical conditions do not, by their nature, constitute illness; rather, they require identification and classification, which entail subjective and value-laden considerations – that is, they are socially constructed. Social constructionism counters medicine's claims to be scientific, objective and disinterested ... Rather than disinterestedly detecting symptoms and physiological causes ... medical practice involves interpretation and judgments about what is normal and abnormal – about which circumstances are suitable for medical intervention and which are not. The symptoms do not speak for themselves; their interpretation and categorisation are informed by social values and assumptions about what constitutes health (normal) and illness (deviance) (Roach Anleu, 2005, p.171).

Fleshing out the concept of the medicalisation of deviance as an exercise in power and hegemonic social control, Roach Anleu charts the transfer of power - as held by institutions as the instruments of hegemony - from the church to the authority of medicine, paralleling a corresponding shift of the locus of heresy and deviance - the "other" to normal and rational - from witchcraft to mental illness (Roach Anleu, 2005). This shift of the locus of deviance, as a post-Enlightenment shift of

the locus of faith and authority of knowledge and omniscience, reinforces Durkheim's assertion that "between the logic of religious thought and that of scientific thought there is no abyss" (Durkheim, 1965, p.271). The idea that the Enlightenment constituted a transfer of faith and authority underscores Price's observation that,

Today's healers are as much faith healers as were their predecessors. Only the faith has changed. The new cosmology with which we make sense of the world is no longer inhabited solely by gods and demons; these are challenged by the claims of the new monotheism, the scientific deity, to explain the quirks of human existence (Price, 1984, p.71).

The gendering of deviance and heresy, on either side of the shift of the locus of deviance, and the patriarchal exercising of the power and dominance of the modern and the rational, is something that Roach Anleu demonstrates in her study, cataloguing the gendered imbalances in the diagnosis of mental illness and the medicalisation or pathologisation of gender. This study of patriarchal representation, pathologisation and subjugation of the female other - of the other as weak, ill, deviant, licentious and diametrically opposed to the normal and healthy self - builds directly on a Foucauldian analysis, and is something which augments and aligns with his works on sexuality and the clinic (Foucault, 1978a and 1973). It is also a very postcolonial concern, and Said's work on the representation of the other in colonial discourse, which he presents in *Orientalism* (1978) - to name but one example from the corpus of colonial discourse analysis - mirrors a sense of this pathologising and feminising of the "weaker other". Be it the weaker sex or the weaker race, the representations of deviance and tropes of weakness, illness and licentious behaviour and feeble mindedness are standard. Androcentric and ethnocentric discourses tend to mirror each other in their construction and representation of weak, disabled otherness, and these discursive processes are at the heart of the logic of the technology of social control that Quayson refers to as the trope of "stigmatized underprivilege" (Quayson, 2002, p.228) in his work on disability in postcolonial writing.

The example of the treatment of a medicalised state - of the cure for mental illness, weakness or feeble mindedness - that stands out most starkly in Roach Anleu's work stems from her analysis of the treatment for hysteria. As Roach

Anleu demonstrates, an historically common way of treating women for mental illness, or for their deviation from the male, rational norm, was to make them physically more normal – more like men. Mental illness, or hysteria as it was broadly known, was treated by hysterectomy - de-womanising - which is an enormous exercising of power over the subject. And clearly, this kind of treatment is the product of a particularly gendered, androcentric, expert narrative with some quite stark exclusions and *particular* investments in power. Roach Anleu's final word on that analysis is a reminder that her interest is not in the middle ages: her focus is of contemporary relevance. She says (noting the over-representation of women amongst diagnoses of mental disorders) in regards to the ongoing pathologisation of the feminine other, and in regards to manifestations of the consequences of the material circumstances of otherness,

... the hysterical woman' stereotype remains pervasive, and behaviour that, in the past, may have resulted in a diagnosis of hysteria may today be diagnosed as schizophrenia, as a personality disorder, or as PMS (Roach Anleu, 2005, p.182).

In his work on the classification and representation of otherness in expert mental health discourses, Wearing makes an important observation about the machinations of discourse. He notes the colonising logic - or expansive and imperialistic tendencies - of expert discourses and orthodox systems which have become hegemonically accepted, codified and certified as authoritative and factual. Discussing the operation and epistemology of psychiatry he says,

This medicalised curriculum of psychiatry means that the specialist knowledge of the profession is rarely, if ever, subject to cross professional and public scrutiny. Further, the other health professions in mental health services tend to ally with or use psychiatric discourse to justify their own practice (Wearing, 1994, p.60).

The final stage of expertise, in this light, is akin to the imperialism which Lenin casts as being the last stage of capitalism (Lenin, 1948). This concept of allied deference is not, however, only a marker of total and material dominance. As with postcolonial resistance to imperialism, there is a marker here too of latent sites of discontent. Hegemony has always had holes in it – the totality of its saturation is never realised. It is from these sites and holes that horizontal guerrilla insurgencies into the strongholds of hegemony can start to be deployed,

and such an ongoing deployment - which relates to Roach Anleu's concerns regarding the androcentric representation and medicalisation of deviance, and which constitutes a strategic and structural population based approach to health inequalities - is the women's health movement. Rowland and Klein frame this movement well. They say,

As part of its analysis of the structures of patriarchy, Radical Feminism has argued that medicine is male-controlled, operating to control women socially to the detriment of our health. In the late 1960s the Women's Health Movement gathered momentum, developing since then in international scope with diverse approaches to women's health. It has revised the way women's health has been viewed, stressing self-help and prevention rather than a reliance on high-tech, expensive and dangerous technologies and drugs (Rowland and Klein, 1990, p.285).

Medicine as a patriarchal, normative and powerful institution has had a long, monopolistic and hegemonic history of pathologising differences which only present as clinically dangerous from the point of view of a *particular* cultural or discursive logic and set of values and power relations regarding normality and the natural order of things. Through the processes of discourse, this colonising, homogenising and imperialistic logic, and these relations, become ingrained in our common sense, silencing softer and smaller alternative narratives. The discursive dimensions of such a cultural logic, common sense, order of things and dynamic of power are demonstrative of a genealogy - to stick with Foucault - of vertical epistemology and of technologies of disenfranchisement and exclusion (as well as their corollaries - enfranchisement, belonging and entitlement). Such epistemologies and technologies are the products of pretentious, strong, normative ontologies. This verticality and hegemonic pretension is both the discursive strength and the shaky ontological foundation of expert epistemologies, prescriptions and treatment, and exemplifies the way in which the discursive manufacturing of strong ontology begs incredulity, forging a space and strategic possibility for a contrapuntal and amateuristic attention to more worldly, circumstantial, located and alternative guerrilla explanations, and to softer, intersecting and permeable narratives spoken from the always and already present interstitial sites of contestation which hegemony contains.

As far as the expert production of the hegemonic imagination goes, we can think of the medicalisation or pathologisation of difference as the social construction of illness – where something (some difference) which is not essentially, inherently, transcultural or transhistorically guaranteed to be clinically recognised is labelled as a health problem. Remembering the role of discourse in the construction of hegemony, we ought to note that pathologisation is a product of representations of otherness which are facilitated by the discursive stance or gaze which a Cartesian remove underpins. One of the problems here, in terms of health outcomes, is that any active, intrusive, invasive or in any way effect-producing treatment of any condition – no matter how imagined or constructed – carries the risk of secondary outcomes, direct and indirect consequences, complications, side effects and results. Not to mention the self-fulfilling and disempowering effects of being pathologised in the first instance, and the degree to which the treatment of pathology involves an inevitable hiving off and institutional control of that which is to be treated, resulting in a loss of “autonomy” - as a marker of empowerment - for all or part of the self. This is the ramifying, cascading and uncontrollable mess - the by-product of expert systems which separate and remove their focus and jurisdictions from the worldly whole in a *pretension* of control - which Mitchell’s work on expertise (2002) does so much to demonstrate and bring to the fore, and which radical feminist critiques of patriarchal control seek, in their way, to address. As Said demonstrated in *Orientalism* (1978), representations have material effects and they underpin relationships of power. This is the power of expertise. It is the manifestation of the cultural and ideological privilege of expertise which, as the colonial project demonstrates so ruthlessly, is inclined to be a project of optimising outcomes for the expert which cannot be assumed to align with the interests of the represented parties.

Medicine as a discursive and normative ritual doesn’t increase wellness *per se* in the sense of objective wellness, because absolute and objective wellness is an ideologically inflected and discursively imagined phenomenon. The effect of medicine and the treatment it deploys is merely to increase rates of and conformity to normalcy or subjective wellness, and to attend to the control and containment of difference, deviance and the other. This is where the concept of mis-alignment with the interests of represented parties really applies: this management and attention is at the expense of limiting or avoiding sub-optimal

flow-on outcomes regarding morbidity and mortality, and – mirroring the consequences of expansive capitalism, all imperialistic technologies, and any hegemonic expert system or imagined pretension of expertise – it is at the expense of “other-voice” subjective appraisals of what constitutes the optimisation of outcomes. It is certainly at the expense of experiences of subjectivity other than those imagined through the liberal impulses of the scientific imagination. As Rose suggests in regards to the “psy” professions (Rose, 1998), in a way which can be generally extrapolated here to subsume the logic of broader medical practices of extrication and separation, there is a “culture of the self” (Rose, 1999, p.91) articulated through the discourses of “psy” knowledge and intervention which privileges modern, Cartesian subjectivity. It serves us to note that the mere possibility of the existence of other subjectivities and other appraisals of outcomes demonstrates that the hardness of the hard and scientific fact which underpins the evidence in evidence-based medicine is limited by the professional parameters surrounding what culturally based and discursively framed evidence it looks for. This is not to suggest that medicine is without utility. It is just to suggest that the practices and technologies of medicine ought to be tempered by a reflexive methodology of dialogical contrapuntality, lest those technologies be sub-optimal, partial and subjugating in effect.

Of course - and this gets back to our thoughts on hysteria and the discursive androcentrism of medical expertise, whilst keeping us aligned very closely to the ongoing concerns of movements within women’s health - one common clinically recognised health problem, one common cause of monological appraisal, hospitalisation and attention by doctors, nurses and medicine in Western society is pregnancy. However, whilst pregnancy is definitely an issue related to health and wellbeing, it’s not the case across history, or across other cultures, or even across all Western health systems, that it’s an issue of medicine – of the professionals and colonising institutions of treatment. There is strong clinical evidence to suggest that health outcomes are optimised when pregnancy is not treated this way, but when it’s treated as normal, not deviant, when it’s treated as wellness, not illness, when it’s managed by women as women, not obstetricians as experts, and when it happens at home, not in the clinic. And, to compound this, there is a strong argument to suggest that medical measures of optimal outcomes are not

directly suitable in assessing outcomes around birth. This evidence is something to which we will attend.

But medicine, as we will explore, doesn't agree – it doesn't imagine pregnancy and birth that way, as a normal, female event. Our common sense cultural imaginations struggle to allow us to believe in the inherent normality and equality of women. As such, there is a rigid epistemological block to dialogue and contrapuntality which surrounds expert discourse on pregnancy. As with so much of women's business, pregnancy is pathologised and treated as illness and, culturally, through the processes of discourse and the construction of hegemony, we come to view it that way too. It becomes common sense that if you're pregnant you see a doctor, and if you're in labour you go to a hospital. But it isn't necessarily so, and it isn't necessarily so because, as we've seen, illness is at least as socially and discursively constructed as it is absolute.

Pregnancy is an excellent example of the social construction of illness – of the pathologisation of otherness via the professional representations of the modern Cartesian expert. It is also an example of the powerful and dominant logic which medicine wields in its capacity as a normative institution. And it is an excellent platform from which to view how the amateur writes back.

6.3/ Heresy and Birth: The Amateur Writes Back.

6.3.1/ Blood Lust: Ambivalence, Control and Desire.

Like women's minds, women's bodies have long been the object of male fascination, of patriarchal culture's examination, classification, obsession and pathologisation. Colonial discourse analysis shows us how the other tends to be represented as an object around which fascination is manifested as a simultaneous revulsion and desire – a kind of nostalgic and erotic yearning for nakedness and sensuality, and a coexisting loathing of the wretched and the bestial, which characterises the ambivalence of the self's relationship with its own ontology and identity. This dynamic of desire (see Young, 1995) is well illustrated in the construction and representation of the noble savage in colonial discourse, and in the overall project of exoticising the other which characterises the discourse of orientalism (see Said, 1978).

Whether the relationship - the dynamics of discourse and hegemony - between self and other is exemplified by the ethnocentric relationship between colonised and coloniser, or by androcentric male and female intersections around heterosex, the paradoxical impulses of desire obtain – the paternalistic imperative of control and amendment, and the pure, phallogocentric urge coexist. Pratt's seminal archaeology of colonial discourse, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992), provides excellent resources for exemplifying the trope of desire within colonial discourse. The following passage, to borrow from her analysis and research, is taken from Humboldt's 1810 personal narrative. The people, places and author are almost generic, and intersect around a generic narrative of a kind of fantasy of desire, demonstrative of how the desire for the other as represented in nature and the landscape mirrors the sexual (and cultivating) longing for the fertile and fecund promise of the wild darkness of the other – a sexual longing to multiply, propagate and populate:

... the inhabitant of the banks of Oroonoko will behold with ecstasy, that populous cities enriched by commerce, and fertile fields cultivated by the hands of free men, adorn these very spots, where, at the time of my travels, I found only impenetrable forests, and inundated lands (Humboldt, cited in Pratt, 1992, p.131).

Whether as an object to be avoided or possessed, or both at once or in turn, the other is cast in the discourse of liberal representation, which colonial discourse exemplifies, as an object to be controlled, its movements and habits studied and known, and its intemperate unpredictability brought in line and under restriction, regulation and domination. It is, accordingly, in the perverse and paradoxical interests of the fascinated, colonising, and dominating or controlling self to subject the other to the pathologising, classifying, medicalising and categorising expert institutions and technologies of normative control – of institutionalised captivity.

The medicalisation and pathologisation of women's bodies which produces the conditions for institutionalised captivity and expert control orbits around the same locus of fascination as the historical pathologisation of the female mind – the sexuality of the other as reductively and biomedically located in the reproductive body. And that body, and the processes of the biology of reproduction, are

scrutinised and medicalised in all of their dimensions and at each of their turns. Be it through the specialised medical discourses of psychiatry, gynaecology or obstetrics, or even paediatrics, from menstruation to menopause and from lactation to lunacy and lesbianism, the language, practices and protocols of medicine exhibit a powerful capacity to transform the biologically and developmentally healthy and natural processes of the other into an illness. Complications around reproductive biology can arise and can require medical intervention to optimise health outcomes: there is a utility to medical proficiency. However, the pathologising of natural processes within the Western medical institution presents a problem of expertise overstepping its utility – a problem of sub-optimisation and disenfranchisement born of the expert's remove and self ordained and self proclaimed autoreferential and professional authority to narrate. The result is a discursive manufacturing of a vertical and gratuitous imposition of power by virtue of the free range granted expertise in the absence of any policy or public will which invites discursive checks and narrative balances which are contrapuntal and amateuristic in nature. The silencing and colonising dominance of hegemonic expertise and the cult of professionalism and credentialisation creates the conditions for its omniscient self belief, and omniscience creates the conditions for a kind of control that has nothing to do with objective outcomes, and everything to do with tradition and power.

Outlining the thrust of the conclusions reached in a study regarding the “~~mas~~culinist bias” (Zita, 1988, p.189) in the science of premenstrual syndrome, Zita makes some observations in her work on the “~~dis~~-easing” of the female reproductive cycle which draw attention to the connections and discursive greyness in the nexus of health science, tradition, ideology and power. Aligning with our observations around the pretensions of science, Zita observes, with a relevance which still resonates an alarming two decades after publication,

What I have argued ... is that we need to be at times leery of new PMS research and the assumptions behind its practice. The assumptions carry troublesome ideological content, when the codification of symptoms results in the morbidification of a sex difference which renders all women inherently disadvantaged in a man's world. In addition, reductionist models further complicate this, by ignoring the impact of socio-cognitive variables. What needs to be acknowledged is that our

experience of the body is very likely symbolically mediated by ideologies and socio-cognitive factors that impact on how one interprets bodily states. What I have suggested ... is that lines of influence between ideology and science need to be carefully scrutinized and the social use of science in the subjugation of women put through the lens of feminist criticism (Zita, 1988, pp.205-206).

