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Subversive mythologies and imperialism trends in twentieth century American literature (The house of the Scorpion As An Example)

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[المائدة :من الايه 3]

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DEDICATION

To my kind father....my role model, and my role model in life; He taught me how to live with dignity and honor.

To my tender mother..... I can't find words that can give her right, she is the epic of love and the joy of a lifetime, and an example of dedication and giving.

To my sisters....my support and my support, and I share my joys and my sorrows.

To my friends, and all those who stood by me and helped me with all they had, and in Many levels.

To all my dear teachers; Who did not hesitate to help me I dedicate my research to you.

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CONTENTS

Introduction

Land ownership dispossession is a key feature in establishing imperial hegemonies.

Certain twentieth century British and American writers, especially modernist and late modernist authors, use mythology to subvert the relationship between imperial hegemony and literature and re-imagine the societal beliefs, artistic justifications, and historical assumptions that provided a foundation for colonial ideologies. The authors in this study represent a transatlantic, multi-ethnic literary engagement with the ongoing consequences of British colonialism as related land ownership dispossession in both the Irish and American contexts. The Irish texts include several Northern Irish works: Brian Friel's Translations (1980), Marina Carr's By the Bog of Cats (1990), W.B. Yeats and Lady Augusta Gregory's Kathleen ni Houlihan (1902), and Sean O'Casey's Juno and the Paycock (1924). [1]

Direct interventionism has been one of the most important features of the reach of American imperialism. Although through a kaleidoscope of ultimate subjectivity, with the assumption that liberal democracy is the paradigm, such interventionism has arguably had positive effects on the modern world. It would be jejune to simply highlight the cataclysm that was the Vietnam War, spanning three decades. Accordingly, it is important to understand the context of all American involvements. Max Boot defends American imperialism by declaring that it "has been the greatest force for good in the world during the past century. It has defeated Communism and Nazism and has intervened against the Taliban and Serbian ethnic cleansing." American hegemony, at this very moment, was paved by the dissolution of the Soviet Union that had been accelerated by American military spending and a Strategic Defence

Initiative. It is clear that “today the Cold War is over. The Soviet Union is no more” America’s strength could also be understood as extinguishing the dying embers of British Empire: “one thing we are not fighting for is to hold the British Empire together”, as echoed by President Eisenhower who famously condemned British action in Suez in 1957 as “in error”. This condemnation was also a necessity to exert American influence at its fullest.

While American imperialism has had positive effects, it would be quixotic to assume that the American agenda and the effects of interventionism have been wholly beneficial and successful. “The world is a much more dangerous place as a result of America’s determination to save it”. This is due to excessive entanglement in areas of entrenched tribal conflicts, such as in Afghanistan and Iraq. Despite his usual fetishism for America and empire, even Ferguson acknowledges “the failures outnumber the successes roughly four to one” and that “in the countries that the United States intervened in militarily, between 1898 and the present, only a tiny handful were successfully transformed into quasi-American societies.” It is probable that the Cold War would not have helped the American cause for the proliferation of capitalism and liberal democracy, in that there was a broad acceptance that each sides’ influence be contained.

Fredric Jameson (born April 14, 1934) is an American literary critic, philosopher and Marxist political theorist. He is best known for his analysis of contemporary cultural trends, particularly his analysis of postmodernity and capitalism. Jameson's best-known books include Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism (1991) and The Political Unconscious (1981). Jameson is currently Knut Schmidt-Nielsen Professor of Comparative Literature and Romance Studies (French) and the director of the Center for Critical Theory at Duke

University. In 2012, the Modern Language Association gave Jameson its sixth Award for Lifetime Scholarly Achievement. [2]

Chapter one on subversive mythologies

In a political milieu of renewed turbulence, the importance of scholarship that produces subversive knowledge to engage with the world around us is ever more urgent. Subversive knowledge unsettles common-sense understandings and has the potential to disrupt politics. This importance is compounded, and also made more difficult to realize, by the fact that universities are simultaneously threatened by cuts and closures under conditions of pandemic economics, government austerity, extraordinary labor competition without effective workers' protection, and cyberbullying that encourages self-censorship. These academic spaces are key sites for potential complicity with imperialist global political projects, as well as struggles against them. Their influence on the practice of IR is not limited to direct policy relevance but instead includes knowledge circulation that potentially challenges or legitimates dominant ideologies (Vitalis 2015, 3) [3]. Both quantitative and positivist qualitative methods can produce IR knowledge that subverts global politics as usual. However, we argue that ethnography is particularly well positioned for this task, providing means to investigate multiple worldviews through reflexive and systematic research that avoids the hubris of contemporary mainstream social science. In so doing, ethnography may provide a new basis for reasoned engagement between academic, public, and policy worlds (Forrest 2017). We are motivated by a sense of urgency in the midst of a global pandemic and increased state repression in reaction to the Black Lives Matter movement, as well as continued migrant deaths in the Mediterranean Sea and the Sonoran Desert. This urgency, coupled with quarantine that deepens mobility restrictions, has propelled us to revisit the potential contribution of

