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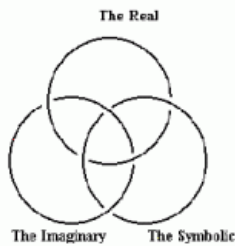
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Reconfiguring Apartheid Loss: Reading The Apartheid Archive Through A Lacanian Lens



Lacan's Three Registers of
Human Reality

Abstract.

This paper, the first of two focussed on the topic of libidinal attachments between white children and black domestic workers in narratives contributed to the Apartheid Archive Project (AAP), offers a series of methodological insights derived from a Lacanian type of psychoanalytic reading practice. A Lacanian reading practice is one which emphasizes the importance of symbolic juxtaposition, of recombining different facets of texts, and of attempting to locate what I term the “absent mediator” implied by tacit conjunctions and associations within texts. In this paper I focus particularly on a puzzling aspect shared by a series of contributions to the AAP, namely the role of animals in the narratives of white participants, which appear to emerge precisely when the question of a loving relation for a black person is posed. I argue that this narrative device is an attempt to make sense of a prospective relationship, particularly when such a relationship is effectively prohibited by the prevailing rules of interaction. In response to pressing questions of inter-racial loss and love, and in respect of an ambiguous inter-racial relationship, recourse to an animal provides a fantasmatic “solution”, a model of how to manage a relationship that otherwise difficult to understand.

Keywords: Absent mediators, Apartheid Archive, Lacan, psychoanalysis, racism

Introduction

One of the unintended consequences of apartheid's massive injustices of social division and inequality was – paradoxically – the production of relations of *racial proximity*. This pinpoints one of apartheid's internal contradictions: as its white beneficiaries came increasingly to rely on the domestic labour provided by an oppressed black population, so a series of intimate white spheres – the site of the home, and more particularly, the care of children – were effectively opened up to “inter-racial” contact. It is for this reason that, psychoanalytically, the literature discussing the relationship of white children and black – childminders (“nannies”) (Cock, 1980 & 2011; Motsei, 1990; Ally, 2009) is so crucial to an understanding of the libidinal economy of apartheid. This literature speaks to the presence of intimacy within structures of power, to the factor of affective attachments, sexual and familial alike, occurring across seemingly impassable divisions of race.

Mbembe (2008) uses the phrase “disjunctive inclusions” in his description of those figures that were, as we might put it, “included out” of the structured inequality of apartheid. His interest are close to my own, certainly inasmuch as he uses this term to refer to the ambiguous inclusions of black subjects in apartheid's cities, such as, precisely, “black nannies” who were permitted, to live on white properties. This poses the general question of racial intimacies in apartheid, and it directs us to childhood reminiscences produced by contributors to the Apartheid Archive Project (AAP), a collaborative research undertaking that has collected and analysed a corpus of narratives on the experience of apartheid racism see: <http://www.apartheidarchive.org/site/>.

The AAP aims not only to record such narratives, itself an important aim in remembering history, but also to engage thoughtfully and theoretically with the narratives. As such the AAP encourages both a commitment to personal remembering and a joint intellectual commitment to interrogating narratives rather than taking them at face value (Hook & Long, 2011).

The first of the key topics of this paper can thus be specified by means of a question: how were such “disjunctive inclusions” managed, psychologically, by children, and, more precisely, by white children in particular[i]? A second key objective follows on from the first, as its pragmatic methodological consequence: how we might contribute to a form of psychoanalytic discourse analysis suitable to the task of analysing narrative texts of apartheid. It is in reference to the

emerging area of Lacanian discourse analysis (see Glynos & Stavrakakis, 2003; Parker, 2005; Pavón Cuéllar, 2010; Neill, 2013) that I hope to make a contribution. Before moving on to the first of the narratives that I want to consider, it helps to provide a little more detail on the scope of the narratives, and how they were collected. The AAP is comprised of a group of some 25 local and international researchers from a variety of backgrounds. All of the researchers have themselves submitted narratives to the project.

Narratives have also been solicited from other academics, students and members of the South African public. The AAP offers an unusual richness, both in terms of who has contributed to the corpus of narratives and in view of the heterogeneity of the researchers writing about the archive. All working from the same bank of narratives, the researchers have “offered a range of analyses aimed at understanding apartheid history and its sometimes enacted, sometimes denied resonance in the present” (Hook & Long, 2011:3). Let us turn then to one of the texts prepared for inclusion in the AAP, a text of particular relevance given our current concerns:

A man named Dyson worked for my parents. He was affectionate and good-willed man, generous, and he was loved by the family. I remember him always at work in the kitchen. He was considered a good man, trustworthy. In the racist codes of the time he was a “good African” by which was meant that he was faithful, self-sacrificing and big -hearted. He was no doubt, in colonial parlance, a “kitchen boy”. I guess that for significant periods in my first years I was under his care. Perhaps there were carefree times before an awareness of race came into play and I was genuinely effusive and natural with him. I can only hope so. I don’t know how and when a change occurred – even for sure that one did– but I do remember at a certain point becoming excessively formal with him, avoidant, distanced, as if a type of enacted superiority and distance had become necessary.

Try as I might I cannot think of touching him, of any loving physical contact, although I am sure that there must have been. This still puzzles me: at what point was it that I became rigid, aware of the need to keep myself apart, to be aloof. These were the appropriate behavioural codes, the implicit rules of contact that I had assimilated. I was aware that Dyson, despite his smiling and forgiving nature had registered the change in my behaviour and was, I think, saddened by it, yet nonetheless respectful of the stance I had taken.

The time came when the decision was made to leave Zimbabwe. It was a difficult

parting; new homes had to be found for the dogs – a particular focus of tears and disbelief for me on the eve of our departure – and a reliable family needed to take over the mortgage of the house that couldn't be sold under such short notice. The most awful moment in all of this for me, the most poignant and irreversible, was to see Dyson crying, distraught, seemingly inconsolable, on the day we left. Worse yet than this heartbreaking feeling for me was the sense that I could not now break the façade and run up to him and hug him goodbye. I needed now to maintain the self-conscious role of distance and coolness that I had imposed.

Part of what shames me about this episode is that I went beyond the explicit prescriptions governing racial interaction; I enacted a more extreme type of coldness and detachment than was required. The distance I affected could not have been derived from my mother, who always seemed far more at ease, natural in her interactions with Africans. My lack of demonstrativeness may simply have been a case of not knowing how. Not just a willed aloofness, but perhaps also a sense of simply not being able – certainly not within the codes of white racist masculinity – to express love for Dyson. That is what continues to disturb: the fact that I was responsible for this. I had not merely mimed a “white man's bearing”, that is, a deportment of racial superiority, I had taken it upon myself to exaggerate it, to exceed what may have been expected of me by my parents and grand-parents. The words “I loved Dyson” seem both historically true and yet not subjectively real; factual, and yet difficult to personalize. What is far easier to imagine is that my parents had loved Dyson. This poses the question: where in my childhood unconscious did I place Dyson? Did I ever question his role – as surely I must have – as a member of my family ...? An uncle ...? Was Dyson my “other daddy” (conceivable perhaps as the good, ever-present daddy relative to the strict white daddy who seemed at times less approachable)?

Was there ever a time that I addressed him as such? How would I have been corrected? What other faux pas might I and other white children in such racially – charged situations have made on the way to assimilating the rules of racialized existence? More significant perhaps was the fact that such mistakes – so I would guess – were very infrequently made. Perhaps if and when they did happen, they were so vigorously repressed that they were never repeated. Perhaps this was the missing antecedent to my reserve and distance in respect of Dyson – a faux pas of the heart? Why is it, however, that I feel so sure that I never made any such mistake with him?

It is worthwhile offering a few brief analytical comments on the above text. There is an echo of a key signifier in the first few lines; the word “good” is repeatedly attached to the figure of Dyson (this is even more apparent in the longer version of the text from which the extract is drawn). Psychoanalytically we may pose that there is a form of idealization occurring here which functions both perhaps as a defence (against knowing Dyson, against a more fully - rounded, non - stereotypical view of him ...?) and as an element in the racist logic of “one good native”, that is the praise of the rare trustworthy black man who is the exception that proves the rule.

More immediately evident perhaps is the indecision exemplified in the text, the vacillation between direct assertions and equivocation. The author claims not to have known how and when a change occurred, even if one did, despite going on to discuss, in definitive terms, the change itself (“I do remember ...”). The framing of key postulates in terms of questioning, doubt, even negation is, psychoanalytically, a potential indication of repressed material. There are many such examples in the text: “perhaps there were carefree times ...”; “I cannot think of touching him”, “I never made any such mistake with him”, and so on. The tacit contradictions in the text - which, like much of white post - apartheid writing adopts the genre of a confessional (Nuttall, 2010) - are instructive. Take for example the repeated argument that the author may not have known how, or was simply unable, to express affection for Dyson, despite the suggestion that at an earlier time this had indeed been possible. Such evasions are then followed by an admission of responsibility for “racist deportment”. One of course needs to allow the author the latitude to develop and (re)consider a position within the course of a narrative. That being said, the movement of the text between these subject - positions - as determined by, or agent of racism - suggests that a “get - out clause” has been retained, that the issue at hand (a confessed responsibility) has not as of yet been fully resolved.

Notable too are the apparent *absences* on display, particularly apropos the subject’s apparent love for Dyson, qualified as not real but true, factual but not personalized, and seemingly delegated to his parents, all of these are potential markers of repression. Here the gaps, the missing pieces in the text, speak powerfully. As in the case of negative hallucination, there is a strong declaration that something is not there, yet this apparently non - existent object nonetheless needs to be carefully avoided, denied. Such conspicuous evasions point to the

prospect of a latent belief. In the same vein, we might ask whether the question: “did I ever call him [daddy] ...?” reveals something of fantasy, which is not of course to assert that the child ever said anything of the sort, but merely to aver that such a relation had been the topic of fantasy. That is to say, this relationship begged a response, a degree of imaginative speculation. It posed the question of how the subject might understand himself relative to the opaque social relationship he is presented with. Such a relationship in which both familial bond and racialized “master” and “subordinate” roles are invoked, is difficult to comprehend, it begs a type of formalization which fantasy might provide.

A further point of interest concerns something of only peripheral importance at first glance, the author’s brief mention of the dogs that will be left behind. This is clearly a narrative laden with affect, shot through with questions of emotional expression and reserve; nonetheless this is the single moment in the text where the narrator gives his emotions free reign (“a particular focus of tears”). We might risk the interpretation that what cannot be openly shown toward Dyson is expressed elsewhere, in the form of a substitute object. An additional line of questioning is sparked here, one which points to a puzzling aspect shared by a number of the narratives contributed by white South Africans. What is the role of the animals that are so frequently introduced into these texts; what is their narrative function; at what precise point do they appear within the narrative?

Bridging disjuncture

In earlier discussions of psychoanalytic discourse analysis (Hook, 2011), I have tried to emphasize how it may be necessary to employ a matrix of latent meanings to make guesses at what is “repressed” within a given utterance. There are of course many ways in which we may go about doing this; many of the suggestions I made in respect of the above narrative aim to develop just such an array of latent meanings. One of the richest possible sources of methodological inspiration for such an undertaking is, of course, Freud’s (1900) approach to dream analysis. While a detailed mining of the various “methodological” principles offered in *The interpretation of dreams* for the particular purposes of Lacanian discourse analysis has not yet, unfortunately, been undertaken, Lapping’s (2011) elaboration of guidelines for psychoanalytic social research has yielded a series of important methodological suggestions. Discussing how Freud’s idea of the overdetermination of images, symbols and signifiers in dreams may be applied to discourse analysis, Lapping (2011: 68) notes that “details that appear as

insignificant or as having little psychic intensity may in fact be covering over the most intense psychical ... forces". She (ibid: 71) stresses the need to identify associative tugs against dominant narratives, and emphasizes the importance of "attending to elements that connote symbolic relations outside the linear narratives of a dominant discourse". Crucially, she also remarks: [A]pparently cohesive accounts cover over a set of more complicated relations, and they pose questions that invert the obviousness of what they are seeing ... [D]ominant discourse is unsettled by the construction of a symbolic juxtaposition (ibid:72).

How might we expand upon this methodological speculation? More precisely, how might we utilize a strategy of symbolic juxtaposition to trace the unconscious of a text?

One answer: by staggering two or more seemingly discontinuous elements within a given narrative. The idea of overlaying apparently disconnected scenes as an interpretative tactic is something familiar to students of psychoanalysis. A personal example suffices. I started a session (as an analysand) complaining about a work colleague who had, I thought, unfairly snubbed me. I discussed some other banal events of the previous day, and then suddenly recalled an incident in a prison where I used to work as an honorary psychotherapist. A prisoner had recently told me how he never lost his temper. Should someone do him an injustice he would bide his time, wait till the person was totally at ease, and then, when he least expected it, stab him in the back. No great analytical nous is needed to pose an interpretative hypothesis here: I, presumably, wanted to do just this to the work colleague: to stab him violently in the back.

This is of course a crude example, and the tentative reading I have suggested remains open to different interpretations. One might speculate that the desire in question was far more paradoxical or masochistic in nature, that, for example, I may have wished to be stabbed in the back. There certainly is room to go further here, particularly if we take seriously the idea that a successful interpretation should surprise the analysand. The assumption here of course is that a successful interpretation touches precisely on repressed material, on ideas that a subject disavows, that they cannot "own" as pertaining to them (hence the surprise factor). The above interpretation might be seen as less than surprising - although it did in fact produce a mild shock in me - as in need of further, more developed interpretation.

Here it is worth noting that, from a Lacanian perspective attentive to the role of

the signifier, the verbal formula “stab him in the back” is an idiom with various metaphoric extensions. This formula – an effective shorthand for betrayal – could be the persistent signifier underlying the generation of a dream image or, as in this case, the seemingly spontaneous recollection of a memory. It is worth emphasizing the poly-vocal, overdetermined and, indeed, *re-interpretable*, quality of the signifier in question so as to avoid the pattern of formulaic interpretations that the worst of psychoanalysis is infamous for. I am thinking of course of the endless regurgitation of a finite series of conceptual motifs – castration anxiety and penis envy would be two classic and not unproblematic Freudian examples – and superimposition of a series of caricatured themes as explanatory scripts for virtually any situation[**ii**]. The Lacanian emphasis on signifiers rather than merely symbols would help then move us away from any one single reductive sexual reading of the formula in question (the sexual connotation of “to be stabbed” is clear), without of course definitively ruling it out.

What the stabbing example brings home – if for the moment we credit the first interpretation as valid (“I want to stab my colleague in the back”) – is the need to attend to the form of what is being said. Unconscious desire, that is to say, is never simply stated, afforded first-person propositional form. It appears instead as the result of the combination of elements, as an implicit but not obvious relation between them. Leader (2003: 44) puts this as follows: “when a wish cannot be expressed in a proposition (‘I want to kill daddy’), it will take the form of a relation, a relation in which the ‘I’ is missing” . This is one way of understanding Lacan’s (1992: 126) insistence that “half -saying is the internal law of any kind of enunciation of the truth”, namely that we need to ask what hypothetical idea emerges “in between” two apparently unrelated narrative fragments once juxtaposed.

We might offer this as a methodological maxim for psychoanalytically – informed types of discourse analysis: treat the effect of intercalation – that is, the posited insertion of an implicit connection, a posed relation between two disconnected narrative elements – as a modality of unconscious expression. Freud’s description of dream – pairs proves a helpful means of expanding upon this idea. If a dream – wish has as its content some forbidden behaviour towards an individual, says Freud, “ then that person may appear in the first dream undisguised, while the behaviour is only faintly disguised” (1932: 27). In the second dream however we would expect that “[t]he behaviour will be openly shown ... but the person made

unrecognizable... [or] some indifferent person substituted for him" (ibid:27). Commenting on this passage, Leader (2003) points out that Lacan's thesis, following the influence of Lévi-Strauss, advances upon Freud's.

It is not simply then the case that a forbidden thought would be disguised, hidden via means of substitutions of subject, object or indeed act itself – although presumably one would want to keep such a possibility open – it is rather that the forbidden thought "only exists ... as a slippage between the one and the other" (Leader, 2003: 44).

Leader (ibid: 44) continues: "A man has two dreams ... In one, he loses a blood-soaked tooth and stares at it in absolute horror. In the other, his penis is being examined in a medical test and no problems are found. Neither of the dreams represents castration as such, but it is in the relation between the two that the reference is to castration is situated."

Leader's conclusion? "When something cannot be expressed as a meaningful proposition, it will take the form of a relation between two sets of elements" (2003: 47). There is a more direct way of making the same point, as applied to the task of discourse analysis. When confronted then by an instance of narrative disjuncture – or, clinically, by a sequence of ostensibly disconnected thoughts – we should ask: what implicit link between these elements has been "subtracted"? Or, put slightly differently: what is the absent mediator which would need to be reconstructed if the connection between scenes is to be understood? The factor of "what is not there" is hence vital, much as is the case in Freud's famous (1919) discussion of beating fantasies, also discussed by Leader (2000), where the various permutations offered by the patient ("my father is beating a child", "a child is being beaten", "my mother is beating a child") never includes the crucial formulation "I am being beaten by my father", which of course, pinpoints the unconscious fantasy. Freud is only able to arrive at this missing element via a construction, that is, by positing what is the missing formula in a sequence might be, a formula which can be deduced from but is by no means contained within the variants which precede and follow it.

Let us now turn to a second Apartheid Archive narrative, one in which the effect of narrative disjunction is apparent:

It is a lazy Sunday afternoon ... I am bored, and I need to ask Phyllis something. I burst into her room. The door was half shut I think, but I have no respect for her privacy, there are no boundaries between her space and mine. The scene on the

bed is a surprise to me, I live in the sexually repressive days of apartheid. These scenes are “cut” from the movies that I watch at the cinema. The beautiful tall man enmeshed with Phyllis becomes the hero of my novel written into a lined exercise book in the long hours of the weekend and evenings before lights out.

Of course I am the heroine, but I am myself, not Phyllis, a bit older though as I want to be enveloped in his arms too. We are having a relationship across the “colour bar”; he is a young activist, organising... a stone – throw away from where I live. It is 1976, he is becoming increasingly politically active. He is a leader. I am in love with him, and of course I am against apartheid. He is murdered, like so many other young men of the time, at the brutal hands of those masquerading as public protectors. I survive, to join the struggle, to tell the tale. Phyllis also plays a role in the book, a small part. I am ashamed now for walking into her room.

Notions of “us” and “them”, difference and “otherness” are central to my early constructions of the world. But it is complicated. The community I grow up in is so tightly woven, based on notions of a shared history, religion, culture, we only know each other. I am at preschool with the same children that I matriculate with. I hardly ever meet or even speak with a member of an “other” community. Of course apartheid and other discriminatory practices are woven into the fabric of our day – to – day lives, but my primary sense of difference is about who is part of my community and who is not. There are always Black women living with us. Not a part of the family, but living on the premises of our home. They perform the submissive role of servant, yet I know they have power too. Since my mother is absent, all of us know where we can get our comfort, enfolded in the large warmth of our “nanny’s” arms.

In our house, in an area reserved then for white people only, there is a separate unit for domestic workers attached to the house. Two rooms with a bathroom between them. Phyllis lives in one of those rooms. Besides my sister, she is my favourite person in the world in those years – she is young, beautiful, full of fun. When she is angry with us, she knocks us on the head with her third finger, it is so painful we shriek, but it passes very quickly, unlike some other pains I know. She brought the chicken to our house, which became our pet as it raced around our garden clucking. When it disappeared one day, only to reappear on our dinner table, my long commitment to vegetarianism began!

Sometimes, as we rough and tumble, which I catch a hint of the sweet-sour scent

of Phyllis's addiction to alcohol. She also died young, just like my hero, ultimately a consequence of the same violence. I found this out much later. I never knew her story. I never asked her. Just wrote my own.

The narrator in the above extract bursts in on a sexual scene, a scene which prompts an imaginative foray into Phyllis's world. The aspect of fantasy seems in this respect clear: the description has a noticeably cinematic aspect ("I am the heroine"), it is clearly indexed as fictitious (he becomes "the hero of my novel"), and it maintains a masturbatory quality. This projection of the author into an "other scene" appears however to stop short of identification. The author sees herself, a little older, as the beautiful tall man's lover, and plainly states: "I am myself, not Phyllis".

Crucial also is the element of appropriation; the beautiful man is now her lover and Phyllis is reduced to a minor character ("Phyllis also plays a role in the book, a small part"). That is to say, the predominant mode of identification here seems to be the hysterical identification with the place of another which is to be distinguished from identifications based on a loving bond that entails an internalization or replication of the other. To reiterate the elementary psychoanalytic qualification: hysterical identifications are essentially opportunistic; one can be wholly indifferent to the figure of identification, who proves merely the vessel of identification by means of which the identifying subject attains a desired object or position. Phyllis, in short, becomes the imaginative vehicle that enables the narrator to live out the romantic vision of a heroic woman against apartheid. It is via Phyllis and her lover that the narrator becomes able "to join the struggle, to tell the tale".

The mid-section of the narrative provides some of the socio-historical context (a "tightly woven" white community in which "we only know each other") explaining why difference becomes such a fantasmatic (and indeed sexual) preoccupation. What also becomes apparent here is the necessity of a mediator - an object of sorts - to manage a relationship between the narrator and the black domestic worker. This is a relationship which is both intimate ("all of us know where we can get our comfort") and yet nonetheless contractual ("They perform the submissive role of servant"); it is simultaneously "familial" and yet decidedly not. I made this point at the outset of the paper, that the conditions of apartheid led to such contradictions, the prospect of loving attachments ("comfort, enfolded in the ... warmth of our nanny's arms", "... she is my favourite person in the world"),

indeed, even of erotic attraction, occurring within a oppressive, hierarchical, racially-structured social relations.

