

RECKONING WITH ANTHROPOLOGY'S REPLOTTING OF NARRATIVES OF LIBERAL COLONIALISM: A COUNTER-NARRATIVE OF INSURRECTION BECKONING TO THE DECOLONISATION OF REASON

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Abstract

In this paper I evaluate in essay-form the intervention of a self-styled anthropological discourse that sets claims to postcolonial theory in order to frame the Greek-Cypriot irredentist insurrection (1955-1959) in a Manichean allegory of high-toned and overwrought binary signifiers of aphotic, unilluminated, night-time nationalism imputable to a villainous, recidivist and coercively like-minded communitarianism emblematic of Greek-Cypriot culture on one hand, and the enlightened, unbigoted, freethinking progressivism attributed to Turkish-Cypriot culture on the other, {the latter operating as a back-up signifier for a licensed civil modernity, deputised by a misunderstood liberal colonialism}. By selectively recalibrating aspects of postcolonial theory serviceable to the urgency of reenfranchising colonialism in an age of imperial succedaneum, the anthropological discourse under review aspires to bail the indigenised natives out of their atavistic unreason and irredentist infirmities, while nursing them mentally until they graduate from the consummated modernity of the West. Contrary to such renovated missionary ambition and anthropological evangelism trading condescendingly with the unprincipled and unauthorised modernity of ex-subject populations, I suggest a duological counter-narrative of the nation, venturesome enough to evoke but also cross its boundaries when they become totalising, mindful that the other is not always and already what the coloniser had imagined s/he would be. This is, after all, an essay on the decolonisation of whatever has been left over from the perpetrated euthanasia of postcolonial reason after the latter's salutatory high-jump from the comfort of its cosmopolitan observation tower.

With the decline of the grand narratives of modernity some cosmopolitan strands of postmodern/postcolonial theory, unconscious of their geopolitical collusion with Western power, tend to convert the merciless cynicism of colonial modernity into new, equally ruthless, narrative forms of cynical enlightenment, which naturalise Occidentalism and which unless critically understood in a contestatory process, no vision of mental decolonisation can be made possible.

With us there is nothing more consistent than a racist humanism since the European has only been able to become a man by creating slaves and monsters.

(Sartre, 1967)

Containing the Cynical Malaise of Commissioner Liberalism

Toward the closing of the 1990s, the weather-hardened and dean of Cypriot anthropologists, Peter Loizos, sensed the urgency of admonishing the community of scholars who are venturing into the meandering folds of the Cyprus problem: *"Scholars can make things clearer by calling each other to account over significant details in their interpretations of matters of common interest ... they can make a further contribution by refusing the pressure toward ethnic stereotyping in politics, towards abstracted generalisations in daily life Clear understandings can be fostered by keeping sight of the particularities of time, place, persons, individual responsibilities, contexts, and by not lumping together, not aggregating. By not favouring only one way of doing, of seeing, of being a man, a woman, a citizen, a people"*, (Loizos, 1998, p. 48). Indeed, the amassment of people into the aggregate categories of being Greek-Cypriot or Turkish-Cypriot embraces a greater existential density than their nominal classification, or their presently coerced geographical designation would make known. For this reason, the aspired unity of a prospective UN-sponsored nation can be sustained only in manufactured and simulated narratives of moral cynicism which due to their heteronomous, godfathered nature, constantly fragment into multiple realities and spheres of meaningless existence. In turn, this undermines endeavours to establish new communities and experimental identities that cross and unite disparate groups in some kind of *commoning*. These multifaceted, tortuous, convoluted and idiosyncratic ways of being Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot, which actually means being locked into the ambivalence of being a self but with self-contradictions, although not necessarily unrecognised by the scholarly community in Cyprus, received only sparse attention so far, and has been respected only faintly and ephemerally. Even if vaguely intuited, this experience of inaudible impairments and muffled incapacitations remains instinctive and precognitive as far as anthropologists (and sociologists) are concerned. They have not really pondered the issue by putting energy and minds on it, or wonder about, or turn it over, weigh, understand it and evaluate its implications. No indication of hermeneutic empathising has been manifested for tragically fated experiences such as the failed irredentist insurrection, a source of thwarted feelings, depressing disillusionment, resentment and discontent, but also an unfailing source of self-empowerment and moral grandeur against bondage and captivity of all colours and stripes. Between outright dismissal, down turning thumbs or ritual sanctification, Loizos' counsel has gone largely unheeded, with gross

implications for the quality of scholarly work, a retrogression further aggravated by the trendy capitulation of intellectuals and their willingness to enlist their work squarely in the service of planetary forces, or become advocates of either community's polemical logomachia, to the detriment of fresh insights, imaginative and resourceful breaks with schematised interpretations.¹ I sense that this is an alarming sign of a fundamental crisis of intellectual and political imagination and a symptom of a patent outgrowth of cynicism, which is mistaken (by impatient partisans) with reason and deliberation. When scholars reproduce the ideological conventions and state-forms of journalistic commentary and news reporting, we are already facing cynicism as a pressing theoretical proposition and moral posture. The cynical manipulation shaping campaigns, reporting and citizens' decision-making seems to have decided also the public fate of many intellectuals as well. Having yielded to New World Order liberalism, the better part of Cypriot intellectuals allowed themselves to be converted to mere solicitors of unquestioned fatalities (EU constitution), frenzied envoys of reasonably predictable miscarriages (Annan Plan), and emissaries of imperial adventurism (Palestine, Afghanistan, Iraq) thus reducing liberalism to a mere ideological vulgarity, a totalitarianism without terror.

