

Speaking Truth to Power

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INTRODUCTION: THE RHETORIC OF CULTURAL RESISTANCE

Resistance is 'the act or power of resisting or opposing' (*Webster's*). Some theorists argue that politics is essentially a cultural discourse: a shared set of symbols and meanings, that we all abide by. If this is true then the re-writing of that discourse – which is essentially what cultural resistance does – is a political act itself (*Duncombe*). Therefore, a culture that is used consciously or unconsciously, to resist and/or change the dominant political, economic and/or social structure is a kind of power that could dismantle the master's ideology. The role that cultural resistance plays is 'a form of memory against defacement' (*Barsamian 159*).

In fact, resistance through culture is of utmost significance since culture is a knowledge through which power can operate effectively. Colonialists used their knowledge of colonized cultures to monopolize and control them. Therefore, cultural resistance would be a counter-discourse where 'confrontation between constituted reality and its subversion' (*Terdiman 13*) becomes an effective way of resistance and hence of cultural/political change; where subversion of the canon would not only challenge it but would address the whole body of the colonialist ideology wherein imperial texts operate in colonized contexts. Here, arises the role of the authentic intellectual:

The independent artist and intellectual are among the few remaining personalities equipped to resist and to fight the stereotyping and consequent death of genuinely living things. Fresh perception now involves the capacity to continually unmask and to smash the stereotypes of vision and intellect with which modern communications swamp us. These words of mass-art and mass-thought are increasingly geared to the demands of politics. ... If the thinker does not relate himself to the value of truth in political struggle, he cannot responsibly cope with the whole of live experience (*Mills 299*).

The 'questioning ... of authority' (*Said 1994: 91*) is the role of the intellectual, but 'how the intellectual confronts the question of power and authority' (*Said 1994: 85*) is rendered differently by intellectuals. E. Said resists or questions authority through a *contrapuntal* reading of 'high culture' or the 'canon'; while M. M. Bakhtin resists authority through a reading of 'popular culture' – the *carnival*. They both belonged to threshold ages. Their objective was to 'de-canonize' the canon.

THE CONTRAPUNTAL AND THE CARNIVALESQUE

How far can an intellectual 'speak truth to power'? According to Said (1935 – 2003), a real intellectual is an 'amateur' with a 'critical consciousness', who disturbs the status quo, upsetting cultural assumptions and political and social prejudices. Within this context, 'worldliness', 'secularism' are due prerequisites:

The central fact for me is I think, that the intellectual is an individual endowed with a faculty for representing, embodying, articulating a message, a view, an attitude, philosophy or opinion to, as well as for, a public. And this role has an edge to it, and cannot be played without a sense of being someone whose place it is publicly to raise embarrassing questions, to confront orthodoxy and dogma..., to be someone who cannot easily be co-opted by governments ..., and whose raison d'être is to represent all those people and issues that are routinely forgotten or swept under the rug. The intellectual does so on the basis of universal principles: that all human beings are entitled to expect decent standards of behaviour concerning freedom and justice from worldly powers or nations and that deliberate or inadvertent violations of these standards need to be testified and fought against courageously (Said 1994, 11-12).

The role of the intellectual is associated with Said's theory of resistance. Said's interstitial space, his co-existence between two worlds as an elite academic in Columbia University and an exile, formulated the text of his identity and consequently the text of his writings. This paradox of identity was the impetus behind the intellectual force of his writings, setting them in the world, that is having a material context. Both Said and his writings are set in the world. His exile led to his formulation of what he called 'secularism,' 'amateurism,' and 'worldliness,' in order to disrupt standard cultural assumptions and social and political injustices:

... the intellectual ... represent[s] an individual vocation, an energy, a stubborn force engaging as a committed and recognizable voice in language and in society with a whole slew of issues all of them having to do in the end with a combination of enlightenment and emancipation or freedom (Said 1994, 73).

The locatedness of the intellectual activity directs Said's approach in dealing with Orientalists, imperialists, culture, canonical texts or political questions. It is this 'worldliness' of the intellectual that initiates, and is the potential that drives, his/her engagement with and commitment to cultural and political issues, hence having the motivation *to speak truth to power*.

Said's intellectual should have a 'critical consciousness' (Said 1983, 28), not locked within an ideology or political party, in order to be able to return criticism to the world to look for freedom of opinion and expression. The power of resistance is manifested in the intellectual's ability to 'write back' to imperialism or to speak truth to injustice:

At bottom, the intellectual, in my sense of the world, is neither a pacifier nor a consensus builder, but someone whose whole being is staked on a critical sense, a sense of being unwilling to accept easy formulas, or ready-made clichés, or the smooth, ever-so-accommodating confirmations of what the powerful or conventional have to say, and what they do. Not just passively unwillingly, but actively willing to say so in public (Said 1994, 23).

