

Bija Satyagraha: An analysis of the Global Political Economy of Seed and Intellectual Property Rights as an attempt to explore the spiritual possibilities of writing a dissertation within the academic discipline of GPE in order to show something that cannot be said.

“Action alone is the province, never the fruit thereof. Let not thy motive be the fruit of action, nor shouldst thou desire to avoid action.”¹

SUMMARY

This dissertation begins by attempting to outline some unorthodox conditions for its own success, designed to unsettle the reader from a standard academic reading of the following text. It then discusses important features of the Global Political Economy of Seed, leading to discussion of the Global Political Economy of Intellectual Property Rights in order to provide a basis for certain philosophical claims about the violent nature of academia. These claims are explored generally and then specifically in the context of the subject of GPE, of which this dissertation is part, therefore leading to self-reflexive consideration of in what sense this dissertation itself might provide an alternative to this violent practice. Ultimately, this is something left to the judgement of the text of Bhagavad Gita.

TITLES OF CHAPTERS

Introduction

p 5-7

¹ Gandhi, 2000, p.48

A Seedy Business	p8-11
The Enclosure of Knowledge	p12-19
The Possibility of Violent Knowledge	p20-27
The Violence of GPE	p28-33
Towards a spiritual GPE	p34-41
Showing and Saying	p42-47
Conclusion	p48-50

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

GPE	Global Political Economy
TRIPs	WTO agreement on the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property
IPRs	Intellectual Property Rights

PREFACE

The main purpose of this dissertation submitted in the academic discipline of Global Political Economy is to consider its own status within the Global Political Economy. Therefore, beyond the initial analysis grounding it in discussion about the GPE of seed and intellectual property, it could be viewed as being primarily a theoretical work. However, given the theoretical conclusions that are reached it also manifests a concrete answer to the problems discussed. Its sources are diverse, drawing upon literature beyond the normal boundaries of the discipline of GPE whilst still engaging with some of the central texts in this field of study. This dissertation has been completed with little supervision beyond the initial comment of Julian Saurin which provoked much of its argument, rejecting his claim that it is not necessary to give an a priori justification for carrying out academic study. Other members of the University of Sussex who contributed significantly to this thesis beyond sources mentioned in the text are Sam Knapfo and John McLean in the initial discussion session about titles. Beyond this, it is a central notion in this essay that it is impossible and perhaps even violently unnecessary to go any further in specifying the sources of this dissertations ideas, given the authors belief that this work is an act of spiritual devotion to the oneness of all things.

INTRODUCTION

“Among the young people who come to these mountain huts, there are those, poor in body and spirit, who have given up all hope. I am only an old farmer who grieves that he cannot even provide them with a pair of sandals – but there is still one thing I *can* give them.

One straw.

I picked up some straw from in front of the hut and said, ‘From just this one straw a revolution could begin.’

‘With the destruction of mankind at hand, you can still hope to cling to a straw?’ one youth asked, with a touch of bitterness in his voice.

This straw appears small and light, and most people do not know how weighty it is. If people knew the true value of this straw a human revolution could occur which would become powerful enough to move the country and the world...

With this straw, I, by myself, will begin a revolution!

The youths who had been listening silently were now roaring with laughter. ‘A one-man revolution! Tomorrow let’s get a big sack of barley, rice, and clover seed and take off, carrying it on our shoulders, like Okuninushi-no-mikato², and broadcast seeds all over the fields of Tokaido’

‘That’s not a one-man revolution,’ I laughed, ‘it’s a *one-straw* revolution!’

Stepping out of the hut in the afternoon sunlight, I paused for a moment and gazed at the surrounding orchard trees laden with ripening fruit, and at the chickens scratching in the weeds and clover. I then began my familiar descent into the fields.”³

The condition I would like to outline for judging the success of this dissertation is whether or not it is a seed. Whilst there will be some discussion in this essay of the metaphorically seed-like nature of knowledge or information, I would also like to establish a sense in which this dissertation is a seed in a non-metaphorical

² The legendary Japanese god of healing who travels around tossing good fortune from a large sack which he carries over his shoulder.

³ Fukuoka, 1992, p.178-181

way. As Deleuze and Guattari speculate in *Mille Plateaux*, “What if one became animal or plant through literature?”⁴. ‘Becoming’ a plant through literature surely includes the possibility of ‘becoming’ a seed, but is this suggesting the accepted opposite of the term metaphorical which might apply to this dissertation being called a seed in a literal sense, as if it were covered in soil? I wish to avoid claiming that this is the exact meaning I envisage in describing this dissertation as a seed since it is the very point of its thesis to allow for the possibility of meaning beyond such an initially occurring dichotomy.

Claiming that this dissertation is a seed in this sense is perhaps best understood by explaining that this dissertation is an exercise in mythopoesis. Mythopoesis is defined by Alistair McIntosh as

“a mindset that is very different from the Greek rational and empirical framework which has become the mainstream of western thought...It is, first and foremost, mythological. Reality is ‘mythopoesis’ – an interesting word, combining the prefix ‘myth’ and the Greek origin of the word poetry – poesis – which literally means ‘the making’. Mythopoesis is therefore about the construction of reality from story.”⁵

Mythopoetically, this dissertation is a seed. It is “the making and fresh upwelling of reality”⁶ within the act of writing and reading the following story – a story which I will argue makes crucial whether the form of this story itself both creates and allows diverse realities to bloom.

The story around which this act of creation is based concerns the parallels in the development of the Global Political Economy of Seed and the Global Political Economy of Intellectual Property Rights. The dynamics involved in these developments have come to effect the very institution of the Global Political Economy that calls this dissertation into being – namely the system of the university in which it will be submitted and assessed. Therefore, the above self-reflexive consideration of the status of this dissertation is required since the findings of my research suggest that the violent and homogenising forces at

⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, 2002, p.4

⁵ McIntosh, 2001, p.45

⁶ *ibid* p.153

work in the Global Political Economy of Seed and Intellectual Property may in fact be ‘emergent properties’ of a worldview ascribable to the institution of academia, of which this dissertation is part. The moral and philosophical status of writing a dissertation within the academic discipline of GPE is thus called into question and any attempt to articulate an alternative viewpoint must of necessity be reflected in the very act of the dissertation itself. Therefore this dissertation seeks to both outline and exemplify a spiritual way of practicing within the realms of the subject of GPE, though this may necessarily take it outside the bounds of judgement for this discipline. However, this marks the ultimate opportunity for the act of this dissertation to display its spirituality in accordance with what Mohandas Gandhi, identifies as the central message of one of the worlds greatest spiritual texts Bhagavad Gita – namely that “the way to self-realisation is renunciation of fruits of action”⁷.

A SEEDY BUSINESS

The Global Political Economy of Seed has two main characteristics that are of central importance to this dissertation – firstly, the dramatic concentration of power over global seed markets achieved by multinational corporations and secondly the astonishing destruction of seed diversity that has taken place in the last 100 years as a result of the practices of industrial agriculture. An ETC group report in late 1999 claimed that the 10 largest corporations controlled 33% of this \$23 billion industry. The leading five companies, Astra Zeneca, DuPont, Monsanto, Novartis and Aventis, between them control 23% of the commercial seed market and approaching 100% of the market in genetically engineered seed. Specific crops such as soya bean and cotton are subject to almost total monopolies on the world seed market⁸. At the same time, statistics reveal that the

⁷ Gandhi, 2000, p.18

⁸ ETC Group, 1999

number of seed varieties existing in the world has been decimated since the onset of industrial agriculture in the last century. In the UK alone, 97% of vegetable varieties have been lost⁹. In the United States, the Rural Advancement Foundation International conducted a sample study of seed stock readily available in 1903 versus the inventory of the US National Seed Storage Laboratory in 1983. This study showed an astonishing decline of diversity in tomatoes, with a loss of more than 95 percent of the 1903 varieties. This was matched by similar losses in the order of 90 percent for lettuce, sweet corn and asparagus.¹⁰ These statistics suggest that fewer and fewer varieties of seeds are being held in fewer and fewer hands – let us now attempt to understand how we came to this situation in the Global Political Economy of Seed.