The problem that is constituted by the relationship with Phyllis is underscored by the narrator's comment that her "primary sense of difference is about who is part of my community and who is not". This is a puzzling relationship to make sense of. Phyllis, who is both a part and not a part of the narrator's family (or, as she puts it, of the "premises of our home") is difficult to place in the given set of symbolic familial roles. I should add here the obvious qualification that the nature of this relationship and Phyllis's potentially ambiguous status within it were of course very well defined within the framework of apartheid itself which provided the discourse and associated social norms of "nannies", "domestic workers". As many of the Apartheid Archive narratives make abundantly clear, apartheid rationality was thoroughly ingrained within white South African children who understood their prerogatives all too well (as in the narrator's admission: "I have no respect for her privacy"). Crucial to grasp however is that apartheid ideology nonetheless exhibited clear social contradictions that could not always be explained away, and that inevitably sparked a type of fantasy, which we can understand as an attempt to make sense of incongruous social roles and identities.

These considerations go some way perhaps to explaining what at first seems an anomalous element in the unfolding narrative: the chicken that becomes the family pet and that abruptly turns up on the dinner-table, igniting thus the narrator's commitment to vegetarianism. Although this may appear a relatively arbitrary component of the narrative, there is, as Freud warns in respect of dream interpretation, much of significance in this seemingly trivial element. The chicken is a *pet*, a designation that places child and animal in appropriate domestic roles and that affords a familiar and thus stable familial "object-relation". The chicken is owned and yet – so it would seem – loved. There is a proprietorial relationship in place that has not precluded the development of ties of affection. The text implies that the narrator was saddened by the loss of the pet, although this loss nonetheless benefits her. The animal serves an important purpose even in its demise: it becomes the basis of the narrator's ideological commitment to vegetarianism.

The link between Phyllis and the chicken is not only metonymic (the chicken is an extension of Phyllis who "brought [it]... to the house"). "Phyllis also died young" the text tells us, introducing an ambiguity: who might the "also" refer to (the

young hero no doubt, but also, given its proximity in the text, the chicken?). There is a parallel between Phyllis and the pet here in view not only of their sudden deaths, but in terms of how each benefits the identity of the narrator; each is an object of appropriation. As noted above, Phyllis provides the materials of a story that the narrator crafts about herself, a story which would appear to be crucial to her formative political identity (as “against apartheid”). This, obviously enough, is a non-reciprocal and an unequal borrowing. Phyllis provides the imaginative basis for the narrator’s story about herself; she becomes essentially a device in the narrator’s own self-fashioning, her own perspective, her own “real” story never being involved (“I never asked her. Just wrote my own”).

What does such an associative link tell us? Is this a case of the disguise – by – way – of – substitution that Freud discusses in dream pairs? Or are the narrative elements in a Lacanian manner as suggestive of an unconscious idea that exists only as a possible intercalation between components? The task then is to consider what the result would be of superimposing these narrative pieces. Such a conjunction, I think, provides one way of telling us something about the relationship to Phyllis that cannot otherwise be admitted. As is by now evident, Phyllis is “owned” by the family, the narrator has certain “rights of privilege” over her as a condition of such an unequal relationship. Phyllis cares for, gives happiness and love to these children, yet seems ultimately to be discarded by the white family (“she ... died young ... I found this out much later”) who appear to have known little about her life (“I never knew her story”).

This is not to cast doubt on the love felt by the narrator for Phyllis. The affective dimension of these relations should not be dismissed; there was no doubt a degree of quite genuine love, although, then again, one can love quite sincerely in a fashion that consolidates a relation of condescension, as one loves a child, or indeed, an animal. We might say then, extending this point and following the implication of overlaying of overlaying these narrative components, that Phyllis’s relation to the family is akin, in many ways, to that of a pet. Shefer’s (2012) discussion of black domestic service in white (post)apartheid households highlights many of these issues. Domestic service, she notes, was a prime site not only for racist ideology, but of black submissiveness (a point affirmed also by Cock, 1980; Motsei, 1990; Ally, 2009). Such domestic practices, in short, allow for the engendering of “normative white privilege and authority through the ... control the white child is granted in relation to Black adults” (Shefer, 2012: 308).

Echoing the point made above, Shefer (2012) observes that while in a fundamentally unequal sense the domestic worker is, nominally, a member of the family, she remains nonetheless, “owned” and controlled by adults and children alike.

One might be tempted to draw a line under our analysis at this point, concluding that our investigations have led us to an “unconscious of the text” that is summarily racist inasmuch as it extends a longstanding colonial trope in which black person and animal are equated. It is true that the animal – human link is, even if only implicitly, apparent in both of the narratives cited here; both may be critiqued as extending a racist theme on exactly this basis. That being said, such an apparent finding does not exhaust all that can be said, psychoanalytically at least, about these texts.

It proves profitable to compare the two narratives featured here, both of which, like a number of the narratives contributed by white South Africans, share an initially puzzling feature: the sudden appearance of an animal in their discussions of racism. Although the animal in the first narrative appears only briefly, it has, arguably, a crucial role to play as a mediator, a means of linking the white and black characters in the narratives.

Interestingly, the animal in the two above texts, despite obvious contextual differences, occurs at a similar moment in the narrative. It appears when the question of a powerful affective and loving relation for a black person is posed for the white subject. More importantly perhaps – especially for a Lacanian approach that does not prioritize affects over symbolic considerations – an animal emerges when the difficulty, indeed, the impossibility, of a certain symbolic relationship becomes pressing. The problem is precisely that of symbolic positioning, of how to make sense of a prospective relationship – or find an analogue for it – particularly when such a relationship is not socially viable, is indeed effectively prohibited by the prevailing rules of interaction.

What is so notable in the above narratives is not only that the libidinal relation in question appears to lack an obvious framework of comprehension, but that a material component is involved as a means of mediating the symbolic relation. There is an effective adjunct to the personal relationship, an “operator” of sorts which provides an effective frame of comprehension for the relation in question. The spontaneous recourse to an animal enables the narrators, however temporarily, to bridge an impasse. In response to pressing questions of inter-

racial loss and love, and in respect of an ambiguous inter-racial relationship, which is as much that of familial tenderness as that of effective “ownership”, this operator provides an answer. This makes for an interesting experiment, to ask how the given “animal mediator” presents a solution of sorts for the problems evinced in each of the situations. The puzzle of the ambiguity inherent in the relation with a loved domestic worker results in a tacit equation: Phyllis – as – pet. In the first narrative, we might venture that the loss of the dog provides the paradigm for how to deal with the loss of Dyson. What is intriguing about this hypothesis – perhaps as in the case of Winnicott’s notion of “healing dreams” – is that the unconscious labours to provide a solution.

I would like, before closing, to include a few further reflexive comments on the methodological undertaking attempted above. My aim in analysing the foregoing material is not to pin the charge of racism on the above authors. It pays here to refer to Silverman’s (2008: 124) comment that to judge someone’s unconscious fantasy ultimately misses the point, for such ideas would not have been repressed “if they were not as abhorrent to that person’s consciousness as they are to our own”. Furthermore, a discourse analysis is by definition focussed on the broader discursive currents animated within the language productions of the speaker, not on the singular speaker themselves. My objective is to show how the text might be said to speak beyond itself, to extract something that is implied but not explicitly said by the text. These methodological provisos in place, it is nonetheless necessary to stress again the problematic epistemological status of what I am asserting of the text (take for example, the extrapolation that, in respect of the third narrative, Phyllis’s relation to the family is akin to that of a pet). This idea is nowhere stated in the text; it cannot as such be ascribed to the author. The argument could just as well be made that this idea exists more in the mind of the interpreter than in the author of the text. As Pavón Cuéllar (2010) warns, this is often the lure of imaginary understanding in attempts at discourse analysis, that one’s “findings” are essentially a projection *of the analyst’s* own reading.

We may offer a slightly different perspective on the same issue, by stressing how interpretation itself often engenders an impasse. In Lacanian terms, we could say that interpretation is, in many instances, precisely what causes the unconscious to close.

This, more precisely, is a twofold problem concerning both the heavy-handed imposition of the discourse of psychoanalysis and the factor of the over – eager

interpretations of the analyst which impedes the flow of material. This is a point well made by Lapping (2011) in her exploration of what Lacan (1991: 228) has in mind with his counter - intuitive notion that within psychoanalysis "there is only one resistance, the resistance of the analyst". She (2011) crystallizes Lacan's underlying point: resistance is the product of the analyst's interpretation. Although of course the situation of text analysis is different, the same conclusion may be drawn: inertias of analysis, resistances in analysing, are typically the result of the analyst's impositions. The clinical strategy here would be to align oneself with whatever opens the horizon of further interpretations, "to bring this desire into existence", to encourage and facilitate its expression, in often differing and multiple forms, rather than close it down by virtue of the need of the analyst to impose authority, mastery, understanding.

To read for the "unconscious " of a text is then perpetually to risk "wild analysis". Textual interpretations of this (psychoanalytic) order are potentially ethically problematic, and not only for the reason that they very often are more a function of *the reader* than of the discourse of the text itself. Such interpretative attempts utilize a set of clinical strategies for material over which the reader has no clinical warrant. If such interpretations were to be utilized in the clinical context they should not - I would hope - take the form of definitive declarations on the part of the analyst. If such an interpretative association were to be eluded to, it would presumably be hinted at far more gently, enigmatically perhaps, in such a way that the analysand could take it up, respond to it. This then poses a series of ethical challenges for the prospective use of Lacanian discourse analysis, challenges that need be considered and responded to within the life of any given research project.

Desire without end

By way of conclusion, I would like to offer a comment on the second narrative cited above which responds to the earlier distinction between Freud's theory of dream-pair substitutions and the Lévi-Strauss idea (1963) that one needs to look for a relation between elements . What emerges in the above text is not simply a case of substitution.

Yes, there are a series of telling parallels between Phyllis and the pet, and questioning what such a substitution might mean or imply would perhaps be a useful analytical exercise. As in "stabbing in the back" episode cited earlier, such an initial substitution (the prisoner's actions as my own desired actions) opened

things up, it enabled further questioning of what might be repressed. Other possible extrapolations of desire were made possible. To fix upon a single substitution as the key would, very possibly, have closed down additional interpretative possibilities; my own possible desire to be “stabbed in the back” would not have come to light in this way. A further interpretative leap was required here; the initial substitution was just the springboard for a hypothesis that required elements of both apparently disconnected narrative components, but that ultimately proved greater than the sum of their parts.

Levi-Strauss’s (1963) emphasis on *the relation between elements* within the study of myths proves so important to psychoanalysis because it suits an engagement with the over-determined nature of psychical material. Levi-Strauss famously asserted that there is no one totalizing version of the Oedipus myth; there are only variants, and the only regularity we can trace within the matrix of versions we might plot is that of certain types of relations between components. The link to the work of psychoanalysis seems clear: the prospects of re-interpretation of any over-determined psychical material means that there is never one singular, triumphant interpretation. This provides an important ethical guideline for Lacanian discourse analysis: we do an injustice to the complexity of the material in attempting to extract a single over-arching message.

NOTES

[i] My approach may be criticized for prioritizing a white perspective. It is worthwhile stressing two issues here. Firstly, I took my lead from narrative material contained within the Apartheid Archive, where white childhood reminiscences of apartheid featured prominently. Secondly, given the circumstances of apartheid in which white children were frequently cared for by black domestic workers, and where many black children would have had only infrequent access to white adults, it is unsurprising that such white experiences should be disproportionately featured in the material.

[ii] It could be countered that what makes these motifs such effective interpretative tools is the resonance they have over so wide a variety of surface phenomena. In short, echoes of such concepts might be used not so much as interpretations, but as mechanisms to prompt the flow of further material.

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Refuting Melancholia: Postures Of Melancholic Identification In The

Apartheid Archive



Abstract.

This paper, the second of two focussed on the libidinal attachments of white children to black domestic workers in narratives contributed to the *Apartheid Archive Project (AAP)*, considers the applicability of the concept of social melancholia in the case of such “inter-racial” attachments. The paper questions both the psychoanalytic accuracy, and the psychic and political legitimacy of such an explanation (that is, the prospect of an “inter-racial” melancholic attachment of white subjects to black care-takers). By contrast to the political notion of ungrievable melancholic losses popularized by Judith Butler’s work, this paper develops a theory of compensatory symbolic identifications. Such a theory explains the apparent refusal of identification which white subjects exhibit towards black caretakers and it throws into perspective an important conceptual distinction regards loss. On the one hand there is the psychotic mechanism of melancholic attachment, which expresses absolute fidelity to a lost object, even to the point of self-destructive suffering. On the other, there is the neurotic mechanism of compensatory identification, in which the original object is jettisoned and a substitution found, such that a broader horizon of symbolic and ideological identification is enabled.

Introduction

The companion piece ([see: Rozenberg Quarterly](#)) to the current paper investigated a series of Apartheid Archive narratives via the means of psychoanalytic reading practice. That paper and this one share a similar aim: of shedding light on certain of apartheid’s “lost attachments”. The analytical undertaking of a mode of psychoanalytic discourse analysis is not, of course, a-theoretical, and at least one crucial facet of the texts considered – their ostensibly mournful as aspect – begs further conjecture. In supplementing the foregoing article then, I am shifting here from a focus on specific strategies of textual reading practice to a critical exploration of the usefulness of a key psychoanalytic concept in the illumination of these texts. The first of these two papers engaged with the “dathow one might psychoanalytically read the repression of libidinal attachments via certain absent mediators. The current paper comprises an extended theoretical development of psychoanalytically reading a political

situation of loss and how this should be conceptualized.

The Apartheid Archive, a collaborative research project that collects and analyses narratives of early experiences of apartheid racism, features a significant number of white contributors speaking tentatively of bonds of “inter-racial” intimacy between white children and black child-minders. A number of these narratives are characterized by a melancholy tone, and I want to pose the question here as to whether such lost attachments might be understood via the notion of melancholic loss that has become so popular in the postcolonial literature (Eng & Han, 1996; Chen, 2000; Khanna, 2003; Gilroy, 2004). I want to question the usefulness of the notion of melancholia as a mode of social formation in the context of the Apartheid Archive texts.

The forerunner to this paper, the companion piece with which it is paired ([see: Rozenberg Quarterly](#)), contained two lengthy textual extracts from narratives contributed to the Apartheid Archive that I will again refer to here. In the first of narratives, reference was made to a man called Dyson, of whom the narrator recalls:

I don't know how and when a change occurred – even for sure that one did – but I do remember at a certain point becoming excessively formal with him, avoidant, distanced, as if a type of enacted superiority and distance had become necessary ... This still puzzles me: at what point was it that I became rigid, aware of the need to keep myself apart, to be aloof ... The time came when the decision was made to leave Zimbabwe ... I could not now break the façade and run up to him and hug him goodbye. I needed now to maintain the self-conscious role of distance ... My lack of demonstrativeness may simply have been a case of not knowing how ... not being able – certainly not within the codes of white racist masculinity – to express love for Dyson ... The words ‘I loved Dyson’ seem both historically true and yet not subjectively real; factual, and yet difficult to personalize ... [W]here in my childhood unconscious did I place Dyson.... Was Dyson my “other daddy” (conceivable perhaps as the good, ever-present daddy relative to the strict white daddy who seemed at times less approachable)?

It is intriguing to note the similarity between certain of the words chosen here and Butler's (1997) description in her now canonical account of melancholy gender. The relevant phrase in the extract, to recall, is: “The words ‘I loved Dyson’ seem both historically true and yet not subjectively real”. The relevant section of Butler's account comes when she addresses the predicament of living in

a culture which can mourn the loss of certain (homosexual, or, potentially “cross-racial”) attachment only with great difficulty. I have made several key substitutions in the following quotes, “cross-racial”**[i]** for “homosexual”, “racial” for “sexual”, etc, so as to further underscore the pertinence of her argument to the present case (the structure of Butler’s argument remains, of course, unchanged):

“[I]s [a cross-racial attachment] regarded as a ‘true’ love, a ‘true’ loss, a love and loss worthy and capable of being grieved ... of having been lived? Or is it a love and a loss haunted by the spectre of a certain unreality, a certain unthinkability, the double disavowal of the ... *‘I never loved him, I never lost him’*. Is this the ‘never-never’ that supports the naturalized surface of ... [the life of racialized difference]? Is it the disavowal of loss by which [racial] formation ... proceeds?” (Butler, 1997: 138, emphasis added).

It is the disavowing refrain, “I never loved him, I never lost him”, which most pertinently echoes the words in the Apartheid Archive narrative. In order to appreciate this resonance one needs to combine the content of the narrative, the words “I loved”, with the author’s apparent relationship to them, namely the apparent sense of non-reality. It is only in this way, juxtaposing, the content of the statement with the author’s *position* of enunciation, that one grasps the stuckness of these lines, the aspect of simultaneous affirmation and denial, the fact that there has been an actual loss, which has nonetheless, been held in suspension, not fully processed.

If one accepts then that a prohibition on cross-racial ties of love and identification operates within racist culture – I am paraphrasing and adapting Butler (1997) here – then the loss of cross-racial love would appear foreclosed from the start. Of course, one needs to bear in mind that what counts as the start would be retroactively constituted at a point following initial foreclosure. Butler (1997: 139) makes precisely this point, remarking that her use of the term “foreclosed” suggests “a pre-emptive loss, a mourning for un-lived possibilities. If this love is from the start out of the question, then it cannot happen, and if it does, it certainly did not. If it does, it happens only under the official sign of its prohibition and disavowal.”

It is worth stressing the factor of an after-the-fact effacement, that is, the retroactive capacity of the foreclosure Butler alludes to. This is important not only in view of the above example – where clearly there was an initial experience of

loss – but also so as to make the point that despite their seemingly “impossibility” within apartheid, such cross-racial ties and desires most certainly did exist, even if subsequent forms of psychic erasure ensure that, effectively, they did not.

Butler (1997: 139) specifies the location of the melancholia in question which exists always in tandem with societal proscription:

“When ... [such] losses are compelled by a set of culturally prevalent prohibitions, we might expect a culturally prevalent form of melancholia, one which signals the internalization of the ungrieved and ungrievable [cross-racial] cathexis. And where there is no public recognition or discourse through which such a loss might be named and mourned, then melancholia takes on cultural dimensions.”

To think melancholia as cultural formation is to appreciate how psychical operations and social structure combine in ways which cannot be reduced to the singular level of the individual subject. Formations of cultural melancholia would thus appear – in this adaptation of Butler’s (1997: 140) argument – to go hand in hand with strident demarcations of racial difference:

“it is not simply a matter of a individual’s unwillingness to avow and hence to grieve [cross-racial] attachments. When the prohibition against [cross-racial attachments] is culturally pervasive, then the ‘loss’ of ... [such] love is precipitated through a prohibition which is repeated and ritualized throughout the culture. What ensures is a culture of ... melancholy in which ... [categories of racial difference] emerge as the traces of an ungrieved and ungrievable love.”

Butler’s (adapted) formulations seem particularly apposite in (post)apartheid contexts within which white children have formed significant if subsequently foreclosed bonds of attachment with black child-minders. While one may have expected a lessening of racial difference by virtue of such proximities, it seems, more often than not, that exactly the opposite was and is the case (Ally, 2009, 2011; Shefer, 2012). What makes little intuitive sense – the fact that the development of loving ties does not necessarily minimize notions of difference, but somehow appears to consolidate them – is apparently given a dynamic explanation in Butler’s work.

An important amendment needs to be made before we progress. As is by now perhaps apparent, we cannot simply transfer Butler’s notion of melancholy gender to the domain of racial difference. In Butler’s model, crucially, the lost yet unconsciously retained object is itself the basis of a powerful identification. The

melancholic object shines through; it propels identification: the more I cannot have a given (homosexual) object, the more I identify with, and become like them. For this reason “it comes as no surprise that the more hyperbolic and defensive a masculine identification, the more fierce the ungrieved homosexual cathexis” (Butler, 1997: 139). This, incidentally, is a thoroughly orthodox Freudian idea, as is the notion that the object of failed love relation can be retained and internalized as the basis for an enduring identification (this is what Freud (1921), in his *Group psychology and the analysis of the ego*, dubs “regressive identification”). This factor is shared in the prospective “melancholic” inscription of heterosexuality and racial difference alike: the operation of a *refused identification* (be it with the opposite sex, or with a “different” race) is crucial in substantiating an exclusive identification (with the same sex or race). However, while in the case of foreclosed cross-racial ties, a prospective avenue of identification is likewise refused, the “ungrieved” object *does not itself become the model of an identification* but supports instead a compensatory identification of a different order. In other words, the idea of foreclosed cross-racial attachments involves not an unconscious identification with, but the very opposite, a refusal of identification with, the lost object.

The responses to loss are different in each case. In the first instance (the melancholic inscription of heterosexuality) what has been loved and lost is carried within the subject as a loss that blocks any further attachments of the same kind. The route to new attachments of a similar sort has been barred. The melancholic remains one with its lost object which by now has been folded into the ego, and that object, kept in place, effectively voids the possibility of particular loves. (It is this element of Freud’s account – the barring of further attachments on the basis of an unprocessed incorporation – that Butler’s conceptualization of cultural melancholia depends on). One appreciates thus the elegance of Butler’s argument: what could be a better way of ensuring subjective compliance to social prohibition than by securing such proscriptions on the basis of unmetabolized losses? What results from this operation is a series of libidinal embargos which effectively designate a field of ineligible objects. The intractability of this interweaving of social prohibition and unconscious foreclosure provides us with a profound instance of the psychic life of power. As a possible strategy of recovery, this response to loss cannot but be considered a failure, for the very obvious reason that it permits for no recovery at all: rather than loss being gradually assimilated into reality, reality itself is assimilated into loss.

I will return shortly to the distinction between two different modes of loss. Although I do borrow facets of Butler's theorization in what follows, I will stress different psychological mechanisms underlying the "cross-racial" attachments and refused identifications being discussed. What I propose is not that we dismiss Butler's account, but that we extract both what is most psychoanalytically defensible, and most helpful in respect of an analysis of the Apartheid Archive narratives in question.

Doubting Melancholia

The question of how reliably this conceptualization of melancholia may be applied in the present case is a tricky one. Before entering into such deliberations it is worthwhile stating a series of critical arguments that beg the question of whether such a notion of societal melancholia is in fact psychoanalytically viable. I want to follow a dual type of analysis here, simultaneously pursuing and questioning the line of analysis Butler offers in *The psychic life of power*. Indeed, as pertinent as Butler's account is, it does, I think, suffer from a discharacterization, as does much of the work which takes up the Freudian topic of melancholia as a means of understanding socio-cultural conditions.