The menstrual cycle has been medicalised to the point that it has distinct clinical symptoms such as premenstrual syndrome. The idea of symptoms, usually used in reference to manifestations of injury and disease, invokes a sense of illness and the need for medical intervention. The idea of a syndrome further connotes a deviation from a healthy norm and the need for medical attention. For subjects whose consciousness and common sense are linguistically informed in the field of discursive construction, the common conclusion led to by dominant expert narratives of pathologisation is that menstruation, and premenstrual syndrome especially, are medical conditions, diseases or illnesses that require medical care and intervention. This is a common sense which is quite at odds, however with an important counterpoint: many cultures and societies view menstruation as a marker of wellness rather than illness, seeing it as a sign of maturation and fertility (Lorber 1997).

Similarly to menstruation, and in common with the other ages, stages, processes and ebbs and flows of female reproductive and sexual health and being, childbearing is reduced to the examinable and treatable level of pathologised process in the discourse of medical specialisation which surrounds the event. That discourse renders a naturally biological and usually clinically uncomplicated event as a pathological disorder requiring intervention and female passivity (as performed by a "sick role" (Parsons, 1951)) or deference to patriarchal expert authority, played out in the captivity of normative medical control as the institution of ambivalent and fascinated bloodlust.

6.3.2/ Technocracy, Rituals and Obstetrics.

An aspect of the human lifecycle which is as well and natural as any is that of procreation and childbirth. However, similarly to menstruation, childbirth is commonly, medically and discursively constructed as a form of illness. Childbirth is as colonised a terrain by the settler discourses of expertise as any,

and the penetration of that wild and otherly terrain as embodied in women is deeply analogous to the expeditions of adventure which were the substance and product of colonial desire. Whether performed as a bodily, visceral moment of copulation, or as the intrusive specular procedure of medicine, the penetration of the female body is a foray into otherness fuelled by the ambivalent and phallogocentric desire to cultivate, possess and control which we see woven through and underpinning so much colonial discourse (see Pratt, 1992, Young, 1995, Mitchell, 1991). Indeed, whether by penis or by stainless steel probe, the journey up the birth canal is that journey into an otherness - a heart of darkness - which Said's analysis of Conrad has tackled so well. Said's examination of Conrad is central to and emblematic of his work in *Orientalism* (1978), and constitutes a definitive illustration of the trope of phallogocentric colonial desire. The narrative of the journey into the heart of darkness is a narrative of colonialism: it is the narrative of a binarising modernity in the process of shoring up its ontological security too. It is a narrative of the discursive construction of knowledge and of the interplay between the systems and institutions of that knowledge and power. It is a narrative of epistemology – *of epistemology as narrative*. It is a narrative of the construction of an epistemological verticality and of the construction of a privileged and powerful phenomenon – the phenomenon of expertise as performed by the specular intellectual.

The horrifying heart of darkness - the object of fear, danger, otherness and unpredictability which is the substance of colonial exploration - is the very heart of the study of obstetrics, and it is the object of *its* explorations. The fear - the darkness which strong ontology and vertical epistemology help to keep at bay - is perfectly captured by a character in *Apocalypse Now* (1979), Coppola's screen interpretation of Conrad's classic. Having ventured briefly away from the safety of his boat and its (very linear) exploration upstream, into the dark confusion of the South East Asian jungle, the character Chef is confronted with the actualisation of the savage horror of otherness as he is attacked by a tiger. Scrambling back to the boat against the odds, Chef returns abject and shaken. In narration, Willard's musings on Chef's ordeal capture the enduring logic and the power of modernity, its myths, superstitions and systems of expert belief. He says, "Never get out of the boat. Absolutely goddam right" (*Apocalypse Now*, 1979).

Obstetrics - like all systems of rational expertise - is in the business of codifying protocols, policies and procedures for making sure that the boat is not abandoned. It is in the business of keeping us from harm's way, recognising, as Chef and Willard do, and as old maritime navigational charts tell us, that off the chart and off the boat – here be monsters. In this light, amateurism is a suspension of epistemologies of superstition and an insistence not to be scared of monsters. Whereas the jungle represents an ominous and limitless heart of monstrosity - a terrifying ravenousness just outside of the perimeter of our strong ontological vessel - for our adventurers on page and screen, the amateur is more inclined to see a zone of possibility which, like anywhere, poses both dangers and opportunities. The amateur's is a softer ontology and a less linear journey, inflected and transformed by the worldly attention to environment and local knowledges which comes from critiquing the monological and foundational assumption that monsters are actually dangerous in a separate-from-us sense rather than merely being represented as such, as a manifestation of discursively constructed otherness. In other words, the amateur recognises that strong ontology's preoccupation with safety from monsters is somewhat superstitious and absurd, in that monsters only pose a threat to strong ontology. Strong ontology protects nothing except its own purposeless protectionism and the interests vested in the dynamic of power which that protectionism affords.

Obstetrics is a powerful institution of codification and maritime cartography, its legitimacy being hegemonic not only at the cultural level of common sense and civil society, but as a construct of that popular level of hegemony – as legislatively enshrined by the state. When it comes to birth - when it comes to women's health - obstetrics decides where the boat's going, how it's going to get there, and how long it's going to take. And it provides the master narrative for the journey. The assumption that the legitimacy of obstetrics is predicated on is that this expertise and mastery of the terrain constitutes an evidence in and of itself which positions obstetrics at the forefront of the science of optimising successful birth outcomes. Of course, the counter argument is that the mastery of obstetrics is a mastery over nothing more than a privileged ability to define the terms of the debate and the legitimacy or otherwise of homotextual analyses of outcomes. What a strong body of criticism suggests is that the frame of reference and terms of debate which obstetrics manufactures is predicated on an assumption and

drawn on an axis of female inferiority and the need for scientific, rational and patriarchal guidance to get the job of birthing done. Tuana puts this in a nutshell. She says,

I argue that the adherence to a belief in the inferiority of the female creative principle biased scientific perception of the nature of woman's role in human generation (Tuana, 1989, p.85).

That role - as captive passivity - is one of the managed subject in the process of childbirth management. But as with colonisation and imperialism everywhere, there is discontent amongst the colonised other, and there is a movement of resistance to passivity and control. In her study of the contest between various stakeholders in the attempt to define the terrain of maternity care needs, Reiger puts the general swell of this resistance into some perspective. She says,

During the 1980s, childbirth management reached the international public policy agenda. The challenge to the established medical, technological model of birthing had been developing in Western societies for several years, generated by childbearing women's political activism, feminist theoretical and empirical work and the resurgence of midwifery. Further, in this period, formal reviews of maternity care were auspiced by governments in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Britain, and by the World Health Organisation (WHO). Analysis of this conjuncture allows a glimpse of the complexity of interaction of political and unautocratic agendas, professional and managerial conflicts and dilemmas, and the various concerns of women as users of maternity services. Contests over birthing knowledge and appropriate models of care continue, not only in the West, but in relation to the imposition of technological childbirth in postcolonial contexts (Reiger, 1999, p.387).

The concerns of women which Reiger refers to, and the contention of midwifery and feminist critiques in response to those concerns, was - and still is - that orthodox models of the expert and medical management of childbirth constitute a patriarchal and pathologising control of women and their reproductive processes. But this is not an abstract concern about medical ethics and the place of women in society, as worthy as such concerns are. What the reviews which Reiger alludes to are based upon is a concern that the hegemonic or medical, expert management of childbirth as a clinical experience is unnecessary, and that it produces sub-

optimal outcomes which are measurable in terms of morbidity and mortality, and in terms of a needless detriment to healthcare budgets. In short, the argument could be stated as suggesting that the medicalisation and pathologisation of women, or the representation of women as other and deviant from the Cartesian and strong ontological position of patriarchal expertise and normalcy, leads to the manifest production of women and children who are actually sick, and to the eventual and overall detriment, impoverishment and sickness of society. This is an argument against the limited logic of modern hegemony and specialised expertise which tends to obfuscate and ignore - or extricate itself from - the issues of contingency, interconnection and ramifying or cascading consequence. It is an argument against strong ontology and vertical epistemology, which assert their authority in spite of a complexity which will not allow such a remove. It is an argument embodied in the heresy of midwifery as a therapeutic art which seeks to reconceive alternative authorities - alternative epistemologies - around the business of childbirth, and which seeks to transcend the sanctity of the boundaries and the sacred ontology of closed, scientific expert systems. It is an argument which we will examine.

Around the issue of heresy as a resistance to patriarchal hegemonies surrounding childbirth, and around the rituals which are performed to consolidate those expert hegemonies, as well as around the concept of alternative, horizontal authorities in birth, the work of Davis-Floyd is pre-eminent. Spanning the academic or expert divides between anthropology and midwifery as well as between theory and empiricism, Davis-Floyd writes - like Said - with an affiliative and transgressive amateurism as she teases out the socio-political dimensions of childbirth in a manner that lights our way towards a worldly, amateuristic model of resistance to structures of expertise and power.

In spite of a wealth of scholarship across disparate disciplines, there is a horizontal imperative within Davis-Floyd - an engagement with women, with people, rather than with the academy - which is an important marker of epistemology, methodology and intent: her work is aimed at a diffuse, un-certified audience and at a popular political target, employing the kind of amateuristic clarity which Ashcroft and Ahluwalia identify in Said (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 1999, p.21). It is for this reason that the first and most appropriate place to meet

Davis-Floyd as a reader is not through a refereed journal, but through the pages of a self help book for pregnant women. In terms of flagging an intent around an epistemology and a methodology which resist hegemonic structures of power and knowledge, the title of the book *Trust Your Body! Trust Your Baby!* foreshadows a clear departure from medical paradigms around childbirth, and in her contribution to this volume, Davis-Floyd (1995) makes such a departure. In her chapter, *Ritual in the Hospital: Giving Birth the American Way*, Davis-Floyd (1995) mounts a compelling attack on medical paradigms around childbirth. For Davis-Floyd, expertise is performed as ritual, and ritual is a way of speaking common sense – of asserting the hegemony of a culture’s “core values and beliefs” (Davis-Floyd, 1995, p.26). Citing conclusions drawn from her qualitative research, Davis-Floyd states,

I realized that [Western] society’s deepest beliefs and values center around science, technology, patriarchy and the institutions that control and disseminate them, and that these core values are very clearly and effectively enacted and perpetuated through the high-tech obstetric procedures that have become standard in hospital birth. In other words, obstetric procedures are far more than medical routines: they are the rituals which initiate American mothers, fathers and babies into the core value system of the technocracy. The technocracy is what some anthropologists are calling American society in its current form (Davis-Floyd, 1995, p.27).

“Some anthropologists” have coined a wonderfully evocative term – “technocracy” manages to capture a partial yet substantial shift from religious to scientific faith and a shift in the locus of omniscience from God in the abstract to the kind of human-as-god which, as our critique of the humanistic method suggests, characterises and is precipitated by the Cartesian remove that the broader logic of modernity embodies. That human-as-god is the technical expert: the subject certified in the science of omniscience and the production of certified, technical knowledge. The notion of technicality is a perfect way to further frame the idea of specialisation, as an unworldly and technical attention to a limited and contained body of detail, and the notion of technocracy captures the gate-keeping dimension of the work of technical experts as the guardians of sacred truths. If bureaucrats are the gatekeepers, archivists and experts in the knowledge of the

state, then technocrats are their hegemonically overarching partners as the custodians and holders of the wisdom of the nation, and the technocratic institutions and professions – as the holders of *the* knowledge – are very powerful institutions and professions indeed.

Further drawing on her anthropological background, Davis-Floyd casts this notion of *the* knowledge in terms of the production of myth or, to cast that in terms that we have developed, as epistemologies of superstition and fear. Davis-Floyd's work draws together the ideas of technocratic myth and ritual as cultural technologies of a theology underpinning the faith in the omniscience of human gods. For Davis-Floyd, the technocratic ritualisation of initiation around significant rites of passage such as birth is of powerful significance, attesting to the cultural importance of articles of faith and the maintenance of such articles. As she says, –we have made a heavy investment in the *technocratic myth*” (Davis-Floyd, 1995, p.28). In a passage which works to tie the modern cult of technical specialisation and expertise to the phallogocentric and imperial logic of desire for control over the wild and unpredictable, Davis-Floyd puts the concept of a faith in the myths and gods of technocracy in the following terms:

Th[e] myth insists that the more we control nature, the better it gets, and that the ultimate control of nature is possible. Believing this myth, we have focussed enormous energy on building machines that we can control in order to control nature, which we ultimately cannot control. But these powerful machines do generate at least the appearance of control. They help us to feel safe, and they extend our human powers enormously. So it is no wonder that we invest so much energy, attention and faith in them (Davis-Floyd, 1995, p.28).

Machines - it is barely possible to understand modernity, to understand technocracy, to understand expertise, gods and humanity - or phallogocentrism and Eurocentrism and their expansive, imperial logic - without thinking about machines. Machines are at the heart of the longing and the logic of technical expertise, and are emblematic of a general desire for control which underpins the impulses of specialisation and modern theoretical paradigms of investigation and production, or research and development. Machines, and the mechanistic paradigm, are technocracy's children, its hope and promise. Nowhere is this paradigmatically modern promise better linked to the technical promise of

obstetric or medical expertise and technology than in the writing of Rothman, which informs Davis-Floyd's work (Davis-Floyd, 1998). Rothman also serves well to tie back in the notion of Cartesian limitations, or the problem of specialisation's logic of separation. Drawing on the language and logic of mechanisation in her work on power in the birthplace, she says,

The Cartesian model of the body-as-machine operates to make the physician a technician, or mechanic. The body breaks down and needs repair; it can be repaired in the hospital as a car is in the shop; *once fixed, a person can be returned to the community*. The earliest models in medicine were largely mechanical; later models worked more with chemistry, and newer, more sophisticated medical writing describes computer-like programming, but the basic point remains the same. Problems in the body are technical problems requiring technical solutions, whether it is a mechanical repair, a chemical rebalancing, or a "~~de~~bugging" of the system (Rothman, 1982, p.34, emphasis added).

Rothman, through an extended yet tenable analogy, casts the tenets of expertise in medicine as being precisely those unworldly articles of ideological faith which seek to extract and abstract controllable, autarkic and autonomous systems and objects from the world. With a faith in technical expertise and mechanical obsession, medicine - as an archetype of the folly of expertise which Mitchell (2002) critiques - misses the world as it hits its mark. With an attention to the hegemonic silos of technical and strong ontological isolation, medicine is not paradigmatically equipped to account for the worldly dimensions of structure, locatedness and community which a sociological approach to health and a postcolonial politics of amateurism and the Left (as a field of ideas attentive to structure, collectivity and contingency) are positioned to apprehend. From that perspective, it is interesting to highlight and emphasise the suggestion in Rothman's passage that treatment - as per our previous engagement with Turner's notes on specialisation - requires a kind of other-worldly extrication of the patient from the community (or a reduction of the patient to biology or to the body) to which the patient is then returned. Also as per our engagement with Turner, we see again that, following the loveless removal of the individual from society, the patient is further and de-humanisingly subjected to the regime of expertise which separates it into manageable, disconnected parts via a process of specialisation.

Referring to the separations which science facilitates and which technocracy assumes, Davis-Floyd comments on this kind of mechanistic Cartesian separatism which she says “has been fundamental to the development of both industrial society and post-industrial technocracy” (Davis-Floyd, 1994, p.1125). Elaborating on this, she says,

... the essence of scientific research and description is *separation* – of elements from the whole they compose, of humans from nature, of mind from body, of mother from child. Such conceptual distinctions are implemented through ritual acts that produce physical embodiments of the underlying worldview (Davis-Floyd, 1994, p.1126).