Cynicism means that all hermeneutic conflicts involving some traces of excellence, intelligence, skill and flair will be ending ingloriously with a liberal giggle. This smug, cat-that-swallowed-the-canary kind of liberalism, insofar as it reflects the moral and ideological globalisation of imperial neoliberalism, appears (in some respects) as American as the apple pie and may be identified as *cynicism without*. Eventually, however, it evolves into a latent cynicism within, with no significant alternatives to it (Goldfarb Jeffrey, 1991).

Being a commitment to nothing at all, cynicism undermines any normative practice, orientation or promise, thus, conflating permanently reason with power. Originating in a dog philosophy of bathtub simplicity, cynicism evolved into a late Roman Empire cult of resignation to the status quo, emphasising the animal side of Aristotle's political animal, in order to question the normative foundations of political philosophy. Although Diogenes, the archetypical satirist and social critic conceived cynicism as a self-chosen project of poverty, directed against the philanthropic pretensions of imperial power, it has presently been misappropriated by the latter as a means of stripping life down to iron geopolitical opportunism and market realism, in order to further accumulate power and capital. The shift that has taken place is from critical cynicism directed against empire, to a mocking and enervating imperial cynicism that mutes any critical impulse and ridicules normative commitments by way of universalising paltry truisms such as "they all do it anyway", "you have done it to me earlier". At the present state of Empire, cynicism reflects an average, lightweight, urbane cottage-headedness. It reflects the cultural underside of an imperial mass democracy of consumption and letters that supplants critical reason with sophistic casuistry and pedantic Jesuitism.

I want to call attention to cynicism as a generally unrecognised interpretive frame of hardboiled-realism, as it currently reflects in scholarly work. I intend to illuminate the discursive processes by which this substitution occurs and by which critical ideas turn into cryptograms of an imperial civil code, a kind of cultural glue that presently fixes the mass order of neo-liberal societies. This *cynicism without* which originates in the US academic life, is in the process of evolving into a *cynicism within* by replacing a critical debate on values, by impoverishing our constitutional imagination with machtpolitic, by exonerating colonialism, by pardoning imperialism, by excusing elites, by blaming the victims, by rendering economic, political and cultural domination invisible. I, therefore, believe that cynicism as a hegemonic interpretive frame imposed by an artless and spoon-fed realism, amounts to a systematic distortion of human intelligence, which in the long-run enervates the very democratic capacities for a process of constitution-making without imperial patronage. As it was stated above, cynicism alternates between resignation and apology. In what follows I will be concerned with the second, a discursive technique of absolving colonialism in an age of imperial succession.

Professing Imperial Haematics in Cold Blood: Homage to Pax Ottomanica

The groundwork for clearing colonialism and conquest of any charges, commences with a marked distinction of Cyprus' communal histories by an improbable discourse that appropriates "blood". This still remains to be established with respect to Greek-Cypriot discourse, insofar as the latter appeals less to a blood genealogy for legitimation than to panegyric acclamations of the sparkling legacy and grandeur of Greek civilisation which subsumes blood. Haematic discourse seems to be shaping more consistently the Turkish-Cypriot national imaginary, insofar as it invokes "rivers of blood" spilled by the forefathers during the Ottoman conquest of Cyprus (Rebecca Bryant, 1998, p. 59). This is not an uncommon motif in discourses of legitimation and sounds no less hilarious than the crackbrained and imbecilic eulogium heralded from the housetops by its Greek-Cypriot counterpart. What strikes one with wonder, is that a scholar and connoisseur of the Cyprus problem notarises this makeshift and self-serving ideological manoeuvre, claiming that the contingency of the Ottoman conquest of Cyprus "provides a future that is makeable, while an inevitable history is merely part of a grander scheme" (*ibid.*, p. 59). Pulling the strings around the meaning of the Ottoman conquest in order to contrive a natural imperial humanism (Pax Ottomanica) in anticipation of liberal colonialism (Pax Britannica), suggests crafty brilliance and cunning cynicism which has always been the unspoken premise of humanism at any rate. In a baffling contrast to EOKA's "undemocratic goals", Bryant argues, that "the Ottoman capture and rule of Cyprus" amounts to "a contingent history which is much closer to human life" than an Hellenic genealogy "which overtakes one as inevitable" (*ibid.*, p. 59). As a discursive contrivance that engineers *haematic humanism*, itself a plasma of

moderate, decent, open-minded, and non-discriminatory nationalism, it is intriguing enough. Critical reason is lost in some wonder, but it may still solicit an answer: what is so remarkable about the "contingency of Ottoman conquest", what are the implications, and why does this sanguinary humanism issue into a liberal Turkish-Cypriot nationalism, absolutely unenclosed, uncompelled and unconditioned, with no-strings-attached to it by geopolitical alignments and cold-war machinations?