The intellectual should not only have a critical consciousness that rejects the imperial discourse, but must negotiate 'the intrinsic conditions on which knowledge is made possible' (Said 1983, 182). This critical consciousness challenges the hegemonic nature of the dominant culture and 'the sovereignty of the systematic method' (Said 1978a, 673). Hence, developing that insight that reads what is in the text and what lies behind it unseen allowing for a *contrapuntal* reading of the canon. Said borrowed this concept from music, which goes back to Medieval Western religious music the *punctus-contrapunctus*.

punctus or the counterpoint. He was influenced by the pianist Glenn Gould who 'exemplified contrapuntal performance' (Robins et al. 1994, 21).

Contrapuntal reading is a *modus operandi* of leitmotif and difference by which a counterpoint is established between the imperial narrative and the post-colonial perspective; a *puncta tim* narrative that keeps getting beneath the surface of particular texts to work out the pervasive presence of imperialism in canonical culture. Therefore, the critical consciousness will assume 'agency' detaching itself from the dominant culture to hold a detached adversarial position that commences to 'account for, and rationality to discover and know the force of statements in texts' (Said 1978a, 713). Eventually, 'worldliness' and 'contrapuntality' converge in an attempt to formulate a theory of resistance.

Henceforth, Said's theory of resistance was conceived to topple down all previous postulations of the role of the public intellectual. Said was dissatisfied with the dominant models of literary and cultural theory. His concern was with the material conditions of thinking and writing; he castigated political and cultural oppression focusing on imperial power and/or colonialist discourse because the intellectual should represent ... emancipation and enlightenment, but never as abstractions or as bloodless and distant gods to be served. The intellectual's representations – what he or she represents and how those ideas are represented to an audience – are always tied to and ought to remain an organic part of an on-going experience in society: of the poor, the disadvantaged, the voiceless, the unrepresented, the powerless (Said 194, 113).

What drove Said to question the imperial discourse of the West and to intertwine his theory of cultural analysis with the text of his own identity was the colonization of Palestine especially after the 1967 six days' war. Said's identity is itself a text which is connected with and voiced by all the texts he renders:

Exile ... is 'a mind of winter' in which the pathos of summer and autumn as much as the potential of spring are nearby but unobtainable. Perhaps this is another way of saying that a life of exile moves according to a different calendar, and is less seasonal and settled than life at home. Exile is life led outside habitual order. It is nomadic, decentred, contrapuntal; but no sooner does one get accustomed to it than its unsettling force erupts anew (Said 1984, 55).

The intellectual is an 'amateur' with a 'secular' disposition and a 'worldly' position; living in 'exile' trying to re-read canonical texts 'contrapuntally'. 'Amateurism,' which is, "an activity that is fuelled by care and affection rather than by profit and selfish, narrow specialization" (Said 1994, 88) as opposed to 'professionalism', comprises Said's rejection of the whole institution of specialized intellectual work, wherein the academy speaks to itself rather than addressing the world of everyday and regular need. This leads to what he called 'secularism' which challenges the limited and particular authority of most of the academic discourse. This opens up to Said's notion of 'worldliness' in which the literary text is not simply situated in a line of canonical texts but bears many aspects of the real world – of the material world with its cultural, political and social connections. All of these conform to Said's project of the contrapuntal reading of canonical English texts unravelling their deep implications in imperialism and the colonial process. Hence, the 'affiliations' of the text are revealed rather than its 'filiations'. A 'voyage in' the canon becomes essential to shock permanent, established, solid beliefs and assumptions.

Said's 'voyage in' dominant-culture, dominant power, dominant texts, that is in the 'canon', is also a 'writing back' to empire; to canonical texts, 'to authority since unquestioning subservience to authority in today's world is one of the greatest threats to an active, and moral, intellectual life' (Said 1994, 121). To understand Said's 'worldliness' which will eventually lead to 'contrapuntality,' there are a number of Saidian concepts that one should go through to put things together forming a Saidian network. The text according to Said is a cultural production with material existence.

It is not an inert structure but is an act situated in the world having a social, political and cultural history; a material presence 'enmeshed in circumstances, time, place and society – in short, they are in the world, and hence worldly' (Said 1983, 35), resulting from 'some immediate contact between authors and medium [to become] a being in the world (Said 1983, 33). Unlike the realists and the structuralists, the text, for Said is part of that world from which it was formed or created negotiating man's experience of the world since it is 'an event having sensuous particularity as well as historical contingency, ... incorporated in the text, as infrangible part of its capacity for conveying and producing meaning (Said 1983, 39).

