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Lise Cyrenne

AUTEUR DE LA THÈSE / AUTHOR OF THESIS

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FACULTÉ, ÉCOLE, DÉPARTEMENT / FACULTY, SCHOOL, DEPARTMENT

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TITRE DE LA THÈSE / TITLE OF THESIS

Kenneth Bush

DIRECTEUR (DIRECTRICE) DE LA THÈSE / THESIS SUPERVISOR

CO-DIRECTEUR (CO-DIRECTRICE) DE LA THÈSE / THESIS CO-SUPERVISOR

EXAMINATEURS (EXAMINATRICES) DE LA THÈSE / THESIS EXAMINERS

Carolyn Sharp

John van den Hengel

Gary W. Slater

Le Doyen de la Faculté des études supérieures et postdoctorales / Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

The Children of Colonization:
Privilege and Justice
in Conflict

Lise Cyrenne

Thesis submitted to the
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the MA in Conflict Studies

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"Finally she speaks...
'I don't know if the bird you are holding
is dead or alive, but what I do know
is that it is in (y)our hands.
It is in (y)our hands."¹

¹ Morrison, T., *The Nobel Lecture in Literature, 1993*, London, Chatto & Windus, ©1993, p.11. Brackets are my addition.

Thesis Abstract

The thesis is an in-depth exploration of the role privilege plays in subverting social justice, despite 'best intentions', within day-to-day life and within conflict studies discourse and practice. The thesis explores the constituting dynamics within privilege, how these dynamics become 'socially acceptable notions of common sense in everyday life', and how such common sense undermines social justice at every turn, despite best intention. A central component explored is the exploitation of the desire 'to be'. The exploitation of the desire to be, combined with enticement toward anticipated or real privilege, is central in driving consent to even the most subtle forms of everyday coercion from 'ordinary' hierarchy to acceptance of and participation in the violence of totalitarian regimes. The author traces this dynamic across a wide range of conflicts and contexts. The thesis challenges those in conflict studies and peace practice to rigorous self-critical reflection in action in context.

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Introduction

Conflict Studies: Social Justice or Tragic Reconciliation?

Privilege, as will be demonstrated in my thesis, is a difficult reality to delineate. A central part of privilege is its invisibility. It functions largely through effect. Moreover privilege is a means of keeping systemic relations of dominance in place, yet appears as and works through individual people. Privilege is central to assuming any degree of power in current strategic relations of force², yet this 'assumption' of power largely takes the guise of the individual assuming it. This is in keeping with its central role within operations of power, where, as Judith Butler demonstrates, power must be assumed by people, both individually and collectively, for power to function. Yet as Butler's theory shows, the assumption of power by individuals does not make those individuals the origin of power. I will take up this dilemma central to my thesis.

The means by which privilege functions have not been theorized very extensively within the social sciences to date. Delineating this – the means by which privilege functions, what it 'looks' like in both its 'invisibility' and in effect – is the central concern of this thesis. Since the theorizing of privilege is not extensive in the traditional social sciences, I turn to scholarship from feminists, marginal groups, and critical theory to help delineate how privilege functions.

Privilege is visible largely in its effects. Although privilege is intensely contextual, it knows no boundaries. It is observable in day-to-day life, largely through the pervasiveness and operations of hierarchy (whose efficacy is rooted in coercion) in the more economically privileged countries, where operations of power

² The term – strategic relations of force – is a key term throughout my thesis. It is a term taken from Foucault's analysis of power, where power is "understood as a strategic relation of force that permeates life and is productive of new forms of desire, objects, relations and discourses" (Mahmood, 17). See Chapter 2 for an in-depth consideration of power as strategic relation of force.

are effected for the most part, not through overt coercion but through the Gramscian notion of hegemony.³

Privilege's effects are also observable in current places of work, and are posited here as being the means through which a consistent exploitation of the desire 'to be'⁴ recruits 'ordinary' people's participation in systems of injustice. This face of privilege is largely responsible for the complete cleavage in perceiving suffering as injustice (Dejours, 1998). Where privilege is at work, through the exploitation of the desire to be, suffering is perceived largely as individual fate or destiny. Such a (constructed?) perception relieves the privileged from both a sense of responsibility, and hence a sense of needing to act against suffering.

Privilege, as we will see through Primo Levi's writing, is central to the functioning of the 'gray zone' in operations of power, both within modern work places and under totalitarian regimes.

The theories of Judith Butler, Christoph Dejours and Primo Levi shed light on the means by which privilege functions, and in tracing its effects in the thick details. Understanding these theories is central to my thesis.

This thesis is being written within the context of the emerging academic discipline of conflict studies. A central assumption I am making in this exploration is that conflict studies, as a discipline, must (and, for the most part, intends to) contribute to social justice in both theory and practice. I am well aware that this is not a fully outspoken commitment of this emerging discipline, yet one I challenge the field to make more explicit.

³ See Chapter 1 for a clarification of the Gramscian notion of hegemony.

⁴ The 'desire to be' is another key term in this thesis, taken from Judith Butler's theory of the inextricable relation between power and psyche; the desire to be refers to the core human drive, need, *to exist*. See Chapter 2.

Conflict studies, without a conscious, explicit commitment to social justice, risks becoming a means of perpetrating a 'tragic reconciliation' with systems of (and hence people's participation in) profound injustice.

A défaut de pouvoir être versée au bénéfice de l'*action*, l'analyse que nous allons déployer pourra au moins servir à la *compréhension*, sans pouvoir écarter le risque – mais ce n'est qu'un risque – d'une réconciliation tragique : « comprendre, affirme en substance Hannah Arendt, est une activité sans fin par laquelle nous nous ajustons au réel, nous réconcilions avec lui et nous efforçons d'être en accord ou en harmonie avec le monde » (Revault d'Allonnes, 194).⁵

I see conflict studies as especially vulnerable to this risk for several reasons. First conflict studies is an academic discipline emerging largely in the economically (over)developed countries that have benefited most from historical and present systems of pervasive injustice and extreme violence over centuries.

Secondly, within the (over)developed countries, it is largely the most privileged and dominant group driving its theory and practice: white, well-educated, mostly heterosexual men.⁶

Thirdly, we need to face the fact that such a tragic reconciliation with systems of injustice and our role in such a reconciliation benefits and sustains both the most privileged systems and individuals: namely ourselves.⁷

Lastly and above all, the very content of conflict studies is intensely vulnerable to being the means of such a tragic reconciliation, primarily because a large portion of conflict studies theory and practice openly posits reconciliation itself, most often with *no* reference to social justice, as its primary goal. At best one must intentionally go in search of if, where, and how social justice is addressed at all in most literature. It is rarely considered a central core reference (Baruch Bush & Folger, Bohm, Swartley, Schellenberg, Fisher & Ury, Keating & Knight).

⁵ Dejours, C., *Souffrance en France: La banalisation de l'injustice sociale*, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1998, p. 22

⁶ A quick overview of bibliographies for five conflict studies courses (the first 5 binders on my shelf) reveal a total of 212 authors identifiable by full name: 168, or a full 79.4% are identifiably male. Race and sexual orientation are not available information on these authors.

⁷ "...the costs of bringing one American or Western European conflict resolution professional for a two-week training could fund a local office for a year" (Lederach et.al., 2002, 175)

The risk of conflict studies becoming the means of such a tragic reconciliation is high. Equally high is the risk of conflict studies and its adherents becoming (consequently) the perpetrators of such systems of profound injustice, that is, the 'benevolent face' of injustice. This is not just an academic consideration as Saba Mahmood posits below.

...It was the burka-clad body of the Afghan woman – and *not* the destruction wrought by twenty years of war funded by the United States through one of the largest covert operations in American history – that served as the primary referent in the Feminist Majority's vast mobilization against the Taliban regime (and later (in support of) the Bush administration's war). While the denial of education to Afghan women and the restrictions imposed on their movements were often noted, it was this visual image of the burka more than anything else that condensed and organized knowledge about Afghanistan and its women, as if this alone could provide an adequate understanding of their suffering. ...Perhaps we need to entertain the possibility that had there been some analytical complexity added to the picture that organizations such as the Feminist Majority presented of Afghan women's situation under Taliban rule, had the need for historical reflection not been hijacked by the need for immediate political action, then feminism might have been less recruitable to this ill-conceived project.⁸

The possibility of recruiting feminism, which from the beginning posits itself as a struggle for social justice becomes clear in Mahmood's observation. Conflict studies, because of the reasons mentioned above, I posit, is even more vulnerable than feminism to such recruitment.

Good intentions are not enough. We in conflict studies are the 'successful' children of 'successful' (albeit extremely violent) historical colonization, which continues well hidden from, yet perpetrated by the privileged (as in Canada) even today. What do the privileged 'children' of the perpetrators and sustainers of systems rooted in extreme violence have to contribute to social justice, and how do we posit doing so through the discipline of conflict studies? How does privilege function in this context? Where is it traceable in the thick details of theory and practice? How does our privilege subvert our reach toward social justice? These are the key questions haunting and driving this thesis.

The structure of my thesis is as follows.

⁸ Mahmood, S., *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*, Princeton and Oxford, Princeton University Press, ©2005, p. 197

Chapter One introduces, in general terms, the theory driving conflict studies at present, largely dominated by the disciplines of political science through international relations, and the theory and practice of alternative dispute resolution rooted in psychology and law. Then, the theory and concepts of privilege and social justice are introduced and explored. These are followed by overtly stating my perspectives and assumptions. I close Chapter One with a clear statement of my hypothesis.

Chapter Two is an in-depth exploration of the three thinkers that most influence this thesis: Judith Butler, Christoph Dejours, and Primo Levi. The larger portion of this chapter is a detailed exposition of Judith Butler's theory focused on the 'exploitation of the desire to be'. Her theory is in-depth and very complex. Necessarily then I give her words a central place in this chapter. It is important that her theory be understood as she delineates it and not through my interpretation. The relevance of her theory and the ways to which I put her theory to work in the context of conflict studies and practice becomes clear in Chapter Three.

Christoph Dejours explores modern work places, and how the dynamics within these cleave suffering from injustice. He explores the dynamics at work that recruit people to full participation in the perpetration of injustice, in the name of day-to-day life. His research provides a window on the 'ordinary' world of work, and at the same time, a practical context in which Butler's theory of 'the exploitation of the desire to be' can be seen in day-to-day practice.

Lastly, I consider Primo Levi's writing on the 'gray zone' in concentration camps. Levi posits a working of privilege that I see as the central constituting dynamic of gray zones within both 'ordinary' day-to-day life and under totalitarian regimes. As will be demonstrated, privilege sought through a 'bargain with the devil' for purposes of survival, and privilege 'bestowed' as a result of accident of birth are not substantially different in effect. I take up this parallel extensively to demonstrate

that no privilege is 'innocent' – that all privilege must be questioned rigorously both its in origin and in its continuing use. This is especially relevant to the field of conflict studies and peace practice at present. The exploration of Levi's work closes Chapter Two.

Chapter Three is where I 'read' the function of privilege through conflict (studies) discourse and practice. Reading privilege in this context requires moving continually from the macro level to the micro world of individual agency in word, action and omission. It requires mining these micro perspectives in detail for silences, turns, inoculations and dissimulations that 'just happen' to sustain privilege at the cost of enacting justice – repeatedly across conflicts and contexts.

For those of us living relatively comfortable lives, the 'reading' of privilege, is like reading fairy tales: the reading itself risks activating the 'poison in the apple' – a numbing 'so what...' hovers at the edge.⁹ To make a 'case', I must demonstrate the 'turns' that sustain privilege across conflicts and contexts. The act of repetition to demonstrate the breadth and depth of the phenomena is what, at the same time, renders it so banal, so common place, so 'so what'. This 'so what...', by turn, sustains privilege's invisibility and its seeming common-sense 'irrelevance'. This exploration is a plunge into this risk and inherent contradiction.

Chapter Four is an exploration of how 'being' the children of colonization sabotages and pollutes our imaginations in conflict discourse and practice. I posit that the colonial imagination is rooted primarily in the fairy tale (and Hollywood) structures of singular sudden heroic moments of 'redemption' in answer to suffering. I posit that these dynamics conceal both the operations of power we exist within,

⁹ Mary Daly designates the reading of fairy tales itself as the 'poison in the apple'. (I could not trace the specific reference to this point.) Daly says that women reading fairy tales are 'numbed' by the continual repetition of the prince as the answer to women's life challenges and dilemmas. Daly asserts that the reading of fairy tales is itself the poison in the apple that puts women (Snow White?) into the passive mode (causes 'sleep' for years on end).

and how we re-inscribe these same operations of power in conflict theory and practice.

Based on documented experience of effective resistance, I posit the colonial imagination, in discourse and practice at this point, lacks the core resources needed for effective resistance to exploitative strategic relations of force: community in context.

I propose four 'critical moments' in conflict discourse and practice, and in 'ordinary' life where a potential for subverting privilege may be possible. I identify these moments as potential resources in learning critical colonial privilege disobedience, potentially opening a wider space for collective enactment of justice, going forward in conflict (studies) discourse and practice.

A short conclusion closes the thesis.

Central to my thesis in this context is content often considered outside the bounds of traditional academic theory: location, position and personal experience.

Privilege is not a 'detached', 'objective' phenomenon: it is granted and operates on intensely personal levels, sustaining (and some would posit potentially subverting) operations of power. Additionally, the anthropology of everyday life is central to the parameters within which I am carrying out this exploration: again, it can not help but be so given that people are central to sustaining and perpetrating privilege in operations of power, in their day-to-day interactions. Hence, at moments throughout the exploration, I contribute and reflect on personal experience, within the theoretical parameters of the exploration.

...even though experience is considered central to knowledge, 'there is more to knowing than studying experience' (Campbell, personal communication, November 1996). Unlike some interpretive methodologies, the intent is to understand how everyday experience is inextricably bound to relations of dominance and subordination (Smith, G. 1995) rather than to interpret experience in a way that elevates subjectivity or illuminates personal motivations.¹⁰

¹⁰ Miller, R., "Wife Rena Teary", in Brown, L., & Strega, S., (eds.) *Research as Resistance: Critical, Indigenous, & Anti-Oppressive Approaches*, Toronto, Canadian Scholars' Press, ©2005, p. 182

It will be precisely in this vein that I use experience and reflections on experience throughout this thesis.

Theorizing privilege and exploring the means by which it functions challenges almost everything we, with some modicum of privilege, have come to understand, practice and respect as 'decorum'. It means delving into what ought not be seen, exposed, or brought to light. Decorum is about concealing the little miseries of day-to-day life, and more importantly, insulating the privileged from the substantial suffering around them.

I intend to bring the suffering back into the science, or more accurately in Bruno Tricoire's words, 'faire entrer la misère dans la science' (27). 'La misère', in the French dialect I grew up with, can be translated as misery, suffering and equally, what (or who) is troublesome, vexing and difficult. To theorize the means through which privilege functions is to betray the decorum required of privilege, its constituting invisibility.

Some of the day-to-day examples I will use are not, by any means, grotesquely violent or overtly repulsive (to or for the privileged). They, by and large, might simply be considered things better left alone, not focused on, ignored in the name of basic decorum especially in an academic thesis. It is important that the reader not be caught unaware, in this, my intentional betrayal.

Identifying and positioning one's self within one's research is a central means of countering the myths (themselves serving particular operations of power) of neutrality and objectivity.

It is our opinion that one of the most fundamental principles of Aboriginal research methodology is the necessity for the researcher to locate himself or herself. Identifying, at the outset, the location from which the voice of the researcher emanates is an Aboriginal way of ensuring that those who study, write, and participate in knowledge creation are accountable for their own positionality. We are of the opinion that neutrality

and objectivity do not exist in research, since all research is conducted and observed through human epistemological lenses.¹¹

Although I am not Aboriginal, but French Canadian, who nevertheless has experienced forced assimilation into the English language, I adhere to this perspective and practice it throughout this exploration.

I want to use an English that is neither specialized nor located primarily in academic discourse. Analysing how privilege functions is not simple, nor do I stay away from engaging very complex theory and analysis. However, apart from letting others speak in their own complex language (Butler above all), I want to keep the language as ordinary and as broadly accessible as possible.

Carol Cohn, in her analysis of the use of language speaks directly to both my concerns and my considerations in this choice.

Learning to speak the language of defense analysts is not a conscious, cold-blooded decision to ignore the effects of nuclear weapons on real live humans...but by the time you are through (learning), the content of what you can talk about is monumentally different, as is the perspective from which you speak...

I could adopt the language and gain a wealth of new concepts and reasoning strategies – but at the same time as the language gave me access to things I had been unable to speak about before, it radically excluded others. ... This language does not allow certain questions to be asked or certain values to be expressed... I had not only learned to speak a language: I had started to think in it. Its questions became my questions...What I was actually talking about – the mass incineration caused by nuclear attack – was no longer in my head.

If we refuse to learn the language, we are virtually guaranteed that our voices will remain outside the 'politically relevant' spectrum of opinion. Yet, if we do learn and speak it, we not only severely limit what we can say but we also invite the transformation, the militarization, of our own thinking...¹²

The use of a particular vocabulary is intimately related to the concept of privilege. Language is central to both delimiting and to entering 'secret kingdoms'.

Part of the appeal was the thrill of being able to manipulate an arcane language, the power of entering the secret kingdom, being someone in the know. It is a glow that is a significant part of learning about nuclear weaponry. Few know, and those who do are powerful. You can rub elbows with them, perhaps even be one yourself.

¹¹ Absolon, K. & Willet, C., "Putting Ourselves Forward: Location in Aboriginal Research", in Brown & Strega, p. 97

¹² Cohn, C., "Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals", in Scheper-Hughes, N. & Bourgois, P. (eds.), *Violence in War and Peace: An Anthology*, Victoria, Australia, Blackwell Publishing, ©2004, p. 358, 359, 360

That feeling, of course, does not come solely from the language. The whole set-up ... communicated the allures of power and the benefits of white male privileges...¹³

The field of conflict studies is perhaps not the politically powerful kingdom of defence intellectuals. However, in its quest for academic legitimacy, it is developing a vocabulary and culture that risk cultivating allusions to a certain 'priesthood' of specialists. I wish to counter this throughout this exploration, as much as possible, by staying with my own 'ordinary' vocabulary.

¹³ Cohn, in Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, p. 357

Chapter 1 - Conflict Studies, Privilege and Justice

Introduction

Conflict studies is an emerging interdisciplinary field in the northern academic world, and not yet its own defined discipline. Such an emerging field offers many possibilities for research. This thesis is an inquiry into how privilege intervenes in conflict studies' reach toward social justice.

Privilege has been theorized largely in the context of race, class, feminist, and gender studies. The analysis of privilege, per se, has not yet entered conflict studies to any significant degree. Social justice, on the other hand, seems to have permeated some oral discourse in conflict studies, and although some writing on social justice is present, it lacks in-depth critical engagement with the concept specifically in the context of conflict. This thesis is an in-depth exploration of how privilege functions, and becomes the central means of subverting a reach for social justice especially within conflict (studies) discourse, theory and practice.

In the discourse of conflict studies, northern actors, be these agencies, academia or individuals, have largely dominated the development of theory that is at the base of much work done, often in less privileged contexts, most often in low-income, violence-prone southern contexts. Yet the very conflict inherent in having a very privileged group determining and setting the theoretical and practical delineations for much less privileged realities has not (yet) become a central part of the discussion. It is the beginning of such a discussion that I want to contribute to by writing this thesis.

Writing a thesis in an emerging field of study is a significant challenge. This challenge grows with the place conflict holds in human history and experience: the large historical conflicts of religion and war throughout the world; the most challenging and oft declared unintelligible phenomena of genocide, holocausts and

atrocities committed around the world; and the most 'mundane' of human experiences, of people in interaction with one another on a daily basis.

Secondly, the line between theory and action in relation to conflict studies is invariably thin and highly charged. Can and do theory and action in conflict studies ever part ways? Ought they part ways? Where? Why? Because conflict is a phenomenon all people have experienced to greater or lesser degrees, both the separation and the non-separation of theory and practice can be thoroughly and fully argued for and argued away. This thin and highly charged line between theory and action, demonstrated in Mahmood's observation of the Feminist Majority's recruitment to supporting the Americans going to war in Afghanistan is, in the least, a line that must be recognized and walked consciously in conflict studies.

Thirdly, because conflict studies is not (yet) fully its 'own field' in academic reality, a declared 'authoritative' body of literature – a 'canon' has not (yet) been set. This is fortunate because the literature of reference to date is intensely selective – it is largely the literature of analytical theory and the literature of the practitioner's experience. Often the voice of those most central to the conflicts are 'simply' absent. For the field, this has profound ramifications, as I demonstrate below.

The Pivot of Privilege

Virginia Woolf might have said that on or about March 5, 1997, world morality – not to say, human nature – changed. The reason was unexpected: In response to accusations of profiting from Jewish suffering during World War II, Switzerland announced its intention to sell substantial amounts of its gold to create a humanitarian fund of five billion dollars. The fund is to be dispensed to Holocaust victims who lost their money in Swiss banks and, further, to amend historical injustice worldwide. The surprise is not only that Switzerland rattled the financial markets and caused a fall in the price of gold, or even that Swiss bankers appeared to deviate from their image of stability, secrecy, and respectability, but that moral issues have become so powerful in the international arena they seem to turn even tailored bankers into compassionate radicals.¹⁴

Barkan's opening claim - that one country's move to assist in restituting historical injustice can rattle the financial markets, appear to turn tailored bankers

¹⁴ Barkan E., *The Guilt of Nations: Restitution and Negotiating Historical Injustices*, Baltimore and London, The John Hopkins University Press, ©2000, p. xv

into compassionate radicals and change world morality in one day - is very seductive. One must, however, follow the story to its conclusion.

The idea of an humanitarian fund, using the revaluing and sale of some gold reserves, was defeated in Swiss Parliament and by popular vote. The gold was indeed re-valued, some was put on the market, and the money resulting was instead distributed, within Switzerland, with two-thirds going to the cantons, and one-third to the federal level (Maissen, 312, 313). Barkan unfortunately did not take into account the workings of privilege in the reach toward justice, present throughout history.

"We used to treat history as an 'objective' knowledge of past events that were largely immune from reinterpretation; history was the past, and we could do little about it. In the more distant past, history was differently controversial, a largely factual (and relatively uninspiring) winners' history. Increasingly however, we recognize the growing elasticity of history and that it is anything but fixed. More recently, as history has become increasingly malleable, it has simultaneously become more central to our daily life. It informs our identity more intimately today, and being subject to interpretation, it has also become a space for contesting perspectives...History changes who we were, not just who we are. In this sense history has become a crucial field for political struggle."¹⁵

History, as it has been taught in most places, has largely been a history of the winners, or at least a history of the privileged (Alfred, Tuhiwai Smith, Landry & Maclean, Scott, Viswanathan). This has 'privileged' certain meta-narratives, which Barkan's opening statement contributes to. The opening paragraph of the book, entitled *The Guilt of Nations: Restitution and Negotiating Historical Injustices* leaves one with the impression that such restitution is taking place. A closer look at Barkan's optimism reveals that it is a 'privileged' optimism, as in the Swiss case.

Several reasons were given for the defeat of the humanitarian fund. The conservative factions in Parliament said instituting the fund would essentially be an admission of historical responsibility, which they disavowed. The liberals proposed an amended fund. The amended fund would have gone partially to such an international humanitarian fund and partially to address the growing social security needs in

¹⁵ Barkan, p. x

Switzerland itself. This proposal was later narrowly defeated (52% against) in a popular referendum – a common reality in Swiss direct democracy. Lastly, the left basically were suspicious of back room dealings between bankers and politicians. They saw the fund as a somewhat devious attempt to clean the slate historically, rather than confront directly the role of Switzerland in WWII. The international community, not understanding direct democratic politics (that federal Cabinet proposals must be debated in Parliament, and are often subject to popular vote) perceived Switzerland to have broken its promise of historical restitution (Maissen, 310).

All reasons considered, the combined objections raised by the ruling political spectrum resulted in Switzerland benefiting, once more, from its controversial role in WWII, and restitution for historical injustice averted – a common 'turn' – the pivot of privilege – that will become more and more evident in the process of this thesis. Delineating how such turns come to be so common in conflict studies and practice is central to this thesis, yet the literature of conflict studies offers few resources in attempting such a delineation. I will now address the body of literature present in conflict studies.

Conflict Studies Literature

Conflict studies literature is interdisciplinary, yet it offers few resources for 'reading' privilege's role in the subversion of social justice. There are two main contributing disciplines that make up conflict studies literature. The first main contributor is international relations, including a particular version of peace studies. The second is the literature rooted in the alternative dispute resolution movement in North America and France of the last 30 years. The various schools of thought within conflict studies focus either on one of these disciplines primarily or, more and more,

on the combination of these two schools of thought, generating then what I call the 'third component' in conflict studies literature.

International Relations

The literature and theory emerging from international relations is dominated by three main paradigms: realists, (neo) liberals, and historical-structuralists (Rasmussen; Cohn, T. H.; Terriff et. al.).

Realists focus by and large on a billiard-ball theory of states as self-contained entities in interaction with one another. State security is of paramount importance in this paradigm. States are considered self-contained entities that interact with one another, and within the realist paradigm, internal dynamics within each state are considered much less important than the interaction among the states. This paradigm gained tremendous momentum following WWII, in reaction to the idealist paradigm of 'never again' that had gained some momentum in the interwar period.

The realist paradigm anchored much of the theory and practice in international relations up until the fall of the Berlin Wall. The rapid change both leading to the fall of the wall, as well as the intense conflicts leading to violence within states, a central focus of international attention beginning in the 1990's, was both unexpected and hence not theorized by this paradigm. Consequently, the realist paradigm has lost much academic and political ground in international relations in the last 15 years.

The (neo)liberal paradigm focuses, above all, on economic considerations in international relations. This paradigm has gained tremendous momentum since the end of the Cold War. Neo-liberals consider 'economic relations to be a positive-sum game' (Cohn, T.H., 116), where one country or region's gain results in gain for all. Neo-liberalism is best exemplified by the establishment of the Bretton Woods Institutes such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

This paradigm gained momentum in the north with the election of Ronald Reagan in the United States and Margaret Thatcher in Britain. The focus of neo-liberals is largely on macroeconomic policies, including trade and privatization, with social and structural considerations largely secondary. This paradigm has taken over the dominance once held by the realist paradigm, in both theory and practice. Yet the weaknesses of this paradigm are becoming more and more evident, most especially in contexts of violent conflict.

The World Bank now admits that economics focused on social policy – social/economic inclusion specifically – through their own research – has proven more central to stabilizing post-conflict situations than either macro-economic or restructuring foci (Collier et. al., 155). The question not addressed satisfactorily in this book, and others, is whether in fact a focus on social economics – focused on inclusion – prior to conflict breaking out might also have something to contribute to the prevention of conflict.

Poverty increases the likelihood of civil war admit Collier et.al. in a World Bank Policy Research Report entitled *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy* (2003). Yet the focus of the World Bank remains the perpetrating forces of conflict and not the root causes.

Civil war is fueled partly by the circumstances that account for the initial resort to large-scale organized violence, and partly by forces generated once violence has started and that tend to perpetrate it. We refer to the initial circumstances as the root causes and to the perpetrating forces as the conflict trap.¹⁶

By their own admission, through the title of the policy report, the World Bank focuses on the perpetrating forces (the conflict trap) of conflict and not on the root causes of conflict.

I suspect this very subtle 'bias' might be one bias conflict studies itself has inherited, knowingly or otherwise. Focusing on reconciliation stripped of social and

¹⁶ Collier, P., et. al., *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy (A World Bank Policy Research Report)*, Washington, World Bank and Oxford University Press, ©2003, p. 53

economic inclusion, an important dimension of justice, may effectively support the neo-liberal paradigm.

More practically, and central to northern actors and agencies, it is likely that neo-liberal institutions are more likely to fund people and approaches that address perpetrating forces of conflict and not its root causes. Lack of critical reflection on these aspects of 'peacebuilding' may be paving the roads to the tragic reconciliation I addressed in the Introduction.

Boosting health and making education more accessible were identified as the top priorities by United Nations ambassadors meeting at a two-day conference in Washington, D.C. Envoys at the meeting also identified boosting conflict resolution, free trade and narrowing the gap between rich and poor as other global priorities.¹⁷

The question is whether free trade itself might not be part of the conflict. To bring together conflict resolution, free trade and narrowing the gap between rich and poor together in one sentence might leave one with the impression that the gap indeed can be narrowed through free trade combined with conflict resolution. Conflict resolution here serves as a palatable face to free trade, as a central part of the answer to narrowing the gap between rich and poor. The tragic reconciliation I addressed may be a reality in the making.

The third main paradigm of international relations, the historical-structuralist paradigm, is largely based on Marxist theory. This paradigm perceives the structure of economic, political and civil relationships, throughout history, to be the core determinants of international relations. This third paradigm sees the (over)developed countries in the north largely dominating the world to their own advantage. Historical-structuralists perceive economic relations in capitalism largely as a zero-sum game. Their perspective is difficult to argue with when even the World Bank admits,

¹⁷ UN Wire, un.wire@smartbrief.com, June 21, 2006. See also Lewis, S., *Race against Time*, Toronto, Anansi Press, ©2005 for a very critical analysis of UN declarations followed by inaction and/or financial aid tied to conditions in complete contradiction to UN declarations on health and education.

Poverty, hunger and disease are prevalent in much of the world, and the gap between the richest and poorest states is growing. According to the World Bank, the average income in the world's richest 20 states is 37 times higher than the average in the poorest 20 states – a gap that has doubled in the past 40 years.¹⁸ (my emphasis)

If the neo-liberal paradigm of economics were in fact valid, one would have expected the difference between rich and poor countries and regions to have significantly decreased instead of doubled in the last 40 years.

If poverty is a central cause of civil war, and if the gap between the rich and the poor has *doubled* in the last 40 years, the corresponding increase in civil war within poor countries was to be expected. Yet, by its own admission the World Bank does not focus on root causes such as poverty. To enter a discussion of root causes, one has to turn the historical structuralist paradigm.

Among several schools of thought within international relations, the historical-structuralist paradigm has most to offer in my analysis of privilege and justice.

One theory I find very relevant within this paradigm is Dependency Theory. This particular theory emerged from Marxism and Latin American structuralism (Cohn, T. H., 121). Emerging from within Latin America itself, it took some time to reach prominence in the north due to the need for translation from Spanish to English (which is not inconsequential in relation to privilege and privileged theories).

Dependency theory originated in the south and is concerned primarily with the problems in the south. The theory posits that expansionist capitalism is detrimental to the south because it creates economies and politics that nurture a full dependency on countries in the north. According to this theory, the north tailors southern economies and political elites to focus on and meet the needs of the northern capitalist societies, at the expense of their own independence and independent economic, political and social development. The fact that the gap between the richest and poorest countries has doubled, at the same time as northern

¹⁸ Cohn, T. H., *Global Political Economy: Theory and Practice*, (3rd ed.), New York, Pearson Education Inc., ©2005, p. 363

economies have thrived over the last 40 years, speaks clearly to the relevance of this paradigm.

Yet to understand privilege in the 'thick details', we need to turn to another major school of thought within the historical-structuralist paradigm – that of Gramsci.

Antonio Gramsci, an Italian structural theorist, argues that Marxism exaggerates 'the importance of economics relative to political, social and cultural factors' (Cohn, T. H., 130). Gramsci focuses on how the political, social, economic and cultural relations structure civil society to the benefit of the dominant groups. He introduces the concept of hegemony, a complex relation of dominance that is extensively successful *without* the use of overt coercion. The Gramscian concept of hegemony is relevant to my analysis of the function of privilege in relation to social justice.