The arbitrariness of the Ottoman conquest, in my view, is neither a subsidiary supplement to Turkish-Cypriot nationalism, nor a circumstantial and provisional marker of its legitimacy. Arbitrary events with shaping force in History, are of no less axial significance than less arbitrary and less contingent ones. Contingent outcomes once realised, create iron inevitabilities and even new regimes of legality in search of legitimation. Feigning a counterfeit contrast between EOKA's irredentist campaign (which is common in the British Mediterranean) and the Ottoman conquest, saturated with post-dated allusions to liberalism and alluring intimations of humanism is well-seasoned, but it cannot stand up to scrutiny. Similarly, overdrawing discrepancies and/or similarities between opposing geopolitical, irredentist claims stands on unsafe grounds.

Bryant never really fleshes out her concept of contingency on which she relies heavily in order to ascribe to Turkish-Cypriot nationalism celebrated postmodern virtues such as open-endedness, open-mindedness, undecidability, indeterminacy etc. This arcane concept, however, is deployed by postcolonial cultural studies in order to denote the aleatory, random and unpredictable processes that define agency and identity as after-effects of ambivalent intersubjective individuation. In other words, contingency evokes the unreliability and perplexity of signs that define postcolonial hybridity. In illustrating the matrix of contingency, postcolonial critics appeal even to Hannah Arendt's remark on the ambivalent temporality, dwelling on the notorious unreliability of ancient oracles that neither reveal nor hide in words but only give manifest signs (Homi Bhaba, 1994, p. 189; Hannah Arendt, 1958, p. 185). Does Rebecca Bryant raise the issue of contingency in the abovementioned sense? She does grope toward this end, although in a very diffident and precarious mode, precisely because she intuits the impossibility of locating a transgressive subaltern agency of the postcolonial, hybrid variety within the enunciative position of Turkish-Cypriot nationalism. What she could bring out, however, but did not proceed carrying it out because of its unbecoming implications, was to identify the heroes of her story, fully aware that "*we can never point unequivocally to them as the authors of the story's outcome*" (Hannah Arendt, 1958, p. 185) particularly because they are located in contingent constellations of the local and the extra-local, of the native and the imperial. Presently, globalisation capitalises upon the structures of colonialism, preserved by neo-colonialism and the failure to decolonise the mind (Couze Venn, 1999, p. 47).

**A Postdated Tribute to Pax-Britannica: Replotting Narratives
of Liberal Colonialism**

There is a sense, however, in which Bryant's exonerative anthropology overlaps with the postcolonial theoretical imaginary. In tandem with postcolonial theory, her replotment of the colonial narrative no longer portrays imperialists as simply aggressive patrons of domination, nor are Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots narrated as its acquiescent, unassertive and compassionate victims. The concept, for instance, of Greek-Cypriot irredentism as an unfixable and irreconcilable form of life, is subjected by Bryant to lopsided and partisan interrogation, with the synergy of liberal tales of suspense concerning its undemocratic nature. Her postimperial narrative reconstruction of the colonial drama of Greek-Cypriots abounds in speculative and postulational tall stories which revise relations of domination and servitude as solely internal and constitutive, not external to their community. So far Bryant operates squarely within the plotline of postcolonial theory. Yet, her shooting script confines relations of domination within the Greek-Cypriot community alone, thus rescuing Turkish-Cypriot nationalism as a postcolonial envoy, implying postmodern practices of policed recognition and respect rather than a metaphysical contention for justice which is saved for Greek-Cypriots (Bryant, 2004, pp. 217- 249). The future, it seems, belongs neither to the defiant slave, nor to the absolute master, but rather to those who seek mutual respect without self-respect, while practicing recognition within the transactional discursive spaces and hegemonic geopolitical sites of Western power.

