The Hundred River Review

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The Writing Program
NYU Shanghai

海纳百川 有容乃大

The Hundred River Review is a journal of excellent student writing produced in our core writing courses here at NYU Shanghai. We celebrate essays that challenge our thinking, present us with new ways of seeing texts, build great arguments, and model the writing goals of our core courses.

We believe that students want to share their writing and read the work of their peers, and *The Hundred River Review* provides a space for this exchange.

All works cited as in the original text.

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Letter from the Editors

We are thrilled to present to you the inaugural issue of *The Hundred River Review*! The essays in this journal were all submitted for core courses taught in the Writing Program during the 2015-2016 academic year and were selected for showcase because they are notable examples of the kind of work undertaken by students in their first and second years at NYU Shanghai.

Here on the ninth floor, we are busy with celebration: As NYU Shanghai's first graduating class prepares for commencement, this journal makes its way to print. We drew its name from the Chinese idiom 海纳百川 (*Hǎi nà bǎi chuān*) or "the sea accepts one hundred rivers." This phrase is sometimes paired with 有容乃大 (*Yǒu róng nǎi dà*), which can be translated into English as "a great person should be inclusive." Taken together the two idioms suggest that inclusivity is a mark of excellence, that institutions who strive towards excellence are not only vast like the sea but also take in inspiration from multiple sources.With this title, we want to acknowledge Shanghai's historically eclectic and receptive culture and the ways in which it has informed the many-cultured spirit we have built here at NYU Shanghai.

From an analysis of the presence of ghosts in Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* to an application of Luce Irigaray's concept of ***philotes*** to *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, the topics explored in this first issue are varied and thought-provoking. You will find essays about the politics of cross-cultural exchange, about procrastination in *Hamlet*, and about the function of formal apologies after a genocide. At times our authors pour over the meaning and significance of a single sentence; other times they elegantly orchestrate a sustained mode of questioning across multiple texts.

While there are clear differences in strategy, style, and shape, each essay successfully implements the writing skills and techniques taught by faculty in the Writing Program. In all of the essays, the au-

thors have carefully worked to navigate between their sources efficiently and effectively, to evidence all claims adequately and eloquently, and to develop a sound and arguable claim.

In order to create these coherent arguments, students must be willing to work at the difficult practice of shaping their ideas into words. *The Hundred River Review* is a celebration of our writers' hard work, both the efforts they put into their initial submission and efforts they put into revising their papers with writing fellows and faculty after acceptance.

We believe there is value in reading the writing of those with whom we share our classrooms and our halls. We hope that you'll enjoy reading these essays as much as we did.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Tomscha and Emma Lumeij,
The Hundred River Review Editorial Board

Table of Contents

Faculty Introduction

A significant hurdle students face in writing courses is, simply, the essay prompt. Writing faculty lace them with important writing objectives. Unfortunately, students don't always realize they're not fully engaging the prompt—what it's asking, why it's asking what it does, and what it hopes to accomplish. In "Cardboard Cutouts: The Paradox of Female Power," Josie Gidman zeroes in unerringly on her essay prompt, which, intending to cultivate students' interpretive skills through close analysis, asked her to pinpoint a key quotation that she considered fit uniquely, like a puzzle piece, into her text's whole in such a way as to illuminate its complex, rich meaning. Firmly rooted in the specifics of her astutely chosen quotation (two other key prompt intents), Josie's essay delivers a striking, nuanced interpretation of the "love arts" of the sacred harlot-priestess Shamhat—initiator of Enkidu into manhood and the world of humans—adroitly constituting and navigating between dissonant poles of real and artificial female power that she exposes in the nearly 3500-year-old *Epic of Gilgamesh*.

Amy Goldman, Lecturer

Cardboard Cutouts: The Paradox of Female Power

JOSIE GIDMAN

> "Now, Enkidu, you know what it is to be with a woman, to unite with her. You are beautiful, you are like a god. Why should you roam the wilderness and live like an animal?"
> – Shamhat to Enkidu

In *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, these are the first words from Shamhat, the temple priestess, to Enkidu, the strong and savage man created by the gods to balance the hero Gilgamesh's power, after they engage in intercourse. Despite fitting naturally within the context of the epic, her pronouncements are unexpectedly significant. Shamhat's words, together with the overall image of her seduction of Enkidu, intimate particular powers of women that further the central themes of the epic, including the question of what it means to be human and the desire of humans to be god-like. As a result, the scene of Shamhat's seduction initially appears to be a portrayal of the efficacious powers of females – specifically females' capacity for *philotes* and the mysterious faculties of the *femme fatale*. These capabilities are empowering for women, who are often represented as weak or in need of help. However, a closer analysis of Shamhat's words to Enkidu following her seduction reveals a crucial paradox that challenges this initial interpretation: although female powers effectively convey the epic's

critical themes, we can see that the female characters who exhibit these powers are reduced to their sexual function. By exposing how the text conflates female powers with females themselves, I seek to reveal the cardboard quality of the epic's portrayal of female characters. In the same way that cardboard appears to be three-dimensional, but its flimsiness and emptiness attest to its true, two-dimensional nature, the female powers in the story only give the illusion that the women in the epic are characters in their own right. Rather, just as easily as cardboard is flattened by even the tiniest of weights, a closer look into the female powers presented in the epic reveals the empty, two-dimensional nature of the women in *Gilgamesh*.

Shamhat's exemplification of the uniquely female capacity for *philotes* initially appears as a presentation of female power in the epic on account of its critical role in portraying the theme of "human-ness." The feminist philosopher Luce Irigaray defines *philotes* as a female form of "tenderness and affection" that gives the act of sex its "human dimension": it is a love that "is both carnal and spiritual" (Irigaray 94). In the epic, Shamhat expresses *philotes* in her relationship with Enkidu through the utilization of her "love arts": her affectionate kisses and passionate sexual acts, concerned and complimentary conversation following intercourse, and her continued care for him as she leads him to Uruk (Mitchell 80). Through her demonstration of this inherently "human love," Shamhat communicates the central theme of "human-ness" and alerts the reader to be attentive to other instances in the epic that shed light on what it means to be

human (Irigaray 94). Such instances include the variety of strong (innately human) emotions that friends Gilgamesh and Enkidu exhibit as they journey to kill Humbaba, the monster, the two heroes' desire to find deeper meaning in human experiences as they interpret Enkidu's dreams, and Gilgamesh's uneasiness with the reality of human mortality. These later depictions of "human-ness" are more apparent and compelling than they might be otherwise because Shamhat's seduction, through which she was able to express the uniquely female "power" for *philotes*, effectively awakens the reader to the theme early on in the tale.

However, Shamhat is not a character who communicates the theme of "human-ness" in the epic: she is a vessel through which to achieve "human-ness." Through her acts of *philotes*, Shamhat elevates Enkidu from beastlike ignorance to human awareness. Included in the epic is the detail that, following intercourse, Enkidu "knew that his mind [had] somehow grown larger" (Mitchell 79). The enlightenment of Enkidu reduces the female power of *philotes* to a merely transformative power, and moreover conflates Shamhat with that power – Shamhat herself becomes the means, the vessel, or the instrument through which to achieve enlightenment. Shamhat's demonstration of *philotes* thus reveals a central paradox in the epic regarding female power: although Shamhat's distinctly female capacity for *philotes* is crucial to the conveyance of the central theme of "human-ness" in the epic, her elevation of Enkidu results in the unwarranted conflation of her with her power. The reduction of Shamhat from a woman capable of expressing *philotes* to a mere vessel that em-

bodies the transformative potential of *philotes* exposes the overall cardboard quality of this female power as presented in the epic.