If the dominant class rules almost exclusively by coercion, this is *not* the Gramscian idea of hegemony... A dominant class has hegemony, by contrast, when it legitimates its power through institutions and makes concessions to encourage subordinate groups to support the existing social structure. Thus, hegemonic rule is based more on social-moral leadership than on coercion. The ruling class gains the active consent of subordinate classes on the basis of shared values, ideas, and material interests.¹⁹

I will posit that it is largely through the real, anticipated or imagined privileges promised to subordinate groups, by the dominant groups, that entail consent and support of unjust structures. 'Civil' society, in all its manifest forms, I will posit, comes to sustain systems of injustice largely through a complex web of anticipated or assumed power and privilege. Assumed power and privilege function largely in remaining unquestioned and more significantly, largely remaining *unquestionable*.

Privileges remain unquestionable because concessions granted by subordinate groups to access such privilege often take the guise of a 'shared' social-moral lens. I

¹⁹ Cohn, T. H., p. 131

will argue that hierarchy, for example, with its efficacy rooted in (sometimes very subtle) coercion, is deeply concealed, rendering the concessions of subordinate groups and individuals almost completely invisible. The depth of concealment (invisibility) of both coercion and consent are central to my analysis of privilege, and how it subverts social justice, especially within conflict studies discourse and practice.

International relations also included a 'lesser' paradigm that, later, came to be almost completely identified with the Scandinavian academic John Galtung: peace studies. In the late 1960's Galtung gained a significant profile through his concern with 'peace per se', his introduction and analysis of 'structural violence', and his perspective of 'peace research as vocation (focused on) developing an analysis of conflict, free of the taint of ideology and national bias, for developing peace proposals...The elimination of structural latent violence creates positive peace in the form of social justice and a redistribution of power and resources.' (Terriff et.al., 72-3).

Galtung, still active today, opened much of the academic space that conflict studies now occupies within northern academic institutions.

In the late 1960's, the push to take structural violence into account pushed peace studies into a politically more radical position. Prior to this time, peace research in the United States had emphasized 'value-free' analysis - the only acceptable terms under which peace research academics could secure funding for their work in American universities. (Terriff et. al., 69).

The dynamic by which peace research content was largely determined by those who funded it (a particular state with a particular, albeit 'invisible', ideology) and that researchers themselves conceded to these terms individually and collectively, is another 'turn', similar to the Swiss 'turn' away from justice in support of privilege in the opening paragraphs of this chapter. Such 'turns' are central to my

analysis of privilege's role in the reach for social justice within conflict studies and practice, and will become a central consideration in Chapter Three.

Alternative Dispute Resolution

As international relations and peace studies developments were taking place, other disciplines and social sectors were also going through changes. The second major contributor to conflict studies is largely what has come to be known as Alternative Dispute Resolution.

Over the last 30 years, especially in France and the United States, Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) has emerged more and more as an alternative to the more formal judicial resolution of conflicts. ADR began to look at negotiation and mediation as central and viable alternatives to litigation (Baruch Bush & Folger, XI). The ADR movement saw itself offering an alternative to the courts that was more accessible and personable. 'When successful, mediation is deemed to be an informal alternative to the courts that empowers individual disputants, strengthens communities and restores peace to troubled relationships' (Pavlich, 3).

ADR evolved quite differently within North America (Baruch Bush & Folger, Fisher & Ury, Bohm, Lederach, LeBaron) than it did in France. In North America, ADR has largely remained focused on the personal, inter-relational dynamics, while in France a much more critical debate has emerged on the social implications of ADR's role in communal policing/enforcing of 'the' normative (Ben Mrad, Six, Tricoire, Dupont, Dejours). Both streams developed rapidly and are centrally influenced by law, sociology and psychology.

The 'Third' Component

Conflict studies literature has a 'third' component made up of those who attempt a combination of international relations (including peace studies) and of social sciences coming from ADR. Such a combined approach is exemplified by

Samuel Huntington and Donald Horowitz who lean heavily on political science and international relations yet take psychology and anthropology centrally into account in their focus on ethnicity as a motor of group conflict; Kwame Anthony Appiah, and other identity theorists concerned with conflict, also combine the two streams centrally; and to a lesser extent, John Paul Lederach and Michelle LeBaron, both heavily influenced by ADR do take some political, social, and economic factors centrally into consideration for their theories of conflict, and as practitioners of conflict resolution.

Particular terms within conflict studies have emerged from the combination of international relations and alternative dispute resolution. Several terms that my exploration uses are peacebuilding, and what I call the 'conflict +' terms. I define these below.

Peacebuilding is a central concept in conflict studies.

Here, peacebuilding is used in its broadest sense to refer to those initiatives which foster and support sustainable structures and processes which strengthen the prospects for peaceful coexistence and decrease the likelihood of the outbreak, reoccurrence, or continuation of violent conflict. This process entails both short and long-term objectives, for example, short-term humanitarian operations and longer-term developmental, political, economic, and social objectives. Peacebuilding is therefore a twofold process of *deconstructing* the structures of violence, and *constructing* the structures of peace. These are two interrelated *but separate* sets of activities that *must be undertaken simultaneously...*

Peacebuilding is not about the imposition of "solutions", it is about the creation of opportunities. The challenge is to identify and nurture the political, economic, and social space, within which *indigenous* actors can identify, develop, and employ the resources necessary to build a peaceful, prosperous, and just society. Ultimately, peacebuilding entails strengthening or creating democratic structures and processes that are fair and responsive to the needs of an entire population...²⁰

There are many definitions of peacebuilding present in the field, yet Bush's definition addresses what I consider are the central 'what, who and how' of peacebuilding. Especially significant, in my perspective, in this definition, is the emphasis on *indigenous* actors, on the goal being *peaceful, prosperous and just*

²⁰ Bush, K., "Commodification, Compartmentalization, and Militarization of Peacebuilding", in Keating, T. & Knight, W.A., (eds.), *Building Sustainable Peace*, Tokyo: United Nations University Press, Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, © 2004, p. 25-26

societies, and on *structures and processes responsive to the entire population*. Peacebuilding definitions that avoid focusing on these elements are definitions, in my perspective, that fall short on the *substance* of peace, and focus instead on the absence of violence.

The definitions largely coming from the Anglo-Saxon alternative dispute resolution movement are primarily focused on various responses to conflict. The terms vary: conflict transformation, conflict resolution, conflict management, and conflict settlement. I provide definitions below.

Conflict Transformation:

In this transformative orientation, a conflict is first and foremost a potential occasion for growth in two critical and interrelated dimensions of human morality. The first dimension involves strengthening the self. This occurs through realizing and strengthening one's inherent human capacity for dealing with difficulties of all kinds by engaging in conscious and deliberate reflection, choice, and action. The second dimension involves reaching beyond the self to relate to others. This occurs through realizing and strengthening one's inherent human capacity for experiencing and expressing concern and consideration for others, especially others whose situation is "different" from one's own.²¹

Conflict Resolution:

...(T)he efforts to resolve or eliminate the underpinning grievances and irritants which sustain a conflict.²²

Conflict Management:

(The) efforts to control or 'de-escalate violence' without necessarily eliminating the root causes of the conflict.²³

Conflict Settlement:

Some analysts employ the term 'conflict settlement' to 'indicate the formal ending of armed hostilities and the renunciation of the use of force...'²⁴

Mediation and negotiation are often part of all the terms above. To seek a definitive explication of either mediation or negotiation would entail an exploration in

²¹ Baruch Bush, R. & Folger, J.P., *The Promise of Mediation: Responding to Conflict Through Empowerment and Recognition*, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, ©1994, p. 81

²² Bush, K. D., *The Intra-Group Dimensions of Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka: Learning to Read Between the Lines*, New York, Palgrave MacMillan, ©2003, p. 204

²³ Bush (2003), p. 204

²⁴ Bush (2003), p. 204

itself. Instead I will restrict myself to providing one characteristic that is said to distinguish mediation from negotiation.

Negotiation is often seen as two parties, each represented by one or more people. Those representing the parties negotiate directly with one another, with the parties, or the parties themselves negotiate directly with one another.

Mediation on the other hand is considered 'mediation' only when a 'third voice' facilitating the interaction is present (Baruch Bush & Folger, Ben Mrad, Tricoire, Six). The process and content of mediation is the centre of much debate and has been since the alternative dispute resolution movement emerged.

Terminology in the field is an ongoing development. At this point, I consider the above definitions to be as clear a definition of the various terms as possible. I do not estimate a broader review of terms and definitions would contribute significantly to my exploration.

Much of the 'third component' literature in conflict studies in northern academies has been written by academics and practitioners, who are mostly from the north, and from the dominant groups in the north: white, male, highly educated and usually heterosexual.

The literature of central reference in conflict studies includes only very little original feminist and marginalized group scholarship. Importantly, it includes almost no literature on large historical conflicts central to the acquisition of northern dominance such as colonization, the attempted genocide of Indigenous peoples, or slavery. Correspondingly it rarely includes reflections on the writers' or practitioners' privileged positions vis-à-vis the people at the heart of the conflict being studied or analyzed. It is, as I asserted at the beginning, a very selective literature of theory and experience.

My approach in this exploration contains substantial literature from feminist, marginal group and critical theory scholarship (Alfred, Brown & Strega, Butler,

Heldke & O'Connor, Mahmood, Mani, Welch). This scholarship is of central relevance to my consideration of privilege and justice, as these are the fields that have begun to theorize privilege. Privilege as a concept for central consideration does not exist in the conflict studies literature.

Central to my exploration of privilege and justice is the role of civil society, following on Gramsci's analysis of hegemony. I consider privilege a central means of sustaining hegemony. I use hegemony in the Gramscian sense of dominance without *overt* (violent) coercion, as exists in most northern countries, which as group, dominate the world.

Given the focus in my exploration on civil society's participation in and sustenance of dominance, it is also important to take the anthropology of every day life centrally into consideration.

Part of peoples' everyday construction of their world – whether they are politicians, news reporters, or others – entails the process through which popular consensus is built around the idea that the state ought to control certain others, usually minorities, by jailing them, depriving them of basic services and civil rights, deporting them or even killing them. The result of these processes are analogous to Hinton's primers (towards genocide), in the sense that political violence is activated by injecting just a little bit of ethnic conflict into daily fare in order to 'get it going'...(This) requires the implicit agreement and cooperation of ordinary nice people who have been inoculated with evil, who learn to take myths at face value, and who do not question the projects of the state in defense of a social order that requires hierarchy. Only when general consensus has been created can "ordinary people" (read the dominant group) actively participate in human rights abuses, explicitly support them, or turn their faces and pretend not to know even when confronted with the incontrovertible evidence of them....

Such inoculations of evil are crucial to human rights violations because they become part of socially accepted notions of common sense, a kind of social knowledge of the "everyone knows" variety that enters public discourse and helps build popular consensus around who and what is suspect, who and what ought to be repressed, what constitutes difference and how the state ought to control it. Thus even when accused of brutality, excessive use of force, murder, or other human rights abuses and brought to trial, neither Border Patrol agents (for the US-Mexico border) nor police officers are usually convicted.²⁵

Inoculations take place in everyday life as Negengast says above. Exploring day-to-day experience becomes central to understanding the means by which privilege functions both as a means of inoculation and as it's effect.

²⁵ Nagengast, C., "Inoculations of Evil in the U.S.-Mexican Border Region", in Hinton, A., (ed.) *Annihilating Difference: The Anthropology of Genocide*, Los Angeles, University of California Press, ©2002, p. 338-9

Four serious gaps, in my estimation, exist in conflict studies literature: a central place for subaltern groups²⁶ theory and experience of and in conflict; a central place for critical historical reflection on dominance, significant attention to how the north itself gained its dominance, and how preserving and/or extending this dominance is central to driving violent conflict around the world; self-critical reflection on position and privilege by those currently dominating conflict studies paradigms; and a clear overt commitment to putting this discipline in service to social justice.

A refusal, by action or omission, of substantially closing these gaps in conflict studies, risks conflict studies being the benevolent face to continuing dominance through systems of profound injustice.

Conflict studies, as a discipline, is at the heart of some (re?)emerging narratives, characterized most by a meta-optimism.

...What collective and global legacy are we leaving for our great-great-grandchildren this century? This is not just a challenge posed generally, or reserved for political leaders or policy makers. This is a challenge I wish to place before the burgeoning fields of conflict transformation and peacebuilding broadly defined with all of their professional applications. I count myself a practitioner within these disciplines and *I believe we need a dose of realism. Ours are professions afflicted with a proclivity toward the promise of great change. It is true. Our rhetoric comes easy. If constructive social change rolled forward as easily as our words and promises pour out, world justice and peace would have surely been attained by now.*²⁷ (my emphasis)

Alternatively, Scheper-Hughes looks directly at other emerging narratives holding a central place in conflict studies currently.

The psychologies of remorse, guilt, catharsis, and closure compete today with the theologies of reconciliation, forgiveness, and redemption in another version of what Philippe Rieff (1966) called the triumph of the therapeutic. Michael Ignatieff has hit upon an appropriate generative metaphor for looking at the present contexts of national recovery: *getting over*. The words conjure up biblical images of safe passage, of reaching the other side, and, finally, of *overcoming*.²⁸

²⁶ Where "the term 'subaltern' designates non-elite or subordinated social groups" (Landry & Maclean, p. 203)

²⁷ Lederach, J.P., *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace*, New York, Oxford University Press, ©2005, p. 21-22. Please note that because the discipline is so young, the terminology varies. I use the general concept of conflict studies, which includes Lederach's concepts of conflict transformation and peace building. Terminology in the field is an ongoing discussion.

²⁸ Scheper-Hughes, N., "Undoing: Social Suffering and the Politics of Remorse in New South Africa", in Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, p. 459

In my estimation, the meta-optimism of both 'great change' and 'overcoming', completely divorced from substantial change within the world we, the most privileged live, renders conflict studies deeply problematic.

The only consistency among the legion of excuses for various family legacies of colonial privilege is moral cowardice on the part of contemporary Settlers. The implication of this obscurantism (historical and moral) is that what is happening *here* in the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand is not as serious as what happened *there* in South Africa and India; and, of course, *we* Americans, Canadians, and Australians *are not* as bad as *they were* in Indochina and the Congo...Giving back stolen lands, paying recompense, and respecting Onkwehonwe autonomy are outside the realm of possibility for Settlers who have thus far escaped the hideous possibility of reckoning with their forefathers' evil misdeeds. I am convinced that most Settlers are in denial... (T)hey still refuse to see and accept the fact that there can be no rhetorical transcendence and retelling of the past to make it right without making fundamental changes to their government, society, and the way they live. For no other reason than a selfish attachment to the economic and political privileges they have collectively inherited as the dominant people in a colonial relationship, they, by cultural instinct and imperative, deny the truth.²⁹

It is important, indeed central, to understand that such 'obscurantism' does not happen 'elsewhere', but very much in the midst of 'ordinary' life. I will now turn to my own particular experience to ground how such obscurantism can and has functioned in my personal and professional context.

Historical legacies of dominance, in the form 'common sense' un-studied, un-reflected, pass down through generations as 'reality'.

In the rural French Canadian culture in which I grew up, I inherited a few: Jews killed Jesus, Indians are lazy, the English are square-heads, the French are 'Canadiens', all Blacks are starving, all Whites are Christian, women can never be priests, priests are rarely wrong, the pope is infallible, sex is dirty so save it for the one you love.³⁰ These were not spoken, nor passed down consciously – at least to all appearances, and in childhood memory. These simply came with the 'territory' like

²⁹ Alfred, T., *Wasase: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom*, Toronto, Broadview Press, 2005, p. 107

³⁰ Although these are rendered rather crudely as 'short cuts' here, these short cuts reflect the deeper and more rooted epistemological sense of being I am familiar with. These 'short cuts' contribute significantly to questions such as "Who am I?", "Who are 'they'?" These short cuts are not intended as irony. They represent the pillars of understanding in the world I grew up in, and was 'meant' to carry on. Admittedly, my childhood rests several decades back, yet these same legacies, with varying superficial nuances continue to be the content of 'childhood' in large parts of Canada today.

dark brown eyes, (once) black hair, and the 'knowing' that I would, like generations of women before me, become a farmer's wife. School, church, TV, movies, music, life was full of this legacy. These were my initiating social inoculations (along with the physiological ones against measles, polio and small pox) into Canadian adulthood.

In the theory of conflict studies the anti-Semitism, racism and misogyny of my Canadian childhood, a 'normal' childhood by Canadian standards, seem to remain academically uninteresting. The particular inoculations seem to have been effective within large portions of Settler society. The two most flagrant, and persistently violent conflicts in Canada still active today (Onkwehonwe³¹-Settler Communities; French-English), and reaching centuries back, remain largely unspoken, un-reflected, and un-questioned in the Canadian authored literature in conflict studies.

How is it that our Canadian legacy of conflict can remain so uninteresting in the face of conflict (resolution) theory and visions for other peoples, other countries? It is this silence in theory and practice by privileged northern actors and institutions that has perplexed me most.

Largely, I posit in this thesis that such pervasive silence is only possible on the part of the (inoculated) privileged in the conflict. Only those for whom such conflicts are not day-to-day, gut-wrenching realities can afford the pervasive silence. Only those well-cushioned from, or by the *benefits of*, the realities driving these conflicts, raging on our own door step, can look at the conflict in Israel, Afghanistan and Sri Lanka, and dream dreams of peace through negotiation. There has been no such success between Onkwehonwe and Settlers on Greater Turtle Island (a part of which colonization now designates as Canada).

³¹ I will use the Rotinohshonni word *Onkwehonwe* meaning *the real and original people* (Alfred (1999), xv) to write about the people and their ancestors inhabiting Greater Turtle Island prior to and since the arrival of Europeans. There are other words in many languages to designate the real and original people. Yet because my work relies centrally on Alfred's writing and analyses, I will use the Rotinohshonni word. Despite the word being in Rotinohshonni, I do not italicize it throughout the thesis, as academic tradition requires. I feel such italicization over and over again would cause the word to become a 'visual' exception, the grammatical version of insistent setting apart.

As Lederach points out, 'Ours are professions afflicted with a proclivity toward the promise of great change...Our rhetoric comes easy.' Yet the promise of great change seems to be largely envisioned as great change for others. To put our theories to work on our historical and continuing legacies of conflict might mirror back to the most privileged of the continent exactly that which we prefer to not see.

(Marshall) names the seemingly innocuous assumptions of the powerful: that it is responsible to act for others, that one can be certain of one's moral intent and strategic practical wisdom. These assumptions prevent powerful groups from seeing the destructive consequences of their well-intentioned projects.³²

I am convinced we in conflict studies and peacebuilding communities 'need a dose of realism'. Yet, there is no 'dose' out there waiting for a simple injection. Such a project requires critical detailed attention and analysis of what has gone before. It requires a deep critical questioning of our own past and present 'moral intent and strategic practical wisdom'. It requires action in word and deed, categorically anchored in our own historical and continuing legacies, addressing these legacies head on, and changing the course and content of such disciplines as conflict studies, and their profound implications for practice.

Privilege

"She told me that, for her part, she'd completed her reading of my political essays, 'You are so lucky!' she exclaimed.

"What do you mean by that?"

"You have a cause. You have purpose to your life."

I looked carefully at this white woman; what was she really saying to me?

"What do you mean?" I repeated.

"Poverty. Police violence. Discrimination in general."

(Jesus Christ, I thought: Is this her idea of lucky?)

"And how about you?" I asked.

"Me?"

³² Welch, S. D., *A Feminist Ethic of Risk*, Minneapolis, Augsburg Fortress, ©1990, p. 51

"Yeah, you. Don't you have a cause?"

"Me? I'm just a middle aged woman: a housewife and a mother. I'm nobody."

...

"If she believed me lucky to have regular hurdles of discrimination then why shouldn't I insist that she's lucky to be a middle class white Wasp female who lives in such well-sanctioned and normative comfort that she even has the luxury to deny the power of the privileges that paralyze her life."³³

Privilege: To live 'lives in such well-sanctioned and normative comfort', that offer even 'the luxury to deny the power of the privileges that paralyze (our) lives.'

Theorizing privilege is a relatively new arena, and has been pushed forward primarily by activists in the anti-racism, feminist, and GBLT³⁴ movements. In the late 1980's these groups' activism began to be taken up and theorized in university disciplines.

Alison Bailey theorizes privilege precisely in the vein I want to take up in this thesis. She specifically states that her concept of privilege has nothing to do with legal definitions of privilege in the sense of privileges such as a driving license. She says:

My interest is in a narrower sense of privilege as unearned assets conferred systematically... (I) f we want to determine whether a particular advantage qualifies as a privilege, we need to look at that advantage macroscopically in order to observe whether it plays a role in keeping complex systems of domination in place... Privilege, in the sense I will be using this word, is by definition advantageous, but not all advantages count as privilege. Advantages that are not privilege I will call earned advantages...

Failure to recognize the differences between earned and unearned assets allows privileged groups to interpret all privilege on the same footing as earned advantages."³⁵

Bailey then summarizes her use of the word privilege, and I will be using the word privilege throughout my research exactly in the same sense.

The general distinction I will make between privilege and earned advantages... rests on four related claims: (1) benefits granted by privilege are always unearned and conferred *systematically* to members of dominant social groups; (2) privilege granted to members of dominant groups simply because they are members of these groups is almost never justifiable; (3) most privilege is invisible to, or not recognized as such by, those who have it; and (4) privilege has an unconditional "wild card" quality that extends benefits

³³ Jordan, J., "Report from the Bahamas", in Heldke, L. & O'Connor, P., (eds.), *Oppression, Privilege, & Resistance: Theoretical Perspectives on Racism, Sexism, and Heterosexism*, New York, McGraw-Hill, ©2004, p. 523

³⁴ GBLT: Gay, Bisexual, Lesbian and Trans (Transgender/Transsexual)

³⁵ Bailey, A., "Privilege", in Heldke & O'Connor, p. 305, 307

to cover a wide variety of circumstances and conditions... (That) is to say that being heterosexual, male or white will almost always count in one's favor.³⁶

Privilege is most often that invisible wind at your back especially if one is white, male, educated, and heterosexual. One 'sails' through the world with a particular feeling of *personal* accomplishment. One is simply unconscious that invisible, unearned advantages embedded in structures (often created to secure such unearned advantages) play a significant role in everyday life, often cumulating in a particular sense of self, and of personal *and* group achievement. Or the wind at our back called privilege rocks the cradle of our lives so gently that it puts us to sleep; gently, gently, it numbs us, and strips us completely of meaningful engagement within the human community. We can only look on passively at those whose lives are so threatened, that the struggle to survive against violence, direct or structural, can even become the focus of our envy, as described by June Jordan above.

The wind at one's back is largely invisible, so long as it remains significant. It becomes most evident as it 'weakens' with every degree one is removed from the dominant group. Race, gender, sexual orientation and employment all affect the invisibility.

Alison Bailey points out,

...(O)ne of the functions of privilege is to structure the world so that mechanisms of privilege are invisible – in the sense that they are unexamined – to those who benefit from them.³⁷

In exposing the invisibility of privilege, Bailey takes up several metaphors. One of the metaphors she takes up is that of white privilege being an 'invisible knapsack' and she gives examples by another author of what these might 'look' like in their invisibility.

(White privilege is) an invisible package of unearned assets that I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was 'meant' to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, assurances, tools, maps, guides, codebooks, passports, visas, clothes, compass, emergency gear, and blank checks...

³⁶ Bailey, in Heldke & O'Connor, p. 306, 311

³⁷ Bailey, in Heldke & O'Connor, p. 309

- I can if I wish arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.
- I can be sure that my children will be given curricular material that testifies to the existence of their race.
- I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group.
- I can dress any way I want and not have my appearance explained by the perceived tastes of my race.
- Whether I use checks, credit cards, or cash I can be fairly sure that my skin color will not count against the appearance of my financial reliability.
- In most instances I can be assured of having the public trust.

Heterosexual privileges include:

- Being able to publicly show affection for one's partner without fear of public harm or hostility.
- Being assured that most people will approve of one's relationship.
- Not having to self-censor gender pronouns when talking about one's partner.³⁸

Privilege then is very difficult to grasp, to understand and to undermine. It is 'simply' part of or *not* part of the world one is born into. Either it functions in one's favour, or against one. Moreover, it is a macroscopic invisible structure keeping structures of domination in place, and simultaneously simply assumed as part of personal 'reality'. Trained to not recognize privilege, as such, is one 'inoculation' that works almost without fail.

Slavoj Zizek, in the book entitled *Iraq: The Borrowed Kettle* says two things, which combined, can help illuminate part of the dynamic of how privilege functions.

Tongue in cheek, he says,

In March 2003, Donald Rumsfeld engaged in a little bit of amateur philosophizing about the relationship between the known and the unknown:

"There are the known knowns. These are the things we know that we know. There are known unknowns. That is to say, there are things we know we don't know. But there are also unknown unknowns. These are the things we don't know we don't know."

What he forgot to add was the crucial fourth term: the unknown knowns, the things we do not know we know...³⁹

I would venture to say that for the most privileged, privilege belongs to this fourth category: the unknown knowns. For those variously removed from the dominant group in today's world, white, male and heterosexual, privilege is, by

³⁸ Bailey, in Heldke & O'Connor, p. 309-310

³⁹ Zizek, S., *Iraq: The Borrowed Kettle*, New York, Verso, ©2004, p. 9

degrees, more of a known known. The more removed one is from the dominant group, the more visible privilege becomes.

Sigmund Freud is rumoured to have insisted, successfully, at the age of 15 that his sister stop attending piano lessons because her practice disturbed his capacity to concentrate while doing homework in the family home. Was he aware of exercising privilege? Most likely not. Was she aware of his exercise of privilege? Most likely, very clearly. His male privilege and the room to assert it is simply taken for granted.

Returning to Žižek, he comments on American privilege in the world political arena, which again is enlightening for the concept of privilege.

The old paradox of the forced choice is reproduced here: the freedom to make a choice on condition that one makes the right choice.⁴⁰

We see this in operation in Iraq most visibly at the moment. Privilege is the ability to set the condition or conditions by which a range of possibilities is narrowed down to the 'right' choice.

Forced choice functions not only at systemic levels. It, like privilege, functions also pervasively in the day-to-day life of ordinary people. Its face is so well known many people simply take it for granted. It is one of the 'common sense' realities where subtle coercion and consent are for the most part, practically invisible: it is called hierarchy.

In a program of study at a Canadian university (as in most universities in the north) I am free to make a number of choices regarding courses, the content I focus on in courses and whether I approach the content from a number of directions. Yet the academic hierarchy is pivotal in letting me know if indeed I have made the 'right' choice: grading, academic support or censure are simply taken for granted as

⁴⁰ Žižek, p. 14

belonging to the environment. Should I one day become a professor, then it is up to me, within a quite flexible range, to set those conditions for others.

Becoming a professor may be regarded then as an 'earned advantage'. Yet if I am a white male, and have been happily, and invisibly, socialized into an urban, schooled, white male brotherhood from the time of childhood, I will have a much clearer and sharper understanding of 'right' choices within Canada's academia, than if I have grown up male or female in a non-English speaking, intensely rural, oral culture.

Canadian academic institutions are intensely dominated by white urban, schooled, heterosexual men. The fact that a white urban, educated male teenager will have a clear (unacknowledged) advantage in eventually becoming the professor has nothing to do with his particular talent. Yet, his advantage will be directly attributed to personal talent.⁴¹ On this basis, he will likely be granted power in hierarchy – the power to reduce a range of choices down to the 'right choices' (for others). He is likely never to see the particular dynamics at play, having been inoculated not to recognize such dynamics. He will more than likely simply become an adult with a particular worldview that reinforces his experience of life. Only those with less privilege will likely challenge his worldview. He is likely to attribute the challenge to the person's character and (lack of?) talent, not to the structure or the continuous inoculations that makes the challenge necessary.

A hundred years ago, the above generalization would have applied in 99.9% of public and private institutions in Europe and North America. Today however, with the increasing necessary breakdown of white male privilege, the picture is only in tiny fractions different. There are other voices, other people gaining access to structures, which simultaneously diminishes the excluding power of the structure,

⁴¹ Bailey gives the example of George W. Bush having 'been born' at third base, but insisting he hit a triple. This, she says, is a prime example of how the privileged continually attempt to dissemble privilege into 'earned advantage'. See Heldke & O'Connor, p. 307

and therefore the privilege, while at the same time risks giving 'token' representation and privilege to a very small number of those excluded fully before.

More and more, people are often multiply situated. There are more women, more openly gay men, people from more racial, ethnic and social groups are represented in institutions than has been the case before. The discourse on both privilege and oppression has necessarily become more nuanced, and necessarily more differentiated.

Anti-oppressive theorists contest the ontological assumptions of Enlightenment-based theories that are rooted in universal, transcendental, and singular truth claims. The ontological assumptions of anti-oppressive theories are rooted in the subjective and specific as well as particular socio-historical experiences of people that are simultaneously multiply positioned... The specific and differential nature of oppression is acknowledged, but without losing the sense of collective experiences of oppression.⁴²

It is important then, to keep in mind the tension that exists between the 'specific and differential nature' of privilege, and at the same time keep in mind the fact that privilege does operate and is largely visible and effective primarily at the macroscopic, or collective levels active in keeping structures of domination in place. For example, to say that women are less privileged than men is not to deny that many individual women are in positions embedded in extensive privilege. It is to remember that women as a group have, nowhere in the public domain, the representation due to being 52% of the general population.

It must also be kept in mind that white, educated, heterosexual men are grossly over-represented in all public and private institutions, in the north and world-wide, given that they make up such a small percentage of the world population.

Let me reiterate my conviction that existing market economies still fall a good way short of meritocracy. Nor do I believe...that without political intervention the market itself will tend to eliminate anti-meritocratic practices such as racial and sexual discrimination.⁴³

Yet the continual inoculations against seeing this very simple fact, and changing it head-on, have been and remain very effective, despite decades of

⁴² Moosa-Mitha, M., "Situating Anti-Oppressive Theories within Critical and Difference-Centred Perspectives", in Brown & Strega, p. 64-65

⁴³ Miller, D., *Principles of Social Justice*, Cambridge, London, Harvard University Press, ©1999, p. 193

feminism and anti-racism work within the last century. Conflict studies, as a discipline, is no exception. It is largely in the hands of northern white men.

Privilege, above all is dissembling, and it is contextual. It is about power and may contribute significantly to political and social paralysis at the same time. It functions to keep structures of domination in place. Privilege is an unknown known for those who have it, but more often a known known for those who have less, becoming more visible with its decline. It is contextual. People are multiply positioned primarily due to race, gender, sexual orientation and employment. Privilege is systemic yet functions to maintain the guise of personal attribute or talent, or lack thereof.

In theoretically delineating privilege, it is important to distinguish between the advantages that privilege provides and the substantial provision of the inherent benefit. It is the differential access to substantial resources, and not the resources themselves, which renders privilege in and of itself so insidious. For example, access to meaningful work, substantial shelter and security from hunger, the elements, and personal harm, health care, the freedom to choose the companion or solitude of one's choice, and substantial meaningful interaction in the community are basic life components that make life meaningful. The *intentional* differential access to life sustaining resources are the problematic I am addressing, not the resources themselves. Privilege cements and upholds the perpetuation, support and acceptance of resistant centres of social, political, cultural, military and economic systems that insist on the legitimacy of differential access to these life-sustaining resources.