Bluntly put, in most cases what are taken to be societal instantiations of melancholia are, quite simply, not cases of melancholia at all, certainly insofar as we remain faithful to Freud's (1917) initial clinical formulations. Freud's account of melancholia cannot be reduced to a state of ungrieved loss; such a conflation appears frequently in Butler's (1997) discussion. Melancholia is more than just the failure of mourning, more than a prolonged non-resolution of loss, states which, incidentally, can be easily romanticized. It is for this reason that Crociani-Windland and Hoggett (2012: 165) observe that "Sometimes writers in [the] post-colonial tradition appear to confuse melancholia with melancholy". Whereas melancholy "is part of the sweet sadness of loss", melancholia is by contrast "the bleak, visceral, agitated, desperate existence of a loss with no name" (ibid).

Freudian melancholia necessarily involves hostility towards a lost object that has been withdrawn into the ego. It entails the sufferer's assault upon this lost object which, via the means of narcissistic regression, has been incorporated into the ego. These then are the conditions under which a relation to the lost object may be maintained, conditions which amount to a crippling state of internalized aggression. A constituent component of melancholia - far more difficult to romanticize than states of ungrieved loss - is the fact of a loathing, self-*abjecting*

relation to one's own ego that has been deemed worthless and opened up to the punitive fury of the super-ego (Freud, 1932). A form of suffering tantamount to being buried with the dead, melancholia cannot be summarily equated merely with blockages of identification, with states of unending remembrance (see for example how the concept is utilized in the political writings of Moon, 1995; Muñoz, 1997; Novak, 1999). The phenomenology and clinical structure of melancholia present a completely different picture (Lander, 2006; Leader, 2008). As Verhaeghe's (2004) brief gloss makes clear, the presiding features of melancholia – clamorous self-denunciation, convictions of inner worthlessness, the impetus to selfpunishment – seem to hold little of promise for increased political awareness or action. The melancholic subject, condemned to a type of nonexistence “takes the entire guilt of the world onto its shoulders, and this is the sole reason for ... [their] existence ... [The condition is characterized by] all-encompassing guilt and its accompanying need for punishment invariably display[s] a delusional character ... The subject disappears, is reduced to nothing (Verhaeghe, 2004: 455-456).

Of course, many of the authors who adapt Freud's notion, transforming its destructive qualities into something productive, into the “militant preservation of the lost object” (Eng & Han, 2003: 363), do so intentionally. Muñoz (1997: 355-56) for example argues that “for blacks and queers ... melancholia [is] not a pathology ... a self-absorbed mood that inhibits activism, but ... a mechanism that helps us (re)construct identity and take our dead to the various battles we must wage in their names”. Frosh (2012a: 7) provides an adroit summary of such re-appropriations of the notion of melancholia:

“Melancholia – severe depression – feeds on itself, consuming the person until there is nothing left ... Against this unpromising backdrop, melancholia has been resurfacing as a paradigm of subversion, an instance of how what is written out as a profound negative can be reinterpreted as a call to arms ... The key element in this re-reading of the productive possibilities of melancholia is not the issue of self-hatred, but rather the [preservation of the object] ... In melancholia there is no recognition of the lost object ... it exists ‘in’ the unconscious as something which cannot be grieved because it is never acknowledged ... [Melancholia] preserves the object precisely because the object is never grieved. That is, whereas mourning deals with object loss and integrates the object into the subject's psychic life, dissolving it so that it becomes a part of the subject,

melancholia can be read as an act of refusal on the part of the object to be taken up and destroyed in this way.”

What this means is that many of the constituent elements of the clinical picture of melancholia sketched above – particularly the relentless internalized self-violence – are screened out of postcolonial engagements with the topic. Such adaptations as a rule emphasize the non-digested incorporation of the lost object, and of course the facet of ungrievable loss, but then sidestep the resultant reflexive dynamic – the broader libidinal economy – of radical self-hate which ensures that melancholia is always more than a facet of identification.

What becomes evident then is the importance of distinguishing between *forms of identification* which have a melancholic character and the pathological *condition of melancholia* in and of itself. Both such uses are of course apparent in Freud’s (1917, 1921, 1923) own work. Nonetheless, this distinction, so often lacking in the spiralling literature on postcolonial melancholia, nonetheless deserves reiteration. On the one hand we are concerned with melancholia as diagnostic structure, a pathological assumption of the place of the dead which consigns the melancholic to a state of purgatory. On the other we have in mind a *mode of identification* in which lost objects are retained as a way of building the ego. Although this may sound like a small qualification it is vital, separating as it does a psychotic condition from an everyday modality of identification present in each and every ego. This clinical distinction will have important ramifications, as we will go on to see, both in respect of how we understand the social application of melancholia and in terms of how we under the question of “cross-racial” attachments as addressed in this paper.

Forster’s (2003) essay “*Against melancholia*” isolates two reoccurring problems that characterize much of the literature that attempts a rehabilitation of the notion. The first pivots on a crucial misunderstanding, namely the idea that mourning entails a forgetting, relinquishing, indeed, the apparent *erasure* of the lost object which is thus consigned to the oblivion of non-memory. Once such a categorization is in place, melancholia can be pictured as the only method for the faithful preservation of the object. Brophy’s (2002: 267) assertion of melancholia “as mechanism of memory” able to resist the “recuperative pressures” of prevailing prescriptions of gender, race and class, is an apt case in point. What such a view (purposefully?) overlooks is the fact that what has been lost remains unconscious to the melancholic. The “melancholic’s unconscious incorporation ...

prevents the object from being remembered, in part because it confuses self and other”, a confusion which makes it near impossible “for the other to become an object of memory or consciousness” (Forster, 2003: 138). Mourning, in short, is not tantamount to forgetting. Insofar as it involves a systematic work of detachment from the lost object, mourning can in fact be viewed as a precondition for the memorialisation of this object. Mourning enables a gradual differentiation between ego and object, a state when the ego is no longer completely fused with the object; in this way it is the basis for remembrance.

The depathologizing of melancholia, furthermore, risks encouraging a misguided celebration, indeed, the collective cultivation of a state characterized by “*numb disconnection and a self-loathing whose logical conclusion is suicide*” (Forster, 2003: 139). What is in question here is not only a complete evasion of the affective reality of melancholia, but of theoretical conjecture completely overriding the reality of lived experience in a way that encourages “a collective self-hatred whose progressive implications are far from clear” (ibid).

One may extend the above critique by posing a question to such celebratory treatments of melancholia: to what ends – ideological, self-justificatory – is this object, this proposed melancholic attachment, being used? If it has a pragmatic function, serving perhaps as a support of identity, as an argumentative warrant or some or other sort, then it would seem less than truly melancholic. This would be less a case of ethical fidelity to the object and more an instance of its instrumental use. If the latter is indeed the case, then we are most likely dealing with a fetishistic rather than melancholic object.

Frosh (2012b: 41) highlights a further drawback of such valorizing conceptualizations:

“[I]n imagining the existence of a lost object that can ... be “recovered”, a mythology is created ... a kind of romance of origin that can be called on to establish the distinctiveness ... to which the group can return”. The danger is that “what is produced is something fantasmagoric and potentially reactionary, the lost object becoming [thus] ... a call back to a neverland of imagined time” (ibid). Forster (2003: 163-64) adds to this the warning that “the hostile component of melancholic ambivalence is often displaced onto convenient scapegoats”. This is a pronounced risk inasmuch as the ego in and of itself can, as Butler (1997) intimates, never be a wholly satisfying substitute for the lost and now hated object. There are thus, for Forster (2003: 143), serious political risks in attempting

to utilize melancholia for progressive ends, particularly given the possibility of “the channelling of melancholic rage toward the socially vulnerable”.

Contrived losses

Having developed this critique of how melancholia has often been applied, we may now return to a more focussed discussion of the Apartheid Archive narratives. We might follow Butler half of the way here, accepting her thoughts on barred love and identification, but stopping short of assuming the full machinery of the model of melancholia. In light of the above critique, we might suggest that Butler most helps us to see is less a type of melancholic cultural disposition, than patterns of *refused identification*. The key here is not so much the lost relationship that remains unmourned, internalized; this fact is of secondary importance relative to *the identification it shores up*. So, rather than a given formation of identification being the outcome of a more pervasive and general condition of melancholia, I will offer that refused identification is the primary phenomenon here, which may or may not have a melancholic quality to it.

Turning back then to the narrative material discussed above, we might now pose a series of more focussed questions. Firstly, are we dealing with a properly “ungrieved” or unconscious loss, or, a thoroughly conscious, declarable loss? In the narrative cited above we are surely dealing with *conscious* losses, conscious enough that they can be explored in a form of public writing (certainly, in texts destined for an archive). Of course, one can argue that in the Dyson text there is grief, even if held in abeyance and never fully declared given the apparent absence – at the time – of any “public recognition or discourse through which such a loss might be named and mourned” (Butler, 1997: 139). The spectre of unreality that Butler speaks of seems apparent here. We need to keep open the possibility that the remorse admitted prior to this point may not have been significantly registered, hence its return here in an unresolved form. That is to say, the difficulty of distinguishing between conscious and unconscious losses is not as simple as it may appear, especially given Freud’s (1917) memorable declaration that the melancholic knows full well *whom* they have lost, just not *what* they have lost in them. So, in the cases of Phyllis and Dyson, what appears to be a conscious loss may nonetheless be tied by an invisible thread to a lost quality that cannot be retrieved. This is part of what ties the melancholic so inextricably to the dead: the fact that they do not know and cannot represent exactly what has been lost. This loss, furthermore, is not delimited, differentiable

in its relation to other libidinal objects, which is to say that it is effectively the loss of everything.

The counter-argument here is that what we are dealing with are contrived losses, experienced only after the fact, as a way of the narrator's attempts to rehabilitate an image of themselves not wholly reducible to the racist social relations of the time. In this respect the double temporality of the extracts, written in a decidedly post-apartheid voice, of apartheid-era experiences, is undoubtedly a factor. Whereas, during apartheid, there was no adequate social framework or representational space to support this mourning – which, as such, was never fully processed, never supported by broad symbolic recognition – the discursive context of post-apartheid South Africa entails a very different set of imperatives. What we can safely assume is required of such white post-apartheid retellings is that the narrator invoke at least the possibility of a mourning, providing thus the “proof” of feelings of a humanity not wholly determined by racism. It seems after all true that in both cases there is a suspension of remorse an odd resignation – even, ultimately, disinterestedness – with reference to the lost libidinal attachment that, in the final analysis, appears dispensable. As such we might ask: is this attitude the result of foreclosed attachments that meant such losses did not count more significantly, or, more disturbingly, was this “foreclosure” simply due to a racist under-valuation of the person in question? More directly: is this more a case of mimed melancholia than a melancholia of an ostensibly “ethical” sort?

If there is a properly melancholic aspect to these reminiscences of Dyson and Phyllis, then it would be characterized, in clinical terms, by a blockage of retrieval that Freud (1917) described by means of his distinction between word- and thing-presentations. If there was a melancholic loss evidenced by the texts, it would not present in an obvious way, but would instead be only *symptomatically* apparent, being in and of itself effectively unrepresentable. What this means is that if there is a melancholic loss here it is probably not the loss specified (or implied) as such by the subject. Let us leave this intriguing possibility – of a hitherto undeclared loss shadowing the screen memory of a declarable loss – to one side so as to bring a series of further theoretical issues into focus.

Compensatory (Symbolic) Identifications

I want now to revisit the idea of the two responses to loss that I posed earlier on. The first of these was melancholic and it entailed an unprocessed loss blocking the making of further attachments. This delimiting of attachments would certainly

pertain to sexual object-choice, the field of objects similar to the object lost would be effectively off-limits, but it would also foster an exclusive type of identification. The second response to loss, in which I stressed the factor of refused identification, involved the making of identifications of an altogether different order. Such identifications involve a point of reference beyond the domain of the original subject-object relation. It is worth emphasizing that in this second mode of response – by contrast far more socially-adaptive, psychically-expedient than the first – what has been loved and lost propels a need for compensatory identifications *precisely not with the lost object* itself. The trajectory of identification is directed towards a symbolic locus beyond the delimited parameters of the relation between the grieving subject and the lost object. This symbolic identification – I will provide examples as we continue – helps disavow the painful significance of the loss and it enables the location of more suitable object-investments. The logic is not “what I loved and lost I now carry within me”. It is not, in other words, a form of fidelity to the lost object which is maintained even at the price of the self-ravaging subjectivity of the melancholic. It is rather the logic of rejection, of “what I have loved and lost I now leave behind”. Rather than a mechanism of blockage that prevents further libidinal ties, this is a relation – perhaps akin to abjection – of repulsion, a rejection of the object whose value is now drastically diminished and denied. It is a rejection, furthermore, that accordingly compels the search for replacement objects to assume the now vacant place of the lost object. In the first – that is, melancholic – response to loss, pain is extended indefinitely. The fidelity of the melancholic, we might venture, is not only to a lost object, but also to *the pain inflicted by its loss*.

In the second (non-melancholic) response there is, by notable contrast, amelioration; there is no fidelity to the object; the object is instead demeaned, de-valued in comparison to a series of narcissistically-bound, “closer to home” object-investments. We are dealing, in this latter case, more than anything else, with a defensive operation which deals with loss by replacement, by means of a narcissistic over-evaluation of the ego and its adjourning field of objects and symbolic values. It may well entail a mournful posture, but it is by no means melancholic.

A distinctive relation to the world of symbolic articulation is involved in each of these two cases. I have already stressed that the refused identification that I take to be the predominant factor in the above narratives – a type of “identification on

the rebound” – involves a push towards symbolic identifications beyond the immediate subject-object relation. This amounts to an opening up of a broader socio-symbolic horizon. The unprocessed losses of melancholia, by contrast, are pathological losses that are denied social articulation and symbolic comprehension. Such losses are effectively shortcircuited, reflexively arcing back upon the ego which becomes the target of its own punishment. They cannot, furthermore, be adequately expressed given that the disjunction between object- and word-presentation affords no articulation of what has been lost. It is precisely in this respect that the precision of the existing Freudian (1917) clinical model of melancholia – too easily dismissed by more celebratory treatments of the notion – proves so vital. In the Dyson and Phyllis examples we are dealing with a thoroughly *neurotic* loss. This is not a seizing up of the ego, or an inability to make further investments (libidinal cathexes) in the external world. It represents instead a flourishing of symbolic identifications – such as that of a vegetarian anti-apartheid novelist in the Phyllis narrative – that reach beyond the confines of the ego-object dyad.

To be sure, I am not suggesting that no loss has occurred, or that it is negligible. I am stressing rather that this is a type of loss that has been managed via various repressions and substitutions, that it is a non-psychotic loss which thus can be dealt with within the terms of the prevailing symbolic and thus ideological order. However, to claim that we are dealing with a neurotic loss incurs a question. Is this not a contradictory response, especially given Butler’s (1997: 139) suggestive idea – accurate I think, in the context of our examples – that within the given socio-political condition, there is no adequate “public recognition or discourse through which such a loss might be named”. While no adequate discourse may have existed to express the lost “inter-racial” intimacy, what certainly did exist was the broader symbolic network of possible identifications through which a relation to prevailing familial or community roles was still retained, indeed, affirmed. A case in point may be located in this paper’s companion piece, in that article’s discussion of animal mediators, of fantasy as a means of responding to discursive impasse. The resulting “answers” to the dilemma of how the white child is to locate themselves in such “inter-racial” relationships seemed precisely to affirm existing community roles and familial positions, neutralizing rather than radicalizing moments of social contradiction.

One further detail from the Phyllis extract proves, in retrospect, telling. Whereas

a type of identification certainly does seem to be set in motion here, it is not of a melancholic sort – the prospective identification with Phyllis seems to have been thoroughly “metabolized” – but, as noted in the previous paper, of a hysterical sort, an identification with the place of the other. The narrator needs to be taken at face value when she declares: “I am not Phyllis”. Phyllis as lost object is a stepping stone, a means to an end; she enables an altogether different identification (that of the novelwriting, anti-apartheid white heroine) and is discarded in the process. This, interestingly, gives us a different perspective on a facet of the narrative that has not as yet been emphasized, namely, the fact that the narrator apparently refuses to eat the chicken. What is important in this respect is not so much what actually happened, but the fact that *it is included by the narrator in the text*. It is difficult to avoid the Freudian symbolism here, in terms of which such “cannibalistic” incorporation is considered as a primal form of identification. The message that might thus be read out of the text is thus as direct as it is counter-intuitive: an introjection is refused, or, more to the point, there is a refusal of Phyllis as object of identification.

The importance of the distinction I am drawing – between what we might call ethical as opposed to mimed forms of melancholia – is by now apparent. The ethical quality of a properly melancholic attachment is qualified by two conditions, one of which is all too easily overlooked in celebratory affirmations of the notion. Firstly, by an absolute fidelity to what has been lost, that is, by the state of suspended, ungrieved loss so often reiterated in the literature. Secondly, by the fact – less frequently stressed – that this fidelity comes at a price. The melancholic tie is one of great pain, even of destruction. The unconscious persistence of a preserved libidinal attachment is not, in and of itself, an ethical matter. (A great many attachments presumably persist in non-pathological forms; no libidinal tie is easily relinquished). When the preservation of such a tie puts one’s own existence at risk however, then an altogether different order of ethical commitment is in question. By contrast, the neurotic strategy of compensatory identifications and substitute objects is at best a type of “mimed melancholia” in which attachments to the object are jettisoned in the name of recovery. So, while in such a case we are confronted with a kind of betrayal, the second killing of the object – and here I am recasting terms used by Žižek (2000) in his critique of how the notion of melancholia is often applied – the melancholic subject, by contrast, remains faithful to it, refusing at all costs to renounce their attachment to it. The importance of Žižek’s (2000: 658-659) contribution is that he simultaneously

underlines the unconditional ethical quality of the melancholic while castigating opportunistic recourse to the trope of the melancholic:

“[One should] denounce the objective cynicism that ... a rehabilitation of melancholy enacts. The melancholic link to the lost ethnic Object allows us to claim that we remain faithful to our ethnic roots while fully participating in the global capitalist game ... what is wrong with postcolonial nostalgia is not the dream of a world ... [one] never had (such a utopia can be thoroughly liberating) but the way this dream is used to legitimize the actuality of its very opposite, of the full and unconstrained participation in global capitalism.”

Or, put in the terms of our current concerns: brandishing the badge of a “cross-racial” melancholic attachment allows one to mitigate to one’s self the ongoing racial divisions that one continues to live by.

Unexpected identifications

In retrospect one cannot but be struck by the struggle of identification that is writ large in the above narratives. These texts are, in many respects, far less about lost attachments than about white subjectivities locating a pole of identification amidst the complications posed by apartheid’s insistence on racial difference and in view of the post-apartheid declaration that such apparent differences *do not matter*. This observation allows us to return to an assertion made above with regard to a third point of identification, that is, to the topic of symbolic identification that occurs outside of the confines of the truncated ego-object relation obtaining in melancholia. Making such an analytical distinction is vital from a psychoanalytic perspective. It makes the point that identification resides not merely where we might like it to, with whom we might like to, or on the basis of an obvious affective tie; a symbolic identification may over-ride all of these relatively “psychologistic” considerations, and it may exist unconsciously, as an attachment to a symbolic frame itself.

This distinction can be illustrated with reference to the Phyllis narrative, in which, as noted in the foregoing paper, we see the interplay of various forms of identification. After an initial reading, one might treat the hysterical Phyllis-identification as primary. I would argue, by contrast, that the more substantive identification, for which the temporary and imaginary Phyllis identification is merely a conduit, is symbolic in nature, indeed, that it is an exemplary case of the opening up of a broader socio-symbolic horizon. I have in mind here of course the

identification as *anti-apartheid writer*, which, like all symbolic identifications, is an identification beyond any one single person, and identification that maintains a strong historical trajectory, in the sense that it both extends into the future – providing thus a career, a vocation – and links back to a lineage. Such a symbolic identification is far more robust than the more transitory stuff of imaginary identifications; it provides the structuring component which underlies and delimits the ebb and flow of inter-subjective identifications. Symbolic identification plays the role of the anchor that grounds the subject to a longstanding series of traditional, communal and cultural values.

Two important implications follow on from this conceptualization of identification. Firstly, this identification – identification as anti-apartheid novelist – dilutes the radicalism of the apparent identification with Phyllis and the fanciful sexual fantasies associated with it. This is not only because the identification in question is thoroughly acceptable and socially admired – it is hard to think of a more *bourgeois* and less revolutionary preoccupation than that of a novelist. but also because such an identification recontextualizes the earlier Phyllis identification as precisely imaginary, as work of fiction. Furthermore, we might contend that such an identification is essentially *an identification with the symbolic itself*, certainly so inasmuch it would allow the subject to take on the position of one able to *produce symbolic fictions*. The discomfiting although by no means necessary implication here is that such a subject would be one that contributes to, rather than dismantles, the socio-symbolic conditions of the apartheid social formation in question.

We might extend these speculations on symbolic identification by turning back to the Dyson narrative. In Truscott's (2012) engagement with this text [iii], he argues that there is – perhaps contrary to the narrator's wishes – no real identification with Dyson. The identification lies instead with the “strict white daddy who seemed at times less than approachable”. While there is little evidence that the narrator has made this connection, namely that it is a paternal identification rather than the loss of a “cross-racial” bond that predominates in this text, a crucial facet of such an identification is clearly evident: the conferral of a trait. It is precisely the father's lamented quality of being inaccessible, unapproachable, that the narrator enacts with respect to Dyson. So, advances Truscott (2012), while the loss of the relationship with Dyson might here be negotiated in all sincerity, Dyson is in fact “a secondary cast member on stage

where a[n] ... identification with the father plays out", indeed, the aloofness to Dyson could be "exactly a sign of an identification with the lost white father".

Truscott's (2012) line of argument would concur with my own insofar as it suggests a more substantive form of identification occurring beyond the bounds of the relationship with Dyson. Whereas I have termed this a form of symbolic identification activated in a compensatory manner – the assumption being that it is intensified by the loss of Dyson – Truscott rightly intimates that such an identification may have pre-empted, even caused the loss of the imagined relationship with Dyson. The text itself, perhaps unwittingly, includes reference to this point of change brought on by the identification with the father. This provides a nice example of psychoanalytic reading practice, of the double-reading of a text, because the change the author has in mind is the change of his relationship with Dyson which he appears to view as disconnected with the relation to the father. As Truscott puts it, referring to the words of the narrator: "The identification with the father is marked here (the 'change' being the onset of the loss of, and identification with, the father)":

I don't know how and when a change occurred – even for sure that one did – but I do remember at a certain point becoming excessively formal with [Dyson], avoidant, distanced, as if a type of enacted superiority and distance had become necessary.

