

Global Thoughtlessness, the Social Contract and the Double Bodied Female Other in the Cypriot Imaginary

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RÉSUMÉ

Cet article explore la persistance d'une image-celle de l'autre au corps double- dans les esprits des Chypriotes. Les effets nuisibles d'une telle construction imaginaire sur les vies des travailleuses étrangères, aussi bien que ses racines politiques et ontologiques constituent les deux principaux aspects de la question abordés dans le présent article. En réduisant les personnes à un assortiment comprimé de parties corporelles a comme effet de les deshumaniser et par extension de justifier moralement leur exploitation. Les fondements de telles constructions imaginaires peuvent être trouvés politiquement dans les théories classiques du contrat social qui fournissent le fondement moral et politique pour le traitement de certains groupes de personnes comme des non-humaines. De plus, une approche ontologique à ces mêmes questions, indique une façon globale de penser, qui a comme but de maîtriser le monde dans lequel nous vivons en le transformant en une image; une manque générale d'égards, qui fournit les conditions ontologiques pour des imaginaires aussi monstrueux, qui, cependant porte en elle-même les germes de sa propre destruction.

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the persistence of an image - that of the double bodied other - in the minds of Cypriots. The deleterious effects of such an imaginative construction on the lives of foreign female workers, as well as its political and ontological roots constitute the two main areas of focus of this paper. Reducing persons to a compressed assortment of body parts has the effect of dehumanizing them and by extension morally justifying their exploitation. What grounds such imaginings politically can be found in the thinking of classic social contract theories that provide the moral and political foundation for the treatment of certain groups of people as non-human sub-persons. In addition, an ontological approach to these same questions, points to a global way of thinking, that aims to master the world in which we live by turning it into a picture; a global thoughtlessness, that provides the ontological conditions for such monstrous imaginings, yet one that bears within itself the seeds for its own collapse.

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The foreign female other in the Imaginary of post-colonial, post Anan-referendum, still politically suspended Cyprus of today appears as an amalgamation of random foreign elements, reminding one of a Dali painting, that take the shape of a Double-Bodied Female figure with three heads, different shapes of eyes, shades of skin, color and texture of hair, muscle tones and bone structures. Although this monstrous figure of the female other is a mental creation, it acquires corporeal substance ready to satisfy real and imagined needs. The first body in this figure, coming from the old Soviet block and Eastern Europe, “the body of the prostitute”, is imagined as lean with long legs, its facial features are fair, with eyes in the shades of blue and blond hair. This is a totally sexualized body, holding the power to seduce, please, destroy families, empty bank-accounts and satisfy men’s wildest sexual fantasies. The other, that of the house maid, comes in two versions: the first that of the woman from the Philippines is thought of as muscular, quick in its movements, hard working and is semi-sexualized. The second, that of women from Sri Lanka, is constructed as darker and bigger, with long black hair, dark sad eyes, slower in its movements, lazier, more comforting, and is seen as almost totally non-sexual. Both the body of the prostitute and the two headed body of the house servant have one thing in common, they are for sale at a reasonable price. Three for the price of one, a bargain of sorts one may argue.

This compressed assortment of foreignness, put together to serve the needs of consumers with a taste for the exotic “stand(s)” to appropriate Ellison, “noisy in its silence, harsh as a cry of terror in its quietness”.¹ These jarred-women-for-sale are the missing women from history, women of transition, the ignored other whose expressionless faces speak louder than any words would if anyone were ready to listen. Of what world do they speak? And what makes possible such monstrous imaginings are the two questions this paper attempts to explore.

Editors’ Note: The situation presented in this article is not unique to Cyprus. Sexual exploitation and trafficking of women is a common problem in other European countries like Germany, Belgium or Great Britain for example. According to Amnesty International even UN and NATO troops (Americans, British, French etc) in the region of Balkans, especially in Kosovo, are using the trafficked women for sex and some have been involved in trafficking itself. (BBC, 6 May 2004, Amnesty International, Press Release, 6 May 2004, Euro/Topics 18-02-2008).

The Monstrous World of Female Foreign Workers in Cyprus

The 2007 Cyprus Report on Human Rights Practices released by the US State Department² indicates that Cyprus is a destination point for women trafficked for sexual exploitation. Despite legal sanctions prohibiting trafficking in persons that have a specific focus on countering trafficking for sexual exploitation, trafficking women for sexual exploitation to the country still constitutes a major problem. In addition, allegations of police corruption related to trafficking continue to be reported. Although a plan of action to stop the trafficking of persons and the exploitation of children was adopted in 2005, the authorities seem to generally tolerate this practice.