The Israeli prime minister's closest adviser, Dov Weisglass, revealed that what Israel has in mind for Gaza is not prosperity but keeping it teetering on life support. "We need to make the Palestinians lose weight, but not to starve to death," he said.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ McGreal, C., "Gaza under Siege", in The Guardian Weekly, June 2-8 2006, Vol. 174, NO. 24, p. 16

Social Justice

Justice is at once philosophical and political, public and intensely private, universal in its existence and yet highly individualized and culturally shaped in its expression. The seeming universality of the value of justice reinforces the tendency of scholars and practitioners to treat it without nuance, without reference to its manifold cultural and individual expressions. Peacebuilders did seem to learn some lessons in the treatment of justice over the past decade. And yet the path ahead is murky and uncertain. The need for a clear understanding of justice and commitment to address it in all its complexity is as urgent as ever. It is essential to pursue justice in the shadows of war. The survivors of war deserve no less.⁴⁵

As Rami Mani posits, the concept of justice is difficult to grasp. She argues for a contextual notion of justice; simultaneously, she insists 'a clear understanding of justice in all its complexity is urgent (especially) in the shadows of war.'

Charles Taylor defines 'the moral' as centred on elements often considered central to justice.

Perhaps the most urgent and powerful cluster of demands that we recognize as moral concern the respect for the life, integrity, and well-being, even flourishing of others. These are the ones we infringe when we kill or maim others, steal their property, strike fear into them and rob them of peace, or even refrain from helping them when they are in distress. Virtually everyone feels these demands, and they have been and are acknowledged in all human societies.⁴⁶

Justice is too large a concept in its entirety to theorize in any meaningful way in this exploration. As well, Western conceptions of justice, though perhaps filling millions of volumes and perhaps many whole libraries, have few well documented cases of successful application over long periods of time.

Beginning with Plato and Aristotle, justice was imagined as a 'universal' concept. Yet, where Plato (through Socrates) sees justice as principle, Aristotle sees justice more as virtue lived through good relationship. Kant takes up Plato's sense of justice, as principle, and bases it on an 'ideal' of pure reason. Kant's thought provides the basis for most conceptions of justice, available through Western academic institutions, since the 1800's.

⁴⁵ Mani, R., *Beyond Retribution: Seeking Justice in the Shadows of War*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, ©2002, p. 186

⁴⁶ Taylor, C., *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, ©1989, p. 4

Yet, as universal and sane⁴⁷ as reason came to be proposed in the Kantian tradition, reason failed intensely in visions and reality of the 'good life' in 18th, 19th, 20th and 21st century world. The devastating European-driven realities of slavery, brutal colonization and the Holocausts on both continents all taking place during and following European Enlightenment (itself laying claim to essential universal concepts of freedom and reason) prove the profound ambivalence, in the application of Western conceptions of justice.

There always has been an apparent separation between the ethical principles and the philosophies and practice of government in the Western tradition. Take, for example, the profundity of some of the original texts of the Western tradition, subtract the sum of their practical application throughout the history of European empires and states, and you are left with little that is substantial and real; hardly anything of lasting worth for the betterment of the human race has resulted from European exercises in imperial self-justification.⁴⁸

They tell me this Democracy form of government is a wonderful thing. It has freedom, equality, justice, in short, everything!...And all this talk and praise-giving has got me in the notion to try some of the stuff. All I want to do is to get hold of a sample of the thing, and I declare, I sure will try it. I don't know myself, but I have been told that it is a really wonderful thing. ...The only thing that keeps me from pitching headlong into the thing is the presence of numerous Jim Crow laws on the statute books of the nation. I am crazy about the idea of this Democracy. I want to see how it feels.⁴⁹

Some social scientists have declared defining the concept of justice as a 'hopeless and pompous task...beyond the capacity of scientific analysis' (Miller, 43).

Sharon Welch posits a unilateral conception of justice as immoral.

...(D)ecisive action is intrinsically immoral. We do have the power to act alone to repress, to exploit, to blow up the world. We do not, however, have the power to make the world peaceful and just. That is a qualitatively different task and requires a qualitatively different exercise of power. Justice cannot be created for the poor by the rich, for it requires the transfer of power..., the elimination of charity and the (collective) enactment of justice.⁵⁰

Rama Mani posits three dimensions of justice as needed in the shadow of war. These are: rule of law, rectificatory justice, and distributive justice. She defines these as follows.

⁴⁷ "A truly rational entity, that is, will *ipso facto* have to follow the dictates of a rational imperative if it is to be true to its nature" in Pavlich, G.C., *Justice Fragmented: Mediating Community Disputes under Post-modern Conditions*, London, Routledge, ©1996, p. 23

⁴⁸ Alfred, (2005), p. 102

⁴⁹ Hurston, Z.N., "Crazy for this Democracy" (1945), in Walker, A., (ed.), *I Love Myself When I am Laughing: A Zora Neal Hurston Reader*, New York, The Feminist Press, 1979, p. 165-168

⁵⁰ Welch, p. 51

The first dimension of justice that needs to be addressed is legal justice or the rule of law. The need to address legal justice stems from the rampant legal injustice, exemplified by the breakdown or corruption of the rule of law and absence of legal redress, that is a common symptom preceding and during most conflicts.

The second is rectificatory justice. The need to address rectificatory justice arises from the direct human consequences of conflict in the form of injustices inflicted upon people including gross human rights abuses, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The third is distributive justice. The need to address distributive justice stems from the structural and systemic injustices such as political and economic discrimination and inequalities of distribution that are frequently underlying causes of conflict.⁵¹

Yet in a world where radical exclusion and inequality are the norm, and where I am writing from the position of a privileged white woman in academia in the north, it is critical to recognize that for all the volumes on Western conceptions of justice, little has been done for the vast majority of the world's population.

Every year 20 percent of the Earth's people in rich nations use 75 percent of the world's resources and produce 80 percent of the world's waste. An example: Chicago, with three million people, consumes as much raw produce in a year as Bangladesh, with ninety-seven million people.⁵²

When 4 billion of the world's 6 billion inhabitants live on less than \$2 a day, I consider distributive justice to be the most paramount consideration, in this exploration of justice and privilege. If, as the World Bank asserts, civil war has its root causes, above all, in poverty and in social-economic exclusion, I challenge conflict studies to consider distributive justice, including full historical restitution, its central concern.

The concept of justice, for the sole purpose of this exploration, refers to the fair distribution of power and resources to ensure the substantial shelter and security from hunger, the elements, and personal harm; access to health care; the freedom to choose the companion or solitude of one's choice; and the freedom, time and resources for substantial meaningful interaction in the community, for all people.

⁵¹ Mani, p. 5-6

⁵² Johnson, E. A., "Passion for God, Passion for the Earth" in Hembrow Snyder, M. (ed.), *Spiritual Questions for the Twenty-First Century: Essays in Honor of Joan D. Chittister*, Maryknoll, NY, Orbis Books, ©2002, p. 120

Injustice is intentionally and systematically blocking access to any of these resources, or rendering access to these resources conditional on relationships and/or structures that are coercive.

Access to meaningful work is a necessary component of 'justice' in so far as a community insists work is the only means by which all other elements are accessible. In such a community, such insistence can also be challenged on the basis of whether such 'common sense' coercion is just. This would apply above all to all northern countries, and the mythic market-driven 'democracies' being forced upon most countries accepting the assistance of Bretton Woods institutions at this point in time.⁵³

My central concern here is not to give a definition of justice, but to trace how deeply privilege and its invisible, unacknowledged mastery over us has and continues to *subvert and turn our own best intentions into supplementary fuel for the fire of conflict around the world*. My project is to demonstrate that until privilege and its effects has been named, addressed head-on, by those who benefit from it the most, with its real life consequences for the majority around the globe, the violence will not stop.

My project is to make visible the invisible warp privilege creates so that we, in Canada, who are living and have lived and benefited from stolen land across the country, and the destruction of millions individually and as peoples, *can imagine ourselves peace facilitators for others around the globe without even acknowledging that we are metaphorically standing knee-deep in the blood of the people of Turtle Island*. I want to follow the gorge of privilege, and its deep role in sustaining conflict

⁵³ Defining justice unilaterally is, I agree, a 'hopeless and pompous' task. However, let it be clear that I am writing in the context of a northern university that itself is rooted in the subtle 'common sense' coercion of hierarchy. It is important to make such consent to even subtle coercion clear because it is exactly such consent to subtle coercion that I am analyzing – and how anticipated privilege – a Master's degree in this case – is the driving force behind my concession to such coercion, so common in day-to-day life.

through its constant subverting of our own theoretical and practical reach toward justice.

Perspectives and Assumptions

Both PAR (Participatory Action Research) and AOP (Anti-Oppressive Practice) share the understanding that researchers are knowledge producers and are located within a complex set of social structures. Their identities, motives, and agendas influence the questions they ask, the methods they use, and the conclusions they draw. In other words, the production of knowledge is not an 'objective' exercise...

Recognizing that multiple forms of oppression are perpetuated daily through language, discourse, societal institutions and cultural dominance, AOP research is, at its core, about power relations. Inasmuch as traditional knowledge is critically questioned and examined, AOP is considered to be a political act.⁵⁴

Much research in the northern academy, especially in conflict studies is focused on the most vulnerable populations either within the north itself or within the global context. The push for research among the materially poor or contextually vulnerable populations is becoming a criterion of 'legitimacy' among northern researchers and practitioners. If one has not seen 'life in the trenches' of the globe, one should refrain from speaking.

The growing research among (on, as opposed to by) the most vulnerable populations has come to signify **not** the growing space that the majority's reality is taking among the academic discourse nor that the global majority have become the primary *beneficiaries* in any advantageous way of this research itself (Tuhiwai Smith, Brown & Strega, Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois), but rather that the northern researcher is often the primary if not exclusive beneficiary of *legitimacy* for having done his or her 'time', much like active service in military and war is considered a must for some generations of European and North American politicians. Needless to say, that this very privileging of work among the most vulnerable populations has served to continue most often entrenching privilege of those who have the most privilege already.

⁵⁴ Rutman, D., Hubberstey, C., Barlow, A., Brown, E., "Supporting Young People's Transitions from Care: Reflections on Doing Participatory Action Research with Youth from Care", in Brown & Strega, p. 156

As a consequence of this observation, I have decided to focus my research not on the most vulnerable populations, but rather on a very powerful population, institutionally, knowledge-determining, and practise setting, in conflict studies: namely northern actors, agencies and institutions.

...(The privileged) are taught to think of their lives as morally neutral, normative, and average, and also ideal, so that when we work to benefit others, this is seen as work that will allow 'them' to be more like 'us'.⁵⁵

Virginia Woolf is renowned for having said men (living in European patriarchal mode) like to be reflected twice their size.

Women have served all these centuries as looking glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size...That is why Napoleon and Mussolini both insist so emphatically upon the inferiority of women, for if they were not inferior, they would cease to enlarge. That serves to explain in part the necessity that women so often are to men. And it serves to explain how restless they are under her criticism...For if she begins to tell the truth, the figure in the looking glass shrinks; his fitness for life is diminished. How is he to go on giving judgments, civilizing natives,⁵⁶ making laws, writing books, dressing up and speechifying at banquets, unless he can see himself at breakfast and at dinner at least twice the size he really is?⁵⁷

I believe traditional research practise has contributed to this phenomenon for most privileged groups. I hope to use this thesis to 'downsize' our own image of ourselves through a realistic reflection of the impact our 'moral intent and strategic practical wisdom' have had in history and continue especially today in the field of conflict studies. Until we know, in detail, how our good intentions function to keep privilege intact at the cost of social justice, we will continue to simply dream dreams for others 'that they may one day be more like us'.

⁵⁵ McIntosh, P., "White Privilege and Male Privilege", in Heldke & O'Connor, p. 319

⁵⁶ Woolf's casual racism here demonstrates what is often asserted by feminists challenging white feminism's racism: "... Larissa Behrendt has argued that the 'protection' of white woman from 'savages' was not only crucial in justifying colonizers' brutal oppression of indigenous Australians and the sexualization of Aboriginal women, but its legacies continue into the present." in Paisely, F., 'Citizenship, Women and Social Justice: International Historical Perspectives' in "Journal of Australian Studies", June 2001, p. 209 ff, downloaded on Sept 22, 2005. Electronic collection: A78538882, RN:A78538882, Queensland, University of Queensland Press, © 2001

⁵⁷ Woolf, V., *A Room of One's Own*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, ©1992, p. 45-7 (Original publication: 1929)

Hypothesis

The hypothesis framing my research is that privilege, combined with and because of, ignorance of our own active albeit unacknowledged role in conflicts, past and present, largely keeps northern actors from critically engaging with the question of the role privilege plays in both framing and driving work within less privileged contexts; that this very lack of self-critical reflection, at best, limits the effectiveness of work toward justice and at worst, replicates the very structures and dynamics that drive and sustain many deep-rooted, often violent conflicts. I propose that such replication is traceable in the theory and practise of northern actors. Moreover, my hypothesis is supported by an exploration of the role and evidence of subtle or not so subtle strategic relations of force at work within development and peace work.

I demonstrate that it is only through critically engaging with and foregoing our dissembling, and the supposed 'innocence', of privilege, individually and collectively, and through entering fully into the complex reality of conflict as reflective, active parties to the conflict itself, that gives any hope for our work to contribute significantly to addressing entrenched and violent conflict around the world, beginning at home.

Chapter 2 - Fear and the Desire 'To Be'

Introduction

This chapter explores, in-depth, the theory that provides the lens through which I will analyse privilege – that of Judith Butler, Christoph Dejours, and Primo Levi. Yet, 'autobiography is a powerful tool for making visible the everyday and embodied world of (people's) lives' (Brown & Strega, 75). Before delving into theory, I begin with a personal story.

One night, I was at a bar (in Winnipeg) with several friends catching up on life and laughter. Someone completely unknown to us approached our table and said she and her friends weren't racist and enjoy hanging out with 'Native women' so why didn't we join them instead of hanging out *alone*. We all stared at our shoes.

The woman had leaped into the gorge of privilege and was disconcerted at our barely concealed looks of astonishment, embarrassment and distaste at watching someone dive willingly into such a pit, inviting us to *follow* her. She was absolutely convinced she was being courageous, and 'nice'. She returned to her own table in confusion at our immediate retreat.

Privilege entails, at its core, a profound relational and moral vacuity. Like privilege, the relational vacuity is invisible, most of all, to those who have it. To many others, it is glaringly obvious.

Relational vacuity is the gorge the privileged fall into when privilege fails. The privileged flail about vulnerable in not knowing what has just happened.⁵⁸ (When privilege functions, those without privilege are perpetually vulnerable to its (ab)uses. When it fails, all persons, including the privileged, are vulnerable.) Some will attribute the retreat of those near them to culture, communication and/or character (defects usually). And some will beg those in retreat to explain their behaviour. The

⁵⁸ I, personally, know this gorge 'from the inside' – times when my own re-inscribing of assumed privilege has 'failed'.

burden falls not on the privileged, but on those who have just been cast onto the periphery.

In the bar that night every table was its own centre, its own hub. The moment the invitation was issued we, in no uncertain terms, knew we had just become, not a 'you' but a 'them'. In that instant, there are no words. There are no words to restore the multiple centres because *one* person has just asserted their centre to be singular, exclusive, albeit 'welcoming' to any wishing to constellate themselves accordingly.⁵⁹

When privilege fails, the privileged suddenly and predictably take it personally. Because privilege is a largely invisible unearned advantage, assumed largely without conscious decision, the privileged have no capacity to understand and relate when privilege fails. There has been no work involved, no discernment, no deep engagement with the unearned advantage. When it fails, there are no resources to turn to, no earned knowledge or wisdom gained along the way. There is only a gaping moral and relational vacuity all get pitched into at a surprising velocity.

Sudden, intense vulnerability is difficult to deal with for all people. Yet, in relation to someone with power, vulnerability can become rather dangerous; without reflection, the more privileged will exercise whatever power at hand, to restore a sense of familiarity – a return to an assumed position of centre.

What happened in the bar that night was limited in its capacity to cause serious immediate harm beyond the common re-inscription of delegation to the periphery: we were more or less on a temporary 'level' playing field.

People with privilege, however, will usually have at their disposal, institutional power, authority, positions of hierarchy, a sense of 'rightness' not grounded in

⁵⁹ I am grateful to Edward Schillebeeckx's article for the delineation of 3 'false' dynamics of religion: singular (superior) truth; election (only those who 'accept' it unquestioningly can benefit from it); and, *the* truth that guarantees the well-being of humanity. I 'translate' these here as, and draw the parallel through referring to, singular centre, exclusive centre, 'welcoming' centre; see Schillebeeckx, E., "Documentation: Religion and Violence", *Concilium* (1997/4): 129-142

reality, though effective in its consequences. Had the woman who approached our table that night had institutional authority over any of us, at work for example, the situation would have played itself out, likely, very differently.

Privilege is a macroscopic system of advantages, largely assumed positions of centre, conferred on specific groups of people, without justification, and intimately disguised and perceived, *instituted, played out between individuals*. Its consequences are personal: the job not offered, the name not remembered, the partner not mentioned, the apartment denied. These personal consequences are multiplied systematically, and can be apprehended only from the macro perspective: white men have most positions of institutional hierarchal power, with a token peppering of women and 'minorities';⁶⁰ and a world focused primarily, if not exclusively, albeit invisibly on the privileged having easier access to life sustaining resources. When privilege functions, largely only the people cast onto the periphery notice its dynamics. The privileged largely perceive it as 'normal' day-to-day life.

Given that one of the central functions of privilege is to dissemble itself, and given that it can be apprehended largely only in effect, it makes privilege difficult to theorize. A critical analysis of power can assist in theorizing privilege.

Privilege has systemic consequences, yet is essentially put into practice and sustained through and by individuals. It is of critical importance to my analysis then to attempt a delineation of how the systemic-personal-systemic-personal dynamic of privilege works. This is not a linear dynamic, yet words (with perhaps the exception of poetry and of Gertrude Stein) can delineate only in linear terms.

Understanding the intertwined faces at play in power and privilege, both systemically and at the deeply personal level, is necessary to be able to make sense of how it is that ordinary people can come to participate knowingly or otherwise in

⁶⁰ It is important to remember that women are 52% of the population, and educated white men are a very, very small proportion of the globe's population; speaking of 'minorities' to speak of the globe's majority is very misleading.

such phenomena as crimes against humanity, in our day-to-day lives. Through an exploration of power and its dynamics lived largely in the extreme, some of the more subtle faces of both power and privilege come to be seen, again largely through effect.

I now turn to the most extreme face of power or to its most extreme manifestation in order to make its effects clearer. In the extreme, power exercised as a system of domination comes to enact itself, barefaced and unapologetically, as naked power, tyranny.

Azar Nafisi's description of life as a woman in Iran several years following the 1979 revolution speaks to both the systemic and intimate aspects of tyranny.

The worst crime committed by totalitarian mindsets is that they force their citizens, including their victims to become complicit in their crimes. Dancing with your jailer, participating in your own execution, that is an act of utmost brutality....

(Our jailers) invaded all private spaces and tried to shape every gesture, to force us to become one of them, and that in itself was another form of execution."⁶¹

Such regimes are at work not only in countries like Iran.

In January 1904, an Indian (E)lder from Alberta was found dancing in a traditional Indian ceremony. Although he was more than ninety years old, feeble, and almost blind, he was charged and sentenced to two months of hard labour in prison. The Indian Affairs Department eventually agreed to free the (E)lder because of his age and poor health. But dozens of other Indians were less fortunate. They were fined or jailed for as long as four months for the same crime. The restrictions on Indian dances were tightened again in 1914 and 1918 *with new amendments to the Indian Act which made it easier for the government to obtain convictions for spiritual misbehaviour*. In 1921, the RCMP raided a (P)otlatch on Vancouver Island, arresting dozens of Indians and confiscating masks and other spiritual objects. Forty-five of the Indians were jailed.⁶² (my emphasis)

It is important to consider the intimate personal effects, fully intended by power, and again, lived and carried out by people, alone and collectively.

In Tehran:

Several months into the class, my girls and I discovered that almost every one of us had had at least one nightmare in some form or another in which we either had forgotten to wear our veil or had not worn it, and always in these dreams the dreamer was running, running away. In one, perhaps my own, the dreamer wanted to run but she couldn't: she was rooted to the ground, right outside her front door. She could not turn around, open the door and hide inside. The only one among us who claimed she had never

⁶¹ Nafisi, A., *Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books*, Random House, New York, ©2003, p. 76-77

⁶² York, G., *The Dispossessed: Life and Death in Native Canada*, Toronto, McArthur & Company, ©1990, p. 264

experienced such fear was Nassrin. "I was always afraid of having to lie. You know what they say: to thine own self be true and all that. I believed in that sort of thing," she said with a shrug. "But I have improved", she added as an afterthought. Later, Nima told us that the son of one of his friends, a ten-year-old, had awakened his parents in horror telling them he had been having an 'illegal dream'.... He kept repeating to his parents that he was having illegal dreams.⁶³

On Turtle Island/Canada:

Now the following is, it seems to me, the way in which to acquire an ascendancy over our Savages....The...means of making ourselves welcome to these people, would be to erect here (at Québec) a seminary for little boys, and in time one for little girls...They could be instructed here with all freedom, being separated from their parents.⁶⁴

'Dreams above all have here great credit,' a Jesuit wrote in 1635. (Mealing, 45). The 'illegal dreams' and nightmares of Nafisi's story can be only be imagined magnified a thousand-fold for Onkwehonwe children and adults of Turtle Island: first because of the centrality of dream life to Onkwehonwe life and culture traditionally; secondly because of the merciless tyranny of fear, in all intimate spheres, instilled and inculcated by force *over centuries*; and thirdly, by having fewer and fewer places free of colonial domination.

What began as a European Jesuit mission to 'save souls' in the 'New World' was itself a tyranny of the most intimate and personal spheres, over centuries, and this even despite the fact that the Jesuits themselves encountered Onkwehonwe traditions they could only admire.

You note, in the first place, a great love and union, which they are careful to cultivate by means of their marriages, of their presents, of their feasts, and of their frequent visits. On returning from their fishing, their hunting and their trading, they exchange many gifts; if they have thus obtained something unusually good, even if they have bought it, or if it has been given to them, they make a feast to the whole village with it. Their hospitality towards all sorts of strangers is remarkable; they present to them, in their feasts, the best of what they have prepared, and, as I have already said, *I do not know if anything similar, in this regard, is to be found anywhere*. They never close the door upon a Stranger, and once having received him into their houses, they share with him the best they have; they never send him away, and when he goes away of his own accord, he repays them by a simple 'thank you'.⁶⁵ (my emphasis)

The Jesuits told the people to whom they preached that 'in order to honour God and to be happy in Heaven, they must abandon vice; live as men, and not as beasts; think more of their souls, that are immortal, than of a body that will rot after death (27:51). They evoked the 'pure spirit' of Christ as one that 'destroys nature, and causes grace to

⁶³ Nafisi, p. 46

⁶⁴ Mealing, S. R., (ed.), *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: A Selection*, Ottawa, Carleton University Press, ©1990, p. 29, 28

⁶⁵ Mealing, p. 45-46

live,' finding 'its delight and its repose, not in plush and satin, but in a soul enriched with loving fear' (27:181).⁶⁶

Colonization was a project of contestation over power, of willed domination by Europe over the rest of the globe. Central to colonization's power and domination at all cost, is the colonization of intimate spheres and colonization of the meaning of what it means to be human. Missionaries did not hesitate at all, much like the religious/political leaders today in many countries, including some democracies,⁶⁷ to ascertain without doubt what it means to be human.

Ordinary Lives

Documentation of genocides, crimes against humanity and mass atrocities are clear in one regard: such events do not, and more importantly, can not take place without the participation of 'ordinary' people living 'ordinary' lives.

I am convinced that legacies, especially the cumulative violent legacies of the North American Holocaust and colonization, as well as the Holocaust at the heart of Europe in WWII do not take place because of a few masterminds. Rather I am convinced that it is ordinary people: teachers, priests, social workers, police officers, judges, bureaucrats with ordinary jobs and perhaps loving families, that make such atrocities possible.⁶⁸

Hannah Arendt's controversial book *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, as well as much of the emerging legacy of residential schools in Canada demonstrate clearly how ordinary people, with 'ordinary' jobs, jobs perhaps

⁶⁶ Blackburn, C., *Harvest of Souls: The Jesuit Missions and Colonialism in North America 1632-1650*, Montreal & Kingston, McGill-Queen's University Press, ©2000, p. 58-59

⁶⁷ The mayor of Jerusalem - democratically elected in 2003 - refuses to shake hands with 52% of his constituents (female). See Erlanger, S., "Jerusalem mayor tries a balancing act", in [The International Herald Tribune](#), July 11, 2005.

⁶⁸ See the website www.breakingthesilence.org.il where former Israeli soldiers previously assigned to the occupied territories are beginning to reveal the daily atrocities they are forced or induced into as part of the Israel's 'self defense' against Palestinians. These former soldiers admit clearly that Israeli society does not want to 'know' about these atrocities. See "Wo ein barfüssiger Bub zum Feind wird", (Where a Barefooted Boy becomes the Enemy), [Tages-Anzeiger](#), 2 May 2006, p. 12

even considered as contributing something of 'value' to society, made and make the carrying out of such atrocities possible – over years in Germany, and over centuries in the Americas.

We, at present, in peacebuilding and conflict work, have no ground on which to claim more insight, more foresight, or more sophistication than our ancestors had; to claim that we suffer less from the moral and relational vacuity privilege entails, or that we are less seduced by the systemic 'attractions' of power. Rather, it is precisely because our ancestors' legacies, even and especially "well-intentioned" legacies, have gone and are still going so wrong, at such cost to millions around the world and at home, that we must take these legacies to heart. For we are now those 'ordinary people.' Without deep and critical reflection, the chance that our work too, will contribute as deeply to destructive and violent legacies is high.⁶⁹

Once more, for the purposes of my exploration, it must be stressed, that the most devastating and destructive policies against Onkwehonwe in Canadian education and law did not come about in the 17th or 18th century, at the time when power relations were continually contested and having to be negotiated:⁷⁰ For Onkwehonwe, being forced to 'dance with their jailer, participate in their own execution, (the) act of utmost brutality....' has taken place in 20th Century Canada, and continues intact into the present.⁷¹ The official, intentional policies and practices of Canadian Settler society and government, facilitating "the invasion of all private

⁶⁹ "Canada's International Policy Statement...suggests that the Canadian military will now be engaged in 'stabilization operations' that require soldiers *to wage war to advance foreign policy goals, something they are now doing by killing insurgents in Afghanistan...*(my emphasis). In Afghanistan aid will be delivered in order to win support... Colonel Steven Bowes, the commander (of Canadian forces in Afghanistan) said, 'Projects that improve the basic living standard are a start, but we are not into development for development's sake' in Maloney, S., & Fennell, T., "Soldiers, Not Peacekeepers: Canada wages war in Afghanistan", in *The Walrus Magazine*, March 2006, Volume 3 Issue 2, p. 48-59

⁷⁰ See Blackburn, p. 83-84

⁷¹ See NFB Films by Alanis Obomsawin: "Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance" (1993); "Rocks at Whiskey Trench" (2000); "Is the Crown at War with Us?" (2002). These films demonstrate directly the continued current use of overt violence combined with structural violence by the Settler government and population forcing Onkwehonwe to 'dance with the executioner', through forced agreements of giving up inherent rights for simulated rights, re-inscribing and sustaining the colonial legacy to date.

spaces, the attempt to shape every gesture, (to force Onkwehonwe to become like Settlers), itself another form of execution" have taken place within the last 120 years, continuing as *official policy* until as recently as twenty years ago, when the last residential schools were closed. The tyranny of Nafisi's Iran is not remote history in Canada. The 'illegal dreams' still haunt many Onkwehonwe today.

We understand that Canada has under no circumstances ever tried to exercise any good faith with us. They have never, at any time or at any moment in history, extended any peaceful means toward us – aside from when they needed our military help to be allies in wars against the French or the Americans...

Once you begin to unravel history and what the government has done to us, you can start to trace the genesis of our fears...

All of those people (in positions of authority) are there for the same purpose, which is the occupation of your territory, the stealing of your resources, and to lie and cheat you into the history books.⁷²

Several questions that need to be considered in the face of privilege's role in the subversion of justice, are: How is it possible, for ordinary people, such as teachers and police officers, and all others involved, to see and participate in forcing thousands upon thousands of very young children to be ripped from their homes and families against their and the will of their parents and communities, to see the intense, intense suffering this caused every day, and still believe in the 'work' they were doing? How is it possible that every person needed in the bureaucracy (police officer, judge, jury) to put a feeble, blind 90-year-old man in prison to perform hard labour, because he danced a ceremonial dance, not suffer a profound crisis of conscience?

It is important now to turn to an in-depth analysis of power and subject to inquire into and to come to understand that indeed conscience itself may be a central anchor of operations of power.

...The inner life of consciousness and, indeed, of conscience, not only is fabricated by power, but becomes one of the ways in which power is anchored in subjectivity...Power is no longer understood to be "internalized" by an existing subject, but the subject is

⁷² Alfred (2005), p. 92-93

spawned as an ambivalent effect of power, one that is staged through the operation of conscience.⁷³

Power, Fear and the Desire to Be

Power, according to Foucault, cannot be understood solely on the model of domination as something possessed and deployed by individuals or sovereign agents over others, with a singular intentionality, structure, or location that presides over its rationality and execution. Rather, power is to be understood as a strategic relation of force that permeates life and is productive of new forms of desires, objects, relations and discourses (Foucault 1978, 1980). Secondly, the subject, argues Foucault, does not precede power relations, in the form of an individuated consciousness, but is produced through these relations, which form the necessary conditions of its possibility. Central to his formulation is what Foucault calls the paradox of *subjectivation*: the very processes and conditions that secure a subject's subordination are also the means by which she becomes a self-conscious identity and agent.⁷⁴

Foucault's concept, as delineated by Mahmood above, touches on the dynamics which I see at the heart of privilege: a strategic relation of force that permeates life; in its permeation, these relations are themselves productive of desire, objects, relations and discourses; and that the very process by which one is 'subordinated' are also the very means by which one comes to identity and agency. There is, for Foucault, no 'individual' core that precedes or comes to be completely separate from the strategic relation of force one is born into; and it is the very strategic relation of force which makes an 'I' possible, albeit only through subordination to and simultaneous re-enactment of this same strategic relation of force.

Judith Butler takes up Foucault's concept of power as a strategic relation of force that permeates life and itself is productive of particular 'subjects'. I take up Butler's work primarily because it is one of the few theoretical formulations that brings Foucault's theory of power together with theories of the psyche.

...(A)n account of subjection, it seems must be traced in the turns of psychic life. More specifically, it must be traced in the peculiar turning of a subject against itself that takes place in acts of self-reproach, conscience, and melancholia *that work in tandem with processes of social regulation*. And yet, if we refuse the ontological dualism that posits the separation of the political and the psychic, it seems crucial to offer a *critical account of psychic subjection in terms of the regulatory and productive effects of power*. If forms

⁷³ Butler, J., *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, ©1997, back cover

⁷⁴ Mahmood, p. 17

of regulatory power are sustained in part through the formation of a subject, and *if that formation takes place according to the requirements of power, specifically, as the incorporation of norms, then a theory of subject formation must give an account of this process of incorporation...* How does the subjection of desire require and institute the desire for subjection?⁷⁵ (my emphasis)

The conjunction of the theory of power and theory of the psyche is necessary to come to understand to some degree how and why it is that people, 'ordinary' people, in their day to day lives, are indispensable to sustaining particular relations of force and, at the extreme, how people can be forced into a place of needing to 'dance with your jailer, participate in your own execution.'