It is plain that Bryant beats around the bush, shunning from providing a critical account of the devastating encounter between ex-colonials and imperialist masters (who are still masters), putting forward instead only narrative resources that enable communities to undergo a remedial group therapy that will take them beyond their previous experiences of each other. By condoning the mental perversions brought about by colonialism (which impacted perniciously upon intercommunal relations), Bryant is forced to fence her discourse within a space of representation authorised by colonialist normalcy. By turning a blind eye to the postcolonial psychoanalytic reflexivity of the ex-colonials, who like Franz Fanon pondered the pathologies and ill-resolved conflicts at the root of the colonial vocation (Fanon, 1967, 1970), Bryant appears to join the predacious rationalism of western power, which normalises its own history of expansive domination by inscribing the colonised in a fixed hierarchy of civil progress. She seems to imply a normative consent to God's honest truth that coloniser and colonised are involved in a hierarchical bigwig miscognition, where each point of identification is a pervert iteration of the otherness of the European self: liberal and despot. Actually Fanon quotes M. Manoni approvingly on this point, arguing that the coloniser has fled from respect because "he cannot accept men as they are". Europe's "Prospero complex" intuited on time by

Shakespeare in "The Tempest", is defined by an "urge to dominate, which is infantile in origin and which social adaptation has failed to discipline" (Fanon, 1967, pp. 107-108).

Why then did Bryant not survey the sadistic authority and leadership complex of the coloniser in the first place, and then account for the Greek-Cypriot displacement of physical and affective misery toward Turkish-Cypriots? This lapse of critical reason to reflect sufficiently on the mental ruins left behind by colonial tyranny, equipped with inquisitorial psychotechnic apparatuses, puts the colonised continually under erasure. Instead of idle talk with some of EOKA's prodigious spokesmen and indoctrinators (Bryant, 2004, pp. 165,167), themselves inadvertently put in the service of certifying the anthropologist's prearranged and predeliberated fixations, it would have been much more visionary and inspiring to interview dismantled-to-pieces survivors of the British torture chambers and hanging executions, and detect in person the severe mental difficulties they suffer down to our days in coping with "others" as well as their own manifestations of otherness. Against the hangdog culture of the colonised, we ought to counterpose and dissect the hangman's culture of the bigwig killer, and the public executioner. Otherwise, we fall prey to the coloniser's narrative demand "embodied in the utilitarian or evolutionary ideologies of reason and progress" (Bhaba, 1994, p. 98). A narrative demand which is "a police matter" of *"inquisitorial insistence, an order, a petition To demand the narrative of the other, to extort it from him like a secretless secret, something that they call truth about what has taken place"* (Derrida, 1979, p. 87).

Becharmed and subject to the same relations of representation, Bryant "asked her informants what they had hoped to gain from the EOKA struggle and from *enosis*: it was not a struggle, they claimed, for increased rights and opportunities, but for union with their mother Greece" (Bryant, 1998, p. 59). Western narcissism articulates its narrative command by defining the anthropological essence in terms of the perceived utilitarian coordinates of reason: gains and losses. To the coloniser's narrative kind of command-anthropology, the anti-colonial insurrection is incogitable and contrary to reason, unless it is self-serving, fortune-hunting, gold-digging, leading to privatism and penny-pinching individualism. Astonishingly, it does not cross the anthropologist's mind that insurrections and uprisings may be launched against imperial rule for reasons of dignity, self-respect and self-rule, for reasons of moral uplifting and nobility, for reasons of community and solidarity and not for handy reasons of profitability, functionalism, convertibility, advantageousness, expediency and serviceability. It is true, that virtue politics when pursued with imprudent tenacity and uncompromising notionateness may lead to self-destructive ends, deviate to vice-ridden, spleen politics and may be led astray by unintended consequences. But this is an inherent possibility for all forms of

human action, the EOKA epic being no exception, although consistent western manipulation, scheming, wire-pulling and frame-ups contributed to its degeneration and defilement. All the same, adversity, misfortune, adventure, and miscarriage is an indispensable form of Greek, tragic drama play, and I see for this reason no striking moral superiority in misrepresenting, railing against or belittling what was knightly valiant, princely handsome, altruistically selfless, and larger than life, as the dauntless Afxentiou revealed to the colonial toughies who reduced him to anthracite ash fuel, deep in the solemn woods of Machairas. I suspect that Afxentiou's anthracitic speech act (apart from being an answer to academic prattle-prattle, and loose tongue western noology) remains a hard coal that still burns almost without flame in the Kyp(riot)ic imaginary. Kyp(riot)ic anthracite constitutes that unsymbolisable and traumatic hard kernel at the core of anthropological humanism (a Lacanian *petit a*), operating as the main source of Western rationality's psychotic breakdowns. It is anthropologically impossible to study a *being* in the form of a flameless, burning coal, with the meticulous aid of a controller's computable rationality. Only reason, upon ruins witnessing ashes, may intuit that for Afxentiou and the rest of his sacrificial fellowship of knight-errants, Hellas was not an issue of passports and satellite television but an alibi, an excuse prompting them to become equal to the task, measuring up with themselves, with the unreckonable, with death itself.