Generally recognized as a stock character in film noir cinema of the 1940s, the *femme fatale*, or "deadly woman," uses her charm and sexuality to seduce men (frequently bringing about disaster for the men). The modern archetype draws on a legacy of mythical seductresses and temptresses whose sexuality results in destruction, from the Greek witches Circe and Medea to the biblical Eve. The *femme fatale*'s sexual powers are so great that they might be said to be supernatural. The epic's portrayal of Shamhat as a *femme fatale* also initially appears as a genuine portrayal of female power, especially because of the crucial role the analogy plays in conveying another major theme of the epic: the human desire for equivalency with the gods. The flattering, charming nature of Shamhat's comments following the seduction – calling Enkidu "beautiful" and god-like – and the very fact that she set a "trap" to seduce him by waiting on the ground naked, is reminiscent of the female power exemplified by *femmes fatales* (Mitchell 80). This association is even stronger in light of the fact that she is a temple priestess, and thus has a *femme fatale*-like connection to the supernatural. Moreover, Shamhat's comparison of Enkidu to a god following the act of intercourse – when only days ago he was living as an animal – betrays her eagerness for humans to be equivalent with the gods and consequently establishes an important connection between Shamhat and another famous female of the Western tradition who desired to be godlike: Eve of the Genesis creation story. Eve, the first woman, has been interpreted by

many to be the original archetype of the *femme fatale*. By eating the forbidden fruit out of a desire to "be like God himself" (The Oxford Study Bible, Gen. 3.5), she disobeyed God and doomed all of mankind. The association in *The Epic of Gilgamesh* of females with *femmes fatales* through the portrayal of Shamhat as a seductress (evidenced through her words and behavior during and after intercourse with Enkidu) serves as the first and most straightforward communication of the crucial theme in the epic of the human desire for immortality or god-like status. Consequently, such an association deepens the reader's understanding and appreciation of later parts of the epic regarding that theme – such as Gilgamesh's journey to gain immortality.

However, Shamhat is not depicted simply as a woman who utilizes the particular female powers often attributed to *femmes fatales*; rather, the epic's portrayal of her ploy to seduce Enkidu and her use of flattering language suggests that she is, in some sense, a *femme fatale*. The epic's association, though indirect, of Shamhat with the concept of a *femme fatale* serves to label, stereotype, and ultimately de-individualize her – and women in the epic in general. In regards to the female power of seduction of men, Shamhat has already internalized the de-individualizing label of the *femme fatale* when she deemphasizes the importance of her role as an individual in regard to intercourse with Enkidu; she states that her seduction showed him what it is like to be with "a woman" in general, rather than with her particularly (Mitchell 80). The effect of this pronouncement is that women are regarded as *femmes fatales* first and foremost at the expense of being

appreciated as multifaceted beings who occasionally garner sexual influence. The use of this stereotype exposes the underlying paradox of female power in the epic: although the female power attributed to *femmes fatales* is strong enough to demonstrate the epic's theme of the longing of humans for equivalency with the gods, the fact that Shamhat is portrayed as a *femme fatale* in the first place reduces this female power to a clichéd stereotype. It is precisely this reduction that points to the cardboard quality of the female powers on display in the epic.

The latent paradox surrounding the portrayal of female powers in the epic serves an important patriarchal purpose: it diminishes the influence of female powers and claims them for male use. That is, not only does the power of *philotes* become a transformative means for male ends, but also the expression of the power of seduction guarantees the labeling, stereotyping, and de-individualizing of women as *femmes fatales*. The brilliance of the paradox lies in the fact that some readers, who would normally be troubled by an inequitable portrayal of females, might be appeased by the obvious importance and seeming three-dimensionality of their powers of *philotes* in relation to the conveyance of the central themes of the epic. However, by carefully noting the disjunction between the portrayal of women as complex characters and the portrayal of women with the power of *philotes*, astute readers can avoid the interpretive pitfall of heralding Shamhat. Her appearance of depth comes at the expense of a more critical consideration – that seemingly empowering images of women can circulate to achieve patriarchal ends.

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Faculty Introduction

Isabella Baranyk's essay, "Femininity, Ghosts, and Feminine Ghosts in *The Woman Warrior*" was written for her *Perspectives on the Humanities* class, "Embodied Language," in the spring of 2016. The assignment called for a close examination of select passages from Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*. Students were asked to formulate argument-driven narratives that move beyond simple observation and achieve deep critical analysis.

Isabella presents a strong example of this kind of analysis. Her paper reveals how ghosts and women in the novel are both diminished by unequal relations of power, in overt and understated ways. Living people can be disregarded as "ghosts" and women are cast off, challenged, and policed, particularly for the ways in which they express their femininity. Over the course of the paper, Isabella calls attention to the strange and specific ways in which characterizations of ghosts and women intersect in Kingston's work, alternately, to both unfortunate and empowering ends.

Eun Joo Kim, Lecturer

Femininity, Ghosts, and Feminine Ghosts in *The Woman Warrior*

ISABELLA BARANYK

Since its original publication in 1976, Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts* has become a seminal work of Chinese American literature but continues to defy categorization, floating between fiction and nonfiction, autobiography and memoir. The book is a collection of short stories told through the voice of a Chinese American speaker. The stories are a combination of the memories, speculations, histories, and fables that have been transmitted to the speaker via her mother's "talking story." This oral storytelling tradition serves a multitude of functions, but of significance here is its powerful ability to shape the speaker's understanding of China and what it means to be Chinese. The role of talking story as a cultural device provides a partial map for each chapter, where the speaker grapples with defining her various cultural identities: what it means to be Chinese, to be American, and to be a woman. These identities overlap and separate at different moments throughout the book, and their ability to be understood by the audience develops with the speaker's own exploration. One frequent motif in each talking story is the ghost, a title by which the mother describes a variety of characters, both dead and alive. By following the roles of women both as ghosts and as the humans who interact with them, this

paper will reveal how the narrator herself is shaped by the forces indicated by the ghost's uneasy presence in her family's narrative.

Years after her husband has moved to the United States, the speaker's mother, Brave Orchid, uses her savings to move to a new province and attend a women's medical college. She has already experienced life as a wife, mother, and daughter-in-law, and the school represents a new opportunity for freedom from familial responsibility: the "daydream of career life;" the "daydream of women" (62). From the speaker's perspective, Brave Orchid spends most of her time in quiet competition with the other students, eager to prove herself as a "brilliant, natural scholar," willing to help other students if only to gracefully acknowledge her own superiority (63). When fear of a ghost-haunted room strikes the dormitory, Brave Orchid agrees to spend the night in the room, both to solidify her reputation as a courageous leader amongst the young women and to make certain that no ghost inhabits the space.

Her confidence remains unshaken when a "sitting ghost" of warmth and weight does indeed emerge, pinning her against its oily fur (69). The language of Brave Orchid's survival is rooted in her femininity: her breath is shallow but persistent, "as in childbirth," and she is sure that the ghost has "no power against a strong woman" (70). She defeats the sitting ghost with insults and stubbornness, determined to prove to the other students that she is fearless enough make it through the night. The source of Brave Orchid's triumph is tangled within her femininity: both the strength found within it, and her commitment to overcome it by

differentiating herself from her female peers.