From the humanist or Cartesian construction of human-as-god or God-as-human, through the medical reductionism of the idea of human-as-body, right through to Rothman’s formulation of body-as-machine, there is a flow of modern logic and technocratic faith which speaks of modernity’s reverence for the machine and for experts and technicians as a clerical order of soothsayers, versed in the institutionalised gospel of modern, technical theology. Underlying that theology there is always a liberal and Cartesian impulse – a logic of separation as a precondition for the scientific production or *creation* of knowledge. The hegemony of that position and precondition - the hegemony of technical expertise - is very much alive and well, and very much in control. Expanding on the idea of the separation of mother and child, and on the concept of Cartesian specialisation, Dumit and Davis-Floyd illustrate the depth of expert control and the status of the expert as a god-figure within technocracy, demonstrating that they control the very formation of life. In a piece titled *Cyborg Babies* – a title which brilliantly extrapolates the concept of technocracy to evoke and produce an image of the techno-subject or techno-citizen – Dumit and Davis-Floyd make the following remarks:

This idea of the baby as separate, as the product of a mechanical process, is a very important metaphor for women because it implies that men ultimately can become the producers of that product (as they already are the producers of most of Western society’s technological wonders). And indeed, male production of the babies women carry has intensified in recent years with the development and proliferation of the new technologies of conception, such as in-vitro fertilization (IVF), that

involve the removal and the technological manipulation of women's genetic material and its reinsertion (Dumit and Davis-Floyd, 1998, p.6).

The reverence which inheres within a hegemonic faith in technocracy and isolation from the world - in the technologies of separation and an epistemic commitment to reductionism - is one of a reverence for and faith in linear progress, and one of striving for the promise of a reward for faith – for a promised land of objective certainty. It is a reverence for and faith in science. Equally, it is one of a kind of ambivalent loathing for the degraded, more base states of primitivism and nature, and for messy processes like natural birth, which progress seeks to move away from.

Colonial discourse analysis, as we have noted, has done so much to reveal this ambivalence and loathing. But we need to further remember and note the unilinearity of the logic which underpinned the trope of the narrative of modern progress in colonial discourse, and also the unilinearity of the ambivalent discourse which represents the degraded other. Similarly to the logic of the discourse which underpinned and legitimised the colonial project, the unilinearity of the logic and discourse of technocracy is characterised by a tendency to represent the other as in a “natural” state, or as part of nature. In the colonial context, this logic tended to represent the other as a natural being or entity whose prior-state naturalness eclipsed, erased and negated any sense of culture (marked, for example, by cultivation as progress) that could otherwise be deployed to inscribe the other with the credentials of humanity. Again, in the colonial context, cultured humanity was the juxtaposed state of being ascribed to the coloniser as a higher being (see, for example, Pratt, 1992). Nowhere is this unilinear and bifurcating logic of the colonial mind and of modern, imperial logic better captured than in Fanon (1965, pp.29-30), who graphically demonstrates the discursive tool of juxtaposition which underpins the binarising impulse of unilinear modern logic and the logic of the colonial mission. Fanon's contrasting of native and settler towns is the quintessential illustration of the colonial juxtaposition of chaotic, wretched otherness to the cleanliness and order of whiteness which modern paradigms of progress and development promise to whiten further. Tying back to our thinking on identity, Mitchell reminds us of how the technologies of othering which facilitate the construction of strong

ontological belonging underpin these kind of discursive representations, juxtapositions and investments in modern paradigms of progress. He says,

In order to determine itself as a place of order, reason, propriety, cleanliness, civilisation and power, [the West] must represent outside itself what is irrational, disordered, dirty, libidinous, barbarian and cowed (Mitchell, 1991, p.165)

Such are the discursive technologies of the maintenance of hegemony. Such are the technologies of power. Such are the discourses of expertise. Of course, the very licence to narrate which makes such technologies of representation possible comes from the kind of autoreferentially certified authority of expert knowledge which Said's work in *Orientalism* (1978) serves to critique, and which a broader corpus of Foucauldian analysis exposes. That such authorities and expert hegemonies continue with narrations which are little changed from the time of the colonial encounter is something we can see in the celebration of machines as manifested in the utility and application of the language of mechanisation in the celebration of progress, the representation of inferiority and the discourse of control.

Davis-Floyd suggests that patriarchal assumptions about female inferiority have tended to result in a kind of masculinist discourse which casts women as *-eloser to nature* and feebler in body and intellect" (Davis-Floyd, 1995, p.28, emphasis added). This is an unremarkable observation, aligned with innumerable feminist critiques and analyses of patriarchal and masculinist discourses. But it is a serviceable inflection, and the parallels with the mechanocentric discursive construction of a natural, savage other in the colonial encounter are clear, and guide us towards an understanding of the colonising desire for control - born of a technocratic faith in linear progress - which exists within hegemonic representations of women. Davis-Floyd captures the centrality of the logic of normative mechanocentrism to hegemonic assumptions about women, and to the hegemonic acceptance of the need to control, help and improve women. She says,

... the men who developed the idea of the body-as-machine also firmly established the male body as the prototype of this machine. Insofar as it deviated from the male standard, the female body was regarded as abnormal, inherently defective, and dangerously under the influence of

nature. The metaphor of the body-as-machine and the related image of the female body as a defective machine eventually formed the philosophical foundations of modern obstetrics. Wide cultural acceptance of these metaphors accompanied the demise of the midwife and the rise of the male-attended, *mechanically manipulated* birth (Davis-Floyd, 1995, p.28, emphasis added).

The idea of the hormonally predictable male body as a standard archetype and normal prototype from which difference diverges - the idea from which the normative desires of medicine and assumptions regarding defectiveness spring - is the idea, or the discursive concept, which legitimises the colonisation of the female other by the expansive imperial force of patriarchal, phallogentric expertise. That idea, and the existence of that idea, is well illustrated in the science of medical research. As Broom puts it, drawing from her overview of the influence of gender on medical research,

Until recently, men and male animals have been the main, or only, subjects of most studies of disease, diagnostic procedures, management therapy, and prevention ... except those that are directly related to fertility (Broom, 2005, p.103).

That idea reveals the science of medical research to be an ideological and normative performance which casts the male as normal, but one which is played out unconsciously, as a common sense production of hegemony. Broom articulates the taken-for-granted nature of such hegemony and hegemonic assumptions well. She says,

Perhaps a surprising consequence of attempts to rethink health research is that it highlights the neglect of masculinity - as well as femininity - in health and health research. This may seem paradoxical in light of the male domination of medicine, the focus on males in research, and the privileging of the male body as normal. But it is less surprising when we note that these processes have occurred without being explicitly theorised, and hence there was no conscious or thoughtful attention to masculinity per se (Broom, 2006, p.104).

This privileging of masculinity and celebration of the masculine machine is a cultural statement of technocratic values, or value, and Davis-Floyd again draws the ideas of value and ritual together. She says,

Rituals are often repetitious, conveying the same message over and over again in different forms. The rituals of hospital birth remind women in several ways that their body-machines are potentially defective. These include periodic and sometimes continuous electronic monitoring, frequent examinations to make sure that the cervix is dilating on schedule, and, if it isn't, administration of Pitocin to speed up labor so that birth can take place within the required twenty four hours. All three of these procedures convey the same message over and over: *time is important, you must produce on time, and you cannot do that without technological assistance because your machine is defective* (Davis-Floyd, 1995, p.29).

Of these three procedures, and though all are similar phenomena related to similar stories, one - the technocratic gaze of continuous electronic monitoring - serves as our example of the way in which the expert's desire for technical control produces outcomes which run counter to expert statements of claims around discourses of control and outcome optimisation, and around protection from monsters.

Continuous electronic monitoring is a technology of medical control which is wedded to the medical paradigm of birth – a paradigm predicated on a belief in the impending malfunction of the deficient machine and the need for “colonial administration” performed as technical and expert surveillance, support, augmentation, rectification and treatment. Dumit and Davis-Floyd elaborate on the concept of impending malfunction and on these technologies of medical control or colonial administration, linking their development to the conceptual origins or creation of obstetrics and casting that discursive beginning as a kind of self-fulfilling autoreferentiality of the patriarchal specialist in which the self-ordained right to oversee and administer - or colonise - the affairs of the other is drawn from a discursively legitimising sense of the superiority of the self over the juxtaposed other. They say,

During pregnancy and birth, the unusual demands placed on the female body-machine render it constantly at risk of serious malfunction or total breakdown ... [T]he rise of the male-attended, mechanically manipulated birth followed close on the heels of the wide cultural acceptance of the metaphor of the body-as-machine in the West and the accompanying acceptance of the metaphor of the female body as a defective machine – a metaphor that eventually formed the philosophical foundation of

modern obstetrics. Obstetrics was thus enjoined by its own conceptual origins to develop tools and technologies for the manipulation and improvement of the inherently defective and therefore anomalous and dangerous process of birth (Dumit and Davis-Floyd , 1998, p.4).

As with all protocols of colonial administration, continuous electronic monitoring of the defective other is a subjugating operation: it is done *to*, not *with*. As continuous electronic monitoring is a methodologically monological undertaking as opposed to a process based on dialogue and contrapuntality - as it is part of an administration which is steadfast in its verticality and strongly guarded against the horizontal incursions of the natives across its professional boundaries - there is little room to suspect that its service of the paradigms, administrations and protocols of medicine would produce anything other than sub-optimal outcomes for the colonised subject: outcomes are arrogantly viewed in objective terms by such paradigms and procedures, which is paternalistically untenable, and they are viewed in isolation, which is the unworldly, untenable and unrealistic pretension of a Cartesian remove and specialisation. Indeed, the Perinatal Practice Guidelines of the South Australian Government's Department of Health acknowledge that technologies of control do not necessarily produce optimal, controlled outcomes. The Guidelines state that continuous foetal monitoring "(i)ncreases the rates of caesarean sections and operative vaginal deliveries" (Government of South Australia, 2007).

The pretension and arrogance of strong ontology and vertical epistemology are the sub-optimising follies of expertise. They are the follies of faith in false prophets, the stamp of *iprimi potest*, and the expert's conservative, self ordained and self proclaimed autoreferential and professional authority to narrate. They are the follies of a liberal belief in the autonomous human-as-god rather than a belief in humanity and an attention to the structural dimensions of community. They are the follies of the Right. In other words, they are the follies of belief in vertical expertise over a contingent, horizontal amateurism which demands an amateur epistemology that contorts strong ontological boundaries and - to re-employ *Apocalypse Now* - gets off the boat. The amateur is happy to get off the boat, or to allow the other on, facilitating a guerrilla resistance to hegemonic and colonising power – facilitating a democratic demand and a claim to citizenship which refuses to be governed and bound by edict and fiat. That resistance of the

Left and process of horizontal dialogue is a subversion of the authority of autoreferencing and ideological professional narration, and of the authority to represent a subjugated other, and of the narratives of the subjugated as faulty, inferior and in need of administering. Such a vertical narrative of subjugation - such a pretentious folly and arrogant administration against which there is a significant movement of subversive resistance - is continuous electronic monitoring. And the subversive movement around continuous electronic monitoring is best articulated through an examination of the phenomenon of vaginal birth after caesarean. But first things first: before we consider vaginal birth after caesarean, what were we ever doing in theatre in the first instance? How did we get to the point of being *after* caesarean? And why does continuous foetal monitoring increase the rates of caesarean section?

6.3.3/ The Cascade of Intervention.

Building on an observation around hegemonic faith in expertise, technoscience and machines which is interwoven with a unilinear discourse of and belief in progress, Dumit and Davis-Floyd deploy their concept of the cyborg baby as the child and subject of technocracy to good effect. They cast the expert imperative - the obstetric impulse - in classically Gramscian hegemonic terms – as *something that just is because it is* and as common sense – as culturally reconstituting certainty around what is ordinary, normal and natural. Commenting on the discursive construction of the normal, the common and the sensible, they discuss how the cyborg has become the new ordinary, natural baby:

[Technoscience] sees “normal reproduction” as a kind of traditional throwback – dangerous, risky, random. Envisioning the appealing possibility that every woman can be a perfect mother who bears perfect children with every conception requires seeing every aspect of traditional reproduction as lacking and in need of technoscientific surveillance and intervention. Cyborg conceptions (such as IVF), cyborg fetuses (gray blurs on the ultrasound screen), cyborg labors (the contractions both traced and mediated by the monitor, the baby’s heartbeat green line on a black screen), cyborg births (via forceps, vacuum extractors or caesarean), and cyborg babies (physically transformed by vaccines, SIDS monitors, and intelligence-enhancing toys) become the desired end ... We have moved so far into the cyborg realm that only those

technological transfusions we call —assisted reproduction” - safe, monitored, controlled - are considered —natural” ... It has become unnatural to give birth at home, without the body-altering safety net of high technology. Instead, our culture has naturalized technobirth (Dumit and Davis-Floyd, 1998, p.9).

The cyborg baby is the expert’s child – the child of hegemony. It is ordinary. It is common. It just is. But is it sensible, or is it just a product of vertical, domineering ideology which ultimately fails to deliver on the promise of techno-optimised outcomes? Is techno-faith misplaced, and are experts the false prophets of progress that the colonising hegemonic imagination conjures? The ultimate cyborg birth is the caesarean section. The caesarean section represents the greatest extension of the technological and medical control over the birth process. In the sterility of theatre, amidst the surrounds of technology and amongst the company of specialists, the caesarean section represents a techno-triumph of control and order over birth. It is the triumph of a colonial administration or subjugation of wretched chaos. And as with the historical, territorial precedents for such administrations and subjugations, the deepest triumph of administration is that colonisation of the mind which produces hegemonic imaginations - which are *powerful* in the self-regulating Foucauldian sense - around faith, logic and vertical, unilinear progress (see, for example, Fanon, 1965, Mitchell, 1991, and Ngugi, 1986 for accounts on the processes of the colonisation of the mind). It is this kind of production of hegemony which constitutes the production of a sense of necessity, inevitability and imperative. Commenting on the birth of her first child, Peyton, Davis-Floyd addresses this sense of necessity which comes from the loss of belief in pre-colonial paradigms. She says,

So many people to do the work of one! A cyborgian system, consisting of people, information, institution, and artifacts, all there to —externalize” one baby from one mother – who if they had but been left alone, could perfectly well have accomplished this miracle on their own. But no one in that room knew that for sure; everyone, at the time, thought that this procedure was necessary, perhaps even lifesaving (Davis-Floyd, 1998, p.257).

This sense of necessity is what Dumit and Davis-Floyd call the —transcendent message of cyborg birth, that technology is better than nature” (Dumit and Davis-

Floyd, 1998, p.11). It is this transcendent message which is the substance of the myth and the subtext of the rituals or discursive ritualisation surrounding modern expert or technocratic systems which seek to separate the self from nature and to apply an unworldly frame of analysis to the extricated subject. For Davis-Floyd, the substance of this transcendent, mythological message takes form as a ritualistic dance around what she calls the "One-Two Punch" (Davis-Floyd, 1994a, p.6), which she frames as a process of mutilation and subsequent, remedial prosthesis, and which she borrows from Reynolds' work, *Stealing Fire: The Mythology of the Technocracy* (1991). Davis-Floyd's application of Reynolds' work to articulate the idea of the One-Two Punch, and her adaptation of his insights to the process and rituals of birth, is worth quoting at length:

Take a natural process that is working well - say, a river in which salmon annually swim upstream to spawn. Punch One: "Improve" it with technology - build a dam and a power plant, generating the unfortunate byproduct that the salmon can no longer swim to their spawning grounds. Punch Two: Fix the problem created with technology with more technology - take the salmon out of the water with machines, let them spawn and grow the eggs in trays, feed the babies through an elaborate system of pipes and tubes, then truck them back to the river and release them downstream.

Reynolds' brilliant insight was to see that, while most people see Punch Two as an accidental byproduct of Punch One, the deeper truth is that *Punch Two is the point*. We in the West have become convinced that culturally altering natural processes makes them better - more predictable, more controllable, and therefore safer ... It is not hard to see how this One-Two punch of mutilation and prosthesis applies to birth. We fear the birth process ... it seems to us to be chaotic, uncontrollable, and therefore dangerous. So we "improve" it with technology. First we take it apart - deconstruct it - into identifiable segments. Then we control each segment with the obstetrical equivalent of dams and floodgates (EFM, Pitocin, drugs.). When the unfortunate byproduct of this technological reconstruction of birth is a baby in distress from a now-dysfunctional labor, we rescue that baby with more technology (episiotomy, forceps, Cesarean section). Then we congratulate ourselves on a job well done, just as the builders of the salmon hatchery Reynolds

visited in California put a plaque on the wall to congratulate themselves for "saving the salmon" (Davis-Floyd, 1994a, pp.6-7).