In 'First the Seed', Jack Kloppenburg gives a detailed account of the development of the political economy of seed in the United States which uncovers many of the dynamics responsible for the present global situation. A key feature of seed, to put it in Kloppenburg's Marxist terms, is that "it is both the means of production, and, as grain, the product"¹¹. On this account, the development of a political economy of seed rests upon a process of commodification that is necessary to overcome the free gift of nature that is contained in the re-generative power of the seed. This process was achieved in the US through a division of labour between public and private institutions, with the entire process resting upon the global transfer of germplasm from the gene-rich periphery of the world economy to what Kloppenburg identifies as the capitalist core.

While this schema laid out by Kloppenburg undoubtedly goes some way to explaining the development of the US political economy of seed and the resulting dominance of US-based multinationals in the wider Global Political Economy of seed, I believe he blinds himself from recognising the most fundamental level of explanation that has enabled this situation to arise. It is a central claim of this dissertation that the process of the commodification of seed could only happen against the particular philosophical background of a given

⁹ Moulsecomb Forest Garden and Community Project, 2004, p.45

¹⁰ Kimbrell, 2002, p.24

¹¹ Kloppenburg, 1988, p.10

society. The role of a reductionist philosophy of science is unfortunately missing from Kloppenburg's analysis, perhaps because this is a view that he unreflectively adopts himself, e.g. "a seed is, in essence, a packet of genetic information, an envelope containing a DNA sequence"¹². Ultimately, Kloppenburg shares the very same philosophical basis as the forces of capital to whom he argues power should not be ceded in determining how biotechnology of seeds is developed and deployed, which I believe fatally impairs his ability to achieve this aim.

Indeed, perhaps this explains why the issue of declining seed diversity is virtually ignored by Kloppenburg, only mentioned as an aside in his overarching concern with the economics of the control of capital. Staying at this level of fundamental critique, the possible 'philosophical' causes of the destruction of seed diversity leading to the present situation in the Global Political Economy of Seed are indicated by Saurin's identification of environmental degradation occurring as the result of the everyday practices of modernity¹³. Particularly applicable to seed is modernity's requirement for uniform or standardised information as disclosed by Vellve's claim that "to figure on an official list and be legally marketable, a variety must be proved to be distinct, or distinguishable from others; uniform and stable". This is confirmed by Pat Mooney's interview with the leading seed industry figure Sir Joseph Hutchiman who concedes that

"For administrative reasons, diversity will not be tolerated...nothing must be grown except varieties that are equally identifiable. So you must not sell for seed anything except pure and certified varieties. Thus we are compelled by law to do our utmost to eliminate all variability's from the most valuable stocks we have."¹⁴

An example of such legislation that has been instrumental in destroying seed diversity is the UK Plant Varieties and Seed Act 1964. On top of insisting upon pure and certified varieties, this law specifies that in order to be able to sell a legally licensed seed, a seed company must pay £1,000 to initially register the

¹² *ibid*, p.201

¹³ Saurin, 1993

¹⁴ Mooney, 1979, p.68

variety and then an annual _185 renewal fee¹⁵. These charges amount to yet another inbuilt discrimination against diversity given that seed sellers are much more likely to just sell a few varieties of different plants given the prohibitively large costs of registering many, especially given the threat of large fines and legal costs for selling unlicensed or 'outlaw' seeds¹⁶. If seeds are not grown then the variety dies out forever and the explanation for the processes leading to the above statistics showing striking losses of seed diversity can ultimately be accounted for at the philosophical level of modernity's administrative requirement of uniformity.

However, to achieve such a level of explanation for the phenomenon of the concentration of power in the hands of multinational seed corporations, it is necessary to focus on the nature of the institutional forces identified by Kloppenburg which enabled the commodification of seed that was once freely available to everyone – a fact even in evidence in the actions of the now ultra-regulative US government, which gave out 22 million packets of seed in its 1897 free seed distribution programme¹⁷. Whilst Kloppenburg identifies the important role of the technical creation of hybrid seeds that were specially bred to have low chances of germinating year on year, therefore requiring the farmer to return to market each season instead of growing their own saved seed, the most important device adopted was the strictly legal means of extending the reach of private property into seed germplasm. This brings us to the use of patents and the topic of the Global Political Economy of Intellectual Property Rights.

THE ENCLOSURE OF KNOWLEDGE

Hope Shand identifies Intellectual Property Rights as “a powerful tool to enhance corporate monopoly and consolidate market power”.¹⁸ This view is

¹⁵ Guest, 2003

¹⁶ *ibid*

¹⁷ Shand, 2002, p.241

¹⁸ *ibid*, p.240

supported by Peter Drahos' account of the development of the World Trade Organisation TRIPs agreement¹⁹, which constitutes the main regulatory framework of the GPE of Intellectual Property Rights, wherein he describes two main purposes for extending private property over public knowledge, such as the biological information contained in seeds.

- “1. to obtain monopoly control of knowledge in any field that is likely to prove important to commerce in some way.
2. to enable the formation of cartels.”²⁰

Therefore it seems we might be in the right vicinity for locating an explanation for the concentration of power we have seen within the global seed industry. To see if Intellectual Property Rights really are responsible for this state of affairs we must now give some broader indication of what they are and how they came to be applied to seed.

In his comprehensive work on the GPE of IPRs, Christopher May seeks to characterise intellectual property by contrast with the more commonly understandable notion of material property²¹. However, what he admits both have in common is that the notion of property itself is a social institution²² and this gives lie to significant problems for the coherence of his account of intellectual property. The main difference for May between material property and knowledge or intellectual property is that material things are “formally scarce, i.e. they cannot be in two places at once”, whereas “the use of knowledge by one person does not preclude simultaneous use by someone else”²³. Therefore, any scarcity of intellectual property must be constructed in the form of an institution²⁴. This leads May to the problematically circular assertion that “knowledge defines the character of the knowledge that can be commodified as Intellectual Property”²⁵. This is problematic because it is unclear whether or not this ‘defining’ knowledge is capable of commodifying itself. To put the problem

¹⁹ Drahos, 2002

²⁰ Ibid, p.150

²¹ May, 2000, p.45

²² ibid, p.16

²³ ibid, p.45

²⁴ Kloppenburg gives a similar account of how scarcity is to be created in seed.

²⁵ ibid, p.47

simply in the context of intellectual property, would it be possible to patent the idea of patenting? This is a chicken and egg dilemma because what comes first, the idea of the patent or the action of patenting? May attempts to get around the problem by saying that “institutions are constructed through the production of *specific knowledge*”²⁶ (my emphasis) whereby there is the specific i.e. separate knowledge of the social institution of intellectual property. However it is still unclear whether this ‘institutional knowledge’ is only able to refer to other knowledge but not itself in deciding what can be property and what cannot. If it can’t refer to itself, then in what sense is it knowledge given that it is able to have fundamentally different properties from other ‘knowledge’ that is capable of being commodified?

Similar to the above analysis of Kloppenburg’s argument, I would like to highlight this critique as operating at a base philosophical level concerning a lack of self-reflexivity in the argument in question. May is undoubtedly aware of the highlighted problems given his explication of a methodology of a ‘dual-dialectic’ involving reciprocal causality between the material world and the formation of concepts but I believe his characterisation of intellectual property suffers from not applying this to the conditions of his own knowledge. Despite acknowledging Webster’s scepticism that “there is a major difficulty in defining with any precision what is meant by theoretical knowledge”²⁷, it is clear from the above problems that May gives inadequate attention to the question of exactly what knowledge is, which ultimately makes his account of the GPE of intellectual property rights deficient in my view. A cursory glance at an introductory textbook on epistemology²⁸ reveals the fundamentally inconclusive nature of academic philosopher’s attempts to come up with anything like the precise characterisation of knowledge that might enable any acceptance of the concept of property in knowledge. Sufficient recognition of this fact necessitates fundamentally calling the concept of intellectual property into question, as opposed to May’s willingness to accept it’s a priori legitimacy, e.g. “whatever the arguments to suggest that no intellectual property can be justified, in the global

²⁶ *ibid*, p.29

²⁷ *ibid*, p.5

²⁸ see Dancy, 1985

political economic relations of the knowledge economy an acceptance that property in knowledge can be justified remains ‘common sense’²⁹.