Trafficking for prostitution to Cyprus involves almost exclusively Eastern European Women (from Belarus, Bulgaria, Moldova, Romania, Russia and Ukraine).³ Every six months more than 1000 foreign female workers come to Cyprus to work in cabarets (PP, 32). They arrive in Cyprus on entertainment visas since the law strictly prohibits prostitution related activities that are effected through the use of force (PP, 4). The legal requirement that employers apply for a visa on behalf of the employee prevents any of the details about her employer or the nature of her employment from reaching the employee before she arrives on the island (PP, 2).

Because of this, most women think they will be working as barmaids in nightclubs and bars on the island and only after arrival they discover what their work entails (PP, 2-3). Not only are they, in most cases, deceived about the nature of their employment, but even when they are not, and compensation is given to them for sexual transactions, they only receive a small fraction of the profits for their services (PP, 3). While not all women are forced into prostitution, most suffer sexual and physical violence in the hands of their employers (PP, 3). During their “free time”, their freedom of movement is for the most part limited as in a number of cases their passports are taken from them or they are being watched closely to prevent them from escaping or reporting abuse (PP, 3). More importantly, the nature of their work carries with it a stigma creating a negative image of these women in the minds of Cypriots making the quality of their lives on the island extremely hard to bear. For the sake of simplicity, Eastern European Women are all referred to as “Russian” while all South East Asian Women, whether from Sri Lanka or the Philippines, are abbreviated with “black.” It seems that both “the Russian prostitutes” and the “black housemaids” are seen by the Cypriot society as just that: “prostitutes” and “housemaids,” not people. Aided by such “naturally” taken for granted assumptions, Cypriots are enabled to first completely

dehumanize these women and then exploit them - taking advantage of a global liberal capitalist economic system that exploits the many to benefit the few in its demarcation of the world into “first” and “third” - by using them as cheap labor. Ironically it is the financial exploitation of these nameless others that constitutes one of the factors contributing to the strengthening of the Greek-Cypriot economy. That it is taken for granted that these women are something less than human shows itself more strongly through simple observations of their treatment in public. It would be a rare phenomenon to see a group of South East Asian, or eastern European women, sitting in any of the popular Cypriot cafés enjoying their tea or coffee after a hard day’s work, or having a meal at a restaurant by the sea on their day off. It would be just as odd to see any of the foreign workers chatting amicably with Cypriots enjoying each other’s company. If a South East Asian woman is seen with a Cypriot family, she is mostly there to mind the children or an old person, and even when she is just there “to enjoy” her meal, she sits by herself, with hardly anyone noticing or addressing her - unless they need something - *feeling and being treated like a servant*. The assumptions change, however, when an eastern European woman is observed at a restaurant or a café. She, contrary to the South East Asian woman, *feels, and is being treated like a prostitute*. To suggest that either “the prostitute” or “the housemaid” chooses to live this way would be, to put it mildly, a thoughtless, yet by no means accidental, “oversight”.

The worsening economic situation plaguing former Eastern block countries forces many women to look for work abroad. Cyprus’ booming economy, its strategic location and recent induction to the European Union make it an attractive employer for these women and the organized networks that promote them (PP, 1-2). Until the early 90’s most women working in Cabarets were from South East Asia mainly from the Philippines. The Government of the Philippines, however, following numerous complaints from women who found themselves forced into prostitution even though they were promised work as cabaret dancers, banned the issuing of entertainment visas for its women (PP, 3). South East Asian Women are now employed as house servants in Cyprus. Foreign female workers, employed as housemaids, come on four year contracts and face labor exploitation as they receive extremely low wages (82 cents per hour compared to four or five pounds per hour for Cypriot maids)⁴ and no legal provisions for overtime pay, or health and safety regulations in their work environment (CCR, 11). They are for the most part overworked as they not only mind the houses of their employers but also those of their employers’ relatives. Their duties

involve cleaning, caring for children, taking care of old people, cooking and gardening. Most do not dare complain as they fear deportation.

What this brief - and by no means exhaustive - factual portrait reveals is that the not so human treatment the foreign female working force in Cyprus receives is due to its perceived sub-person status that takes shape in the very real thought-image of the double bodied female other. A perception based on the racist/sexist/heterosexist/classist logic that can only exploit when it dehumanizes and it dehumanizes because of the taken for granted perception that these women are something less than human. Imagining women as a collection of body parts devoid of any resemblance to human beings dehumanizes these women and justifies their exploitation. The reductive logic that thinks of these women as “standing reserve”⁵ to use Heidegger, or “docile and useful bodies”⁶ to use Foucault, or to put it differently that justifies morally such monstrous imaginings, is what the next section traces. The intention here is neither to make an “objective”, empirically supported claim - although some data have been used - nor to suggest that the interpretive framework used here only applies to the Cypriot context. Rather the aim is to examine philosophically the taken-for-granted presuppositions of an enduring structure of thinking that justifies the inhuman treatment foreign female workers receive in Cyprus. What may be uniquely Cypriot is the specific shape the image in question takes as it arises out of a certain local context. Its particularity, however, is but a symptom of a durable logic that is global in its origin and manifests itself variably in different contexts. A logic that has its roots *politically* in the enlightenment principles that ground social contract theory and *ontologically* on a specific interpretation of being and truth characterizing the modern epoch that aims to master the world by turning it into picture.