In another chapter, the speaker's aunt, pregnant out of wedlock, is a repeated point of focus in Brave Orchid's talking story. On the night of the illegitimate child's birth, the villagers invade the family home, destroying their property and shouting to denounce her betrayal of the group: "The old woman from the next field swept a broom through the air and loosed the spirits-of-the-broom over our heads. 'Pig.' 'Ghost.' 'Pig,' they sobbed and scolded while they ruined our house" (3). Contrary to the role of the sitting ghost as an obstacle to be overcome with feminine strength, the use of the term "ghost" here is the first communication of a shame that can only come from being a woman. From the violence of the villagers and the condemnation of the aunt by Brave Orchid, it becomes clear to the speaker that, by getting pregnant, the aunt has done something unforgivable. The label of "ghost" then becomes an insult, repeated again when the villagers later exclaim "'Aiaa, we're going to die. Death is coming. Death is coming. Look what you've done. You've killed us. Ghost! Dead ghost! You've never been born"' (12). The aunt becomes a ghost when the community discovers her misdemeanor. Because of its moral implications, her supposed loss of purity, a phenomenon only possible here for women (whose crimes can show in their bellies), is perceived to hold some power over the village: "Death is coming" because her actions have brought bad luck to the community. The speaker understands that whatever control the aunt holds in this situation is neither empowering nor freeing; the moment she gains influence over the village, she is

condemned to ghost-hood.

By proclaiming her as a ghost, the villagers claim the aunt's future in two ways. Firstly, by calling her a ghost, by shaming her, the villagers drive the aunt to commit suicide. Secondly, by calling her a ghost the villagers effectively mandate that her existence be forgotten. The mother's later instruction never to speak of the aunt echoes the manner in which the villagers sentence her to effectively disappear. Her story will never be anything more than a cautionary tale, and her ancestors will not acknowledge her lineage, meaning her spirit will never be venerated. In the aftermath of her death, the villagers succeed in their proclamations: the aunt materializes as a ghost that haunts the village. While this result was in some sense anticipated by the narrative, the effect of this story on the speaker resists the villagers' intention. Indeed, the speaker works precisely to remember her aunt, in part, because she has been actively forgotten by her family members.

For the speaker, this story oft-repeated by Brave Orchid contributes to her idea that "women in old China did not choose" (4). In order not to be erased from a family or society's memory and be socialized as a spirit after her death, the Chinese woman could not do anything to endanger her perception in the eyes of the village. If she acts in her own self-interest – the speaker obsesses over possible personal motivations of love and lust for the aunt to have wound up pregnant – she will disappear.

The role of the Chinese woman ghost further evolves in a later recounting of another story, this time not necessarily told

by the speaker's mother. The speaker recalls her knowledge of "big eaters" in Chinese history as having a special power: "Another big eater was Chou Yi-han of Changchow, who fried a ghost. It was a meaty stick when he cut it up and cooked it. But before that it had been a woman out at night" (86). Hong Kingston's use of fleshy, corporeal language here in the frying, cutting, and cooking of the "meaty stick" brings a pulpy physicality to the existence of the ghost, which was likely understood formerly in many minds as an invisible, untouchable being. The unusual and even violent diction in this scene forces the reader to adopt a new understanding of the woman ghost as a physical being that can be mutilated, not unlike the sitting ghost.

As this revelation is made, the speaker discloses that the ghost had been a very real woman, and one who is powerless alone and vulnerable to the force of Chou Yi-han. The "big eater" is lauded for conquering and consuming the ghost, whose actual existence as a woman's body is disclosed essentially as a chilling afterthought – a seemingly deliberate move by the speaker as a nod at her own perception of the Chinese woman in folklore and, by extension, culture. Here, the woman is made a ghost under the violence and muscle of man; she is conquered silently, her story never told. In the speaker's imagining of the ghost aunt's story, too, she is subject to her rapist's "demand," impregnated because she "obeyed him," and led to live in shame until "he organized the raid against her" (4). In the cases of both the aunt and the victim of Chou Yi-han, the women ultimately become ghosts as a result of their domination by men.

The notion of femininity as it relates to the lived experience of the speaker is shaped by the relationship of women and ghosts in each story. The uncovering of the speaker's understanding of femininity through its nuanced relationship with ghost-hood in each story mimics both the processes by which she receives each piece of information through talking story, as well as the reader's discovering and collaging of elements from each encounter. Talking story occurs organically over decades, and as a result has left the speaker with inconsistencies and uncertainties in regard to their lessons.

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Faculty Introduction

Steven Yu wrote this essay for his *Perspectives on the Humanities* course on the "Literary Hero." The assignment asks students to critically engage with one of the two canonical tragedies they have just read – *Oedipus the King* and Shakespeare's *Hamlet* – but does not specify how they should do it. Instead, students are encouraged to embark on an inquiry of their own, with the aim to explore the complexity of a chosen literary work, to understand it through the lens of a particular theory, and/or to resolve some controversy that it has provoked.

It seems that Steven has molded into one meaningful inquiry all of the above: he considers Hamlet's situation, both psychological and social, with a fair amount of care and insight; he examines Hamlet's status as a hero in the light of Aristotle's theory of tragedy; he tries to correct the perception of Hamlet as a procrastinator by highlighting both his rationality and alienation. His essay is a useful illustration of how to converse with an all-too-familiar play in a way that is not trite or superficial.

Lin Chen, Lecturer

Procrastination and Tragedy in *Hamlet*

STEVEN YU

Procrastination – the bane of college students across the globe. The tantalizing pleasures of Youtube and the immediate social gratifications of Facebook are all too alluring for the average student, especially when the alternative is a five to seven page essay about that old drab Shakespeare. And yet the title character of what most people believe to be Shakespeare's crowning achievement, *Hamlet*, is probably the best-known procrastinator of all. In her paper, "Tragic Flaw in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*," scholar P. Indira Devi argues that "Shakespeare's tragic hero Hamlet's fatal flaw is his failure to act immediately to kill Claudius, his uncle and murderer of his father" (2). Although the ghost of Hamlet's father orders Hamlet to kill his uncle Claudius in Act I, our hero waits until the king is undeniably guilty before he ends his uncle's life. Despite Hamlet's eventual success in killing Claudius, Devi argues that his "procrastination, his tragic flaw, leads him to his doom along with that of the other characters" (2).

This judgement upon Hamlet is easily made from the perspective of an omniscient reader who knows of Claudius's guilt, but falls short when viewed from Hamlet's perspective. According to Aristotle in his *Poetics*, a tragic hero is someone who falls not because of vice or

depravity, but falls "because of some mistake" (57). While Devi is quick to pinpoint Hamlet's mistake in his delay to kill Claudius, I would like to pause, as Hamlet does, on the reasons for why he does not immediately kill Claudius. Departing from the popular view of faulting Hamlet's procrastination, I wish to argue that Hamlet should not receive full blame for the misfortunate events that befall Denmark. Instead, I argue that much of the fault lies outside our hero and that a consideration of these external forces is important to any understanding of Hamlet's tragic situation. In this paper, I want to focus on how the dubious reality of the ghost of Hamlet's father, as well as the political situation of Denmark, complicates the significance of Hamlet's measured acts of procrastination.

Hamlet breaks the classical model of an Aristotelian tragic hero in both his characterization and his revelation. While most authors give their protagonists an overbearing tragic flaw to balance their talents, Hamlet lacks a unique and strong tragic flaw because he has no amazing talents to balance out. Aristotle notes four important aspects of a successful tragic character, one of which "is to make the character lifelike, which is something different from making them good and appropriate" (60). Unlike the abilities of well-known tragic heroes such as Odysseus and Oedipus, Hamlet's amazing intellectual ability provides little to no assistance and at times prevents him from being decisive. One might expect in another story that if Hamlet were told of the injustice against his father, he would boldly and heroically battle his way through the kingdom's forces to claim his rightful place

on the throne. This is the exact opposite of what our protagonist chooses to do. Instead of heroically battling his fate, he laments "that the Everlasting had not fixed his canon 'gainst self-slaughter" (1.2.131). Referencing the belief that suicide would lead the religious to hell, Hamlet rather unheroically wishes to kill himself before even learning of his fate. There is no need to give Hamlet a tragic flaw to humanize and help the reader to empathize with him because Hamlet's abilities and actions are well within the scope of human capability.