While this may seem a pedantic point, I believe that recognising the difficulty of establishing any coherent notion of intellectual property is crucial to understanding how intellectual property rights came to be applied to seeds. The need for some other kind of justification beyond the operation of reason is in fact suggested by May in his admission that all talk of the justificatory schemata for intellectual property deriving from philosophers such as Locke or Hegel is somewhat superfluous given that eventually all such arguments end up resting on some notion of economic utility.³⁰ Further to this, I have shown that within May’s account of intellectual property there lies an implicit hierarchy of different types of knowledge, which ultimately must be recognised to give a full account of the role of economic coercion and further violent power relations involved in the creation of intellectual property rights and their subsequent application to seed. While acknowledging the importance of May’s demonstration that intellectual property rights rely on economic factors for their existence, this epistemological level of critique is required to illuminate issues that will later be revisited. This is reflected in the overarching goal of this dissertation seeking to undermine what it considers to be false claims to intellectual property whereas May is concerned with considering how the current GPE of intellectual property might better fit with its declared justificatory schema³¹.

Bearing out this analysis, the present TRIP’s regime that dominates the global system of intellectual property rights can be understood as representing the globalisation of an intellectual property regime specifically designed to benefit the business interests of large biotechnology corporations , which, as we have seen, currently dominate the global seed industry. Commenting on the process of negotiating the TRIP’s agreement, James Enzart of Monsanto said

²⁹ May, 2000, p.63

³⁰ *ibid*, p.51

³¹ *ibid*, p.14

“the industries and traders of world commerce have played simultaneously the role of patients, diagnosticians and the prescribing physicians.”³²

TRIPs stands for the Agreement on the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property and this addition of economic interest to the concept of in some way owning knowledge is essential to the very existence of the concept of intellectual property and its subsequent effects on the global seed industry. Drahos meticulously details the process by which intellectual property was made ‘trade related’, dating back as far as the 14th century and the very invention of the term ‘patent’ - meaning a letter of protection for tradesmen brought from abroad to develop English industry³³. Drahos argues that TRIPs amounts to the globalisation of the correspondingly medieval organisation of the guild³⁴ whereby less than 50 individuals³⁵ were responsible for establishing intellectual property rights as the basis of the global cartel that is the present global seed industry in which the profit return on seed sales is 40-45%³⁶. Building on the 1980 US Supreme Court decision of *Diamond vs. Chakrabarty*, which established the principle of owning patents on living organisms, Article 27 of The TRIPs agreement is a global licence for the seed corporations engaged in biotechnology to weave legal webs of patents around seed, eliminating the possibility of farmers saving and exchanging seed or even breeding their own crops. This amounts to a legal monopoly to enslave and hold to ransom people around the world, given the universal need to buy food to eat once self-reliance becomes impossible³⁷. The ability of a globally enforceable patent system to serve corporate interests in their desire to control all stages of the food chain, starting with seed, is just one sector of the global political economy where Mark Getty’s claim that “Intellectual property is the oil of the 21st century”³⁸ is coming true. Intellectual property rights represent the means of harvesting the profits

³² quoted in Shiva, 1997, p.82

³³ Drahos, 2002 p.34

³⁴ *ibid*, p.48

³⁵ *ibid*, p.73

³⁶ Primal Seeds, 2004

³⁷ see Shand, 2002 p.242-43 for an account of this process in the US

³⁸ Shand, 2002,p.240

indicated in Peter Drucker's statement that "the main producers of wealth have become information and knowledge"³⁹.

The presence of these economic imperatives guiding the creation of a global system of intellectual property rights serves to introduce a dimension of compulsion that further explains how the notion of intellectual property was forced into being. Drahos frequently refers to the use of Section 301 and Special Section 301 processes by the US government in the negotiation of the TRIPS agreement in the context of the Uruguay Round of negotiations on intellectual property within the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs. These 301 processes amount to "mechanisms of economic coercion"⁴⁰, threatening countries without intellectual property protection up to the standards of the US government with trade sanctions. This unilateral process was used 11 times at various stages to quell opposition within the multilateral negotiations on TRIPS⁴¹ as well as in bilateral dealings between the US and other countries over intellectual property⁴².

This systemic use of economic coercion by the United States on the behalf of the global intellectual property cartel, which had over a period of time come to dictate the interests of the United States Trade Representative as well as the negotiating teams of Europe and Japan⁴³, amounts to clear and significant evidence of some level of violence necessary to establish the notion of intellectual property. According to Johann Galtung, economic sanctions amount to a form of maiming⁴⁴ and I will spend the rest of this dissertation examining what Galtung calls the cultural violence that legitimates the direct violence of the destruction of diversity detailed in the above analysis of the Global Political Economy of Seed, which is in itself just one location of the structural violence manifested in the achievement of concentration of power by multinational corporations in the Global Political Economy of Intellectual Property.

³⁹ May, 2000, p.4

⁴⁰ Drahos, 2002, p.93

⁴¹ *ibid* p.134/136

⁴² *ibid*, p.136

⁴³ *ibid*, p.123

⁴⁴ Galtung, 1990, p.293

The role of the institution of the university will be central to this analysis and here I take a position very different to the one expressed by commentators considered so far such as Kloppenburg and Drahos on the relationship between academia and the growing corporate control of knowledge, as expressed in their views on seed and intellectual property rights. Kloppenburg details the role of public universities in assisting the private commodification of seeds⁴⁵, suggesting a view of academia being corrupted or exploited by the economic forces of capitalism, an opinion that is endorsed by Drahos. Talking about the development of the University-Industrial Knowledge complex⁴⁶, Drahos argues that academics are becoming enslaved to multinational corporations through the use of patents in academia. This view expresses concern about research agendas narrowing as a result of being dictated by corporate funding or the possibility of pay-offs from the registering of a patent, which in itself is becoming a criterion of promotion in universities⁴⁷. Contrary to this view lamenting the fall of the university from its role of public service as the 'incubators of innovation'⁴⁸ in the intellectual commons, I will argue that the violence evident in the GPE of seed and intellectual property rights is actually made possible by a culture of violence that is hard to separate from the founding principles of the institution of the university. It is my claim that the so-called corrupting forces of capitalism affecting academia are in fact contingent on the worldview which heralded the birth of academia itself - a view that objectified the world to such a degree that enabled the commodification of nature in the form of the seed and even the objectification of knowledge itself, which lead to the illusion of intellectual property.