Political Grounds: The Social Contract and its Ideal Visions of Equality, Personhood and Morality

In Political Philosophy various accounts have been offered that describe how people originally got together and through mutual consent agreed to certain common rules that would enable the establishment of a civil society of equals. The importance of these accounts for our purposes lies in the way they articulate the question of what it means to be human and what makes one a person. In Plato's *Republic*⁷ we see the first articulation of this common agreement between people that provides the foundation for later contract

accounts such as those of Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau and Kant. With Plato morality is established as central to the creation of a civil society demanding that the Social Contract as well as its signatories are moral. Glaucon in order to force Socrates to argue in favor of morality as an end in itself plays the devil's advocate and says that people act morally out of necessity and not because they want to. Morality is thus seen as a compromise between what is considered the best of all which is "doing injustice without paying the penalty" and the worst of all which is "to suffer it without being able to take revenge" (R, 359b). Glaucon presents human nature as fundamentally bad and the aim of the common agreement between people is, therefore, to curb their unruly nature but more importantly that of others. The story of Gyges and his magic ring that as he discovers can make him invisible further supports this claim. The argument is that if we could get away with evil acts we would commit them. It is the fear of being found out as well as the possibility of others doing wrong to us without us being able to retaliate that makes us willing to agree to a compromise with others. Glaucon's major assumptions about human nature come close to those of Hobbes in the *Leviathan*⁸. For Hobbes the natural equality among men makes their belief in their ability to attain their highest hopes very strong. Such a strong belief in themselves makes men enemies to one another as they assert themselves on each other in their self-righteous efforts to pursue and achieve their aims. In the absence of a sovereign with the "power to over-awe them all," (L, 99) men find themselves in a state of war where competition, diffidence and glory are the main causes of quarrel. In this time of war every man is enemy to every other man and life is characterized by a lack of arts and letters, the absence of a society and the continuous fear and danger of violent death. In such a state, Hobbes famously claims, the conditions of life are "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short" (L, 100). An agreement thereby becomes necessary that would enable people leave this state of nature and elevate themselves under the guidance of a strong sovereign—a king or an assembly, ruling arbitrarily and demanding obedience in return for protection—to the civil society. Hobbes' absolutism and violent take on human nature is tamed down by John Locke⁹ who speaks of a more peaceful human nature that permits people to act with more civility within the state of nature. For him, within the state of nature men are rational, equal to one another and they enjoy perfect freedom. The threat of war provides the reason for men to enter into civil society, established by consent in the commonwealth, where they are free under government. For Locke, authority can never be absolute.

Contrary to Hobbes, he envisions an assembly regularly reviewed through elections acting as an adjudicator of disputes. His version of the social contract is severely critical of a monarch's arbitrary rule and hierarchically structured societies. Locke's liberal ideals, however, do not seem to apply to all equally, he admits to some justified exclusions when he very clearly points out that some "men" are more equal than others in his section on property. As he says "God gave the world to men in common; but since he gave it to them for their benefit, and the greatest conveniences of life they were capable to draw from it, it cannot be supposed he meant it should always remain common and uncultivated. *He gave it to the use of the industrious and rational* (and labour was to be his title to it), not to the fancy or covetousness of the quarrelsome and contentious." (STG, V, 34). As Mills¹⁰ points out, Locke uses the case of America and specifically that of Indian idleness - which for him resulted in the destruction of land its turning into wild woods and uncultivated waste - to support his claim. What Locke thoughtlessly takes for granted when he imposes his European liberal criteria on to the American natives is that American Indians were neither as industrious nor as rational as the white Europeans that settled on their land, hence they could not leave the state of nature and elevate themselves to civil society. In addition, the land that they lived on all their lives was not really theirs as they had not earned the right to own it through reason and labor. Compared to the European settlers that proved themselves through their industriousness and superior rationality, they were something less than human, something below persons. The Indians, for Locke, were sub-persons.