The insistence that a subject is passionately attached to his or her own subordination has been invoked cynically by those who seek to debunk the claims of the subordinated. If a subject can be shown to pursue or sustain his or her subordinated status, the reasoning goes, then perhaps final responsibility for that subordination resides with the subject. Over and against this view, I would maintain that the attachment to subjection is produced through the workings of power, and that part of the operation of power is made clear in this psychic effect, one of the most insidious of its productions.⁷⁶

Butler posits that such 'operations of power' begin at birth.

Although the dependency of the child is not *political* subordination in any usual sense, the formation of primary passion in dependency renders the child vulnerable to subordination and exploitation... *Moreover, this situation of primary dependency conditions the political formation and regulation of subjects and becomes the means of their subjection.* If there is no formation of the subject without a passionate attachment to those by whom she or he is subordinated, then subordination proves central to the becoming of the subject. As the condition of becoming a subject, subordination implies being in mandatory submission. Moreover, the desire to survive, "to be", is a pervasively exploitable desire. The one who holds out the promise of continued existence plays to the desire to survive. "I would rather exist in subordination than not exist" is one formulation of this predicament (where the risk of death is also possible)...If the child is to persist in a psychic and social sense, there must be dependency and the formation of attachment: there is no possibility of not loving, where love is bound up with the requirements for life.⁷⁷

Butler sees love and survival as intimately intertwined in 'becoming', and that becoming entails subordination: 'mandatory submission' to those one 'loves' is necessary in order to emerge as subject; and that this primary dependency 'conditions the political formation and regulation of subjects'.

⁷⁵ Butler, p. 18-19

⁷⁶ Butler, p. 6

⁷⁷ Butler, p. 7-8

Before going on with Butler's theory of power and psyche, two 'disclaimers' are necessary to avoid inherent confusion in my use of Butler's work in my exploration. It is important, at this point, to name these two 'disclaimers'.

First, although I use Butler's theory centrally in my exploration, as it does shed light on current strategic relations of force as they are experienced currently in much of the world, I do not agree that the intimate intertwining of love and survival are *necessarily* or *naturally* a prerequisite to coming 'to be'. That 'the desire to survive is a pervasively exploitable desire' does not mean its exploitation has always been or needs to continue to be the prerequisite to coming 'to be'.

Secondly, it is important to address two paradoxes in carrying out the discussion of 'subject': the first paradox is that, in many theories from Hegel to Nietzsche to Althusser, the 'subject' is considered to become 'subject' at the moment of 'internalization' of norms, of prohibitions, or of interpellation.

The moment we seek to determine how power produces its subject, how the subject takes in the power by which it is inaugurated, we seem to enter this topological quandary. We cannot presume a subject who performs an internalization if the formation of the subject is in need of explanation. The figure to which we refer has not yet acquired existence and is not part of a verifiable explanation, yet our reference continues to make a certain kind of sense. The paradox of subjection implies a paradox of referentiality: namely, that we must refer to what does not yet exist.⁷⁸

The second paradox that needs to be acknowledged is the following.

'The subject' is sometimes bandied about as if it were interchangeable with "the person" or "the individual". The genealogy of the subject as a critical category, however, suggests that the subject, rather than be identified strictly with the individual, ought to be designated as a linguistic category, a placeholder, a structure in formation. Individuals come to occupy the site of the subject (the subject simultaneously emerges as a "site"), and they enjoy intelligibility only to the extent that they are, as it were, first established in language. The subject is the linguistic occasion for the individual to achieve and reproduce intelligibility, the linguistic condition of its existence and agency. No individual becomes a subject without first becoming subjected or undergoing "subjectivation" (a translation of the French *assujétissement*). It makes little sense to treat "the individual" as an intelligible term if individuals are said to acquire their intelligibility by becoming subjects. Paradoxically, no intelligible reference to individuals or their becoming can take place without a prior reference to their status of subjects.⁷⁹

Let me summarize the two disclaimers: I will use Butler's work focusing on the pervasively exploitable desire to survive, without attributing a natural or

⁷⁸ Butler, p. 4

⁷⁹ Butler, p. 10-11

necessary state to its exploitation; secondly, to speak of 'subject' within Foucaultian conceptions of power, is to 'refer to what does not yet exist'; and that the term 'subject' does not denote directly the individual or the person, but is used as a 'linguistic category...a structure in formation' which the individual/person at a 'later' point comes to occupy. I expect a discussion is still possible despite these inherent paradoxes.

There are four elements of power and psyche that are relevant to my exploration. These four elements are:

- the exploitation of the desire 'to be'
- the emergence of conscience
- power as subject formation, and power as willed effect of the subject
- power and reiteration

I will address each of these in turn as much as possible. Again I remind the reader that I am not addressing discrete steps of a chronological process, but rather attempting a delineation of simultaneous dynamics inherent in Foucault and Butler's conception of power and subject.

The Exploitation of the Desire to Be

Let me return to the above Butler quotation, but take it in discreet sections for clarification. She says:

If the child is to persist in a psychic and social sense, there must be dependency and the formation of attachment: there is no possibility of not loving, where love is bound up with the requirements for life.

Love, according to Butler is not NOT possible, where it is bound up with the requirements of life. Current strategic relations of force are such that, as infants and young children, we may need to 'love in order to survive'. This may not be as far-fetched as it may first appear. Young children not under intense threat will often say

that they would prefer to live with another person, a friend of the family or another family member. In most European Canadian households, this is simply considered neither a legitimate 'desire', nor a legitimate concern.

Yet, in cultures where survival was a matter of the larger community and not of a particular household, children were rarely constricted to one household or to one pair of adults for primary relationship. Once mobile, they were free to choose whom they took meals with, where they slept and who they spent their time with. This is still the case on occasion, most often in Onkwehonwe communities (which still causes 'scandal' among Settler communities). The child is considered free to choose his or her own company, and physical survival is not attached to particular adult figures.

Where children are not free to choose where to live or with whom, loving to survive indeed often becomes necessary, as is documented over and over again in child abuse, including incest. The child has come to love their abusers, often only as a survival strategy.⁸⁰ It is also true that not all nuclear families are abusive families, yet enough are to some degree that a postcard saying 'One nuclear family is enough to ruin your whole life' circulated and sold copiously in my undergraduate days.

Where the elements necessary for physical survival are conditional upon submission, often dissimulated as 'love', submission cannot help but become a part of the dynamic of survival, of relationship itself. Attaching a degree of submission to the conditions of physical survival will in most cases ensure submission to some degree. In current strategic relations of force, Butler identifies this as a key to political formation.

Although the dependency of the child is not *political* subordination in any usual sense, the formation of primary passion in dependency renders the child vulnerable to subordination and exploitation... Moreover, this situation of primary dependency

⁸⁰ For more in-depth analysis of this, see Herman, J., *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence – From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*, New York, BasicBooks, ©1992; and Graham, D. L. R., *Loving to Survive: Sexual Terror, Men's Violence and Women's Lives*, New York, New York University Press, ©1994

conditions the political formation and regulation of subjects and becomes the means of their subjection.

Further, she says,

Bound to seek recognition of its own existence in categories, terms, and names that are not of its own making, the subject seeks the sign of its own existence outside itself, in a discourse that is at once dominant and indifferent. Social categories signify subordination and existence at once. In other words, within subjection the price of existence is subordination. Precisely at the moment in which choice is impossible, the subject pursues subordination as the promise of existence. The pursuit is not choice, but neither is it necessity. Subjection exploits the desire for existence, where existence is always conferred from elsewhere; it marks a primary vulnerability to the Other in order to be.⁸¹

Two elements here are important to highlight for further consideration in my analysis. First, a 'forced choice' is not a choice as Žižek observed in Chapter One. Secondly, that subjection 'marks a primary vulnerability to the Other in order to be' consists in a wide range of possibilities not considered by Butler. I will address how I see a 'primary vulnerability to the Other' as a resource and not necessarily only or primarily as *the* core of exploitative subjection, in Chapter Four.

The Emergence of Conscience

Let me once again return to the quotation above this section:

Power is no longer understood to be "internalized" by an existing subject, but the subject is spawned as an ambivalent effect of power, one that is staged through the operation of conscience.

Conscience then, in Butler's analysis, through the subject is itself an 'ambivalent effect of power'. This is a crucial point to understanding how individuals come to participate in power and in power's most insidious forms. Therefore, I ask the reader to bear with me as I explore Butler's pitch into psychoanalytic theory. Although it is not central to my exploration that one understands psychoanalytic theory in detail, certain elements, like the emergence of conscience as posited here, must be apprehended that my exploration further along can be followed to its conclusion.

⁸¹ Butler, p. 20-21

Butler, in her reading of classical psychoanalytic theory, comes to accept a premise in modern psychology, beginning with Freud, which is again core to her theory, yet for my exploration must be taken centrally into account without attributing it as *natural* or *necessary* to human development. In her assertion of current strategic relations of force entailing a degree of mandatory submission in order to emerge as subject, she asserts that the dependency on which this submission is based must come to be denied if the subject is to emerge as subject.

No subject can emerge without this attachment, formed in dependency, but no subject, in the course of its formation, can ever afford fully to "see" it. This attachment in its primary forms must both *come to be* and *be denied*, its coming to be must consist in its partial denial, for the subject to emerge.⁸²

Butler posits two key 'moments': that attachment formed in dependency is critical to the subject's emergence; and that attachment formed in dependency needs to be denied by the adult, although sought out again and again to 'persist' in a sense of self.

To desire the conditions of one's own subordination is thus required to persist as oneself. What does it mean to embrace the very form of power – regulation, prohibition, suppression – that threatens one with dissolution in an effort, precisely to persist in one's own existence? It is not simply that one requires recognition of the other and that a form of recognition is conferred through subordination, but rather that one is dependent on power for one's very formation, that that formation is impossible without dependency, and that the posture of the adult subject consists precisely in the denial and reenactment of this dependency. The "I" emerges upon the condition that it deny its formation in dependency, the conditions of its own possibility.⁸³

This 'turn' against oneself is said, in psychoanalytic theory, to be the emergence of conscience.

Freud and Nietzsche offer differing accounts of subject formation that rely on the productivity of the norm. Both account for the fabrication of conscience as the effect of an internalized prohibition (thereby establishing "prohibition" as not only privative, but productive). In Freud and Nietzsche, a prohibition on action or expression is said to turn "the drive" back on itself, fabricating an internal sphere, the condition for self-inspection and reflexivity. The driving back upon itself becomes the precipitating condition of subject formation, a primary longing in recoil that is traced in Hegel's view of the unhappy consciousness as well. Whether this doubling back upon itself is performed by primary longings, desire, or drives, it produces in each instance a psychic habit of self-beratement, one that is consolidated over time as conscience...(Thus one never "knows" oneself prior to the recoil of desire in question.)⁸⁴

⁸² Butler, p. 8-9

⁸³ Butler, p. 9-10

⁸⁴ Butler, p. 22

Freud posits another concept critical to my exploration.

Freud distinguishes between repression and foreclosure, suggesting that a repressed desire might once have lived apart from its prohibition, but that foreclosed desire is rigorously barred, constituting the subject through a certain kind of pre-emptive loss.⁸⁵

The difference between repression and foreclosure is that repression takes place only after one has recognized the possibility of something: I know I can be in love with two people at once, but that is not 'allowed', considered legitimate morally, socially, legally, practically. So I will repress one love, recognizing it at some level perhaps as a loss. However, foreclosure operates such that the very possibility itself of being in love with two people is not recognized, let alone repressed. As Butler says,

...The foreclosure of homosexuality appears to be foundational to a certain heterosexual version of the subject. The formula "I have never loved" someone of similar gender and "I have never lost" any such person predicates the "I" on the "never-never" of that love and loss. Indeed, the ontological accomplishment of heterosexual "being" is traced to this double negation...

As foreclosure, the sanction works not to prohibit existing desire but to produce certain kinds of objects and to bar others from the field of social production...Marked for "death", the object is, as it were, already lost, and...if loved, would spell destruction for the one who loves.

Can we read the workings of social power precisely in the delimitation of the field of such objects, objects marked for death?⁸⁶

It is not simply that certain 'objects' are produced, but that some are also always already pre-emptively 'marked for death'. Such dynamics affect not only objects but simultaneously desires, relations and discourses as well.⁸⁷

Power as Subject Formation - Power as Willed Effect of the Subject

'Subjection' signifies the process of becoming subordinated by power as well as the process of becoming a subject.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Butler, p. 23

⁸⁶ Butler, p. 23, 24, 25, 27

⁸⁷ Throughout the writing of this thesis, I have had many conversations with people about the role fear plays in modern economies. The majority of conversations circle around the very common 'core' belief that if fear were not part of economic practice, economies would collapse. People willingly, creatively and happily contributing actively and continually to life sustaining community, without fear as primary motivator, I posit here as an example of a 'discourse marked for death' in modern societies.

⁸⁸ Butler, p. 2

Because the term subjection is used in both senses as delineated above, the term is predicated on an ambivalence that must be addressed. The question is often asked in oppositional terms: is power that which forms the subject or is power that which the subject wields? It is both.

In each case, power that at first appears as external, pressed upon the subject, pressing the subject into subordination, assumes a psychic form that constitutes the subject's self-identity.

A power *exerted on* a subject, subjection is nevertheless a power *assumed by* the subject, an assumption that constitutes the instrument of that subject's becoming.

Power not only *acts on* a subject but, in a transitive sense, *enacts* the subject into being. As a condition, power precedes the subject. Power loses its appearance of priority, however, when it is wielded by the subject, a situation that gives rise to the reverse perspective that power is the effect of the subject, and that power is what subjects effect. A condition does not enable or enact without becoming present. Because Power is not intact prior to the subject, the appearance of its priority disappears as power acts on the subject, and the subject is inaugurated (and derived) through this temporal reversal in the horizon of power. As the agency of the subject, power assumes its present temporal dimension. (Footnote to text: For power to act, there *must* be a subject, but that necessity does not make the subject into the origin of power.)⁸⁹

A final paragraph clarifying this ambivalence is necessary, and it makes the point of power's 'reversal and concealment' that will become critical in my exploration of privilege.

There is, as it were, no conceptual transition to be made between power as external to the subject, "acting on," and power as constitutive of the subject, "acted by". What one might expect by way of a transition is, in fact, a splitting and reversal constitutive of the subject itself. Power acts on the subject, an acting that is an enacting: an irresolvable ambiguity arises when one attempts to distinguish between the power that (transitively) enacts the subject, and the power enacted by the subject, that is, between the power that forms the subject and the subject's "own" power. What or who is doing the "enacting" here? Is it a power prior to the subject or that of the subject itself? At some point, a reversal and concealment occurs, and power emerges as what belongs exclusively to the subject (making the subject appear as if it belonged to no prior operation of power). Moreover, what is enacted by the subject is enabled but not finally constrained by the prior working of power. Agency exceeds the power by which it is enabled.⁹⁰

There are four particular points that I want to highlight in this discussion before going forward. The first is that there can be no clear distinction between the power that 'enacts' subjects, and the power 'acted by' subjects; secondly, for power to act there must be a subject, but this does not make the subject the origin of power; thirdly the expected transition from Power to Subject is theorized as located

⁸⁹ Butler, p. 3, 11, 13

⁹⁰ Butler, p. 15

in the 'splitting and reversal constitutive of the subject itself' – that is the 'moment' (figuratively speaking) when the 'subject' denies its subordination in dependence, which I addressed earlier, is the 'moment' of the expected 'transition', the same moment which is said to constitute conscience; and lastly, that the 'moment' addressed in the third point is constituted in a reversal and concealment of the 'enacting' power, into the 'guise' of what 'belongs' exclusively to the subject.

These four elements are central to my analysis of privilege in conflict studies and discourse in Chapter Three.

Power and Reiteration

Power is both external to the subject and the very venue of the subject. This apparent contradiction makes sense when we understand that no subject comes into being without power, but that its coming into being involves the dissimulation of power, a metaleptic reversal in which the subject produced by power becomes heralded as the subject who *founds* power. This foundationalism of the subject is an effect of a working of power, an effect achieved by reversal and concealment of that prior working. This does not mean that the subject can be *reduced* to the power by which it is occasioned, nor does it mean that the power by which it is occasioned is *reducible* to the subject. Power is never merely a condition external or prior to the subject, nor can it be exclusively identified with the subject. If conditions of power are to persist, they must be reiterated; the subject is precisely the site of such reiteration, a repetition that is never merely mechanical....The reiteration of power not only temporalizes the conditions of subordination but shows these conditions to be, not static structures, but temporalized – active and productive.⁹¹

Here, we begin to see the light that eases the tension in the structuralist-humanist debate: whether people are completely 'authored' by life circumstances and structures they are born into, or whether people 'author' their own lives.⁹² As Butler says, 'if conditions of power are to persist, they must be reiterated, 'meaning re-enacted, repeated, re-inscribed. However, the reiteration is 'never merely mechanical'.

'Assuming' power is no simple process, however, for power is not mechanically reproduced when it is assumed. Instead, on being assumed, power runs the risk of assuming another form and direction...A re-description of the domain of psychic subjection is needed to make clear how social power produces modes of reflexivity at the same time as it limits forms of sociality...The psychic operation of the norm offers a

⁹¹ Butler, p. 15-16

⁹² To understand the structuralist-humanist debate more fully, see Appiah, K.W., *The Ethics of Identity*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, ©2005; and Halliwell, M. & Mousley, A., *Critical Humanisms: Humanist/Anti-Humanist Dialogues*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, ©2003

more insidious route for regulatory power than explicit coercion, one whose success allows its tacit operation within the social. And yet, being psychic, the norm does not merely reinstate social power, it becomes formative and vulnerable in highly specific ways...Just as the subject is derived from conditions of power that precede it, so the psychic operation of the norm is derived, though not mechanically or predictably, from prior social operations.⁹³

It is then in the ambivalence of 'assuming' power that we come to the concept of 'agency' – the ability of each individual to act, in itself ambivalent.

Assuming power is not a straightforward task of taking power from one place, transferring it intact, and then and there making it one's own; the act of appropriation may involve an alteration of power such that the power assumed or appropriated works against the power that made that assumption possible. Where conditions of subordination make possible the assumption of power, the power assumed remains tied to those conditions, but in an ambivalent way; in fact, the power assumed may at once retain and resist that subordination. This conclusion is not to be thought of as (a) a resistance that is *really* a recuperation of power or (b) a recuperation that is *really* a resistance. It is both at once, and this ambivalence forms the bind of agency.

...(W)hat is enacted by the subject is enabled but not finally constrained by the prior working of power. Agency exceeds the power by which it is enabled....

Exceeding is not escaping, and the subject exceeds precisely that to which it is bound. In this sense, the subject cannot quell the ambivalence by which it is constituted. Painful, dynamic, and promising, this vacillation between the already-there and the yet-to-come is a crossroads that rejoins every step by which it is traversed, a reiterated ambivalence at the heart of agency. Power rearticulated is 're'-articulated in the sense of already done, and 're'-articulated in the sense of done over, done again, done anew.⁹⁴

Agency, that is, the capacity of a subject to act is both made possible by the operations of power, and yet, not *necessarily* constrained to the self-same operations of power. There is a space here, in power's need for reiteration that opens up somewhat to the volition of the subject. Yet this volition itself has been constituted by, and to some extent is dependant on, the operations of power and power's need for reiteration. When reiteration is taken up in different terms than the regulatory operations of power require (which is, on occasion, somewhat possible), that reiteration risks not being apprehended by regulatory power, hence the subject and the reiteration denied as 'non-existent'.

It is possible to observe a shadow of this dynamic in 'ordinary' day-to-day interactions, as Cohn observes, in the use of language when one is allowed into specific realms of power.

⁹³ Butler, p. 21

⁹⁴ Butler, p. 13, 15, 17-18

What I found was that no matter how well-informed or complex my questions were, if I spoke English rather than expert jargon, the men responded to me as though I were ignorant, simple-minded or both. It did not appear to occur to anyone that I might actually be choosing not to speak their language.

A strong distaste for being patronized and dismissed made my experiment in English short-lived. I adapted my everyday speech to the vocabulary of strategic analysis. I spoke of 'escalation dominance', 'pre-emptive strikes,' and, one of my favourites, 'sub-holocaust engagements'. Using the right phrases opened my way...⁹⁵

The subject's reiteration, and recognition, is still bound to the regulatory operations of power if it wishes to 'exist' as such. This bind, constitutive of agency itself, is central to my analysis.

In Summary

The question, how is it that ordinary people living ordinary lives come to participate and sustain crimes against humanity, opened this section of my exploration.

Foucault's theory of power and subject as profoundly and intimately constitutive of one another is a beginning point from which to understand that operations of power cannot be attributed "as something possessed and deployed by individuals or sovereign agents over others, with a singular intentionality, structure, or location that presides over its rationality and execution". The subject for Foucault does not "precede power relations, in the form of an individuated consciousness, but is produced through these relations, which form the necessary conditions of its possibility".

I have taken four key elements from Butler's theory that are key to my exploration here. These can be summarized as follows. Butler posits that all subjects 'come to be', first through an attachment formed in primary dependency, where the 'desire to be' is exploited through attachment (love), that is, a 'love' that is necessary to access the requirements of life. She posits that we are born into subordination – we must love in order to survive. In order to 'come to be' under

⁹⁵ Cohn, C., in Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, p. 358

terms not of our own making or choosing, we must and do concede to these terms, because of primary dependence, and the desire 'to be' - to exist socially (familial, political, social and economic being included).

Secondly, for Butler, the emergence of 'autonomy', of 'I' depends centrally on our denial of both the attachment formed in dependence, and of the necessary submission such attachment entails, to terms not of our own choosing; and simultaneously, the 'I' needs a degree of 're-enactment' of both attachment and submission, to persist as an 'I'. This 'turn' against ourselves, the conceding to terms not of our own making in order to exist, and its simultaneous denial and pursuit of 'I' through its re-enactment, marks for Butler the emergence of conscience.

Thirdly, for Butler, the 'transition' of power from being that which the enacts the emergence of 'I', and the 'I's agency, is not a transition as such, but takes place at the 'moment' of the 'turn' described above. The 'turn' of concession, denial and (unconscious?) re-enactment of the terms under which 'I' emerges, is the transition between power enacting the subject, and power acted by subject. This 'turn' is constituted through a reversal and concealment of the 'enacting' power, into the 'guise' of what 'belongs' exclusively to the subject. That power must be acted by a subject does not necessarily make the subject the origin of power, as Butler reminds us. 'Assumed power' is *neither* a recuperation of power that is *really* a resistance, *nor* a resistance that is *really* a recuperation of power, but both at the same time; and that all agency contains this ambivalence.

Lastly, power's need for reiteration, dependent on subjects for its enactment, is its greatest vulnerability. Power is not power, if it is not acted by subjects both individually and collectively. Hence as much as subjects are dependent on power for their very existence, so power's very existence is dependant on subjects, individually and collectively. The subject's agency is constituted, both made possible and somewhat constricted by this bind, between power and subject. With agency, a

(small) space opens up for the subject, where resistance and recuperation are intimately intertwined, and where it is possible for the subject to 'exceed' the conditions by which she was constituted. This small space, as ambivalent as it may be, will become central to my analysis of privilege and justice.

Suffering and Injustice

Christoph Dejours' in-depth analysis of the social space of work itself, as well as the social space 'work' occupies within current neo-liberal economic (and political) thought, combined with its role in individual lives, and how these come to play a pivotal role in systemic 'maintenance' of injustice, provides a glimpse into the dynamics of strategic relations of force at 'work' in today's world. I will use Dejours' analysis to provide a small window for putting to work Butler's theory in a context most of us (writer and readers) are familiar with.

Dejours' key question opening the book is how is it that pervasive social suffering can come to be seen and related to as personal fate, rather than as profound systemic injustice.

Nul ne doute que ceux qui ont perdu leur emploi, ceux qui ne parviennent pas à en trouver (chômeurs primaires) ou à en retrouver un (chômeurs de longue durée) et qui subissent le processus de désocialisation progressif, *souffrent*...

En revanche, tout le monde aujourd'hui ne partage pas le point de vue selon lequel les victimes du chômage, de la pauvreté et de l'exclusion sociale, seraient victimes aussi d'une *injustice*....La souffrance ne suscite un mouvement de solidarité et de protestation que dans le cas où une association est établie entre perception de la souffrance d'autrui et conviction que cette souffrance est le fait d'une injustice.

Pour comprendre le drame que constitue la faiblesse de la mobilisation contre le chômage et l'exclusion, il faudrait être en mesure d'analyser précisément les rapports ou les liens qui se tissent ou se défont entre souffrance d'autrui et injustice (ou justice).⁹⁶

Dejours then proceeds, on the basis of research carried out in the auto industry, to identify the dynamics by which such a cleavage or disintegration of understanding between suffering and injustice can take place, and come to 'make

⁹⁶ Dejours, p. 17-18

sense' in social and personal terms. It is this process, which he details, which he names 'le banalisation du mal' in modern economies.

Mon analyse part de « la banalité du mal » au sens où Hannah Arendt emploie cette expression à propos d'Eichmann. Non pas, comme elle le fait, dans le cas du système nazi, mais dans celui de la société contemporaine, en France, à la fin du XX^e siècle. L'exclusion et le malheur infligés à autrui dans nos sociétés, sans mobilisation politique contre l'injustice, viendraient d'une dissociation réalisée entre malheur et injustice, sous l'effet de la banalisation du mal dans l'exercice des actes civils ordinaires par ceux qui ne sont pas (ou pas encore) victimes de l'exclusion, et qui contribuent à exclure et à aggraver le malheur de fractions de plus en plus importantes de la population.

En d'autres termes, l'*adhésion à la cause économiciste*, qui clive le malheur de l'injustice, ne relèverait pas, comme on le croit souvent, de la simple résignation ou du constat d'impuissance face à un processus qui nous dépasserait, mais elle fonctionnerait aussi comme une *défense* contre la conscience douloureuse de sa propre complicité, de sa propre collaboration et de sa propre responsabilité dans le développement du malheur social.⁹⁷

Like my exploration, Dejours' exploration is concerned with how it is that ordinary people come to participate, in large numbers, in systems of injustice. He analyses somewhat more 'discrete' steps (than Butler), to come to understand how this functions in modern work places.

La banalisation du mal passe par plusieurs chaînons intermédiaires. Chacun d'eux relève d'une construction humaine. En d'autres termes, il ne s'agit pas d'une logique incoercible, mais d'un enchaînement impliquant des responsabilités. Ce « processus » peut donc être interrompu, contrôlé, contrebalancé ou maîtrisé, par des décisions humaines, qui impliqueraient bien entendus des responsabilités, elles aussi. L'emballlement ou le freinage de ce processus dépend de notre volonté et de notre liberté...⁹⁸

I summarize Dejours' analysis in 6 steps:

- Denial
- Shame and Inhibition
- From Fear to Submission
- From Submission to Dissimulation
- The Lie Institutionalized
- Le Sale Boulot - Doing the Dirty Work

⁹⁷ Dejours, p. 19-20

⁹⁸ Dejours, p. 21-22

Denial

Dejours says the cleavage of understanding between suffering and injustice begins in the denial of one's 'own' suffering. In the context in which his research takes place, he asserts that the unwillingness of unions and political leaders to take centrally into account, the suffering of those who *do* work, forms the basis of denial or refusal to recognize the suffering of the unemployed and hence of social exclusion.

There is a similar analysis found in Bruno Tricoire's work. Tricoire, interestingly, analyses the position of social workers in France – specifically those who are supposedly the people responsible for attending to the socially excluded. In his analysis, denial is a central dynamic as well. Tricoire says denial functions, in this context, through forgetting and then forgetting that we have forgotten (Tricoire, 24), echoing Butler's concept of foreclosure as double negation.

The consistency of denial or foreclosure necessary to the functioning of privilege will be taken up in my analysis.

Christoph Dejours identifies the second step in cleaving suffering from injustice.

Shame and Inhibition

L'absence de réaction collective face au malheur social et psychologique occasionné par le *chômage* aujourd'hui a donc été précédée par un refus délibéré de mobilisation collective face à la *souffrance* occasionnée *par le travail*, au prétexte que cette souffrance relevait de la sensiblerie...⁹⁹

First the refusal to acknowledge the suffering of those with jobs creates the ground from which to also refuse to see the systemic injustice suffered by the unemployed. Hence if one is 'lucky enough' to have a job, the 'foreclosure' of suffering (suffering *at work* is not possible, therefore not happening) becomes a central part of 'being' an employee.

⁹⁹ Dejours, p. 45

Secondly, those responsible for the suffering of those at work (and for increasing the numbers of people socially and economically excluded), become, at the same time, the only ones perceived to be forging new 'social utopias', (through new management and 'thriving' human resource discourses).

L'erreur d'analyse des organisations politico-syndicales sur l'évolution des mentalités et des préoccupations émergentes vis-à-vis de la souffrance dans le travail a laissé le champ libre aux innovations managériales et économiques. Ceux qui spéculaient, qui accordaient des largesses fiscales sans précédent au revenu financier, qui favorisaient les revenus du patrimoine au détriment des revenus du travail, qui organisaient une redistribution inégalitaire des richesses (qui se sont considérablement accrues dans le pays en même temps qu'apparaissait une nouvelle pauvreté), ceux-là mêmes qui généraient le malheur social, la souffrance et l'injustice, étaient dans le même temps les seuls à se préoccuper de forger de nouvelles utopies sociales...En même temps que l'entreprise était la base du départ de la souffrance et de l'injustice (plans de licenciement, 'plans sociaux'), elle devenait championne de la promesse de bonheur, d'identité et de réalisation pour ceux qui sauraient s'y adapter et apporter une contribution substantielle à son succès et à son 'excellence'.¹⁰⁰

Once more, let me highlight this 'turn' so common where privilege is at work: the neo-liberal economy which is responsible, through human decisions, to socially and economically exclude greater and greater numbers of people, is at the same time positing itself, and is posited again through human decision and action, as the only new social utopia worth some attention.

This is observable where free trade, the trademark of capitalism, comes to be advocated by people at the United Nations as being a central part of the answer to brutal global economic inequities. In order to assert free trade as being so central to alleviating such brutal inequities, a double negation must be performed and remain unquestioned. The first 'fact' that must be forgotten is that the last 40 years, as free trade gained more and more momentum, is exactly the same 40 years in which the gap between rich and poor *doubled*. Secondly, as Tricoire posits, we must forget that we have forgotten this very simple fact. Only through this double negation, performed again and again, can people at the United Nations today advocate free

¹⁰⁰ Dejours, p. 46

trade as a 'solution' to the very brutal inequities that free trade has *in fact* contributed to significantly, if not caused directly.¹⁰¹

At the individual level, having a job is often seen as one's only access to the only socially facilitated 'dreams' of new utopias. Having a job, no matter how exploitative the conditions is also the only way many people survive economically and socially. Yet the intense suffering such jobs might entail is denied at the individual and collective levels – because having a job at all is considered already having a 'significant' footing in the 'new utopia' posited as that which alleviates suffering. Such denial eliminates any apparent need for collective action in the face of suffering, one's own and others' foreclosed completely. Thus begins the disintegration of perception between suffering and indignation, of suffering as injustice.

To have work, where work is perceived as contributing to the only possible social utopia, and to feel indignation at the suffering in the midst of being part of the new utopia is impossible. One feels shame and inhibition in attempting to acknowledge that in fact participation in such new utopias is not what it is 'cracked up' to be.