Shakespeare's twist on the reversal and recognition of the elements of Aristotle's model explain the complex thoughts which, I argue, absolve Hamlet of any guilt. These moments of reversal and recognition happen for Hamlet when he meets his father's ghost. After Hamlet talks with the ghost, his life undergoes Aristotle's reversal, defined as "a change from one state of affairs to its exact opposite," since now he cannot run away from home lest guilt slowly eats away at him (56). He also reaches Aristotle's recognition stage, described as "a change from ignorance to knowledge," when he learns of the potential truth behind his father's death (56). Although Shakespeare's recognition of Hamlet already deserves praise from Aristotle as Aristotle remarks "the best form of recognition is that which is accompanied by a reversal," Hamlet's recognition is also an incomplete one as he is unsure of the ghost's credibility (56).

Although the play does later prove the ghost's accusations to be true, the characters in the play rightfully doubt the ghost as spirits hold the possibility of evil intentions. Horatio immediately

reveals to the readers that "it must be either an evil spirit or a good one" (Joseph 495) and warns Hamlet of the ghost potentially leading Hamlet to death or to madness (1.5.69-74). Ironically, the ghost's credibility does lead to both Hamlet's death and madness as his inner conflict troubles him for the rest of his life. Other tragic heroes like Oedipus receive rather direct confirmation of their relevant fact, but Hamlet changes from ignorance to uncertainty rather than to knowledge. This uncertainty causes Hamlet's delay, and it is therefore the dubious reality of the ghost that causes his delay. The shift of blame from Hamlet to the dubious reality of the ghost causes a stronger sense of pity for Hamlet's tragedy as he suffers not because of some personal mistake, but because of his uncertainty over which he has no control.

Aristotle's tragic hero is typically characterized as one who falls after the consequences of some action, but Hamlet does not appear to act much at all. After receiving his father's command to kill Claudius, Hamlet promises to him "thy commandment all alone shall live / Within the book and volume of my brain" but does not do much until Act II when the opportunity presents itself (1.5.102-3). It is natural then to view Hamlet's decision to do nothing as the action leading to his demise. From there, jumping to the conclusion that his inaction – his delay – must be his tragic flaw also comes naturally. In the book *Stay, Illusion!*, Simon Critchley and Jamieson Webster reference Hegel's claim that Hamlet "eventually perishes owing to his own hesitation and a complication of external circumstances" (qtd. in Critchley and Jamieson 92). Although Critchley and Jamieson reference Hamlet's delay

as another factor of his demise, I wish to focus on the external circumstances of the prince. While much time does pass between Hamlet receiving his duty and enacting it, he does not waste it pondering. As he does not possess any exceptional gifts to help him combat the world, Hamlet makes a traditionally unheroic decision: he looks for help.

The first person who seems capable of trusting and helping Hamlet is Ophelia. Lamenting his fate and delaying his duty, Hamlet does at one point turn to Ophelia for assistance. Ophelia reports to her father, Polonius, that Hamlet went to her with "a little shaking of [her] arm …[and] He raised a sigh so piteous and profound that it did seem to shatter all his bulk / And end his being" (2.1.93-97). This sign of weakness shows that Hamlet trusts Ophelia, perhaps because he loves her and knows that she has feelings for him as well. He tries to rely on somebody else because his fate is too much for him to bear alone, but Hamlet's repeated distress calls for Ophelia fail because "as [Polonius] did command / [She] did repel his letters, and denied / His access to [her]" (2.1.109-11). Due to Polonius's erroneous foresight and advice, Hamlet is unable to request assistance, or even talk to, the only person in the play in whom he could confide. He completely loses faith in Ophelia during their next encounter in the castle as he questions her: "are you honest? … Are you fair?" (3.1.104-06). In the 2009 film adaptation of *Hamlet*, directed by Gregory Doran, this scene repeatedly shows Hamlet staring into the camera revealing his knowledge that both Claudius and Polonius are listening in from afar. Assuming her to be a supporter

of Claudius, Hamlet concludes that he cannot trust Ophelia with his burden and quickly severs their ties. As he parts from his only sure confidant, Hamlet asks Horatio – his one friend – for minimal assistance.

Horatio is introduced as the best friend of Hamlet, easily seen from Hamlet's animated lines when they first reunite. However, while Hamlet addresses Horatio as "Sir, my good friend", he does not actually confide in him as a good friend would (1.2.162). Critchley and Webster also reveal in their analysis the possibility that Horatio is spying on someone else's behalf is not improbable, given how little we know of the character (47-49). When we look at the situation in Denmark, it becomes clear why Hamlet cannot shake the feeling that Horatio might be just like Ophelia, a pawn in someone else's game. Hamlet realizes early on that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, also friends of his, were charged by Claudius to spy on him as in their first conversation he questions "Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining [to visit me]? Is it a free visitation" (2.2.238-9). For our wary protagonist, it is not difficult to also take Horatio's loyalty with a grain of salt.

Once we remove the last trustworthy person from the list of potential confidants, it becomes clear that Denmark's current situation of turmoil and espionage causes Hamlet's downfall. Every character in the play is watched by someone else. Comparing Hamlet to his foil Laertes, we see that Laertes' father, Polonius, orders a servant to "make inquire of his behavior" and to look for actions like "drinking, fencing, swearing, [and] quarreling" (2.1.4-26). Although Polonius's watch over his own son may be filled

with good intentions, it clearly shows that he does not trust his son. This lack of trust amongst the main characters of the play permeates their relations, creating an atmosphere of doubt and wariness between all residents of the castle. An excellent illustration of this comes from Doran's *Hamlet* where certain scenes are viewed through a security camera. Although the primary use of this camera is to show that the ghost of King Hamlet does not appear on recordings, the cameras also reflect the spying and lack of trust throughout the castle of Elsinore, explaining Hamlet's beliefs that the current "Denmark's a prison" (2.2.242).

Hamlet tries and fails to recruit assistance from others, leaving him with no choice but to tackle his fate alone. As fortune would have it, a group of performers stroll into Denmark giving Hamlet the idea to probe Claudius's guilt. He instructs the performers to act out the circumstances of his father's death and judges Claudius based on the usurper's reactions, believing "For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak / With most miraculous organ" (2.2.514-515). After the Mousetrap succeeds, Hamlet is presented with a golden opportunity to kill a vulnerable, praying Claudius. Although the reader knows earlier that Claudius confesses, "My offense is rank…It hath the primal eldest curse upon't, a brother's murder" (3.3.36-8), Hamlet enters only after Claudius finishes his own soliloquy, leaving him still in the dark about Claudius's culpability (3.4.36). While many rush to fault Hamlet for not stabbing Claudius in the back here, Hamlet assesses the situation as one where "A villain kills my father and for that, I, his sole son, do this same villain send to heaven"

(3.4.76-8). In this moment, he is still unsure of Claudius's sin, so from Hamlet's perspective it is rational to wait until a time when Claudius is proven guilty. Devi argues that all deaths after this point were due to Hamlet's delay in killing Claudius; however, murdering Claudius here would not have been very honorable or heroic. Although certain lives may have been saved, those lives have already been ruined by the events of the play: Ophelia and Laertes are left fatherless while Gertrude, Hamlet's mother, must reckon with her own sin after the confrontation with her son. Perhaps death is the best ending for them as they could also escape with Hamlet from the tragedy that is Denmark – especially as Fortinbras's army marches outside the castle doors.