As we have seen so far, inherent in these accounts is the requirement that *one is a person*. The fulfillment of such a requirement, permits one to enjoy the moral agreement that will not allow the strong to exert their power on the weak arbitrarily as in the case of Glaucon; or benefit from the protection of a powerful sovereign who would preserve the quality of life in society by not allowing it to revert back to a state of war in the case of Hobbes. With Locke, however, it becomes clear that not everyone meets the criteria of personhood. Some are left out from the original agreement. The Enlightenment principles and the benefits these promise "for all" are in essence restricted only to some, those who are persons, and *the decision as to who is or is not a person is decided the moment the original contract is signed by those who sign it*. In the signing phase, while the signatories with satisfaction imagine an ideal world of equals, they at the same time construct a world of unequals, an underworld, inhabited by disfigured sub-persons who are but

negative reflections of all the things the equal selves are not. Although the two worlds appear to be distinct, they are ironically linked by a negative dependency.

For Mills, the philosopher more responsible for the distinction between persons and sub-persons is Immanuel Kant¹¹. In Kant's moral theory one gets a clearer understanding of what is meant by "person," a category of vital importance to classic Social Contract accounts. Kant explains the meaning of the third formulation of the categorical imperative by saying that ¹².

For all rational beings come under the law that each of them must treat itself and all others never merely as means, but in every case at the same time as ends in themselves. Hence results a systematic union of rational beings by common objective laws, i. e. a kingdom which may be called a kingdom of ends, since what these laws have in view is just the relation of these beings to one another as ends and means. It is certainly only an ideal. A rational being belongs as a member to the kingdom of ends when, although giving universal laws in it, he is also himself subject to these laws. He belongs to it as sovereign when, while giving laws, he is subject to the will of any other. (K, 181, 182).

On the one hand *a person* is understood here as an abstract individual, who is autonomous, rational, an end in himself capable of abiding to as well as creating objectively valid and universally applicable moral laws. In addition, such a person earns the right of passage to the community of rational beings like him, the kingdom of ends, in which he co-exists with all others as their equal. Personhood and Equality informed by a universal moral code are, thus, the main presuppositions of the Social Contract (or to use Kant the kingdom of ends) which, he is quick to point out, is only an ideal. Kant's views, however noble they might sound, are not as egalitarian as they appear to be. Mills points out, that Kant is not only "the most important moral theorist of the modern period," but also "the father of the modern concept of race" (RC, 70). His views on moral character are racialized making skin color something more than a physical characteristic, something providing "evidence of an unchanging and unchangeable moral quality...full personhood for Kant is actually dependent on race" (RC, 71). Mills concludes his account of Kant's racialized thinking by saying that "...the embarrassing fact for the white West (which doubtless explains its concealment) is that their most important moral theorist of the past three hundred years is also the foundational theorist in the modern period of the division between *Herrenvolk* and *Untermenschen*, persons and sub-persons, upon which Nazi theory would later draw. Modern moral theory and modern racial theory have the same father" (RC, 72). Mills

strongly asserts that in light of these, the hotly debated discussions in academia concerning Martin Heidegger's and Paul De Man's complicity with the Nazis must be put into perspective. Heidegger and De Man for him were "minor leaguers", "bit players" (RC, 72). Without claiming that Kant would endorse genocide, he argues that the distinction in Kant's moral theory between persons and sub-persons has more serious implications as it provides the ontological and moral ground for distinctions that grant one the right to become a member of the society of equals *as it determines the criteria for gaining entry to personhood*. Is Kant simply a product of his time unintentionally reflecting certain mindless biases that were mere "exceptions" to his otherwise "ideal" schema? Or is his thinking symptomatic of a process that Heidegger calls "the complete Europeanization of the earth and of man"¹³ or global thoughtlessness?

The Contract's Shadows

To assume that despite the "occasional flaw" in the thinking of classic contract accounts, the early theorists "meant well," as opposed to seeing how their thinking constitutes the grounds for the inequities of the world in which we live would mean to accept the fiction of an ideal Social Contract. As Critics have pointed out, implied in the original agreement is that the category of *non-human sub-persons* will legitimately, and justifiably be left out of the contract. The contract is thus seen as both subjective and biased by definition. The "biases" are part of its thinking, and not exceptions to it. Behind its abstract façade, and despite its claims to objectivity and presuppositionlessness, the contract is shown to be very concrete, presupposing without giving it any thought, a world divided into superior and inferior races, genders, sexual orientations and classes. At its very core the contract is racial/sexual/heterosexual and defined by specific economic parameters. These invisible dimensions guiding its thinking are as central to it as its more visible ones-- equality, personhood and morality. If there is an agreement between signatories, it is that these unquestioned presuppositions should remain unquestioned. It is this implicit agreement that explains Mills' puzzlement at people's ability to consistently do the wrong thing while thinking that they are doing the right thing (RC, 94). As he argues,