The discourse of management is not solidarity – rather it is along the lines of most self-help books that have flourished along with, and at a similar pace to the 'new' economy.¹⁰² I call this the 'cult of happiness': if you are not happy, you simply

¹⁰¹ A recent article on cotton farming in India reveals the some mechanisms of 'free trade': cotton farmers in India pay the equivalent of 32 Swiss Francs as technical fee for 450 grams of genetically altered seed, where in the United States, cotton farmers pay the equivalent of 3 Swiss Francs for the same amount of seed from the same (American) company. Additionally, 25,000 American cotton farmers have their exports subsidized to the tune of USD 3.0 billion yearly. Without such subsidization, the world price for cotton would be 70% higher, which would increase the income of cotton farmers in developing countries by USD 5.0 billion yearly. See "Jede achte Stunde bringt sich ein Bauer um" (Every 8 Hours a Farmer Commits Suicide), in Tages-Anzeiger, 27 June 2006, p.10. The article is an in-depth analysis of how globalization has created a vortex of dependence that more and more Indian farmers find no escape from. Although income has increased for these farmers over the last 15 years, costs have skyrocketed and any semblance of independence – economically especially- has completely disappeared.

¹⁰² The magazine 'Time' (Europe Edition) of March 20, 2006 has an article on the 'exploding industry' of sensitivity training for managers, while astronomical corporate profit and pervasive wide-spread layoff, taking place often simultaneously, are simply not mentioned. Eye contact and active listening are

need to look in the mirror (or the nearest self-help book, workshop, guru) to find out what, within you, is responsible for your 'lack' of happiness. Indignation at the conditions of work is completely foreclosed, when suffering is perceived to be a result of one's own inability to 'appreciate the chance' I am 'being given' for personal fulfilment in the possibility to work.

Although what I name the 'cult of happiness' might be seen as peripheral to some readers, it is crucial to remember the bookshelves/bookstores that have flourished with books derived from and encouraging, in every way, the promise of self-fulfilment in isolation, completely independent from the social, political, and economic conditions all of us exist within. One can hardly miss the seemingly obvious, though tacit operation of a 'norm' that 'just happens' to serve regulatory power at this time in history very, very well.

Such self-fulfilment fantasies, stripped from basic human needs, are 'leaking' into, at times flooding mediation theory. More disconcerting is the role mediation theory and practice may have in substantially sustaining the fantasy of self-fulfilment in isolation. Baruch Bush and Folger epitomize, in my estimation, this approach. They do not hesitate to assert,

What ultimately makes our existence meaningful is not satisfying our appetites but developing and actualizing our highest potential...A smoothly working world of satisfaction and equity leaves this need untouched.¹⁰³

To dismiss 'a smoothly working world of satisfaction and equity' as completely irrelevant to actualizing human potential is deeply problematic, given colonial history and mentality. A focus on personal actualization, completely divorced from human need for food, shelter, and community woven and constituted through attending to such needs together, is not without its historical precedence in missionary work.

apparently the most central concern for managers at this time in history. See p. 38. (Amsterdam, Time Warner Publishing).

¹⁰³ Baruch Bush & Folger, p. 30

...for they are so occupied in seeking their livelihood in these woods, that they have not the time, so to speak, to save themselves.¹⁰⁴

The historical precedence in missionary work must be kept centrally in mind; for missionaries were focused on 'saving souls', completely disembodied from people's lived lives. We know today, especially through the experience and struggles of Onkwehonwe on Turtle Island that the work to 'save souls' sustained and perpetrated, in and through the most intimate spheres, was work in service to a regime of terror centrally concerned with executing ethnocide.

The 'turn' of perpetrating/foreclosing cruel injustice while posing one's work as 'saving souls' or facilitating *others* reach to 'actualize one's highest potential', stripped from the embodied realities of people's lives is a common turn – usually enacted by people whose own embodied realities are characterized by privileged access to (or even an excess of) resources that make life possible and comfortable.

En effet, dans la troisième étape du processus s'effectue un nouveau clivage, non plus entre souffrance et indignation, mais entre deux populations : ceux qui travaillent et ceux qui sont victimes du chômage et de l'injustice.¹⁰⁵

From Fear To Submission

Dejours identifies four dynamics inherent here. He sees the discourses of management concerned with new 'flexibility' and 'ability to respond to economic conditions' as completely split from the discourse of employees focused on the increasing insecurity and growing fear. This results for the employees and low-level management into:

- Increasing pressure on those in jobs, and an increase in subjective physical and psychic suffering (which, it must be remembered is already 'foreclosed': not possible, therefore, not happening)

104 Mealing, p. 30

105 Dejours, p. 53

- A complete neutralization of any thought toward collective mobilization against the conditions of work
- A sinking into silence and a desperate 'holding on'; the suffering of others is both something one can do nothing about, and something which, if recognized, not only increases fear but has the potential to threaten one's capacity to endure, one's capacity 'to be' an employee
- Fear of unemployment is translated into focusing on individual survival, a rigid individualism, in a precarious environment; 'given a certain level of suffering, misery no longer motivates gathering together, but destroys reciprocity' (Dejours, 60). Employees live in constant, (likely denied subterranean) fear, of becoming one of 'those': socially excluded unemployed... one cast out and excluded from participating in the only (apparent) emerging social utopias.

Management discourses and practice positing neo-liberal economies as being the only way to social utopia, *at the same time as causing millions to be socially and economically excluded*, needs to be traced in all its guises. The success of such discourse has its roots in the instrumentalization of fear.

The instrumentalization of fears is one of the principle mechanisms of social discipline. It is a strategy of de-politicization that does not require repressive means, except to exemplify the absence of alternatives. It suffices to induce a sense of personal and collective inability to have any effective influence on the public realm. Then the only alternative is to take refuge in the private realm in the hope (albeit vain) of finding minimal security in intimacy.¹⁰⁶

One could posit, in effect, that the pervasive instrumentalization of fear at work has been the reason for the success of mediation in workplaces - often bordering on a similar instrumentalization of intimacy. Hence, mediation can come 'to be', to serve as the benevolent face of a boss needing to lay thousands of people off.

¹⁰⁶ Lechner, N., "Some People Die of Fear: Fear as a Political Problem", in Corradi, J., Fagen, P.W., Garreton M.A. (eds.), *Fear at the Edge: State Terror and Resistance in Latin America*, Berkeley and London, University of California Press, ©1992, p. 31

Manipulation of fear or of its counterpart, intimacy, is an instrumentalization of human emotion for particular purposes.

Eric Albert note une autre cause de ce nouveau stress dans l'entreprise : la montée de l'affectif, l'apparition, dans le monde de travail, du discours amoureux : « On sollicite intensément la dimension affective des personnes. Mais plus on la sollicite, plus on la fragilise.¹⁰⁷

The increasing frequency of workplace mediation, at the same time as fear and the subtle manipulation of fear increase in the work place, requires critical analysis. Could mediation itself be posited as one means of bringing 'la montée de l'affectif...(le) discours amoureux' into the workplace, attempting to facilitate the albeit vain hope 'of finding minimal security in intimacy'?

The discourse of *suffering at work* is one discourse I would posit as 'marked for death' in today's workplace and economy at large. Without critical reflection on the role mediation plays in the workplace, workplace mediation may well become the very means that facilitate the 'funeral rites' of this discourse.

Everyday violence encompasses the implicit, legitimate, and routinized forms of violence inherent in particular social, economic, and political formations. It is close to what Bourdieu means by 'symbolic violence,' the violence that is often 'mis-recognized' for something else, *usually something good*.¹⁰⁸ (my emphasis)

From Submission to Dissimulation

Comment font-ils (les cadres) pour admettre qu'on puisse continuer ainsi à 'dégraisser' constamment les effectifs sans que cela altère la marche de l'entreprise, alors même qu'ils éprouvent chaque jour, non sans douleur, les difficultés de tenir les objectifs dans un contexte de manque chronique d'effectifs ?¹⁰⁹

Dejours attributes two specific dynamics to this step. First, he says, low and middle management are also continually under threat of unemployment. Hence they above all, who are measured according to theoretically 'objective' criteria (management by objectives, balanced score cards being common terms in middle

¹⁰⁷ Six, J.F., *Dynamique de la médiation*, Paris, Desclée de Brouwer, Collection Cultures de Paix, ©1995, p. 110. This is also evident in conflict studies courses where journaling and personal reflections are assigned as *course requirements subject to grading*.

¹⁰⁸ Scheper-Hughes N. & Bourgois, P., "Introduction: Making Sense of Violence", in Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, p. 21

¹⁰⁹ Dejours, p. 63-64

management) become tremendously invested in a 'dissimulation' of their own fears and questions vis-à-vis the effectiveness of their own and of their section's work.

This is especially so in relations to their hierarchical peers and their superiors. At the same time they, themselves, put the mechanism of fear to work. The threat of more lay-offs can intensify production to a certain degree. Yet fear has its limits in facilitating motivation.

Dans l'analyse du système nazi, l'accent a presque toujours été porté sur l'élucidation du comportement des chefs militaires ou civils. ... De notre point de vue, il reste toutefois dans cette investigation une énigme de taille. Le système ne fonctionnait pas seulement grâce à ces chefs. Son efficacité reposait sur la collaboration, en masse, de la majorité du peuple des « exécutants ». Par collaboration, il faut entendre ici la participation coordonnées de toutes les intelligences singulières au fonctionnement du système.

Le zèle dont tous ces acteurs ont fait preuve n'est pas une qualité « contingente » de leur conduite. Le zèle est central, sinon décisif, pour l'efficacité du système. Pourquoi ?

...aucune entreprise, aucune institution, aucun service ne peut éviter la difficulté majeure de décalage entre organisation du travail *prescrite* et organisation de travail *réelle*, quel que soit le degré de raffinement des prescriptions et des procédures de travail. Il est impossible, en situation réelle, de tout prévoir à l'avance. Le supposé travail d'*exécution* est ni plus ni moins qu'une chimère...

En d'autres termes, le procès de travail ne fonctionne que si les travailleurs font bénéficier l'organisation du travail de la mobilisation de leurs intelligences individuellement et collectivement.¹¹⁰

Dejours above addresses a critical dynamic: zeal of employees. Without the zeal of individuals to make the system work despite the system itself, most organisations would stop functioning. We see this in 'work to rule' actions where all employees agree simply to fulfil job descriptions and nothing more. The paralysis of organisations by 'work to rule' is inevitable.

Encore convient-il de préciser que l'exercice de cette intelligence dans le travail n'est souvent possible qu'à la marge des procédures, c'est-à-dire en commettant, *nolens volens*, des infractions aux règlements et aux ordres. Il faut donc non seulement faire preuve d'intelligence pour combler le décalage entre organisation du travail prescrite et organisation du travail réelle, mais aussi admettre que, pour une bonne part, cette intelligence ne peut se déployer que dans un semi-clandestinité... Oser transgresser ou enfreindre, agir intelligemment mais clandestinement ou, au moins, discrètement - , ces caractéristiques donc de l'intelligence au travail constituent ce que nous désignons communément par le « zèle » au travail...

La discipline, l'ordre, l'obéissance, et plus encore la soumission, conduiraient inévitablement à la paralysie des entreprises et des administrations. Ce qui fait leur force, c'est non pas la discipline seule mais son dépassement par le zèle, c'est-à-dire par toutes les infractions et tricheries que les travailleurs introduisent dans le procès de

¹¹⁰ Dejours, p. 65-66

travail pour que ça marche. C'est la mobilisation subjective de leur intelligence qui est décisive.¹¹¹

The mobilization of fear combined with, and as the 'motor' for, inventive 'zeal' completes the 'mirage' of effective organisations. It is the dissimulation of this combination, the dissimulation of the gap between job descriptions and job realities, along with the foreclosure of the possibility suffering at and from work, which makes up the core 'lie' at the heart of such industries.

The Lie Institutionalized

Le mensonge consiste à *produire* des pratiques discursives qui vont occuper l'espace laissé vacant par le silence des travailleurs sur le réel et par l'effacement des retours d'expériences. Le mensonge consiste à décrire la *production* (fabrication ou service) à *partir des résultats* et non à partir des activités dont ils sont issus. C'est la première caractéristique. La seconde consiste à construire une description qui ne s'appuie que sur les résultats *positifs* et les succès et ment, par omission donc, en ne mentionnant pas ce qui relève du défaut ou de l'échec. Produire ce discours n'est pas le résultat d'une erreur d'appréciation ou d'une naïveté, mais d'une duplicité. Cette dernière, cependant, trouve sa justification dans des arguments commerciaux et gestionnaires :...l'image...¹¹²

Naomi Klein's book *No Logo* is an exemplary investigation into the institutionalized lie. It is not necessary to go into her analysis, but suffices to name the four sections of the book: No Space; No Choice; No Jobs; No Logo. Klein details how most headquarters now are focused on 'strut over stuff', selling dreams through 'manufacturing' their 'brands' deep inner meanings – the spirit of individuality, athleticism, wilderness and community', while the people physically working on the products (people almost completely invisible to people buying the products) 'are likely to be treated like detritus – the stuff left behind' (Klein, 196).

Le Sale Boulot – Doing the Dirty Work

Dejours, in his analysis, like myself in this exploration, is concerned with exploring how it is that 'ordinary people' with 'ordinary lives' can be recruited to structures and tasks that, at their core, are unjust and contribute significantly toward the suffering of others.

¹¹¹ Dejours, p. 66-67

¹¹² Dejours, p. 76

Le problème que nous posons ici est celui de l'enrôlement des « braves gens », en grand nombre, voir en masse, dans l'accomplissement du mal et de l'injustice contre autrui. Par « braves gens », nous entendons ceux qui ne sont ni des pervers sadiques, ni des paranoïaques fanatiques (« idéalistes passionnés »), et qui font preuve, dans les circonstances habituelles de la vie ordinaire, d'un sens moral qui joue un rôle central dans leurs décisions, leurs choix, leurs actions.¹¹³

At the risk of subverting my own analysis, it is important to note that even where the promises of privilege is no longer motivating, appeals to such 'virtues' as courage can and do, in appearance at least, replace anticipated privilege in recruitment for participation in systems of injustice.

Aux promesses de privilège et de bonheur qu'on leur fait miroiter actuellement dans les entreprises, beaucoup de braves gens ne croient plus vraiment. Le processus serait plutôt le suivant : le travail que l'on vous demande – faire la sélection pour les charrettes de licenciements, intensifier le travail pour ceux qui restent en place, violer le droit du travail, participer au mensonge ... -, ce n'est pas une tâche agréable. On ne peut l'accomplir de gaieté de cœur. Personne...n'a de plaisir à faire le « sale boulot ». Au contraire, il faut du courage pour faire le « sale boulot ». Et c'est donc au courage des braves gens que l'on va faire appel pour les mobiliser.¹¹⁴

The substitution of 'virtue' for privilege in workplace discourses is one more interesting 'turn'. Such turns are indeed often the key juncture where privilege subverts justice. Where 'virtue' is at the core of workplace discourse, the central dynamic at work must remain visible for my analysis: an employee may well embrace the discourse of courage and zeal in order to be able to continue to 'be' an employee. Were the threat of lay-off not the continual subtext to such discourses, adherence or resistance to discourses and relations predicated on apparent courage and zeal might constitute themselves very differently than current strategic relations of force allow for.

Reflecting on 20 years of work experience, ranging from the Canadian federal government to Swiss-based international financial institutions, including several years of subsistence earnings as an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher, the 'virtues' of courage and zeal were pervasively present in all management discourse. It was, by turns, embraced or repudiated, always in varying degrees, by employees including myself, predicated primarily on needing a job to 'survive'. I have participated in, though

¹¹³ Dejours, p. 89

¹¹⁴ Dejours, p. 97

was never personally (made) responsible to 'execute', layoffs; and I have been laid off myself.¹¹⁵

I can think of few people I know between the ages of 30 and 60 who have not experienced such conditions of employment, and appeals to the 'courage needed to deal with the hard times upon us' (to do the dirty work), are simply very, very common at present in neo-liberal economies.

Entering the Gray Zone

Primo Levi, a Holocaust survivor and an anthropologist speaks clearly to the function of privilege and how privilege functions in the most desperate and treacherous of human situations – the concentration camps of Nazi Germany. Despite looking at such an extreme situation, Levi is not unaware of how these same dynamics function intricately and similarly in every day life situations, such as in 'a big industrial factory'.

Let me say clearly that, in turning to Levi's work, my intention is to draw the parallel between, and the attention to, how consistent the use of the exploitation of the desire to be is whether we are looking at northern work situations or at concentration camps. It is not by any means an attempt to compare the suffering under such radically different circumstances.

In 'normal' day-to-day life, the pervasive exploitation of the desire to be is dissimulated so effectively that those in the situation often fully 'buy' into the dissimulation to the point of believing that we/they are, in fact, exercising 'the virtue of courage for the hard times upon us'. The dissimulation of such exploitation and our part in sustaining such dissimulation is what makes it one of power's most insidious effects, as Butler points out.

¹¹⁵ In my most recent experience of layoff, in 2003, taking place within German-speaking Switzerland, one of the most banal phrases repeated throughout the process was the English phrase 'Think Positive'. Because many people, with German as a first language, have difficulty pronouncing the English 'th', and instead often pronounce 'th' as an 's', the phrase became, more accurately, 'Sink Positive'. This became, of course, a key 'code-phrase' among those of us laid off, affording us an ironic two-word summary of management discourse at that time.

More central yet to my argument is that it is exactly the 'ordinary' exploitation of existential needs in 'normal' life, and its constituting dissimulation, that paves the way towards 'ordinary people's acceptance of and participation in crimes against humanity. As I say in the introduction to Chapter One, atrocities such as ethnocidal residential schools, genocide and crimes against humanity are often declared 'unintelligible'. I argue to the contrary that they are 'intelligible' in so far as one can trace in 'ordinary life' what makes such atrocities intelligible – the consistent and pervasive acceptance of the exploitation of existential needs. Such exploitation is most visible in situations of extreme, and thus, I turn to Levi's writing.

'Privileged prisoners were a minority within the Lager population; nevertheless they represent a potent majority among survivors' (85). This speaks to the profound ambiguity of the role of privilege through a degree of collaboration: increasing one's chance of survival.

From many signs it would seem the time has come to explore the space which separates (and not only in Nazi Lagers) the victims from the persecutors, and to do so with a lighter hand... Only a schematic rhetoric can claim that that space is empty: it never is, it is studded with obscene or pathetic figures (sometimes they possess both qualities simultaneously) whom it is indispensable to know if we want to know the human species, if we want to know how to defend our souls when a similar test should once more loom before us, or even if we only want to understand what takes place in a big industrial factory.

Let us confine ourselves to the Lager, which (even in its Soviet version) can be considered an excellent "laboratory": the hybrid class of the prisoner-functionary constitutes its armature and at the same time its most disquieting feature. It is a gray zone, poorly defined, where the two camps of masters and servants both diverge and converge. This gray zone possesses an incredibly complicated internal structure and contains within itself enough to confuse our need to judge.¹¹⁶

For Levi, the central concern is to understand, not to judge. The Nazi Lagers were the extreme of the extreme: tyranny taken to its fullest and most destructive potential. To understand, for Levi, is preparation for facing such extremes again, and to understand dynamics in modern places of work.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ Levi, P., "The Gray Zone" in Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, p. 84, 85

¹¹⁷ It is well worth remembering that the main gate to the Lager in Auschwitz, Poland has an arch with the following words on it: 'Arbeit Macht Frei' which can be translated as 'Freedom through Work'.

In Levi's analysis, the means by which privilege functions remains consistent across the 'divide' between ordinary life and life under brutal totalitarianism.

The gray zone of (privilege) and collaboration springs from multiple roots. In the first place, the more the sphere of power is restricted, the more it needs its external auxiliaries... In the second place, and in contrast to certain hagiographic and rhetorical stylization, the harsher the oppression, the more widespread among the oppressed is the willingness, with all its infinite nuances and motivation, to collaborate: terror, ideological seduction, servile imitation of the victor, myopic desire for any power whatsoever, even though ridiculously circumscribed in space and time, cowardice, and, finally, lucid calculation aimed at eluding the imposed orders and order. All these motives, singly or combined, have come into play in the creation of this gray zone, whose components are bonded together by the wish to preserve and consolidate established privilege vis-à-vis those without privilege.¹¹⁸

The gray-ness, the lack of transparency in the gray zone is further complicated by another version of collaboration: those who choose to collaborate in order to subvert totalitarianism.

Some of these (prisoners who occupied commanding positions), thanks to skill or luck, had access to the most secret information of the respective Lagers and, like Herman Langbein in Auschwitz, Eugen Kogan in Buchenwald, and Hans Marsalek in Mauthausen, later became their historians. One does not know whether to admire more their personal courage or their cunning, which enabled them to help their companions in many concrete ways...(T)he three mentioned, for example, were also members of secret defense organizations, and therefore the power they wielded thanks to their positions was counterbalanced by the extreme risk they ran, inasmuch as they were both "resistors" and the repositories of secrets.

Not so the greater part of the other persons with positions of command, human specimens who ranged from the mediocre to the execrable. Rather than wearing one down, power corrupts; all the more intensely did their power corrupt, since it had a peculiar nature.¹¹⁹

Levi also addresses a central element in the gray zone: the element of choice.

It remains true that in the Lager, and outside, there exist gray, ambiguous persons, ready to compromise. The extreme pressure of the Lager tends to increase their ranks; and they are rightful owners of a quota of guilt (which grows apace with their freedom of choice)...¹²⁰

Yet, the degree of choice in collaboration, and hence the degree of responsibility, 'on the part of big and small collaborators (never likable, never transparent)' is always difficult to evaluate (85).

Levi names a particular dynamic within strategic relations of force that is of central concern here: to dissimulate the differences between the people responsible

¹¹⁸ Levi, in Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, p. 85

¹¹⁹ Levi, in Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, p. 86

¹²⁰ Levi, in Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, p. 87

for translating brutal ideology into reality, and those attempting to survive such brutality. It is a return to Azar Nafisi's analysis of regimes of tyranny that force their victims to 'become one of them'.

But collaborators who originate in the adversary camp, ex-enemies, are untrustworthy by definition: they betrayed once and they can betray again. It is not enough to relegate them to marginal tasks; the best way to bind them is to burden them with guilt, cover them with blood, compromise them as much as possible, thus establishing a bond of complicity so that they can no longer turn back.¹²¹

Primo Levi is centrally concerned with the difficulty of judging all collaboration on the part of the most vulnerable.

It is a judgement that we would like to entrust only to those who found themselves in similar circumstances and had the opportunity to test for themselves what it means to act in a state of coercion.¹²²

Privilege takes on grotesque proportions in 'ultimate' collaboration. Levi addresses this in describing the prisoners who were forced into the deepest collaboration (known as 'Special Squads' in charge of running the crematoriums).

For the prisoners making up the Special Squads responsible for running the crematoriums in Nazi Lagers, food rations were generous, alcohol was supplied in large amounts, and yes, soccer games against/with the German SS guards at the crematorium were allowed.

Nothing of this kind ever took place, nor would it have been conceivable, with other categories of prisoners; but with them, with the "crematorium ravens", the SS could enter the field on an equal footing, or almost. Behind this armistice one hears satanic laughter: it is consummated, we have succeeded, you no longer are the other race, the anti-race, the prime enemy of the millennial Reich; you are no longer the people who reject idols. We have embraced you, corrupted you, dragged you to the bottom with us. You are like us, you proud people: dirtied with your own blood, as we are. You too, like us and like Cain, have killed the brother. Come, we can play together.¹²³

Yet, those prisoners forced to this degree of collaboration (and here one did not have a choice except to choose death instead of service), despite the 'brotherhood of betrayal' that allowed for the applause, the cheering on of teams at soccer games, were already 'dead' metaphorically and soon to be literally. These

¹²¹ Levi, in Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, p. 85

¹²² Levi, in Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, p. 85

¹²³ Levi, in Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, p. 89

people were systematically killed to eliminate the 'knowledge' of what was taking place. In fact, 'as its initiation, the next squad burnt the corpses of its predecessors' (88). The ultimate in collaboration spells the ultimate in self-destruction in personal, moral and often physical terms.

It may seem extreme to consider this degree of 'participating in one's own execution', yet as Levi reminds us, only those put in such situations of extreme coercion might themselves be in a position to judge.

Levi's focus is the gray zone, the 'place' where boundaries blur. The gray zone has a very intricate and complicated structure; it is 'where masters and servants converge and diverge'. Gray zones exist in all hegemony and systemic coercion. In every situation of overt systemic or structural violence, there are populations deeply implicated in the enacting or sustaining systems of such violence; and there are populations designated as the 'targets' of the systemic and structural violence. Yet the gray zone is exactly where these boundaries blur.

In the same way as Butler's 'subject' does not come 'to be' outside the operations of power, so 'gray zones' are constituted only through operations of power - *and individual and collective* 'assuming' of power. The gray zone does not 'exist' on its own: it is constituted through both the operations of power and people's individual 'assuming' a degree of real or anticipated power.

The 'nature' and constitution of the grey zone must continually be apprehended in order to learn how such zones come about, how power invites the constitution of such zones. At the same time, it is paramount to retain as clear a distinction as possible between the enacting of violence and the vulnerability to enacted violence.

The distinction, without attempting a collapse of intense complexity, I posit as following the lines of systemic and personal privilege - those most privileged by overt or covert strategic relations of force are least likely, *if they continue to act in*

accordance with the terms under which the privilege is secured, – to be the most vulnerable individuals or population. Conversely, if people do concede to terms under which privilege is secured – the chance that they will be recruited into sustaining if not directly perpetrating the overt or structural violence is high.

I posit this clearly keeping in mind that privilege is part of the gray zone – there are no hard and fast distinctions to be made. Yet if my exploration is not to fall into a complete relativizing of position and privilege in the face of conflict, this distinction must be sustained.

One of the most effective means for privilege to function is through a sustained constitutive invisibility. Equally, regimes of violence use gray zones, the blurring of enacting violence and vulnerability to violence enacted to their distinct advantage; blurring the lines of responsibility continually, contributes significantly to sustaining regimes of terror.

Hannah Arendt posits a 'turn' that perpetrators in Nazi Germany used to blur these lines.

The member of the Nazi hierarchy most gifted at solving problems of conscience was Himmler....Himmler hardly ever attempted to justify in ideological terms, and if he did, it was apparently quickly forgotten. What stuck in the minds of these men who had become murderers was simply the notion of being involved in something historic, grandiose, unique ("a great task that occurs once in two thousand years"), which must therefore be difficult to bear. This was important, because the murderers were not sadists or killers by nature; on the contrary, a systemic effort was made to weed out all those who derived physical pleasure from what they did. The troops of the *Einsatzgruppen* had been drafted from the Armed S.S., a military unit with hardly more crimes in its record than any ordinary unit of the German Army, and their commanders had been chosen by Heydrich from the S.S. élite with academic degrees. Hence the problem was how to overcome not so much their conscience as the animal pity by which all normal men are affected in the presence of physical suffering. The trick used by Himmler – who apparently was rather strongly afflicted with these instinctive reactions himself – was very simple and probably very effective; it consisted in turning these instincts around, as it were, in directing them toward the self. So that instead of saying: What horrible things I did to people!, the murderers would be able to say: What horrible things I had to watch in the pursuance of my duties, how heavily the task weighed upon my shoulders.¹²⁴

The 'turn' away from those suffering from operations of power toward those sustaining and enabling such operations through perpetrating the violence and

¹²⁴ Arendt, H., *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, New York, Penguin Books, ©1963, 1964, p. 105-106

suffering, I posit is one key 'turn', one of the central means privilege functions: first by completely severing profound suffering from injustice (and hence from a sense of responsibility), and secondly by 'turning' the perpetrators themselves into the focus of concern. This turn will be traceable not only in situations of extreme violence, but in day-to-day life where privilege is centrally at work.

Arendt's delineation also brings to light other core dynamics explored in theory in this chapter: a complete denial of the terms under which one 'assumes' power - a regime of hate and destruction; a 'turn' to the zeal of a unique and grandiose task; and an appeal to 'courage' in the face of such a task - in itself a complete denial of full and complete concession to do the 'dirty work'.

'The inner life of consciousness and, indeed, of conscience, not only is fabricated by power, but becomes one of the ways in which power is anchored in subjectivity...the subject is spawned as an ambivalent effect of power, one that is staged through the operations of conscience.'

The central concern of this chapter was to come to understand how it is that ordinary people come to participate in crimes against humanity. Such crimes, as we have seen through the theory, are not only the overt violence of the Holocaust of World War II. They are also present in the pervasive intentional ethnocide of Canadian residential schools, imprisonment for 'spiritual misbehaviour' and the destruction of ways of life, through the explicit exploitation of existential needs, forcing Onkwehonwe to trade inherent rights for simulated rights. There is no 'system' out there doing this: this structural violence is sustained and perpetrated by individuals and groups of individuals convinced of the 'necessity' of their work...people like you and I.

In the following chapter, I return to conflict studies theory and practice, using the lenses this chapter has provided. These lenses will lead me in a 'reading' of

theories and practices that brings to light the intense, albeit deeply concealed role of privilege in subverting the reach toward social justice in this emerging field.

Chapter 3 - Reading Privilege and Justice in Conflict

Introduction

Reading privilege through conflict (studies) discourse and practice entails difficulty. The first difficulty is that privilege constitutes itself primarily in 'spectral' invisibility - those with privilege benefit from it pervasively, yet most often are in denial of the privilege itself. Secondly, part of sustaining privilege requires adhering to discourses of denial, and if not denial, then of silence - this may seem a contradiction, yet privilege rests deeply concealed in contradiction, *and* in deeply concealed contradictions.

Reading privilege in relation to justice is to delve into the complexity of contradiction.

I propose to look at various 'moments' of conflict and go in search of the contradictions: contradictions that can be 'unpacked' and 'read'.

I propose 'reading' the contradictions through three themes:

- 1) The breadth and depth of denial, silence or acknowledgement of the contradiction(s)
- 2) The use of denial and silence (or, on the contrary, acknowledgement) serves in systemic terms: sustaining those more privileged by or those more vulnerable to (ab)uses of the operations of power
- 3) The ambivalent of use agency: individually and collectively; and most critically to whose benefit - where does agency tend to become a 'recuperation' of operations of power, and where does it tend to become a 'resistance' to the operations of power. It is important to continue to see, however, that agency is rarely, if ever, either or. It is both, yet the ambivalence I suggest can be 'read' in the 'effect' most clearly.

My goal is to understand the dynamics by which ordinary people come to be recruited into and participate in systems of profound injustice in such 'common-

sense', 'so what' terms. It is an exploration into the day-to-day inoculations that make participation (through action and omission) in such systems so 'common-sense'; to read the means by which we in conflict studies make up part of these 'ordinary' people, fully inoculated against the perception of injustice, largely as a result of the privilege we take for granted; and finally to begin to 'decipher', in the thick details, how protection and sustaining of our privilege is the core means by which we subvert our own (potential) reach for justice in conflict discourse and practice.

Concealing and Concealed Privilege

Democracy

The first contradictions I will analyze are those present in the founding of 'democratic' countries: slavery and female disenfranchisement.