⁴⁵ see Kloppenburg, 1988, p.17

⁴⁶ Drahos,2002, p.163

⁴⁷ ibid, p.188, p.218

⁴⁸ ibid, p.188

THE POSSIBILITY OF VIOLENT KNOWLEDGE

A good starting point for understanding this argument concerning the presence of a culture of violence within the institution of academia is the notion of emergent properties. Alistair McIntosh conceives of the idea in the following way

“Emergent properties are characteristics not evident at a small scale. However, as the scale at which a system works increases, characteristics evolve that may be qualitatively different and greater than the apparent sum of all the tiny parts...As a change of scale comes about, little seeds of good or evil barely visible at an earlier stage can unfold in quite unforeseen ways. In the absence of consciousness, awareness, mindfulness, it is possible for an expression of evil to emerge where there may have been no original intent to implant it.”⁴⁹

A similar idea is present in Saurin’s reference to the work of Zygmunt Bauman regarding the role of seemingly benign ‘normal’ practices being intrinsic to such events as the Holocaust.⁵⁰ As outlined earlier, there is a plausible story to be told about how the everyday practices of modernity lead to large scale environmental

⁴⁹ McIntosh, 2001, p.108

⁵⁰ Saurin, 1993

degradation in terms of the destruction of seed diversity. However, after some reflection on the term 'environmental degradation', it seems hard to separate the destructive effects of modernity on 'the environment', presumably referring in some way to the natural world, from the ascription of a more general destructive nature to this mindset, which I will argue includes violence towards people and other forms of knowledge. Indeed, in perhaps another display of a lack of self-reflexiveness, it could be argued that in limiting the application of his argument to such an imprecise and technical term as 'environmental degradation', Saurin is engaged in something akin to the destructive practice of distancing of action which he identifies as being inherent within modernity.

At this point it is important to be clear about where what I am calling violent emergent properties might be emerging from – in other words identifying the so-called 'form of knowledge' which provides the basis for the aggressive forces at work in the GPE of Seed and Intellectual Property Rights. Saurin focuses on the term 'modernity' as the cause of environmental degradation, citing the essential features of distancing and mediation of action; technical-rationalism and bureaucracy; and the marginalisation of other modes of knowledge. This feature of violence against other modes of knowledge will be a key location for analysing the cultural violence underpinning forms of structural and direct violence yet I believe the identification of the specific historical period of modernity to be a mistaken understanding as to the source of such violent emergent properties. Rather it is necessary to go to a much earlier historical time to trace the roots of the fundamentally philosophical forces we see at work today.

The history of Western philosophy was famously characterised by Alfred North Whitehead as "footnotes to Plato" and I believe the overwhelming influence of Plato and Socrates on the formation of the so-called 'Western mind' to be the proper starting place to look for the cultural violence evident in the practices of the GPE of seed and intellectual property. I will seek to show that the arguments of Socrates, as transmitted through Plato, which have been so important to the foundation of Western philosophy and science, are based upon a use of force that gives lie to the corruption of the use of reason contained therein for the purposes

of political power. The relation between the practice of philosophy and government is clear for all to see in Plato's best known work, the Republic. Socrates overarching message is that reasoned argument is the path to justice and the right ordering of society, leading to the doctrine of the philosopher-king and what Popper has called 'the spell of Plato' – the notion that an authoritarian aristocracy is necessary for the rational ordering of society⁵¹. While the merits of such a worldview may have been perfectly understandable in the situation of Plato's Athens, the elevation of rationality to the path that leads the soul to God has ultimately lead to the corruption of reason and the actions that flow from it. Violence, or force, is present in Socrates effort to present his views and values

“not simply as his own, suitable for himself and for those who may be like him, but as views and values that should be accepted by everyone on account of their rational, objective and unconditional authority.”⁵²

In the Republic the authority of Socrates' views on what is the form of the ultimate good has both a personal and political application in the form of an analogy between the soul and the state whereby the conditions of rationality in the perfect soul are comparable to the role of reason in the proper functioning of the state. “The just man and the just city will be no different but alike as regards the very form of justice”.⁵³ The equating of mental health and happiness with the acceptance of the rational authority of a just government founded on the same principles is an apparently crude political device but one that has held great sway in the history of Western philosophy because of its instrumental value to the operation of power.

There is an argument to be made that the above treatment of the Republic is an unfairly selective representation of Plato and Socrates but I am merely concerned with showing how the emergent properties of a view best encapsulated in the Republic can be seen as responsible for the violent operation of power through the use of reason. Violence is intrinsic to such a worldview given the presence of

⁵¹ McIntosh, 2001, p.210

⁵² Nehamas, 1986, p.4

⁵³ Plato, 1955, p. 149

so-called objective force requiring a certain position to be accepted – and ultimately the theoretical force of argument is backed up by the use of physical force⁵⁴. Indeed the very possibility of physical violence is predicated upon the dualisms of the mind and body or the idea and the real enshrined by Plato, culminating in the objectification of the physical world. Treating people as separate objects that can be abused, as in the Republic's many endorsements of slavery, is but a small part of the worldview that has reached its most recent incarnation in the realm of genetic engineering in seed - reducing organisms to sequences of proteins to be mixed and matched to produce new DNA structures.

However, the force of violence that we will focus on in this dissertation is the cultural violence of certain ideas forming violent institutional structures that give rise to direct acts of physical violence, following Galtung's model for the possibility of ascribing violence at all of these levels. Galtung provides a good analogy for understanding this argument in terms of comparing the practice of violence to the phenomenon of an earthquake. Cultural violence is aligned with the invariant background of a fault line, structural violence with the movement of tectonic plates and direct violence with the actual event of the earthquake. Given that the very description of academia derives from the academy of Plato and that the term *university* displays a predilection for one version of things, there seem to be good grounds for investigating the possibility of a fault line of violence running through the scientific form of knowledge associated with the rationality of Socrates. Is the destruction of diversity in the global political economy of seed an emergent property of a worldview that is unable to tolerate diverse realities and truth? Is the creation of monopolies inherent in the global system of intellectual property rights facilitated by a philosophy predicated on the absolute authority of reason? To what extent are these forces present in the modern practice of academia and indeed this very dissertation that exists as part of it?

Before going any further in this investigation it is necessary to say a little more about how it is possible to identify particular forms of knowledge and what

⁵⁴ a phenomenon described in Strange 1994, in her account of the power structure of knowledge, p.128

might be the nature of violence between them. Stephen Marglin has given the following characterisation of the notion of a knowledge system developed by figures such as Levi-Strauss and Foucault.

“ a knowledge system is defined in terms of four characteristics: epistemology, transmission, innovation, and power. Each system has its own theory of knowledge, its own rules for sharing knowledge, its own distinctive ways for changing the content of what counts as knowledge, and finally, its own political rules for governing relationships both among insiders to any particular knowledge system and between insiders and outsiders.”⁵⁵

Bernard Williams attempts to outline the possibility of violence between knowledge systems in the following way

“To say that knowledge is destroyed is not to say that particular beliefs that once were true now cease to be true. Nor is it to say that people turn out never to have known the things they thought they knew. What it means is that these people once had beliefs of a certain kind, which were in many cases pieces of knowledge; but now, because they can no longer use concepts essential to these beliefs, they can no longer form beliefs of that kind.”⁵⁶

Marglin has gone some way to detail how a system of knowledge with key characteristics deriving from Plato and Socrates behaves in the violent and destructive manner that Williams describes. Marglin distinguishes between two forms of knowledge which he calls *episteme* and *techne*, the former referring to the knowledge form of management while the latter concerns the practical knowledge of labour. *Episteme* is characterised

“not only by impersonality, by its insistence on logical deduction from self-evident axioms as the only basis for knowledge, but also by its emphasis on analysis, its claim that knowledge must be articulate in order to exist, its pretence to universality, its cerebral nature, its orientation to theory and empirical verification of theory, and its odd mixture of egalitarianism within the knowledge community and hierarchical superiority vis-à-vis outsiders.”

The characteristics of an ‘imperialistic pretension to universality’⁵⁷ and ‘a total inability of adherents to regard competing systems with anything but contempt –

⁵⁵ Marglin, 1990(a) p.24. Also see Marglin, 1990(b), p.232

⁵⁶ Williams, 1985, p.167

⁵⁷ Marglin, 1990(a), p.25

or even to contemplate the existence of competing systems⁵⁸ ascribed to episteme are clearly consistent with the emergent properties of the form of knowledge this dissertation posits as being responsible for the violence within the current GPE of seed and Intellectual Property Rights. Talking in terms of violence is supported by parallel studies of the application of this form of knowledge in the realm of Indian medicine where Frederique Apffel Marglin claims that it “(does) violence to (the Indian) vision of reality to speak of naturalistic versus religious explanations of disease”⁵⁹. The violence of this knowledge system is even more relevant in agriculture where Arjun Appadurai claims that the disembeddedness of what the author calls ‘Western’ knowledge undermines the sociality of farming, leading to the displacement of systems of subsistence agriculture⁶⁰.