The requirements of objective cognition, factual and moral, in a racial polity are in a sense more demanding in that officially sanctioned reality is divergent from actual reality. So here, it could be said, one has an agreement to misinterpret the world. One has to

learn to see the world wrongly, but with the assurance that this set of mistaken perceptions will be validated by white epistemic authority, whether religious or secular. Thus in effect, on matters related to race, the Racial Contract prescribes for its signatories an inverted epistemology, an epistemology of ignorance, a particular pattern of localized and global cognitive dysfunctions (which are psychologically and sociologically functional), producing the ironic outcome that whites will in general be unable to understand the world they themselves have made. Part of what it means to be constructed as "white"...is a cognitive model that precludes self-transparency and genuine understanding of social realities. To a significant extent then, white signatories will live in an inverted delusional world, a racial fantasyland...There will be white mythologies, invented orient, invented Africas, invented Americas, with a correspondingly fabricated population, countries that never were, inhabited by people who never were...but who attain virtual reality through their existence in traveler's tales, folk myth, popular and highbrow fiction, colonial reports, scholarly theory, Hollywood cinema, living in the white imagination and determinedly imposed on their alarmed real-life counterparts. (RC, 18-19).

Mills' critique becomes even more important when thought in conjunction with that of feminist critics of the social contract. What these critical perspectives reveal is that the ossification in thought of the main presuppositions of classic contract theories as natural - those of personhood, equality among its signatories, and an objective moral code that is universally applicable (except in the case of Hobbes) - has the effect of rendering us blind to the fact that the Social Contract describes exclusively *ideal* conditions that do not reflect the non-ideal reality under which most people in the world live. It is on the negation of such a reality that the contract in its ideal form is founded. More specifically, feminist critics of classic contractarianism have pointed out that the social contract in its ideal form is in fact underwritten by classist, sexist, heterosexist, and racist assumptions working together to constitute various intersecting Shadow Contracts that in turn inform the conditions of the "ideal" contract.

Monique Wittig¹⁴ speaks of the straight mind as a totalizing discourse that conceives and interprets reality in universalist - in this case heterosexual - terms. Heterosexist assumptions underlying the social contract privilege one group of people - those with a straight mind, the legitimate contractors of

the ideal contract-over and above another - those excluded because of their inability to think straight. Carole Pateman in *The Sexual Contract*¹⁵ speaks of the patriarchal bias of classic contract positions. Her analysis shows that although women were equal to men in the state of nature, they were later not part of the group that signed the original contract with the intention to form the political state. This absence resulted in their exclusion from the contract and its benefits--freedom and equality for all persons.

Marxist feminists¹⁶, in challenging the classic liberal assumption that our capacity for rationality is what makes us human, challenge at the same time the very foundations of contract theory positing instead that what makes us human is that we produce our means of subsistence. The liberal feminist demand for equality with men, on the grounds that women are also capable of rationality, is thus found by Marxist Feminists to be an inadequate solution to oppression in that it fails to satisfactorily grasp the structural power imbalances in capitalist societies. In addition, the liberal belief that capitalism is a system of voluntary exchange relations is seen as dangerously naive by Marxist Feminists who speak of capitalism as a system of power and economic relations which results in the division of the world between those who own the means of production and those who are exploited while producing them. What Marxist analyses effectively disclose is that the Social Contract having its basis on liberal principles is an economically restricted agreement. If liberal feminism gave the abstract subject of modernity a gender, Marxist feminism located her/him within a system of economic power relations. While fighting gender oppression from the liberal feminist perspective simply means demanding the right of entry to the masculine world - through the right to vote, access to the public sphere, and education, (an individual effort) - from a Marxist point of view, fighting oppression becomes a collective effort consisted in acquiring class consciousness and refusing to accept the lies imposed by the ruling class. The Marxist challenge thus runs deeper, questioning the very notion of an abstract, autonomous, rational, classless individual demanding a collective effort for a solution. Simply adopting liberal ideals for the feminist cause is not an adequate challenge to oppression as it allows the standards set by the privileged groups as well as the imbalance of power inherent in them to remain intact.

The final feminist critique levelled against liberal ideology comes from Black feminists,¹⁷ who speak from the perspective of "multiple oppressions." For them it is not enough to understand oppression from any one perspective alone but only in the way these (gender, sexual orientation, class and race)

intersect with one another. Any one of these locations can not, on its own, fully explain how the image of the double bodied female other is capable of existing in the minds of Cypriots in such a real way. It is the complexity of multiplication and not of simple addition that makes this figure monstrous. Its haunting monstrousness is the result of *gender (x) class (x) race (x) sexual orientation* and not of *gender (+) class (+) race (+) sexual orientation*. The Double Bodied Other, as the outcome of multiplying various dimensions of sub-existence, pointing to the intersectionality of difference, speaks of the multiply located sub-persons that did not make it to the world of equals. This is the figure of the ultimate other and the more she is compressed as pure negation the more the Self comes to the fore in all its glory.