In this light, the birth of Peyton Floyd via caesarean section was a salmon's salvation. But the process of salvation is an exercise in ritualistic expertise and technocratic liturgical dancing - a speaking in tongues - which is both of a *necessity which is only a discursive and imagined monster-proofing*, and of ramifying, contingent, interconnected worldly consequence of a type which Mitchell exposes so well in *Rule of Experts* (2002), where he deploys his critique of the hard epistemology and strong ontology of the specialised separatisms of techno-science and expertise, to demonstrate that a little bit of knowledge - per expertise - which exists in ignorance of its effects in the world is a dangerous thing, and a thing which is pretentious and untenable in the face of worldly interconnections, interactions, interminability and contingency.

But how can we claim that the necessity of medical salvation is only discursive, and what are the ramifications and consequences? The argument that salvation is only of discursive necessity is one which is contingent upon framing salvation as a Punch Two, necessitated by a chain reaction of consequence, ramifying and cascading from the initial deployment of a Punch One as a clumsy, superstitious swing in the dark – a fear and loathing and fight for control. On that chain reaction, Davis-Floyd states,

... once those "cosmic gears" have been set into motion, there is often no stopping them (Davis-Floyd, 1994b, p.324).

And despite Davis-Floyd's example of a material, physical Punch One with the application of procedural dams and floodgates, the power of these interventions in leading to Punch Two only partially stems from the physical. As much as Punch Two is of discursive necessity, much of the body weight behind Punch One is discursive too: to give a pregnant woman a patient identity number is not a physical or medical action or intervention *per se*, but it is an act of physical and medical Heisenbergian consequence. It is an act which codifies a discursive presupposition of inadequacy, ineptitude and inability to attend to the natural lifecycle without assistance. It is a natural, common sense gesture which transmits and calcifies a disempowering, discursive reassurance of the inherent failure of mothers and of women. And it is not without some theoretical merit to

speculate or hypothesise around the self-fulfilling consequences which such prophecies produce as the discursive preconditions for material effect, and for the need for Punch Two: bottles, breast pumps and anti-depressants could reasonably be argued to be the tools of salvation for disempowered and despairing mothers.

Citing her own study with birth mothers and their experiences with the birthing process - which pits the anecdotal authority of women's stories and experience against the authority of the clinical trail and its omissions, or the authority of open, horizontal narratives against a closed, vertical narrative - Davis-Floyd articulates one of innumerable possible scenarios to capture the concept of the cascade of intervention and consequence succinctly. She says,

A "cascade of intervention" occurs when one obstetric procedure alters the natural birthing process, causing complications, and so inexorably "necessitates" the next procedure and the next. Many of the women in my study experienced such a "cascade" when they received some form of pain relief, such as an epidural, which slowed their labor. Then Pitocin was administered through an IV to speed up the labor, but Pitocin very suddenly produced longer and stronger contractions. Unprepared for the additional pain, the woman asked for more pain relief, which ultimately necessitated more Pitocin. Pitocin-induced contractions, together with the fact that the mother must lie flat on her back because of the electronic monitor belts strapped around her stomach, can cause the supply of blood and oxygen to the fetus to drop, affecting the fetal heart rate. In response to the "distress" registered on the fetal monitor, an emergency Cesarean is performed (Davis-Floyd, 1995, pp.30-31).

This scenario is resonant with irony. Punch Two legitimises a belief in Punch One and vice-versa. The whole situation, whilst unnecessary in any material sense, and whilst medically necessary only from the precondition of discursive superstition, actually serves to reinforce and legitimise that superstition. The message in the One-Two Punch of medical pugilism is that birth is painful and dangerous, and that it requires expert administration. But there is a good counter argument to suggest that the danger is in strapping a pair of boxing gloves onto the obstetrician before sending them in to nurture a birthing mother and baby.

But isn't it the case that medical birth is safer than natural birth? Isn't this reinforced superstition actually legitimate? That is technocracy's looping,

discursive refrain. The crux of the response of the active birth movement, as a woman-centred movement which seeks to shift the locus of epistemological authority, is “no”. This is a “no” which is predicated on socio-environmental (see Labonte, 1992) or worldly sociological approaches to health which disregard the strong ontology of expert systems and which deploy horizontal, democratic epistemological narratives against the authority of clinical verticality. It is a response which critiques the self-fulfilling technocratic irony and superstitions of the clinician. It is a critique which casts intervention as an unnecessary One-Two Punch, and which suggests that a punch-free birthing process, or an expert-free, amateuristic process, is not deficient in outcomes relative to expert models of birth. This is a very heretical assertion. It seems almost ludicrous – such is the strength of medical hegemony. But it is an assertion which is tenable. Cahill captures the essence of the heretical, sociological underpinnings of that tenability:

Whilst there is little doubt that biomedicine has indeed been instrumental in saving many lives as a consequence of increasingly complex and technological approaches to the management of *disease*, popular assumptions about its role in improving *health* have been subjected to sustained challenge. Evidence suggests that the contribution of biomedical knowledge and expertise has in fact been overstated ... a pertinent illustration is provided by the considerable reduction in UK infant and maternal mortality rates during the first two decades of this century. If asked, it is probable that most people (including many doctors) would explain this reduction largely as a welcome consequence of greater scientific knowledge and improved medical care. However ... if pregnant women were able to avail themselves of a better diet (as they were), clearly both they and their unborn infants would benefit, which is the most probable explanation for falling mortality rates ... Similarly, mortality rates associated with infectious diseases began to fall well in advance of the availability of any vaccination or effective treatment and are similarly explained by public health improvements (Cahill, 2001, pp.335-336).

These are not wild assertions and concepts. *The National Maternity Action Plan* (Maternity Coalition *et al.*, 2002) advances similar arguments. *The National Maternity Action Plan* is a major, evidence and research based Australian lobbying document prepared by a strong amalgam of peak consumer and

midwifery advocacy groups which, in sum, constitute a considerable horizontal nexus of alternative birthing knowledge and authority. In making its case for reform, *The National Maternity Action Plan* reinforces the kind of claims and thinking that we find in the above passage by Cahill. It makes a number of interesting points and arguments which articulate the essence of the active birth movement as a heretical current in political health lobbying. And it contains a bottom line too – the plan’s citing of Enkin *et al.* (2000) and Tew (1986) provides a strong premise for argument. The Tew reference is particularly interesting: published in the *British Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology* in 1986, the article by Tew was an early, bold and provocative incursion into the inner sanctum of the field of obstetrics under the title, *Do obstetric intranatal interventions make birth safer?* (Tew, 1986). The cited articles constitute an accepted part of the scientific record. In part, *The National Maternity Action Plan*’s case for reform states:

Contrary to the current literature and statistical evidence, popular opinion in Australia still assumes that obstetric care is the safest way to manage birth for all women. The argument is commonly put that obstetric technologies and techniques have contributed to declining maternal and infant mortality in Australia as in other western countries over recent decades. Two important facts are often overlooked by proponents of this view. Firstly, there is strong evidence to show that improved maternal and infant outcomes have correlated with improvements in public health ... The ability of women to give birth to their babies without complications has been significantly improved over the past 50 years by better nutrition, housing, sanitation, hygiene and overall health. A reduction in the number of babies born to each childbearing woman, and fewer pregnancies to very young and older women has also improved both maternal and infant mortality rates. Secondly, if high rates of obstetric intervention in childbirth deliver the best outcomes, then it follows that those countries with the highest rates of intervention would have the lowest rates of maternal and infant mortality (deaths) and morbidity (illness and injury related to childbirth). However, this is not the case. Indeed, the western countries with the lowest perinatal and maternal morbidity and mortality rates have been found to be those with comparatively low rates of obstetric intervention

in childbirth, and where there is widespread use of midwives as the primary caregivers of pregnant and birthing women (Enkin *et al.*, 2000. Tew 1986) (Maternity Coalition, *et al.*, 2002).

The National Maternity Action Plan is a case for the facilitation of natural and active women-centred birth, and for reform to medical and legislative frameworks to enable an optimisation of birthing outcomes predicated on a relocation of the locus of rights and authority away from childbirth experts and towards birthing women. It is a statement against the conflation of health care and medical expertise, and it is a call for worldliness and amateurism in policy. Addressing the phenomenon of caesarean section as the ultimate and most drastic intervention, as the starkest and most passive or subjugated juxtaposition to the concept of empowered birth, as a technology which is sub-optimal in effect, and as the conclusion towards which cascading interventions inexorably tend, the essence of *The National Maternity Action Plan*, and the essence of the active birth movement more generally, is captured in the plan's reference to the World Health Organisation, (WHO, 1999), which underpins a quest for an outcome-optimising best practice which is mindful of the observation that,

... recent research has shown that even low risk healthy women receive significantly greater numbers of caesarean sections than is recommended by WHO as best practice (Maternity Coalition *et al.*, 2002).

So, if we put caesarean sections under the microscope as the destination of medical birth, as the ultimate intervention, and as the ultimate technocratic, clinical control of the messy process of birth - if we examine the assumption that theatre, sterility and the straight lines of incisions and episiotomies have it over vaginas and the chaos of women, and that medical birth is defensible because its ultimate conclusion is ultimately safe - what are *our* conclusions? What does such an examination say about the location of epistemological authority around expertise, and about the ontology of disciplines and technologies around specialisation, given that non-specialists make a reasonable claim which suggests that the non-expert or amateuristic positions which they advocate are not only equal to but actually better in terms of outcomes than clinical protocols – that medicine as an androcentric and patriarchal deployment of power is not only ineffectual, but dangerous? The questions are rhetorical, but picking up the

master's tools, the rhetoric around the questions – a rhetoric of amateurism – is, as we will see, empirical.

6.3.4/ Caesar Über Alles.

In a piece titled *Caesareans: Are they really a safe option?*, Goer (2007) examines the technocratic myth that medical control, as manifested in the caesarean section, is safer than non-surgical birth. She takes a critical stance against the promotion of caesarean section by some members of the obstetric community, and against the traction that such a campaign has managed to establish within the popular media. Goer makes the definitive statement on the safety of caesarean sections, which serves as a solid critique of the assumption that theatres have it over vaginas and that experts are indeed the appropriate locus of birthing authority. She is worth quoting at length, as she provides a synthesis of research which would be almost impossible to better. And it is that research and proficiency in the use of the master's tools - communicated within the public and democratic space of the web as a nexus of transgressive horizontal epistemology - which makes her statement and critique definitive. The following passage is an excellent example of resistance from within, succinctly synthesising and predicated on research from authors within such privileged, prestigious and authoritative peer reviewed journals as the *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology*, the *British Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology*, the *European Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology and Reproductive Biology*, and *Obstetrics and Gynaecology*. All of Goer's claims are repeatedly backed by the clinical literature within such publications (see Goer, 2007). She states:

As someone whose life[']s work is evaluating and synthesizing the obstetric research, I can attest that NO data support the contention that caesareans are as safe as vaginal birth for mother and baby. A caesarean section is major abdominal surgery, with all that entails. Compared with vaginal birth, caesarean section causes pain and debility, sometimes for weeks ... The surgery itself, as opposed to medical problems that might lead to a caesarean, increases the risk of maternal death, hysterectomy, hemorrhage, surgical injury to other organs, infection, blood clots, and rehospitalization for complications ... Potential chronic complications from scar tissue adhesions include pelvic pain, bowel problems, and pain during sexual intercourse. Scar tissue makes subsequent caesareans

more difficult to perform, increasing the risk of injury to other organs and the risk of chronic problems from adhesions. The surgery itself also increases the risk of the baby being born in poor condition or having trouble breathing after planned caesarean or caesareans done for reasons other than the baby's condition. Also, because of scar tissue, the incidence of placenta previa ... and placenta accreta, complications that kill babies and mothers, soars with each successive caesarean. Infertility and ectopic pregnancy ... associate with previous caesarean section as well (Goer, 2007).

In the face of such claims, in the face of such evidence, and in light of the clinical data which Goer cites throughout her piece, there is good reason to suggest that mothers and vaginas have it over doctors and theatre – that birthing outcomes are better when birth is women-centred and predicated on women as the locus of birthing authority, rather than when it is medicocentric with authority located within professional expertise and administration. Medical control tends towards self-fulfilling prophecies of pathology, and the caesarean section is a prime example of that phenomenon.

Caesarean sections are relatively and largely unnecessary and unsafe. They are, nonetheless, a powerful and subjugating technology - such is the hegemony of expertise and the material effect of hegemonic power. Ultimately, that power - as is commonly the case for forms of power predicated on structures of hegemonic knowledge under all regimes of governance - is sanctioned and enforced by the state as the ultimate vehicle for the control of deviance and subjugation of the powerless or disempowered minority. With birth, the use of state sanctioned force in the subjugation of heresy and deviance reaches a head with the issue of court ordered caesareans (see examples in Davis-Floyd, 1990, p.184 and the *Australian Nursing Journal*, 12(8), p.6).

As we have noted, and as is generally the rule for power, its deployment as a subjugating and hegemonic force is rarely in the interests of the subjugated. From the colonial administration of colonised subjects to the court-ordered administration of women's affairs, the logic of barbarous imposition and the sub-optimisation of wellbeing obtains. Whilst there is nothing to be gained from a comparison of magnitude or effect, there is something to be noted in the parallels in logic: from the stolen generations of Indigenous Australians to the generations

of medically birthed Australians, the logic of the expert as deployed through either colonial or technocratic administration and protocols has stolen motherhood and silenced the heresy – the “other voice” of motherhood – to produce sub-optimal results. Whether cast in terms of the outrage of Indigenous health indicators (see Australian Bureau of Statistics data (Trewin and Madden, 2005)), or in terms of complications and undesired outcomes and consequences around birth, the nature of the worldly nexus of ramifications and sub-optimisations stemming from expert administration is empirical and clear.

At the heart of the court ordered caesarean section is that document which, in one form or another, is the same artefact of administration which haunts the foreground of the dark history of Australia’s subjugation of its Indigenous people. That document is the child abuse notification. And perhaps more than any example, the logic of that artefact demonstrates how the past has far from receded and how it remains in the present: how it is *everywhere*. The phenomenon of court ordered caesarean section falls under that logic – under the pipe-puffing, pith-helmeted and detached colonial arrogance of expertise. One such court ordered caesarean section which received a degree of public attention, and which was ordered on the grounds of a child abuse notification, was predicated on the court decision – on the basis of expert medical testimony – that the mother involved was risking the life of the dependent foetus by electing to have a vaginal birth after caesarean, or VBAC (see the *Australian Nursing Journal*, 12(8), p.6). This court order proceeded against the mother’s wishes, on the basis of the authority of hegemonic structures of expert knowledge. But were the experts right in ordering this violence? Is VBAC dangerous and endangering, as they claimed? Or is the omnipotence of metropolitan reason and the locus of authority in metro-medico expertise a dubious article of faith?

6.3.5/ VBAC

The thing about birth is that medicine sees it in degrees of abnormality, from the ordinary abnormality of “normal birth”, to the highly contentious category of “high risk birth”. Notwithstanding the fact that these intervention-legitimising or colonisation-legitimising discourses of normal risk (ordinary pathology) and higher risk (super pathology) are as contestable as the overarching discourse of pathologisation, the categorisation of a birth situation as high risk calcifies the

authority of expert narratives around the situation of that birth. Whilst there is scope to avoid the surveillance of continuous electronic monitoring (that technology which “increases the rates of caesarean sections and operative vaginal deliveries” (Government of South Australia, 2007) in normal birth, the chance of doing that with a high risk birth requires an engagement with expertise and hegemonic assumptions around pathology and female inferiority which pits a horizontal guerrilla force against the strength and the power of vertical authority and hegemonic administration. Such an engagement surrounds vaginal birth after caesarean. It is an engagement with an undemocratic expert edict, “once a caesarean always a caesarean”, which was popularised within obstetric lore by Cragin nearly a century ago (Cragin, 1916, p.104), and which is contested within the democratic, horizontal nexus of knowledge which the strong, vertical institutions of expertise keep at bay. It is an engagement with the autoreferential flow of a professional edict into institutional policy and control. That policy around VBAC is articulated within the perinatal protocols for VBAC issued by Women’s Hospitals Australasia. These protocols suggest a series of guidelines for clinical practitioners faced with a pregnant woman who has had a previous caesarean section. The first of these guidelines indicates the increase in level of pathology that a woman with a uterine scar presents as she enters labour. It reads,

Identify, at the first antenatal visit, all women who have had a previous caesarean section OR have a uterine scar. Most women with prior uterine scar need not be considered high risk during the antenatal course (unless other obstetric factors such as placental site so dictate). However, the woman’s level of risk changes around the time of labour and delivery. These risks need to be discussed and a plan for delivery made well in advance of spontaneous labour where at all possible (Women’s Hospitals Australasia, 2007, p.4).