Alongside 'worldliness' comes 'affiliation' which refers to a kind of identification through culture. Said advocates 'affiliation' as it allows the reader to regard the text as a world phenomenon, situated within non-canonical 'affiliations' qualifying it to perpetuate itself as a text along with the status of the author, historical moment, conditions of publication, diffusion and reception, values drawn upon, values and ideas assumed, a framework of consensually held tacit assumptions, presumed background, and so on (Said 1983, 174-5).

When the text comes to be affiliated with culture, history and society, it is inevitably freed from the so-called European canon, turning to its cultural texture. Thus, 'to recreate the affiliative network is therefore to make visible, to give materiality back to, the strands holding the text to society, author and culture (Said 1983, 175). Promoting the materiality of the text allows Said to read the texts of English literature 'contrapuntally' to realize how far and how much they are involved in the expansive, sweeping political project of imperialism. The ability to read the canon (English literature) 'contrapuntally' unravels the relationship between cultural identities that is colonized societies and the imperial culture or the 'contrapuntal ensembles' (Said 1993, 60).

The world and its close connection to the intellectual (critic) and the text is the clue to understand the role of the intellectual. Without 'worldliness' the intellectual has nothing to speak about or to speak to. The intellectual's work is affected by 'where it takes place, whose interests it serves, how it jibes with a consistent and universalist ethic, how it discriminates between power and justice, what it reveals of one's choices and priorities (Said 1994, 89).

Said's oeuvre as a whole is a kind of 'resistance' to the dominant discourse. When he proposed a contrapuntal reading of archival texts or canonical texts he wanted to enable the intellectual to discern the constant countering of power and resistance operating within the colonized world:

As we look back at the cultural archive, we begin to re-read it not univocally but contrapuntally, with a simultaneous awareness both of the metropolitan history that is narrated and of those other histories against which (and together with which) the dominating discourse acts. ... we can read and interpret English novels, for example,

whose engagement (usually suppressed for the most part) with the West Indies or India, say, is shaped and perhaps even determined by the specific history of colonization, resistance, and finally native nationalism. At this point alternative or new narratives emerge, and they become institutionalized or discursively stable entities (Said 1993, 59-60).

A contrapuntal reading allows the 'worldly side of these canonical texts' (Viswanathan 2001, 186) to be exposed, otherwise ignored, hence revealing the overlapping and intersection of imperialism and its resistance. In *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), Said heralds resistance within the domain of culture. This contrapuntal reading would discover what a univocal reading might hide concerning the political 'worldliness' of the canonical text. Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* (1814), conceals the pervasive constitutive power of imperialism, however, contrapuntality would unmask the political 'worldliness' of this canonical text. Reading it 'as a polyphonic accompaniment to the expansion of Europe (Said 1993, 71), showing the dense inter-dependence of imperial and colonial societies. Sir Thomas Bertram's absence from *Mansfield Park*, looking after his Antiguan plantations results in a kind of dissolution among his household. However, when he returns, a sense of order and decorum is restored. A contrapuntal reading throws light on the geographical presence and ideological reality of Antigua. Sir Thomas is assumed to do the same thing on his Antiguan plantations, maintaining law, order and control over this colonial estate with unquestionable authority:

There is nothing in *Mansfield Park* that would contradict us, however, were we to assume that Sir Thomas does exactly the same things – on a larger scale – in Antiguan plantations. Whatever was wrong there ... Sir Thomas was able to fix, thereby maintaining his control over his colonial domain. More clearly than anywhere else in her fiction, Austen here synchronizes domestic with international authority, making it plain that the values associated with such higher things as ordination, law, and propriety must be grounded firmly in actual rule over and possession of territory. She sees clearly that to hold and rule *Mansfield Park* is to hold and rule an imperial estate in close, not to say inevitable association with it. What assures the domestic tranquility and attractive harmony of one is the productivity and regulated discipline of the other (Said 1993, 104). *Mansfield Park* epitomizes the colonial domain of Sir Thomas. Those colonial holdings maintain the ordered, leisurely life at *Mansfield Park*, without which 'stability and propriety at 'home' ... would not be possible' (Said 1993, 69). Contrapuntal reading also lays bare the geographical reality of imperialism and its manipulation of an extensive part of the globe.