Instead, Bryant laments that to them "freedom meant enosis' (Bryant, 1998, 59). One may point out that this notion of freedom is no less fraught with risks and possible self-deceptions than the partisan elite of the US independence struggle contemplating a new Rome upon the hills by way of conquest and imperial expansion, or the Pilgrims fantasizing a new Jerusalem, or putting one's faith in the belief that the Turkish nation exists in latency throughout China, the ex Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Bryant discusses approvingly Turkish-Cypriot views that British education could be assimilated into an ideology of linear progress conducive to community improvement: "every Turkish teacher's first duty is to inculcate in the children a national consciousness and a national idealism Once we have done this, along with *our blood, our race, and our history*, we will boast and feel pride in winning our rights (Halkin Sesi, 12 April 1950). This orientation (Bryant argues) towards a better, progressive future presents a *sharp contrast* to Greek-Cypriot nationalism that sought to restore an imagined former order of the greater Greek world" (Bryant, 1998, p.58). This may be a slip-up of inopportune nature, recurring habitually in the United States among scholars closely associated with the tabulated ideological agendas of the states of Greece and Turkey. But conjuring silver dollars out of thin air does no service to a place already saturated by mother states-cynicism. Patronising the haematic and racial imaginary of one nationalism while criminalizing

the other in a place of state-subsidised, superpower-financed and mother nation-sponsored nationalisms encouraged in their postcolonial adventurism, is unseasonable at best, unpromising and hopeless at worst. I think, it is scholarly more propitious to rescue and redeem in critical analysis the anti-colonial, anti-imperialist dimensions of irredentism, set apart from the climacteric extremities directed against the contiguous other without and within. All the same, the voluntary oversight of the psychopathology of colonialism by some strands of postcolonial theory, advocating a politics of contingency, difference and respect, (at the expense of justice), is being presently outflanked by global strategies of imperial and sub-imperial power which evacuate the position they claim and depotentialise any ostensible post-modern challenge (exemplified by the Turkish-Cypriot politics of contingency), by integrating it in new differential hierarchies and geopolitical alignments which can be combated only by new forms of solidarity and militancy.

The Functionalist Fallacy Concerning the Education of the Colonised as a Symptom of Anthropology's Failed Self-Decolonisation

On the issue of education, Bryant makes an astute remark, pointing at the failure of the Greek-Cypriot leadership to acknowledge strains within the apparatus of the colonial administration, mainly manifested in the contrastive outlooks between military (Worseley) and classically trained scholar-commissioners (C. D. Cobham). This is, indeed, an ingenious insight into the state processes of colonialism in Cyprus because it brings into sharp relief the plausible view that British education policy-making could be contingent upon changes in administrative personnel or upon events taking place in other parts of the Empire (Bryant, 1988, p. 56). The complication, however, that is not addressed by Bryant, is who prevailed in this inter-governmental conflict in the long run: the militarists or the classicists? She considers the anti-colonial uprising of 1931 a "provocation", and seems to be glossing over the consequences of cultural engineering and the offensive attempts at curriculum control by the colonial administration which did covet begrudgingly to establish its own mercenary education, and did go about creating its own loyalist constituency by allocating scholarships and lowering school fees as a means of capitalising on poverty.

Be that as it may, inconsistencies in anti-colonial opposition abound as in every insurrectionary experience, but they do so as well in Bryant's creedbound evaluation of anti-colonialism. For instance, although she credits the scholarly training and ministrant classicism of some high-commissioners as charitable and benign, she seems to withhold her assent for classical education in Greek secondary schools, and even sounds disconsolate that government grants were rejected; that the instrumental rationality of technical education was discouraged "*despite Cyprus' growing industries in the post-war period*" (*ibid.*, p. 61). What is

puzzling is why this is so hard to swallow for Bryant. Rejecting government monies and government control in the early 1950s (apart from a single Commercial Lyceum), constitutes such an act of defiance that elsewhere, for instance in the US, it would lead one to readily identify in its intent all the normative protocols of American patriotism, namely republican virtue and self-government in education. Is it not Allan Bloom who in "The Closing of the American Mind" (1987) bemoans the eclipse of classical education and biblical imagination (in the US academia and high schools) as a symptom of consolidated multicultural nihilism? Why, indeed, is it so reprehensible and disgraceful for the colonised to espouse and champion their own community-empowering version of classicism? Is it because it discourages capitalist ethos? It seems to me that the problem lies elsewhere. The colonised did not pursue their classicism from below in a consistent and thorough fashion, namely they failed to contextualise and radicalise it in changing circumstances, so that they could qualify it as an inclusive, yet defiant classicism apropos of postcolonial modernity. Instead, it remained stagnant, motionless and lifeless, operating as a reaction-formation to colonial haughtiness and cocksure imperial narcissism. Eventually, it became ceremonial and commemorative of bygone glories, customary and deprived of nerve, before it was finally crushed by the Church itself, the latter being (in Weberian fashion) a catalyst of secularisation and disenchantment, as well as a promoter of the capitalist ethos of industrialisation.