Given the presumption of an elevated state of female pathology during birth after caesarean, the Women’s Hospitals Australasia protocols recommend particular measures for ongoing management of labour. In part, these measures include continuous electronic foetal monitoring as per Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (RANZCOG) recommendations. The Women’s Hospitals Australasia protocols recommend this form of medical surveillance of deviance in the following terms:

Women who have had a previous CS should be offered electronic fetal monitoring during labour. It is acknowledged that there are considerable variations in protocols from member hospitals in Australia and New Zealand concerning the use of electronic fetal monitoring in women attempting VBAC. The options range from monitoring with intermittent auscultation only to continuous fetal monitoring throughout the labour.

There is no clear evidence either for or against continuous electronic fetal monitoring for VBAC, but it is recognised that these labours do significantly increase the risk of adverse perinatal outcome. There have been suggestions from cohort studies that continuous electronic fetal monitoring may lead to early detection of uterine scar rupture and Continuous Electronic Fetal Monitoring throughout the labour should be recommended in accordance with the RANZCOG Guidelines for Fetal Surveillance in Labour.

It is recommended that fetal monitoring in an attempted VBAC is at a higher intensity than in an uncomplicated labour and should consist of at least intermittent cardiotocography. In the event of induced or augmented labour, or where an epidural is employed continuous electronic fetal should be used (Women's Hospitals Australasia, 2007, p.7).

But this kind of risk mitigation, as an act of the surveillance and subjugation of deviance, carries risks – risks of cascading intervention, risks of self-fulfilling prophecy, and risks of precipitating surgical birth and its associated dangers. As such, it is worth asking whether the need for interventionist risk management passes a risk-benefit analysis when considered in terms of the evidence, or only when considered in terms of a discursive investment and series of assumptions based on an adherence to patriarchal and technocratic myths of expertise and expert diagnoses of pathology. Are VBAC risks real, or are they the spectre of discursive assumptions, myths and rituals which pre-empt the facts and - via a self-fulfilling Punch Two - reinforce the technocratic myth? Are there a counter-discursive set of assumptions around women's capacity which underpin the revelation of alternative facts? Beyond the strong ontological boundary, what is the substance of the restlessness of the natives. Is there something to be learned from the restless horizontal epistemology of the subjugated other?

The restlessness of advocates around VBAC is a simple one – it is one which suggests that the clinical evidence relating to VBAC risk is superstitious and mythological rather than empirical. It is one which suggests that the medicalisation, pathologisation and consequent surveillance of VBAC is unnecessary, unwarranted and unacceptably and inappropriately sub-optimising, subjugating and counter-productive. The basis of the accusation of superstition and unnecessary subjugation stems from the fact that VBAC protocols - which deem VBAC to be high risk and which demand a range of interventions from continuous electronic monitoring to mandatory repeat caesarean section - are drawn from a selective reading of the clinical data, suggesting that search methods or starting points around clinical literature reviews are the pre-empting results of hegemonic assumptions. It is certainly true that no shortage of clinical data supports VBAC, and it is also true that this is often not cited in perinatal protocols around VBAC. And some of the VBAC-supporting clinical data is thorough, comprehensive and completely unambiguous. Take, for example, the following set of conclusions from a study published in the *British Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology*, involving a review of 69 412 cases:

This audit confirmed that women with one previous low transverse caesarean section can achieve a high rate of VBAC overall and a high rate of VBAC in labour. These high rates were associated with a low risk of rupture of the caesarean scar in labour. Even when the scar ruptured, major complications for mother or baby were few.

If, during the study, we had adopted a policy of repeat elective caesarean section at term in women with one previous caesarean section, *we would not have prevented any perinatal death due to labour*. We might have prevented a single case of hypoxic ischaemic encephalopathy, but this complication did not result from rupture of the caesarean scar. Moreover, encephalopathy can occur after any labour irrespective of the obstetric history. We may have prevented three antepartum stillbirths, but logically, elective caesarean at term should be considered in all pregnancies if we wish to prevent all stillbirths after 39 weeks of gestation.

If we had implemented a policy of repeat elective caesarean section, we would have performed an additional 3129 repeat caesarean sections. We would also have committed these women to third, fourth and fifth

caesarean sections, etc. if they were to have more children in the future. Any increase in the incidence of repeat elective caesarean section at term has also a potential downside for the baby. The incidence of neonatal respiratory problems, for example, increases after elective caesarean section compared with that after a vaginal delivery, irrespective of gestation (Turner *et al.*, 2006, pp.730-731, emphasis added).

There is substantial unequivocal data within Turner *et al.*, and it is not an isolated, maverick publication. A similar example is found in a study of vaginal birth after multiple caesareans (VBAMC) from the *European Journal of Obstetrics & Gynaecology and Reproductive Biology*. It reads,

Elective repeat caesarean section is not the only answer to a woman with two or three previous caesarean sections. A trial of labour can be a safe option for a selected group of women (Spaansa *et al.*, 2003, p.16).

In light of the latter study in particular, there is a reasonable question around why the vertical, expert wisdom - as articulated within the VBAC guidelines of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (ACOG) - is as it is. The ACOG guidelines state that,

For women with 2 prior cesarean deliveries, only those with a prior vaginal delivery should be considered candidates for a spontaneous trial of labor (ACOG, 2004, p.204).

The critique of the ACOG position - the reasonable question as to why - is taken up by Kmom, a cyber birth activist who - as with Goer's work on caesarean section (Goer, 2007) - exhibits a comprehensive proficiency in the use of the master's research tools and a transgressive use of a horizontal, web-based choice of democratic, amateuristic communication, which demonstrates a guerrilla resistance and the seeding of contrapuntal, horizontal epistemology at its best. Kmom's comments on the ACOG protocol provide some reasonable insights into the machinations of hegemony and expert power. Kmom's critique, which canvasses Spaansa *et al.* amongst a multitude of other data and literature, suggests that,

... by choosing to highlight only [one] study, [ACOG] neglected the many other studies that found much *lower* risks for uterine rupture ... In summary, the new ACOG guidelines based its new ban on VBA2C

almost entirely on the results of one study (which was extremely small and whose results were significantly out of line with other studies), while completely ignoring or dismissing other, larger studies on the topic ... in the current litigious climate, doctors have gotten even more skittish about VBACs. Since most [obstetricians] are not familiar with the wide spectrum of VBAMC data and the small ... study was heavily publicized, many perceive VBAMCs as “too risky”. Because ACOG is at heart a trade union to protect the interests of its members, revised guidelines have now been adopted that give its members legal grounds to justify avoiding VBAMCs (Kmom, 2007).

As Ngugi (1986) and others have told us, and as Kmom reminds us through her guerrilla assault on expertise, the machinations of hegemony are the technologies of the colonisation of the mind. The objections to the substance of that colonisation, which Kmom raises, problematise and resist the foundations of the locus of expert authority, the need for expert authority, and the mandate for the kind of expert surveillance and intervention that we find with continuous electronic monitoring. As well, there is a denunciation of vertical, autoreferential or filiative certification, pedagogy and knowledge dissemination within that resistance. And we can mould from that denunciation the proposition that the dissemination of vertical epistemology is the spread of power, whilst the dissemination of horizontal epistemology is the spread of democracy and the dispersal of power and empowerment.

6.3.6/ Writing Back.

The modern, binarised order of things and specialisations, and the exclusive, discursive boundaries, identities and loveless apartheidisms which constitute the Cartesian, liberal commitment to separation and the tunnel-vision of reductionism, are demonstrably suboptimal and partial technologies, and pretentious and miscalculating supplications to technocracy. The suboptimisation inherent in specialisation casts expert systems of knowledge as being cultural and infinitely improbable systems of governance via the error and incomplete miscalculation inherent in a modern epistemic malaise. It is this particular malaise which appears to be intimately entwined with subjugating systems of dominance and alienation, which are hegemonically saturating, and which serve no real purpose apart from providing a monological mask of ontological security which serves to calcify

investments in authority, legitimate knowledge and both discursive and material manifestations of power. Such calcification obfuscates the potentiality for more optimising agency and dialogues, or for other forms of authority and authoritative knowledge.

With its attention to contingency and its relationship to a reinvigorated category of humanity embedded within new, hybrid subjectivities, postcolonial theory performs an operation of dialectical conflation and collapse which provides the conditions for a reclaimed sense of agency. A postcolonial epistemology, a postcolonial agency, and a postcolonial sense of love constitute a rationale for a process of advocacy. The refusal of a fixed, universal logic by postcolonial theory means that such a process is always limited and demands a dialogical and transformative attention to the local as opposed to the monological dictate from the expert's pulpit that hierarchical and dialectical relationships allow. This is the stuff of worldliness – of seeing the situation-as-text as located within a nexus of specificities and out-of-tunnel-view contingencies, and of giving prominence to the interactions and transformations at the local and particular moment. A concept of worldliness attaches us to those moments and gives us political agency. That agency is, primarily, a manifestation of a horizontal responsibility to the contingent relationships which constitute community or, as Said puts it, “some sense of responsibility to a community which is not a specialized group” (Said, cited in Wicke and Sprinker, 1992, p.243).

It is this worldly responsibility - this solidarity without exclusive separation or speciality - which is the amateurism and the *agape* of the Left's collective undead. It is a responsibility to small things, soft narratives and to the Nietzschean “gay science” (Nietzsche, 1974) of contorting and weakening ontology. This amateurism is, at its heart, the art of picking up and using pliable, limited and local artefacts, be they the master's tools or the tools of other authorities. It is about soft ontology and horizontal epistemology. It is about fostering a horizontal epistemology which forges a place within the epistemological landscape for other transformative, *appropriate* and *effective* (and consequently efficient) authorities which the strong boundaries of modern, expert ontology seek to preclude.

The notion of responsibility to community is a quintessentially Left wing concept – it is an attention to collectivity and to structure. The kind of communities that

an amateuristic politics responds to and advocates for are those which are structurally disadvantaged by the processes of expert and hegemonic colonisation and suzerainty. They are those communities which exist as other, which are constructed as deviant or pathological, and which are put at remedial, self-fulfilling and cascading risk by *inappropriate* colonial administration and treatment. They are the communities of the colonised. An amateuristic responsibility to community and horizontal knowledge recognises a worldliness of the other-as-text and of the body-as-text which disallows an acceptance of the objectivity and mythological power of expert discourses, and makes a worldly demand for horizontal authority and contrapuntality. In regards to the expert colonisation and theft of birth, Davis-Floyd and Sargent speak to this notion of horizontal authority:

I think that what we need to think about is how we can move from a situation in which authoritative knowledge is hierarchically distributed into a situation where it is, by consensus, horizontally distributed – that is, where all participants in the labor and birth contribute to the store of knowledge on the basis of which decisions are made (Davis-Floyd and Sargent, 1996, p.111).

This is a question of participatory rather than professional legitimacy. It is a question of refusing the modern hierarchies which are embedded within a liberal, binarising logic which allows and constructs strong ontological categories of vertical expertise and homotextual, disciplinary identity based on a discursive, colonising and auto-legitimising process of othering. It is a matter of picking up the master's pen and advocating through - and facilitating - a process of contrapuntal writing back. It is about a parodic, uncanny mimicry: it certainly entails proficiency within dominant terms of reference. But within that framework - *from within* - it is about contorting the boundaries of the authoritative and legitimate.

Around birth, that writing back comes from democratic, transgressive heretics: these forces are channelled through women-centred advocates, organisations and activists. This is the heresy - the tradition steeped in witchcraft - and the power of women's business: it is the transformative force of subjugated, other knowledge. As we have seen with the example of the Hindmarsh Island Bridge Royal Commission (1995), heretical writing back is impotent unless it is undertaken

with the master's pen – unless it is the kind of strategically uncanny mimicry which produces the transformative emergence of the unfamiliar within the familiar (the other within the self)" (Pritchard, 2000, p.4). The uncanny must be mastered if the heretic is to succeed in epistemological or theological discombobulation.

The heretical energy around birthing rights is born of people and institutions who are proficient within the terms of the master's or insider's mainstream epistemological practices, but who often locate themselves outside of the realm of those practices in democratically, dialogically and interactively public, accessible and less priestly or clerical spaces from which they write *back in*. They inhabit that negotiated epistemological crucible which Davis-Floyd and Sargent exemplify by reference to midwifery-based systems that involve lateral sharing of authoritative knowledge between mother and midwife" (Davis-Floyd and Sargent, 1996, p.117). This frames progressive midwifery well as dialogical, negotiated therapy, in contradistinction to a more normative, impositional and monological model of medical treatment or administration. It is the negotiation around authoritative knowledge - the proficient promotion and promulgation of the potential and products of a local nexus and nucleus of knowledge - that casts progressive midwifery as amateurism *par excellence*, and that casts midwifery as a worldly art of small things.

Within progressive midwifery as a manifestation of the broader women's health movement, and as the state-sanctioned and regulated embodiment of birth activism which writes and seeps upwards from within civil society, the lateral sharing of knowledge - the nurturing of that contrapuntal and dialogical knowledge which is born of listening rather than prescribing - orbits around the concept of "woman centred care" at the vanguard of policy reform. Woman centred care exists in stark juxtaposition to traditional medical models of birth management, or "medicine centred treatment". It exists in contrast to the prophylactic, proforma protocols of intervention, monitoring (continuous, electronic or otherwise) and evaluation, which are the grand, universalising medico-legal narratives of technocracy, presumed failure and inherent deficiency. In a worldly way which really creates no opportunity for the application of an expert or abstract template, woman centred care heretically refuses a belief in

dominant, invested representations of deficiency and incapacity, and focuses on individual women's needs and on the unique aspirations which exist within local, immediate situations: there is an attention to the worldly uniqueness of each body-as-text's situatedness. Woman centred care steps outside of techno-mythology and, where practical and appropriate, deploys a re-evaluation of the evidence, rituals and superstitions on which hegemonic orthodoxy is predicated. It does this as an outcome optimising impulse. This organic impulse and these principles exist within progressive health policy as a nascent and largely untapped nucleus of amateuristic principles within public policy. Within the health policy of the South Australian Government, the philosophy around woman centred care is articulated through a set of principles which underpin the Midwifery Group Practice Program within the Women's and Children's Hospital. These principles state:

In Midwifery Group Practice, 'Woman Centred Care':

- Focuses on the woman's individual, unique needs, expectations and aspirations rather than the needs of the institutions or professions involved.
- Recognises women's rights to self determination in terms of choice, control and continuity of care from a known caregiver or caregivers.
- Encompasses the needs of the foetus/baby, the woman's family, her significant others and community as identified and negotiated by the woman herself.
- Follows the woman across the interface between institutions and the community, through all phases of pregnancy, birth and after the birth of her baby. It therefore involves collaboration with other health professionals when necessary.
- is 'holistic' in terms of addressing the woman's social, emotional, physical, psychological, spiritual and cultural needs and expectations (Government of South Australia, 2007a).

The appeal to holism is interesting here. It foregrounds a paradigmatic principle which is at odds with traditional principles of expert reductionism. It underpins a blueprint for care which is at odds with models of specialisation, professional silos of expertise, and the loveless apartheid of medical separations. This aligns with an affiliative ontological shift and consequent epistemological shift away from isolated autoreferentiality. We have seen this shift further articulated within

the South Australian Generational Health Review (Government of South Australia, 2003).