It gives those absences or 'far-flung and sometimes unknown spaces' (Said 1993,75) a presence. Austen's Antigua is not just a reference to the mercantile venturesomeness of acquiring overseas dominions as a source for local fortune, or one reference among many attesting to a historical sensibility suffused not just with manners and courtesies but with contests of ideas, struggles with Napoleonic France, awareness of seismic economic and social change during a revolutionary period in world history (Said 1993, 112).

Antigua retains a definite place in Austen's moral geography, because the Bertrams could not have had that way of life without slave trade and the sugar plantations. Therefore,... it is a radical falsification of culture to strip it of its affiliations with its setting, or to pry it away from the terrain it contested or – more to the point of an oppositional strand within Western culture – to deny its real influence. Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* is about England and about Antigua and the connection

is made explicitly by Austen; it is therefore about order at home and slavery abroad, and can – indeed ought – to be read that way ... (Said 1993, 313).

Contrapuntal reading also unfolds the almost total interrelation between cultural and political practices in global imperialism. Verdi's *Aida* as it raises complex questions about 'what connects it to its historical and cultural moment in the West (Said 1993, 135), its uniqueness, 'its subject matter and setting, its monumental grandeur, its strangely affecting visual and musical effects, its overdeveloped music and constricted domestic situation, its eccentric place in Verdi's career (Said 1993, 137); requires a contrapuntal reading according to Said, as it embodies 'the authority of Europe's version of Egypt at a moment in its nineteenth century history; a history for which Cairo in the years 1869-71 was an extraordinary suitable site' (Said 1993, 151).

A contrapuntal perception would disclose its 'structure of reference and attitude, a web of affiliations, connections, decisions, and collaborations, which can be read as leaving a set of ghostly notations in the opera's visual and musical text (Said 1993, 151). *Aida*'s story of the Egyptian hero defeating the Ethiopians and then censured as a traitor who is sentenced to death recalls the rivalry of imperial powers in the Middle East. The British encouraged Khedive Ismail's moves in East Africa as a way of hindering French and Italian enterprises in Somalia and Ethiopia. From a French point of view, *Aida* 'dramatized the dangers of a successful Egyptian policy of force in Ethiopia' (Said 1993, 151). *Aida* is an example of the complicity of European culture in the imperial process, however, divesting itself of any apparent connection to the world of its creation, as it assumes transcendence like the works of classical Western art. In fact, *Aida* remains a symbol of the country's 'imperialist subjugation' (Said 1993, 156).

Said, in his contrapuntal reading of canonical texts looks into Kipling's *Kim* and Camus' *L'Etranger*. He explains how contrapuntality goes deep into the colonial contexts of these works to reveal how specific operations of their themes and structures proceed from and reflect certain historical conditions. He shows how Kipling writes 'from the perspective of a massive colonial system' (Said 1993, 162) and how Camus' work is 'affiliated historically both with the French colonial venture itself ... and with outright opposition to Algerian independence (Said 1993, 212). Camus' fiction should be seen 'as an element in France's methodically constructed geography of Algeria (Said 1993, 213). Hence, a contrapuntal reading would reveal 'that very distinctly French imperial conquest begun in 1830, continuing during Camus' life, and projecting into the composition of the texts (Said 1993, 212). Camus is a writer whose work has been integrated within the canon of contemporary Western literature. However, France's colonization of Algeria could be perused when looked at contrapuntally despite the fact that it is absent in his writings.

Although resistance is a twofold process; the first is the 'recovery of geographical territory' (Said 1993, 252), then 'ideological resistance' (Said 1993, 252), yet Said is more concerned with the latter which comprises an 'insistence on the right to see the community's history whole, coherently, integrally' (Said 1993, 259); [then searching for] 'an alternative way of conceiving human history. ... based on breaking down the barriers between cultures (Said 1993, 260). [Hence, entering into the] 'discourse of Europe and the West, to mix with it, transform it, to make it acknowledge marginalized or suppressed or forgotten histories ... (Said 1993, 260).

This is what Said considered 'writing back to the metropolitan cultures, disrupting the European narratives of the Orient and Africa ... (Said 1993, 260). This kind of intellectual endeavour Said calls 'the voyage in' (Said 1993, 261). Here, he refuses 'essentializations that have the power to turn human beings against each other (Said 1993, 276) [and] are an abandonment of the secular world (Said 1993, 276) which he opts for. These nativist essentializations like negritude, Islam, Irishness or Catholicism are only important in the early stages of identity formation. He is for a pluralistic vision of the world focusing not on an extremist concept of culture but on a de-colonized culture in which consciousness and conscious activity will be set free.