ethnography in the field of IR. We argue that ethnographies can provide a particular form of critical research, rooted in subversive, marginalized, and tacit knowledge, which remains largely absent in IR scholarship, still dominated by positivist research. Although claims of an "ethnographic turn" in the discipline appear as early as the 1980s (Vrasti 2008, 279)[4], resurface periodically, and have recently received renewed interest (e.g., Brigg and Bleiker 2008[5]; Jackson 2008[6]; Aronoff and Kubik 2013[7]; Betts and Orchard 2014, 19)[8],a dearth of ethnographic work on global issues persists in IR as a Political Science discipline.

Chapter two on imperialism

Imperialism will be conceived of as a dominance relation between collectivities, particularly between nations. It is a sophisticated type of dominance relation which cuts across nations, basing itself on a bridgehead which the center in the Center nation establishes in the center of the Periphery nation, for the joint benefit of both. It should not be confused with other ways in which one collectivity can dominate another in the sense of exercising power over it. Thus, a military occupation of B by A may seriously curtail B's freedom of action, but is not for that reason an imperialist relationship unless it is set up in a special way. The same applies to the threat of conquest and possible occupation, as in a balance of power relationship. Moreover, subversive activities may also be brought to a stage where a nation is dominated by the pin-pricks exercised against it from below, but this is clearly different from imperialism. Thus, imperialism is a species in a genus of dominance and power relationships. It is a subtype of something, and has itself subtypes to be explored later. Dominance relations between nations and other collectivities will not disappear with the disappearance of imperialism; nor will the end to one type of imperialism (e.g. political, or economic) guarantee the end to another type of imperialism (e.g. economic or cultural). Our view is not reductionist in the traditional sense pursued in marxist-leninist theory, which conceives of imperialism as an economic relationship under private capitalism, motivated by the need for expanding markets, and which bases the theory of dominance on a theory of imperialism. According to this view, imperialism and dominance will fall like dominoes when the capitalistic conditions for economic imperialism no longer obtain. According to the view we develop here, imperialism is a more general structural relationship between two

collectivities, and has to be understood at a general level in order to be understood and counteracted in its more specific manifestations - just like smallpox is better understood in a context of a theory of epidemic diseases, and these diseases better understood in a context of general pathology. Briefly stated, imperialism is a system that splits up collectivities and relates some of the parts to each other in relations of harmony of interest, and other parts in relations of dishurmony of interest, or conflict of interest.

Slavery, Philosophy, and American Literature

"the philosophy of the street" was supposed to have practical value; and while philosophy was not equally available to all, neither was it restricted to privileged academics and romantics running through Concord. Though Thoreau wrote in Walden (1854), "There never was and is not likely soon to be a nation of philosophers," Richard Hildreth argued in a treatise on the political theory of abolitionism, "In the present age, we are all growing to be philosophers."[9] From the perspective of a social history of ideas, the issue is not if philosophy mattered in antebellum United States culture but rather how it moved and was moved by the course of civic events.

William E. Channing suggested as much when he wrote in 1835, "Slavery, regarded only in a philosophical light, . . . involves the gravest questions about human nature and society."[10] Whether whites could know the experience of slaves became a problem of intersubjectivity. Discussions of reform entailed debates over the will and the mystery of iniquity. Attempts to determine the rectitude of slavery could not logically prove first principles and led to struggles over contract theory, natural law, and definitions of humanity. Such conundrums were not new except that the antebellum era could not effectively defer them, especially

after the Compromise of 1850 served chiefly to exacerbate tensions. The years before the Civil War witnessed the devastating irony that as the slavery conflict came to dominate intellectual life, America's supposed empire of reason lacked philosophical clarity.