Fully aware of the declarative force of the narrative, of what it aims to do by virtue of the admissions it makes, of how it tries to rehabilitate the white (post) apartheid subject, Truscott (2012) reiterates the non-melancholic nature of the attachment. The loss of Dyson is not a cause of "the loss that never was a loss". It is, by contrast, certainly within the post-apartheid context, "a wholly appropriate and completely declarable loss one which would enable the writer of the text to become a part of the postcolonial community". The loss of Dyson "seems like a loss the writer of the text "can only hope" was a loss". Furthermore:

"[T]he overriding wish of the text seems to be that there were faux pas made, that [the author] ... did actually almost call him daddy. The most horrifying thing for the writer seems to be not that he held back sincere feelings that must, surely, have been there, but that there were none, no feelings of sincerity, that there were never 'carefree times before an awareness of race came into play', that he only ever knew him as a 'good African' ... that the racist codes of the time were

the only way that he knew Dyson" (Truscott, 2012).

Despite the apparently mimed melancholia of the extract, which, incidentally, might equally be understood along the lines of the promiscuous shame identified by Straker (2011) in the apartheid reminiscences of whites South Africans, one might argue that there is, nonetheless, a genuine loss evinced here. What is in question is not simply the loss of Dyson, although this autobiographical fragment is, very possibly, the vehicle through which a more serious loss is expressed. In other words, there may be an intermingling of losses here; the loss described may be of an overdetermined sort. This more debilitating loss – and here we need read the text as produced by a post-apartheid subject in a post-apartheid context – is more probably of the discursive figure of Dyson, of "apartheid's Dyson".

"Isn't it possible that it isn't Dyson who has been lost, but ... the 'Dyson' who he knew only through the racist codes of the day, not in spite of these codes. The grief that cannot possibly be professed here, the truly unmournable loss, is of these codes ... [It is] grief for the loss of racist codes that helped him to know who 'Dyson' was ... 'Dyson' has been lost, and, with him, not an unmediated intimacy between him and a fellow man, but an 'intimacy of apartheid'" (Truscott, 2012).

This observation shifts on its axis the perspective of our entire analysis thus far. If the consciously offered story of (Dyson's) loss does both express and conceal another, more substantial loss, then that unmourned loss is very possibly that of apartheid itself, or, following Truscott's (2012) argument, that of the "apartheid symbolic" that framed everyday interactions and identifications. We have moved thus from the topic of lost "cross-racial" attachments within apartheid to the topic of the loss of apartheid's symbolic network itself. Such a change in perspective concurs with the more general argument I have been developing in respect of identification, i.e. the need to consider not only inter-subjective ties and investments (an analysis of ego-level functioning), but to look also to the symbolic factors (the discursive codes, symbolic roles, the behavioural framework grounding everyday interactions) which play a more formidable and foundational role in structuring affects and inter-subjective relations.

This draws attention to a tenet of Lacanian theory. Rather than prioritizing a given affect or interpersonal relationship as the focal-point in the analysis of a text, look to the often overlooked "determining" role of symbolic factors which are often themselves productive of (rather than secondary to) affects. It hardly seem

necessary to emphasize that the “apartheid symbolic”, that is, its network of roles and reciprocal subject. Moreover, this network of relations and values provided not only a strong sense of ontological security, but a readily available social script, i.e. frame of intelligibility, for its white adherents. It is no wonder then that Steyn’s (2001) study of post-apartheid whiteness emphasizes the subjective experience of dispossession and displacement particular in white Afrikaners who have felt a loss of home, autonomy, control, legitimacy and honour.

All things considered, it would be surprising if the end of apartheid was not experienced as a debilitating – and potentially melancholic – loss for white South Africans. Such a glowing period of “white narcissism” was apartheid, enabling whites *en masse* to retain the belief in themselves as extraordinary, as deserving of privilege, that it is unlikely that its demise did not occasion an acute (if not wholly conscious) experience of loss. Apartheid continually affirmed notions of white privilege and entitlement, producing, one might assume, a *jouissance* of assumed superiority. Such a *jouissance* is akin perhaps to the jubilation of the mirror-stage (mis)recognitions in which an ego identifies with an idealized image whose capacities far outstrip its own. My attempt to couch the relation of whites to apartheid as one of narcissistic love is, of course, strategic. Having stressed how apartheid’s symbolic network might itself provide an object of melancholic loss, I want to emphasize also that the libidinal quality, the *jouissance* of white investment in apartheid might equally prove an object of melancholic attachment. I underscore the narcissism of this white relationship to apartheid also for another reason. Toward the end of his famous 1917 essay Freud remarks that the object of melancholic attachment will, in the final analysis, invariably be shown to bear the qualities of a narcissistic object-choice. If then the relationship that many (if not all) whites had with apartheid was tantamount to one of narcissistic love, then a central precondition of melancholic attachment would clearly have been in place by the time of apartheid’s formal demise.

Apartheid unmourned

I have spent a good deal of time in this paper outlining the potential uses and limitations of thinking melancholia as a model of foreclosed “cross-racial” attachments and refused identifications. The unexpected outcome of this critical journey is that there may be a melancholic condition apparent within such texts after all, not in view of a literal application of lost objects (lost “cross-racial” attachments) but rather in terms of certain lost ideals – far more difficult to

pinpoint – of apartheid. This is not to dispute the dynamics of compensatory symbolic identification that I have described above, which are crucial in understanding how the “cross-racial” libidinal attachments are transformed into powerful forms of refused identification. It is certainly not to overturn the various critiques assembled above in respect of postcolonial rehabilitations of melancholia. In fact, it is exactly the constituent elements of Freud’s model that have been omitted by such rehabilitations (hostility towards the lost object; the inability to summon the preserved object to memory) that will need to be stressed if the idea of apartheid melancholia is to emerge as a coherent notion.

This line of discussion opens up the broader topic of the unprocessed and unmourned losses of previous historical eras. It recalls thus Mitscherlich & Mitscherlich’s (1975) influential analysis of post-war Germany’s inability to mourn its fascist past, and the subsequent redirections of libido, the multiple types of denial that accompanied this inability. Such losses remain unspeakable for members of the post-apartheid nation, a nation whose founding definition relies precisely on the repudiation of all that apartheid signified. Apartheid is not an object over which grief can be authorized; it is a loss that should not be a loss at all, “the end of apartheid can only be a sign of progress”, those who laments its loss “become “the other from the past” against which the post-apartheid nation has constituted itself” (Brock & Truscott, 2012: 8). Herein lies the dilemma undercutting the ethico-political imperative to identify in opposition to the apartheid past: it neglects the complications of the multiple symbolic and libidinal attachments – the entanglements, to use Nuttall’s (2009) evocative phrase – of past and present, conscious and unconscious identifications. It is worth noting here that the difficulty of this situation, of the unprocessed losses for (the ‘ungrievable’ nature of) one’s history, indeed, of one’s own possible – even if tacit – identifications with the past, are not only those of white but also black South Africans, as Dlamini’s (2009) *Native nostalgia* makes clear.

An advantage of the Mitscherlichs’ (1975) approach is that they register the breadth of responses to unprocessed loss. As Lapping (2011: 26) stresses, the disavowal of Nazi identity they trace is achieved “not through the absolutist, exclusionary mechanism of ... foreclosure, but through multiple cultural, political and personalized mechanisms of denial”. Their speculations about unprocessed loss in a given socio-historical location are, in other words, more varied and textured than is the case when an assumption is made, as in Butler’s theorization,

about a general state of cultural melancholia. This attention to the variety of historical circumstances underlying unprocessed loss is of vital importance in investigating how *differing social constituencies* within a given social mass respond to unprocessed losses. Doing so enables us to make two further critical remarks in reference to postcolonial rehabilitations of melancholia. Melancholia, firstly, as subjective condition or social state, cannot be expected to map neatly upon given political groups. Of course, one appreciates the logic of the argument that all subaltern identities are, as Crociani-Windland & Hoggett (2012) put it, marked by the shadow of a loss that cannot be grieved. The shorthand assumption here is that “subaltern communities are constituted by melancholia” (Crociani-Windland & Hoggett, 2012: 165). Setting aside for the moment the apparently erroneous supposition that has been made here we may note simply that there is, in practice, no guarantee that so broad and schematic a view would be affirmed. Such are the complexities and ambivalences of psychical life: oppressor and oppressed alike might share a mode of melancholic (or *nostalgic*) attachment to what has gone before, just as there may be significant differences in how a given social constituency responds to unprocessed loss. As in a psychoanalytic treatment, one needs attend not only to given socio-historical circumstances but the singularity of the given subject’s (or subject community’s) responses to such circumstances, a set of responses which never fit the answer that theory would predispose us to expect.

In concluding, I should be as clear as possible: the unprocessed losses of apartheid need not form the basis of a melancholic formation. As in the foregoing analysis of refused identifications, the underlying mechanism in question may be less that of a type of foreclosure – as in Butler’s (1997) conceptualization – than a type of neurotic response, that seeks substitutive displacements for the lost object and the sustenance of broader, lateral field of identifications. This, I would suggest, is a less radical and perhaps more likely response. Such losses may, following the argument I’ve developed above, form the basis of diverse compensatory symbolic identifications with a suitably evocative yet nonetheless “empty” signifier, such as “the new South Africa”. That being said, we need to keep this possibility open, namely that melancholia for apartheid may well exist, just as an unconscious fidelity to its values may persist in many post-apartheid social formations.

If melancholia can indeed be used to describe the response of white South

Africans to the racist social system that benefitted them, then this usage of the concept cannot but unsettle celebratory rehabilitations of the term. The presumption of the silent ethical dignity of the melancholic, of their heroic loss, becomes extremely uncomfortable in this instance, implying as it does the possibility of an ethical fidelity to a system of massive and brutal social injustice. Such an account of fidelity to a lost and hated – and properly hateful – object certainly does trouble celebratory treatments, but it is, precisely perhaps because of this, all the more accurate for doing so. It would make apparent something routinely overlooked in many adaptations of the Freudian problematic, namely the fact that melancholic attachment is not a question of conscious – or moral – choice.

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NOTES

[i] I am aware that in using the term “cross-racial” I risk affirming both “race” and “racial differences” as natural categories. This is certainly not my intention. I have opted to retain these terms “race” and “inter-racial” so as to reflect the force and lived reality of these constructs in the (post)apartheid context. Incidentally, it is worth noting that I view “race” as more than socially constructed in the narrow sense of textual or epistemic practices, certainly so in view of the broad array of enactments, embodiments, libidinal weightings and phenomenological and unconscious values that “race” comes to assume in such contexts.

[ii] I draw here on a lengthy email exchange between the author and Ross Truscott, discussing the Apartheid Archive narrative in question.

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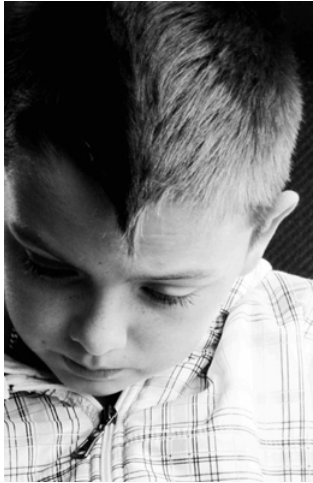
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Diversity Education: Lessons For A Just World

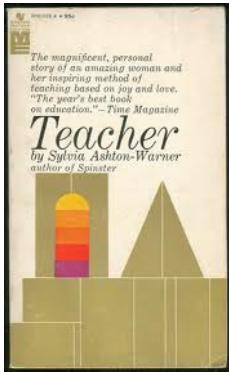


Multicultural education, intercultural education, nonracial education, antiracist education, culturally responsive pedagogy, ethnic studies, peace studies, global education, social justice education, bilingual education, mother tongue education, integration – these and more are the terms used to describe different aspects of diversity education around the world. Although it may go by different names and speak to stunningly different conditions in a variety of sociopolitical contexts, diversity education attempts to address such issues as racial and social class segregation, the disproportionate achievement of students of various backgrounds, and the structural inequality in both schools and society. In this paper, I consider the state of diversity education, in broad strokes, in order to draw some lessons from its conception and implementation in various countries, including South Africa. To do so, I consider such issues as the role of asymmetrical power relations and the influence of neoliberal and neoconservative educational agendas, among others, on diversity education. I also suggest a number of lessons learned from our experiences in this field in order to think about how we might proceed in the future, and I conclude with observations on the role of teachers in the current socio-political context.

Introduction

Although many of my examples are based on the U.S. context and on my research within that context, much of what I have to say is familiar to others in different societies around the world because the power relations and social injustices in the other countries I mention may be similar to the U.S. experience, especially South Africa which, like the United States, also has a history of racial discrimination. Moreover, increasing globalization is making our world smaller and more connected than ever. As a result, whether education is taking place in a large urban school in Johannesburg, a suburb of Boston, a colegio in Buenos Aires, a rural school outside Beijing, a sprawling high-rise community on the outskirts of Paris, or in numerous other places around the world, we face many of the same

challenges, problems, and possibilities brought on by the post-colonial condition and by immigration and global economic issues.



Sylvia Ashton-Warner's 'Teacher'

Although diversity education is widely recognized as having its origins in the mid-twentieth century United States in what was called the intergroup relations movement (Banks, 2005), glimmers of what could loosely be understood as multicultural education were also taking place in other countries around the world. For instance, Sylvia Ashton-Warner's 1963 book *Teacher* chronicled her innovative work with Maori children in New Zealand. Eschewing basal readers and other materials that had little connection to the lives of the children she taught, Ashton-Warner undertook what she called '*organic teaching*', that is, teaching based on the discourse and realities of her students. At the same time, Paulo Freire's (1970) groundbreaking literacy work with Brazilian peasants, in which they learned to '*read the word and the world*', was beginning to have an impact on both literacy and liberation movements around the world. Although neither of these authors used the words now associated with diversity education, they were both concerned with providing students with an education based on the principles of social justice and critical pedagogy, central tenets of what most people today would define as diversity education.

What came to be known as multicultural education in the United States, intercultural education in Europe, antiracist education in the U.K. and, later, nonracial education in South Africa, began with a focus on race. This focus is historically logical and understandable. In the United States, the field has its roots in the civil rights movement while in the U.K. it was a reaction to the

tremendous educational inequities faced by young people from former colonies. In South Africa, the anti-apartheid movement provided a basis for the nonracial movement, and it is still, according to Mokubung Nkomo, Linda Chisholm, and Carolyn McKinney (2004) the underlying basis for the movement which was '*born out of a conscious effort to transform undemocratic apartheid culture and practice by replacing it with a democratic, inclusive education ethos founded on a human rights culture*'. More recently, the focus of diversity education has expanded beyond race alone to also include ethnicity, gender, social class, language, sexual orientation, ability, and other differences. Although there is by no means general agreement on this more inclusive definition of diversity education among either scholars or practitioners in the field, there is a growing recognition that there are complex and important intersections among all social identities that need to be accounted for in diversity education.

Definitions and parameters

For the purposes of convenience, and to be as inclusive as possible, in this paper I refer to the movement that is now most commonly called multicultural or intercultural education with the more neutral term diversity education. Needless to say, there are numerous perceived and real differences among all the terms mentioned, but because I do not want to spend all my time discussing the nuances among these differences, I instead propose some general parameters that I believe most of us in the field would agree with. At the same time, I am mindful of the tremendous differences in context, condition, and history of each society in relation to diversity education. In some nations, diversity education has been concerned primarily with marginalized people of colour, as is the case in the United States. In other nations, particularly in Europe, xenophobia towards both long-term and short-term immigrants is the defining issue (Santos Regó & Nieto, 2000). In South Africa, integrating an immense population that was legally excluded from the full benefits of citizenship looms much larger. Hence, diversity education has not been experienced similarly across distinct contexts. As Crain Soudien, Nazir Carrim and Yusuf Sayed (2004) have argued, *One size does not fit all because citizens are not located in homogeneous, symmetrical and stable social, economic, and political positions. How one addresses the differences and the different kinds of inequalities thrown up by the complex social contexts in which people find themselves is a strategic matter.*

In the broadest terms, diversity education recognizes the pluralism that students

embody (racial/ethnic, social class, gender, and other) as resources to be used in the service of their education. At the same time, multiculturalism is not simply the recognition of group identity, although it has been used in this way in some places, most notably in the United States. Rather, I use diversity education to mean multiculturalism as public policy, as the term is used in Canada and Australia, among other nations (Castles, 2004; Hill & Allan, 2004). Diversity education, used in this way, acknowledges that structural inequalities in society impede equitable outcomes in education, not to mention in life, and it recognizes the role of the state in addressing such inequalities.

For some on the left, multiculturalism is little more than a distraction in the face of the massive global neoliberal retrenchment of the welfare state and the neoconservatives' outcry for a return to the past. Whether we agree with this assertion or not, it is important to be aware of the palliative nature of *'feel-good'* multiculturalism unaccompanied by a commitment to social and economic justice (Kalantzis, 1987). The danger of unquestioning loyalty to any particular cultural group may in fact lead to supporting policies and cultural practices that can be repressive; in the worst cases, uncritical cultural affiliations can result in extreme sectarianism and the fundamentalisms that inevitably slide into racism and exclusion of others. We are living with the results of these fundamentalisms in many countries around the globe. Amy Gutmann (2002) suggests instead that the primary social allegiance must be to social justice: *'Doing what is right'*, she says, *'cannot be reduced to loyalty to, or identification with, any existing group of human beings'*.

Related to the issue of group loyalty are competing notions of identity, or what has been called identity politics. Given the roots of diversity education as an attempt to address the scandalous condition of education to which many marginalized populations have been subjected, it is understandable that racial, ethnic, and linguistic identity became the defining features of diversity education. The implication, however, is that all students from a particular group behave and learn in more or less the same way, believe the same things, and share the same values. This assertion is problematic because it essentializes culture, assuming that culture consists of specific elements that can be applied mechanically to all within a particular social group. In turn, essentializing can lead to generalizations and stereotypes that get in the way of viewing students as individuals as well as of members of groups whose cultures are constantly evolving. One problem with a

static view of culture is that it fails to recognize that all societies are more heterogeneous than ever. With multiple identities growing ever more rapidly, it is impossible to speak about culture as lived today as if it were unitary. In fact, a static view of culture contradicts the very notion of diversity education today. A more accurate term to describe the cultural fusion that is a fact of life for millions of people in many nations today is hybridity, that is, the synthesis of various cultures to form new, distinct, and every-changing identities.

Acknowledging this reality aligns diversity education directly with social justice while it also challenges approaches – variously referred to as ‘*heroes and holidays*’, ‘*tourist approach*’, or ‘*polka and pizza*’ – that simply affirm differences and include ‘ethnic titbits’ (Nieto, 2004) or mention cultural icons in the curriculum. Thus, segregation and other institutional policies and practices that separate students from one another are generally viewed as impediments to equitable education. This is particularly true in South Africa where, according to Nkomo and his colleagues, the dismantling of apartheid meant the dismantling of an inequitable education system predicated on the separation of the races: ‘*If race segregation was the defining feature of schools in the apartheid era*’, they write, ‘*race integration became a defining aspiration in the postapartheid era*’ (Nkomo, Chisholm, & McKinney, 2004, p. 5). At the same time, as Naledi Pandor (2004) suggests, the policy of ‘*first mix then engage*’ was naïve. She writes, *The challenge is not simply racial integration. The challenge is the successful promotion of the values of dignity, equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms. The challenge is to teach that skin colour is not a marker of superiority and inferiority and that we can all take pride in our cultures and heritages.*

In general, as my colleague Patty Bode and I have suggested elsewhere, access and equity must be the overarching framework for diversity education (Nieto & Bode, forthcoming). Absent this critical perspective, diversity education can too easily skirt the issues of inequality that make creating a just school system, and indeed, a just society, impossible.

Another aspect of diversity education that is especially challenging is bilingual and multilingual education. Both in seemingly homogenous societies as well as in more culturally diverse societies, language differences pose a unique challenge. In countries as diverse as Canada, Sweden, Japan, and the United States, policymakers and the general public have often viewed language differences as

problematic and as an impediment to social cohesion (Crawford, 2000; Cummins, 1998; Fishman, 1976; Ota, 2000). As a result, programs such as bilingual and multilingual education, immersion education in the national language, and second language instruction have been viewed with varying levels of suspicion, depending on whether they are perceived as adding to, or detracting from, national unity. South Africa is unique in having eleven official languages, and this too presents challenges and opportunities as each of the languages is associated with a particular ethnic group which in turn has a specific set of political, social, and economic conditions.

Although promoting multilingualism is an official policy of the South African constitution, realities such as the lower status and prestige of languages other than English (and to an extent, Afrikaans) and the social, cultural, and economic capital to be derived from them, are issues of particular salience in this context (Mda, 2004). Finding a balance between promoting language diversity and securing social cohesion is thus a conundrum that will need to be worked out, not only in South Africa but also in numerous nations around the world. What is evident to proponents of diversity education, however, is that an imposed language that neglects to recognize and affirm languages other than the lingua franca (such as is the case with English Only in the United States), is in direct contradiction of the very nature of social justice and equal rights.

'Profoundly multicultural questions'

When used in simplistic ways, diversity education fails to address the tremendous inequities that exist in schools. For example, to adopt a multicultural reader is far easier than to guarantee that all children will learn to read; to plan an assembly program of so-called '*ethnic music*' is easier than to provide music instruction for all students; to equip teachers with a few lessons in cultural awareness is easier than to address widespread student disengagement in learning; and to simply bring white and black students in close proximity in South African desegregated public schools, is far easier than interrogating the quality of post-apartheid contact. Although these may be useful activities and initiatives, they fail to confront directly the deep-seated inequalities that exist in schools and society. Because they are sometimes taken out of context - isolated as pre-packaged programs or '*best practices*' - diversity education can become a bandaid approach to serious problems that require nothing short of major surgery.