For Said, liberation, and not nationalist independence, is the new alternative, liberation which by its very nature involves, in Fanon's words, a transformation of social consciousness beyond national consciousness (Said 1993, 278), [hence, avoiding] the almost inevitable division of humanity into 'us' (Westerners) and 'they' (Orientals) (Said 1978, 45).

Here, a new concept of identity construction would lead to freedom because human beings are what they make of themselves, even if they are products of repressive discourses. Evidently, to resist in order to recreate oneself as a post-colonial, anti-imperialist subject is pivotal for Said. Fanon's influence on Said is there:

It is through the effort to capture the self and to scrutinize the self, it is through the lasting tension of their freedom that men will be able to create the ideal conditions of existence for a human world (Said 1986, 231).

This 'ideal conditions of existence' resulted from resisting dominant discourses like:

... the work of intellectuals from the colonial or peripheral regions who wrote in an 'imperial' language, who felt themselves organically related to the mass resistance to empire, who set themselves the revisionist, critical task of dealing frontally with the metropolitan culture, using the techniques, discourses, and weapons of scholarship and criticism once reserved exclusively for the European. Their work is, on its merits, only apparently dependent ... on mainstream Western discourses; the result of its originality and creativity has been the transformation of the very terrain of the disciplines (Said 1993, 293).

This is a 'writing back' through various strategies of appropriation (Aschcroft et al., 1989). Said's 'voyage in' allows for the development of texts that break down the tyranny of the dominant discourse giving way to a 'hybrid cultural work' (Said 1993, 295). For Said this necessitates reading 'texts from the metropolitan centre and from the peripheries contrapuntally ... [since] ... Texts are not finished objects [but] ... are ... cultural practices (Said 1993, 312). Said's politics of resistance is this ability to encounter the dominant discourse to 'write back' to it by embarking on a 'voyage in'.

In his novel *Rabelais and His World* (1965) M.M. Bakhtin (1895-1975) portrays his vision of how the world should be like; a world resisting all dominant ideas, forms, concepts. What he was actually resisting was Stalinist authoritarianism. He was concerned with 'context' which shaped the meaning of utterances in particular places at particular times. In his *Rabelais*, Bakhtin was working under cover, since what he was trying to oppose, to unmask, to counter, to laugh at, was not medieval ideology with the hegemony of the Roman Catholic Church but Stalinism with its 'purges' and 'prison camps'. Hence, context is of utmost importance for Bakhtin, yet context does not limit

utterances to one meaning. Bakhtin's use of dialogism allows for plurality of meanings. This dialogism is an ever present consciousness of an 'other'. It is this interconnected set of concerns that are in dialogue with each other. Bakhtin's consideration of Rabelaisian license is a dialogic meditation on freedom. His attack on Stalinism is rendered not through a frontal attack but rather through a dialogue with it. Hence, there is also a dialogism between the social institution as depicted in his concept of carnival and the literary mode which is grotesque realism.

Thus, M. M. Bakhtin's *Rabelais and His World* could be regarded as a discourse of resistance; a criticism of contemporary Soviet ideology. It renders a counter ideology to the values and practices that dominated public life in the Soviet Union in the 1930's, during Stalinism. That period was characterized by the rigid suppression of dissident political or ideological views. Bakhtin, in his *Rabelais*, coins the term carnivalesque. It is derived from the word carnival which is the time of free merrymaking, revelry or festival. By means of the carnivalesque, he challenges the dominant discourse, that is, official ideology:

This literary mode parallels the flouting of authority and inversion of social hierarchies that, in many cultures, are permitted in a season of carnival. It does so by introducing a mingling of voices from adverse social levels that are free to mock and subvert authority, to flout social norms by ribaldry, and to exhibit various ways of profaning what is ordinarily regarded as sacrosanct. Bakhtin traces the occurrence of the carnivalesque in ancient, medieval and renaissance writers (especially in Rabelais) (Abrams 63).

Bakhtin uses Rabelais's strategy to reveal his own:

He uses the popular festive system of images with its charter of freedom consecrated by many centuries; and he uses them to inflict severe punishment on his foe, the Gothic eye... In this setting of consecrated rights, Rabelais attacks the fundamental dogmas and sacraments, the holy of holies of medieval ideology (Bakhtin 268).

For Bakhtin, carnival was an anarchic festival during which freedom is totally practised: social hierarchies were turned upside down and authority transgressed. Carnival is presented in the grotesque, in bodily satisfaction: eating, drinking, copulation and excretion. This carnivalized body joins humanity to the materiality of the earth and the biological cycle of reproduction and regeneration. Hence, carnival 'is life itself ... shaped according to a certain pattern of play ... [and] subject only to its own laws ... the laws of its own freedom (Bakhtin 7).