In addressing the relation between education and nationalism, Bryant seems to impose a sociologically untenable distinction between schools as sites of production/reproduction of nationalist subjects on one hand, and schools as sites of socialisation on the other (Bryant, 2004, p. 141). In the first place, Bryant avoids explaining why it is impossible for education to operate on both registers by fulfilling both functions: reproduction as well as socialisation. But even if she had done this, the most she could accomplish would be to deliver a consistently functionalist explanation of seamless integration into community structures. By ruling out the hypothesis of treating educational structures and curricular contents as sites of contestation and contention, Bryant cannot in the end but submit to the functionalist fallacy of "*deeply inscribed routines and practices no longer seen as forms of control*" (*ibid.*, p. 143). She overstates the coherence of techniques of cultivation that evoke "a latent potential of the ethnic subject" (*ibid.*, p. 155). Techniques of learning and indoctrination, structures of socialisation, may break down, counteract one another, or overreach, creating spaces for sly civility, dissimulation and resistance, converting themselves to counter-hegemonic purposes. That is the reason why Bryant cannot account for discursive dislocations within Greek-Cypriot identity such as leftist irredentism in the 1950s, which evolved into pro- independence leftist republicanism in the 1960s. Rather, she attributes disestablishments or recompositions of identity to wholesale economic determinism: "as Greek Cyprus has grown economically powerful, Greek-Cypriots

have begun to imagine ... cultural independence" (*ibid.*, p. 7). Instead, I would suggest a different line of research that breaks with warehouse functionalism and recentres attention to equivocal and antinomic structures of feeling and affect, pointing to the indexicality of inconclusive meanings.

The hegemonic image of *enosis*, for instance, did not bear the same uniform signification for all classes. *Enosis was signified and resignified from contradictory class locations, from right and left, and therefore was singularised in antagonistic fashion from above and below.* Oral reports by witnesses of that tumultuous era of the 1950s, testify that the irredentist campaign of the left met at the time the malignant opposition and wrath of mainstream right-wing irredentism, to the point where identifiable left-wing lodges in the countryside were systematically assaulted, in order to strike down and seize the Greek flags from their masts. Even the left's rather *casuistic irredentism* could not be tolerated, because it seemed to be signifying in distorted fashion the radical potential of *plebeian republicanism*. The *hermeneutic indexicality* of a Greek flag masted on the balcony of a left-wing lodge in the 1950s was indexing much more than it was actually saying, and it was precisely this *inner republican horizon* and *secular subtext* that were the real stakes involved in the short-lived episode of the equivocal and unreliable irredentism of the left. Sociological and anthropological discourse on Greek-Cypriot irredentism is at last obligated to start elucidating existing and fundamental ethnomethodological distinctions between *referential* (i.e. primary, prompt and linear, semantic) associations and those which are *indexical*, contingent and random. The sociological import of this distinction must be understood in terms of the historical and ethnographic specificities of left-wing and right-wing irredentisms, along with hybrid combinations in between. We can no longer account for Greek-Cypriot irredentism as an invariable structure when there is ample ethnographic testimony that the social interaction of meaning in that context was *unstable, variant* and *risky*. The field so far is suffused with analyses which accommodate the *syntactic* component of irredentism. They do not, however, account for the *indexical context* and the way in which meaning was generated in precarious, ongoing social interactions. These views, rather tend to subsume meaning under syntactic components, ignoring intuitive, active and resistant redeployments of the *hegemonic syntax of irredentism* among the colonised. The reductionist grammar implicit in conventional approaches to irredentism, neglects reflexive processes which actively modified hegemonic irredentism in context-bound, indexical and semantic settings. We are no longer entitled to keep encoding *enosis* by using the syntax of a reified ideal. If irredentism was indeed an effective symbolic structure embedded in the Greek-Cypriot lifeworld, then we ought to shake off our syntactic assumptions and resist the comfort of pre-established meanings. We have formalised the syntax of irredentism too severely, allowing meaning to be inordinately divorced from context. The cognitive shifts engendered by the semantic

reflexivity of discrepant irredentisms were not ruled by an invariant syntax. *We have to rethink the invariant as contingent, if we actually want to make sense of the semantic and indexical displacements in the syntactic structure of domination. The challenge is to reconsider the syntactic density of power along with semantic idiosyncrasy.*

As it was argued above, Cypriot sociology and anthropology so far have been hesitant in identifying the parameters of *hermeneutic indexicality* and *moral complexity* pertaining to the clashing *irredentisms* that unfolded among the colonised. This task of doing the necessary justice to the fact that the public ethos favouring independence emerged gradually from the ranks of this *pragmatic* and I would say *reflexive irredentism*, is a labour that still drags on. Because this was indeed a borderline and precarious irredentism, which in the face of geopolitical adversity and the risk of partition shifted to seeking independence, maintaining only a nominal and trivialised attachment to the ungraspable ideal of enosis. This kind of cogitative and *prudent irredentism* eJ:Qerging precariously from a charismatic background, and despite its inherent performative contradictions, was constantly on the verge of converting to a pro-independence course of action. In fact it was Makarios himself, the virtuoso prophet of enosis who actually casted his charismatic prestige upon the baseborn idea of independence, thus ending its ignoble status especially after 1964 due to his consequential disapproval of the Acheson plan, which provided for *conditional enosis*, involving territorial compensations for Turkey in Cyprus. The very cogency and legitimacy of the disreputable idea of independence is to a great extent indebted to the Makarios leadership. Whatever traces of a percolating irredentism can still be detected in Makarios' public oratory after 1964, were only vestiges of a growingly hesitant and *reluctant irredentism* that was straining the concept of enosis to a breaking point, and was for this very reason eliciting even more verbose, overblown and immoderate irredentist opposition from the militant right-wing fringes (Constantinou, 2003, pp. 155-156).