What was distinctive in the New (World) was, first of all, its claim to freedom and, second, the presence of the unfree within the heart of the democratic experiment – the critical absence of democracy, its echo, shadow ... the inherent contradiction of a free republic deeply committed to slavery...¹²⁵

For Phyllis Schlafly, one of the Roman Catholic leaders of the Moral Majority, feminism was a 'disease', the cause of all the world's ills. Ever since Eve disobeyed God and sought her own liberation, feminism had brought sin into the world and with it 'fear, sickness, pain, anger, hatred, danger, violence and all varieties of ugliness'. The proposed Equal Rights Amendment was a government plot to create higher taxes, Soviet-style nurseries, 'and the federalization of all remaining aspects of our life'. ... The conflation of feminism with the other evils...had long haunted the fundamentalist imagination... They associated the integrity and even the survival of their society with the traditional position of women.¹²⁶

There are two core silences / denials concealed at the heart of discourse on democracy based on freedom and equality. The first core denial is that all democracies have been established on, and their 'success' rooted in and by, widespread and intense violence against people not deemed equal or deserving of freedom.

¹²⁵ Morrison, T., *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, ©1992, p. 48-50

¹²⁶ Armstrong, K., *The Battle for God: A History of Fundamentalism*, New York, Ballantine Books, ©2000, p. 311-312

Colonization - dominance, coercion, extreme violence and the outright stripping of indigenous populations' land, cultural, social, political and economic resources and processes - is never acknowledged openly and repeatedly as the *factual* basis of 'success' for western democracies.

Restitution for American slavery has been a topic since the end of the American civil war (1861-1865). During the war, Congress introduced legislation "that included a provision for the confiscation of land from slaveowners...to be given to freed slaves...The effort came to an end in 1869" (Barkan, 284). Restitution has never taken place. "Yet to date reparation has attracted little attention...The toughest obstacle restitution faces is passing 'the political laugh test' as one supporter described it". (Barkan, 286).

Achieving restitution requires white Americans acknowledge, as a matter of course, and take full responsibility for the fact that the United States was built with slavery and segregation being core institutions, at the cost of millions upon millions of lives. The denial and silence of such a deep contradiction at the heart of American history serves, by and large, to sustain the white operations of power.

Yet even when such legacies are acknowledged, the knowledge contributes primarily to inaction.

The memories of the Euro-American middle class often hinder the move from critique to action. Shaped by memories of conquest in the name of the common good..., many middle-class people are paralyzed when we see that our work against ... this legacy of conquest does not have as much success as did the campaigns for military and economic control... Responsibility is equated with action that is more likely to succeed, thus identifying responsibility with action that is, by definition, supportive of the status quo...

The ethic of cultured despair is marked by two distinct features: (1) the despair is cultured in the sense of its erudite awareness of the extent and complexity of many forms of injustice; and (2) the knowledge of the extent of injustice is accompanied by despair, in the sense of being unable to act in defiance of that injustice.¹²⁷

Be it silence and denial or 'erudite awareness', both lead to inaction. As Taiaiake Alfred states:

¹²⁷ Welch, p. 103-104

There are those whom Albert Memmi called the 'colonizers who refuse' to accept their position and role in the unjust state, usually left-wing intellectuals. These are the people whose indignation at the theoretical injustices of imperialism as an historical process (usually thought of as happening in foreign countries rather than their own beloved backyards) is not accompanied by action. They may be progressive politically, but they usually hold a strong attachment to the colonial state and to their own privileges within Settler society. They are effectively silenced by being caught in the squeeze between their intellectual deconstructions of power and moral cowardice when it comes to doing something about injustice in a real sense.¹²⁸

It is the dynamics of 'being caught in the squeeze' that this exploration focuses on. Conserving privilege is central to keeping us, left-wing intellectuals, caught. For most of us to act radically and persistently against injustice, in terms other than is currently allowed (bureaucratic negotiation or superficial reformation), spells a likely dissolution of privileges within the colonial state.

It is in this 'squeeze' where I see conflict studies, discourse and practice as *constituted and caught*.

The dominant populations within democracies are rarely aware of the constituting contradictions within democracies. Those who are deeply aware of the constituting contradictions historically, rarely acknowledge these legacies as still active, or even relevant. I propose to read the current working of privilege through critical reference to the colonial legacy specifically.

This approach offers resources in three ways: to come to understand in detail what 'good intentions' have entailed in the past; to come to see how current conflict discourse and practices of 'good intentions' are still anchored and caught in both discourse and practice of colonial 'being'; and to demonstrate that an in-depth critical understanding can serve as a first step in subverting continued colonial 'being' in peace and conflict discourse and practice today. I now return to the particular contradictions in history and at present.

¹²⁸ Alfred (2005), p. 105

Switzerland and South Africa

The recent conflict in Switzerland regarding restitution for Switzerland's role in World War II demonstrates the contradiction and the 'turn' clearly. The conflict, lived for decades 'below the horizon', not garnering public attention until the early 1990's, is the fact that Swiss banks and government resisted entering into substantial discussion with the heirs of Nazi Holocaust victims, for the millions upon millions placed in Swiss banks for 'safekeeping' by people later killed in concentration camps. The devastating reality is that it was possible to give *money* a 'safe' haven, but not the *people*.

Following the end of the war, and for five decades, Swiss banking bureaucrats largely refused claims to 'dormant' accounts on the grounds that the heirs could not produce the required documentation: primarily death certificates.

How is it possible that a country and *the ordinary people*, spared the devastation of war, retain such a grotesquely bureaucratic approach, *for decades*, in response to such atrocity lived just across its borders?

...(T)he Swiss had not experienced the discrepancy, between positive law and fundamental moral norms based on natural law, nearly to the degree that peoples confronted by totalitarianisms of the 20th Century had experienced. The most deeply distressing experience was the experience of the Jewish people who, on the basis of formally correct legislation, were first deprived of their rights, then stripped of their property and lastly exterminated. The reservations of the Swiss towards an idealistic universal model of international order was founded, not in the least, in that the Swiss themselves had never had a taste of the true hardships entailed in the pessimistic 'realism' they preached.¹²⁹ (my translation)

Maissen accurately observes that it was the *privilege of peace* over centuries in Switzerland that lulled the Swiss into such a conservative stance.

This was also due to the fact that, in Switzerland there had rarely been the need to correct, through legislation, historical developments perceived to be unjust, given that

¹²⁹ Maissen, T., *Verweigerte Erinnerung: Nachrichtenlose Vermögen und Schweizer Weltkriegsdebatte 1989-2004*, Zürich, Verlag Neue Zürcher Zeitung, ©2005, p. 605-606

„...(D)ie Schweizer hatten die Diskrepanz zwischen einer positiven Rechtsordnung und grundlegenden, naturrechtlichen moralischen Normen nicht annähernd so erlebt wie diejenigen Völker, die mit den Totalitarismen des 20. Jahrhunderts konfrontiert worden waren. Die erschütterndste Erfahrung in dieser Hinsicht hatten die Juden gemacht, die auf der Grundlage einer formal korrekten Gesetzgebung zuerst enteignet, dann beraubt und zuletzt vernichtet worden waren. Die Vorbehalte gegen ein idealistisch-universalistisches Modell der Völkerordnung gründete also nicht zuletzt darin, dass die Schweizer selbst nie die wahren Härten des pessimistischen „Realismus“ zu spüren bekommen hatten, den sie predigten.“

the country – apart from Napoleon times – had never fallen victim to foreign use of violence against it. (The country's) fortunate fate led to a legal system more conservative than such norms already are, especially regarding private property.¹³⁰ (my translation)

Once called to account by the United States (a country which, itself, fully and completely refuses restitution for the perpetrated historical injustice of slavery and segregation, for one), the Swiss Federal Cabinet proposed, among other things, the humanitarian fund addressed in Chapter One. As demonstrated in Chapter One, enough 'twists and turns' functioned so that, in the end, it was the most privileged in the struggle – the Swiss themselves – who benefited exclusively from the funds that could have become the humanitarian fund.¹³¹

To Switzerland's credit, the Swiss government established an unprecedented independent and international historical commission with a five year mandate, funded into the billions, based on far-reaching legislation for access to business, banking and private archives not accessible to historians previously, and legislating its commitment to full publication, ensuring the independence and integrity of the commission's work as far as possible.¹³²

The commission's work is interestingly the core of a new history textbook¹³³ for students between the ages of 14 and 18. Like the commission's work itself, the textbook is considered intensely controversial, especially by those who disavow Swiss responsibility for any suffering during and following the war. The textbook is not mandatory in the history curriculum. I expect if those who'd suffered most in the

¹³⁰ Maissen, p. 605

„Dies lag auch daran, dass es in der Schweiz kaum Bedarf gab, als ungerecht empfundene historische Entwicklung gesetzgeberisch zu korrigieren, da das Land – abgesehen von der napoleonischen Zeit – nie Opfer äusserer Gewaltanwendung geworden war. Sein glückliches Schicksal machte seine Rechtsordnung gerade hinsichtlich der Eigentumsrechte konservativer, als solche Normen ohnehin sind...“

¹³¹ See Maissen's book for a full overview of all Swiss initiatives, enacted and failed, in response to Switzerland's role in World War II.

¹³² See <http://www.uek.ch/en/index.htm> for an English summary of the final report entitled 'Switzerland, National Socialism and the Second World War.' There are English summaries available of the commission's findings published in twenty-five volumes.

¹³³ Bonhage, Gautschi, Hodel, Spuhler, *Hinschauen und nachfragen – Die Schweiz und die Zeit des Nationalsozialismus im Licht aktueller Fragen*, Zürich, Lehrmittelverlag des Kantons Zürich, ©2006

war were those setting the history curriculum, the textbook would be mandatory. Such turns, as I have affirmed repeatedly are centrally part of most serious conflicts.

Perhaps for many (often the privileged) in such conflicts, a degree of historical truth at the expense of justice is an acceptable 'bargain with the devil'. 'If truth has replaced justice in South Africa, has reconciliation then turned into an embrace of evil?' (Krog, 146).

In South Africa, at least, it was the survivors of apartheid and, arguably, its most vulnerable population that forged the way forward partially led by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), and this is not incidental. Whatever the controversies, and there are many surrounding South Africa's TRC, it was those who suffered most who created their own version of the 'narrower' road of justice for truth.¹³⁴

In Switzerland it was those who suffered *least* from the atrocities of World War II, who stopped at truth, and subverted potential in-depth historical restitution.

The 'ambivalence' of agency comes fully to the fore in the recognition that it was a popular vote, by individual Swiss citizens, that collectively rendered substantial historical restitution not possible. The 'twist' at the heart of direct, participatory democracy is its intense vulnerability to majority rule: in this case, it was those most privileged, individually and collectively, and those most protected from atrocity in World War II, who decided individually and collectively against substantial historical restitution, in favour of directly benefiting themselves (funds from the sale of gold going 2/3 to the cantons, and 1/3 to the federal level).

This 'twist' of agency towards benefiting the privileged over and against a movement toward justice is also visible on the part of the white minority in New South Africa.

¹³⁴ I would propose that protecting privilege, for some elites of all groups, was probably instrumental in narrowing the road of justice for truth New South Africa chose.

Only 500 of South Africa's 4.5 million whites have signed a recent declaration accepting apartheid's consequences for the black population and white responsibility.

As Villa-Vincencio recognized in South Africa, unless the TRC 'unleashed a process to deal with the economic consequences' of apartheid, it would fail its mandate of reconciliation, for rectificatory justice for survivors is not just about criminal justice but about social justice.¹³⁵

One might posit that privilege was intentionally abandoned in the vote of the ruling white South African minority to abolish apartheid. Yet one need only consider that the country and its elites were losing privilege progressively in their standing among the dominant Western countries. Many countries practiced economic embargoes and South African athletes were threatened with bans from Olympic participation. I am convinced that the white ruling minority was very conscious of losing such privileges, hence, the vote to abandon apartheid while retaining a clear distance from enacting social justice.

Such turns, this thesis posits, don't just 'happen'. I do not, for one moment, attribute such turns to the multi-fariousness of completely autonomous individuals who just 'happen' to be in positions of power, to be privileged, and individually, just 'happen' to think along the same lines.

Instead I argue here that what appears as something that 'just happens', what appears as 'convergence of thought' by chance must be questioned in-depth *because* every 'turn' 'just happens' to benefit the most privileged over and over again.

Concealing Canada's Brutality

I will now turn to the analysis of a central and ongoing entrenched, often violent conflict in Canada to trace the two movements of denial and the ambivalent use of agency, by the privileged – individually and collectively - in subverting justice, despite 'best' intentions.

¹³⁵ Mani, p. 107, 125

Stephen Lewis is an international voice for human rights. He has served as Canada's ambassador to the United Nations and is presently the UN Secretary-General's special envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa. Yet, on the reality of Canada's relationship with and responsibility towards Onkwehonwe, Lewis has rarely challenged Canada's systemic violation of human rights in any substantial way.

'The moments when I am most embarrassed in the human rights field was when our treatment of native people in Canada was thrown at us,' says Stephen Lewis, the former Canadian ambassador to the United Nations. He describes the native rights issue as the 'Achilles' heel of Canada's performance on the international scene.¹³⁶

Canada's standing internationally, in this quotation, seems to be the primary concern. This kind of 'turn', away from the suffering as injustice, towards one's 'own heavy burden' is a distant spectre of what Arendt sees as the turn participants practice in totalitarian regimes, away from the suffering their participation in the operations of power is causing, towards their own heavy burden of 'duty'. This is perhaps too far a reach one might say. Yet it is important to speculate, to attempt to come to understand how one of the leading voices *for human rights* at the UN can so lightly, seemingly, dismiss the legitimate focus on perpetrated injustice, to focus instead on the perpetrator's reputation ... *l'image*, of which Dejours speaks.

Canada's 'federal officials' at the UN did not 'simply' tolerate their embarrassment, but actively worked against Canada's being held accountable by the UN for the intense suffering through entrenched injustice Canada practices in relation to Onkwehonwe.

In the international arena, federal officials have done their best to weaken any attempt by United Nations agencies to study Indian treaties and the rights of indigenous people. Officials clashed openly with Canadian Indian leaders who tried to persuade the United Nations Human Rights Commission to launch a broad study of treaty rights. The federal officials insisted on an amendment to dilute the study by requiring it to take into account 'the socio-economic realities of states and the inviolability of their sovereignty and territorial integrity.'¹³⁷

¹³⁶ York (1990), p. 267

¹³⁷ York (1990), p. 267

Let me consider this one step at a time. First anonymous 'federal officials' dilute an investigation of human rights by claiming a concern for socio-economic realities in one of the richest countries of the world; secondly, they appeal for a dilution of the investigation on the basis of the inviolability of sovereignty and territorial integrity within colonial borders.

Onkwehonwe suffer from two profound injustices: radical poverty and an absolute denial of sovereignty on Turtle Island - land that has, in large part, never been legally ceded to Settlers, even according to Settler law.

The 'federal officials' turn to the UN and appeal for a dilution of the human rights investigation *exactly* on these two grounds: economics and sovereignty. The reversal and concealment of the operations of power, through individual acts of 'agency' in this case are so blatantly asserted, yet so 'normal' as to appear legitimate. Settlers - individuals and collectively - at the United Nations act *consciously and intentionally against Onkwehonwe striving for justice*, in sustenance of privilege.¹³⁸

It is critical to not only identify such turns, but to explore how such turns come to be so 'common-sense' among most people with some privilege. This exploration is interested in knowing *how* we learn to both perform such turns in the midst of expressed concerns for justice, and how we learn 'not to see' *the effects* such turns have, so consistently in support of our privilege.

I posit here that the 'turns' are learned through a refusal to see that we are the children of colonization, and hence a refusal/denial of how we have come to be among the most privileged and powerful of the world; and secondly, in our insistent refusal to perceive ourselves for who we are, we continue to 're-inscribe' the legacy in service to strategic relations of force - often under the guise of concern for justice.

¹³⁸ See http://www.humanrights-geneva.info/article.php3?id_article=453 for a summary of Canada's current position regarding Indigenous rights internationally. In June 2006 Canada used stalling tactics (it used to denounce) to stall the acceptance of a non-binding Declaration on Indigenous rights.

Performing such turns are critical to continuing 'to be' among and as the privileged. Performing such turns are *pivotal* to keeping exploitative strategic relations of force in place.

Conflict Studies

We in conflict studies are, by and large, the 'successful' children of 'successful' colonization and colonizers. The chance is extremely high that we also 'just happen' to think in ways that persistently facilitate turns away from justice in support of privilege, all the while *believing* we are on the side of justice. I now will trace these 'turns' within conflict studies discourse and practice itself.

One of the central tenants of colonization was and continues to be coercion. One of the most pervasive faces of coercion is hierarchy. Yet hierarchy is so common that most Settlers, including the majority in conflict studies simply take it for granted, and have a serious problem imagining life without it - just like our colonial ancestors.

Huron and Montagnais social and political organizations provided neither the words nor the analogous conceptual material that were needed to invoke an appropriate sense of the power and absolute authority of the Judeo-Christian God and the necessity for obedience on pain of eternal punishment. The Jesuits struggled to find terms to impart the power and majesty of God (8:185) who must not only be loved but must be feared and obeyed, and they wrote of the impediment that the 'wicked liberty of the Savages' posed to the necessary submission 'to the yoke of the law of God' (5:177). The faith did 'not agree well with pride' (31:261), and the pride stemming from the relative independence that Native people enjoyed in their social and political relations was, according to Vimont, their 'greatest vice' (25:157).¹³⁹

This degree of coercive power had no parallel among the Aboriginal peoples of the Northeast in the seventeenth century...Champlain and the Jesuits both initially looked to Aboriginal leaders to punish or prohibit behaviour, as in France, but they found that the authority to do so did not exist in any form they could recognize...After participating in warfare with a party of Huron men, Champlain complained that they had no system of command and would not obey his orders when he attempted to take charge. Throughout the *Relations*, the Jesuits frequently described Huron and Montagnais leaders as having little authority and being able only to influence people through persuasion. Notably, Barthélemy Vimont commented that the "captains" were "very poorly obeyed by their people, because they use no violence" (26:117-19).¹⁴⁰

139 Blackburn, p. 92

140 Blackburn, p. 73-4

This is not a difference affecting people's collective and most intimate lives in *history*. For Onkwehonwe on Turtle Island, often forced to conceding to colonial models of governance, for example, has had and continues to have devastating effects on Onkwehonwe culture and continuity.¹⁴¹

Most Settlers however do not question the reality of hierarchy pervasively present in education and in virtually all employment. All Settler institutions are permeated by hierarchy. If one does not concede to hierarchy, one does not find a place of work or of study. Without profound concession to hierarchy, one essentially ceases 'to be' within Settler institutions: one simply can not find work, and work is the only means by which one can access resources for life beyond mere subsistence. We must concede to hierarchy, to relations based on coercion, if we want 'to be' employed. Yet, most of us simply do not even realize that such profound concessions to coercive structures are 'necessary', let alone that we are in fact enacting such profound concessions. Hierarchy is simply taken for granted as 'reality'.

Hierarchy's efficacy is rooted in coercion. It is a complete instrumentalization of human relationship. At times those in positions of authority will be more 'lenient' and consult those with less institutional power. Yet this is left mostly up to the 'whims' of individuals with hierarchal authority to decide.

Learning to Pivot

Hierarchical education offers one narrow road to a potentially challenging 'agency': critical debate. If one can argue within the terms and conditions set by hierarchal education – logic, (mythically objective) evidence, and a 'reasoned' conclusion based on the logic and evidence – one might have a chance of changing the course of discourse minimally.

¹⁴¹ For a substantial discussion on this topic see, Alfred, T., *Peace, Power and Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto*, Don Mills, Oxford University Press, ©1999

Interestingly, in conflict studies, I had three professors out of nine, who suggested, for the sake of minimizing potential 'conflicts', that the tradition of critical debate be suspended in class, course content and processes. We were invited instead to go in search of moments of 'convergence'.

The 'logical' step then, given that critical debate is the only narrow space of critical agency within hierarchical learning structures, would have been to simultaneously suspend all hierarchy and authority. This was neither offered nor considered.

To *not* suspend hierarchal structures (exclusive power to grade a student) simultaneously was an invitation to complete and full concession to professorial discourse – an invitation to apriori agreement with the professors who also held exclusive power over grading. Grading is not incidental here: it is the *only* measure by which individuals come 'to be' academically. Without substantially 'respectable' grades, one does not get far in the Settler academic system. Not conceding to such terms entailed its price – in real terms.

Regardless of the content of each of these courses, the question central to my investigation is: what, in 'conflict' studies, is being modelled here, as concerns practice?

There is a very real danger that donor agencies will in the end impose solutions instead of creating spaces for local capacity building and decision-making.

In the worst cases, donor agencies will organize themselves internally in a very hierarchical and un-democratic manner, failing to integrate local field staff in important decision-making processes. With this kind of structure, it is rather questionable whether these agencies will be able to stimulate democratic processes and empowerment of groups, given that they have proved themselves unable to incorporate even basic democratic rules into their own internal procedures.¹⁴²

I posit that two particular and simultaneous 'turns' are being modelled (and taught) in such approaches to conflict studies education, with serious implications for practice.

¹⁴² Bigdon, C. & Korf, B., "The Role of Development Aid in Conflict Transformation: Facilitating Empowerment Processes and Community Building", at <http://www.berghof-handbook.net/complete.htm> ©Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, p. 10

The first turn being modelled is that a person in a position to *exclusively* set the 'terms' under which work or learning will take place, is perfectly 'reasonable' to set those terms exclusively, and that such terms can be set to benefit themselves, first and foremost; the second turn is such that the first turn appears to be a 'levelling' of the playing field ('convergence thinking' and imposed solutions), when in fact, it is a complete banishment of conflict, or what I call the complete flat-lining of complexity.

In the situation of the classroom, the only legitimate course for students' *critical* engagement with material and processes was completely cut off. The professors' suggestion of working toward convergence, without allowing any discussion on the implications of doing so, became a unilateral imposition. The professors' authority remained intact in *exclusively* grading and legitimizing work undertaken in the course, hence not challenging the professors' *de facto* increasing authoritarian relationship to the student. Professors' authority, and standing in the institution, based primarily on a relationship of subtle coercion remained unquestioned, unchallengeable and fully intact, while the students' 'space' for critical engagement in content and process was substantially eliminated.

Such turns can be traced in conflict resolution and peacebuilding practice.

Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation

The *Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation* is a comprehensive and cumulative website resource that provides continually updating cutting-edge knowledge, experience and lessons learned for those working in the field of transforming violent ethno-political conflict. The website content comes in the form of commissioned *Articles* (sic) by leading experts from current practice and scholarship and a *Dialogue Series* on key issues, in which practitioners and scholars critically engage and debate in light of their experience.¹⁴³

This website is one of the most comprehensive websites on scholarship and practice in the field covered by the academic term of 'conflict studies'. It contains 6 sections:

1) Concepts and Cross-Cutting Challenges

¹⁴³ General Introduction, ©Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation, January 2005, at <http://www.berghof-handbook.net>.

- 2) Analysing Conflict and Assessing Conflict Transformation
- 3) Third-Party Tools and Capacity Building
- 4) Structural Reforms, Institution Building and Violence Control
- 5) Recovering from War: Post-Conflict Regeneration and Reconciliation
- 6) Dialogue Series¹⁴⁴

The section I will focus on is the Dialogue Series on Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA). It is here that I feel the issues I am addressing regarding conflict, privilege and justice are most at the forefront.

The extensive debates in writing on the evolving Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA)¹⁴⁵ offer a glimpse into the very dynamics I am addressing. PCIA has been debated for ten years or more. The debates focus on whether PCIA is an assessment tool capable of distinguishing peace enhancing projects from conflict enhancing projects, an interpretive and learning process in relation to a conflict and peace reality as lived in the context, or an evaluation method that can help northern donor agencies, above all, 'prove' their work contributes to peace. Given the wide spectrum on both perception and practice of PCIA, a definitive 'take' on PCIA is not possible.

The PCIA debates centre largely on two foci: critical questions of power, participation and ownership; and on the 'techniques' of doing PCIA.

I begin with a 'worst case scenario' of PCIA.

In Sri Lanka, so-called 'PCIA workshops' were held both in rebel-controlled and government-controlled areas. By most accounts, they were disorganized, confused and ill-prepared. They were led by foreigners who knew next to nothing about the conflict, very little about PCIA, and absolutely nothing about the intense sensitivities around 'peace' at the time of the workshops – which were held as very delicate peace talks were taking place inside and outside the country. The facilitators were unable to respond to questions about the specific relevance of PCIA to the on-going peace process...

How is it possible to have a workshop in rebel-controlled areas – or any part of a war-affected country – where that context is not the overwhelming point of reference for everyone in the room?

¹⁴⁴ Interestingly, not one title contains the word 'justice'.

¹⁴⁵ See The 'Dialogue Series' at <http://www.berghof-handbook.net/articles/PCIA>

The second workshop followed a similar path – its Northern-defined agenda was based entirely on academic, English-language, material. Local participants were required to sign forms committing themselves to 'rolling out' the tools in the workshops before they were accepted to participate. That is, they were required to commit (in writing) to support a process/product which they had not yet seen...¹⁴⁶

Interestingly, the 'worst' case contains critical parallels to the 'turns' I identified above in northern education: knowledge is completely stripped from the context of learning; learning tools and processes (language in this case) benefit the workshop leader to the clear and complete disadvantage of the workshop participants; 'subtle' yet overt coercion, for the sake of efficacy (*required* a priori commitment to rolling out tools) is implemented, unquestioned and unchallengeable if one would like to attend, 'to be' in the workshop; *and* the subtle coercion (signed agreements by *all* participants to rolling out of tools) can be used as 'proof' of a successful workshop either by the workshop leaders or their organizational sponsors. Every turn is to the benefit of the workshop leader and sponsor.

The debates of the techniques (the 'how') of PCIA is centrally intertwined with the 'who' and the 'what' of PCIA, issues of purpose, participation and ownership.

Everywhere I looked, there was (and is) an obsessive fixation on the technocratic dimensions of 'operationalising' PCIA. This is understandable. In fact...I view *utility* as the single most important criterion for assessing the development of PCIA. The central – and fundamentally political – questions here are: Useful for whom? Useful for what? Whose interests are being served (or not)?¹⁴⁷

The questions Bush poses, and insists accurately on their political nature, are at the heart of the second round of debates in the Dialogue Series.

Beatrice Schmelzle, in her introduction to the second round of PCIA debates seemingly advocates for the operationalizing/technocratic dimension of the debate as more 'manageable' than the debate on participation and ownership.

Schmelzle begins by summarizing the 'most notable recent attempts to improve the understanding and methodology of peace-and-conflict-related

¹⁴⁶ Bush, K., *Field Notes. Fighting Commodification and Disempowerment in the development Industry: Things I learned about PCIA in Habarana and Mindanao (With Appendices I-III)* ©2005, p. 11. http://www.berghof-handbook.net/articles/PCIA_addKB.pdf

¹⁴⁷ Bush (2005), p. 3-4

assessment and evaluation'. Once she has summarized the main contributors to the second round of debate, she highlights three dilemmas that remain critical in the relation to the questions of participation and ownership (6). The second of the three dilemmas interests me here most. She describes it as follows:

"The second dilemma is more fundamental than pragmatic in nature: A radical reversal of ownership, as envisioned by Kenneth Bush, challenges power as well as cultural balances. It entails a quite radical notion of social change which many, even in the peacebuilding and development field, may not be ready for at all, as it would topple certainties they rely on. Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment, as a set of tools and a space for reflective encounter, will be overburdened by the demand that it should act as catalyst for such deep social change. A joint learning process on the theories and notions of social change would be the more appropriate place for such debate."¹⁴⁸

Having realities toppled is, in my perspective, not only the heart of the debate, but the very heart of the phenomena of conflict. Northern actors are in positions of relative extreme privilege, acquired through coercive and violent operations of power over centuries in relation to four billion people in the world. We are fundamentally a part of conflict.

Schmelze appears to completely deny this inherent contradiction. First she asserts that 'the radical reversal of ownership, as envisioned by Kenneth Bush, challenges power as well as cultural balances'. Whose power and whose cultural balances are being challenged here? She continues with 'It entails a quite radical notion of social change which many, even in the peacebuilding and development field, may not be ready for at all'. She expresses concern, first and foremost, for the many in peacebuilding and development – often people from the most privileged part of the world. Her concern is that it would 'topple the realities they rely on'. In essence Schmelze is saying those in peacebuilding agencies are not ready for the complex reality and challenges of conflict: the toppling of realities relied upon.

Schmelze's assertions, that some realities of some peacebuilders ought not be toppled by PCIA, speak to a perspective of peacebuilders as being outside the

¹⁴⁸ Schmelze, B., *New Trends in Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment: Introduction*, ©2005, p. 6 <http://www.berghof-handbook.net/articles/PCIAaddIntro.pdf>

process of peace and conflict – when they are in fact the ones willingly plunging themselves into such contexts, bringing PCIA along themselves. Yet PCIA ought not demand too much of those very people, especially.

The primary impetus, which propelled the idea of PCIA, was exactly that of self-critical reflection on 'good intentions - in action - in context'. With time and experience, it became evident that such self-reflexive practices for interveners have little relevance *to the context* they are working within, when such critical reflection is *done in complete isolation* from those living in these very contexts.

However, it is exactly at this juncture that the debates begin: to dialogue and enter the fray substantially, the reality, messiness and complexity of violent conflict, or to enter the context, retain a (mythical) abstract distance from reality, evaluate and control more intensely, to meet the needs of donors above all, in 'proving' what good work is being done in violent contexts.

Bush has embraced the challenge of substantially entering the fray where Schmelzle appears to prefer a clear distance.

...(B)y using methods or processes that are scientific, verbal, logical and linear, we have to be aware that we are opting for one system of meaning, power, and culture, and not another. By opening our set of methods or processes, we may contribute to shifting meaning, power and culture.... Such openness, though, runs counter to calls for common frameworks, comparable results and strategic coherence.¹⁴⁹

The critical point, the 'turn' following her clearly stated option for her own system of meaning, is the *call for common frameworks, results and coherence*. How far is the word 'common' inclusive or exclusive of those outside her own system of meaning? This is the crux at the heart of these debates.

Since conflict situations are invariably unpredictable in nature, projects must also take a flexible (Sachithanandam would call it 'unstructured') approach, allowing them to respond to varying immediate needs of the target groups under changing conditions (Sachithanandam, 1996, 206). This can of course be difficult to combine with the management logic of donor agencies.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ Schmelzle, p. 7

¹⁵⁰ Bigdon & Korf, p. 21

The persistent conflict of interests between management logic of donor agencies (need for common frameworks) and the 'needs of target groups under changing conditions' is one that shows up in the literature on practice often in the Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation. Such a debate is the central question in relation to privilege and justice, and is a return to Dejours' analysis of the twists and turns necessary 'pour combler le décalage entre organisation du travail prescrite et organisation du travail réelle' observed in modern work places, and also present in peacebuilding. The critical question is whether those in peacebuilding are able to deal with the gap any differently.

I do not argue with the very difficult and complex realities interveners face on the ground, and the tearing choices that need to be made 'under changing conditions'. Yet the marked hesitation, by people making these difficult choices, to admit to the effects of their choices, if not an intentional dissimulation of these effects, is difficult to understand.

Interveners must always be conscious of which groups are supported by their efforts and which are left out. They may well find that, in the particular environment of complex political emergencies, it might be necessary to abandon a needs-oriented approach (supporting the poorest regardless of ethnicity) in favour of a more ethnically balanced strategy.¹⁵¹

Yet, as Bush says below, let's face the reality of what 'peacebuilding and conflict resolution' work is doing in making these choices. The *least* the privileged interveners can do here is to not join the dissimulation game Dejours so accurately describes in Chapter Two.

