# THE CSD BULLETIN

Power to the People

Nitasha Kaul *describes the remarkable arrival of democracy in Bhutan*

In 2008 Bhutan completed a peaceful transition to a parliamentary democracy. Initiated by the monarch, the process was unique: a voluntary abdication of power in the face of public opposition to democracy. (Indeed, had a referendum on the desirability of a transition to democracy been held at the time of the elections it would have failed).

On 24 March, 79.4 per cent of a total of 318,465 registered voters, in 47 constituencies in 20 provinces, cast their ballot in a general election. Some had taken out bank loans to finance trips of hundreds of kilo- metres to be able to vote in their native provinces. The election – in which, in line with the Bhutanese constitution, only two parties stood – produced the first democratically chosen 47-seat National Assembly (NA), or lower house. The people voted overwhelmingly for the Druk Phuensum Tshogpa (DPT) – (*Druk* means dragon; the native name for Bhutan is *Druk Yul*, or 'land of the thunder dragon') – which won 45 out of the 47 NA seats. The DPT's leader, Jigme Y. Thinley, whose leadership and charismatic personality undoubtedly helped the DPT win, is the new prime minister. The PDP (People's
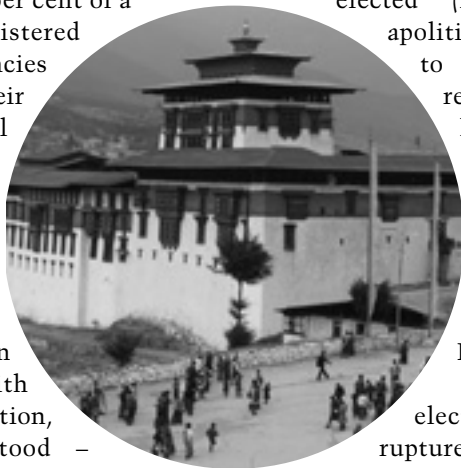
Democratic Party) won 2 seats, forming the smallest opposition of the world's youngest democracy. The portfolios for the 11-member cabinet were announced in April; the first sitting of the NA was held in May 2008.

Earlier, in December 2007 and January 2008, twenty of the 25 members of the upper house, the National Council, were elected (NC members are apolitical and not affiliated to any party); the remaining five, the king's nominees, were announced in March 2008. (The NC candidate with the largest margin of victory was a woman, Pema Lhamo.)

The democratic elections marked not a rupture with, but an evolution of, governance mecha- nisms that had, in preceding decades, introduced decentralized and participatory decision-making. The National Assembly was set up in 1953; the Royal Advisory Council in 1965. Bhutan introduced its first five-year plan in 1961; in 1971 it joined the UN. The fourth king, Jigme Singye Wangchuck, who inherited the kingdom as a teenager in 1972, continued the reforms begun by his father. Bhutan introduced its own currency, the

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ngultrum, in 1974. In 1981, DYTs (District Development Committees) and in 1991 GYTs (Block Development Committees, which work at the level of the *gewog* or smallest administrative unit) were established, which created stronger local government.

Since the 1960s, Bhutan has gradually engaged with a growing number of international bodies. The big change came in 1998, when the king dissolved the government and transferred his executive powers to a new executive council of ministers. In 1999, TV and the internet were allowed into Bhutan. Then, in 2001, the king initiated the drafting of a constitution. This document underwent extensive public consultation in the following years; its adoption is currently being debated in the National Assembly.

In 2005, Jigme Singye Wangchuck stunned the nation with the announcement that there would be a transition to a parliamentary democracy with a constitutional monarch.

In 2006 he abdicated in favour of his son, the fifth and present king, Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck. In April and May 2007 mock elections were held in order to acquaint people with the practice of elections: voters were asked to choose from amongst four fictional parties – Druk Yellow, Druk Red, Druk Green, and Druk Blue; school students were the mock candidates but the electronic voting machines used were real. Yellow is the colour of royalty: almost everyone voted for the Druk Yellow party; it is likely that they would have felt uncomfortable voting for anything else.

Organizations such as the Anti Corruption Commission and the Election Commission of Bhutan (ECB) ran innumerable voter education programmes and awareness campaigns – on TV and the radio and in the print media – about the dangers of political corruption, coercion, and bribery (for example, community votes being solicited in return for power tillers, or voters being misled into thinking that voting machines record voters' identities as they vote).