Postcolonial Theory by Default

Programmatically Bryant places her work squarely within the problematic of postcolonial and subaltern theory, and stipulates "anthropology's mission as one of uncovering counter hegemonic and silenced voices". Moreover, she enlists Gayatri Spivak's notion of "strategic essentialism" as a deconstructive method of "examining the construction of relations of discursive dominance, and how these relations structure social life" (Bryant, 2004, p. 48). The theoretical aspiration of her postcolonial gesture, however, is to set aside and silence an important cognate of this discourse, namely the historical setting that prompts the coloniser against the colonised, deeming the axis of this relation familiar and sufficiently examined (*ibid.*, pp. 8-9). I take to task this assertion, reasoning that it leads to the normalisation of

postcolonial theory, rendering it a strange bedmate and improbable accomplice of colonial dominance.

Spivak, one of the celebrated and authorial figures of postcolonial theory to whom Bryant appeals in order to enfranchise her narrative, actually counsels that one of the standard ways of arguing is to appeal to reason, and one of the standard ways of making a rational argument is to appeal to evidence, *to point to things*. But it seems that at the end, the arguments produced *point to an absence* (Spivak, 1990, p. 20). I want to mark out these non-narrated absences which plague Bryant's anthropology, and which due to inattention, become thoughtless and politically unconscious.

By opting not to address the complicated edge of irredentist opposition to imperial rule, Bryant becomes discursively authorised to place anti-colonialism squarely into a matrix of power, prone to the compulsive victimisation of the other. My contention is that the form of colonial rule shaped the form of revolt against it. I suggest that "Greekness", for instance, evolved simultaneously as an engineered form of disciplinary control over the natives, as well as a form of revolt against it. Ethnicity was, is, and can never be about identity alone: it involves two contradictory moments, (suppressed by Bryant) encompassing social control and normalisation, but also implicating in latent metaphysical form, an unrealised and figurative potential for social emancipation. That is the reason why it makes sense to neither just embrace ethnicity uncritically (which is common among Greek-Cypriots), nor to dismiss it in a cavalier and disdainful fashion (which is what Bryant does in the case of Greek-Cypriot irredentism).

Bryant is so strikingly indisposed to consider the loathsome Greek-Cypriot irredentism in the above duological sense, that she expectedly fails to account for its resonant and charismatic appeal, which was eventuated by a decline of credibility in colonialism's civilising mission in the eyes of an increasingly critical subject population. Whatever social reforms were undertaken by the colonial administration, were vitiated by the aggravation of what was believed to be an officially masterminded and manipulated intercommunal conflict, engineered to keep the natives divided, in order to perpetuate foreign rule. Ranajit Guha (the founding editor of the *Subaltern Studies* movement to which Bryant is piously attached) suggested that the metropolitan state differed from its colonial apparatus insofar as the former was hegemonic in character, while its claimed dominance was founded on a power relation in which motivation, inducement, influence and exhortation were much more compelling determinants of bourgeois state rule than coercion. This alone, demonstrates that the state structure of colonialism in Cyprus exemplified a case of failed hegemony or what he calls "dominance without hegemony" (Guha, 1997). By not troubling oneself to consider the paradox that the

foremost liberal democracy of the Western world established in Cyprus, as elsewhere, an autocratic structure of unlimited rule, assures blindness to a hermeneutic detail of colonial experience: namely that circumstance whereby the withdrawal of legitimacy by the subject population was suffused by an uncanny irredentist pride, which stubbornly refused at that point to take Western superiority in culture and education for granted.

Postcolonial theory, and particularly those strands of occidental anthropological discourse that nominally claim it in jovial and acrobatic fashion, may not have much to teach us about "colonialism both as a political system and as a persistent intellectual influence in the postcolonial era" (Guha, 1997, p. 85), unless they focus on the frustrated attempts of colonial engineering to assimilate (by means of education) the civil society of the colonised into an administrative structure of hegemony.