It must be noted, at this point, that the Contract in its current configuration has become capable of silencing its critics by rewriting itself, thus adapting to the demands of the times. Its movement is insidious. It will magically transform *non-human sub-persons into human persons* when this becomes necessary - there is a hierarchy within the ranks of sub-persons which “moves” regularly, reshuffling the positionality of groups, promoting some to higher ranks, demoting others to lower positions, making some think that the movement is a real one and that there is hope for change and even success only if one were to try harder, so as to prove that he/she is as good as the *human persons*. The appearance of mobility makes some perceive these “changes” as steps to progress. These adjustments, however, do not change the inner exclusionary logic of the contract. The structure of oppression inherent in the liberal model remains untouched. Some will always continue to be excluded.

All these critical perspectives taken together show how these shadow contracts, all these “isms”, interlock and in effect disclose the real, concrete, non-ideal situations of those who are not perceived as legitimate members of the civil society of equals - those not allowed to become signatories to the Contract. The exclusion of sub-persons and the inhuman treatment they receive “makes sense” when thought from the perspective of the critiques levelled against classic contract theory. The taken-for-granted ideal notions of “personhood”, “equality” and “morality” as they depend on their shadows, are but projections of assumptions buried deep in the hearts and minds of the signatories of the ideal social contract. From this perspective, the logic of exclusion inherent in the agreement among “persons” takes shape; at its core it is, *at the same time*, an economically, sexually, heterosexually and racially restricted pact that can only appear in its ideal form by standing on and

pushing its negative aspect deeper into the shadows. The shadows are as important to it as its positive side. Only in the warped fantasyland of a masculine/capitalist/white/straight mind can there be room for imagining that it is morally permissible for “black housemaids” and “Russian prostitutes” to be placed on shelves for sale next to other commodities.

The Ontological Grounds of Global Thoughtlessness and the Haunting Silence of the Shadows

Although the specificity of the shadow image of the double bodied other may be local in its origin (as it arises out of the Cypriot context), the thinking that makes it possible is global. The ability to mentally manipulate and suppress body parts for use as one sees fit is symptomatic of a global thoughtlessness that Heidegger refers to as calculative, instrumentalist or technological thinking. Its aim is to mentally master, so as to concretely utilize, the world as picture. This is the thinking that characterizes our times and as Heidegger warns, it is spreading with such a rapid pace throughout the world that it becomes impossible to even consider the possibility of any other kind of thinking.¹⁸

In *The Age of The World Picture*¹⁹, Heidegger distinguishes between the different ways in which being reveals itself in the age of the Greeks, the Middle Ages, and the modern age. Each interpretation of being and truth reveals ones relationship to being at each epoch. He points out, that since the time of Descartes (in his *Meditations of First Philosophy*) the question of being has come to be understood as “the objectiveness of representing, and truth as the certainty of representing (AWP, 127). What characterizes the modern age is that subjectivism and individualism are introduced as the theocracy of the Middle Ages is replaced by the anthropocentrism of the modern age. What ultimately changes then is the very essence of man in that he becomes subject (AWP, 128). “Man” in this way, “becomes the relational center of that which is as such” due to “a change in the comprehension of everything that is” (AWP, 128). While in the middle ages, being was interpreted as *ens creatum*, and to be in being meant to belong within a specific rank of the order of what had been created, a rank there from the beginning, with the god creator being the highest cause (AWP, 130), in the age of the Greeks, Man is apprehended by being “the apprehending of whatever is belongs to being because it is demanded and determined by being....man is the one who is looked upon by that which is, by that which

opens itself. To be beheld by what is, to be included and maintained within its openness and in that way to be borne along by it, is to be driven about by its oppositions and marked by its discord, that is the essence of man in the great age of the Greeks” (AWP, 131)²⁰. *The long forgotten Greek apprehending of being*, changes into the modern *representing of being* when in the age of reason, Man, conceives and grasps the world as picture, “what is stands before us as a system...what is in its entirety is now taken in such a way that it first is in being and only is in being to the extent that it is set up by man, who represents and sets forth” (AWP, 129). What for Heidegger is decisive about this event is not its newness but rather the fact that “man makes depend upon himself the way in which he must take his stand in relation to whatever is as the objective. There begins that way of being human which mans the realm of human capability as a domain given over to measuring and executing, for the purpose of gaining mastery over that which is as a whole” (AWP, 132). One can see, then, that “that the world becomes picture is one and the same event with the event of man’s becoming *subjectum* in the midst of that which is” (AWP, 132). With the emergence of humanism, Man, becomes the measure out of which everything is evaluated and understood. Specific to the modern interpretation of being is the confrontation of worldviews, whereby man “brings into play his unlimited power for the calculating, planning and molding of all things” (AWP, 135). A sign of this event is that the *gigantic* is making its appearance, which is not simply the “blind mania for exaggerating and excelling” (AWP, 135). For Heidegger