The investigation of the violence of this form of knowledge has been most thoroughly pursued by Vandana Shiva in her article ‘The violence of reductionist science’⁶¹. In addition to violence against other forms of knowledge she also highlights other direct or structural manifestations of its aggressive character; violence against the subject of knowledge in terms of a distinction between experts and non-experts; violence against the object of knowledge in the form of vivisectionist attitudes to nature and; violence against the ‘beneficiaries’ of knowledge i.e. the poor who are victims of the socio-economic practices accompanying reductionist science. Reductionism is characterised as a scientific system that accords with the following beliefs

- (a) a system is reducible to its parts,
- (b) all systems are made of the same basic constituents,
- (c) all systems have some basic mechanical processes,
- (d) knowledge of parts of the system gives knowledge of the whole system,
- (e) experts and specialists are the only legitimate knowledge-seekers.⁶²

The violent consequences of the application of such a system have been

⁵⁸ *ibid*

⁵⁹ Apffel Marglin, 1990, p.115

⁶⁰ Appadurai, 1990,

⁶¹ Shiva, 1988

⁶² as summarised in Saurin 1993,

demonstrated in Shiva's detailed case study of the Punjab in her book 'The Violence of the Green Revolution'⁶³. Under the pretext of development and aid, this reductionist scientific paradigm was introduced into the bread basket of India, with disastrous agricultural outcomes that lead to widespread violent unrest. This episode was just one of many that lead to a wholesale rethink of the project of development, as documented by Tariq Banuri in his article 'Development and the Politics of Knowledge'⁶⁴. In this article the status of social science is included as being as complicit as the above features of reductionist science in the violence of the suffering and environmental decay caused in the name of development. This leads us to now consider the position of this dissertation as a piece of social science in the discipline of GPE and to what extent it is representative of the violent form of knowledge that has been outlined above.

THE VIOLENCE OF GPE

This enquiry into the status of GPE is anticipated by Ronen Palan in his speculation as to "whether there is something that modern IPE (International Political Economy, a synonym for GPE) cannot say or articulate without the

⁶³ Shiva, 1991

⁶⁴ Banuri, 1990

concomitant holistic theory?"⁶⁵ The question of what is the concomitant holistic theory will be returned to later but the fundamental issue to raise at this stage is the issue of whether or not the academic discipline of GPE/IPE excludes certain things depending on its theoretical basis. In the context of this dissertation, could a certain theoretical background preclude the possibility of adequately accounting for the destruction of diversity and concentration of power that is taking place in the GPE of seed and knowledge – with the reason for this being that the theoretical background underlying the subject of GPE is the very same as that which enables such widespread epistemological violence in the global political economy. Even the framing of this question distinguishing between the theoretical practice of GPE and what the subject actually studies could be understood as representing a view that makes a potentially aggressive distinction between theory and reality. As Spike Peterson argues

“the binary logic of these foundational dichotomies infuses not only our scientific knowledge claims but also our mental maps – our ways of thinking, imagining and expressing more generally.”⁶⁶

The fact that all contemporary theories of GPE adopt a broadly empiricist approach in framing the nature of this social science⁶⁷ could be used to charge the discipline with the next stage of Peterson’s argument, claiming that

“as a consequence, positivist dichotomies frame and effectively reproduce ‘ways of knowing’ that are reductionist, ahistorical, masculinist and static.”⁶⁸

As prominent a figure as Susan Strange proceeds to talk about the under-estimation of knowledge as an important power structure within the Global Political Economy⁶⁹ and the role of ideology in defining the goals of knowledge and the findings of social science⁷⁰ whilst endorsing the particularly static view that “the Japanese language will never rival English in importance as a means of

⁶⁵ Palan, 2000, p.228

⁶⁶ Peterson, 1996, p.15

⁶⁷ At least according to van der Pijl, 2003

⁶⁸ Peterson, 1996, p.15

⁶⁹ Strange, 1994, ch.6

⁷⁰ *ibid*, p.136

interpersonal communication”⁷¹. Whether or not this statement turns out to be true in the judgement of all time, its very presence could be used as evidence indicating her unreflective acceptance of a certain Anglophone ideology regarding interpersonal communication. Here we see an example of the power structure of knowledge manifesting itself in an apparent critic of that structure, which points to the necessity of personal reflection for scholarship within this field. In the context of this essay the status of the intellectual property rights of the academics writing on this subject could be argued to form an arena of conflict within political space⁷². As May confesses in his GPE of IPR’s, in the writing of the book he came to back away from his previously more anarchic views on intellectual property and support some form of authorial protection employing copyright⁷³, which is reflected in the content and presentation of the material accordingly. It is not casting any dispersions on the character of the author to ask the question of whether or not this might have had anything to do with the copyright mark that eventually came to be placed in the opening pages of the completed published work. Indeed this question once again locates the crucial issue concerning the influence of the workings the capitalist economy on academia or whether this very possibility is predicated on the worldview that constitutes academia. To explore this question further, how do the theories of GPE concerning the role of knowledge in the global political economy apply to the practice of GPE itself?

A prevalent idea when looking at the role of knowledge in the workings of the Global Political Economy is the concept of epistemic communities – that is, “networks of professional workers with recognised expertise or competence”⁷⁴ on some issue. Therefore academics as professional researchers would appear to be heavily involved in epistemic communities. Peter Haas is concerned with showing how the modern administrative state works in deference to the knowledge elite whereby in Barnes and Edge’s words “science is near to being

⁷¹ *ibid*, p.137

⁷² Farrands, 1996

⁷³ May, 2000, p.178

⁷⁴ Peter Haas, 1992, p.3

the source of authority"⁷⁵. However the authority of science reflected in epistemic communities remains highly political in terms of their ability to define what the acceptable alternatives in a given policy are, which Schattsschneiden calls "the supreme instrument of power"⁷⁶. In this sense, Haas argues that the elevation of elite scientists represents the victory of instrumental reason over any consideration of the fundamental interests of the 'what for' of a given initiative. The underlying assumptions of society go unquestioned, with the absence of such ideas in the practice of the specialised and detached science of epistemic communities reflected in their absence from the policies of government that are formulated as a result. Ruggie argues that

"Institutionalisation involves not only the institutional grid of the state and the international political order, through which behaviour is acted out, but also the epistemes through which political relationships are visualised...Epistemic communities delimit the proper construction of social reality."⁷⁷

Whilst an epistemic community can never be adequately reduced to the ideas it embodies since they are always in flux, the potential for psychological conditioning through which actors understanding of the world and formulation of alternative actions are shaped is clearly established by Haas' analysis of the institution of epistemic communities, though he is reluctant to say how clearly this can be worked out.