Chapter three

American literature : **The House of the Scorpion**

The nation's earliest novels express considerable uncertainty about the coher-
ence and stability of American society. How far would the ideal of self-rule
be extended? What happens to the social order when each member of society
is authorized to judge for him (or her?) self what is proper? The Revolution
ostensibly represented a powerful endorsement of such autonomy. Ordinary
people, according to republican political theory, are "the best Judges, whether
things go ill or well with the Publick," for they are "the Publick," and "Every
ploughman knows a good government from a bad one" (Wood 235). State
a moral case to a ploughman and a professor, said Thomas Jefferson, echo-
ing this line of thought, "the former will decide it as well, and often better
than the latter, because he has not been led astray by artificial rules" (Wood
240). But this belief in the agency of the common folk to decide for themselves
how to live licenses a considerable degree of social innovation. Is one really

comfortable with the resultant movement and change? If not, what does the
feeling of discomfort say about one's egalitarianism, one's faith in democratic
principles such as self-rule? And how would one regulate or curb such rev-
olutionary enthusiasm without betraying the principles authorizing the new
republic?
For the person recalling the ringing endorsements of self-rule justify-
ing the American Revolution, it is perhaps surprising to find that the very
first American novels were seduction tales. In novels such as William Hill
Brown's The Power of Sympathy (1789), Susanna Rowson's Charlotte Temple
(1791)[11], and Hannah Foster's The Coquette (1797),
the exercise of independent
judgment and the flouting of convention are criticized and dutiful obedience to established authorities is recommended.

In The House of the Scorpion

The House of the Scorpion (2002) is a science fiction young adult novel by Nancy Farmer[12]. It is set in the future and mostly takes place in Opium, a country which separates Aztlán (formerly Mexico) and the United States. The main character Matteo Alacrán, or Matt, is a young clone of a drug lord of the same name, usually called "El Patrón". It is a story about the struggle to survive as a free individual and the search for a personal identity.

Though the novel details moral issues involved with human cloning, in his review for The New York Times, Roger Sutton argued that the novel is only nominally science fiction, and is more often a realistic fiction tale with elements of the adventure story.[13]

Plot

This story is set in the country of Opium, a narrow strip of land between Mexico (now called Aztlán), and the United States, which is ruled by the original Matteo Alacrán, or El Patrón, an incredibly powerful drug lord, who is over 140 years old. Opium consists of several drug-producing Farms, the Alacrán estate (which produces opium poppies) being the largest and where some of the Alacran family stays.

The protagonist, Matt, is a clone of El Patrón. For the first six years of his life, he lives in a small house on the edge of the poppy fields with Celia, a cook working in El Patrón's mansion. When he is discovered by three children, Emilia, Steven, and Maria, he smashes a window and jumps out of the house. Unaware of the danger of jumping barefoot onto smashed glass, he has to be carried to El Patrón's mansion to be treated for his injuries. Matt is treated kindly until Mr. Alacrán, El Patrón's great-grandson, recognizes him as a clone, which results in a few months of him being is locked in a room and treated like an animal. When he finds out, El Patrón is furious and gives Matt clothes and his own room and commands everyone to treat him with respect. Matt is also given a bodyguard, Tam Lin, a reformed terrorist who becomes a father figure to Matt.

During the seven years that Matt lives in the house, he befriends María, which gradually blossoms into romance. Matt is kept in the dark about his identity, however, until a cruel joke reveals to him that he is a clone. Matt also discovers that all clones are supposed to be injected when "harvested" (born) with a compound that cripples their brains and turns them into little more than thrashing, drooling animals meant to donate organs. In denial, he convinces himself that El Patrón would not hire tutors for him and keep him entertained if he wanted to kill him and that instead, he must be wanted to run the country when El Patrón dies.

At Steven and Emilia's wedding, El Patrón has a nearly-fatal heart attack. Matt and María attempt to flee in the ensuing chaos but are betrayed by the newlyweds. María is taken back to the convent in which she studies, and Matt is taken to the hospital, where El Patrón finally confirms that Matt was created only as an organ donor to keep him alive. At that moment, Celia reveals that she has been giving Matt doses of arsenic, which were not large enough to kill Matt but would be deadly to one as frail as El Patrón. The resulting rage of El Patrón causes him to have a fatal heart attack. Mr. Alacrán calls doctors to take him to emergency surgery, and after El Patrón dies, he orders Tam Lin to dispose of Matt. Tam Lin pretends to comply but gives Matt supplies and sets him on a path to Aztlán.

Arriving in Aztlán, Matt comes across a group of orphans, the "Lost Boys," who live in an orphanage operated by the "Keepers," a group of fervent Marxists who preach the "Five Principles of Good Citizenship" and the "Four Attitudes Leading to Right-Mindfulness". The Keepers operate plankton farms, force the orphans to do manual labor and to subsist on plankton, while they themselves enjoy luxurious quarters and

food. At first, Matt is an outcast because the other boys think he is a spoiled aristocrat. However, he becomes a hero when he defies the Keepers and leads the boys in a rebellion.