Diversity in Education

Diversity education is also not simply about culture and cultural differences, although of course it does embrace these concerns. But a focus on culture alone, as if everyone from the same background behaved in the same way or held the same values, is in the end ineffective (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003). The same can be said of the kind of diversity education that focuses on the past glories of marginalized populations. If we agree that it is centrally about access and equity, then we need to accept that some culture-centric approaches based on romantic notions of an idealized past can simply obfuscate the primary goals of diversity education.

Instead, I want to suggest that diversity education is primarily about what I have elsewhere called '*profoundly multicultural questions*' (Nieto, 2003a). That is, it needs to address questions that at first glance may not seem to be about diversity at all:

- Who's taking calculus?
- Who's in talented and gifted programs?
- Do all schools receive equal funding?
- Do all children have access to quality integrated schools?
- Are all teachers prepared to teach - and do they value - children of all
- backgrounds?

I define these as '*profoundly multicultural questions*' because they concern first and foremost equity and access. In addition, they imply that hidden dimensions of education, including low expectations of students of marginalized backgrounds, are equally vital to consider.

Diversity education must also take into account how asymmetrical power relations position pluralism in schools and society. A simple '*celebration of diversity*' is not enough because it fails to address how some groups benefit from unearned power and privilege based on their race, gender, social class, or other social difference, and how such power and privilege are used against the very

same people whose diversity is being celebrated. The antiracist movement, first in the U.K. and Canada, and later in the United States, is a case in point, particularly because multiculturalism without an antiracist perspective has been viewed by some as simply a way to manage disruptive groups of people of colour (Troyna, 1987).

Social justice

It is clear, then, that if diversity education is to go beyond a simple recognition of differences, it must be aligned with the concept of social justice. Yet this term, although frequently invoked, is rarely defined. Bandied about as if there were universal agreement as to its parameters, social justice has become little more than another mantra (such as the 'all children can learn' mantra in the United States that rarely leads to real changes in student achievement). For the purposes of our discussion, then, I want to make clear what I mean by the term. I offer the definition that my colleague Patty Bode and I use: we define social justice as a philosophy, an approach, and actions that treat all people with fairness, respect, dignity, and generosity. On a societal scale, this means affording each person the real – not simply a verbalized – opportunity to reach their potential by giving them access to the goods, services, and social and cultural capital of a society, while also affirming the culture and talent of each individual and the group or groups with which they identify (so long as such groups are willing to live peacefully and respectfully with others).

In terms of education in particular, social justice is not just about '*being nice*' to students, or about giving them a pat on the back. Social justice in education includes four components: First, it challenges, confronts, and disrupts misconceptions, untruths, and stereotypes that lead to structural inequality and discrimination based on race, social class, gender, and other social and human differences. This means that teachers with a social justice perspective consciously include topics that focus on inequality in the curriculum, and they encourage their students to work for equality and fairness both in and out of the classroom.

Second, a social justice perspective means providing all students with the resources necessary to learn to their full potential. This includes material resources such as books, curriculum, financial support, and so forth. Equally vital are emotional resources such as a belief in students' ability and worth; care for them as individuals and learners; high expectations and rigorous demands on them; and the necessary social and cultural capital to negotiate the world. These

are not just the responsibilities of individual teachers and schools, however. Going beyond the classroom level, social justice means reforming school policies and practices so that all students are provided an equal chance to learn. As a result, policies such as high-stakes testing, tracking, student retention, segregation, and parent and family outreach, among others, need to be viewed critically. Social justice in education, however, is not just about giving students resources. A third component of a social justice perspective is drawing on the talents and strengths that students bring to their education. This requires a rejection of the deficit perspective that has characterized much of the education of marginalized students around the world, to a shift that views all students – not just those from privileged backgrounds – as having resources that can be a foundation for their learning. These resources include their languages, cultures, and experiences.

Finally, a fourth essential component of social justice is creating a learning environment that promotes critical thinking and supports agency for social change. Creating such environments can provide students with an apprenticeship in democracy, a vital part of preparing them for the future (Nieto & Bode, forthcoming).

Maintaining the focus on social justice in diversity education, however, is not easy given the current sociopolitical context of schools and society, to which I now turn.

The sociopolitical context of education today

Given our globalized economy and huge population diasporas, the world is a vastly different one from what we knew just a few decades ago. Public education, often viewed by people around the world as the central way out of poverty and ignorance, will either gain from this unique time or lose its moral authority as the one place where young people of all backgrounds and conditions can expect to receive an education that will prepare them to live productive lives. Hence, understanding the sociopolitical context of schools and society will be decisive in helping chart the course of diversity education in the years ahead.

Defining the sociopolitical context

The sociopolitical context to which I refer includes the ideologies, conditions, laws, regulations, policies, practices, traditions, and current events that define a society. In many cases, these ideologies, laws, traditions, and so on, support the status quo and keep structural inequality in place, although they could just as easily promote equality and social justice. In the South African context, the

apartheid ideology supported and enforced laws regarding the promotion of white supremacy and the subjugation of all those who were not whites. Moreover, taken-for-granted societal ideologies, assumptions, and expectations – which are often related to people’s identities, including their race, ethnicity, social class, language, gender, sexual orientation and so on – may work in tandem with the material and concrete conditions in society to create barriers to (in the case we’re concerned about here) educational progress. Although there is never complete consensus concerning these assumptions and ideologies (if there were, change would be impossible), they nevertheless help define what a society collectively believes that people from particular groups are capable of doing and worthy of receiving.

At a personal level, we take in the ideologies and beliefs in our society and we act on them whether we actively believe them or not. In the case of the ideology of racism, for example, Beverly Daniel Tatum (1997) has aptly described it as ‘*smog in the air*’. She goes on to say: *Sometimes it is so thick it is visible, other times it is less apparent, but always, day in and day out, we are breathing it in. None of us would introduce ourselves as ‘smog breathers’ (and most of us don’t want to be described as prejudiced), but if we live in a smoggy place, how can we avoid breathing the air? (p. 6).*

At the societal level, these laws, traditions, assumptions, and ideologies determine who counts? That is, who has access to education? Health care? Employment? Housing? And what counts? That is, whose language is ‘*standard*’? Whose lifestyle is ‘*normal*’? At the school level, we must consider questions such as: How do school policies and practices (i.e. curriculum, pedagogy, disciplinary policies, hiring practices, parent outreach, etc.) benefit some students over others? For instance, in terms of curriculum, whose knowledge counts? What knowledge does the curriculum reflect? Whose perspective is represented? Who benefits? Who loses?

The South African experience shows that in many desegregated public schools, white upper/middle class cultural values have become a normalized and at times required school discourse (Chisholm, 2004; Vandeyar, 2008a; Vandeyar, 2006) to such a degree that the schools prioritize these cultural values, thus marginalizing those from outside this dominant discourse. It becomes a case of systematic assimilation of black students into white culture in order to be part of the school.

At the individual level of biases and expectations, the sociopolitical context

manifests through teachers' and administrators' practices and decisions. For instance, in terms of teachers' relationships with students, who is favoured? This is particularly evident in the United States where research has shown that pre-service teachers expect – and want – to teach students much like themselves (Irvine, 2003). And since about 90% of all teachers are white, middle-class, and English monolingual speakers, that leaves little room for immigrants, those who speak languages other than English, the poor, and students of colour. Decisions about who is gifted and talented and who needs to be in special education are also affected by teachers' biases. For example, in the United States, black and Latino students are chronically underrepresented in programs for the gifted and talented, being only half as likely to be placed in a class for the gifted as are white students, even though they may be equally gifted (Harry & Klingner, 2006.).

Changing demographics and diasporas

The current sociopolitical context also includes dramatically changing demographics in both the society in general and in classrooms in particular. Whether we live in small hamlets or large urban centers, whether we are from Africa, Europe, South America, Asia, or anywhere else, our world has changed enormously in the past several decades, and it will continue to do so. For example, what were once fairly homogeneous populations are now characterized by a tremendous diversity of race, ethnicity, and language, among other differences. In some cases, such as the United States and South Africa, diversity has always been a fact of life – although it has not always been acknowledged, accepted, or adequately dealt with. In other nations, the demographic changes have proven to be cataclysmic, challenging the sense of nationhood and community that once seemed fairly straightforward and secure. In all these contexts, children living in poverty, children of backgrounds that differ from the majority, and those who speak native languages other than the common language are now becoming the majority in urban centers and urbanized suburbs, and even in rural areas. Numbers alone, however, as may be seen from the experience in South Africa, will not change the status quo. And even when there is a significant power shift, as has happened in South Africa, it will take many years for changes to be felt by the majority of the population. This is certainly the case in the area of education.

Structural and social inequality

Another aspect of the sociopolitical context concerns the long-standing and

growing structural and social inequality throughout the world that invariably results in poverty, inadequate housing, joblessness, poor access to health care, and the attendant racism and hopelessness experienced by many people on a daily basis. In South Africa, the post-apartheid government's adoption of the neoliberal ideologies of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund through the macroeconomic policy known as Growth, Employment, and Redistribution (GEAR), has placed the socio-economic conditions and the prospects of social mobility of the poor in a precarious situation in this new democracy. (Although GEAR has been recently replaced by the Accelerated Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa (ASGISA), neoliberal principles are also inherent in ASGISA). This macroeconomic policy has been favourably reviewed by the World Bank, but it has had the effect of economically disempowering poor South Africans (Bond, 2004; Desai, 2002; Gumede, 2005). Since education does not take place in a vacuum, this economic inequality trickles down to public schooling, especially because most public schools in poor townships of South Africa have not yet recovered from apartheid inequalities, even though the education budget has increased in all nine provinces (Ndimande, 2005).

In the United States, educators Jean Anyon (2005) and David Berliner (2005), as well as economist Richard Rothstein (2004) have all argued that it is macroeconomic policies, that is, policies that regulate such things as the minimum wage, job availability, tax rates, health care, and affordable housing, among others, that are chiefly responsible for creating school failure because educational policies by themselves cannot transcend these larger policies. While none of them deny the importance and necessity of school reform, they make it clear that what schools can accomplish will be limited if these larger macroeconomic policies do not change. In his report released in June 2006, *'Reforms that could help narrow the Achievement Gap'*, Richard Rothstein of the Economic Policy Institute in Washington, D.C., asserts that education reform without complementary investments in early childhood education, health care, housing, after-school and summer programs, and other social and economic supports (more jobs and a liveable minimum wage would also no doubt help), the so-called achievement gap will never be closed. He goes on to warn about the pitfalls of creating a society that is increasingly characterized as having a very few 'haves' and many 'have-nots'. He writes: *If as a society we choose to preserve big social class differences, we must necessarily also accept substantial gaps between the achievement of lower-class and middle-class children. Closing those*

gaps requires not only better schools, although those are certainly needed, but also reform in the social and economic institutions that prepare children to learn in different ways. It will not be cheap.

It is clear, then, that dramatic inequalities exist in the access that students around the globe have to an excellent, high quality education, inequalities that are lamentably too frequently based on race, social class, language, and other differences. No matter how much schools change to accommodate student differences, they cannot, by themselves, completely overcome these structural realities. Moreover, given the current political realities we are facing in the world, it is clear that it will take concentrated work at many levels – institutional, state, national, and international – to turn the situation around.

Neoliberal and neoconservative politics

Current global conditions may have even more of an impact on education than local or national policies. Neoliberal and neoconservative movements around the world, for instance, have had a devastating impact not only on diversity education, but on education in general, not to mention on national policies and practices that affect all other arenas of life. In his book, *Educating the 'Right' Way* (2006), Michael Apple describes how right-wing neoliberal and neoconservative ideologies have had a powerful and negative impact on public education around the world. The right, according to Apple, is not a unitary force, but rather a coalition of sometimes strange bedfellows. It includes, for instance, neoliberals (defined by Apple as '*capitalism with the gloves off*'), who believe in a 'weak' state and view the world through a market lens and define freedom as individual choice; neoconservatives, who believe in a '*strong*' state and tend to hold a vision of an idyllic past that they yearn to return to; and religious fundamentalists who want to bring God (or, more accurately, their version of God) into public institutions. Then there is the New Middle Class/Managerial Class, which tends to swing back and forth in the Alliance, based on where they benefit with their managerial skills. Together, this amalgam of ideologies forms the '*new right*', or what Apple calls conservative modernization: *Conservative modernization has radically reshaped the common sense of society. It has worked in every sphere – the economic, the political, and the cultural – to alter the basic categories we use to evaluate our institutions and our public and private lives.*

There are numerous examples of how neoliberal and neoconservative policies have impeded progress in diversity education, particularly as it relates to social

justice. In South Africa, Ndimande (2006) has made the case that the influence of neoliberalism and neo-conservatism has partly contributed to the lack of resources in township schools and has impeded school access and equal educational opportunities. In Australia research in urban secondary schools shows that the introduction of community languages had very positive effects not only at the school level but also in the community (Kalantzis, Cope, Noble, & Pynting, 1990). Notwithstanding their success, many of these programs were dismantled in the 1990s when neoliberal educational policies began to be implemented around the world (Castles, 2004).



No Child left behind

A growing standardization, bureaucratization, and privatization in education are also part of the international sociopolitical context. Needless to say, diversity education has suffered in this sociopolitical context. For instance, the conservatives' vision of '*traditional values*', narrowly defined to include only the values of the majority, denies any credibility to multiculturalism. The loss of local authority and a concentration of central control through high-stakes tests and a national curriculum are other important elements of neoconservative ideology. The contribution of neoliberals has been a determined focus on privatization through vouchers, charter schools, and other such schemes. In the United States, the No Child Left Behind legislation is a perfect amalgam of these forces, but it is clear that the United States is not alone in forging such policies. England, New Zealand, Canada, and other nations have also felt the effects of this new agenda (Apple, 2006; Gillborn & Youdell, 2000). In the United States, this has meant, among other things, a growing pressure to '*teach to the test*', influenced by the No Child Left Behind federal legislation that is, in fact, leaving many children behind, particularly those that this legislation was supposed to help. Moreover, evidence is mounting that the testing frenzy, which is a direct result of the call for '*high standards*', is limiting the kinds of pedagogical approaches that teachers

use, as well as constricting the curriculum, especially in classrooms serving the most educationally disadvantaged students. Recent research has found that high-stakes testing, rather than increasing student learning, is actually raising dropout rates and leading to less engagement with schooling: Audrey Amrein and David Berliner (2002) reported findings from research in 18 states that student learning was unchanged or actually went down when high stakes testing policies were instituted.

From this discussion, it is evident that the sociopolitical context is a complex issue with many layers: it is an ideological problem, an institutional problem, and a personal problem. The solutions, therefore, have to be at all these levels as well.

Hard lessons learned

What to do with the chasm that exists between stated ideals and the grim realities of life is an especially vital question for nations and educational systems to consider. A common response, unfortunately, is to behave as if this chasm did not exist. Given the parameters of diversity education I outlined previously, however, I argue that the appropriate response is to confront these challenges directly at various levels, including the ideological, national, local, and classroom levels. I want to suggest some ways of doing so by proposing three lessons to be learned from our experiences with diversity education over the past half-century or so. One is the obstinate power of asymmetrical relations, the second concerns how changing the situation is easier said than done, and the third is how teachers – in spite of the sometimes stifling and unsupportive contexts in which they work – have an immensely crucial role to play.

The obstinate power of asymmetrical relations

One of the toughest lessons that proponents of diversity education have learned is that, in spite of admirable intentions and enormous passion, no program, approach, or perspective will, by itself, change the sociopolitical status quo in either schools or society. Put another way, power relations do not disappear simply because we implement diversity education. We certainly have many examples of this throughout the world, including attempts to integrate schools in the United States (Orfield & Lee, 2006), address inequality in Brazil (Gonçalves e Silva, 2004), or reform the curriculum in South Africa to include topics concerning social justice (Moodley & Adam, 2004).

What often happens when marginalized communities make a claim for equitable treatment in housing, employment, education, or other institutions (through

uprisings, court cases, or other means) is that authorities, while seemingly paying attention to these claims, end up providing a watered-down version of what was demanded, thus subverting its original intention. In the United States, while segregation was outlawed through the historic 1954 Brown v. Board of Education decision, states were so slow in acting that there was little change for many years. In the end, after years of stalling, some desegregation did in fact occur but in the decades to follow, there was continued resistance to desegregation, '*white flight*' from urban areas where most black students lived, and so many other ways of getting around the requirement for integrated schools that segregation once again prevailed. In fact, schools in the United States are even more segregated now, in total, than they were over 50 years ago.

South Africa is a unique case because there was no watered-down version of reforms as the post-apartheid government was always committed to democratic change. Yet a formidable challenge and resistance comes from the right, especially those who have the financial power and access to information to manipulate, for instance, school zones so they can keep their own districts segregated (Jansen, 2004). Racism is still evident in South African public schools (Vally & Dalamba, 1999), including a 2008 racial incident at the University of Orange Free State where white students urinated on a plate of food and duped or intimidated black workers into eating the urinated food. Other white students who appeared on national television claimed that this despicable act was an expression of their opposition to racial integration on what they still consider '*their*' university campus, especially in '*their*' white dormitories.

In England, uprisings in 2001 led to the Cantle Commission Report (2001). The report, while agreeing that there was tremendous polarization and little meaningful interaction among various ethnic and racial groups, rather than suggesting diversity education instead recommended a renewed emphasis on the English language, a recognition of the contributions of all groups to the development of the nation, and primary loyalty to the U.K. According to Peter Figueroa (2004), *Yet, there is scant evidence that a lack of English language or of loyalty to the U.K. were important factors in causing the riots. Instead, social and economic deprivation, discrimination, Islamaphobia, resentment between the White and Asian communities, and political activity by the far right all seem likely contributing factors.*

Another example is what in the United States is referred to as the '*achievement*

gap', that is, the disproportional achievement rates among various groups. The '*achievement gap*' refers to the fact that some students, generally those from the dominant class or race or ethnic group, achieve substantially more than students from the marginalized and dominated classes. This situation, of course, is not unique to the United States. Although the so-called '*achievement gap*' is generally positioned simply as a problem of students' motivation, culture, race, or community, or of teachers' competence to teach, I want to suggest that it could just as legitimately be called the resource gap or the caring gap: the resource gap because achievement is usually tied to widely varying resources provided to students based on where they live and who they are, and the caring gap because it is too often influenced by teachers' low expectations, lack of caring, and inability to teach students who are different from them. Yet we persist on calling attention to the so-called '*achievement gap*', once again laying the blame squarely on the children rather than on the system that created the gap in the first place.

Del dicho al hecho hay gran trecho

The Spanish phrase *del dicho al hecho hay gran trecho*, literally translated as '*there's a big difference between what people say and what they do*', or in more colloquial terms, '*easier said than done*', is another lesson learned from the state of diversity education in the world today. In spite of enormous differences in history and culture, diversity education is a taken-for-granted reality in many nations today. To quote Will Kymlicka (2004), *This trend is quite remarkable given the many obstacles faced by proponents of multiculturalism. These range from deeply rooted legacies of ethnocentrism and racism that denigrate the value of minority cultures to modernizing ideologies of nation building that privilege uniformity and homogeneity over diversity.*

Yet in many societies multiculturalism as a policy and practice has not taken root in any meaningful way. In many countries, diversity education is viewed either as threatening to the status quo or as irrelevant to the national interest. In other countries, if acknowledged at all, there is little more than lip service paid to diversity and social justice. But even in cases where the principles of social justice and multiculturalism are inscribed into a nation's most venerable documents, making these concepts part of the very way a nation defines itself, there is still a discrepancy between what is said and what is done. The '*policy gap*' (Sayed & Jansen, 2001) is thus a reality in even those nations that have written diversity and social justice into their constitutions. This is, for instance, the case with

Canada (Joshee, 2004) and South Africa (Nkomo, McKinney, & Chisholm, 2004; Vandeyar, 2006). Multiculturalism as public policy in Canada, for instance, dates back all the way to 1971, but the shift to the right in the 1990s also brought about changes in educational policies that made a commitment to diversity education difficult, if not impossible (Joshee, 2004). As a result, the fact that multiculturalism and social justice are public policy in no way guarantees that they will be carried out in practice.

Diversity education is also increasingly linked with citizenship education, and more recently, with the notion of democracy. Here too, the fact that multiculturalism is, if not accepted, at least grudgingly recognized, does not mean that it is a reflection of democratic practice in those nations. At a conference of major academics in diversity education that took place at the Bellagio Conference Center in Italy in 2002, one of the major findings was articulated by James Banks (2004), the convener of the conference:

In nation-states throughout the world, citizenship education programs and curricula are trying to teach students democratic ideals and values within social, economic, political, and educational contexts that contradict democratic ideas such as justice, equality, and human rights.

'Easier said than done', therefore captures the challenge we are facing if we want to make a difference in the life chances of young people around the world. Why have I focused on macro, policy, and institutional levels? I do so because otherwise we fall into the trap of thinking that teachers alone will make all the difference. Most reports about the 'achievement gap', for instance, focus on teachers, school administrators, and students: what teachers and principals are doing wrong, how their beliefs and biases affect student learning; how students' lack of motivation leads to their failure, how their families need to take more responsibility for student learning; and so on. There is some truth in all of this. But it is misleading, and I might say even immoral, to address the problem at only these levels if we do not at the same time look at the structural inequalities in schools that are, after all, simply a reflection of the inequalities in society. If we start at the teacher and student level, once again blaming them for student failure, we are being at best naïve, and at worst cynical.

Teachers change lives forever

Given the bleak sociopolitical context of education I have outlined, what is the role of teachers, and of those who prepare them, in confronting and challenging

social injustice in schools and society? I believe that teachers play an enormously significant role in the lives of students, and even in the life of a society. The final lesson from the past few decades of diversity education that I want to propose is that teachers can, and indeed to, make a difference, sometimes a life-changing difference, in the lives of students around the world. Because I have focused my remarks on the larger context in which education takes place, in what follows I shift my attention to the levels closest to learners, that is, the teacher and school levels.

