

DISCUSSION:
'The Colonized Colonizer' NAKAMURA Kazue.
'To be a National Minority in an Ethnic Jewish State:
Palestinians as the Other in Zionist Discourse' USUKI Akira.

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Ms. Nakamura has presented us with a very stimulating and thought-provoking paper, in addition to being most courageous, given that she appeals directly to many Japanese colleagues in the audience, to whom the 'Our,' present in the title, is addressed. I must premise that I am not expert on Japan or Japanese studies. However, I do know about colonialism and how every colonialism is about the exercise of power. In my opinion, until 'post-colonial writing' - whatever its origin - is motivated by the urge to renounce exercising power, it is destined to remain trapped into the same dynamics which inspire colonialism.

If we take for instance the '*Subaltern Studies*' project (the common effort of Western and local historians in India, to re-write Indian history from the point of view of the 'subaltern' - a Gramscian category), we soon discover that while challenging Western colonial discourse, they are using the same Hegelian dialectics intent to achieve 'Absolute Knowledge' over their object of study, which is tantamount to exercising 'Absolute Power' over it. In other words, being so intent in exposing the European colonisers, but using the latter's logics, they fail to recognise the colonisations within India itself. This is the result when we oppose 'power with power.'

Perhaps there is a need to rethink and re-invent a way by which 'post-colonial writing' (like certain brands of feminist writing) acts to renounce the over-masculinity with which colonialism affirms itself. Ruben Alves, a Latin-American, Brazilian poet, at a point in time when the USA was dominating the scene of much Latin American politics, wrote a poem on the Dinosaurs: like past 'empires' these mighty creatures have disappeared, one by one, while some minuscule insects, contemporaries to the dinosaurs, are still with us ... I am not saying 'there is no solution, so let us turn to poetry,' but, I would say, 'let us recover much of Postcolonial writing which can inspire a different way of using the 'power of words': poetry, as much as laughter, can become this powerful tool which, while renouncing power, is able to denounce power, to unmask an indiscriminate use of power.

Is this 'Utopia,' or a discourse 'out-of-place'? As for Utopian ideas, we have here

the close example of Alan Le Pichon: Over fifteen years ago, when he started his adventure of proposing a 'reciprocal anthropology,' he had to fight many battles against the 'establishment.' Not that he wanted to fight any battle: on the contrary, others were fighting against him because, they thought, "Le Pichon is dangerous for Anthropology." And indeed he was, certainly for a certain brand of anthropology too intent to 'save' its good share of power. To be able to renounce this power, to challenge the last vestiges of colonialism within the discipline, means to accept the novelty of 'reciprocity' and to go even 'beyond reciprocity,' so as to 'dis-place' any anthropological discourse that does not originate from an ethical position.

As for the parallelism between Nakajima and Raja Rao, I must say that - excusing once again my ignorance of Japanese matters - in the case of Nakajima, 'nationalism,' to some extent, remains within the novel, whilst for Rao, nationalism goes out of fiction to become a poignant reality in a deeply divided India, where 'nationalism' is understood in a monologic fashion, to be manipulated by those in power to create ever more divisions. Furthermore, sadly for many Indians - who would rather escape from India in search of a better lot - India is not a 'metaphysical idea,' but exists in historical time and in geographical space, a space which has been taken from them (I am thinking of the many tribal and *adibasi* groups) and which has been used as a token of transactions with multinational pharmaceutical companies intent on exploiting even the last resort that a place like India offers: the use and knowledge of herbs for curative purposes. The purpose here has not been to cure the illnesses of the Indians, but to empower those who can give a better return for the money invested by pharmaceutical companies. These are perhaps some of the facts that critical postcolonial writing should help us to discover, reflect and act upon.

Dr. Usuki's paper touches upon a very debated and controversial point, one which even the press, most of the time, is 'afraid' to clarify because of the obvious political implications.

Unfortunately, I was provided only with the 'Abstract' and hoped that the reading of the paper would dispel some of the doubts present in the ideas upon which all the theoretical reflection of the text rests. It is clear that the Arab minority present in the State of Israel was 'formed, constructed and even fabricated as the Other,' which is presumably attributed to a Zionist position. The problem arises when the same 'construction' is applied to both the post-Zionist view and the author's own understanding of 'Otherness.' If 'Otherness' is invoked to shed some light on the subject, it should be made clear that there is a position of 'exclusion of the others' (Zionist sociology) and 'inclusion of the others' (post-Zionist sociology), as quoted from (Ram

1995). However, the dominant position seems the former, so much so that Silberstein's definition of the 'Other' is taken not only as a starting point to clarify Zionist discourse, but it is applied to the whole discussion. Perhaps the 'confusion' is originated by the situation itself, according to which even post-Zionists have reached no consensus on 'how to bring about the desired democratisation,' some of them (if not post- at least non-Zionists) advocating the Law of Return 'as a necessary step to a genuine Western-style democracy,' whatever that may be!

My suggestion would be to make a necessary distinction between 'Otherness' understood in terms of a 'constructed and fabricated Other,' which is derived from and embedded in Western philosophical discourse, and a second position where the 'Other' is welcomed and 'made the object of my concern.' This second stance, advocated by Levinas and others who stress the importance of ethics as first philosophy, subverts the position according to which the 'Other' is not a product of my 'knowledge' but the one who calls my 'murderous freedom into question,' given that 'there is still injustice, in our concept of justice.' Of course, Levinas, himself a Jew, did not gain the favour of Zionists, but I am sure that also some among the post-Zionists find his position on 'alterity' difficult to accept.