His use of the carnivalesque enables him to seek the 'unsaid' in his society through the use of laughter because:

Laughter has a deep philosophical meaning, it is one of the essential forms of the truth concerning the world as a whole, ... the world is seen anew, no less (and perhaps more) profoundly than when seen from the serious standpoint. ... Certain essential aspects of the world are accessible only to laughter (Bakhtin 66).

Bakhtin belonged to a momentarily changing age. The Bolshevik Revolution was a changing moment in world history. Through the carnivalesque, Bakhtin created a medium from which to resist dominant culture. Laughter reveals the unseen. According to Bakhtin, carnival was a time of absolute freedom when all classes of society could do and say what they wanted. All social classes mingled in the streets opposing all official dogma. There was no hierarchy to look up to since

democracy becomes the keyword where men of religion were unhooded and aristocrats uncrowned. Actually, the high exchanged their places with the crude, the common and the vulgar. Everything became acceptable in this muddle, where there was readiness to mingle discourses since kings became beggars and beggars became kings as there is 'a suspension of all hierarchical ranks, privileges, norms and prohibitions' (Bakhtin 10).

The carnivalesque takes in elements contending with order and decorum. This is the vigour and stamina 'that makes men look at the world with different eyes, not dimmed by 'normal' that is by commonplace ideas and judgement' (Bakhtin 39). Here arises the regenerative and liberating aspects of Bakhtin's carnivalesque through which he could attack the repressive order of his times and the tyrannical authoritative ideology of his age. The folk culture of the marketplace comes to generate new meanings amongst which is free expression, which would lead to freedom. There is a need for a re-arrangement of the world after the unmasking of the perverted power. Bakhtin is examining the tension between what is static imposed from above and a need for change from below, between what is old and what is new, between the official and the unofficial.

It is laughter that brings about a sense of variety, change and regeneration and is inevitably connected to the change in seasons which is a kind of rebirth and a new life replacing an old one. This is associated 'to the phases of sun and moon, to the death and renewal of vegetation, and to the succession of agricultural seasons. In this succession all that is new or renews ... is emphasized as a positive element expressing the people's hopes of a happier future' (Bakhtin 1984, 81). This accentuation on change is in direct opposition to all official determination on the past; to that steady, frozen and complete theologies which became like eternity. During carnival people are completely freed from the oppression of such gloomy categories as 'eternal,' 'immovable,' 'absolute,' 'unchangeable,' and instead are exposed to the gay and free laughing aspect of the world, with its unfinished and open character, with the joy of change and renewal (Bakhtin 83).

Evidently carnival is a liberation from all and every kind of stifling force, whether physical or intellectual. Carnival is a feast of triumph over fear, and any feast or celebration would end with food. Hence, arises Bakhtin's emphasis on the physicality of the world in which 'Man's encounter with the world in the act of eating is joyful, triumphant; he triumphs over the world, devours it without being devoured himself' (Bakhtin 281).

The carnivalized body as a complete entity connects humanity at large to the virtual materiality of earth and unceasing cycle of regeneration. Actually the carnivalesque throng is not any swarming crowd but 'It is the people as a whole, ... organized in their own way ... it is outside of all socioeconomic and political organization, which is suspended for the time of festivity' (Bakhtin 10). Here, arises two elements that are connected in carnival – body and time. There is a break from the dominant pattern of time imposed by official dogma. Yet, people feel as a whole body that are united at the same time. Carnivalesque body is connected to carnivalesque time. This carnivalesque crowd is conscious of its uninterrupted continuity in time, of its relative historic immortality ... the people do not perceive a static image of their unity ... but instead the uninterrupted continuity of their becoming and the ceaseless metamorphoses of death and renewal (Bakhtin 255-56).

This bodily renewal is enacted through the grotesque body that is the material and the physical which is the site of becoming: eating, sex and evacuation, that is the mouth, the genital organs and the bowels:

... it is with them that the borders between one's own and other bodies and between the body and the world are breached ... the grotesque image ignores the closed, smooth, and impenetrable surface of the body and retains only its excrescences (sprouts buds) and orifices, only that which leads beyond the body's limited space or into the body's depths (Bakhtin 317-318).

The grotesque incorporates incompleteness, becoming, ambiguity, indefinability and non-canonicalism. This unrestrained display of body functions is the joyous celebration of the body and life. This body as such, is a metaphor for the state that is isolating its people from mingling with the outside world to keep it pure, as in the Stalinist institution of the purge:

if a man recognizes a very strong allegiance to a social group ... then the group is likened to the human body: the orifices are to be carefully guarded to prevent unlawful intrusions, dangers from poisoning or loss of physical strength ... inside becomes good and outside evil (Douglas viii).