I now want to turn to my final point: that teachers can and do make a difference in spite of everything. Although we need to also work to change societal ideologies and structural barriers, we cannot wait around for these things to happen. In the meantime, we know that good teaching can help to alleviate – although it certainly cannot completely overcome – the situation in which many children attend school. There is a growing body of research, for instance, that good teachers make the single greatest difference in promoting or deterring student achievement. In the United States, for example the landmark 1996 report of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996) found that *'what teachers know and do is one of the most important influences on that students learn'*. One widely-cited study, for instance, found that students who are assigned to several highly effective teachers in a row have significantly greater gains in achievement than those assigned to less effective teachers, and that the influence of each teacher has effects that spill over into later years (Sanders & Rivers, 1996).

Let me then briefly focus on the role teachers have in creating success in spite of societal inequities. Teachers, after all, are not apolitical actors in a neutral space. Education is always a political endeavour and teachers are significant players in this context. The most successful teachers with whom I have had the privilege to work are skilled in their pedagogy, well versed in their subject matter, and consciously political in the sense that they know their work makes a difference. Consequently, they embody particular behaviours and attitudes that help them both teach and reach their students, while at the same time they challenge inequities both in their schools and, more broadly, in their societies.

To define these behaviours and attitudes more concretely, I draw on my work with teachers over the past thirty years, and more specifically, on my research with teachers in the past decade or so (Nieto, 2003b and 2005). These are:

affirming students' identities; creating a sense of belonging; expecting the best from all students; teaching students to be critical; and understanding their own power as teachers. I focus on these not because they are the only behaviours that make a difference but rather because more bureaucratic responses to teacher quality such as certification tests and specific courses in subject matter assume that these alone will result in higher quality teachers. While recognizing that other elements besides behaviours and attitudes are equally important, I focus on these because they are equally significant. Subject matter knowledge, for instance, is crucial, but if teachers do not learn how to question it, they end up reproducing conventional wisdom and encouraging students to do the same. Knowing pedagogy is also necessary, but if teachers do not at the same time develop meaningful relationships with their students of all backgrounds, the students simply will not succeed. And if teachers do not understand the life-and-death implications of the work they do, no amount of certification requirements or tricks of the trade will help.

The first behaviour, then, is to affirm students' identities. Too frequently, students' identities – their race, culture, language, social class, and other characteristics – are treated as problems to be disposed of rather than as resources to be used in the service of their education. To affirm identities also means that teachers admire, respect, and honor their students' differences. This affirmation is manifested through the curriculum and pedagogy, as well as through teachers' relationships with students.

A related behaviour of successful teachers is creating a sense of belonging. Students who feel alienated from school find it difficult to claim membership in that particular social circle and they may instead look to other, sometimes more negative spaces, to claim membership. Creating a sense of belonging means making space for all students of all backgrounds. This sense of belonging is visible in classroom activities as well as in outreach activities with families.

Third is to expect the best from all students. The low expectations that teachers and schools have for some of their students based on both societal ideologies and personal biases make their way into pedagogy and other school practices. Numerous research studies over the past several decades, however, have demonstrated that when teachers hold high expectations for their students – in spite of the conditions in which students live or the lack of resources in schools – they meet, and even surpass, those expectations (see Nieto & Bode, forthcoming, for a review of this research).

A fourth behaviour is to teach students to be critical. Too often, controversial topics such as power and inequality are taboo subjects in schools, and this should come as no surprise. After all, as institutions schools are charged with maintaining the status quo and discussing such issues can be threatening. But schools in most societies also claim that a major goal of the educational system is to wipe out inequality. The contradictions between democratic ideals and actual manifestations of inequality need to be exposed, although it might make educators uncomfortable. Such matters are at the heart of a broadly conceptualized diversity perspective because the subject matter of schooling is society, with all its wrinkles and warts and contradictions. Students, therefore, must learn to challenge the '*regimes of truth*' (Foucault, 1980) perpetuated by societal institutions, including schools. Ethics and the distribution of power, privilege, status, and rewards are basic societal concerns. Students of all ages should be allowed to engage in conversations about these issues if we are serious about teaching for, and about, democracy. Moodley and Adam (2004) agree. They write, *We argue that problematizing the contested issues in the context of current debates makes for more relevant and effective learning about democracy than the abstract and idealized exposition of democratic values.*

Finally, teachers who make a difference understand their own power. Every day, around the world, teachers matter tremendously in the lives of their students. Let me quote the words of Karen Gelzinis, a high school mathematics teacher I worked with a number of years ago. Karen, who taught in an urban high school in Boston, Massachusetts, was one of the teachers in an inquiry group I led that met for a year at various high schools in the city to reflect on the question of '*What keeps teachers going?*' On our final day together, we met at a beautiful retreat centre outside Boston. Karen brought a card for me to that final meeting. It said simply, '*Teachers Change Lives Forever*'. She did not really think about it until later that summer when she sent me a long email, only a small part of which I reproduce here: '*Teachers change lives forever*'... *Driving home, thinking about the whole day, the verse on the front of the card hit me. I had looked at the verse: We change lives forever. What power! Of course, we all know it. But how often do we really think about it? Does it get lost in the papers that we correct? In the scores/grades that we write down? This has been another of the group's gifts to me.. I always knew teachers made a difference, a tremendous difference, and I've always taken the responsibility very seriously, but to think about it using these words: Teachers change lives forever and ever ... and ever ... lives ... To really*

think about that, for a long time, is frightening, that type of power, to use it day after day... We are going to change lives forever, one way or another, for good or for bad. Are we doing all that can be done? Despite everything in our way, why do some of us end up staying? Is it because our lives continue to be changed forever, for the better, by our students? What would my life be without Sonie? Without Jeramie? It's not a give-and-take; it's a cycle ... Once your life has been changed, you understand the power.

Conclusion

What are the implications of all these things for diversity education? And what are the responsibilities and roles of teachers, and of those who prepare them for the profession? Given the current context, I believe these are incredibly crucial questions. At present, most responses to them are bureaucratic: devise more stringent teacher tests; create rubrics, benchmarks, and templates; count the number of courses prospective teachers take; look at college grades to determine who will teach. While some of these may be important, they are certainly not enough.

Let me briefly mention some of the changes that need to take place at both the macro and institutional levels if diversity education is to succeed. Beginning with fair funding of education, for example, which would make a tremendous difference. In the United States, the richest country in the world, the most recent *Funding Gap Report* from Education Trust (2006) found that across the country US \$907 less is spent per student in the highest-poverty districts than in the most affluent districts. In the worst case scenario, *The Christian Science Monitor* (Huh, 2005) reported that the difference in annual spending between the wealthiest and the poorest districts has grown to a staggering US \$19,361 per student! Surely no one can say with a straight face that this difference does not matter.

Since South Africa allocates a large portion of its budget to education, it is important that this money be efficiently distributed and spent, especially on poor schools in the townships, instead of being returned to the Department of Treasury as surplus at the end of a fiscal year (MacFarlane, 2002). Most importantly there should not be a mismanagement of funds in departments of education (Jansen, 2005), funds which could otherwise be used to improve teaching and learning conditions. This would give children in poor neighbourhoods access to public schools with better resources, rather than transporting these children to suburban public schools with better educational resources (Ndimande, 2005).

At the institutional level, removing or reforming school policies and practices that get in the way of student achievement would also lead to a change in student learning. These policies and practices include curriculum, pedagogy, tracking, high-stakes testing, retention, the recruitment and hiring of teachers, parent and family outreach, and others. In teacher education, we can develop programs that encourage prospective teachers to learn more about the students who they will teach and the contexts in which they live, and to respect their families and communities (Vandeyar, 2008b). We can provide experiences – through courses, field experiences, and extracurricular activities – that will help prospective and practicing teachers learn to speak other languages and learn about cultures other than their own. We can create a climate through innovative courses and assignments in which prospective and practicing teachers can become critical thinkers. We can help practicing and prospective teachers understand – through dialogue in courses and seminars, through interactions with excellent veteran teachers, through critical readings, and through reflection in journals and essays – that teaching is more than a job.

Change is also possible if we reform the climate in universities and faculties of education. This is a tall order, but an absolutely necessary one if we are to make a difference. This means recruiting a more diverse faculty in terms of experience and background, as well as determining which attitudes and behaviours dispositions will best serve them if they are to be successful with students. At the societal level, we can advocate for teachers to be well paid for their work, and given the respect they deserve. This means committing the nation's economic and moral resources to the problem. Both the bureaucratization and the marketization of public education, I submit, are wrong-headed choices. Even diversity education, in and of itself, will do little to change things. What is required is a change of will – as well as a reorganization of national and international priorities – to address the tremendous inequalities that exist in our societies today. The struggle is long and difficult, but the result, I know, will be worth the time and energy we commit to it.

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On The Limits Of Single-Issue Social Science



Max Weber - Illustration

by Ingrid Bouws

The state of the art of the social sciences at the end of the sixties of the past century was characterized by a strong mood of optimism.

The rediscovery of the critical roots of social sciences as exemplified by the work of Marx and Weber contributed to the idea that one of the main tasks of social science should be to unravel the dynamics of social inequalities and to demystify ideological legitimatizations of those inequalities. Besides, the development of analytical tools and the recognition of the fast growing capabilities of computer software that could process huge amounts of data offered new opportunities to study the complexities and dynamics of modern societies. The combination of theoretical ambitions and research-technical possibilities seemed to promise new ways for social research inspired by 'sociological imagination' (C. Wright Mills, 1967).

A well-known example is the ambitious project of The Club of Rome: a group of interdisciplinary researchers who aspired to develop a model encompassing a variety of social, economical, cultural and environmental factors to study the development and possible futures of the living conditions of societies, social groups within these societies, and mankind in general (Meadows, 1972). The explicit ambition of Dennis Meadows and his colleagues was to combine a holistic approach with a well-founded research strategy using new analytical tools. However, the validity of their research results was rather limited due to the fact that the theoretical focus of their research was biased by a neo-Malthusian political agenda.



Johan Galtung

Another example is the project initiated by Johan Galtung to study structural inequalities within societies as well as between societies (Galtung, 1978). The '*Social Position Theory*' developed by Johan Galtung is also characterized by a

holistic approach of the dynamics of societies and relations between societies: *The general aim is to study the combined effects of different types of social inequalities between Social Positions within societies and the way these effects are influenced by structural inequalities between societies.*

Of course, the state of the art of sociology at the end of the sixties was far more varied than summarized above. First, there were different viewpoints concerning the relation between critical ambitions and scientific goals of social science. The risk of politicizing social science constituted the major topic in these debates. Second, in empiricist research traditions there was scepticism about the holistic ambitions of grand theories. Third, in qualitative sociology and anthropology the idea of combining a holistic approach with a predominant quantitative research-methodology was viewed as unfeasible.

Nevertheless, the general mood in the sixties was dominated by the idea that the possibilities of new research methodologies could be used to study major social problems from a holistic viewpoint.

The sixties is almost half a century ago. So it is worthwhile to wonder about what has happened to the ambitious research agenda of the sixties concerning social inequality? What has sociological research since the sixties contributed to our knowledge of social inequality? To what extent are the expected promises fulfilled?

A review of recent literature on social research on social inequality is in several respects a disappointing experience. Of course, social inequality is still an important issue in social research and as a consequence there is an abundance of empirical studies of social inequality. Nevertheless, the growing quantity does not reflect a growing quality of our knowledge of the dynamics of social inequality.

Symptomatic is the fact that a holistic research agenda such as the one envisaged by the Club of Rome or its methodological approach have not acquired an influential position in sociological research in the western world.

The same is more or less true for the *Social Position Theory* of Johan Galtung.

Sociological research on social inequality is dominated by the tendency to focus on one or a few dimensions. Research agendas inspired by a holistic approach such as implied by the *Social Position Theory*, are virtually absent.

The reduction of sociological research on social inequality to 'single-issue' studies is the main topic of this chapter. First, the main traditions of empirical research on social inequality are discussed. Second, I deal with the epistemological, methodological background of social research and the social conditions of

scientific production that privilege single-issue research practice. Third, the main weaknesses of single-issue studies are outlined. Finally, some strategies are discussed to overcome the weaknesses characteristic of traditions of single-issue sociology.

Current sociological research on social inequality

The mainstream of relevant empirical research in this field is focused on a specific type or form of social inequality. Interrelations between different forms of social inequality are either neglected or the focus remains limited to the relations between only a few different forms. Several research traditions can be distinguished.



Studies on social class

The most important research traditions on social inequality are focused on social class. The history of research on social class is in itself a good example of the growing dominance of reductionist approaches to social inequality. In the first half of the former century it was more or less taken for granted that social class should be viewed as a multidimensional concept. In his famous studies on social class in American cities, Lloyd Warner developed a measurement instrument that was intended to capture the richness of different dimensions of what he called '*the status system*' (Warner & Lunt, 1942). Besides the main source of income (salary, private or public welfare, profit-earning from inherited or acquired capital) and occupational prestige, he also tried to measure cultural aspects of living conditions and life style such as the quality of the residence and the socio-cultural prestige of the environment. The inclusion of cultural indicators of class inequality was partly based on the well known studies of Stuart Chapin (1933) who developed the so called '*living room scales*' that focused on differences in life style by measuring items in the home. The general approach of Lloyd Warner was very much inspired by Karl Marx and Max Weber. As a matter of fact, the whole series on '*Yankee Cities*' can be viewed as an ambitious effort of Lloyd Warner to translate the theoretical notions of Marx, Weber and Sorokin in methodological

procedures on behalf of the measurement of social inequalities. Lloyd Warner and his colleagues were not the only researchers who tried to capture the multidimensionality of class. Another example is Richard Centres (1949) who focussed on the relationship between criteria used to define different objective class positions and the subjective criteria used by the people themselves to distinguish different classes as socio-psychological groups. Centres used a variety of different criteria to measure objective class positions such as educational level, type of job, power, income, standard of living and social prestige.

A common denominator of research on class inequality in those days was a general awareness that power positions should be distinguished according to the type of resources that functioned as the powerbase. For example, power based on economic resources (i.e. economic classes) should be distinguished from power based on political resources, cultural resources or social prestige.

The issue of multidimensionality remains a relevant topic of theoretical debate throughout the sixties and seventies (Blau & Duncan, 1967; Goldthorpe & Hope, 1974; Parkin, 1972; Runciman, 1968; Svalastoga, 1959). However, in actual research on social class most attention focused on the occupational structure, especially on the way occupations can be used as indicators of positions in a general system of social stratification. This development had two important implications. First, social prestige became the main topic of social research on class inequalities while other dimensions of social class disappeared to the margins of the research agenda. Second, the focus on occupational hierarchy implied that the measurement of social prestige was narrowed down to occupational prestige. In case other dimensions of class were included, very often the original theoretical concepts were also narrowed down on behalf of 'efficient' empirical measurements. For example, 'economic class' is often operationalized as income. As noted by Frank Parkin (1972) this is '*almost the antithesis of Weber's own much broader and more useful definition*' (Parkin, 1972. p. 31).

Up until now reductionism is characteristic of the current main stream of social research on social class. The ranking of professions along the social ladder is viewed as the preferred indicator of general social prestige (Ganzeboom et. al., 1992). However, the construction of an unambiguous ranking of professions is not without difficulties. Rankings of professions can vary over time and between societies. Even within a society there may be differences between socio-cultural groups. Last but not least, occupational prestige of a profession is also dependent on gender characteristics of those who exercise that profession (Van Doorne-

Huiskes, 1984). To circumvent those complexities, educational level is often used instead as a measure of social prestige.

Main Topics

There are two main topics within the tradition of social class in terms of occupational prestige. First, the effects of social class on the living conditions of individuals occupying different class positions. Especially income is used as an indicator of those living conditions. Second, mobility between classes. The research agendas concerning these topics are rather straightforward: they include changes in effects of social class over time and changes in mobility over time. Comparative studies about the differences between societies with respect to effects of social class and the mobility of social class constitute a growing field (Ganzeboom et al., 1992).

In the research tradition in which social class equals occupational prestige, attention is paid to the interrelation between social class and some other forms of social inequality. Mainly due to feminist criticism of male-biased research traditions in studying social class, the interrelation between social class and gender receives more attention than it did some decades ago (Blees-Booij, 1994). However, the attention for these interrelations is still rather marginal. As Blees-Booij rightly argues, up until now *'the position of women as subject of stratification research is even worse than their position on the labour market'* (op.cit. p. 53).

Besides the mainstream research on occupational prestige, there are approaches in which the concept 'social class' refers to positions within the relations of production (neo-Marxian tradition; see for example: Erik Olin Wright, 1979, 1985) or to general relations of power (conflict-sociological approach; see for example Dahrendorf, 1959). Especially within the neo-Marxian tradition the interrelation between class, gender and race is considered a relevant research topic (Erik Olin Wright, 1979).

However, empirical research based on neo-Marxian or conflict-sociological approaches of social class constitute a marginal position in comparison with the vast amount of social research on occupational prestige.

Gender studies and the study of race relations

Since the seventies gender studies has become a more or less accepted branch of sociological research. Gender studies filled the gap left by the dominant sociological approaches. It goes without saying that the main focus of gender

studies is on different aspects of gender inequality. There is a growing interest in the interrelations between gender inequality and other forms of inequality. First, in order to tackle the blind spots of male-biased research traditions in studying social class, the interrelations between inequality of class and gender inequality is part of the research agenda of gender studies. Second, in the eighties another branch of sociological research emerged. Students of this approach criticized gender studies for underestimating the structural differences between the Social Positions of black women and those of white women (Kimberley Crenshaw, 1989). In order to overcome colour blindness, the concept of intersectionality was introduced in gender studies as a central category of analysis (Leslie McCall, 2003). This concept focuses on the intersection of different forms of inequality and is based on the assumption that the study of gender inequality requires that interrelations with other forms of inequality be taken into account. This approach has led to interesting empirical studies. For example, Leslie McCall (2001) studied how gender, race and class differences interact and intersect in different economic conditions.

Notwithstanding the promising possibilities of this development, a holistic approach, which aims to encompass all relevant forms of social inequality, is still absent in gender studies and the study of race relations (see also: Lutz, 2002). Intersectionality remains restricted to the interrelation between gender inequality and racial inequality or inequalities of social class (Albeda, Drago & Shulman, 2001; Andersen & Collins, 2000; Gruski, 2001; Johnson, A. 2001; Rothenberg, 1992; Smith, 2005).

Studies of age discrimination and relations between age groups

Along with class, gender and race, age is one of the key components of structured inequality especially in industrialized societies. In comparison with the other components age discrimination is the least acknowledged issue. As a consequence structured inequality between age groups is a rather new field of social research (Macnicol, 2006). The research in this field is mainly focused on the effects of age on job opportunities, and mobility within or between classes (Bessey & Ananda, 1991). The question of how age intersects with other forms of social inequality, such as gender inequality and inequality of social class, has not yet received much attention.

Cultural studies

A rather recent phenomenon is a research field that is dominated by a culturalist

viewpoint on inequality. Of course, the unequal disposition of cultural resources constitutes an important form of social inequality. And culture may play a decisive role in reproducing and/or transforming relations of inequality. But unfortunately, the research agenda is often based on the exclusive attention towards cultural inequalities. A major example is the revival of the '*culture-of-poverty*' theory developed by Oscar Lewis in the sixties of the former century (Lewis, 1966). This approach is not only an example of narrowing the theoretical focus down to a specific form of social inequality, i.e. social inequality due to cultural differences. This approach is also an example of theoretical imperialism. The ambition of the culturalist viewpoint is far from modest. It pretends to explain all other forms of social inequality. As a consequence culturalist theories on social inequality fulfil ideological functions by justifying structural inequalities. Very often, research from a culturalist viewpoint boils down to produce blaming- the-victim theories on social inequality (Dalrymple, 2001).

International studies

The study of the relation between different states constitutes a separate branch of social and economic research. Power relations between states are the main focus of these studies. But there is a tendency to focus on specific aspects of those power relations. Especially within economics there is a substantial branch of research that focuses on economic differences between the Centre and the Periphery between and within countries (Hout & Meijerink, 1996; Köhler, 1998). Holistic studies that focus on the interactions between political, military, economical and cultural power relations are scarce (but see: Samir Amin, 1977, 1980). Holistic studies of how interstate relations of inequality affect structural inequalities between social groups within states are virtually absent.

On the popularity of single-issue sociology

The brief summary of the current state of art of sociological research on social inequality does pose the question how to explain the general tendency to focus on one form of social inequality or the interrelation between just a few different forms or dimensions? Why is single-issue sociology so prominent and why is multi-issue (or better: multidimensional) sociology so absent?

The answer is that single-issue sociology as a social practice is stimulated by a variety of factors. In this section the theoretical, epistemological and methodological characteristics of mainstream sociology that contribute to single-issue sociology are more closely examined.

The decline of 'Grand Theories' and the rise of Empiricism

In mainstream sociology, the self-restraint to focus on one specific form of social inequality (racial inequality or gender inequality, or inequality due to social class or social prestige, etcetera) within a specific domain (e.g., labour relations or family relations) is viewed as a way to guarantee to conduct research meticulously. It is believed that, in order to avoid the pitfalls of 'Grand Theories', empirical research should be limited to those phenomena that can be measured in standardized procedures.

The 'grand stories' about society are viewed as something of the past. As a consequence, the theoretical and empirical contributions of those scientists who try to understand the dynamics of historical developments of social formations and the structural relations characteristic for those social formations such as Marx, Weber and Sorokin are marginalized (see also: Johan Galtung & Sohail Inayatullah, 1997). Holistic approaches are distrusted as either indefensible forms of reductionism or untestable forms of theoretical speculation. Even the term 'holism' as such is often associated with just 'bla,bla'. According to this view, the complexity of modern or post-modern society should focus on empirical testing of hypotheses of survey-able phenomena. The rules for scientific publication stimulate research practices that fit in with this narrow empiricism. Ironically, this empiricism is often presented as '*theory driven research*' because the hypothetic-deductive method requires that research should start from testable hypotheses. However, it is seldom argued how theoretical premises from which those testable hypotheses are deduced, fit in with a more general theoretical framework.