Procrastinators all over the world only boldly admit their fault in delay because, for the most part, they do ultimately complete their assignment. Although the quality of work may not be ideal, the goal is attained. While Hamlet may not be remembered as the conquering hero of his time like his father, he still receives credit for killing Claudius. However, this credit pales in comparison to the effort and suffering Hamlet needed to endure before reaching his journey's end. He was not gifted with abilities like superhuman strength to quickly avenge his father, but in the absence of an act of heroism, we gain a sense of his humanity, a quality of which is captured so well in his thoughts. He asks his friends for help like any normal human would when faced with insurmountable odds, but finds no solace as no one deserves trust. His downfall comes not from a personal tragic flaw, but from what Aristotle defines as hamartia, a class of mistaken acts

"due not to vice or depravity, but to ignorance of some relevant fact or circumstance" (95). In following this fate, Hamlet finds himself fulfilling Aristotle's construction of "the finest kind of tragedy from an artistic point of view" (58). As each character in the play slowly drifts further away from Hamlet, Shakespeare's greatest character finds himself to be great only in solitude.

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Faculty Introduction

Global Perspectives on Society not only challenged students to come to terms with sophisticated concepts and texts, but also to connect those concepts to their everyday experiences and unique cultural backgrounds. In addition, students worked to join authors of multiple texts in inquiry-driven conversation. Hancheng worked toward this essay by first analyzing James Rachels' inquiry into the uses and limits of cultural relativism and Charles Taylor's theory of cultural identity and the "politics of recognition." He then moved to identify a "personal stake" issue, a relevant concrete example that he could analyze within a conceptual framework drawn from the Rachels and Taylor texts. In drafting his essay, Hancheng added Kwame Anthony Appiah and Martha Nussbaum's thinking about cosmopolitanism to the conversation, creating in the end a rich and timely essay relevant not only to his own personal experiences and concerns, but also to those of the greater NYU Shanghai community.

David Perry, Lecturer

Should a Chinese Citizen Celebrate Western Festivals?

HANCHENG ZUO

At my high school in Shanghai, many teachers and students accused those who celebrated Western festivals, like Christmas, of threatening traditional Chinese culture. In classes and public speeches, they would constantly discourage students from taking part in such celebrations. They seemed to assume that the "cultural invasion" from the West is overwhelming our own cultural elements that have been passed on from generation to generation. From their perspective, celebrating Western festivals not only misguides young Chinese people towards uncontrolled consumerism and excessive entertainment, but also makes them gradually lose their sense of traditional Chinese virtues, especially filial piety.

Despite my studying at the culturally diverse New York University Shanghai, as a Chinese citizen, it is still difficult for me to ignore anti-Western culture demonstrations claiming to be protecting the cultural authenticity of the Chinese nation, especially when considering my previous experience in high school. In my view, the anti-Western movement has a noticeably negative influence in China.

However, during the celebration of the Mid-Autumn Fes-

tival at NYU Shanghai, I saw none of our international students holding cards with slogans and boycotting that Chinese festival. Why should traditional Chinese students boycott cross-cultural festivals when international students at NYU Shanghai are embracing them, enjoying mooncakes (月饼) and learning calligraphy at cultural exchange events offered by the Chinese Language Program? Are Western festivals necessarily a threat to our national culture? Does the protection of our national culture require opposition to the introduction of elements of other cultures? Or would these students' claims only reflect what James Rachels, an American ethical philosopher, calls "the prejudices of our society" (35)?

After explaining the "serious shortcomings" of cultural relativism, in "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism," Rachels turns to its "genuine insight" (35). Although we "have learned to reject [...]some types of conduct," chances are "there is nothing evil about" them, and our previous judgments may "reflect the prejudices of our society" (35). Indeed, western festivals are the elements from another culture, but that does not necessarily mean that they are "evil[s]" that would threaten the survival of our own culture (35). One may dress as a Santa Claus on Christmas, but that would not hinder him or her from following the traditions of our culture, including wearing hanfu on Spring Festival, drinking *xionghuang* (雄黄酒) during the Dragon-boat Festival (端午), or making mooncakes on Mid-Autumn Festival.

Moreover, considering the fact that Spring Festival is also

used for shopping carnivals, Western festivals do not necessarily have more consumerist characteristics than Chinese ones. Even if Western festivals are no longer celebrated, young Chinese people would still create festivals like double-eleven (November 11th) to satisfy their hunger for shopping and entertainment. Therefore, Western culture may not be entirely to blame for the "evil" of over-consumerism and over-entertainment, and such phenomena may well be the result of the high-pressure lifestyle of the young population.

From my perspective, a Chinese citizen should not be condemned for celebrating Western festivals, since exchanges with cultures that are different from one's own not only are not harmful to one's own culture – at least not when negative factors in the process of such exchanges are avoided – but also may facilitate the further development of it.

In "The Politics of Recognition," Charles Taylor, a Canadian political philosopher, develops the concept of "dialogicality," which refers to the state of being in constant dialogue with one's culture and society (34). This, from my perspective, plays a significant role in keeping the elements of a culture that would be helpful for future development of its people (and others as well, probably) vital and alive. He explains how "[our] identity crucially depends on [our] dialogical relations with others" (34). Indeed, Taylor's text is a rich and instructive one, and his idea also gives me insight into the dynamicity of culture. The identity of individuals is constantly shaped by "interaction with others," and that

is also the case for other cultures. Since, as philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah suggests, we live in "a single web of trade and a global network of information" (87), it is inevitable we will engage in dialogue with other cultures; otherwise we may perhaps gradually adopt attitudes of isolationism, which has historically brought a series of tragedies to China.

Indeed, some may argue that conflicts or other undesirable incidents might occur during such dialogues, and I do admit that many individuals have abandoned their own culture wholesale due to consumerist propaganda. But from my perspective, preserving one's own culture and celebrating others' are not conflicting with, or exclusive to each other. I believe that as long as one is preserving and protecting these inspiring values and educational practices in his or her culture, dialogue with other cultures would definitely facilitate the further development of one's own. As the Chinese saying goes, "the jade may be refined from stones coming from other hills" (他山之石，可以攻玉). For instance, Buddhism originated in India, but no one would deny that many Buddhist festivals, like the birthday of Buddha, are now among the most important traditional Chinese festivals. Besides, according to Bellenir's "Confucian Today," the "Zen style of meditation" actually promoted the formation of the School of Mind (心学) founded by Wang Yangming (王阳明), a school of Neo-Confucianism. If we refuse to engage in dialogue with other cultures, our own culture may not prosper as well.

Dialogue among cultures is important to their past, pres-

ent and future vitalities. So are the values underlying cultures that facilitate such cultural exchange. In addition to the many concrete examples of cultural practices mentioned above, I would like to introduce a more abstract definition of culture, that is, as a "set of shared *attitudes, values*, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution or organization" (Merriam-Webster, emphasis mine). We might consider *values and attitudes* to be the very foundation of cultures. Therefore, one who wants to keep a culture vital should prioritize the vitalization of its values and attitudes that are sure to facilitate the overall development in the predictable future. Otherwise, other aspects of culture, including customs and traditions, as the expressions of certain values and attitudes and in nature, would collapse as well. *You rong nai da* (有容乃大), which means tolerance and open-mindedness, as a form of expression of the word ren (仁) at a universal level, is a value or attitude that is not only a part of the very basis of Chinese culture today, but also gives us insight in the very idea of cosmopolitanism, or global citizenship.