The principles around woman centred care are evidence-based dimensions of public policy, predicated on midwifery-led challenges to traditional assumptions around protocols and practices, and to hegemonic readings of the evidence. They are principles which constitute an active amateurism, and which augment and reinforce a demonstration of the practical utility of a worldly postcolonial amateurism and theory from a policy perspective. As nascent as the active policy utility of the nucleus of amateuristic principles within public policy may be, the networks of alternative authorities and the nexus of horizontal epistemology and communities which drive the evolution of that nucleus constitute a burgeoning community and impulse within civil society - a resistance and democratisation - which is born of and articulated by the kind of writing back which underpins and has historically underpinned decolonisation and anti-imperialist struggles. Davis-Floyd taps into this notion of resistance by - and decolonisation of - disempowered and subjugated communities of structural disadvantage and self-fulfilling pathology. She says,

As an anthropologist I can see that our present birthing system has meaning and a purpose within its cultural context which serves it well, but as a human and a woman I can see that there are other meanings, other purposes which would be better served. The anomalies resolved by obstetrical rituals under the technological model could also be resolved, perhaps even more successfully, by the replacement of that model with one which honors both the birth process and the female body. In the current challenges to the conceptual hegemony of the technological model, we are seeing our core value system questioned in ways that may eventually result in significant social reform (Davis-Floyd 1990, p.187).

Against a ritualistic adherence to the hegemony of technocracy, its demagogic imagery around machines, and its monsterisation of natural processes, Davis-Floyd advocates

... a paradigm of healing based on a definition of the human body as an organism ... stress[ing] the importance of kindness, of touch, and of caring ... [and of] connection: the connection of the patient to the

multiple aspects of herself, her family, her society, and her health care practitioners (Davis-Floyd, 2001, p.7).

This idea of connection functions on a number of levels as a corrective to modern acts of separation. The connections which Davis-Floyd canvasses are important, but so too are others which have been obscured by obstetric operations of separation. Davis-Floyd and Davis put this into relief:

The history of Western obstetrics is the history of technologies of separation. We've separated milk from breasts, mothers from babies, fetuses from pregnancies, sexuality from procreation, pregnancy from motherhood (Davis-Floyd and Davis, 1996, p.237).

The idea of care and connection – of the care and connection which counters separation - connects us back to our thoughts on the postcolonial death of ogerishness and separatist logic, and it connects us back to the postcolonial themes of love, *agape*, and soft ontological contortionism. It reminds us – remembering our thoughts on stealing motherhood – that *separation is theft*: it is the technology through which the power of expertise is translated into alienation and violence. The role of the amateur in social reform is to resist that violence through a persistence with a contorting love - to keep the contest over hegemony alive and discombobulated by continually, proficiently, contrapuntally and heretically writing back, and by not letting hegemony coalesce around a vertical or filiative expertise driven by a relentlessly imperialistic, linear and autoreferential writing forwards.

6.4/ Conclusion: May the Force be with You.

Amateurism is about embracing softness and the recognition that a rigorous attention to optimising outcomes is at odds with a liberal defence of position and ego. In a postcolonial and contrapuntal way, amateurism is about enhancement and learning through criticism, and about diversifying, democratising and indemnifying the input into the fund of knowledge, rather than insisting on a pretentious omniscience and omnipotence which sub-optimises outcomes and democratic participation.

It is against the pretension of the specialists' hegemony that amateurism deploys its particular brand of heresy, resistance and advocacy. This deployment is always about a horizontal responsibility to a structurally defined community. The

amateur's responsibility to those communities constitutes the kind of advocacy that refuses and strategically contorts the loveless liberal belief in the autonomous realm of "their business". The effect of that refusal is to carve a space for a non-paternalistic and non-universalising agent and a horizontal epistemology centred around the category of humanity.

The hegemony of medical expertise is comfortably established within debate around health and health policy. Nonetheless, there are heretical voices of dissent around the periphery of that ontological security, breaching the sanctity of technologies of certification which codify and enshrine orthodoxy. Amongst these heretical protests, a broadly sociological approach to health tells us that there are problems with expertise – problems to which vertical epistemologies are blind, and which are obscured by strong ontological structures. As the amateur would always agree, and as our sociological approach to health tells us, faith in experts is always misplaced. A *worldly*, sociological model of health recognises that health is about structure. It recognises that health is complex, and it demonstrates that a complex world is no place for modern expert narratives and the Cartesian remove. Complexity demands a softness, a contrapuntality, and an amateurism. It demands an eclectic and transcendent horizontal epistemology.

Vertical, expert epistemologies and technologies are the products of pretentious, strong, normative ontologies. This verticality and hegemonic pretension is both the discursive strength and the shaky ontological foundation of expert epistemologies, prescriptions and treatment. That shakiness exemplifies the way in which the discursive manufacturing of strong ontology begs an incredulity which forges a space and strategic possibility for a contrapuntal and amateur attention to more worldly, circumstantial, located and alternative guerrilla explanations, and to softer, intersecting and permeable narratives spoken from the always and already present interstitial sites of contestation which hegemony contains.

As far as the expert production of the hegemonic imagination goes, we can think of the medicalisation or pathologisation of difference as the social construction of illness – where something which is not essentially, inherently, transcultural or transhistorically guaranteed to be clinically recognised is labelled as a health problem. Remembering the role of discourse in the construction of hegemony, we

ought to note that pathologisation is a product of representations of otherness which are facilitated by the discursive stance or gaze which a Cartesian remove underpins. One of the problems here, in terms of health outcomes, is the ramifying, cascading and uncontrollable mess of unworldly technocratic pugilism which stems from modern, expert discourses, representations and suzerain administration.

The technocratic gaze of continuous electronic monitoring demonstrates the way in which the expert's ritualistic and manifest desire for technical control produces outcomes which run counter to expert statements of claims around discourses of control and outcome optimisation, and around protection from monsters. Continuous electronic monitoring is a technology of medical control which is wedded to the medical paradigm of birth – a paradigm predicated on a belief in the impending malfunction of the deficient other and the need for “colonial administration” performed as technical and expert surveillance, support, augmentation, rectification and treatment. As with all protocols of colonial administration, continuous electronic monitoring is a subjugating operation: it is done *to*, not *with*.

As continuous electronic monitoring is a methodologically monological undertaking rather than a process based on dialogue and contrapuntality - as it is part of an administration which is steadfast in its verticality and strongly guarded against horizontal incursions across its professional boundaries - there is little room to suspect that its service of the paradigms, administrations and protocols of medicine would produce anything other than sub-optimal outcomes for its subjugated subjects. As Said demonstrated in *Orientalism* (1978), representations have material effects and they underpin relationships of power, within which expertise is inclined to be a project of optimising outcomes *for the expert*. And, indeed, outcomes around the unworldly protocol of continuous electronic monitoring - and the general field of medicalised and surgical birth - are demonstrably suboptimal for the colonised, represented parties.

The pretension and arrogance of strong ontology and vertical epistemology is the sub-optimising folly of expertise. An amateuristic resistance to this folly makes a worldly demand for horizontal authority and contrapuntality. This is a question of participatory rather than professional legitimacy. It is a question of refusing the

modern hierarchies which are embedded within a liberal, binarising logic which allows and constructs strong ontological categories of vertical expertise and homotextual disciplinary identity, based on a discursive, colonising and auto-legitimising process of othering. It is a matter of picking up the master's pen and advocating through, and facilitating, a process of contrapuntal writing back.

Around birth, those challenges and that writing back come from transgressive, democratic and heretical practices. This heresy is the transformative force of subjugated, other knowledge which we see performed by progressive (or ~~native~~) midwifery and active birth advocates. It is a worldly art of small things which speaks to policy, which speaks to theory and which, in its articulation of small, local and worldly narratives, *speaks the truth to power*. This is a speech which constitutes a responsibility to community, democratisation and humanity. It is the voice of an anti-imperialist struggle, predicated on a contorted, postcolonial lovemaking and a postcolonial love. It is a struggle against the expertise of technocracy by a more human force. It is a struggle against a modern assault on the world through its separations and its externalities, and this struggle resonates with our opening sentiments from Darth Vader's caution: ~~Don't~~ "Don't be too proud of this technological terror you've constructed. The ability to destroy a planet is insignificant next to the power of the Force".

7/ THINKING AT THE LIMIT: THE AMATEUR AND THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC TRADITION

7.1/ The Economy is a Worldly Text, Stupid.

By Hall's analysis, postcolonialism is "thinking at the limit" (Hall, 1996a). Nothing could better capture the essence of amateurism's unboundedness, and the applicability of Hall's description of postcolonialism to a methodology of amateurism underscores the indebtedness that an amateuristic methodology has to postcolonial theorising. But there is another dimension to this idea of being at the limit, and that is where we have to synthesise a concept of unboundedness with one of progressiveness. Where amateurism encounters policy, it thinks at the limit in two important ways: it undoes the loveless technologies of traditional houses and institutions, and it positions itself - emerging from the rubble of a history of Left politics - as *the* progressive vehicle for contemporary Left criticism, policy and praxis. It is when the amateur takes the reigns of the social democratic tradition and takes that tradition to the limit that we forge a sustainable history for the Left.

That amateurism requires a horizontal or democratic commitment to epistemology is clear, and so - with reference to our examinations of a heretical discombobulation of authoritative medical knowledge - we can understand the "democracy" part of the "social democracy" construct as far as the reinvigoration of an amateuristic Left history or tradition goes. But the notion of the social needs reworking. It needs wrenching from its socialist foundations, but it needs to keep a very strong attachment to the idea of social structure or communities of disadvantage. These communities can be defined in many and varied ways. They intersect and they overlap. At times they reinscribe one another, and at times the relationship is more one of erasure. These are the dynamics of a Venn diagram model of culture, of the type we deployed in our examination of overlapping histories and intertwined territories. The relationship of such dynamics and such

communities to a new concept of the social and a contemporary and tenable tradition of social democracy is alluded to by Omi and Winant, who proclaim,

The racial, gender and sexuality movements have survived and the socialist movement has not. Socialism was complicit in the Enlightenment project; it colluded fatally with statism, centralized control, and, ultimately, repression. By contrast, racialized and gendered others, as well as sexuality and the body in general, were banished from the Enlightenment, which enthroned Europe as the seat of reason and legitimated conquest with the hierarchical logic of domination (Omi and Winant, 1994, p.132).

It is with an attention to these surviving movements which have outlived the usefulness of an old Left socialist remit, and with an attention to Aronowitz's (1994) proposal that the old Left be abandoned in favour of a new, radical democracy, that the ideas of the social and the democratic within social democracy intersect, and they intersect around the idea of an unbounding of the other from the status of outsider. They intersect around a progressive Left politics of contingency, interconnection and *agape*. For democracy to be a truly social activity, it needs to give the advantage of inclusivity to those groups who are represented by movements which engage with that project of emancipatory breaking in – to those groups who are otherwise ontologically otherised. And so the feminist, the post-colonial, the queer and such related movements are emblematic of the central concerns and central resources of a new Left commitment to social democracy.

The idea of inclusivity - the notion of handing over a share of the master's assets in terms of his rights, his privileges and his tool kit - is a many headed and multifaceted beast, but it is a beast which must be courted if there is to be any hope of democratising speech or of empowering a capacity to speak the truth to power. It is a beast which continually taunts with Spivakian whispers about the muted subaltern (Spivak, 1988), but it is not a beast to be frightened of. We will return to the business of combating that fear, but in the first instance, the key to distinguishing an effective new Left direction - or turn towards social democracy - which mitigates that fear is to frame a focus on the fulfilment of substantive citizenship as a first principle for social democracy, or for the process of social democratisation. This is in opposition to a more functionalist social inclusion

model of capacity building as an empowerment model of social justice. The former avoids the latter's problematic association with the practice of imposing inclusion on the excluded, instead fostering and facilitating a self-determined citizenship which safeguards rights to choose. By way of expanding on the idea of substantive citizenship, Chesterman and Galligan provide a simple explanation of the concept. They say,

The substantive part of citizenship ... entails membership of the person in the political community and the social and economic ability of that person to function reasonably well. That requires positive and specific government policies to redress disadvantages suffered by members of marginalized groups, so that they can participate and function as full members of the political community and of society (Chesterman and Galligan, 1997, p.7).

A new Left foregrounding of substantive citizenship and *membership* is a Left turn which emphasises pragmatism over ideology by focussing on an overarching principle of sustainability. It sits uncomfortably with the normative and victim blaming logic of a mutual obligation model of social inclusion offered by the Third Way, which cannot address inequality without creating further injustices of subjugation, and which cannot proceed without sewing the seeds of discontent, exclusion through inclusion, and overall instability and unsustainability. The Third Way, as an exemplar of a wrong turn for the Left, still inhabits a spectrum defined not only by mutuality, but by further manipulations of citizenship and subjectivity too. It inhabits a spectrum defined at its poles by socialism and liberalism, and defined at its heart by an ideological struggle over the definition of what constitutes the appropriate, modern economic unit. To find a middle ground is not to escape ideology, or a tired struggle between modern ideologies – it is to reinscribe it. The Left needs to think squarely about a new pragmatic frame of reference described - along an alternative axis - by the social, and cognisant of the worldly contingencies of a political whole. It needs to re-deploy its historical and progressive critical focus on ontologically and epistemologically conservative values.

A new Left direction needs to depart from the confluence of Left and Right on economic policy. Following Williams' *Base and superstructure in Marxist cultural theory* (1973), a new Left direction needs to mark itself by progressive

and proactive social policy as a first principle, recognising the containment of the base by the superstructure in a way that economically determined models of policy have never been able to do when they approach the economy as the main game. A new Left direction predicated on progressive social policy is pragmatic and post-ideological. It sees division and inequality as *counter forces to sustainability*, and it sees sustainability (in a socio-ecological and wholistic way which renders the base and superstructure as mutually constitutive) as the only reasonable foundation for prosperity, security and progress. A new Left progressive social policy should seek to fix the rent in the social fabric towards which the Right have divisively diverted and distracted our energies through their nonsensical relationship with collectivity which manifests itself on the one hand as a rampant liberal loathing of the state and on the other as a rabid, conservative and xenophobic masturbation of the nation.

A new Left social policy needs to engage with the politics of collectivity and identity through affirmative action. In the context of the post-colonial, it needs to affirm reconciliation as a first principle. It celebrates the diffusion of dominance and the release of diverse, invigorating and amateuristic energies which are the wealth and undercurrent of our heritage. It is about choices, not prescriptions. It is about questioning rule by experts and asking, “whose expert?” This is why a new Left politics must be obsessed with the horizontalising of authority and the democratisation of knowledge, power and empowerment which a focus on substantive equality of citizenship facilitates and demands.

A new Left direction needs to recognise that a society which does not place reasonable, tangible and strong parameters around inequality and disparity - in terms of access to dialogue, membership and the fulfilment of potential for self determination and self realisation - is a society which has no clear indicators by which to measure prosperity or understand security and sustainability. Such a society misapprehends the dimensions of its own contentedness and safety, because the discontented and the disempowered are, mutedly, the same. A new Left politics recognises that all liberties are related and interconnected. It recognises that liberty is a worldly phenomenon, and one which is broadly contingent upon social justice at large. In other words, a new Left politics is in the business of justice and of love. This is a love that can be articulated in

innumerable ways – from the *bhakti* of the Hindu tradition to the Platonic notion of *agape*, to name two of the ways in which we have framed the Left wing bond to humanity which postcolonial theory - and the art of amateurism - facilitates and captures so well. Kevin Rudd, Australian Prime Minister and leader of the federal parliamentary Australian Labor Party expresses the love of the Left in other terms. Wresting the Christian tradition from the clutches of Right wing social conservatives - whose morality and politics are bound up and melded with a neoliberal obsession with the self and individual salvation, and whose obsession with personal salvation is, in turn, bound up with an evangelical moralising - Rudd reclaims the Christian gospel for the Left and for social justice. Rudd frames the love in terms of the Gospel. At once, he frames the social democratic tradition of the Australian Labor Party in terms of a progressive connection and love. He says,

What I am saying is that from a social gospel tradition, or a Christian socialist tradition, what you see in the gospel is a strong emphasis on the impoverished, the poor, the dispossessed, the outcast, the oppressed. What we've sought to do, in that tradition of Christianity and politics, is to say that one of the functions of the Christians in politics is to speak on their behalf, to speak for those who do not have a voice. Therefore when you look, for example, at global poverty today, who speaks for them? Who speaks for those who are currently suffering all sorts of human rights oppression around the world? Who speaks for the planet itself, which is currently subject to this enormous challenge called global climate change? That's where the contemporary challenge lies with this tradition of social justice (Rudd, cited in Jones, 2006).

Elsewhere, Rudd puts the social gospel tradition's respect for and appreciation of worldly contingency and humanity even more succinctly. He says,

... the progressive values of equity, community and sustainability concern others as much as they do ourselves (Rudd, 2006, p.28).