Here there is no static representation of reality, the world is no longer a finished image, 'instead the inner movement of being itself was expressed in the passing from one form into the other, in the ever incompleting character of being' (Bakhtin 32).

As the carnival depicts the intertextuality between official and unofficial ideologies, the grotesque body pronounces the intertextuality of nature. Bakhtin uses the physical aspect of reality to convey his vision as an intellectual of a better world. Here emerges the importance of the mask in carnival. It is a Janus-faced one:

Its official, ecclesiastical face was turned to the past and sanctioned the existing order, but the face of the people of the marketplace looked to the future and laughed, conscious it was attending the funeral of the past and present (Bakhtin 81).

This Janus-faced mask epitomizes violation of uniformity and natural boundaries.

The inverted logic that is displayed in the carnival with the shifts of positions, destinies and clothing is Bakhtin's dialogic meditation on freedom. The carnival is an embodiment of Bakhtin's unique sense of the world where he subverts the discourse of authority, opposes all that was stable and unchanging: dominant hierarchy, the forbidden and all indisputable truths. It is free from mysticism and piety as it is 'placed outside the church and religiosity' (Bakhtin 7), countering the 'narrow-minded seriousness of the spiritual pretense' (Bakhtin 22).

The carnival then, is a kind of collective consciousness where there is a surplus of energy of the trivial and the obscene. Everybody makes carnival; everybody is carnival. It is a spectacle seen by the people; they live it, and everyone participates in it because its very idea embraces all the people. It extends a kind of hegemony everywhere and over everyone and there is no life outside it. Since it is a ritualized anti-ritual and a festive celebration of the 'other', it undoes the gaps and holes in all the mappings of the world present in systematic theologies, legal codes, poetics and class hierarchies. In fact, it becomes a special form of life which threatens dominant ideology. It is a rift in the fabric of society exposing people to free life with the joy of change and renewal giving way to liberation. It could be a collective pilgrimage liberating people from repression. Laughter in the

carnival is used as therapy. Laughter purifies from dogmatism, from the intolerant and the petrified; it liberates from fanaticism and pedantry, from fear and intimidation, from didacticism, naiveté and illusion, from the single meaning, the single level, from sentimentality (Bakhtin 1984, 123).

Laughter, which is the comic, is regenerative that is burying the old for the new. Here folk culture and official culture oppose each other since the former debunks authority figures and received notions acting like a bastion against repression while class culture embodies the 'monolithic seriousness of the Christian cult and world view' (Bakhtin 515). The uniqueness of carnival laughter is its 'indissoluble and essential relation to freedom' (Bakhtin 107), whereas 'power, repression and authority never speak in the language of laughter' (Bakhtin 94). Here arises a power struggle between medieval church (Stalinism) and the carnival. Carnival laughter 'builds its own world in opposition to the official world, its own church versus the official church, its own state versus the official state' (Bakhtin 88).

Moreover, Bakhtin criticizes the dramatic vertical hierarchy in Stalin's age which resembles the Middle Ages comprising a 'vertical world' with absolute values. In fact, in the marketplace 'all hierarchies are cancelled. All castes and ages are equal (Bakhtin 251). Bakhtin is addressing his text to the 1935 Stalinism when augmentation of state control and repression was at its peak, with the hierarchization and centralization of all Soviet institutions. Therefore, a 'reversal of the hierarchic levels' was essential in which 'the jester was proclaimed king... shifting from top to bottom, casting the high and the old, the finished and completed into the material bodily lower stratum for death and rebirth' (Bakhtin 81-2). The moral and philosophical values adherent to the 'vertical world' are undermined by the ethics of the carnival which ridiculed whatever is lofty. The beggar insulted the king and the profane blasphemed the monk:

These liberties were fully revealed in the festive square when all hierarchic barriers between men were lifted and a true familiar contact was established (Bakhtin 188).

Evidently, the carnival world is ordered horizontally opposing all epistemological hierarchies, all dogmas and canons, as everything is in a constant flux being recreated, regenerated and changing, thence flouting the vertical world with its absolute values and reality. The canon would be replaced by the folk who are idealized by Bakhtin. The folk embodies an untamable defiant, invigorating force that will dismantle the status quo. Henceforth, a new and better world will be created when 'the sun shines in the festive sky' (Bakhtin 276), after the death of the old, and a new birth is announced which 'is linked with regeneration' (Bakhtin 406). Thus, the carnival is the intellectual's device

To consecrate inventive freedom, to permit the combination of a variety of different elements and their rapprochement, to liberate from the prevailing point of view of the world, from conventions and established truths ... this carnival spirit offers the chance to have a new outlook on the world, to realize the relative nature of all that exists, and to enter a completely new order of things (Bakhtin 34).