At the core of democracy, as generally understood, is participatory decision-making coupled with symbolic representation in the institutions that exercise power; for this reason, in the political imagination democracy is seen as synonymous with people power.

Bhutan does not fit this model. Bhutan's transition to democracy was *not* the product of a popular movement for democracy; there was no demand for 'democracy as a right'. Instead, Jigme Singye Wangchuck, the fourth king, handed over his powers to the people, and made sure that the constitution contained a provision for any king to retire at the age of 65 (he is 52 himself). The Bhutanese were prevailed upon to accept 'democracy as a responsibility' – a 'gift' from the throne that the people must nurture. Voting was presented to the people as their 'sacred right', a *norbu* (precious jewel) to be handled with care. The fifth king issued a *kasho* (royal edict) before the elections that exhorted people to exercise their franchise, and do so responsibly. There was emphasis on the creation of a 'vibrant democracy' as the foundation of a strong economy.

Why did the Bhutanese want the monarchy to continue? In part, because they worry about the divisiveness that democracy can produce: in unstable democracies (in the region and beyond), violence, strikes, corruption, and all kinds of politicking appear to make life miserable. (Bhutanese are informed about the world: there are 30 international channels on Bhutanese TV, including BBC and CNN, and only one national channel, the

BHUTAN

Bhutan is a small (about 40,000 square kilometers in size), landlocked country in the eastern Himalayas; it is bordered on the north by Tibet in China, on the south by India. The over half a million Bhutanese (divided into three main ethnic groups: the Ngalops in the west, the Sharchops in the east, and the Lhotsampas in the south) have a distinct sense of identity and culture, which is reinforced by both geography and history. Buddhism spread to Bhutan following the visit of Guru Padmasambhava (Guru Rinpoche) in the eight century of the Christian Era /AD. About 900 years later, in the seventeenth century, the dynamic leader Zhabdrung Nagawang Namgyal, who had come from Tibet, unified the country and instituted a dual system of secular and religious administration (*choesi nyiden*). The effects of European imperialism, which shook large parts of Asia in subsequent centuries, were tangential in Bhutan until the start of the twentieth century, when, in 1907, partly with British support and with general consent, the Bhutanese monarchy was established. This was the founding of the Wangchuck dynasty. The present King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck is the fifth Druk Gyalpo.

Enlightenment as Religion

What function do claims of enlightened, secular, and liberal

neutrality serve, asks **William Rasch**

'Jesus is the Christ.' In *Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes insists that this be the single article of dogma all citizens are called upon to profess. All other tenets – transubstantiation, for instance – are to become a matter of private conviction, not public dispute. Doctrinal warfare threatens the existence of the polity; internal pacification can only be achieved by the neutralization of these causes of bloody conflict. 'Jesus is the Christ' is both the affirmation of a specifically Christian commonwealth and a formally declared and legally enforceable truce.

Hobbes's is the first step in the eventual secularization and liberalization of modern Europe through the privatization of religious conviction. Carl Schmitt also relates a version of this historical trajectory. Neutralization, the ability to disarm difference, requires a common ground or 'central sphere,' as Schmitt calls it, upon which warring parties can stand. Yet that ground or central sphere *cannot* be neutral itself. For the Europe of Hobbes, Schmitt reminds us, Jesus, not Yaweh, not Allah, not Buddha is the Christ; Christians are still privileged, non-Christians at best

tolerated. Neutralization always brings with it discriminations: to bring 'us' together, distinctions must be made between 'us' and 'them'.

The history of modern Europe since Hobbes's attempt to neutralize Christian difference is the history of the shifting of 'central spheres' and thus central identities as new conflicts and new differences arose. Schmitt finds that, above all with the rise of a sanguine belief in the universal good of technology, *neutrality itself* stakes a claim to be the central ground upon which all differences can be neutralized. With technology, neutrality becomes the Christ, as it were, and, infused with the holy spirit of indifference, difference is said to be banished from the civilized, worldly realm.