In many cases, the willingness of internationally supported projects to work within 'the givens' on the ground, effectively accepts, excuses and ultimately legitimizes the atrocities that created the current political dispensation. The subtlety with which some project officers achieved this was impressive. One informed me that his conflict resolution workshops worked within what he called 'geographic communities' – which, when translated from English to English, meant the Serb areas in RS. This sleight of hand avoided the question of whether in fact the Canadian-funded project worked to build bridges between ethnic communities. Without mentioning the fact of ethnic cleansing, the impression is created that they were working in the intergroup arena,

¹⁵¹ Bigdon & Korf, p. 21

whereas this was not the case. The workshops themselves did not create a multiethnic space...¹⁵²

The dissimulation game as Dejours so accurately demonstrated is central to management logic. Bigdon and Korf's 'in favour of a more ethnically balanced strategy' verges on the same dissimulation game. Their affirmation of actors sometimes choosing an 'equal' justice rather than a 'needs' justice can launch a debate of moral philosophy. Yet that is not the point: at heart is what and more importantly *who* is forcing such a choice and what and who benefits from the choice at hand.

It may well be that this protection of privilege is in some contorted 'gray zone' way perceived to be the best path to survival. Even if so, the *least* those in such situations can do is not to dissimulate both this 'bargain with the devil', and above all, the real life and death *effects* such choice entails for the most vulnerable in the situation.

The Instrumentalization of Vulnerability

The instrumentalization of vulnerability can have many faces where the peacebuilding and conflict 'resolution' industry moves in, as Bush says below.

Relating the impact a flood of NGO's had on Pristina, Bush says:

The massive concentration of international aid in such a tiny country has had a devastating impact. By December 1999, car accidents had overtaken landmines as a source of injuries. Less visible, but equally damaging, was the inflation caused by agencies snapping up houses at prices way beyond the means of Kosovars. Unable to pay rents, and with their families on welfare, many students were forced to sleep in classrooms. But nothing caused more distortions than UNMIK (UN Mission in Kosovo)'s policy on salaries. Kosovar teachers, doctors and police officials receive between \$100 and \$150 a month. But a Kosovar could earn over ten times as much by working for an international agency as a driver, watchman, or interpreter.¹⁵³

Vulnerability can be put to use in many ways that are useful to the privileged, including turning teachers and doctors into drivers and watchmen for NGO's in a post conflict situation, where capacity building and not capacity destroying was probably

¹⁵² Bush, in Keating & Knight, p. 29

¹⁵³ Bush, in Knight & Keating, p. 28

on the policy documents and lips of many agencies and actors present. *In effect* however, the immense discrepancy of salaries, combined with the vulnerability of people in post-conflict situations (an economic vulnerability exacerbated by the flood of 'aid' to the region), benefited once more the most privileged: the most privileged actors and agencies themselves.

What is *not* theorized for learning or practice purposes in conflict studies is vulnerability and the uses it is continually put to, usually in service to the most privileged in a situation of conflict.

Vulnerability is the at the core of all coercion – from tyrannies practiced in the most intimate spheres at home to tyrannies of state; from students at northern universities conceding to a priori agreement with professorial discourse, to doctors becoming drivers for NGO personnel in Kosovo.

We must realize that vulnerability has a profound effect on people's agency, especially critical agency, and that the most powerful groups have often turned this effect consistently to their advantage. As children of colonization we must recognize this specific dynamic as having played a central role in the 'success' of colonization, and trace how this legacy is still being lived at present in substantial ways.

The Jesuits hoped to promote the obedience and submission that was a necessary attribute of Christian life by reconfiguring Aboriginal social and political relationships. Conversion itself, however, and the Jesuits' ability to gain compliance most frequently occurred after a process of chastisement and humiliation that had been brought about by disease or the consequences of warfare. The Jesuits described the misfortunes that were increasingly experienced by Native people during the 1630's and 1640's as afflictions and crosses, and they wrote that these afflictions had an especially beneficial effect in inducing conversion and generating the humility and obedience that were appropriate to Christian behaviour. Le Jeune, for example, wrote that affliction 'opens the eyes of the understanding (sic) (14:183)'. He and other Jesuits argued that suffering was necessary in order to reduce the pride and independence that kept people from recognizing the necessity of submission and their obligations to God and the Jesuits. This understanding was pointedly expressed in the *Relation* for the years 1642 and 1643, which stated: 'Humiliations are the harbingers that mark the dwellings of the great God; and tribulation attracts us more strongly and with much more certainty than does comfort. It is necessary to abase the pride and haughtiness of these people, in order to give admission to the faith'(25:39).¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴ Blackburn, p. 105

The exploitation of the desire to be is especially effective the more vulnerable people are. This is reflected in Levi's delineation of the 'gray zone'. Very simply, the more vulnerable people are the more 'willingly' people will accommodate 'management logic'.

Conversion to Catholicism is not the concern here – conversion, by those most vulnerable in conflict situations to management logic in peacebuilding and development work is. Moreover, given that market oriented economics are very much at the heart of peacebuilding operations, peacebuilding operations, prioritizing first and foremost 'management logic', without least consideration for a post-conflict population's economic, social, political and personal vulnerability, may yet prove the *perfect Trojan Horse* of market economics.

In the words of Claude Ake, market-oriented economics quickly became 'something close to a global theology' in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War. This was the political and ideological milieu within which the first flurry of peacebuilding operations were launched at the very end of the Cold War – and it was this context that shaped the design and conduct of these operations in fundamental ways...¹⁵⁵

Peacebuilding in effect (becomes) an enormous experiment in social engineering – an experiment that involves transplanting Western models of social, political, and economic organization into war-shattered states in order to control civil conflict: in other words, pacification through political and economic liberalization.¹⁵⁶

Roland Paris is clear about peacebuilding becoming the means of the tragic reconciliation addressed in the Introduction. To sharply, consciously and progressively cut with this colonial legacy, self-critical and consistent challenges, within the north and to northern agencies, for a radical reversal of ownership and participation of peacebuilding processes in post-conflict contexts needs to take place. This is a first step.

There is a more central step however, never considered within 'management logic' frameworks, and at best only implied within the debate on radical reversal of

¹⁵⁵ Paris, R., *At War's End: Building Peace after Civil Conflict*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, © 2004, p. 21-22

¹⁵⁶ Roland Paris, as quoted in Keating & Knight, p. XXXIX

ownership in PCIA. Saba Mahmood speaks to it directly, albeit within a different context.

What does it mean for feminists like myself to take the mosque participants' concept of human flourishing into account?

...Many feminists, who would oppose the use of military force, would have little difficulty supporting projects of social reform aimed at transforming the attachments, commitments and sensibilities of the kind that undergird the practices of the women I worked with, so that these women may be allowed to live a more enlightened existence...

... The questions that I have come to ask of myself, and which I would like to pose to the reader as well are: Do my political visions ever run up against the responsibility that I incur for the destruction of life forms so that 'unenlightened' women may be taught to live more freely? Do I even fully comprehend the forms of life that I want so passionately to remake? Would an intimate knowledge of lifeworlds distinct from mine ever lead me to question my own certainty about what I prescribe as a superior way of life for others?¹⁵⁷

Most often, the most privileged concerned with 'change' want the difficult process of change to be done by 'others' – that they may one day be more like us'. The reality of change – the complex, intense, challenging of realities relied upon – is rarely the challenge embraced by the most privileged in the context.

The Flat-Lining of Complexity

The insistence on 'management' logic and 'common frameworks' ('common' here intentionally applying exclusively to northern agencies) is the 'business equivalent' of my central concern at the beginning of this section: the search for 'convergence of thought', without in-depth mutual critical engagement.

The result is consistently that the more vulnerable parties are invited into a subtly coerced convergence in order to continue 'to be' within the operations of power – in this case, peacebuilding.

Jean-François Six, a French mediator who has written extensively on mediation theory and practice, addresses this concern directly in the context of mediation. I am convinced that peacebuilding needs to consider these dynamics

¹⁵⁷ Mahmood, p. 195-197

centrally, for assumptions in peacebuilding very often parallel assumptions in mediation.

Les médiateurs idéalistes rejoignent, sans le savoir, les bellicistes qui font, eux aussi, du conflit, un absolu...Ce sont de grands intégristes, des hommes qui ont une volonté de pureté, de faire triompher la seule et unique cause, qui est la leur, promue comme seule vraie, des hommes qui rejettent de haut toute médiation car pour eux il n'y a qu'une solution: réaliser des purifications...

Comment le comprendre? Les binaires ont comme tendance naturelle de réduire à l'un: les pacifistes le font dans un grand tout unique, une unification sentimentale; les bellicistes le font dans l'élimination, à leur profit, du deuxième terme, de l'adversaire, de l'autre, qu'ils obligent à perdre leur identité, à se fondre en eux.¹⁵⁸

Six proposes that such 'zeal' has its roots in religious terms.

Cette conception de la médiation, on le comprend, est un idéalisme pur et simple ; elle participe souvent à un mythe religieux... Et pour se permettre de le dire de façon humoristique, avec Woody Allen, il faut, avant que n'advienne la non-violence absolue, faire cette contestation réaliste : 'La Bible nous dit que le lion et l'agneau partageront la même couche. M'est avis que l'agneau ne dormira pas beaucoup.'

L'idéalisme, en matière de médiation tout particulièrement, aboutit souvent à l'inverse de ce que la médiation voudrait réaliser ; il fait naître des effets pervers.¹⁵⁹

Management logic - the search for 'common frameworks' - advocated without the intense work and 'risk' to 'certainties we rely on', that genuine and substantial engagement requires from *all* sides, destroys 'peacebuilding'. Management logic becomes a search for control based on the need for non-negotiable certainties.

Comment détruit-on une médiation dès son point de départ? Comment comble-t-on l'espace vide et massacre-t-on le tiers? En posant tout de suite le but que l'on veut atteindre. En ayant déjà en tête un scénario, les perspectives de solution que l'on a échafaudées pour avoir le mot de la fin. Vouloir connaître à l'avance le bout de chemin, le terme auquel conduira le trajet qui va être entrepris... Si l'on a à l'esprit la destination prévue, il suffit d'appliquer des techniques, de se servir des bonnes cartes pour y parvenir ; ce n'est pas de la médiation.¹⁶⁰

Schmelze's reasoning that Bush challenges ways of doing and being that 'many ... may not be ready for at all' echoes 'reasonable' objections of the comfortable vis-à-vis those, contesting from within, the conditions causing suffering.

While confined here in the Birmingham City Jail, I came across your recent statement calling our present activities 'unwise and untimely'. You deplore the demonstrations that are presently taking place in Birmingham. But I am sorry that your statement did not express a similar concern for the conditions that brought the demonstrations into being....

¹⁵⁸ Six (1995), p. 219-220

¹⁵⁹ Six (1995), p. 217

¹⁶⁰ Six, J.F. & Mussard, V., *Médiation: Essai*, Paris, Editions de Seuil, ©2002, p. 183

I guess it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say, 'Wait'. But when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your sisters and brothers at whim; when you have seen hate-filled policemen curse, kick, brutalize, and even kill your black brothers and sisters with impunity; when you see the vast majority of your 20 million Negro brothers smothering in an airtight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society; when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your six-year-old daughter why she can't go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television, and see tears welling up in her eyes when she is told that Funtown is closed to coloured children, and see the depressing clouds of inferiority begin to form in her little mental sky, and see her begin to distort her little personality by unconsciously developing a bitterness toward white people...then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait.

I had hoped that the white moderate would understand...and would reject the myth of time...the strangely irrational notion that there is something in the very flow of time that will inevitably cure all ills...We must use time creatively, and forever realize that the time is always ripe to do right...¹⁶¹

The myth of linearity, that conflict rooted in injustice can be 'resolved' one clear and clean 'manageable' step at a time is a myth that is constituted simultaneously with privilege, and 'just happens' to privilege the privileged, as we see over and over again.

To want simplicity or assured clarity, before advocating for, supporting and engaging in substantial change, can always be traced back to a 'turn' that is at heart, a call for an assurance of continued privilege.

To want to avoid the real and intense complexity of conflict, through addressing (or deploring) conflicts but not the conditions that bring about such conflicts, (or through an insistence on management logic and common frameworks *first*), is a return to what Jean-François Six identifies as fear of conflict itself, an unwillingness or incapacity to deal with the complexity of conflict.

Il faut aller plus loin: à travers cette manière de vouloir faire s'évaporer les conflits comme par enchantement, on comprend que d'une part il y a, chez celui qui pense ainsi, il y a un désir infantile de toute-puissance : on voudrait faire disparaître le conflit comme par magie, en utilisant les méthodes, les « charmes » qui sont indiqués dans les contes de fées ; on comprend d'autre part qu'il y a une immense peur, la peur du conflit : on désire que celui-ci rentre sous terre, meure, parce qu'on est paniqué par lui.¹⁶²

Dans cette configuration, il s'agit toujours de tordre le cou – avec douceur ! – au conflit, à cette hydre qui s'appelle le conflit...Et des livres entiers vont alors prôner l' 'esprit de la

¹⁶¹ King, M.L., 'Letter from Birmingham Jail, in Loeb, P.R. (ed.), *The Impossible Will Take a Little While*, New York, Basic Books, ©2004, p. 281-284

¹⁶² Six (1995), p. 218

médiation' où le médiateur est présenté comme un ange exterminateur du conflit, l'ange qui vient ainsi restaurer l'harmonie initiale, le paradis perdu par le conflit.¹⁶³

No waiting, no management logic or common framework for a few, will ever be able to render the complexity of multiple realities in conflict 'clean' and 'manageable'. There is no way to assure ourselves, our employers, or funding agencies, (nor do I advocate it as desirable), that the certainties we rely on will or ought to remain 'un-touched'.

Knowledge is not only understood as subjective, grounded as it is in one's lived experiences, it is also conceived of as situated and subjugated. Situated knowledge contests the notion of an omniscient or omnipotent viewpoint from which anything is knowable. Knowledge is understood as situated by one's social location as a result of privileges and oppression that one has experienced....¹⁶⁴

We, in peacebuilding and conflict studies must come to understand that *our* knowledge is 'subjective, grounded, situated and subjugated', and that there is no such thing as an 'omniscient or omnipotent viewpoint'. We are, by and large, the 'successful' children of 'successful' colonization. We must come to see 'les effets pervers' that such simultaneous situated, subjugated and privileged being entails. We must come to see the 'turns' we perform to remain privileged both individually and collectively in peacebuilding and conflict discourse and practice. Without a deep and intensely *self-critical* grasp of our situation, subjugation in and re-enactment of privilege, we risk simply continuing the centuries-old colonial legacies of the privileged, all the while claiming a concern for justice.

Individual Agency and Colonial Being

I turn to a last personal experience to demonstrate how 'easily' oppressive colonial legacies are 'innocently' re-inscribed into the present, with potential far-reaching consequences for people alive today.

¹⁶³ Six (2002), p. 24

¹⁶⁴ Moosa-Mitha, in Brown & Strega, p. 66

In one course in conflict studies, a professor openly declared the 'best' strategy for Onkwehonwe on Turtle Island would be to launch themselves fully into economic activity similar to Settlers and Settler communities.

Given the academic context, one could expect some logical 'grounding' for this assertion. None was forthcoming. No mention was made of the many self-sustaining, often thriving, Onkwehonwe communities with good economies that have been intentionally destroyed by Settler government and industry, one after another, especially since the early 1960's. Among them, Moose Lake, Cedar Lake and Wollaston Lake: thriving communities, with sustaining economies intentionally destroyed to make way for Settler hydro or mining 'projects'. Negotiated and publicized compensation packages, as though such destruction could be 'compensated' for, were most often never honoured by Settler governments (York, 1990, 107ff).

This 'situated' knowledge, served as an 'innocuous' aside by a person of 'authority' within an institution of 'higher learning', is not the 'innocuous' comment it appears to be. It is an individual's fundamental re-inscribing of operations of power currently at work in Canada, subverting the ongoing Onkwehonwe struggles for justice, present throughout centuries.

Taiaiake Alfred's exposé in *Wasase: Indigenous Pathway of Action and Freedom* documents the 'pathways of least resistance' Onkwehonwe are essentially being forced into taking for the upcoming Winter Olympics in Vancouver in 2010.

"First Nations band councils agreed to pay the province of British Columbia \$25,000 per year for the use of four acres of land in a resort town located in the First Nations' shared traditional territory. This was the first publicized case of Onkwehonwe paying white people for their own lands, of actually giving money to the people who stole their land in exchange for permission to use the very property that was stolen from them in the first place and which remains in legal limbo as far as its legal title goes, even in colonial courts. It would be easy to mock the bands chiefs' cowardice, or shed tears over the loss of pride and culture that this represents, but this is the present reality of First Nations' politics."

'Dancing with your jailer, participating in your own execution' for Onkwehonwe on Turtle Island is not history. It is current reality.

"This particular land deal was part of a band economic development scheme agreed to by the province. In exchange for the two band councils' participation in the City of Vancouver's successful bid to host the 2010 Winter Olympics...they were awarded the privilege of operating a cultural centre in the Olympic Village as a tourist attraction – to market their melanin and play the role of Friendly Indian for the otherwise white-washed Vancouver Olympic bid.

"(There is) an ongoing fight of Onkwehonwe in the area to protect their lands from predatory ski resort developers... (T)he planned Olympic facilities are to be situated on the pristine and unsundered lands of the St'at'imx people (as is the resort town itself)...

"The messy complexity and aching conflicts of our lives don't market well to people on vacation..."¹⁶⁵

These are the turns by which conflict discourse and practice's apparent reach for social justice is completely undermined by unquestioned colonial privilege. Such a 'brief', critically unexamined aside 'served' by a privileged white professor in *conflict studies* performs the reversal and concealment of the strategic relations of force appearing instead as one person's 'innocent' personal opinion.

Throughout this chapter – from Switzerland to South Africa, from classrooms in Canada to PCIA workshops in Sri Lanka, from officials at the United Nations to non-governmental organizations in Pristina – it is possible to trace how individual and collective agency is repeatedly put in service to strategic relations of force that sustain domination – despite all rhetoric of good intentions. Tracing in detail the effects privilege is put to, across conflicts and contexts, substantiates much of Butler's writing on power and individual agency.

Individually and collectively, people in conflict studies must come to comprehend how deeply 'colonial being' has seeped into and saturates our knowledge, identity and agency, and how pivotal our 'being' is to sustaining such continuing colonization.

Six Challenges to Colonial Being

Chapter Three, as introduced, rests on three core theses asserted by Butler: first, the formation of the subject (body, psyche, identity and agency) follows the

¹⁶⁵ Alfred (2005), p. 41, 43

needs of regulatory power in substantial measure; secondly that subjects 'come to be' through a dissimulation, reversal and concealment of the horizon of the operations of power; and lastly that agency rests in the ambivalence of resistance and recuperation of operations of power. Through such an analysis it is possible to begin to see how it is that 'ordinary' people living 'ordinary' lives come to participate in crimes against humanity. It is also possible to begin to imagine a different way of 'being' within strategic relations of force.

Provocatively, and sincerely, let me close this chapter with a 6-step challenge to people, theory, and practice in conflict studies. The six steps follow Dejours' analysis of the modern workplace closely, and which I posit here as small spaces open to critical agency, to undermine domination, in our day-to-day lives.

Challenge 1: Refuse denial. Dare to acknowledge the intense rigidity of colonial 'being' and economic privilege. In other words, stop denying the intense suffering – our own and others' – that sustaining 'successful' colonial being entails.¹⁶⁶

Challenge 2: Break with cultured despair – acknowledge cultural desperation. Dare to openly acknowledge how very few resources we have to offer – other than financial – to people and communities around the world – because in-depth quality of life and community in wealthy countries have been stripped down to the hierarchal paper chase – money and bureaucracy – anchored in the instrumentalization of fear.

Challenge 3: Dare solidarity. Refuse and openly challenge the instrumentalization of fear and the seductive call to submission. Analyze and recognize how deeply our lives – economically, socially, politically, often even personally - are ruled by the

¹⁶⁶ An interview in the weekend edition of the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* on June 18, 2006 with a 36-year-old businesswoman is exemplary of the denial/dissimulation necessary 'to be' successful in modern economies. She first openly admitted to working 12-14 hours a day regularly, and then said she is very good at maintaining a healthy life-work balance. This interview was on the front page of the section dedicated exclusively to job ads. By placement, this interview is clearly intended to describe 'successful being' in the modern economy.

instrumentalization of vulnerability, and how pervasively we reproduce these dynamics in 'ordinary' life – child rearing practices, in learning and in all working life. Challenge all faces of tyranny, including asphyxiating 'harmony at all costs', magic solutions and seductive illusions of 'having the answer'. Make time and resources available for the long haul of comprehensive, self-critical reflection and action in context and community.

Challenge 4: Dare to tell the truth about your life:

In speaking of lies, we come inevitably to the subject of truth. There is nothing simple or easy about this idea. There is no 'the truth', 'a truth' – truth is not one thing or even a system. It is an increasing complexity. The pattern of the carpet is a surface. When we look closely, or when we become weavers, we learn of the tiny multiple threads unseen in the overall pattern, the knots on the underside of the carpet.

This is why the effort to speak honestly is so important. Lies are usually attempts to make everything simpler – for the liar – than it really is or ought to be.

It is important to do this because it breaks down human self-delusion and isolation.

It is important to do this because in so doing we do justice to our own complexity.

It is important to do this because we can count on so few people to go this hard way with us.¹⁶⁷

Challenge 5: Dare to openly challenge and refuse to perpetuate the institutional lie. Refuse the dissimulating practices of 'results-oriented' reporting that conceals more than reveals. Recognize, analyze and participate in theory and practice, the intense wealth and complexity of many realities coming together. Learn how to respond truthfully to challenges without using corporate li(n)es of 'self-defence'; refuse, at all turns, the 'grotesque eloquence' of dissimulation; acknowledge openly that to question 'the way things are done' challenges and exposes the central instrumentalization of fear in hierarchy.

Challenge 6: Dare to openly, actively and consistently refuse to do the dirty work in the name of fear or of courage for the 'hard times' upon us. Alternatively, in the worst-case scenario, analyze with others if possible what elements of vulnerability

¹⁶⁷ Rich, A., *On Lies, Secrets and Silence: Selected Prose 1966-1978*, New York, W. W. Norton & Company, ©1979, p. 187-188

are being manipulated to such a degree that you need to concede to doing the dirty work. Analyze together, and openly acknowledge, the implications for yourself and for others in the context.

Chapter Four – A Wider Imagination in Theory and Practice

Introduction

Both (writing and reading) require being alert and ready for unaccountable beauty, for the intricateness or simple elegance of the writer's imagination, for the world that imagination evokes. Both require being mindful of the places where imagination sabotages itself, locks its own gates, pollutes its vision. Writing and reading mean being aware of the writer's notions of risk and safety, the serene achievement of, or sweaty fight for, meaning and response-ability.¹⁶⁸

Conflict demands a wider imagination from every one. It demands, as does literature, being alert for the elegance and beauty of engagement with one another, and being 'mindful of the places where imagination sabotages itself'. Conflict is the 'sweaty fight for meaning and response-ability'. The notions of risk and safety are central to conflict, central to critical engagement with one another.

The European colonial imagination that we as the children of colonization have inherited, and risk or keep perpetuating, is rooted in fairy tale structures of heroes and villains that can make reality change in one magic moment. Barkan's opening claim that the Swiss humanitarian fund changed world morality 'on or about March 5, 1997' is completely in line with an imagination rooted in 'magic' moments.¹⁶⁹

Community in Context

The story of Rosa Parks is often framed as a lone individual, one day, taking a stand and changing the course of history. Yet Rosa Parks acted in context, with others, and in full awareness of a long tradition of fighting for civil rights.

Before refusing to give up her seat, Parks had been active for twelve years in the local NAACP chapter, serving as its secretary. The summer before her arrest, she had attended a ten-day training session at Tennessee's labor and civil rights organizing school...Parks had become familiar with previous challenges to segregation: Another Montgomery bus boycott, fifty years earlier, successfully eased some restrictions...

¹⁶⁸ Morrison (1992), p. xiii

¹⁶⁹ Barkan begins the quote 'Virginia Woolf might have said...'. It is an interesting 'twist' worth giving some thought to, for reading Virginia Woolf's writing, one can see clearly that her imagination is not rooted in magic moments. If anything Woolf's writing is rooted in the ordinary, the mundane, the 'thick details' of everyday life – especially of women's lives. Why Barkan chose Woolf to potentially utter the 'magic moment' phrase remains a complete mystery to me – other than to give a very 'male-stream' thought a lesser male-stream guise.

In short, Rosa Parks didn't make a spur-of-the-moment decision. She didn't single-handedly give birth to the civil rights efforts, but she was part of an exciting movement for change, at a time when success was far from certain. We all know Parks' name, but few of us know about Montgomery NAACP head, E.D. Nixon who served as one of her mentors and first got Martin Luther King, Jr., involved. Nixon carried people's suitcases on the trains, and was active in the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, the union founded by legendary civil rights activist A. Philip Randolph. Nixon played a key role in the campaign. But no one talks of him, any more than they talk of JoAnn Robinson, who taught nearby at an underfunded and segregated Black college and whose Women's Political Council distributed the initial leaflets following Parks' arrest...

Yet, the conventional retelling of her story creates a standard so impossible to meet, it may actually make it harder for us to get involved, inadvertently stripping away Parks' most powerful lesson of hope.

The conventional portrayal suggests that social activists come out of nowhere, to suddenly take dramatic stands. It implies that we act with the greatest impact when we act alone...¹⁷⁰

'Heroic magic moments' contain two dynamics we have seen as sustaining privilege – the 'false' religious dynamic of a singular, exclusive and welcoming centre (where 'welcoming' indicates *the* answer to human well-being for those willing to constellate themselves accordingly); and the 'new age' myth of self-fulfilment in complete isolation of social, economic and political realities, our own and of those around us. Both these dynamics, as explored in Chapter Two, serve the present strategic relations of force very well.

As the story of Rosa Parks demonstrates, acting against suffering and injustice requires the opposite of these dynamics: (historical) context and community. Nelson Mandela speaks directly to these two dynamics having been critical for him.

The first task in accomplishing that (surviving prison as political prisoner) is learning exactly what one must do to survive. To that end, one must know the enemy's purpose before adopting a strategy to undermine it. Prison is designed to break one's spirit and destroy one's resolve. To do this, authorities attempt to exploit every weakness, demolish every initiative, negate all signs of individuality – all with the idea of stamping out that spark that makes each of us human and each of us who we are.

Our survival depended on understanding what the authorities were attempting to do to us, and sharing that understanding with each other. It would be very hard if not impossible for one man alone to resist. I do not know that I could have done it had I been alone.¹⁷¹

170 Loeb, P. R., "The Real Rosa Parks", in Loeb, p. 288-290

171 Mandela, N., "The Dark Years", in Loeb, p. 73

(Historical) context and critical engagement in community are two dynamics central to fighting injustice. Yet in Chapter Three, the twists and turns, inoculations and dissimulations so central to sustaining privilege are most often facilitated through stripping the struggles from the (historical) contexts, or from critical engagement in community. In the northern institutions of learning and conflict intervention, often both are missing: there is no critical historical learning and reflection on being the children of colonization or how this pollutes our imagination and practice; and substantial long-term critical engagement with the communities in conflict very often does not take place.

A related aspect ... involves the North-South dimension of peacebuilding operations. What is the role of the South in peacebuilding? Interventions to date have tended to reflect asymmetrical distributions of power in which Northern states have determined (if), where, when and how such interventions will occur...Yet the big Southern countries are often not even at the table when proposals for deploying peacebuilding operations are discussed at the UN. Some analysts have advocated that measures be undertaken to ensure the involvement of key Southern countries such as Brazil, Mexico, China, India, Pakistan, and Indonesia in developing peacebuilding strategies. If they were more integrally involved, *the colonial overtones surrounding intervention would be reduced and the legitimacy of the operations would be strengthened. It may also be possible that these countries will have some familiarity with the sorts of problems being confronted by post-conflict societies in the South and thus make an effective contribution to the content of peacebuilding operations.*¹⁷² (my emphasis)

Keating and Knight address a concern for increased participation in peacebuilding operations. Yet, their concern, first and foremost, is to lessen the colonial overtones of interventions - once more a concern for image management rather than qualitative collective enactment of peace. The substantial contribution to peacebuilding operations by southern countries is posited by Keating and Knight as an 'afterthought': 'it may be also be possible...'

The mythic hero, the magic solution, the neutral, autonomous 'peacebuilder' share the common misperception that it is possible to act and 'to be' outside operations of power. Butler identifies denial of subjection within operations of power as central to becoming a 'subject', to assuming a degree of power, within particular

¹⁷² Keating & Knight, "Introduction: Recent Developments in Postconflict Studies - Peacebuilding and Governance, in Keating & Knight, p. XLI

operations of power. Assuming power however does not happen through denial alone. Assuming power requires denial of subjection *and* its simultaneous 're-enactment'.

Can we read this 'denial' in northern learning traditions and institutions, immersed in coercive hierarchy and stripped of substantial engagement with an extremely violent colonial history and present, in conflict (studies) discourse and practice? Can we read simultaneous re-enactment of colonial subjugation in the terms under which 'peacebuilding' is taking place? I posit this is possible, and that the function of privilege is one through which such denial and re-enactment of subjection is consistently lived out.

Autonomy and Subjection

One cannot be both fully autonomous *and* subjected within particular operations of power. I posit that the entrenched autonomy myth individually, and collectively through continual assertions of (mythic) state 'sovereignty', is central to the complete dissimulation of operations of power, the strategic relations of force, based currently in neo-liberal market-economy myths as 'the' answer to all of life's individual and collective struggles. The myth of total autonomy collapses substantially in Butler's theory of subjection.

Subjection exploits the desire for existence, where existence is always conferred from elsewhere; it marks a primary vulnerability to the Other in order to be.¹⁷³

There is, *in fact*, no existence without an other. There is no birth, there is no infant survival, thriving toddlers or relational adults without an other. There is no conflict and there is no peace without an other. There is no justice in isolation.

We are all born within operations of power, be this Charles, the King-who-may-never-be, myself born to a rural French Canadian family in English Canada, or Alem, a baby girl who was exposed because of desperate poverty, taken in and

¹⁷³ Butler, p. 21

cared for by a group of women in Ethiopia. We all come 'to be' within particular operations of power, and our 'being' (or imposed death) is intended, consciously or otherwise, to continue and sustain the operations of power we are born within.

Feminists who call for an end to the burka in Afghanistan and say nothing about our daughters being 'forced by choice' in the name of fashion, to bare midriffs, or wear tiny debilitating high heels in the middle of a Canadian or Swiss Alps winter are equally in denial of operations of power.

... when assessing the violence that particular systems of gender inequality enact on women, it is not enough to simply point out, for example, that a tradition of female piety or modesty serves to give legitimacy to women's subordination. Rather it is only by exploring these traditions in relation to the practical engagements and forms of life in which they are embedded that we can *come to understand the significance of that subordination to the women who embody it.* (my emphasis)

...I understand the political demand that feminism imposes to exercise vigilance against culturalist arguments that seem to authorize practices that underwrite women's oppression. I would submit, however, that our analytical explorations should not be reduced to the requirements of political judgment, in part because the labor that belongs to the field of analysis is different from that required by the demands of political action, both in its temporality and its social impact. It is not that these two modalities of engagement – the political and the analytical – should remain deaf to each other, only that they should not be collapsed into each other.¹⁷⁴

Whether women are hidden under the Taliban's burkas and 'forced' to stay behind the private walls of cultural and domestic tyranny, or whether we are 'forced' to carry the triple burdens of full careers, childcare and housework, raising children in cities walled by billboards of almost naked women, two levels of analysis are required: we need to come to understand the significance of embodied subordination to the operations of power we each exist within; and we collectively need to understand the significance of that subordination to those who embody it.