Liberation of thought and freedom as manifested in bodily behaviour or the 'lower stratum' denote the intellectual's ability to resist authority, the canon, and mainstream ideology.

CONCLUSION

Said and Bakhtin had a deep sense of the world in which they lived. They both lived historical changes in their different parts of the world. Said lived before and after the 1948 Palestinian

occupation with all its ensuing repercussions on the world in the last fifty years of his life. Bakhtin witnessed the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution with the discrowning of one authority system and the accession of another notorious one with its prison camps. Hence, Bakhtin was a victim of power cast away as an exile in some remote place in his country. Virtually, Said was displaced from his homeland. Both were exiles within different contexts and because of different reasons.

Said and Bakhtin attempted to formulate a theory of resistance through their writings. Sharing a breadth of knowledge, Said used the essay form to put down his convictions, while Bakhtin used the novel, however, they were both polyphonous or multivocal. They tried to destabilize the canon by underpinning what was left out unsaid or unuttered. They voiced the mute confronting dogma and authority. Historical context was important for both, hence, they inscribed themselves into their times through their writings, giving themselves the license to mingle discourses. Each in his own way created a difference in the world around him, engendering in the consciousness of their readers an intellectual awareness.

In a time of strict discipline, Bakhtin wrote about freedom. In a time of dogmatism, standard heroes and autocracy, he wrote about the people whom he gave absolute freedom. At a time when literature was only that which is approved of as the canon; he wrote of overthrowing all that was considered canonical or revered by the dominant discourse. At a time when people denied the body he eulogized the virtues of the common activities and functions of what he called '*the material bodily lower stratum*' (Bakhtin 82).

For Bakhtin '*there is no last word.*' The renewal of the old is the only valid thing in life. The revolutionary spirit is infinite and any ideology is never complete. '*In the world of carnival ... established authority and truth are relative* (Bakhtin 256)

Bakhtin disapproves of the attitude of contemporary intellectuals towards the end of the book, when he says that maybe at different historical times we could find a chorus laughing, but not at all times we can find a '*coryphaeus*' like Rabelais.

Edward Said, as an intellectual, did his role; he changed the world around him. His impact on all who read him or even listened to him was global and awesome. Said's passion, vision, ideas and style are unrivalled among contemporary thinkers and intellectuals. In fact, he revolutionized entire fields of studies amongst which are the Orient, the Middle East and Islam. He challenged and questioned the Western institutionalized cultural production. His eloquence in itself, was an act of resistance amidst a dominant imperial world. For him, discourse and the representations it generated were among the most determining things in reality. He reshaped the world, revitalizing and reinvigorating the relationship between what was assumed to be the weak and what was considered the strong. Although his intellectual achievement is rooted in the great philosophical traditions of Western culture and thought, yet he transcended its scope to challenge some of its most fundamental convictions and credos – the problematic relationship between the West on the one hand and the East, the Arabs and Islam on the other.

Said enabled the '*weak*' to speak, to tell their story, to narrate themselves, to construct their discourse, to represent themselves, past, present and future. He gave his readers the courage and stamina to interpret *contrapuntally* in an age that rejected interpretation. His attitude, views and

vision were in themselves an act of '*resistance*'. The whole of his discourse is full of vital energy, anger, reflection, examination and virginal phraseology and hypotheses. He seized spaces never touched before and included them homogeneously into the '*central*' space: Europe, the Empire and its whole culture. He merged them together abiding by his theoretical stance against segregating or apartheidizing spaces, embracing them *contrapuntally*. Said demythologized twentieth century thought.

Said believed that the intellectual should not only liberate him '*self*' but the '*self*' of the reader as well. Resistance resulting in liberation emanated not from a desire to take revenge or to destroy the '*other*', but from a longing to create a human space within which '*self*' and '*other*' could be read *contrapuntally*, and could both realize what is positive and enhancing in their world views; that which could bring them together as productive cultures and societies sharing what they can share while maintaining their own sense of themselves. Said, as an intellectual, challenged the established order, enshrined beliefs and certainties; generating and shaping the intellectual perceptual, conceptual and attitudinal make up of his readers. In trying to '*de-canonize*' the canon, he became a '*canon*' *speaking truth to power*.

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