However, such an analysis is more fully realised in sections of Hardt and Negri's application of Deleuze and Guattari's ideas in their characterisation of the Global Political Economy as the juridical formation of Empire. Understanding the workings of Empire as involved in 'the production of subjectivity'⁷⁸, Hardt and Negri argue that "each institution has its own rules and logics of subjectivisation", which are subsequently spread across the social terrain. Accordingly, on this view it could be argued that the rules and logics of the

⁷⁵ quoted in *ibid*, p.10

⁷⁶ quoted in *ibid*. p.16

⁷⁷ quoted in *ibid*. p.26

⁷⁸ Hardt & Negri, 2000 , p.196

institution of the university create the subjectivity of academics who are then unable to adequately call into question the nature of their actions in perpetuating the system of Empire, which I would claim bears sufficient similarities to justify being identified as emerging from the system of knowledge of Plato and Socrates. Following Foucault, Hardt and Negri believe that “the exercise of discipline is absolutely immanent to the subjectivities under its control”⁷⁹ with the realm of ‘the ether’ of ideas providing the most fundamental medium of imperial control – similar to the role of the authority of reason established in the earlier analysis of the Republic. Accordingly

“Communication is the form of capitalist production in which capital has succeeded in submitting society entirely and globally to its regime, suppressing all alternative paths.”⁸⁰

The difficulty of communicating alternatives within this form of knowledge provides some explanation for the lack of self-reflexivity that we have seen displayed by certain authors considered in this essay such as Kloppenburg, May, Saurin and Strange that has led to them displaying the very characteristics of what they seek to criticise. The question of the extent to which this phenomenon is attributable to the workings of the power structure of knowledge in the global political economy is annulled given that this structure itself is a manifestation of the violent form of knowledge under consideration here. The institutionalisation of the Socratic form of knowledge sets the very conditions for thought and articulation of academics working within this system and therefore the very possibility of their being affected by the forces of the capitalist economy only exists as a result of the prior marriage of reason and power that can be identified as beginning in ancient Greece, if not before or in another place. As a final exemplar of this point consider the following statements by Ronen Palan in his article speculating about what I have called the violence of GPE in its possibly violent inability to say certain things. While on the one hand recognising the point made above that “the relationship between different discourses is not just a

⁷⁹ quoted in *ibid*, p.329

⁸⁰ *ibid*, p.346

battle of ideas but is rooted in certain institutional structures which privileges some over others”⁸¹, in the very same article he displays his own role in maintaining these privileging institutional structures by claiming that “all societies ascribe correct knowledge to themselves and false knowledge to others”⁸². Consideration of a belief such as Jainism, which says that “any individual or group claiming to know the whole truth is engaged in falsehood”⁸³, would indicate that this is simply not the case and such a statement only serves to show Palan’s thought as fundamentally tied to the Socratic academic tradition which maintains that what is true of itself must be true of everything. Now, having shown the potential for describing the academic discipline of GPE as a violent form of knowledge and explored the dynamics of the power structure of knowledge by which this might happen, I will now attempt to articulate what an alternative to this form of GPE might be.

TOWARDS A SPIRITUAL GPE

An interesting starting point has been suggested by Arundhati Roy in recent speeches and publications where she adopts the ‘Empire’ vocabulary of Hardt and Negri. In *The Ordinary Person’s Guide to Empire* she identifies the forces of “the obscene accumulation of power, the greatly increased distance between

⁸¹ Palan, 2000, p.227

⁸² Palan, 2000, p.219

⁸³ Kumar, 2002, p.55

those who make the decisions and those who have to suffer them”.⁸⁴ This was augmented by a call in her opening speech at the Mumbai World Social Forum to take inspiration from Gandhi in seeking to challenge these forces.⁸⁵ This dissertation seeks to exemplify and work out more fully the possibilities for bringing together the internal post-modern/post-structuralist critique of the power structure of knowledge as contained in Hardt and Negri and the external fundamental critique contained in the ideas of Gandhi and others formulated in the struggle against the British form of Empire. A crucial feature for understanding Gandhi’s struggle is the central role of spiritual seeking in all of the principles of action he developed. For Gandhi, all motives are religious and politics is the application of religion. Crucially for the purposes of this essay, trying to develop a mode of knowledge that accommodates diversity, Gandhi insists on “room for all the world’s prophets to worship” within his quest of spiritualising politics.

“Just as a tree has one trunk but many branches and leaves, so there is one true and perfect religion, although it is divided into many as it appears through human intermediaries”⁸⁶.

Therefore I take this as a starting point for trying to give some indication as to how it might be possible to practice an academic discipline such as GPE in a way that it reflects on its own status to the extent that it does not perpetuate the fundamentally violent forces of a worldview that believes it is the only correct one, therefore discriminating against different ways of knowing.

Indeed, many practicing academics, including some of the ones mentioned in the above citation of GPE as a violent form of knowledge, would claim that this is really what they have been doing all along despite occasional lapses into less accommodating language . The statement of intent of the Centre for Global Political Economy at Sussex University seems to recognise and fulfil the need for

⁸⁴ Roy, 2004(b), p.69

⁸⁵ Roy, 2004(a)

⁸⁶ quoted in Tahtinen,1979, p.20

the type of framework I am outlining.

“It is the long-term aim of the Centre for GPE to foster scholarship that will transcend the divides created by the increased reliance on more narrowly defined expertise...academics increasingly need to be working in close proximity with business and even more so, with governments. These connections tend to weigh on research output, which tends to favour practical issues over more fundamental ones...Policy-oriented research, for all the money that goes into it, tends to leave out some of the broader concerns of contemporary society.”⁸⁷

This leads on to the question of what alternative philosophy of science could accommodate the social science of what I am calling spiritual GPE. What possible theoretical backgrounds exist that indicate how such a subject could function?

Sussex University once again provides a source of inspiration in the guise of its former professor Paul Feyerabend’s anarchic theory of knowledge. He states that “the only principle that does not inhibit progress in science is: anything goes”⁸⁸, suggesting an abolishing of any distinction between observational and theoretical terms – an issue that has been present in this dissertation. The need to accommodate different ways of knowing in any conception of the validity of scientific practice is recognised in Feyerabend’s statement that “Science is a tradition among many and a provider of truth only for those who have made the appropriate cultural choices.”⁸⁹ Feyerabend’s view represents a full working out of the theory of scientific revolutions propounded by Thomas Kuhn, suggesting that new paradigms or ways of viewing the scientific enterprise occur at regular intervals – ultimately entailing that no one conception of truth within a given paradigm can be held as being superior to any other.

The views of Feyerabend and Kuhn have been utilised in recent thinking about

⁸⁷ The Centre for Global Political Economy, 2004

⁸⁸ Feyerabend, 1988, p.14

⁸⁹ *ibid*,

mathematics education⁹⁰, which offers useful suggestions for how the teaching of the academic discipline of spiritual GPE may proceed and is already linked to scholarship in the field via the theory of radical constructivism discussed by Ronen Palan. As simply stated on the back cover of *Radical Constructivism in Mathematics Education*

“The common conviction is that knowledge cannot simply be transferred ready-made from parent to child or from teacher to student but has to be actively built up by each learner in his or her own mind.”⁹¹

This sentiment is echoed in what this dissertation views as the related context of the role of education in liberation from the oppressive epistemological violence of colonialism or Empire. In his famous work *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire states that “the oppressed must reach conviction as Subjects, not as objects...conviction cannot be packaged and sold: it is reached, rather, by means of a totality of reflection and action”. Therefore it seems that some theory of radical constructivism may be capable of providing the basis for the practice of a form of GPE that does not destroy other forms of knowledge.

The ‘totality of reflection and action’ required by such a theory is a good characterisation of the personal nature of spirituality expressed by Gandhi⁹². An example of such a totality would be an acceptance of the notion of incommensurability that is central to Feyerabend’s philosophy of science. This means accepting that certain views cannot be compared because each involves concepts that are incompatible with the other and in fact violence would be done to such views in the very act of comparing⁹³. The necessity of a taking everything into account to this degree brings us back to the quote from Palan asking whether such a “concomitant holistic theory” is required for the subject of GPE to be able to fully account for all phenomena in the Global Political Economy.

⁹⁰ see Steedman, 1991

⁹¹ von Glasserfeld 1991, back cover

⁹² See Gandhi, 1982

⁹³ Steedman, 1991, p.3

This dissertation answers in the affirmative, requiring that the practice of the subject must recognise itself as a type of action within a wider political and spiritual project in order to avoid necessarily curtailing its ability to speak about the Global Political Economy and in fact commit violence in doing so.