The dominance of Methodological Individualism

Besides empiricism, the mainstream of research on social inequality is either implicitly or explicitly based on methodological individualism. The 'fait social' is viewed as the sum total of the interactions of individuals. This viewpoint is nicely summarized by the well-known one-liner of Margaret Thatcher: '*Society doesn't exist*'. As a consequence, social inequality is conceptualized in terms of differences between individuals, who possess different amounts of assets (income, prestige, etcetera). From this viewpoint inequality is essentially a ranking of individuals based on some type of asset. The focus on research of separate ranking systems is conceived of as a necessary prerequisite to build up a more complete representation of the combined effects of different forms of social inequality. How the construction of a complete representation should be

achieved, is seldom reflected. Our hypothesis is that most researchers assume or dream that this goal will be achieved somewhere in an unspecified future by combining and adding results of specialized single-issue research.

This dream is based on a very simple concept of causality: *Causality is viewed as linear and additive*. Of course, there is some attention for possible interactions of different causal factors. But the baseline of the general research strategy is the assumption that additive causal relations are the rule and interactions are the exceptions to the rule.

From a holistic viewpoint this dominant concept of causality is inadequate for several reasons. First, causal relations should be conceived as fundamentally context-dependent. As a consequence, the real meaning of single-issue research is always uncertain, because this context-dependency is seldom studied. Second, a holistic approach implies a dialectical view on the causal relations between structure and agency. The aggregate of structural relations of social inequalities determines the live chances of social actors occupying the distinguished positions in these relations. But those relations are also reproduced and transformed by those actors. Gender, race, and social class are social constructions and the meanings and boundaries of gender categories, racial categories and class divisions are object of social struggles.

Besides the inadequacies of the dominant concept of causality, the ranking concept of social inequality that dominates single-issue research underestimates important structural characteristics of social inequality. From a holistic viewpoint a relational concept of social inequality is more appropriate. A relational concept of social inequality implies that inequality is characteristic of relations between interdependent structural positions. Social inequality is primarily about positions and only secondary about the individuals occupying these positions and their mobility between positions.

To summarize, methodological individualism neglects the specific nature of social reality: Social reality cannot be reduced to the sum of contextually independent causal relations between individual characteristics constructed by single-issue research.

Arbitrary eclecticism & reductionism

The 'grand' theories are not completely absent from the current scene of social research. But the way in which conceptual frameworks developed within these theories function within research on social inequality is rather ambivalent.

General theoretical concepts, that are part of those frameworks, are used to legitimize the research in question. At the same time however, these concepts are often reduced to very specific aspects of the phenomena under study.

A good example of this form of eclecticism is the use of Bourdieu's theoretical framework in current social research on social inequality. In fact, Bourdieu is one of the last inheritors of the tradition of 'grand' theories who is still rather popular in the field of empirical research on social inequality. His work is much cited. But the interest remains restricted to only one of the three main forms of 'capital' distinguished by Bourdieu, namely: *social capital*. And even this form is often reduced to a position in a social network in a specific field (labour organization, friendship relations, etcetera).

The other side of the coin of theoretical eclecticism is theoretical reductionism, i.e. the assumed predominance of a specific form of social inequality. In the seventies of the former century, social inequality in terms of social-economic classes constituted the main focus of empirical research. Mainly due to neo-Marxist theories, this focus was often legitimized by the claim that socio-economic class is the 'ultimate' decisive factor in explaining all kinds of social inequality. This type of reductionism can also be found in some feminist approaches of social inequality and in some approaches in the field of race relations.

Since the nineties of the former century, a new branch of reductionism has acquired a dominant position in the field of social research on inequality: the study of the cultural roots of social inequality. This approach is part of a more general theoretical focus on the assumed importance of cultural phenomena in social changes. The concept of identity plays a central role in these developments. Identity construction is at the forefront of theoretical work and scientific debate. And identity politics seems to replace traditional concepts of politics concerning structural change. These developments run the risk to result into a new form of reductionism in which cultural identities are viewed as 'basic'. As a consequence, Social Position and structural inequality are neglected as important factors determining social and cultural developments. An example is the popularity of the '*culture-of-poverty*' theorists, who claim that social inequality is mainly due to cultural characteristics of the lower classes.

Another example is the influence of the '*Clash of Civilizations*' theory in the field of international relations between western societies and non-western societies (Bernard Lewis, 1993, Samuel Huntington, 1993). International conflicts are explained in terms of assumed cultural homogenous societal formations classified by labels such as 'The Western World' and '*The Islamic World*' or just '*The West*'

versus *'The Rest'*.

To summarize, the twin sisters *'theoretical eclecticism'* and *'reductionism'* constitute a major force in the legitimization and promoting of simplifying single-issue sociology.

On the social conditions of single-issue sociology

The popularity of single-issue sociology is partly due to the way sociologists construct aims, norms and methods and the way in which they develop and use specific epistemological assumptions and methodologies to legitimize their research practices. But the popularity of single-issue sociology is not merely the outcome of the sum of preferences and convictions of individual researchers. Social research is embedded within scientific institutions and is also partly dependent on features of the broader social and political context. Therefore it is worthwhile to scrutinize how single-issue sociology is related to general institutional as well as political characteristics of the context of social research.

The institutionalized labour division in social research

In most western countries, a strong labour division within social sciences has gradually emerged. As a consequence, social research is divided along disciplinary boundaries and within each discipline research is further divided along different domains and themes of social research. That labour division is firmly institutionalized and conditions the development of social research and the (im) possibilities of interdisciplinary cooperation. Unfortunately the prevailing segmentation and fragmentation of the academia constitutes optimal conditions for the strategy of single-issue sociology. Different forms of social inequality are studied in different organizational contexts. Socio-economic departments restrict themselves mainly to inequality in terms of social class and/or social prestige. As a consequence, gender studies are often organized within separate departments and the same is true for other forms of social inequality, such as the study of race relations. Inequality in interstate relations is furthermore the privileged object of departments of international relations, etcetera. From a historical point of view this organizational structure of scientific research is understandable, but one of the unintended effects of the prevailing division of scientific labour is the reproduction of single-issue sociology. Besides, research fields that do not fit in with these institutionalized divisions run the risk of being marginalized or removed. For example, peace-studies focuses on the unravelling of the complex dynamics of socio-economic, cultural and political forces that constitute the

conditions for the development of violent conflicts and for their solution. Therefore, peace-studies is only viable as an interdisciplinary practice that transgresses traditional boundaries between disciplines. The dominance of organizing scientific research within separate disciplines constitutes a barrier for the development of peace-studies.

The social norms regulating the production and productivity of research activities
During the last decades of the former century general norms were developed to control and measure the productivity of research groups and individual researchers. The norms in the field of social research are mostly copied from those traditionally used in the natural sciences. These productivity rules make it more attractive to produce short articles about specialized topics than to write lengthy books in which complex research is presented. Nowadays social scientists as Weber or Sorokin, who spent years to write voluminous interdisciplinary studies on the development of societal formations, would not survive in modern academic institutes. Besides, the quality journals require articles in which a few well-developed hypotheses are tested. As a consequence, these social norms privilege single-issue sociology.

The political interest in key factors on behalf of managing social change
Government agencies and private companies play an important role in financing social research. Policy makers are often only interested in finding just a few crucial key factors as instruments for policy measures. Moreover, the general public discourse has also a tendency to frame social problems in simplified terms. It is rhetorically attractive to explain social problems by focusing on just one of the possible explanations. Both tendencies make it tempting to reduce social research to single-issue studies. An example is the growing focus on cultural aspects of social relations between immigrants and native inhabitants in western societies. This corresponds with the public discourse on cultural differences as 'the' cause of racial or ethnic inequalities. In other words, the practice of social research tends to adapt to the dominant culturalist discourse in society and in the political scene while critical research is marginalized.

How to overcome single-issue social science?

In the sections above we outlined the theoretical foundations of single-issue sociology and the conditions that favour social research that conforms to the rules of single-issue sociology. In fact single-issue sociology constitutes an elaborate discourse in the sense of Foucault (1969, 1971): It is not just an ideology or a way

of thinking, talking and evaluating social research; it is also materialized in institutionalized forms of social practices and the norms that rule research practices. These practices fit in with the wider social context (policymaking practices, the practices of the mass media and the institutionalization of social research).

This makes it difficult to overcome the deficiencies of single-issue social by developing new ways of studying social reality from a holistic viewpoint. It is not only necessary to construct new research strategies. It is also imperative to create social conditions that make these strategies viable.

In this paper I only deal with the problem of research strategies. It is possible to distinguish between two main roads that aim at studying social inequality from a holistic viewpoint.

Developing and renewing the ethnographic road

Research from a holistic viewpoint has always been one of the hallmarks of qualitative research, especially ethnography. But in the history of anthropology, ethnography has gradually developed from a general research strategy into a specific strategy mainly used to study small communities within a society such as cultural groups in urban neighbourhoods. The advantage of these small-scale ethnographic research designs is that the complexity of interrelations between different types of social inequality can be studied in-depth while taking into account the context-dependency and the dialectics of complex causal processes. This strategy plays a considerable role in gender studies that try to capture the dynamics of the intersection between gender inequality and other forms of inequality. In the research practice of gender studies two variants of this strategy can be distinguished.

First, this strategy is used to scrutinize the complexities of the lived experience of a social group whose living conditions are determined by the intersection of different forms of social inequality. Leslie McCall (2003) labelled this approach as '*intra-categorical*'.

Second, within a post modern approach this strategy is used to deconstruct the way the social group is categorized by questioning the boundary-defining process itself. Leslie McCall (2003) used the label '*anti-categorical*' to characterize the latter approach. From the viewpoint of a holistic approach such a division between structure oriented and agency oriented research strategies is rather unfortunate. To unravel the dialectics of processes of reproduction and transformation of structural relations of inequality, one should combine both

strategies.

A common feature of the different strategies following the ethnographic road is the tendency to focus on particular social groups at specific points of intersection between different relations of inequality. In this respect intersectional oriented ethnographic research fits in well with traditional characteristics of ethnography in general. Ethnography is often equated with a research design focused on the micro-worlds of the social life of a single group. Multi-case designs focused on a comparative study of different social groups constitute the exception to the rule of single group studies.

But there is not a methodological restriction to use the ethnographic approach in a multi-case design to study the general dynamics of a society as a whole. In terms proposed by Leslie McCall, such a multi-case design is compatible with an inter-categorical approach.

A well-known example of such an inter-categorical approach is a nationwide study on the effects of social inequalities on social life: *the ambitious research project led by Pierre Bourdieu on social suffering in contemporary society* (Bourdieu, 1993). The concept of social suffering does not only include poverty but all kinds of deprivations and feelings of failure. The research of Bourdieu and his colleagues aims at how the combined effects of different forms of social inequalities and aspects of living conditions are experienced by individuals and contribute to different kinds of suffering. This holistic ambition is realized by conducting a series of ethnographic studies of the life of different individuals and their families living in very different social and physical spaces. Each of these studies is based on in-dept interviews and observations. The results that are presented in an extensive publication makes it possible to create a general representation of how different forms of social inequality interact and function in the daily life of ordinary people in French society at the end of the eighties and how these people cope with these inequalities. Of course, this is a labour-intensive research design, but the strategy followed by Bourdieu and his colleagues could be further developed by combining this type of qualitative case studies with quantitative data about the social conditions in the society to be studied.

Developing and renewing the Social Position Theory

A second road that is compatible with the inter-categorical approach is the development of a quantitative model based on a holistic approach of social inequality. This research strategy could depart from with the theory of Social

Position as developed by Johan Galtung at the sixties. Before this approach is elaborated, it is necessary to review the dimensions of inequality as conceptualized four decades ago. New social developments (such as the recognition of the inequality of access to natural resources) and new theoretical insights (such as the proto-theory for the empirical study of social inequality developed by Veit-Michael Bader and Albert Benschop (1988) should be taken into account in the re-conceptualization of the different dimensions of inequality. The proto-theory of Bader and Benschop is an important step in the development of an all-embracing holistic theoretical framework for the analysis of structural inequalities. It breaks through the compartmentalization of social research in separate disciplines or even sub-disciplines and it overcomes the limitations of narrow-focused research traditions.

Up until now, the scientific community largely neglected the important study of Bader and Benschop. There are a few exceptions. Benschop himself conducted an extensive study to develop an integral theory of social class (1993). Inspired by the proto-theory of Bader and Benschop, Helma Lutz (2002) proposed to incorporate, besides gender, class, race and ethnicity, other forms of structural inequality such as age, state of health, environmental conditions, cultural resources, possessions, state of societal development, and position of the society in international relations ('North-South' and 'East-West').

Of course there are other possibilities to conceptualize the different forms and dimensions of structural inequalities.

Besides conceptual innovations, new analytical tools should be introduced to unravel the complexities of the interactions of different forms of social inequality. The original Social Position Theory proposed a research strategy that aims at the construction of an overall index that is conceptualized as the sum total of positions on dimensions of social inequality. Such an index assumes an additive causality. Fortunately, there are new research possibilities to take into account conditional causality that is characteristic for social reality. Different analytical techniques are developed that can be used to analyse the complexities of the intersection of different forms of inequality. For example, in case of large datasets multi-level research may be used to analyze context dependency of the way different forms of inequality intersect. In case of comparative studies of a limited number of groups, regions or countries, the research tools and analytical procedures – known as the Comparative Method and developed by Charles Ragin (1994) – can be useful to analyze the dynamics of the way different forms of social

inequality interact in social life of individuals. The Comparative Method is based on the assumption that any research strategy should take into account that conditional causality is the rule and that the simple model of additive and linear causal relations is the exception to the rule. That assumption fits in quite well with the general approach of the Social Position theory as outlined by Johan Galtung (see chapter 2 and 3 in this book).

To summarize, new theoretical insight as well as new research techniques enable the development of the conceptual framework and of the methodology of the Social Position Theory. This helps us to tackle the complexities of the modern social world and the combined effects of different forms of social inequality.

Conclusion

In this paper I outlined the consequences of current research traditions for research on social inequality. Especially the dominant position of single-issue social science constitutes an obstacle that impedes substantial progress of scientific knowledge. Of course, in-depth research that focuses on a detailed study of a very specific phenomenon can be very important. But if single-issue research becomes paradigmatic for the way social research in general should be carried out, then real progress of knowledge will turn out to be fictitious. Unfortunately, the dominant position of single-issue social science is very well institutionalized within social science.

However, dominance is never complete, and can be challenged. Therefore it is important to discuss possible research strategies that can overcome the deficiencies of single-issue sociology. In this paper, two different strategies are discussed. One strategy departs from the virtues of the ethnographic method and tries to avoid the limitations of traditional ethnographic research. The other strategy departs from a holistic conceptualization of social inequality and the virtues of quantitative modelling and analytic procedures.

In fact both strategies could be combined. Such an approach would fit in with the growing interest in mixed method research. The development of such a combined strategy could constitute a serious challenge to the dead-end road travelled by single-issue social science.

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Edutainment Radio Programmes



The ways in which journalists frame HIV stories can strongly contribute towards news consumers' perceptions of the epidemic. This paper discusses the news values of HIV radio programmes in Ethiopia, Kenya and South Africa. It argues that the culturally appropriate 'humanisation' of HIV stories and the proper use of conflict as adding news value are paramount to the impact of stories.

The skillful application of news values can make almost any HIV-related story newsworthy and therefore part of mainstream news. Moreover, it is maintained that HIV advocacy environments contribute to the newsworthiness of HIV stories in the media.

The AIDS advocacy milieus of South Africa and Kenya are compared and related to the type of HIV stories that are published and broadcast in the respective countries. Journalism training methods are critically discussed in the context of the above. It is argued, that, in developing countries, where journalists often lack basic journalism skills, it is not sufficient to provide reporters with HIV-related information; HIV information sharing should be combined with general journalism training and mentoring.

Introduction

In December 2007, an excited Bashir Osman - a Somaligna-speaking journalist from Dire Dawa in the east of Ethiopia - broadcast a live call-in show on breastfeeding and HIV to his Somali audience on Dire 106.1 FM. According to the most recent Ethiopian government figures, Dire Dawa has the second highest HIV

prevalence rate in the country, and almost doubles the national average. Each year there are almost 1, 000 HIV positive pregnancies with at least 230 children born with the virus. Yet this was the first HIV programme that Bashir had ever produced. AIDS was so stigmatised in the region that Dire 106.1 FM hardly ever discussed it on air. And Osman had no problem following this route. A week before the broadcast, the journalist – like most of his listeners – refused to be in the same room as people with HIV because he “*didn’t want to risk breathing the same air*” (Osman cited in De Masi, 2008) as them. He would never consider sharing a plate, or hosting an HIV positive person in his home, and thought it a deep insult to be tested for the virus.

But then Osman accessed what turned out to be a precious piece of culturally relevant information: he learned that babies of HIV positive women can get infected with the virus through their mothers’ breast milk (personal communication, December 6, 2007). All mothers with babies in his community breastfed their infants x including his very own wife. His own five-month old baby could be at risk, he perceived with shock, because neither he nor his wife knew their HIV status. The realisation changed Osman’s entire view on AIDS, and HIV was suddenly a virus that had the potential to directly impact his own life and those of everyone else he knew, in ways he had previously vehemently denied (personal communication, December 6, 2007). In short, this piece of information made AIDS newsworthy to Osman, his community and his editors. It became something that was crucial and worthwhile to talk about.

HIV and the News Media

Several communication experts, AIDS activists and journalists (Collins, 2005; Kinsella, 1989; Malan & Gold, 2006; Scalway, 2003; Shilts, 1987) have argued that the news media have the potential to be an immensely powerful tool in the response to HIV. According to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS Executive Director (UNAIDS), dr. Peter Piot, “*journalists can save more lives than doctors in terms of HIV prevention because preventing HIV is about communication and changing norms*” (Piot, 2006).

Proving statements like this, however, is very complex; studies have not been able to conclusively show that stories in the news media have resulted in change in HIV-related behaviour on a large scale. Research has, however, strongly suggested that news stories are capable of setting the framework in which citizens discuss public events. McCombs and Shaw (1972) demonstrated that there was a strong relation between the topics that the news media highlighted

during an American election campaign and the topics that news consumers identified as important. Another US study illustrated the power of broadcast news to set the policy agenda when it proved that evening news bulletins had the effect of defining the policy areas by which the president should be judged (Iyengar et al., 1984).

McCombs and Ghanem (2001) have argued that *“the level degree of emphasis placed on issues in the mass media influences the priority accorded these issues by the public”* (cited in Reese, Gandy & Grant, 2001, p. 67). Dearing and Rogers (1996) stated that this proposition had been supported by more than 200 studies. But, I would argue that the regular publishing or airing of stories on a certain subject does necessarily lead to the public taking note of that subject. If such stories do not directly relate to the lives of readers or broadcast audiences, or are not presented in captivating ways with strong news values, they are unlikely to influence news consumers’ opinions – whether negatively or positively. In the case of a highly stigmatised and sensitive subject such as HIV/AIDS, even more so.

Osman broadcast an interview with an HIV positive woman in her mid-twenties. Her name was Meskerem. He met her at an HIV journalism training of the media organization, Internews Network, that he was attending. Meskerem was mother to a baby that was HIV negative because she had used freely available drugs that helped to prevent her baby from becoming infected. Doctors advised her not to breastfeed – unless she could do so exclusively (i.e. without feeding the baby anything other than breast milk for five months followed by a total halt to breastfeeding).

“When my listeners heard the woman speak about breastfeeding and HIV, everyone started to send text messages from their cell phones”, Osman says. *“Like me, they wanted to know that their babies wouldn’t get harmed by HIV”* (personal communication, December 10, 2007).

The information was directly relevant to the lives of the people of Dire Dawa. Moreover, it was presented with a *“human face”*, and told by an HIV positive Ethiopian mother herself. And, on top of that, a strikingly attractive and presentable young woman that Osman acknowledged he initially could *“not believe was infected with HIV because she looked so healthy and vibrant”* (personal communication, December 10, 2007). The interview was followed by a live call-in show with an in-studio specialist HIV nurse who answered callers’ questions or text messages. Most people who phoned or sent texts were desperate to know what they needed to do to protect their babies (Osman cited in De Masi,

2008; personal communication with De Masi, June 29, 2008). The nurse's most common answer was to tell mothers to get themselves and their babies tested for HIV.

Previously, Osman hardly got any strong audience responses. In many of his programmes – on other topics – he talked almost exclusively. But his HIV programme was different: it framed the AIDS pandemic in a human and culturally relevant way. The fact that it contained a local woman with HIV who was mother to an HIV negative baby, and that the dangers of breastfeeding were explained to a “*breastfeeding society*”, is what made it of cultural relevance and ultimately newsworthy. Had Osman done his programme in the usual way, by inviting government spokespeople to rattle off statistics on health related subjects, his audience response is unlikely to have been the same. In his words: *They would have been their usual self, and not respond at all. I've realised those statistics alone don't move them. It's the human face and bringing out something that directly impacts them, that makes all the difference. Prior to this program, I didn't think it was possible to make HIV newsworthy. I thought people just didn't want to hear about it any longer* (personal communication, December 10, 2007).

Influencing audiences

Bernard Cohen (1963, p. 13) has encapsulated the news media's agenda-setting function in a much quoted statement: “[The press] may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about”. By this, he meant that the news media can influence the topics news consumers talk and think about, but don't necessarily determine their opinions on those subjects.

However, some scholars find Cohen's statement misleading. Entman (2007) argued that it is impossible for the media to tell consumers what to think about without also exerting considerable influence over their opinions on the subjects they think about. Entman contended that “*getting people to think (and behave) in a certain way requires selecting some things to tell them about and efficiently cueing them on how these elements mesh with their own scheme systems*” (Entman, 2007, p. 165). Moreover, Malan (2006) has asserted that the South African news media did in fact tell the public what to think with regards to AIDS policies (that they “lack comprehensiveness”) and antiretrovirals (that they “*are effective and should be made available*”,) in the late nineties and early 2000s. In the case of Osman's radio program, the media or experts on his programme told listeners to “get tested for HIV” and “not breastfeed their babies for longer than

six months if they test HIV positive”.

Stories can obviously also negatively impact societies, sometimes resulting in media consumers thinking the “wrong” things. In March 2004 one of Kenya’s major national dailies, The Standard, published a front page story on HIV tests arguing that the rapid tests used in VCT centers – which enable clients to receive their test results on the same day – were inaccurate. The news quickly spread when one of the most popular Nairobi based radio stations, Kiss FM, picked up on the story in its morning news bulletins. Most other radio stations followed suit. The story was covered by every major newspaper, radio and television network throughout the week, by using a strong news value: conflict.