The gigantic is that through which the quantitative becomes a special quality and thus a remarkable kind of greatness...but as soon as the gigantic (in planning and calculating and adjusting and making secure shifts over out of the quantitative) becomes a special quality, then what is gigantic and what can seemingly always be calculated completely, becomes precisely through this incalculable. This becoming incalculable remains the invisible shadow that is cast around all things everywhere when man has been transformed into subjectum and the world into picture...This shadow, in turn points to something which is denied to us of today to know (AWP, 135).²¹

But suppose, Heidegger asks,

that denial itself has to become the highest and most austere revealing of being? What then?...If denial is to be understood as the concealed

essence of being, it unveils itself first of all as nothing, but nothing ... is the keenest opponent of mere negating. Nothing is never nothing, it is just as little a something (an object), it is being itself, whose truth will be given over to man when he has overcome himself as subject, and that means when he no longer represents that which is as object (AWP, appendix 14).

The gigantic, then, is to be understood as a symptom of an age that understands “man” as the center of everything that is, as a “man” who represents to “himself” the world as picture, an object that can be measured and controlled. In a more important way this can be seen as an act of hubris, as a forgetting of the fact that as humans we are essentially finite and thereby limited, and inevitably as an attempt to overcome that very finitude. The appearance of the gigantic constitutes, however, the moment when modern man’s arrogance is exposed in that by calling this calculative plan of taking over the world “greatness,” a value that is incalculable, “he” at the same time creates the conditions for its destruction²². Thus, in the transformation of the gigantic (something quantifiable) into the incalculable value of greatness (the ultimate expression of hubris) the modern subject is forced to face “his” own limitations in that “he” discovers that “he” can not measure and control “greatness” in the same way one can measure and control inert objects. To avoid the anxiety evoked by such a realization, the modern subject attempts to suppress it by either ignoring it through relegating it into the realm of “accidents,” or by trying to make it into something through naming it. But it refuses to be named; it rather seems that the more it is pursued or ignored the more forcefully it flees from “him” in that it is turned into that silent ghost that haunts his otherwise “whole” picture of the world. The echoes of this silence are what can potentially undermine the global imperialist project of modern “man” and disclose to “him” a world - the underworld of shadows - that is totally other than the one “he” takes for granted, one however that is “his” own. The haunting silence emanating from the disturbing image of the double bodied other, points to such a world - a world that remains an alarming mystery without a solution for the modern subject as it can not be packaged neatly within a frame.

NOTES

1. Ellison Ralph, *Invisible Man*, New York: Vintage International, p. 440.
2. US Department of State, *Cyprus, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices released by the bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor*, March 6, 2007 8-9, henceforth *CCR*.
3. The Protection Project, "The Cabaret Artistes of Cyprus," Johns Hopkins University, Washington, DC, 2005, henceforth *PP*.
4. Markides Constantine, "82 cents an hour: the cost of a foreign maid", *Cyprus Mail*, 2007.
5. Heidegger Martin, "The Question Concerning Technology" in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt, New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1977, 3-35. With "standing reserve" Heidegger identifies the specific way in which being reveals itself in its truth in the age of modern technology as orderable and substitutable. As he says "Everywhere everything is ordered to stand by, to be immediately at hand, indeed to stand there just so that it may be on call for a further ordering. Whatever is ordered about in this way has its own standing. We call it the standing-reserve [*Bestand*]" (17).
6. For Foucault, "docile and useful bodies" are the effects of a power that no longer functions through repression but through production so as to adapt to the demands of liberal capitalist democracies that exert their power through the disciplining of bodies rather than punishment. What Foucault's analysis ultimately reveals is that power or rather its technologies are adaptable to new and ever changing conditions. What has essentially changed since the time of the Enlightenment is not that power no longer exists but rather that its center is now rendered invisible as a result of its adaptable nature. The formidable power of death of the old regime with the monarch being its visible center becomes now the seemingly center-less but still regulatory power over life of the Enlightenment era. The Dinosaur has mutated into the Lernaia Hydra - the many headed monster. With this shift in focus, we are forced to move away from an understanding of power that is thought of in purely negative terms, as Foucault says: "We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it 'excludes', it 'represses', it 'censors', it 'abstracts', it 'marks', it 'conceals'. In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production." (149). In Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage Books, 1977. Also see Spanos, V. William in *America's Shadow: An Anatomy of Empire*, 51. Of special interest has been Spanos' insistence that the center of power did not simply disappear in the 17th century but rather that it has been rendered invisible adapting in this way to the new demands of power in the age of reason.