At this stage it is important to say a little more about what is meant by the spiritual nature of such a project. Again, taking a starting point from ideas developed in previous struggles against epistemological violence I refer to the writings of Alistair McIntosh on liberation theology, where he refers to spirituality as “becoming alive to the aliveness of life”⁹⁴. The importance of giving life is emphasised by the pioneer of liberation theology, Gustavo Gutierrez as the culmination of liberation on three levels, beginning with liberation from one’s social situation, then undergoing a personal transformation which ultimately enables one to be liberated from sin in being reconciled with God⁹⁵. For Gutierrez, liberation theology represents the liberation of theology from the scholastic dogmatism of theology that began in the 14th century, heralding a new way to do theology which

“does not stop with reflecting on the world but rather tries to be part of the process through which the world is transformed”⁹⁶.

The capacity of a new spiritual practice of GPE to give life is also made important by the previous identification of objectivising scientific knowledge with death. Paulo Freire states that “oppression is necrophilic; it is nourished by love of death, not life”⁹⁷, supported by Erich Fromm’s assertion that

“The necrophilic person can relate to an object only if he possesses it; He loves control, and in the act of controlling he

⁹⁴ McIntosh, 1998

⁹⁵ as summarized in McIntosh, 2001, p.166

⁹⁶ Gutierrez, 1988, p.12

⁹⁷ Freire, 1970, p.58

kills life”.⁹⁸

This feature is echoed in the view of the Native North American poet Leslie Marmon Silko who identifies the mindset of European settlers as people who see no life, only objects. Yet they fear an objectified world and so seek to destroy it.⁹⁹

The denigration of life contained within this violent knowledge system is also closely associated with abuse of the feminine. Carolyn Merchant identifies the death of nature with the rise of patriarchal science¹⁰⁰ that was created and exemplified by the following ambition of Francis Bacon “I am come in very truth leading to you nature with all her children to bind her to your service and make her your slave.”¹⁰¹ Vandana Shiva observes the following dynamic whereby “Just as technology changes seed from a living, renewable resource into mere raw material, it devalues women in a similar way.”¹⁰² Nature is transformed from being a living, nurturing mother to simply dead, inert and manipulable matter by the reductionist science of biotechnology that commodifies seeds as merely growing machines. For further examples of the violence done to women by the patriarchal dominance of knowledge and values in society one need look no further than the writings of Naomi Wolff on the myth of beauty that leads to women inflicting repeated violence on their own bodies.¹⁰³

Therefore, to be spiritual, the discipline of GPE must give life – in its consequences but I will argue also in the very action of its practice. ‘The personal is the political’ has often been used as a slogan in feminist objections to patriarchal society and a similar sensibility is required in articulating an alternative to the violence of the Socratic knowledge system. The running together of personal and political justice in the establishing the authority of reason in the Republic has had profound consequences on the psyche of people living within this necessarily divisive worldview, as has been well documented.

⁹⁸ quoted in *ibid*, p.58.

⁹⁹ from McIntosh, 2001, p.94

¹⁰⁰ Merchant, 1980

¹⁰¹ quoted in McIntosh, 1998

¹⁰² Shiva, 1997, p.57

¹⁰³ Wolf, 1990, p.218

Teresa Brennan has documented the psychological suffering that afflicts all people in the system of globalisation whereby “neither the environment nor the people who live in it are given the opportunity to regenerate”¹⁰⁴. David Edwards goes further in equating personal discordance with the inequities inherent to the larger society an individual is part of¹⁰⁵. I believe this issue can be best be surmised in terms of a spiritual poverty that accompanies the violent and reductionist scientific paradigm in its current economic centred form, as highlighted by E.F Schumacher’s observation that “a society suffering from spiritual poverty yet considering itself as wealthy is the ultimate delusion”¹⁰⁶. The importance of personal spiritual health for the wider good of society is well captured in terms of violence by Anthony de Mello who asks

“Do you know where wars come from? They come from projecting outside of us the conflict that is inside. Show me an individual in whom there is no inner self-conflict and I’ll show you an individual in whom there is no violence”¹⁰⁷.

This statement resonates strongly with Gandhi’s teachings on non-violence, famously summarising his teachings with the saying “my life is my message”. This brings us on to what I consider to be the culmination of attempting to characterise what the nature of spiritual GPE in terms of showing something as opposed to just saying it.

¹⁰⁴ Brennan, 2003

¹⁰⁵ Edwards, 1995

¹⁰⁶ quoted in Kumar, 2002, p.115

¹⁰⁷ from McIntosh, 2001, p.101

SHOWING AND SAYING

The terminology of showing and saying is derived from Wittgenstein's work on the philosophy of language but the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophus* in which it is developed is also deeply concerned with spiritual matters. As important to Wittgenstein as the things that can be said in language were those that could not and it is here that attempting to say how the practice of GPE might be spiritual runs up against some necessarily insurmountable obstacles in the form of language. In a letter to a friend accompanying a copy of the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein revealed his belief that his work "consists of two parts: the one presented here plus all that I have not written. And it is precisely this second part that is the important one."¹⁰⁸ To pursue this idea in the context of spiritual GPE, Gandhi embellishes this idea in many places throughout his writing: "Not everything can be communicated to others by means of language"¹⁰⁹, and

¹⁰⁸ Quoted in Moore, 2001, p.188

¹⁰⁹ Gandhi, 1982, p.14

“language is but a weak instrument for the perfect expression of thought”¹¹⁰, summarised by Tahtinen as the position that “the search for truth cannot reach a result merely through intellectual inquiry”¹¹¹. Therefore, how can a spiritual GPE be conducted if it is necessarily limited by being largely conducted through language? Here at least two possibilities present themselves – firstly drawing on Wittgenstein’s notion that what cannot be said can be shown through action, which in itself constitutes the second option of GPE taking the form of a creative enterprise, whereby the written documents that constitute the actions of GPE are an invitation for a reader to create for themselves what it is that is outside the boundaries of what can be said.

Here the use of language in spiritual GPE appears to require something approaching poetry whereby the meaning of the written or spoken word is intended to have resonances beyond the merely apparent, although they may never be precisely and consistently identified. Therefore the inclusion of the following poem is justified as it approaches conveying the overarching message of this dissertation concerning the seed diversity, intellectual property and the role of academia.

A call to certain academics

They say that we do not know anything
That we are backwardness
That our head needs changing
For a better one
They say that some learned men
Are saying this about us
These academics who reproduce
Themselves
In our own lives
What is there on the banks of
These rivers, doctor?
Take out your binoculars
And your spectacles
Look if you can.
Five hundred flowers
From five hundred different types
Of potato

¹¹⁰ quoted in Tahtinen, 1979, p. 28

¹¹¹ *ibid*

Grow on the terraces
Above abysses
That your eyes don't reach
Those five hundred flowers
Are my brain
My flesh¹¹²

Aligning spiritual GPE with the essentially creative discipline of poetry is entirely consistent with the theory of radical constructivism that we have seen shares many features with the project of a spiritual GPE that we are expounding here. Palan claims at the end of his enquiry into the necessity of a holistic theory to explain the Global Political Economy that “the fundamental unit of investigation is the myth.”¹¹³, therefore investigation at this level of creativity warrants a similar creativity in the investigation itself. The status of language plays a key role in reaching this analysis, utilising Lacan’s claim concerning “the structural impossibility of reaching the ‘real’ because of the subject’s subordination to language”.