That progressiveness and love cannot help but be predicated on a post-ideological vision which reaches beyond the Left and Right of the modern and loveless clash of economic ideas and towards the provision of full substantive citizenship - towards, in other words, a progressive national imagination and civic identity which slips the knot of any exploitive and exclusive past to facilitate a progressive

and sustainable future. In this it finds a departure from the convergence of politics and a subsequent degeneration into populism and vacuous social policy which entrenches division, exclusion and the unreflexive repudiation of the wealth of our sovereign social democratic heritage.

A new Left based on the politics of social policy and affirmative action has scope to accept, recognise, harness and temper the advantages of economic liberalism – the processes of dialogue, negotiation and innovation which it underpins, and its role in facilitating an emergence from the tensions of the old Left: tensions between liberty and equality and between, in so many cases, objectives and outcomes. The Left is at its best when it escapes these tensions and when it is post-ideological - when it borrows from, paradoxically mimics and tempers the best that liberalism has to offer. Conversely, a progressive post-ideological politics is at its worst when it submissively apes what liberalism has to offer. A politics of identity and substantive citizenship - a worldly and social politics which invites amateuristic dialogue - is the fissure between best and worst practice in that regard. Such a sustainable politics can only be realised through aggressive affirmative action policies, building on the benefits of post-ideological pragmatism, but employing and tempering its effects with extreme sovereign social democratic prejudice.

Balanced social policy erases the concept of a triple bottom line – a flawed and impotent concept, and a process of separation and extrication which facilitates a marginalisation that reinscribes the singularity of the economic bottom line. That singularity can only be undone or weakened by allowing it to be subsumed by the social. There are short term economic gains to be made from imagining that the economic and the social can be extricated from one another – from imagining that separations obtain, and that there are, indeed, autarkic realms of discreet, specialised provinces. This is a very modern, very binary logic, and it is not without its seduction. There are immediate benefits, in financial terms, to marginalisation, inhumanity and *foregoing the cost of care*. But pursuing such benefits necessitates an unworldly ignoring and externalising of the social costs which inhumanity produces, which ultimately hinder economic activity and hinder sustainability. There is, in this thinking, something of a sympathy for Titmuss' gift (Titmuss, 1971), and gifts are something to which we will return. There is a

refusal, moreover, to believe that an endless investment in prisons, medications and airport security systems is a sustainable remedy for society's discontents. The flip-side of a profit is a loss, and as costs are offset into disadvantaged collectives, the enemy is bred: representations beget and become reality. A new Left direction predicated on a worldly amateurism and an attention to the social needs to be cognisant of these calculations.

There is, again in this thinking and in regards to appropriate calculations, an acceptance that social discontents produce economic costs and hinder economic activity. The logic of inhumanity is unsustainable - its benefits are insecure in the longer term. The logic, in other words, of the absence of care which presents in the extrication of the economic from the social and the elevation of the economic over the social, is unsustainable. Modern systems of separation, extrication, strong ontology and removal constitute, as is familiar to us by now, an untenable and unsustainable ignorance of contingency and the constitutive outside. The structures within which vertical epistemologies and isolated considerations fester are the untenable obstacles to democratisation and care. They are the blinkers of separation and specialisation which allow a tolerance of inhumanity, and it is the blinkered, exclusive tunnel vision of modernity and expertise which constitutes the inhuman unworldliness of the Right. In response to this victim producing and unworldly, victim blaming, liberal and conservative inhumanity of extrication and removal, Macintyre offers the following critical response to mutual obligation as a model of social welfare. He says,

[A] holistic approach to welfare means that the community is answerable to itself rather than the individual accountable to the state. It should also mean that the tired arguments about the obligations of some will be replaced by a new recognition of the responsibilities of us all (Macintyre, 1999, p.118).

The basic message here is that a view from the Left, of structure, contingency and collectivity, which apprehends disadvantage, responsibility and humanity, is totally at odds with liberal fixations on individual accountability and extrication, as it is with conservative exclusions from the ontological whole, and as it is with Third Way models of inclusion through obligation, which constitute a wrong turn for the Left. The denunciation of inhumanity and a call for sustainability through

humanity which resonates here - as an appeal, in effect, to a category of humanity - is a very worldly affair. It is an appeal to a worldly humanity, or to a worldliness, to inclusive calculations, and to appropriate measurements of prosperity. Such is the worldliness, the humanity, and the priority of the Left. After all, the economy is a worldly text, stupid.

And if we're back thinking about the economy, contingency and the constitutive outside, we're back to almost where we began. We're back with Mitchell and his very worldly, very postcolonial critique of expertise. If we remind ourselves of comments by Mitchell which we have canvassed previously, we come neatly back home via a full Left circle, and we note that what we call stupidity, Mitchell frames more charitably as impossibility:

The constraints, understandings, and powers that frame the economic act, and the economy as a whole, and thus make the economy possible, at the same time render it incomplete. They occur as a strange phenomenon, the constitutive outside. They are an interior-exterior, something both marginal and central, simultaneously the condition of possibility of the economy and the condition of its impossibility (Mitchell, 2002, p.291).

But can this kind of Left orientated worldliness be sold on a practical, pragmatic electoral level? Can it really inform policy? Perhaps the answer is that such a Saidian concept can only be given life, befittingly, through paradox. A system which produces and reproduces inequality also produces the chance of great wealth and the promise of happiness, along with its corollary, the liberal individualistic victim blaming myth of merit and undeserving which produces in the victim (and the advantaged) the cultural and moral imagination of the need to help oneself. Policy based on equality potentially fails by virtue of opposition from those who reap the benefit of inequality, and by virtue of such opposition from those who do not, for equality is not necessarily seen as the absence of abjection by the abjected but, in all likelihood, as the absence of opportunity. Such is the colonising nature of the neo-liberal dream - people are enslaved by their illusory love of freedom, and by their moral imagination. Ironically, new Left directions towards policies of equality need to be sold to the already advantaged in society, as investments in the sustainability and security which underpin their further social and economic progress and wealth. This is the

paradox and perversion which the Left must learn. This is the lesson of worldliness and the lesson of amateurism.

There is nothing in this idea - in any of this new Left thinking - that is revolutionary. There is only a re-statement of an old axiom – that taxation buys civilisation: functional societies require investments in the social. Unworldliness is an imagined and unsustainable pretence – it can't actually be achieved, and never has been. The economy is an inescapably worldly text, and a social democracy which moves beyond Left and Right, or which attunes itself to a new, post-ideological Left, is merely an embracing of circumstance – a working with the grain in historically new ways, through an old tradition.

If we connect the idea of working with the grain and the idea of sustainability through affirmative action back to birth and health policy, we should start by reminding ourselves that Left values direct us towards a recognition that health needs to be conceptualised in terms of health inequalities, and that such inequalities and their outcomes are structural issues. The concept of population health and a population-based approach - along with the entwined focus on structural inequalities in health - suggests a rationale for adopting two important principles of the Left to effect optimal health care. These principles are self-determination (as a commitment to soft, small, local narratives), or a refusal to have authority otherwise (or grandly) determined, and *a public commitment to investment in affirmative action* to empower such substantive determination and to seed and invigorate policy and civil society.

We have noted something of the progressive impulses within the South Australian Generational Health Review as a policy document. By allowing us to move away from thinking about the acute care of individuals, and by focussing on the issue of population health, the Generational Health Review provides scope to investigate new health outcomes, policies and practices, broadly consistent with the horizontalising and contrapuntal principles of participation and inclusion as an empowerment model of health, based on self-determination. This bottom-line principle needs to be reinscribed and reclaimed in full in regards to Indigenous health if health policy is to be anything other than expert, colonial administration, and it needs to be reclaimed in full as a principle for engaging with other population-based health issues too, such as women's health. We see through that

latter example that the inclusion, participation and determinations of “native” authority are rich in capacity to optimise health outcomes and efficiencies. But we should not be so partial or miscalculating as to suppose that a new tradition of thinking at the limit is the business of any emblematic policy area in particular. These are, after all, the larger concerns of smaller things.

7.2/ A Beast which Must be Courted.

Affirmative action as conceived of here is formative of a position of substantive citizenship from which self determination can flow, or from which it - in the spirit of the native interlocutor - can enter into, discombobulate and heretically seed a horizontal dynamic to ensure that it is part of a dialogue which underpins the impossibility of determining otherwise, or determining through grand, vertical and exclusive dictates of expert administration. Affirmative action, in this sense, is a commitment to the empowerment of soft, small and local narratives, and a commitment to soft, pliable epistemological artefacts. Affirmative action follows a worldly impulse and a commitment to amateur epistemologies in its attention to structural situation and circumstance. Substantive citizenship, in this light, is a point in process and a means to a transformative end, as opposed to the assimilationist end point in itself aspired to by social inclusionists. Further, it is a principle which is committed to weakening exclusive ontology and self-invested systems of belonging. A politics of substantive citizenship is about optimising or democratising the democratic process such that it is a forum within which meaningful and empowered questions and critiques around expertise and administration can be asked and offered. In other words, a substantive citizenship approach is about establishing a forum through which the amateur can write back, or launch a missive from the undead of the Left.

Linking to Omi and Winant’s comments on “racial, gender and sexuality movements”(Omi and Winant, 1994, p.132), Giroux articulates the imperative of a substantive citizenship focus on empowerment as the politics of resistance and the Left. Giroux’s comments are resonant of a therapeutic management of diversity which eschews the impulses of normativity inherent in the processes of colonial control, desire and administrative treatment. He says,

Struggles over the academic canon, the conflict over multiculturalism and the battle for either extending or containing the rights of new social

groups dominate the current political and ideological landscape (Giroux, 1992). What is at stake in these struggles far exceeds the particular interests that structure any one of them or the specific terrains in which they are subject to debate ... Underlying the proliferation of these diverse and various battles is a deeper conflict over the relationship between democracy and culture, on the one hand, and identity politics and the politics of representation on the other.

Central to this debate is an attempt to articulate the relationship between identity, culture and democracy in a new way ... [T]he questions raised by feminism, postmodernism and post-colonialism have contributed to a redefinition of cultural politics that addresses representational practices in terms that analyze not only their discursive power to construct common-sense, textual authority, and particular social and racial formations, but also the institutional conditions which regulate different fields of culture' (Bennett, 1992: 25) (Giroux, 1993, pp.1-2).

Extrapolating from these central points, Giroux goes on to draw the following conclusions:

As part of such a challenge, the political side of culture must be given primacy as an act of resistance and transformation by addressing issues of difference, identity, and textuality within rather than outside of the problematics of power, agency and history. The urgent issue here is to link the politics of culture to the practice of substantive democracy (Giroux, 1988). Stuart Hall and David Held (1990) foreground the importance of this task by arguing that any radical politics of representation and struggle must be situated within what they call a contemporary politics of citizenship'.

The value of such a politics is that it makes the complicated issue of difference fundamental to addressing the discourse of substantive citizenship; moreover, it favours looking at the conflict over the relations of power, identity and culture as central to a broader effort to advance the critical imperatives of a democratic society. Primary to such a struggle is rethinking and rewriting difference in relation to wider questions of membership, community and social responsibility (Giroux, 1993, pp.2-3).

A democratic society predicated on a substantive citizenship would constitute a kind of civic nation, membership and community within which a civic nationalism

of the type which Behrendt (2006) discusses could be invoked and deployed. Such a nationalism, such a nation, and such a citizenship, predicated on intersecting, colliding and contrapuntal fields of local and artefactual epistemology, and predicated on a weakening of exclusive ontology, would be one enriched and optimised by the processes of an emancipated amateurism, writing and speaking its truth into an organic and dynamic nexus of power in transformative, dialogical partnership. That kind of dialogue is the kernel of a form of sustainability within which the truth and power are entwined, related, limited, local, soft, worldly and artefactual.

We have rejected assimilationist models of inclusion and the kindred technologies of multiculturalism, which we investigated during our examination of legitimacy and illegitimacy, and which demonstrate a technology of separation and domination which strengthens and reinscribes the strong ontological divide between the legitimate and the illegitimate through tolerance. Nonetheless, there is still some life left in that beast, with its Spivakian taunts. There is still - though hugely mitigated by appeals to self determination and transformation over inclusion and obligation - more than a trace of dominance and assimilation in a model of affirmative action. There is still, to paraphrase from Pritchard's work on the Hindmarsh Island Royal Commission, an uncanny containment or smothering of the other by the nation (Pritchard, 2000). This is because the notion of substantive citizenship is, naturally, based on a notion of citizenship, and that notion of citizenship is an expression of culture through a set of dominant national referents. Within his work on the uncanny, Ahluwalia teases this out. He says,

At the very time when Anglo-European Australia appeared to be shedding its racist past by dealing with the indigenous population, it was more interested in self-redemption and atoning for its sins. Although proclaiming the dawn of a new era characterised by the recognition of Aboriginal people, it sought simultaneously to draw the indigenous population within its own unmistakably Anglo-European liberal referents. All the indigenous people could do was once again react to a discourse defined by their protagonists, those who had pursued a policy of obliteration and assimilation ... In an uncanny manner, the structures of colonialism reappeared at the very time that a post-colonial moment of reconciliation was being inaugurated ... at the very dawn of the post-

colonial moment, the structures of colonialism reappear uncannily (Ahluwalia, 2000, p.33).

This is a problematic which resonates in any consideration of substantive citizenship or affirmative action. It resonates within the haunting questions which orbit substantive empowerment: whose citizenship? Whose culture? There is the unavoidable fact within any model of citizenship, that it is a cultural construct. The question that a commitment to amateurism must carry, then, is one pertaining to how to let discourse be dialogical, of how to let the marginalised other into that conversation which has always been a conversation of us with us about them, where they are silenced and represented within the paternalistic confines of the logic of a dominant, powerful and disempowering imagination. How does one facilitate ~~an~~ "indigenous" narration of the affairs of nation/s such that the terms of reference are *determined* rather than pre-determined?

There is a problem with asking ~~whose~~ "truth / whose interest / whose expert / whose voice / whose capacity?", and with the implication that there are other truths which ought to contest and enter into dialogue with dominant assumptions and prescriptions such that substantive citizenships can be self-determined, empowered and fulfilled. Such questions can never be so pure as to ask ~~what~~ "what is your point of view?" in an abstract and equal sense. The enquiry can only ever be, ~~what~~ "what is your answer to my question?", or ~~tell me~~ "tell me what you think". An empowerment model of social justice and politics can only reinscribe its own dominant terms of reference in an uncanny and assimilationist manner which resembles the logic of tolerance, at the same moment in which it seeks to affirmatively allow a space for the marginal.

But even if a creole is not a creature of balance, it is still a lot more workable than a cacophony, more sustainable than an imperialistic hegemony, and a lot more pragmatic than distractions towards purity. Such distractions make silences inevitable. And if such distractions are avoided, and if an eschewing of dominant cultural referents is avoided, there is a potential for a powerfully acquiescent and transformative appropriation which avoids what Ashcroft and Ahluwalia call ~~the~~ "the overly simplistic conflation of resistance with oppositionality" (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 1999, p.105). Similarly, a refusal to engage with such distractions assists in moving past what Ashcroft has called the tendency to ~~imprison~~

resistance in an inward looking world ... [and a] deafening rage that cannot be heard” (Ashcroft, 2001, p.326).

That all things can be equal is a pretence, and probably one with its own set of problems. What is practical is a sense that dominant truths can be imperfectly weakened and examined, marginal truths can be imperfectly elevated, and reflexive, transformative and appropriating conversations can take place. And these imperfect conversations, as a site of resistance, are of critical importance if a deafening silence and rage is to be avoided - *better the secondary silences that come from being included within the terms of reference than the primary silences which come from being marginalised even from them*. Better to be ~~–assimilated~~ as a first step, and to contest and transform hegemony from within. Anything else is an impotent fetish for the paternalism of purity – the essentialising romanticisation of the mythical authentic, and it is at the point of these concerns that identity politics risks a wholesale degeneration. It can be a grotesque and arrogant manoeuvre of privilege to lament the dominant terms of reference. Affirmative action, if it is to be anything other than a penalty shot at a grotesque goal, is a question of allowing the other to use the master’s tools rather than saying ~~–you can be experts in your own house~~”.