It became an issue of extreme concern to AIDS organizations operating in Kenya. Although HIV testing experts were eventually quoted, and they explained why the stories were incorrect and that the tests were indeed accurate, the damage had been done. According to Emma Mwamburi, a USAID programme officer responsible for managing the US government’s support to HIV testing in Kenya, several VCT centers all over Kenya reported a drastic decrease in their clientele for months after the publication and broadcast of the stories. Many Kenyans demanded to be tested with the expensive HIV kits that were used in hospitals at the time (ELISA tests). It took 3 days to get results from such tests, as analysis had to be completed in laboratories. This made the ELISA tests considerably more expensive to carry out than rapid tests; yet they were no more accurate.

Upon subsequent investigation, it was established that the source of the initial story that had painted the rapid tests as inaccurate was based at a company that had previously made large amounts of money from production of ELISA tests. When it was realised in Kenya that cheaper rapid tests were just as accurate as ELISA tests, this firm began losing its previous profits. Hence its spread of a false story, and one that did tremendous damage for a very significant amount of time. It is therefore extremely important that journalists access accurate HIV information and are trained on how to use this information effectively. Inaccurate information presented with strong values and in captivating ways can potentially grasp the attention of news consumers in similar ways to accurate information.

Media and society

Researchers such as Garfinkel (1967), Goffman (1974) and Berger and Luckman (1967) have argued that news does not mirror society, but rather helps to shape it. These researchers have maintained that, when journalists describe events, they actively define those events by selectively attributing to them certain details or

particulars. They have contended that news stories define what is "*deviant*" in society and what is "*normative*" and that news acts as a selective "*window on the world*" (Tuchman, 1978, p.1).

Osman's report defined what was "*normative*" – namely breastfeeding – and what was "*deviant*" – namely talking about HIV and knowing your HIV status. Once the culturally-relevant information – that the breast milk of infected mothers can infect their babies – had been shared, knowing ones' HIV status became "*normative*"; it became necessary to get tested for the virus as it could impact on ones' babies' health.

The culturally relevant framing of his programme encouraged Osman's listeners to ask questions about HIV and think about the potential impact of the virus on their own lives. In the media analyst Robert Entman's (2007) words, "it raised the salience or apparent importance of certain ideas", in this case a virus that no one in the community dared to talk about and journalists at Osman's radio station certainly did not address on radio. This is reflected in the number of call-ins/text messages his programme received: almost triple that of any of his previous radio programmes (that did not address HIV). The enhanced interest was an indication that the culturally-relevant way in which he framed HIV appealed to his listeners and significantly increased HIV-related discussion. So much so that Bashir ended up doing two follow-up radio programmes on the issue and managed to sustain a high level of audience participation.

There is a common perception that HIV has been over-reported and that audiences are "*sick and tired*" of it. But an audience perception study by the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa seemed to dispel this myth, at least as far as a Durban township is concerned. Kwazulu/Natal, the province in the east of the country, in which Durban is located, is often referred to as the "*AIDS capital of the world*". AIDS is regularly covered in the city's local news media. Surprisingly, Jooste (2004) found that respondents didn't think AIDS was over-reported, but rather that they weren't hearing or reading enough of the right type of stories.

Jooste analyzed the responses of 200 people in Cato Manor, an informal settlement in Durban. Ninety eight per cent of them said they wanted more reporting on HIV-related matters in print and broadcast media. When Jooste asked them what "kind" of reporting they wanted, 80 per cent indicated they were desirous of "*more about people like us*" or "*more about people living with AIDS*". The researcher discovered that the stories respondents could recall most

often were *“people-centered”* stories. A number mentioned the child activist, Nkosi Johnson – even though he had died about a year earlier – and Gugu Dlamini, a Durban woman who was killed two years earlier for revealing her HIV status. *“Both old stories”*, but they were *“the ones best remembered”*. In the case of Osman’s program, more than half of callers’ text messages and call-ins referred to “Meskerem’s story”. One read: *“How did Meskerem know she was positive?”* and another read *“How did Meskerem know how to help her baby?”*

These listener responses confirm Jooste’s findings: that media consumers remember *“people-centered”* stories and identify better with reports about *“people like us”*. The fact that an Ethiopian mother with HIV told her story herself helped listeners to identify with the issue and “defined a problem worthy of public attention” (Entman, 2007). In stark contrast to Osman’s HIV radio program, an AIDS programme on a major Ethiopian broadcaster seems to have had very little effect. It rarely receives any text messages or call-ins and according to producers, listeners seem to remember very little HIV-related information from it. While this programme is broadcast biweekly, thus regularly, the contents don’t seem to attract listeners – it consists of presenters reading HIV-related information and shocking statistics live on air and medical or government officers explaining strategic plans and scientific information. It rarely humanises the epidemic or makes it culturally relevant to listeners, and often relies on sponsorships, as it hardly ever attracts advertisements.

Lucy Macharia’s programme

A similar radio story of Kenyan journalist Lucy Macharia (not the journalist’s real name; her identity is being protected as her sister is not yet comfortable with being public about her HIV positive status) in 2005 also illustrates the news value of HIV programmes with a human face. Lucy attended a media workshop that focused on Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT). When she learned about the symptoms of HIV-related illnesses, she strongly suspected that her sickly sister was infected with the virus.

The radio programme that Macharia produced related her own experience of having visited a VCT centre to get tested for HIV. It was broadcast on the Catholic radio station, Radio Waumini, for which she worked at the time. She asked her sister to listen to the broadcast and also took it home on CD so that her sibling could listen to it repeatedly. Like Osman, Macharia’s programme began with a human interest feature followed by live call-in show with an in-studio expert, in this case a VCT counselor, that addressed callers’ questions. The human interest

feature related Macharia's fears when she waited for her results. Part of the script read:

I don't need to tell you what I feel. My mind is drawing pictures of what the test kit looks like with my blood on it. Is there one or two lines? One red line means negative, two means I'm positive". But it also explained the help she received: "But Bancy, the counselor, speaks to me. She makes me feel safe. She tells me that it's important to know your HIV status. It helps you to protect yourself (Macharia, 2004).

Similar to Osman's story, Macharia's programme 'humanised' HIV for her listeners. It enlivened the issue, taking it away from the cold realms of words on paper, and far away from scientific lectures given by "dry" experts who were the usual participants in such shows and who never connected with radio listeners and hardly ever elicited great response. The fact that Macharia went for an HIV test herself and openly and humbly spoke about her fears when doing so and allowed listeners a "look" into an HIV testing room.

The human framing of the programme "*defined a problem worthy of public x attention*" (Entman, 2007) and raised the importance of going for an HIV test. This is reflected in the kind of call-in questions the programme received – the three most common call-in questions were: "*How did you feel when you went for the HIV test*", "*How do I get to go to the same HIV testing centre as you?*" and "*How did you know that the test was accurate?*" (personal communication, April 30, 2004).

Previously, said Macharia, her listeners had regarded the tests as "*something out there that other people, but not me, do*". After the programme it changed to "*something that Macharia has done*" and listeners should therefore consider doing as well. After listening to Macharia's program, her sister asked her to accompany her to get tested for HIV, at the same place as Macharia had undergone such a procedure. And, on the morning that they subsequently visited the specific VCT centre, Macharia's sister did, indeed, test positive. According to Macharia, the "*biggest factor*" in convincing her sister to get tested for the virus was the fact that Macharia herself had been tested and that she had the opportunity to first hear "*what happens in a counseling and testing room. Having heard what a counselor says to you*" and hearing the sound on the air of an actual testing kit being opened and used "*is what made all the difference*". Macharia says it in fact gave her sister the "*courage*" to finally overcome her fear and face up to the reality that she was HIV positive (personal communication, May 5,

2004).

Two follow-up radio programmes on this issue proved that some of Macharia's listeners seemed to have the same experience as her sister when listening to the programme. A week after the broadcast of the first programme – on a Sunday morning – four listeners called into Macharia's next programme reporting that they had gone for HIV tests as a result of the first programme and requested to relate their experiences on air. Moreover, Macharia's news editor was so convinced by the programme himself, that he allocated her airtime for a weekly HIV programme and had the entire staff meet with a VCT counselor who he invited to visit the radio station.

Prior to this program, Macharia had produced at least eight HIV programmes that had not resulted in a single call-in. Instead, she reported, it seemed as if her listeners wanted to “*stay away*” from the issue. She believes one of the main reasons for this is the fact that her programme didn't make use of strong news values, and never humanised HIV:

I always presented HIV as something out there for other people something that didn't have a face and certainly didn't impact on me. When I changed that, the response to my programme changed. I started getting listener reactions – often more reaction than to programmes I produced on other much more accessible subjects. I realised listeners aren't tired of HIV, they're just tired of the way in which we present it (personal communication, May 5, 2004).

'A Stitch in Time' (Kenyan Broadcasting Corporation)

One more example of an HIV programme that has used ‘*humanisation*’ as a news value is that of the radio presenter/producer team Ann Mikia and freelancer Sammy Muraya from the Kenyan Broadcasting Corporation's (KBC's) weekly HIV/AIDS programme “*A Stitch in Time*”. In fact, it seems to have led to government action and strongly impacted on policy change. In August 2004 Mikia and Muraya decided to tackle a difficult topic which was not being addressed by the Kenyan government's AIDS programme. The radio team focused on matatu (minibus taxi) touts and drivers and the schoolgirls who were exchanging sex with the drivers and touts for free rides to school or money. Muraya took to the streets and recorded interviews with matatu drivers and touts, schoolgirls and also with officials from the Matatu Drivers Association (Muraya, 2004).

He produced a five- minute radio segment that was followed by a live call-in session between listeners and representatives from the National AIDS Control Council (NACC) and the Drivers Association (Malan, 2005). Muraya's human-

interest report raised and defined a problem “*worthy of government attention*”. (Entman, 2007). In addition to this, the programme was framed in a culturally relevant way. The story raised many questions about the lack of government intervention with regards to transactional sex, a common occurrence in Kenya that most people know of. The representative from the Matatu Drivers Association followed up by asking the National AIDS Control Council (NACC) to commit to action on air. The NACC could not deny any of the problems that were raised in the programme as they were confirmed by the schoolgirls and matatu drivers themselves. One girl in the report admitted that “*They [the matatu drivers] have sex [with us] and disappear just like that*”.

In December 2004 the team did a follow-programme about the issue, reminding the NACC that the problem had still not been addressed and asking them to explain on air why that was the case. Angry listeners called in to ask “*Why is this happening?*” and why nothing much was being done about it, while the girls and matatu drivers themselves were admitting to this happening. Then, in May 2005 – six months later – the government launched a matatu drivers HIV/AIDS programme for which they set up a special voluntary counselling and testing (VCT) centre for matatu drivers and provided HIV/AIDS counselling specifically targeted at them. The drivers were also provided with stickers with AIDS prevention messages to display in their taxis. According to NACC spokesman, Abel Nyagwa, the radio programme “*A Stitch in Time*” was a key player in improving relations with the Matatu Drivers Association.

The radio team’s culturally relevant and human interest framing of this story played a strong role in actively shaping the government’s perception of the extent of the matatu crisis that eventually led to action and “*activate[ed] schemas that encourage[d] target audiences to think, feel and decide in a particular way*” (Entman, 2007). It also encouraged listeners to respond in ways that put pressure on the government to take action.

Journalism training and mentoring

Producing compelling HIV programmes is not something that comes without considerable journalistic skill. In this section the role of media training and mentoring of journalists in developing countries are discussed in the context of the production of quality HIV radio programmes.

Challenges and limitations

Mikia, Osman and Muraya followed a well-tested method of radio production, albeit as yet uncommon in the developing world: to begin their radio programmes with focused, theme-based human interest radio features, followed by live call-in shows with in-studio experts. It is indeed a relatively straightforward radio production method x But it is one that requires a considerable amount of journalistic skills and resources that these three journalists would not have mastered, nor had access to, without their having attended intensive media training workshops and receiving ongoing mentoring from highly experienced journalism trainers at an international media development organization.

But it is not only HIV-related knowledge that is required to tell such stories successfully. A significant amount of journalistic skill is needed in order to produce news media content that carefully interlaces aspects of the epidemic with “*case studies*” – people and communities which the virus has impacted – and to still be able to make it newsworthy. As a radio journalist you need to understand, and write well enough, to present “*life with HIV*” in a way that makes news consumers realise how it affects them as well.

In addition to this, radio producers and presenters need access to telephones and the internet for research, computers with digital sound editing programmes and recording equipment – facilities that are rarely available at under resourced radio stations in poorer countries.

Training and access to resources

All three journalists received access to all of these facilities for the production of their programmes by each attending a weeklong HIV feature story production workshop at Internews Network’s Local Voices programme. The programme follows a training method different from that of most other HIV media training programmes, with a 70 focus on the development of radio journalism skills and only 30 on HIV knowledge. Other HIV media trainings generally approach this very differently, mainly focusing on nurturing HIV knowledge and not journalism skills. At seven days duration, Local Voices workshops are also considerably longer than others, which are generally two to three days. It also trains no more than 10 journalists at a time. All trainees leave the workshops with a ready-to-air radio feature and outline with questions and research for the live call-in show that is to follow the broadcast of their human-interest stories.

During their respective workshops, the journalists learned how to write good scripts, to structure stories, to digitally edit sound and to use appropriate HIV language. They met and interviewed people with HIV and visited pregnancy and

HIV testing centres where they recorded natural sound and interviews with counsellors. During the production of their stories, they were carefully mentored by experienced radio journalists who specialised in HIV reporting to ensure quality. Each of them received access to recording equipment while on the training and received their own equipment after the production of five post workshop HIV stories. Mikia has also received several travel grants to produce HIV stories outside of her home city, Nairobi.

A combination of this training approach and access to facilities enabled them to produce HIV stories with human and culturally relevant frames. Without the training and relevant facilities doing this successfully would have proved unlikely, as they would not have had access to phones and research facilities to find the “human” faces of their stories and not have known how to effectively weave them into their programmes.

Advocacy environments

HIV advocacy environments can significantly contribute to the newsworthiness of HIV stories in the news media. The stories of Osman, Mikia and Muraya were produced in an environment where many other inaccurate HIV stories, like the previously mentioned rapid test/VCT example, are being published simultaneously. The rapid test story was for instance published a mere week ahead of Lucy Macharia’s programme on HIV testing. This resulted in several conflicting messages competing with each other in the media.

Traditional approaches to analyzing news that argue that the news media reflect society without having much influence on shaping that information, hold some water, when one considers the influence of AIDS advocacy environments in the case of Kenya and South Africa. Although none of the abovementioned stories were aired or published in South Africa, the diverse civil societies of Kenya and South Africa are a good example to address “*advocacy environments as a contributing factor to the framing of stories*”.

South Africa and Kenya have two very different civil societies. South Africa’s AIDS activists are extremely vocal and proactive, holding regular protest marches and issuing almost daily press releases. In Kenya, advocacy groups are not nearly as visible and do not place as much emphasis on developing personal relationships with journalists. The ability of civil society organizations and advocacy groups to make their voices heard and present their views in a newsworthy manner, makes a vast difference to what ends up in the news media (Malan, 2005).

When the VCT story about rapid tests broke in Kenya, radio journalists had access to very few HIV testing experts they felt comfortable enough to phone at 6 am in the morning to get a comment on the newspaper article that had appeared that same morning. As a result, comments with accurate scientific information that could counter the information in The Standard's erroneous article was only obtained and reflected much later that day, and in some cases only later that week. So, for a significant amount of time, the Kenyan public only had access to harmful information regarding HIV testing.

In South Africa, on the other hand, the largest AIDS advocacy group, Treatment Action Campaign, in many cases dictates what appears in the news media. The group frames its opinions in newsworthy ways and TAC spokespeople are available to the media on short notice at almost any time of the day. As a result, the movement's views are widely quoted in the local news media and scientifically inaccurate news reports and statements are instantly addressed. Several studies have indicated that the TAC is quoted more than any other source in the South African media - and that includes the government (Spur, 2005; Finlay 2004). The TAC uses newsworthy tactics such as protests, civil disobedience and public confrontation of government ministers to keep journalists interested in what they do.

An example of this would be the opening day of the fifteenth International Conference on HIV/AIDS in Bangkok, Thailand when South Africa's Health Minister, Dr. Manto Tshabalala-Msimang, told journalists that the drug Nevirapine (a cost-effective drug used to prevent mother-to-child-transmission of HIV) was unsafe to use (Brummer, 2004). Two years prior to the conference, South Africa's highest court had ordered Dr. Tshabalala-Msimang to make the drug available, free of charge, to HIV positive pregnant women and their babies. The Minister had displayed resistance to the order ever since. Within a few hours after the Minister's statement, the TAC, AIDS Law Project (ALP), and Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) held an emergency mass meeting for South African AIDS activists, health workers, scientists, and journalists attending the conference. The story, along with reactions from local non-governmental organizations, that challenged the minister's statements, was headlined in almost every major newspaper and broadcast on regional and national radio and television stations throughout the country (Malan, 2005). Local NGOs and scientists were furious, insisting that statements such as Dr. Tshabalala-Msimang's undermined their efforts to educate South Africa's citizens about prevention against HIV infection.

Ultimately, Zackie Achmat, who headed the TAC delegation to the conference, convinced the conference organizers to give the TAC an opportunity to speak at the Thursday morning plenary session, to plead for access to Nevirapine for HIV positive pregnant women in South Africa, and for scientists like Dr. Tshabalala-Msimang to distribute accurate information about the prevention of mother-to-child transmission. In the presence of thousands of participants, the TAC asked session Chairperson Graca Machel, the esteemed Nelson Mandela's wife, to speak to South Africa's Health Minister.

This incident, in which prejudicial and incorrect information was disseminated, and then refuted by activists, is a clear example of NGOs taking on the responsibility of informing the media and the international community of the facts. The result was responsible media coverage which reflected the quality and efficacy of the activist environment of the country. As a result of this activism, policy or human rights issues relating to HIV appear far more often in the South African than in the Kenyan media (Malan, 2005). In this regard, NGOs, government spokespeople, academic researchers, doctors and AIDS advocates from countries that do not have adequate media liaison skills need as much training as the journalists themselves. They need to be taught how to relate to the media, how to assist reporters to access information, and sometimes they even need to be trained on how to make resources such as transport to some of their projects available to journalists. It is not just the responsibility of the media to tell the story of HIV; the people who produce the research on this epidemic have a responsibility to make it available to society through the news media.

The media training programme in which the journalists who produced the radio programmes discussed in this chapter participated, includes this aspect; at least 10 HIV spokespeople are trained in effective media relations for every 30 journalists trained in the countries where it operates (Kenya, Nigeria, India and Ethiopia). Media relations trainings are five days in duration, with trainees holding an actual media event attended by journalists on the final day. The reasoning behind this approach is that it doesn't make sense to train journalists on how to interview activists and local government spokespeople, NGOs and PLHIV networks if those people are not available to the media as a result of their lack of understanding of the sector.

Conclusion

A combination of strong journalism skills, HIV knowledge and an environment conducive to telling stories about AIDS are essential in empowering the media to

assist in the response to HIV. Culturally relevant stories “*with a human face*” can be incredibly powerful, as shown by the case studies discussed in this chapter. In all of the three human-interest radio programmes that were discussed, the human and culturally relevant framing of the programmes resulted in listener responses that actively engaged with the subjects addressed, whether that was HIV testing, protecting your baby from HIV infection or transactional sex between taxi drivers and school girls.

In the context of HIV and of an increasingly competitive news world, it is no easy task to get airtime for an HIV story and to make an HIV-related human-interest story newsworthy, accessible and accurate. At a media panel at the International AIDS Conference in Toronto in 2006, the Wall Street Journal Science reporter, Marilyn Chase – who had been reporting on HIV for twenty years – echoed this concern: “*As the pace of the epidemic matures, our challenges as reporters get more complicated. Editors get choosier about stories. And that means many projects which are worthy may not be deemed newsworthy. That requires us, as reporters, to be smarter and more strategic in uncovering unique angles that make clear what really are the breaking, compelling news developments in the epidemic*” (HIV science and responsible journalism media panel, 2006).

Reporting on subjects other than HIV/AIDS is often considerably simpler. There is more often than not less science to understand, issues are less sensitive and not as much work and skill is needed to produce good stories.

There are several HIV journalism trainings happening in Africa. But some training organizations ignore the importance of training reporters as much in journalism skills as HIV knowledge. Simply giving journalists access to a vast amount of AIDS-related information by slapping together one speaker after another rarely makes a difference to their reporting. Journalists need more than that – they need to improve their journalism skills, and they need time and money to travel to access the “*human faces*” or case studies, and research, that will help them to tell compelling HIV-related stories.

In this regard a recommendation is that more journalists are intensively trained in “*humanizing*” the HIV pandemic. Journalists from all mediums (print, television and radio) should be trained, but, as radio is the most accessible media form in most African countries, it should receive the most attention.

It is also important to provide journalists in Africa with access to facilities and mentors to produce quality HIV stories. Sending journalists back to under-resourced media houses where there are no facilities to create human-interest stories after a training workshop, is counterproductive. If there is no access to

facilities, journalists will not be able to effectively apply the skills they were taught in the training. They also need to be mentored by a senior journalist with significant HIV reporting experience to further develop workshop skills.

Moreover, it is the responsibility of the news media, training institutions, activist communities, scientists and governments, amongst others, to cooperate to ensure that the information surrounding HIV given to the public through journalists' stories leads to the saving, and not the endangering, of lives.

The programme topics in Osman, Mikia and Muraya's HIV radio programmes were not addressed as a result of advocacy communities raising their importance; it was journalistic skill and research that motivated reporters to focus on these subjects. Other than in South Africa, reporters in Ethiopia and Kenya can rarely rely on AIDS advocates to identify relevant "news frames" for them.

As shown by the comparison between Kenya and South Africa, the advocacy environments in which reporters file their stories can significantly contribute to the accuracy and creativity - or the opposite - of journalists HIV stories. It is therefore equally important to also train communication teams from government, PLHIV networks and non-profit organizations in effective media relations. The more conducive HIV advocacy environments are to HIV reporting, the better the chances are that creative and accurate stories with *"human and culturally appropriate faces"* will appear in the media.

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