In "Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism," Martha Nussbaum argues that extreme "*Bande Mataram*," which means "Hail motherland" in English, would "bring a curse" to one's motherland (1). She then illustrates the benefits of cosmopolitan education to a nation: "The defense of shared national values [...] requires appealing to certain basic features of human personhood that obviously also transcend national boundaries. So if we fail to educate these children to cross these boundaries in their minds and imagination, we are tacitly giving them the message that we

do not mean what we say" (Nussbaum 8). From one perspective, the rejection of dialogue among cultures is the equivalent that we have abandoned the national values that advocate such dialogues.

In China, particularly, if students are told that they should boycott certain cultural practices merely because they originate from a foreign land and that they should refuse to support the dialogues between our culture and other cultures, they would begin to doubt the credibility of the educators who taught openness and tolerance. Moreover, the fact is that Chinese culture itself consists of different ethnic groups, and the unity among them has been heavily dependent on the conversations happening between them. The refusal of many Chinese nationalists to hold dialogues between cultures "subverts [...] even the values that hold a nation together," thus destroying almost everything they claim they are protecting (Nussbaum 2). In addition, if those values have been undermined, then the ways of expression, including etiquette, architecture, and dress, will probably disappear as well. If you take a close look at the hanfu many Chinese nationalists wear, it is easy to find parts of the dress that are not made of silk. In other words, their dress code does not reflect the "Chineseness" they advocate at all!

From my perspective, the key to keep traditional Chinese culture vital is to maintain its connections to the past and prepare it for future challenges. For example, Sun Zhongshan joined the traditional Chinese clothing style with the Western suit to create the Zhongshan suit (Wu). As Wu states, "The Zhongshan suit has

strong symbolic meanings according to Sun Zhongshan's design concept of the Republic of China. The four pockets represent four virtues (benevolence, loyalty, probity and shame), the five bigger buttons symbolize the separation of five powers (administration, legislation, jurisdiction, examination and supervision)" (Wu). By combining Chinese virtues with Western political concepts, Chinese clothes with Western styles, Sun Zhongshan rejuvenated traditional Chinese values to facilitate the democratization of China.

By pointing out the importance of the vitality of a culture I am not making a cultural essentialist argument, but am struggling to preserve the cultural elements that are beneficial or useful for future development. Consider the fact that culture is so dynamic that it may seem to be hardly possible for anyone to safely conclude what exactly is its foundation or authentic identity. Boycotting Western culture would not promote the prosperity of traditional Chinese culture. Instead, such an unconsidered movement would perhaps undermine some of its elements that are valuable for the progress of future development. It is the dialogues between cultures that keep a culture vital and alive.

As a matter of fact, Chinese culture is now expanding through cultural exchange right here at NYU Shanghai. Every year, the NYU Shanghai Chinese Language Program, an academic initiative aiming at equipping international students with Chinese linguistic skills and basic knowledge about Chinese culture, holds events on Chinese festivals, including Mid-Autumn Festival

and Lantern Festival. During these events, mooncakes and dumplings are provided, calligraphy is taught, and traditional games are played. Besides that, NYU Shanghai has already opened several Chinese Arts Classes, where international students can learn Chinese Calligraphy, traditional Chinese Painting, and traditional Chinese instruments like *erhu* (二胡).

In the meantime, Confucian Academies around the globe are also promoting traditional Chinese customs and virtues overseas. A Chinese citizen would not regard this as a cultural invasion, would she?

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Faculty Introduction

Tri Hoang wrote this essay for *Global Perspectives on Society* (GPS), Writing Workshop II. The assignment asked students to write an argument-driven essay that uses GPS readings and their own research to shed new light on a contemporary topic figured in a supplementary article or film for the course. Tri used Hannah Arendt's *On Revolution,* Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *The Social Contract,* John Baker's *Equality: From Theory to Action,* and scholarly sources he found on his own to address the question of post-genocidal reconciliation in the documentary film *The Look of Silence.* His essay does an attentive job evaluating sources, discussing and responding in detail to their arguments about the politics of the apology and the notion of equality. Moreover, Tri presents a clear-sighted critique of the prevailing powerlessness of the victims in Indonesia today and provides a nuanced response to whether an apology – as important and urgent as it seems to the viewer after watching the film – is really enough. This essay is a model of thoughtful research, careful evaluation of sources, and clear, eloquent prose in academic writing.

Alice Chuang, Lecturer

On Post-Genocidal Reconciliation

TRI HOANG

The Look of Silence is an award-winning documentary film by Joshua Oppenheimer. The film centers on the confrontation between Adi Rukun, together with his family, and the perpetrators who executed one of his brothers, Ramli Rukun, during the 1965-66 Indonesian genocide. Following the success of the 1965 military coup, Major General Suharto assumed power in Indonesia and began an anti-communist purge, which resulted in the mass killings of an estimated number of one million civilians – who were allegedly identified as communist sympathisers, leftists, and ethnic Chinese. Ramli Rukun was among those convicted of being "communist traitors," and was cruelly tortured to death by the post-coup military. Today, the story of the Rukuns is a representative experience of all the victimised families in Indonesia who have been silenced and who live in constant fear of violence since the genocide. Through the film, Oppenheimer and Rukun hope to communicate "a poem about the necessity of breaking that silence" and to call for support in promoting justice and reconciliation in Indonesia (thelookofsilence.com).

In his official statement to the public, Adi Rukun explains the motive behind confronting the perpetrators: he hopes "[the

perpetrators] would acknowledge what they did was wrong" (indiewire.org). At the end of the film, however, the much-wanted apology from the perpetrators is still withheld. In fact, all of them deny any responsibility for the tragedy. While the Indonesian Genocide has yet to be acknowledged as such, the Rukun brothers' brave decision to reveal their identities raises the question of the role of formal apology as a form of powerful redress in the aftermath of mass violence.

This paper focuses on the extent to which formal apology is effective in promoting reconciliation in post-genocidal societies like Indonesia. Although a formal apology from a government and perpetrators for their past wrongs has powerful social and moral significance, that alone does not constitute the ultimate remedy for genocidal consequences. Instead, I argue that justice and reconciliation in the aftermath of mass violence can only be fully realised through the economic and political empowerment of the victims and through the promotion of social equality. In the first part of my essay I will discuss the social functions of formal apologies. In this section, I will use the political writings of Jean Jacques Rousseau and Hannah Arendt to set up a framework through which to understand the relations between victims and government perpetrators. I will then examine how different definitions of reconciliation point to a deeper problem that governments systematically fail to address: namely, the economic and social inequalities that too often plague societies in the wake of atrocity. Finally, I will explore how these forms of post-conflict redress might theoretically work to promote long-standing recon-

ciliation and justice.

The Social Functions of Formal Apology

An apology is commonly defined as an expression of regret for a past offense and is usually composed of two elements: "an acknowledgement that one has been in the wrong, together with a statement of remorse" (Weyeneth 12). A formal apology implies that the agents of past wrongs are a government or people in power. While a formal apology has important social functions crucial to post-conflict reconciliation, it may have adverse effects if misused for the interests of the entity in power. Deborah Levi in her article, "The Role of Apology in Mediation," outlines three kinds of inadequate apologies. She writes that a "tactical" apology that results from a government attempting "to create an atmosphere of trust and good feelings in which an opponent is likely to make a concession" is inadequate because it further marginalizes the victims and serves to reinforce social divisions (1173). While explanations are crucial to genuine apologies, Levi discusses the way in which wholly "explanatory" apologies fail because they can be provided without the speaker genuinely assuming responsibility for their wrongdoing (1173). This can be seen in the actions of someone who makes excuses for their actions but neglects to properly take responsibility for their role in the offense. A "formalistic" apology or an apology made insincerely to appease the interests of a higher party also fails in Levi's consideration because it is gestural and not genuine (1174). For a formal apology to have a potential role in social reconciliation, sincerity is a prerequisite. A sincere formal apology could

recover the lost political legitimacy of a government, and it can work to rebuild social trust among its citizens. It could work to re-establish trust between the victims and the perpetrators. Such a restoration of trust both among citizens and between citizens and the government would precondition social reconciliation.