As Butler posits, all agency contains the ambivalent interplay of recuperation and resistance to operations of power.

¹⁷⁴ Mahmood, p. 188, 195

Vulnerability and Domination

Operations of power, most especially those rooted in European colonization are a pitiable negotiation of the 'primary vulnerability to the other in order to be' based on domination. Domination is simultaneously a denial of vulnerability and its re-enactment through the instrumentalization of fear.¹⁷⁵ Yet, since September 11, 2001 and the destruction of the World Trade Towers in the most militarily developed country of the world, it is clear that domination does not eliminate vulnerability. Vulnerability cannot be eliminated by force and domination. Only through deep and mutual recognition of our common vulnerability to one another, by virtue of our humanity collectively, dependant on the ecology of the globe, can vulnerability become not only less exploitable, but more importantly a central resource in a balanced interdependence.

In Onkwehonwe traditions around the world, mutual vulnerability and the recognition of the resulting full interdependence of all life forms on one another is a central resource of understanding, governance and wisdom traditions. Primary vulnerability to the other in order to be, in these traditions, is kept at the forefront of consciousness. Instead of being denied and simultaneously re-enacted, it is *the* central consideration in all dealings with another. This does not necessarily imply a lack of conflict, or aggression. It is a fundamental recognition of 'being', acknowledged, and often ritualized to keep it as the central reference in all interaction among people, and all inhabitants of the planet that make life possible.

Equally important in these traditions, and in no way a contradiction, is the fundamental autonomy of each person, within the collective.

¹⁷⁵ This is most visible in the fact that many individuals and populations rendered most vulnerable by modern socio-economic realities – single women with children, migrant workers, people on social assistance and the unemployed are often the ones considered most 'dangerous' to social and economic cohesion. Those in danger of exclusion become those who are 'dangerous' - justifying the socio-economic exclusion – a very common turn instrumentalizing fear and breaking down all potential solidarity. Generating fear of the 'excluded' is the best way to also undermine the legitimacy of potential resources that exclusion can and does at times generate – creative and genuine alternatives to white, patriarchal 'wage-slavery'.

A crucial feature of the indigenous concept of governance is its respect for individual autonomy. This respect precludes the notion of 'sovereignty' – the idea that there can be a permanent transference of power or authority from the individual to an abstraction of the collective called 'government'.

The governance process consists in the structured interplay of three kinds of power: individual power, persuasive power, and the power of tradition.¹⁷⁶

Wisdom traditions and traditional governance structures are centred on these two core recognitions – the interdependence of all, the autonomy of each. Despite 500 years of imposed domination through the instrumentalization of fear, and the full and complete exploitation of the desire to be through colonization, these two core tenants of life for Onkwehonwe continue to be central (Alfred, 1999, 22).

It is critical to consider that Onkwehonwe and Onkwehonwe wisdom traditions, in theory and practice, could lead the way out of colonial obsessions of dominance, as the central negotiation of mutual vulnerability. Domination is a 'dead end' for all, against which we are currently brushing up against – militarily and ecologically. The wealth of wisdom in some Onkwehonwe communities and Onkwehonwe traditions, despite tremendous losses because of colonial ethnocidal practices over the last 500 years, may be among the most central and resourceful people and wisdom traditions leading the way to genuine present and future human flourishing.

Whether in the name of Jesus, Allah, Yahweh or Alan Greenspan, Phyllis Schafly's antifeminism, feminism's visions of human flourishing reduced to the rubble of equality with privileged white men, PCIA's insistence on the contradictory 'common (and simultaneously exclusive) frameworks first', or a conflict studies professor's (colonial and colonizing) 'dream' for Onkwehonwe on Turtle Island, one finds at the core of each the spectre of a discourse rooted in domination – a return over and over again of colonization's 'saviour' ethic, embodied in very subtle and brutally overt strategic relations of force.

¹⁷⁶ Alfred (1999), p. 25, 26

She has thought about what could have been the intellectual history of any discipline if it had not insisted upon, or been forced into, the waste of time and life that rationalizations for and representations of dominance required – lethal discourses of exclusion blocking access to cognition for both the excluder and the excluded.

The conventional wisdom of the Tower of Babel story is that the collapse was a misfortune. That it was the distraction or the weight of many languages that precipitated the tower's failed architecture. That one monolithic language would have expedited the building and heaven would have been reached. Whose heaven, she wonders? And what kind? Perhaps the achievement of Paradise was premature, a little hasty if no one could take the time to understand other languages, other views, other narratives. Had they, the heaven they imagined might have been found at their feet. Complicated, demanding, yes, but a view of heaven as life; not as post-life.¹⁷⁷

Climbing down, one step at a time, from the dreams of the Tower of Babel, which I have been weaned on, let me propose critical 'moments' within conflict (studies) discourse and practice, and within 'ordinary' life where individual and collective agency may come into play – critical and ambivalent as always – to undermine domination.

Critical Moments

The moments I propose as 'critical' are moments when strategic relations of force, the instrumentalization of fear, and the exploitation of vulnerability can be 'unpacked' and analyzed in 'ordinary' day-to-day interaction especially common to people with some privilege.

The critical 'moments' I see as needing 'unpacking' within conflict studies discourse and practice are the concepts of neutrality, confidentiality, designated singular centres (of hope/redemption – social, economic, political or spiritual) and the use of hierarchy in sustaining strategic relations of force.

Neutrality as Myth

The relative absence of any research on the practice of neutrality suggests that neutrality functions like a folk concept, talked, practiced, and researched on the basis of tacit and local understandings, contained in (and by) a rhetoric about power and conflict. This rhetoric, in turn, contributes to the reconfirmation of these same tacit understandings about neutrality. Thus, like other folk concepts, neutrality is both 'transparent' and 'opaque': transparent because it operates on the basis of widely held assumptions about power and conflict, and opaque because it is exceedingly difficult to raise questions about the nature and practice of neutrality from *within* this consensus.

¹⁷⁷ Morrison (1993), p. 18-19

...(T)he location for struggle and conflict is not only differences in interests; the location for struggle is also over meaning and is a function of what Volosinov refers to as 'the multi-accentuality' of words; because meaning is never a property of the word but is constructed in *use*, in particular social contexts, as part of particular practices, the social construction and management of meaning is a political activity.¹⁷⁸

Conflict and conflict intervention are always already centrally about the construction, management and contestation of meaning. There can be no neutrality in the creation of meaning.

As Bruno Tricoire so aptly observes, 'La neutralité, on le sait, peut s'averer être une forme subtile de la cruauté' (footnote, 41). Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois speak directly to this reality in the context of anthropology.

Anthropological witnessing obviously positions the anthropologist inside human events as a responsive, reflexive, and morally or politically committed being, a person who can be counted on to 'take sides' when necessary and to eschew the privileges of neutrality. This stance flies directly in the face of academic non-engagement. The gift of the ethnographer remains, however, some combination of thick description, eye-witnessing, and radical juxtaposition based on cross-cultural insight. But the rules of living-in and living-with peoples in dramatic flux, often on the verge of extermination, remain as yet unwritten, perhaps even unspoken. There is no appropriate distance to take from our subjects during torture, lynching, or rape. What kinds of participant-observation, what sort of eye-witnessing, are adequate to scenes of genocide and its aftermath, or even to structural violence and ethnocide? When the anthropologist is witness to crimes against humanity mere scientific empathy is not sufficient. At what point does the anthropologist as eye witness become a bystander or even a co-conspirator?

These remain vexing and unresolved issues. But the original mandate of anthropology and ethnography remains clear: to put ourselves and our discipline squarely on the side of humanity, world-saving, and world-repair, even though we may not always be certain about exactly what this means or what is being asked of us at any particular moment. In the final analysis we can only hope that our time-honoured methods of empathic and engaged witnessing, of "being with" and "being there" – as tired as these old concepts may seem – will provide us with the tools necessary for anthropology to emerge as a small practice of human liberation.¹⁷⁹

Conflict studies discourse and practice stands at the same critical juncture as anthropology. Whether it be 'innocent' declarations of magic solutions or the dissimulation involved in saying one is working within 'geographic' communities (meaning, in reality, ethnically-cleansed communities), 'third party neutral' mythology, or PCIA's push for indigenous ownership of processes, each places themselves squarely within the operations of power and in relation to the instrumentalization of vulnerability, with real consequences for people's lives. Yet

¹⁷⁸ Cobb & Rifkin, p. 37, 61

¹⁷⁹ Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, "Introduction", p. 27

only Bush's PCIA fully and squarely acknowledges this – all others retain a critical and dissimulating silence on the implications of 'location'.

An 'assumed' (uncontested and unanalyzed) neutrality – as a folk concept - simply cannot remain a central unquestioned assumption in conflict discourse and practice without fully exposing itself to the recruitment I addressed in the Introduction. Indeed, clinging to the concept of neutrality in conflict discourse and practice is practically an invitation to such recruitment - to becoming a bystander and a co-conspirator within particular operations of power, all the while claiming a 'neutral' concern for fairness/justice.

Confidentiality as Coercion

Confidentiality is one of the most effective tools to sustaining hegemony, and is rooted in subtle coercion. It is almost never theorized in conflict studies and discourse, though it is a central pillar in practice. Confidentiality is a central, almost sacred, concept and practice in mediation. It 'just so happens' to be the most effective tool in undermining the two dynamics most central to a struggle for justice: community and context. The efficacy of confidentiality rests in the subtle use of isolation and simultaneous co-optation into privilege: the grey zone of strategic relations of force. Confidentiality is the 'turn' of the key, locking people in or out of 'secret kingdoms'.

As described in Chapter One, mediation came to be posited as a central force for the good, as an alternative to imposed judicial resolutions of conflict. Interestingly, mediation, with its strict and un-problematized pillar of confidentiality emerged essentially at the same time as subaltern groups had become 'system-savvy' enough to begin challenging colonial operations of power through the subversive use of its most central institution: the legal system.

One of the central means by which women fought the state regulation of intimate spheres, until then legally regulated to the distinct and gross advantage of men, was to compile statistics on dynamics present in court proceedings. Racial and sexual discrimination was proven on the basis of statistical evidence compiled from many court proceedings, resulting consistently in favour of the most powerful parties. More crucial still, once the legal system could no longer contest the evidence, and began to open 'tiny' spaces to alternative perspectives, racial and sexual discrimination became 'proven beyond a doubt' using the courts themselves.

Simultaneously, with these developments, mediation began to gain greater and greater relevance in courts of law, as its 'legitimate' alternative. The simple difference is that in mediation, *all* agreements are 'confidential'. That mediated agreements remain confidential is often established through an 'a priori' agreement between the parties. Without such an a priori agreement, often mediation will not go forward. Given this constellation one could posit the process of mediation itself as constituted in an a priori, subtly coerced agreement to isolation.

The complete confidentiality of all agreements renders potential strategies of contestation, like compiling statistics on who benefits and who does not, not inconsequentially, impossible. Interestingly, such a turn 'just happens' to once more benefit the more powerful parties, or those who benefit the most. This dynamic is not without historical precedence, where alternative dispute resolution is concerned.

Indeed Parliament's repeated attempts to institute arbitration as a means of settling disputes appear to be strikingly at odds with its simultaneous endeavours to criminalize trade unions through the famous Combinations Act.

...(A)rbitation's claim to equity and fairness must first be distinguished from its effects...
(M)any arbitration schemes tended to consolidate asymmetrical power relationships rather than redress them...

...(T)he history of arbitration can be used to understand how authority becomes constructed on the shop floor and in civil society as well as the methods by which such power is 'authorized'. Indeed, the history of early industrial arbitration in Britain presents a compelling example not only of the competing sources of authority in industry but also of the ways in which such power relationships are reproduced and

sanctioned through institutions and discourses that present themselves as allegedly fair and impartial.¹⁸⁰

First, Jaffy's observation that Parliament's attempted institution of arbitration is completely at odds with its simultaneous criminalization of trade unions is not surprising in this analysis. Indeed the combination speaks to the goal of arbitration being the break down of collective bargaining. In this instance, the attempted instituting of arbitration is clearly being used as a means to create isolation, and to break down solidarity.

Secondly only because arbitration rulings were *not* confidential could Jaffy, in his analysis, come to the conclusion that 'arbitration schemes tended to consolidate asymmetrical relationships rather than redress them'. Mediation's central pillar of confidentiality closes the books and such an analysis is not possible - most likely as in arbitration, concealing a process of consolidating asymmetrical power relationships to the distinct advantage of the more powerful - in the name of 'fairness'. Once more, this is evidence of the twist and turn so common in and central to sustaining privilege.

Confidentiality in mediation especially, and in all spheres, must be contested for the subtle coercive isolation, and simultaneous co-optation into the 'gray zone' of privilege that confidentiality effects.

In 20 years of professional experience I have been confronted with the effects of 'being taken into confidence' continually. In all instances, confidentiality is posited as necessary to protect vulnerability. The common 'twist' at the core is that the necessity is almost always rooted in the protection of those with more institutional power and privilege. I posit that 99% of confidentiality is in protection of *privilege's vulnerabilities*.

¹⁸⁰ Jaffy, J., "Industrial Arbitration, Equity and Authority in England, 1800-1850", in *Law and History Review*, 18 (3), Fall 2000, p. 527-8

To concede to confidentiality is, especially in professional situations, almost always grounded in fear that to not concede would spell the end of the job. Indeed to be accused of not having a good sense of 'discretion' essentially guarantees exclusion from positions in middle or upper management.

I contend that, regardless of context, one conceding to confidentiality must *at least* recognize what the motives for confidentiality are *and* its effects both on oneself and on others. One must admit, at least to one's self, the role one is playing, usually in support of particular strategic relations of force, most often at the cost of a degree of justice.

Mediation, posing as 'an informal alternative to the courts that empowers individual disputants, strengthens communities and restores peace to trouble relationships' must contend with the contradiction that it works toward this laudable goal through means rooted in increasing isolation and subtle coercion.

Singular, Exclusive Centres

Mediation theory in conflict studies, discourse and practice is also the place where one encounters most frequently the 'singular centre of redemption' ideology. Baruch Bush and Folger have been central to advocating their version of mediation as such a singular means of redemption.

The goal (of transformative mediation) is a world in which people are not just better off but better: more human and more humane. Achieving this goal means transforming people from dependant beings concerned only with themselves (weak and selfish people) into secure and self-reliant beings willing to be concerned with and responsive to others (strong and caring people).

In this respect, the goal of transformation is unique because it involves a supreme value that the other (mediation) goals do not encompass.

Not only is the goal of transformation uniquely important, it is also a goal that the mediation process is uniquely capable of achieving.¹⁸¹

There are several assumptions in this quotation that must be unpacked. First Baruch Bush and Folger equate people in conflict with *personally* 'weak and selfish

¹⁸¹ Baruch Bush & Folger, p. 29-30

people' in need of transformation. Secondly, they assert quite clearly the direction this transformation (for others) has to take. Thirdly, they assert their perspective rests on a 'supreme value' without claiming its supremacy as their valuation. The supremacy of this value is asserted unquestioningly as though two American men could determine, on their own, what values ought be designated as supreme for people *in general*. Remember that Baruch Bush and Folger are also the ones quoted in Chapter Three who consider actualizing one's highest potential as the 'supreme value' and that a 'smoothing working world of satisfaction and equity leaves this need untouched'.

In mediation theory discourse and practice, Baruch Bush and Folger return to a discourse of (supreme) redemption, the mark of religious, socio-economic, and political (extremist) ideology. They do so immersed in genuine 'good intentions'.

The language of singular centres is so common to the children of colonization that even those proposing alternatives to full co-operation with operations of power fall into it. Mary Hunt, questioning the cooptation of the queer agenda for justice into a push for legal marriage, says,

If those of us who are white, middle or upper middle class and well educated enough to manipulate the legal system do not resist the grinding moves toward social sameness, who will?¹⁸²

Resisting 'the grinding moves toward social sameness' has never come from the white middle or upper middle class. The resistance has come from practically everywhere but from this group. To pose the question in this way, if 'we' don't do this, no one will – is the exact opposite of what has taken place in the Americas to date. Millions of people have lost their lives in this resistance.

During the four centuries spanning the time between 1492, when Christopher Columbus first set foot on the 'New World' of a Caribbean beach, and 1892, when the U.S. Census Bureau concluded that there were fewer than a quarter-million indigenous people

¹⁸² Hunt, M.E., "A Marriage Proposal: With Gay Marriage Now on the Agenda, It May Be Time to Consider the Institution of Marriage Itself", *Conscience*, Washington, Vol. XXVI, Issue 2, p. 37

surviving within the country's claimed boundaries, a hemispheric population estimated to have been as great as 125 million was reduced by something over 90 percent.¹⁸³

The profound denial of how we, the children of colonization, have come 'to be' facilitates assumptions such as 'if we don't do it, no one will' – establishing ourselves once more as the singular and exclusive centre of history and the present, further re-inscribing the denial of the millions whose lives were lost in the process of our coming 'to be', to occupy without question the singular, exclusive centre of 'we'.

Such assertions of singular and exclusive centres, especially positing these centres and those who occupy them as the exclusive resource and agents of wisdom/hope/redemption must be contested at every turn, most especially within conflict (studies) theory, discourse and practice.

Hierarchy

Claiming to be, or to be at, the singular exclusive centre of hope/redemption for humanity is intensely driven by and centrally the motor of discourse and practice profoundly and, at the same time, subtly anchored in relations of domination: hierarchy.

Hierarchy is a 'pyramid scheme': millions at the base, growing less in number with the increase of privilege and power. Despite pervasive discourses of democracy, we, the children of colonization, primarily rivet our attention and imagination 'at the top'. Few of us contest hierarchy or contest the forced concessions to re-enacting the coercion it requires of us.¹⁸⁴ Some might dream dreams of subverting hierarchy from the inside, yet few have the 'golden parachutes' so necessary to render fear of 'failure' ineffective.

¹⁸³ Churchill, W., "Encountering the American Holocaust: The Politics of Affirmation and Denial", in Heldke & O'Connor, p. 93

¹⁸⁴ See Ken Wilbur's *A Brief History of Everything* for a brilliant, intentional and seductive (albeit regrettable) naturalizing of hierarchy into holarchy. "Precisely because the Kosmos is composed of holons, and holons exist holarchically, you can't escape these nested orders" (p. 31). The self-congratulatory title of the book, and his intense degree of conviction echoes that of 16th C. Jesuit certainties of 'reality' – a 'new age' re-inscription of 'the natural order': singular, exclusive (although he swears it is the most inclusive) and 'welcoming' in so far as one 'can't escape these nested orders'.

The higher one climbs, the thinner the air becomes: silence is required, confidentiality is a must, and the terms that make 'existence' at the top possible are merciless: fail the terms and you will 'fail'. Ironically, where failing here might be a miniscule step toward an enactment of justice, most of us are riveted exclusively on not failing. The room for critical imagination, agency and practice exists largely in the same measure as one appears to 'fit' into the terms of existence at the top. A personal, critical and existential dissimulation is necessary to exist in substantial positions of hierarchy if one is not simply reproducing, consolidating and thriving on asymmetrical power relationships. It is possible to subvert from the inside, yet as Primo Levi demonstrated few are able to achieve it.

Where coercion and the exploitation of the desire to be are at the core, most people will constellate themselves to some degree along the power continuum, for that is the only way to survive. Even contesting the terms of exploitation to some degree, successfully, requires a conceding to the terms of power. Those who've contested operations of power are most familiar with this reality. Like Nelson Mandela expressed, one needs to know the dynamics at play in order to undermine effectively.

The spring before Rosa Parks was arrested 'a young Montgomery woman had also refused to move to the back of the bus, causing the NAACP to consider a legal challenge until they realized that she was unmarried and pregnant, and therefore a poor symbol for a campaign' (Loeb, p. 289). Because this young woman did not literally embody the 'feminine ideal' of white America, the NAACP, forced to concede to the terms of segregation, strategically paid her fine.

Resisting operations of power through resisting the subtle coercion of normal hierarchy is rarely a well-known constituent of the imagination of colonization's children. We have few resources in this direction; our imaginations in this direction

were locked long ago and are repeatedly locked with every degree of power assumed in coming 'to be' within current operations of power.

To unleash our imagination, to learn effective colonial privilege disobedience we will have to tear our eyes and imaginations from the 'boys at the top' of the pyramid of hierarchy. Conflict studies as an emerging discipline could critically and substantially 'centre' people, knowledge and practice of those most well versed in contesting operations of power – women and subaltern groups.

Yet it is important to realize that privilege and strategic relations of force (the instrumentalization of fear and the desire 'to be') presently pervade all communities to some extent: village councils, feminist projects, subaltern theory, knowledge and practice have all come to be within the operations of power. Privilege is contextual and pervasive.

In Summary

We, the children of colonization, must first and foremost come to understand *how deeply our knowledge and agency is situated in, and subjugated to sustaining colonization*. We must come to see how this located *being* and 'coming to be' pollutes our theory, drives our knowledge and locks our practice in conflict intervention and peacebuilding. Admitting to the contextual and situated knowledge of colonial being, *and its implications*, can give new meaning to the oft advocated 'know yourself' quip so often part of 'how to' writing for and from practitioners in conflict contexts (Lederach, 2002, p. 50, 91, 135).

Secondly we must turn our full attention to, and put our limited and located knowledge in service to individuals and groups practicing effective resistance to exploitative operations of power instrumentalizing fear and vulnerability. To do so means, in many cases, going against hierarchical notions of 'priority', and continually challenging hierarchy's incessant focus on serving the interests of the top of the pyramid.

These two elements may contribute to a necessary beginning subversion of colonial privilege toward a reach for collectively enacted justice.

It is ordinary people who make crimes against humanity so horribly possible and effective. Participation in 'common sense' exploitations, learning and practicing 'common sense' twists and turns that render suffering invisible, establishing and sustaining privilege motivated by fear, the 'virtue of courage for the hard times upon us', or the great and historical task before us – all of these are the ways in which crimes against humanity such as apartheid, ethnocidal residential schools, and 'wars for freedom and equality' come 'to be', with the devastating and intense suffering of millions eclipsed so effectively in day-to-day life of the privileged carrying out these crimes. It is also ordinary people who can make such crimes impossible, through a deep grasp of how such crimes come to be, and how our 'common sense' participation is not so 'common sense' after all.

Deep critical engagement with the breadth, depth and wealth of located and situated knowledge - a profound recognition and engagement with our common primary vulnerability to one another in order to be – can teach us all effective colonial privilege disobedience toward a collectively imagined and enacted reach for social justice.

One hope in preventing conflict studies discourse and practice from being so intimately recruitable to exploitative and destructive operations of power is to dare, consistently across contexts and conflicts – to analyze the instrumentalization of our own vulnerability and its effects in our lives, to understand all privilege is rooted in and sustained by our re-enactment of exploitation of others' fears and vulnerability, and to resist at all turns the complete instrumentalization of 'fear of others' to justify domination in response to our collective, existential 'primary vulnerability to the other in order to be'.

Self-critical, reflective, mutual engagement – community in context, as complex, difficult, rich, and threatening to one’s certainties as it may be, especially in conflict (studies) theory, discourse and practice - must become a central focus and practice.

Conclusion - Painful, Dynamic and Promising

The educated and cultured of the world, the well-born and well-bred, and even the deeply pious and philanthropic cannot escape the contradiction that they receive their training and comfort and luxury, the ministrations of delicate beauty and sensibility, on condition that they neither inquire too closely into the real source of their income and the methods of distribution nor interfere with the legal props which rest on a pitiful human foundation of writhing white and yellow and brown and black bodies (Du Bois, 1986).

Is Du Bois's thesis so radical? *Should* we expect otherwise? *Should* we expect an entire category of mostly European American, 'accommodated' intellectuals to develop a trenchant critique of the system that feeds them, and more importantly, to work actively toward both a national and global redistribution of wealth, power and privilege, *including their own?*¹⁸⁵

Privilege is central to sustaining historical and current strategic relations of force as I have demonstrated in this thesis. It is one of the central means of recruiting individual and collective agency to the supporting and enacting violence directly and/or structurally. Privilege is a central component in sustaining and dissimulating continuing coercion through proverbial 'good intentions'.

Barsh recognizes a truth that applies to institutions at both the broad and local level: 'The evil of modern states is their power to decide who eats.' Along with armed force, they use dependency – which they have created – to induce people's compliance with the will of an abstract authority structure serving the interests of an economic and political elite. It is an affront to justice...¹⁸⁶

'...the power to decide who eats' is the central concern of this thesis, and how this power is translated often with intentional subtlety through and by individuals amidst 'ordinary' life, cumulating in effective exploitative relations of force. Violent colonization historically, and current political, social and economic debates in North America and Europe on the question of human migration is, *in every way*, centrally about 'the power to decide who eats'.

...even apart from the hard labour, the beatings, the cold, and the illnesses, the food ration was decisively insufficient for even the most frugal prisoner: the physiological reserves of the organism were consumed in two or three months', and death by hunger or by diseases induced by hunger, was the prisoner's normal destiny, avoidable only with additional food. Obtaining that extra nourishment required a privilege – large or small, granted or conquered, astute or violent, licit or illicit – whatever it took to lift oneself above the norm.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁵ Binford, L., "An Alternative Anthropology: Exercising the Preferential Option for the Poor", in Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, p. 422

¹⁸⁶ Alfred (1999), p. 26

¹⁸⁷ Levi, in Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, p. 84

Although Levi is describing the face of tyranny that the United Nations has committed itself to do everything possible to prevent such crimes against humanity to emerge again, the lives of millions attempting to cross borders or reach the shores of wealthy countries *at present* is very similar to what Levi describes here.¹⁸⁸

The phenomenon of conflict – violent and structural – is deeply rooted in the pervasive exploitation of the desire 'to be'. Were physical, social, economic, political, and spiritual being not rooted in such exploitation, conflict itself would become non-threatening – unfortunate and painful in relational terms perhaps – but not existentially threatening as it is experienced today.

Conflict studies then needs to take the exploitation of vulnerability centrally into consideration in theory and practice. First, conflict studies and practice ought to facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the instrumentalization of vulnerability in modern work places, current economic practices and in social, political and religious (including 'new-age') systems. The instrumentalization of fear and vulnerability is a central force driving conflict in personal, social, economic, political and professional contexts.

It is individuals who experience the fear and vulnerability, and it is necessarily individuals like you and I who make our own 'bargain with the devil' to be able to sustain ourselves and our loved ones. It is the instrumentalization of fear and vulnerability of the 'secure' that drives and legitimates 'the boat is full' ideology; and that strips down a rich multiplicity of economic, social, political, religious and personal possibilities to one singular, exclusive and 'welcoming' vision of human flourishing.

¹⁸⁸ See Jobard, O. & Kingsley, "My Final Destination: A young man's perilous journey from Africa to Europe", and Fulton, D. "An Old World Solution: Fortress Europe bolsters its defences against African refugees" in *The Walrus Magazine*, May 2006, Volume 3, Issue 4. The current debate about 'illegals' in Canada and the United States is relevant here. Migrants – that is, people earning a living for both themselves and their families – in other words, pursuing and/or fulfilling the neo-liberal 'dream' are, by turn, considered criminals that threaten social cohesion, testifying to one more convenient 'turn' that just happens to sustain privilege.

Secondly, individually and collectively, people in conflict studies need to examine, self-critically and in most minute detail, to guard against perpetuating subtle versions of such exploitation within conflict studies and practice itself.¹⁸⁹

Thirdly, people in conflict studies and practice must, at every turn, self-critically analyze and contextualize their interaction in relation to parties in conflict. The phenomenon of northern 'experts' dominating, financially and practically, conflict contexts around the world is deeply embedded in colonial privilege and hence, centrally itself a part of the conflict, even if not overtly acknowledged as part of the continuing colonial project. Strongly, openly advocating and facilitating inclusive processes such that the privileged 'expert' becomes redundant should be the goal.

Lastly and critically, conflict studies programs themselves must be rooted contextually, historically and firmly anchored in the reality of conflicts present in the context. Very practical considerations such as how the teaching staff is constituted, where the learning institution is located geographically, how hierarchy functions within the learning process, how the student body is constituted, and equally critically, which conflicts are 'centred' and by whom for learning purposes must become a critical part of the learning process. When learning processes themselves are centred on the exploitation of vulnerability – inclusion and exclusion that 'just happen' and are not rooted in conscious, acknowledged processes of active decision making – we can be assured that the exploitation of vulnerability is what is learned, regardless of course content.

'Do as I say and not as I do' we know is a notoriously useless form of child and adult education. To learn and reflect on theory, processes and practices

¹⁸⁹ For example, in mediation practice a key term is BATNA – Best alternative to a negotiated agreement. At the same time, it's counterpart WATNA – Worst alternative to a negotiated agreement is sometimes used to 'render' participants conscious of the costs of going to court if they are not willing to concede to mediation. I see WATNA as a direct exploitation of vulnerability, often put to use to 'convince' recalcitrant parties to concede to mediation. This technique then is most effective with the participants who have limited access to financial resources. Although 'effective' practically, it must remain clear that this is a clear exploitation of vulnerability.

addressing conflicts directly, inclusively, with all the complexity conflicts entail, in an environment that essentially 'disappears' the real conflicts and lived experience of personal, social, economic, political conflicts in the context itself is to completely disassemble the learning itself.

Curiosity about the object of knowledge and the willingness and openness to engage theoretical readings and discussions is fundamental. However, I am not suggesting an over-celebration of theory. We must not negate practice for the sake of theory. To do so would reduce theory to a pure verbalism or intellectualism. By the same token, to negate theory for the sake of practice...is to run the risk of losing oneself in the disconnectedness of practice. It is for this reason that I never advocate either a theoretic elitism or a practice ungrounded in theory, but the unity between theory and practice. In order to achieve this unity, one must have an epistemological curiosity – a curiosity that is often missing...¹⁹⁰

To dream dreams of peace for others around the world, while sitting in the Canadian 'capital' city of colonization where the laws of exclusion and inclusion are determined and put into (often violent) practice, and not to pay those practices any theoretical or practical attention risks simply becoming one more dissembling practice sustaining violent colonization.

'Learning from the past'...is a notoriously tricky exercise. Each event is so multiply determined, each historical development grows out of such intricately interwoven factors, each moment of the historical present can unfold in so many ways into the future, that analogies between the past and the present need to be made with great discrimination. (Yet) insofar as history is a nightmare, it is one from which we need, soberly and consciously, to keep awakening.¹⁹¹

The field of conflict studies has the potential to rest 'in such well-sanctioned and normative comfort' that it, itself, provides the 'luxury to deny the power of the privileges that paralyze (our) lives'. Alternatively, conflict studies has the potential to contribute significantly towards a continual, sober and conscious awakening and challenging of the 'pervasive exploitation of the desire to be'. Conflict studies, *once firmly rooted in an overt theoretical and practical commitment to historical and contextual justice*, could become a central means towards 'the serene achievement of and the sweaty fight for meaning and response-ability'.

¹⁹⁰ Friere, P., *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, New York, Continuum, ©2004, p. 19

¹⁹¹ Hoffman, E., *After Such Knowledge: Memory, History and the Legacy of the Holocaust*, New York, Public Affairs, ©2004, p. 239, 240.

Painful, dynamic, and promising, this vacillation between the already-there and the yet-to-come is a crossroads that rejoins every step ... a reiterated ambivalence at the heart of agency.¹⁹²

¹⁹² Butler, p. 18

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