In this considerations of poetry and myth we appear to be returned to the realm of mythopoesis and creating reality with which this dissertation began and therefore consideration of the claim that this dissertation is a seed. I believe that the practice of spiritual GPE must be creative to the extent that it changes the very possibilities of reality as they have been constructed by the Socratic form of knowledge that it seeks to provide an alternative to. This must go beyond any of the metaphorical similarities that one might claim between this dissertation and the seed, such as claiming that it manifests Vandana Shiva’s claim that seeds embody diversity and that diverse seeds carry with them diverse ways of thinking¹¹⁴. All the talk of this being an act of spiritual GPE that gives life in the same way that the Oxford English Dictionary declares that a seed is ‘the germ or latent beginning of some growth or development’ is merely a suggestion in the direction of the type of transformation of reality that the act of spiritual GPE should engender. This dissertation is not literally a seed since it seeks to

¹¹² quoted in Shiva, 1991, final page

¹¹³ Palan, 2000, p.225

¹¹⁴ Shiva, 2004

illuminate another way in which it can be a seed beyond the opposition of literal or metaphorical that is part of the framework of reality of what it believes to be a violent and oppressive knowledge system.

However, at this point the plausibility of such an intention might be questioned in terms of the ability of such a form of GPE to establish any wider acceptance beyond the actions of one engaged in practicing it. The inherently personal nature of the type of reality creation advocated in this dissertation can make no strong claim on anyone else to agree on that reality– this is the very point of spiritual GPE in rejecting the forced acceptance of a certain version of reality. The central contention of this dissertation is contained within Wittgenstein’s statement that “No feature of the world as a whole can properly be conveyed in words.”¹¹⁵ This goes as far as the constitution of a common reality and the political consequences of such a view is contained in the following statement of Gilles Deleuze about Michel Foucault.

“You were the first to teach us the indignity of speaking for others. We ridiculed representation and said it was finished, but we failed to draw the consequences of this ‘theoretical’ conversion – to appreciate the theoretical fact that only those directly concerned can speak in a practical way on their own behalf.”¹¹⁶

The perceived indignity of determining another’s sense of reality and representation amounts to identifying the violence inherent in saying that there is an objective way that the world is. This view necessarily undermines the worldview supporting the current situation in Global Political Economy of Seed and Intellectual Property Rights which requires accepting that it is possible to have knowledge of the workings of nature and the human intellect to such a degree that it is possible to establish claims to individuated ownership. This mindset of all-encompassing property amounts to claiming that there is some universal scheme independent of all people which it is possible to segment and

¹¹⁵ quoted in Moore, 2001 p.100

¹¹⁶ quoted in Sheridan, 1980, p.114

claim privileged access to. However, this dissertation endeavours to have shown the violence required in establishing such a worldview, which gives lie to the interests of power that underpin such a scheme.

The thought of Nietzsche gives a full background to this argument in characterising life as the expression of what he calls The Will to Power. This is the force of all living things to impose their interpretation on the world. Accordingly, in existing all things are necessarily required to 'falsify' the world in articulating an interpretation that seeks to maintain that it is the only interpretation in whatever form of beliefs and values this may take. However, Nietzsche maintains that one day all such fundamental beliefs will come to be discarded as others have before them and will be again. Things as fundamental as truth and reality are created and not discovered yet Nietzsche claims we must think of them as something we discover in order to go on creating them¹¹⁷.

This critique showing how desire for power is symbiotic with claiming the existence of universal truths has a parallel in Gandhi's arguments concerning the conditions for life. Despite being famous for his insistence on non-violence, Gandhi maintained that all life is violent and that what one must strive to do is minimise violence. To say that all life must be violent for Gandhi amounts to Nietzsche's claim that all life must be false and I believe this provides the proper conclusion to considerations about the possibility of a spiritual GPE. The central tenet of such an approach must be recognition of its own violence and falsity – perhaps something amounting to an adoption in social science of the uncertainty principle asserted by Heisenberg in the physical sciences. In terms of quantum physics, Heisenberg states that there is a limitation of principle in measuring certain things about atoms caused by the very attempt to observe them¹¹⁸. This idea can be broadened out to the recognition that "we can never talk about nature without, at the same time, speaking about ourselves¹¹⁹". In terms of spiritual GPE this entails both violence and falsity because we must assert only our own view of the world, necessarily impinging on the reality of others in the

¹¹⁷ see Nehamas, 1986, p.59 for this interpretation of Nietzsche

¹¹⁸ see Capra, 1975, p.171

¹¹⁹ *ibid*, p.363

way Deleuze outlines and any claim to truth in such an interpretation of the world is necessarily incomplete. This applies to the very act of writing these words and spiritual GPE consists of recognising this fact. Therefore, even the attempt of describing spiritual GPE must be an inherently personal practice if it is to minimise its violence and falsity – as recognised by Nietzsche’s warning to all his readers that

“‘This is my way; where is yours?’ – thus I answered those who asked me ‘the way’. For *the way* - that does not exist.”¹²⁰

CONCLUSION

To complete the bringing together of a post-modern and a spiritual critique of the knowledge system that I hold to be responsible for the violence evident in the global political economy of seed and intellectual property as well as elsewhere in the Global Political Economy, I feel I must finish simply by quoting from Gandhi and his translation of the song of God, Bhagavad Gita, in order to show the sheer inadequacy of the attempts of this dissertation. While the juxtaposition of analysis of seed and intellectual property leading to reflection on the status of academic practice may have been creative and insightful, the entire second half of the dissertation attempting to outline an alternative spiritual GPE has been little more than joining together a series of quotes and ideas from the writings of figures much more qualified than I to talk about such matters. While this may be justified on the terms of this dissertation in terms of being a literal showing as opposed to saying anything, the deficiencies contained within this attempt to describe something sacred through the practice of GPE are multiple next to the expressions of what I mean to say contained in Gandhi’s writings. All of the previous two chapters is contained within the following quote

Shri Krishna said to Arjuna ‘When I say that men of knowledge

¹²⁰quoted in Nehamas, 1986, p.36

will impart this knowledge to you, I do not mean that they will convince your reason. I mean that they will awaken your faith that it is so. You will then realise that it is because of your reason that you see things as separate from other another, that in truth they are one. God, ourselves and all objects in the universe are in essence one Reality. Even God vanishes and we have only “not this, not this”¹²¹.

The reason why I believe GPE should be an individually spiritual and non-violent practice, yet still engage with the events of the world is given in this passage

“One should see oneself in the whole world and the whole world in oneself, and act towards others accordingly. The ideal of non-violence had its origin in this realisation – that when human life is full of suffering we should cause suffering to none.”¹²²

These things cannot be argued for but only realised individually. To consciously attempt to do any more would be to make the same error of inconsistency that I have attributed to various authors in GPE, which can probably be found in numerous places in the above. However, quotes from Bhagavad Gita make a fitting final means for comparing the type of knowledge manifested in this dissertation and that to which it seeks to provide an alternative. Robert Oppenheimer, lead scientist of the Manhattan Project, which could arguably be viewed as the ultimate expression of the violence of the Socratic form of knowledge, upon witnessing the first atomic explosion quoted the following lines from Chapter 11 Verse 32 where the God Krishna takes on the many-armed form of Shiva, the destroyer

If the radiance of a thousands suns
Were to burst at once into the sky
That would be like the splendour of the Mighty One...
Now I become death,
The destroyer of worlds

¹²¹ Gandhi, 2000, p.98

¹²² *ibid* p.141

The spiritual GPE of this conclusion makes clear that the voice and manifestations of Krishna provides the full range of expression for the nature of the Global Political Economy and the forces that exist within it, both in society and within individuals. Instead of Shiva it identifies with Krishna of Chapter 9, Verse 18 who says

“I am the Goal, the Sustainer, the Lord, the Witness, the Abode, the Refuge, the Friend, the Origin, the End, the Preservation, the Treasure House, the Imperishable Seed.”

While this is clearly a radically unorthodox approach that even risks charges of nonsense or a complete lack of seriousness, the spiritual nature of this dissertation is based upon the following final remarks of Gandhi, which has been realised in the actions leading to the creation of this document.

“The matchless remedy {i.e. the way to self-realization} is renunciation of fruits of action.”¹²³

“He who gives up action falls. He who gives up only the reward rises.”¹²⁴

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¹²³ *ibid*, p.18

¹²⁴ *ibid* p.124

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