Mass violence ordered by a government can be regarded as a form of government abuse that demolishes its political legitimacy. In *The Social Contract*, Jean-Jacques Rousseau clarifies the "double capacity" of every individual, first as a citizen of the sovereign and second as a subject of the state (12). Rousseau defines government as an "intermediate body" functioning as an executive power between the sovereign and the state (43). The political legitimacy of a government as a supreme administrative body is justified by the consent of its citizens, who authorize the government "to work under the direction of the general will, to serve as means of communication between the State and the Sovereign, and to do for the collective person more or less what the union of soul and body does for man" (43). If a government orders and permits a massacre to occur, it casts itself as a "despot" that "[usurps] the sovereign power" for its *particular will* and "sets [itself] above the laws," which are agreed upon by the general will (67-68). In this light, one may argue that the post-coup government in Indonesia murdered the so-called "communist traitors" for the general interests and that such an act was in accordance with the will of the many. However, as Hannah Arendt points out in *On Revolution*, the process of generating the general will can be easily manipulated by a government, who may "[rely] upon the

unifying power of [a] national common enemy," instead of an "agreement of particular interests," as the sole means to unify the people (Arendt 77-78). The post-coup Suharto government exploited this strategy of "opposition to a third" in the 1965 genocide by triggering a national struggle against the so-called "communist traitors" who were perceived by the government as a threat to its power. In fact, that the event is still considered taboo in Indonesia today implies that the majority of the country's people did not consent to the killings. Mass violence, as in the case of the Indonesian massacre, is an example of government abuse, which destroys the consent of the people, especially that of the victims, in having the government as their executive power. In other words, what keeps an abusive government in power is no longer its legitimacy, but its "forces," which coerce people "to yield to force [as] an act of necessity, or at the most, an act of prudence" (Rousseau 5).

A formal apology, on the other hand, would enable a past government guilty of wrongdoing to constitute or reconstitute its political legitimacy through an assurance of its allegiance to the guidance of the general will. In other words, a formal apology restores the people's trust in political authority. In essence, the general will is a commitment to advancing "the public advantage" in adherence to the principle of equality (Rousseau 20-21). For victims of genocide, an acknowledgement of their suffering and a promise not to commit injustice again is an official acknowledgement of their identity as victims of violence (Blatz et al. 221). In Rousseau's words, such an act is a firm recognition

of the victims firstly as citizens of the sovereign and secondly as the subjects of the state, who are protected under the just laws. This recognition implies that the victims can equate their particular interests to those of the perpetrators and the non-victimised majority. In this case, each particular will is equally accounted for in the will of all; victims are equal and legitimate recipients of the benefits derived from the government as it acts in favour of the general will.

For the government and the perpetrators, a sincere formal apology is also a "praise for the current system of law and administration" and helps "decrease perceived threat to the system by explicitly dissociating the present system from the system that permitted the injustice to occur" (Blatz et al. 223). Formal apology therefore has symbolic meanings that can motivate the general population to believe that "they live in a just and fair country" (Blatz et al. 223). In his article, "How Can We Trust our Fellow Citizen," Claus Offe describes this feeling in terms of "institutional trust," which he elaborates as a situation wherein "people motivate their ongoing and active support for the institution and the compliance with its rules" (13). In another sense, institutional trust requires "collective expectation, a certainty that the other members of the community will obey the same rules and share [mutual] norms" (Andrieu 13). In other words, an improved institutional trust implies an increase in trust among citizens in the society, where "people within [a society] are trustworthy and see each other as such" (Andrieu 14). In what follows, I will discuss how a formal apology would facilitate trust between

citizens, specifically between victims and perpetrators, and how that trusting relationship can provide a platform upon which other reconciliatory efforts can be built.

Post-conflict trust between victims and perpetrators is an important element not only in rebuilding and maintaining a government's political legitimacy, but also in promoting reconciliation. Formal apology plays an important role in facilitating the restoration of this trusting relationship. Trudy Govier, in her book *Human Trust and Human Communities*, defines trust by the following characteristics:

> (A) expectations of benign, not harmful, behaviour based on beliefs about the trusted person's motivation and competence; (B) an attribution or assumption of general integrity on the part of the other, a sense that the trusted person is a good person; (C) a willingness to rely or depend on the trusted person, an acceptance of risk and vulnerability; and (D) a general disposition to interpret the trusted person's actions favourably. (6)

As Govier says, trust involves both one's confidence that others will behave in a trustworthy manner and that others would also have a similar expectation of him- or herself. Trust is, in this regard, one's vulnerability to rely on intuition and one's feelings toward others (Govier 6). Trust relations between victims and perpetrators in the aftermath of a genocide can be viewed suggestively through the lens of the prisoner's dilemma: the perpetrators may fear the victim's revenge and the victims may fear

that the perpetrators will commit further violence. A cooperative scenario, where both victims and perpetrators are trustworthy and see each other as such and thus do not seek to harm the other, would facilitate social reconciliation (Grovier 11). A defective scenario, on the other hand, where the antagonistic parties distrust each other, would further deteriorate the relationship of the two. The prospect for both parties to achieve a cooperative outcome seems slim, as it is more probable that both victims and perpetrators would choose to defect.

One of the many reasons why the defect outcome is more prevalent is the lack of communication between the parties involved. On this account, a sincere formal apology would break the silence and provide the needed conservation channel, where the government and perpetrators communicate their willingness to cooperate with the victims. The willingness to cooperate may reflect that the perpetrators now view the victims as equal and trustworthy. This conversation, then, serves as "an exchange of shame and power between the offender and the offended," where the perpetrators acknowledge their past wrongs and the victims have the power whether or not to forgive (Lazare 42). By forgiving the perpetrators for their past wrongs, the victims in return communicate their willingness to form a trusting relationship. While there exist cases where apologies are rejected and perpetrators are not forgiven, it is important to acknowledge that a formal apology does play a role in initiating social trust and reconciliation.

Formal apology, as it contributes to the potential resto-

ration of trust in society, can thus precondition social reconciliation. The International Centre for Transitional Justice includes initiatives, such as "truth commissions, reparation programs and security system reform," as measures that would enhance the "possibilities for peace, reconciliation and democracy" in regions affected by mass human rights abuses (ICTJ). It is important to note, however, that the success of these initiatives essentially relies on the extent to which institutional and social trust is genuinely achieved. For instance, governments that neglect to formally apologize, but superficially succeed in transforming their "military, police, judiciary and related state institutions" will fail in their efforts to precondition social reconciliation because by refusing to formally apologize to the victims, the government implicitly denies its responsibility for its past wrongs (ICTJ). The victims would thus not view reforms as a legitimate effort to redress their own marginalization. A security system reform in this case seems to benefit the government in consolidating its power rather than the interests of the general population. Similarly, financial compensation offered without a formal apology would merely exacerbate the problem. Quantifying their damages into monetary values degrades the suffering and losses of the victims.