In Cyprus, as in India, instruction in English was geared to induce members of the subject population to qualify for employment in the colonial administration, both as a measure of increasing middleclass acquiescence to colonial rule as well as a policy of establishing collaborative structures, so that in the condition of dominance the moment of persuasion and consent would outweigh that of coercion. Bryant drops out of sight the manifest and unmistakable intent of the colonial elite to designate norms of Western instrumental rationality and stabilise them with the authority of common sense, "*all the more persuasive and seductive, as this coincides with models of modernisation in the advanced capitalist West*" (Gauze Venn, 1999, p.46). What is elusively described by Bryant as "British administration", "government grants" etc., is inscribed in the scientific and disciplinary knowledges institutionalised in the apparatuses of education, the judiciary, health, commerce, production and communication, established and policed in a discursive space characteristic of Occidentalism, but remaining invisible and unrecognised (by cosmopolitan postcolonial discourse) as a drive of aspiring hegemony, appearing instead in the neutral colours of unquestioned instrumental rationality, functioning as common sense (*ibid.*, p.47).

What is bewildering, is that Bryant seems of have pursued a line of research which is at variance with the critical intuitions and insights of subaltern studies. For instance, Bryant anathematises the Greek-Cypriot cosmology as conservative and illiberal, imputing it to the excessive unanimity and consonancy by which it equated freedom with duty, instead of right (Bryant, 1998, p.65), and similarly considers the discouraging of children from buying English products as a moral demand appropriate to an undemocratic society that calls for obedience to a consensus (*ibid.*, p. 64). Contrary to this representation, Ranajit Guha foregrounds the dramaturgical effect of a garden variety, histrionic Anglicism as it was staged in

plays, whereby an educated debauchee, for instance, delivers a speech in which India is portrayed as a "vast prison" save his own clubhouse, "a hall of liberty" and a "palace of freedom". In this fraudulent mimicry of liberal Anglicism, "the prison" stood for Hindu conservatism *and not for colonial subjection*, Guha argues. "Liberty" and "freedom" were meant by this Anglophiliac showmanship "to militate only against values and relations internal to Hindu society, and not against those that inhered in the power structure of the raj". It demonstrates how concepts and signifiers that were once politically inflammable and were used as gunpowder for revolutions against despotism and tyranny, had their critical potential extinguished by colonialist education. *"Indeed, what most of the nineteenth-century beneficiaries of that education imbibed from it as a code of power, was unquestioning servility to the ruling power"*(Guha, 1997, pp. 168-169).

Now, it is precisely this docile and prostrate anthropology which seems to be at odds with the critical thrust of postcolonial theory. It is rather unoriginal and abject to abhor civil disobedience and the implied solidarity forged by the moral consensus of the subject population, headed as it were by charismatic leaders. Irredentist communitarianism did certainly suffer from deficits of mutual respect directed toward its own others, but what it did not fall short of was self-respect, and that is precisely what this improbable postcolonial theoretical servility to the discursive power of colonialism intends to crush. No semantic sleight, however, can be deployed to disqualify from moral discourse the strategic essentialism of the subject populations vis-a-vis their colonial masters, in order to dignify measures of imperial control.

Animating bicomunal education via intellectual exertion and the acquirement of practical skills, is precisely how the colonial regime wanted education to be thought by the colonised. The question that remains cynically unaddressed, is whether the ostensible bicomunal education nourished and patronised by the British, and so ostentatiously celebrated by Bryant, was simply a harmless code for a civic bicomunal alternative to a supposedly paroxysmic irredentism and intercommunal strife.

Well, there was more to bicomunal education than civic enlightenment, which is a major assignment for all liberal articles of faith. Civic enlightenment was ventured of course, and was patronised as a liberal postulate, but it was also operated to the purpose of evangelising and infixing the idea (to both, missionary converters, and beneficiaries of sponsored bicomunalism) to look upon it as a benign cultural management of intractable communalism, ignoring that education was related to colonial dominance as a hegemonic means of persuasion, as well as a fixture of its coercive apparatus. Bicomunal schooling of native youths was an important qualification for recruitment into the colonial administration and a passport

for crossing the poverty line. Training a caste of public officers recruited among the colonised was expected to set up a paragonic model of influence and infiltration of the civic fibre of the colonised, exemplifying the moral and intellectual improvement they ought to be aspiring to.

Guha is well placed where he is to get this through his head: "education, therefore, was designed as a servant's education, conforming undeviatingly to the master's gaze by annexing the past, in order to pre-empt its use by the subject people as a site on which to assert their own identity" (Guha, 1997, p. 171). Why did Bryant not hang upon this upright, local intelligence? Why not trouble oneself with English as a status-marker and source of prestige, bound to forge a hegemonic instrument of persuading the subject population about the beneficial consequences of its own subjection, of committing bicommunally the colonised to the conviction that colonialism is an inescapable, historically necessary and desirable progress?

Notes

1. Symptomatic of this intellectual crisis which may signal the euthanasia of critical reason are reports by students during the referenda over the Annan Plan, that they were subjected to cheap demagogic propaganda (for and against the proposed scheme) during classroom sessions.

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