To put this in other words, a commitment to resistance and amateurism, or to resistance through amateurism and participation, and to the democratisation of knowledge and the attenuation of exclusions, requires a full, uncanny equality of substantive citizenship. As we have noted, an amateuristic intention towards heretical writing back is impotent unless it is undertaken with the master’s pen – unless it is the kind of strategically uncanny mimicry which underpins the conditions for transformative epistemological discombobulation. That uncanny mimicry is necessarily a parodic performance within the dominant terms and frame of reference, but from within that framework, that performance sets about contorting the authority and legitimacy of the dominant.

Aptly couching resistance and the goals of social justice which underpin a politics of the Left in terms of reconciliation, Ahluwalia suggests that ~~–The uncanny must be overcome if any genuine process of reconciliation is to take place~~” (Ahluwalia, 2000, p.45). Ahluwalia links this overcoming to the concept of the gift, or to a post-colonial economy of giving, of breaking the cycle, of moving into the future

under the most magnanimous of terms. For Ahluwalia, this economy is personified and embodied in the insistence on a forward momentum for independence that was shouldered by Jomo Kenyatta and Nelson Mandela. But Ahluwalia makes the point that such an economy cannot be shouldered by individuals – it needs to be the economy of civil society. It needs to be the economy of the organic intellectuals. It needs to be, in other words, the economy of amateurism and a progressive, new and transformative citizenship. In his own words, Ahluwalia says,

It is this sense of transformation that becomes central to a post-colonial economy of giving. It is one recognising that cultures are not static but dynamic, and that they constantly appropriate from other cultures and, in the process, transform themselves. It is in this way that the post-colonial economy of giving seeks to break down the cycle of revenge ... and must be operationalised through a different conception of democratic citizenship (Ahluwalia, 2000, p.42).

For our purposes, this is far more than a post-colonial concern. To make the briefest allusion to the literature which attends to the hyphen in the post-colonial (see for example Ashcroft, 1996a), there are broader issues here than those which can be contained by temporal or geographical limitations. Ours are broadly postcolonial concerns. They are the concerns of anyone subjugated or excluded by systems of administration, organisation or expertise, and they are concerns relating to national or worldly repercussions around such experiences. They are the worldly business of the Left – of an economy of progress, resistance, transformations and of thinking at the limit. They are the concerns of anyone who cannot afford or cannot abide the luxury or the cleanliness of the strong ontological suggestion that the uncanny beast need not be courted. They are the concerns of an empowered, pragmatic and forward-focussed acquiescence: they are the business of the gift, and of the refusal of binary cycles of oppositionality.

7.3/ Conclusion: Back to the Start.

It is when the amateur de-limits the social democratic tradition that we forge a sustainable history for the Left. For democracy to be a truly social activity, it needs to be horizontally and inclusively structured via an adherence and commitment to the first principle of full and broad substantive citizenship. That

democracy, and that citizenship, is enmeshed within and inextricably linked to a concept of sustainability, and such a sustainability is predicated on a commitment, through social policy and affirmative action, to draw in and include the heretical and the other: this is the stuff of the amateuristic principles of horizontal epistemology, soft ontology and progressive discombobulation, and of allowing a transformative shared wealth to generate and germinate. A new Left politics drawn from the largely postcolonial principles of amateurism is - in its service of a category of humanity, and in a worldly, post-ideological way which disallows inhumanity - in the very postcolonial business of love. And the business of love is the foundation of the social democratic tradition.

Within a new Left politics centred around the principles of amateurism, the uncanny must be overcome. But it must be overcome through reclamation, mimicry and strategic appropriation, recognising that fetishes for cultural stasis, separateness and authenticity are fetishes for fiction, dysfunctionality and bourgeois desires. To revisit the very beginnings of our journey here, we might note that the uncanny must be overcome through precisely the logic and the means that Vattimo proposes when he prescribes an operation of *Verwindung* as a twisting and draining or *weakening* of ontological strength to provide the preconditions for an agency around an engagement with a heterogeneity of postmodern or post-historical narratives. What we reclaim and reinforce here is the very germ of the idea that set us on the path to exploring postcolonial affiliation, heretical authorities, and amateuristic methodologies. We are back at the start.

8/ CONCLUSION

The impulse of amateurism is one of love and of humanity. It is an impulse which is aghast at a traditional relegation of these concerns to the realm of the trite, the irrelevant, the homely, the heretical, or some kind of superstructure. It is a post-dialectical impulse which, as such, we have drawn from Williams (1973), and which informs innumerable other theorists, particularly - drawing on Bataille - within the poststructuralist tradition (see, for example Derrida 1978 and 1986). It is an impulse which resonates throughout the postcolonial theorising of this work. The relegation which this impulse eschews is something which the amateur sees as unworldly, invested and unsustainable. In a turning of the tables, such an unsustainability is viewed by the amateur, in the provocative language of the experts of political economic fundamentalism, as stupidity – as an impractical and unpragmatic insistence on the ideological, liberal technologies of separation, sub-optimisation and partial, incomplete miscalculation.

It is a liberal, loveless relegation - based on strong, exclusive and conservative ontology, and vertical, autoreferential epistemology - which is at the heart of systems of specialisation, expertise and exclusion, and which is at the heart of relationships of dominance, alienation and marginalisation at a discursive and material level. The project of amateurism is one of attending to these relationships and dynamics. It is a project of extreme Left transgression, and of a rebirth of the emancipatory and redistributive dimensions of resistance through a transformative social democratic love. An amateuristic social democratic love is post ideological – it leaves the old clash between Left and Right behind and trumps them with an overarching concern for sustainability and pragmatism, and an insistence on engaging with theoretical, political and social enterprises in new, heretical and outcome-enhancing ways. This is the heretical love - and the love of and through a contingent force - which facilitates, draws from and demands a process of writing back, of contrapuntality, and of allowing the amateur into dialogue. It is a process which is worldly, human, and attentive to the specificities

of the local. It is a responsibility to community. And so, in the post ideological moment, in a reinvigorated and rejuvenated attention to structure, humanity, community and the social, it is the lessons and the principles of the Left which survive and which inform a sustainable set of values around democratic citizenship. It is only the principles of the Left which can articulate a sustainable citizenship which is progressive in terms of optimising appropriate and effective social outcomes through a dialogical amateurism which allows a thorough engagement with the wealth of our social heritage.

This position and these principles are always paradoxical. These things are always impure. They are always sympathetic to the soft, artefactual and disposable dimensions of amateuristic thinking. They do not, in and of themselves, constitute an expert or durable prescription, but instead offer a practical response to the malady of contemporary modernity, its costs, its externalities, and its sub-optimal outcomes, within the situatedness and specificity of a contemporary global moment. If strong ontology and domineering expertise are the vectors of a modern malaise at that moment, then a discombobulating amateurism is happy to facilitate the ontological weakening which allows impurity and paradox in. It enjoys the ludicrous construct of a “post ideological Left”, as much as the Right have enjoyed their own triumphalism over an end of history. Further, the extreme Left leanings of amateurism, which demand a primary focus on structural disadvantage, are paradoxically open to criticism of constituting an extreme Right conservatism. In its advocacy of embracing the uncanny and an uncanny citizenship, amateurism does reinscribe an orthodox framework. Such is life. Ultimately, this is precisely the kind of paradox that amateurism embraces, and any bourgeois laments about impurity are the stuff of the amateur’s disinterest.

In the wake and the ashes of the epistemological decentring, de-homogenising and discombobulation which amateurism effects, and in the wake of the parallel weakening of ontology, the potential of the heretical, amateuristic phoenix is one which enjoys a softness of methodology, and which appreciates smaller things. It attends to the local and the artefactual with a limited sense of purpose. Such a phoenix is the protagonist and progenitor of smaller, softer narratives - or smaller subjectivities - which invite an affiliative and strategic application to the world.

But it is postcolonial thinking and theory which gives us rigour within that affiliative nexus, and which saves us from being hopelessly and mindlessly adrift in a sea of subjectivity. It is postcolonialism that helps us to reconceive subjectivity in meaningful and politicised ways which rebirth and apply a complex, constitutive and transformative interplay of cultural, structural and political referents, and a sense of agency. It is postcolonial theory which brings back and recentres structure and collectivity, and which recentres social identity, to overcome other post-driven inertias. This recentring is an identity-led political attention to structural disadvantage, born of a contingent sense of humanity, love and responsibility to structure and community. It is an attention to - and a concern for - worldliness, or worldly materiality, and it is a concern which places a methodology of postcolonial amateurism at the heart of a new Left epistemological recombobulation and citizenship.

A critical view of the alienating dominance of certain identities, communities, discourses, hegemonies, paradigms and knowledges perpetually begs a rhetorical question: whose expertise? In disallowing the strength of the expert and the universal, amateurism undoes the strong ontological silos of epistemological containment to effect a diffuse, organic and horizontal democratisation and dynamic of knowledge. This sense of the weak, the dialogical, and the democratic allows for a worldly and situated application of artefactual epistemology which is more sensitive to specificities than is any blundering, bludgeoning modern expert's prescription.

We have observed that the interconnections and contingencies which permeate the boundaries between ontologically separated and strongly specialised areas undo such discreet autonomy and problematise knowledge systems and any expertise which is predicated on a precondition of that autonomy. Such autonomy – such inbred homotextual and humanistic disciplinarity and professional separation – is constructed of an untenable and self-citational pretence. A critique of this pretence, and an attention to the problematisation of homotextual expertise, lends itself to an acceptance of smaller artefacts and their specific locatedness in a world which is too complex and elliptical to fix in universal and categorical terms. Herein is the acceptance of the amateuristic phoenix and a post-liberal agency revealed by postcolonial theory and the postcolonial subject, and herein is a

commitment to specificities and to soft, pliable artefacts. Such cultural agents and artefacts refuse to let history end. They refuse to let the Left die. They are the Left's undead. In tackling the dominance of the liberal subject, postcolonial theory recognises that postmodernism never needed to kill the subject: postcolonial theory kills the liberal and lets the worldly subject survive.

A postcolonial conceptualisation of hybridity deepens a sense of connectivity, intertwining and overlapping, and opens up a space in which we can appreciate the transformative impulses of contortionism within a complex nexus of dynamic cultural grids. It is within these grids that postcolonial theory finds and enables a new agency and a new sense of subjectivity. It directs us towards the dynamic nexus of cultural interactions, and attends to the subject as a culturally transformative and *constitutive process* and interaction. That interaction is the Force which weaves us together. And it is this weaving which revives the Left's undead – which gives them some power to harness. The Force gives the Left's collective undead the opportunity for resistance and transformative agency. The Force gives form to a reconstituted subject – *to the complex human rather than the bounded person*. This complex human – the undead collective – refuses the unworldly and binarised hierarchies of expertise which master narratives dominate and dictate. Instead, the complex, worldly human requires attention via softer, local stories and artefacts. A complex world is no place for modern expert narratives: it is no place for the expert.

The formula of amateurism, at its simplest, revolves around the nature of the relationship between the agent and power within complexity. It is about the elevation of an *agape* sense of horizontal speech and accountability over a filial sense of vertical accountability. It is about a contrapuntal and worldly or located affiliation which reconstitutes a kind of particular responsibility and artefactual community born of complex and transformative interactions. It is about democratic speech. It is about speaking the truth to power.

In its insistence on a horizontal democratisation, amateurism is predicated upon a project management of contingency. An apprehension of and engagement with contingency is an attention to connectivity, structure and collectivity – it is an attention to the structural dimensions of power, and such an attention is the core business of the Left. It is the foundation of what Said would frame as a secular

and affiliative responsibility to community, in juxtaposition to a specular responsibility to expertise and professionalism. A politically vigorous direction for the Left can be drawn from an attention to culture, collectivity and community, and such an attention bases itself on a strategic attachment to a creed and to a type of group which demands solidarity. Paradoxically, amateurism – for all its secular and exilic impulses – demands comradeship, and it is the organic comrades who are the Left's collective undead, and who demonstrate a paradoxical, post-liberal amateurism at its best. This is where the amateur comes in from the cold and out of exile. This is how the amateur finds a voice and a *relevance*. This is where the concepts of relevance, resistance, smaller things and worldliness intersect. *This is how the amateur writes back.*

The hegemony of medical expertise invites heretical voices of dissent, a writing back, and an amateuristic assault on its ontological security which breaches the sanctity of the technologies of certification that codify and enshrine its orthodoxy. Amongst these heretical protests, a broadly sociological approach to health tells us that there are problems with expertise – problems to which vertical epistemologies are blind, and which are obscured by strong ontological structures. Such exemplary protests are demonstrative of amateurism's deployment of its particular brand of heresy, resistance and advocacy against the pretension of the specialists' hegemony. This deployment - this writing back - is always about a horizontal responsibility to a structurally defined community.

As the amateur would always agree, and as our sociological approach to health tells us, faith in experts is always misplaced. Our particular, worldly, sociological model of health recognises that health is about structure. It recognises that health is complex and worldly and it demonstrates, in manifest terms, that a complex world is unamenable to the Cartesian remove. Complexity demands a softness, a contrapuntality, and an amateurism. It demands an eclectic and transcendent horizontal epistemology which is at odds with modern, technical expertise.

The notion of technocracy captures the strong, vertical, gate-keeping dimension of the work of technical experts as the guardians of sacred truths, who protect us from the ravenous monstrosity of the other. The business of truth, in this regard, is the business of the production of myth and epistemologies of superstition and fear. It is the business of technocratic ritual as a cultural technology of a theology

which underpins faith in the omniscience of human gods. The strong ontology of these god systems is the field of resistance which an amateuristic epistemology must overcome if the vertical silos within that field are to be transcended and spilt. And spilt they should be: the expert's ritualistic and manifest desire for technical control produces outcomes which run counter to subjugating expert administrator's statements of *claims* around outcome optimisation and protection from monsters. An examination of the medicalisation of birth demonstrates this well.

Around birth, the processes of writing back against subjugating superstitions and theology come from the efforts of democratic, transgressive heretics: these efforts and forces are channelled through women-centred organisations and activists. This heresy is the transformative force of subjugated, other - or native - knowledge which we see performed by progressive midwifery and active birth advocates. It is a worldly art of small things which speaks to policy, which speaks to theory and which, in its articulation of small, local and worldly narratives, *speaks the truth to power*. This is a speech which constitutes a responsibility to community, democratisation and humanity. It is the voice of an anti-imperialist struggle, predicated on a postcolonial lovemaking - a making of messy, human babies - and a postcolonial love. It is a struggle against the expertise of technocracy by a more human force. It is a struggle against a modern assault on the world and against liberal separations and externalities. It is demonstrative of the spirit of our opening statement from Darth Vader, that "The ability to destroy a planet is insignificant next to the power of the Force".

It is when the amateur deploys that spirit to explore the de-limitation of the social democratic tradition that we forge a sustainable history for the Left which is attentive to a worldliness of humanity as a field of multiple social specificities. For democracy to be a *truly* social activity which is sensitive to multiplicity, it needs to be horizontally and inclusively structured via an adherence and commitment to the principle of full and broad substantive citizenship. That democracy and that citizenship are enmeshed within and inextricably linked to issues of social identity and structure, and to a concept of sustainability. Such a sustainability is predicated on a commitment, through social policy and affirmative action, to draw in and include the heretical and the other: this is the

stuff of the amateuristic principles of horizontal and discombobulated epistemology, and soft ontology too. It is the business the Left, of social democracy, and of love.

Within a new Left politics centred around the principles of amateurism and love, the uncanny must be overcome. But it must be overcome through reclamation, mimicry and an empowered, strategic appropriation. It must be overcome through an avoidance of fetishes for authentic cultural stasis. It must be overcome through the logic of *Andenken* that Vattimo proposes when he prescribes an operation of *Verwindung* as a means to agency. In returning to the beginnings of our project, what we reclaim and reinforce here is the very bud of the idea that set us on the path to exploring affiliation and the uncanny, artefactual, and amateuristic methodologies which allow the postcolonial and social democratic amateur to write back. And the amateur must be allowed to write back. It is through that allowance, that positive enabling, and that mutually transformative and giving economy, that the Left is able to harness the politics of social identity and to reclaim and reinvigorate its history and its historical remit of social justice, critical engagement, and a progressive, purposeful and structural politics of sustainability.

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