When formal apology is not offered and trust in society is not restored, any attempt to reconcile seems artificial. In fact, Isabelle Auguste provides solid evidence that it was the Australian government's formal apology for its past mistreatment of the Indigenous children and for other discrimination policies against the Indigenous that "really put the idea of reconciliation 'back

on track'" (321). While her work suggests that society can only begin to make serious efforts towards reconciliation once formal apology is achieved, it is important to emphasize that formal apology does not solely guarantee reconciliation. Instead, it only stimulates social trust, which preconditions other reconciliatory efforts. The success of social reconciliation therefore also depends on what follows formal apology. In the next section, I will clarify what reconciliation is and what is required to achieve a successful post-conflict reconciliation.

Post-genocidal Reconciliation: Toward an Equal and Inclusive Society

Scholars, politicians, and individuals define the concept of reconciliation in different ways. Some believe that reconciliation must encompass many concepts, such as "justice, forgiveness, truth, healing, peace and so on" (Parent 278). Others believe that reconciliation is better understood as "healing individual post-conflict wounds" (Parent 278). A more systematic way to look at different reconciliation approaches is considering retributive and restorative forms of justice. In "Reconciliation and Justice after Genocide," Genevieve Parent defines the focus of retributive justice as "fighting impunity," or prosecuting the offenders (282). Parent rejects such an approach, citing "the post-conflict divided society" in Rwanda – where there exist "two distinct, mutually exclusive, and homogeneous social groups" – as a failure of "the government of Rwanda and the international community [for putting too] much emphasis on holding perpetrators accountable" (282). In the same vein, Kora Andrieu crit-

icizes the retributive approach for being too "thin" because it does not work to resolve the "dormant hostility" between the two antagonistic parties, who happen to "coexist without necessarily interacting or forgiving one another" (3). Furthermore, a retributive approach seems to be invalid in cases where some of the perpetrators of a massacre have already deceased or deteriorated mentally, as seen in *The Look of Silence*. Admittedly, while retribution as an approach to justice and reconciliation is problematic and may result in adversarial effects to social recovery, the symbolic reinforcement of humanitarian and criminal laws through punishment does play a role in preventing future injustice. Yet, retribution – as a process through which more pain is generated in society, or as Parent would say, a process through which the "perpetrators are victimised" – does not seem to be a sustainable way to rectify social damages (283).

Restorative justice, on the other hand, focuses more on fulfilling the social and emotional needs of the victims as well as "[restoring] the humanity of the perpetrators and their relationship with the victims" (Parent 283). Parent makes his view clear that restorative measures would better promote social reconciliation because they help "[the victims validate their] worth as members of the community – something that is often taken away by the violent act and is rarely restored by retributive justice" (286). Restorative justice, due to its forward-looking perspective and direct address of the victim-perpetrator relationship, is a progressive and promising redress for social reconciliation. However, Andrieu criticizes the restorative approach for being too "thick"

because it greatly appeals to emotion and neglects "the real issues, [such as] offering reparation, condemning the perpetrators and enforcing the laws" (3-5). Instead, Andrieu proposes a "subjective definition" of reconciliation, which aims to enable both victims and perpetrators to cooperatively rebuild "social norms and civic trusts" following an "open conservation" initiated by apologies (8). However, Andrieu in this regard seems to speak from a theoretical standpoint that overemphasizes the role of conversation in the "norm-affirming" and "trust-building" process. In post-genocidal countries like Indonesia, the victims are usually socially and economically disadvantaged in relation to the perpetrators. One therefore may question Andrieu's claim that victims, given their lower status, could attain an equal voice in "open conversation." Similarly, the problem with forward-looking restorative justice is that it is not forward-looking enough: the healed relationship between the perpetrators and victims seems fragile if there exists the gap of social and economic status between the two parties. This is because the lower status of the victims is another source of their marginalization in society, which in turn prevents their social reintegration. For this reason, reconciliation should best be understood as both a process and a goal, where both victims and perpetrators eventually cooperate for an equal and inclusive society.

Equality of Condition as the Ultimate Redress for Genocide

The goal of an equal and inclusive society in the aftermath of a genocide requires appropriate reconciliatory policies

and programs. Since each post-genocidal society has needs specific to its context, it is difficult to generalize about what policies should be put forward. Nevertheless, it is important to discuss the framework that shall guide the process of social reconciliation. In *Dimensions of Equality: A Framework for Theory and Action*, Baker et al. present three distinct concepts of equality – basic equality, liberal egalitarianism and equality of condition – and discuss the contents and implications of each concept through the lens of the five key dimensions of equality – namely "respect and recognition," (5) "resources," (4) "love, care and solidarity," (6) "power," (7) and "working and learning" (7). In the context of a genocidal aftermath, the victims are usually worse off in all five dimensions compared to the perpetrators and the non-victimised majority. Silence, stereotypes, and misrepresentation of the victims in the media and education have consistently reinforced their inferior social status, preventing them from attaining an equal standing in terms of social respect and recognition. This inequality then leads to their disadvantage in accessing resources, attaining social solidarity and compassion, engaging in social and political activities, and accessing working and learning opportunities.

While the two concepts of "basic equality" and "liberal egalitarianism" tolerate "the existing inequalities" in society and try to regulate these inequalities at a moderate level, "equality of condition" takes this a step further: it challenges the "existing structures [that] work systematically to generate and reinforce inequality" (Baker et al. 44). In a post-genocidal society, a formal

apology without a commitment to ensure social equality, after all, is still an implicit acknowledgement of "inevitable inequality" between the social status of the victims and that of the non-victims. In fact, such inequality works to reinforce their victimhood identity. "Basic equality" and "liberal egalitarianism" fail in this sense as guiding principles for post-genocidal rectification. Equality of condition, unlike other reconciliatory efforts that aim to offer benefits or privileges to the victims, "[enables] and [empowers] people [regardless of their victimhood experience] to exercise […] real choices among real options" (Baker et al. 34). In the dimension of "respect and recognition," equality of condition offers the victims and perpetrators a chance to engage in a "critical dialogue" about the social, political, and economic inequalities endemic to their society. As Baker et al. claim, the critical dialogue would lead to an acceptance, but not a toleration, of cultural, religious, political and other social differences. This acceptance may be important in amplifying the prospect for "love, care and solidarity" for the victims. In the realms of "resources" and "working and learning," equality of condition eliminates the unjustified social preferences given to the perpetrators and the privileged and enables the victims to achieve an equal stance in attaining "social and cultural capital," "knowledge and skills" as well as "opportunities to satisfying work." In the aspect of "power," equality of condition enables the victims to participate in making decisions that affect themselves and their society. Women in Rwanda, who were subjected to sexual violence and traumatisation during the 1994 Rwandan genocide, now represent 64 percent of the parliament. Such an advancement of equality of

power, as concluded by Powley in her published case study *Rwanda: Women Hold Up Half the Parliament*, "has been particularly effective in promoting reconciliation" in Rwanda (157). This evidence indicates that reconciliation has a strong connection with social equality and can only be truly and fully realized through promoting social equality.

Formal apology, as it works to re-establish political legitimacy of the government and social trust between antagonistic parties, is an essential component that initiates reconciliation in the aftermath of mass violence, yet, on its own, it does not constitute a comprehensive redress that promises social recovery. Furthermore, post-genocidal reconciliation and justice cannot be sustained in the long term by punishing the offenders, compensating the victims, asking the perpetrators to apologize and the victims to forgive and the like. Instead, the success of a reconciliation realistically depends on how equal and inclusive a post-genocidal society can be under the guiding framework of equality of condition. For most of us who are lucky enough not to be affected by mass violence, the efforts we have made to help promote reconciliation in societies like Indonesia should not cease when the victims are apologized to and sufficiently compensated, or when the perpetrators are forgiven and punished, but should continue until we reach true equality and inclusion for all victims in the wake of a damaged society.

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