He then is shut up in a closet for the night after the incident, until the next morning. Here, he is dumped in the "Boneyard", a dried lake full of whale bones, delicately balanced. After he manages to get free, he and Chacho are rescued by Ton-Ton and Fidelito, who drive the shrimp harvester to San Luis to find María and her mother, the politically-powerful Esperanza Mendoza.

Esperanza thanks the boys for giving her the ability to take down the Keepers. Matt learns that Opium is in a country-wide lockdown but manages to re-enter the country, only to learn that the entire Alacrán family is dead, and the estate is empty except for servants, including Celia. Those at El Patrón's wake, including Tam Lin, who promised El Patron, drank poisoned wine, which El Patrón saved to be served at his funeral since he never intended to die and wanted to run the business forever or to have it and everyone else die with him.

Matt takes on the role of El Patrón to become the new ruler of Opium and to dismantle the regime.

Chapter four on Subversive mythologies and imperialism in *The House of the Scorpion*

"Matt stood in front of the door and spread his arms to keep Celia from leaving. The small, crowded living room was still blue with early morning light. The sun had not yet lifted above the hills marking the distant horizon.

“What’s this?” the woman said. “You’re a big boy now, almost six. You know I have to work.” She picked him up to move him out of the way.

“Take me with you,” begged Matt, grabbing her shirt and wadding it up in his hands.

“Stop that.” Celia gently pried his fingers from the cloth. “You can’t come, mi vida. You must stay hidden in the nest like a good little mouse. There’re hawks out there that eat little mice."

Analysis

He sees to see how she likes it through her emotional actions and language. Celia calls Matt "mi vida" ("my life" in Spanish) because, as he will see, throughout the novel, Matt's protection and care will give her life a purpose.

"Matt was wildly excited. Not only were they going on a picnic, but they would travel by horseback. Matt had seen horses from the windows of the little house. And of course he’d seen them on TV. Cowboys and big, tough bandidos rode them. His favorite hero was El Látigo Negro, the Black Whip. El Látigo Negro was on TV every Saturday. He wore a black mask and rescued poor people from evil capitalists. His favorite

weapon was a long whip with which he could peel an apple while it was still on the tree.

Matt was more than a little disappointed when Tam Lin brought out a sleepy gray horse instead of the spirited steed El Látigo Negro rode. “Be reasonable, lad,” said the bodyguard, tightening the girths on the saddle. “We’re after reliability, not speed. El Patrón "wouldn’t take it at all well if you were dumped on your head."

Analysis

Matt's love of cowboy television shows demonstrate his childish innocence and his desire for exploration beyond the confines of his isolation. Tam Lin's explanation of the Farm laborers releasing opium shows his desire to help Matt understand the larger context of the society into which Matt has been born. Whereas others have only been interested in keeping Matt captive and ignorant, Tam Lin clearly wants to open the young boy's mind and encourage him to think for himself.

“Matt stops crying when he realizes he hears children's voices outside. The voices wonder what this little house is out in the field, as someone tries to open the front door. Matt is suddenly afraid. The children, a boy and a girl, look inside the window and see Matt”.

Analysis

Matt shows his humanity through his desire for human interaction. However, his fear of such contact also shows his isolation living out in the cottage with Celia.

“Matt wakes up to Steven and Emilia carrying him through the poppy fields, with María running behind them. Matt screams because he has

never experienced pain like his cuts before. The children carry him to a house with many pillars, statues, and doorways. A carved outline of a scorpion sits above the central arch of the house".

Analysis

Matt's new experience of pain symbolizes the fact that he has now left the safe, sheltered environment he has always known. The detailed description of the Big House's grandeur suggests the materialism and wealthy status of those who live inside it.

Conclusion

The novel tackles some acts of Subversive mythologies and imperialism as the American novel is The House of the Scorpion is a story about the struggle to survive as a free individual and the search for a personal identity. The novel deals with issues and ethics around human cloning. Though the novel details moral issues involved with human cloning, in his review for The New York Times, Roger Sutton argued that the novel is only nominally science fiction, and is more often a realistic fiction tale with elements of the adventure story.[14]

The main purpose of the American novel in the 19th century was to describe the complex of ideas and ideals which defined the beginnings of the great American experiment, in the New World, with its own kind of religion, culture and compulsions of environment and history. If the 19th century English novel studied the impact of society on the individual in Dickens and George Eliot, in the American novel of the same time, it was defining an individual, with his staunch commitment to (more than anything else), his authentic and unmistakable stamp of individualism

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