7. Grube G. M. A, (trans), *Plato Republic*, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc, 1992, book II, henceforth *R*.
8. Hobbes Thomas, *Leviathan or the Matter, Forme and Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiastical and Civil*, New York, Touchstone, 1997, henceforth *L*.
9. Locke John, in *The Second Treatise of Government and a Letter Concerning Toleration*, Mineola, New York, Dover-Thrift-Editions, 2002, henceforth *STG*.
10. Mills Charles W., *The Racial Contract*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997, henceforth *RC*.
11. See Mills Charles W., "Kant's Untermenschen" in Andrew Valls (ed.) *Race and racism in Modern Philosophy*, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 2005, 169-193. In this essay Mills builds on his earlier work *The Racial Contract*, and discusses specifically Kant's racial views and their implications.
12. Kant Immanuel, from "Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals", in Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason and Other Works on the Theory of Ethics*, 6th edn, trans. Thomas Kingsmill Abbott, London: Longmans 1909, 9-22 and 29-59. Excerpted in Sterba James P., (ed.) *Ethics: The Big Questions*, Massachusetts, Blackwell, 1998, 171-185, henceforth *K*.
13. Heidegger Martin, "A Dialogue on Language" in *On the Way to Language*, trans. Peter B. Hertz, San Francisco, 1982, 1-54. henceforth, *DL*.
14. Wittig Monique, *The Straight Mind and Other Essays*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1992, 21-45.
15. Pateman Carole, *The Sexual Contract*, Polity Press, 1988.
16. For a more detailed discussion of Marxist Feminist critiques of the major assumptions of Liberal Feminist Theory see Josephine Donovan, *Feminist Theory: The Intellectual Traditions of American Feminism*, New York: Continuum, 1994; Alison M. Jaggar, *Feminist Politics and Human Nature*, New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield, 1988; Rosemarie Tong, *Feminist Thought, A Comprehensive Introduction*, Boulder and San Francisco, Westview Press, 1989.
17. Bell Hooks, *Feminist Theory from margin to center*, Boston: South End Press, 1984; Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought, Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment*, New York, Routledge, 2000.
18. As Heidegger points out when he discusses the oblivion of being--in Heidegger, Martin. "Memorial Address". In *Discourse on Thinking, A Translation of Gelassenheit*, trans. John M. Anderson and E. Hans Freund. New York, Harper Torchbooks, 1966, 43-57 "...the approaching tide of the technological revolution in the atomic age could so captivate, bewitch, dazzle and beguile man that calculative thinking may someday come to be accepted and practiced as the only way of thinking...Then there might go hand in hand with the greatest ingenuity in calculative planning and inventing indifference toward meditative

thinking, total thoughtlessness. And then? Then man would have denied and thrown away his own special nature-that he is a meditative being. Therefore, the issue is the saving of man's essential nature. Therefore the issue is keeping meditative thinking alive (55-56).

19. Heidegger, Martin, "The Age of the World Picture", in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans., William Lovitt, 115-154. New York, Harper Torchbooks, 1977, henceforth, *AWp*.
20. For Heidegger, the fact that Greek man *is* as the one who apprehends being, constitutes the reason why the world in the age of the Greeks cannot become a picture (*AWP*, 131). He does point out, however, that with Plato and his definition of *eidōs* as the beingness of whatever is, the path is opened up for "the world's having to become a picture" (*AWP*, 131). In other words, beginning with Plato, we see the pre-conditions for the later modern interpretation of being and truth that manifests itself as the world having become a picture. Heidegger also speaks of this in "Plato's Doctrine of Truth" in *PathMarks*, ed., William McNeil. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, 155-182. As he says locating with Plato the origin of the change in the understanding of being and its truth, "Truth is no longer, as it was *qua* unhiddenness, the fundamental trait of being itself. Instead, as a consequence of getting yoked under the idea, truth has become correctness, and henceforth it will be a characteristic of the knowing of beings. Ever since, there has been a striving for 'truth' in the sense of the correctness of the gaze and the correctness of its direction. Ever since, what matters in all our fundamental orientations toward beings is the achieving of a correct view of ideas" (179).
21. Heidegger points out that the incalculable as shadow is experienced as that which, withdrawn from representation, is nevertheless manifest in whatever is, pointing to being, which remains concealed (Appendix 13).
22. Think, for example, of the way in which empires call themselves "great". The great Roman Empire, or America the "greatest nation on the planet", and how in these proclamations, a quantitative term is magically transformed into a quality. What is ironic, however, is that in that very transformation, something monstrous is created that exceeds its original calculated and controllable determination.