> 'We have lost our faith in technology to neutralize differences and solve problems; and Europe no longer seems to burn with the same sectarian resentments of old'

Schmitt offers two separate – though often intertwined and indistinct – accounts of the dangers of neutrality, On the one hand, neutrality

– a real possibility – is represented by the claims of the nineteenth-century liberal, agnostic state. The danger he sees for Europe is that absolute neutrality appears incapable of making distinctions and therefore of recognizing and combating potential enemies. Neutrality, he fears, is incapable of self-defense.

But Schmitt also presents not neutrality itself as the threat, but rather the disingenuous *claim* to, or the *ideology* of, neutrality. General and flexible terms – humanity, peace, human rights, for example – are used to disarm sensible European resistance. Neutrality, if it existed, would be impotent; but the duplicit and deceptively aggressive *language* of neutrality introduces distinctions and exclusions that gain in potency by remaining unacknowledged and unnoticed. One sees this argument in Schmitt's invectives – largely aimed at the threat from the United States – against the emerging, post-World War I discourse of monolithic, global liberalism.

Today we have lost our faith in technology to neutralize differences and solve problems; and Europe no longer seems to burn with the same sectarian resentments of old. But what do we mean by 'Europe'? What central sphere neutralizes Europe's differences? On the level of Europe's self-reflection or self-description the answer is pretty clear: the Enlightenment – under which we subsume Europe's secular society and liberal politics and economy. What function, however, do claims of enlightened, secular, and liberal neutrality serve? Are they philo-sophically sophisticated expressions of the belief in the power of mutual tolerance and peaceful coexistence – and do they thus, as Schmitt feared, pose a danger to Europe's ability to defend itself in times of crisis? Or are they an evangelical call to arms that can only be perceived as a threat by those not wishing to convert? If the latter, is the threat justified? Are those who resist us truly evil, condemned not to eternal damnation but to secular excommunication?

GRASS'S TOLERANCE

An interview with the German writer Günter Grass in 2006 in the Spanish newspaper *El Pais* is a point of entry into this discussion. Asked if he was surprised by the acts of violence that followed the publication of the Danish caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad, Grass answered thus:

We live in an age in which one act of violence follows another. The first originated in the West, the invasion of Iraq. Today we know that thereby international law was violated; the war was waged solely on the basis of Bush's fundamentalist arguments, namely that there is a battle between good and evil. What we see now is the fundamentalist answer to a fundamentalist act.

Grass complicates the basic distinction between the West and the non-West. His wrath is aimed at something called fundamentalism; and it seems that, for him,

'The modern nation-state has developed an indifference towards an increasing number of competing and divisive worldviews'

fundamentalists exist in both global spheres. What, then, distinguishes the non-fundamentalist West from – wherever it is located – its fundamentalist other? His response to a subsequent question about whether this cycle of action and reaction should be taken as evidence of a 'clash of cultures' provides an answer:

That is precisely what fundamentalists on both sides want. We should begin, however, to differentiate. We have the luck to have had the Renaissance and the Enlightenment and therefore have undergone a painful process that has brought us a series of freedoms that are still threatened. The Islamic world has not undergone this process; they find themselves at a different stage of development. And this must be respected.

'We' – non-fundamentalist Europeans – have undergone the process of the Enlightenment and find ourselves at a presumably higher or more advanced level of development. The difference between Europeans and fundamentalists (both Islamic and their Western counterparts) is that between the civilized and the uncivilized; but what distinguishes Europe from the Islamic world is our higher level of culture. And that difference must be respected – by tolerating our somewhat backward cousins. 'Two years ago Western and Arabic authors met in Yemen', Grass continues,

to discuss literary themes, including erotic themes. This was unusual for Arabs, but in the end we had a successful discusion. One can talk about everything, even controversial themes, if everyone brings the same tolerance he expects from others – even if one has a different idea of culture that is determined by its own set of taboos.

One wonders how that discussion went. Is tolerance is a way to get others, who for religious or cultural reasons are disinclined to talk about sex, to talk about sex? And if one's beliefs about culture are determined by taboos, what taboos did Grass break at this meeting? Tolerance may come easy when one has the role of civilizer, and the taboos broken are not one's own.

Most of us probably recognize and feel comfortable with Grass's views. We shrink from what Grass calls fundamentalism, especially religious fundamentalism: most of us probably presuppose – implicitly – the Enlightenment's cultural and political superiority – or, as we prefer to say, its inclusive universality, which we pit against the exclusive particularity of fundamentalism. This conviction in the universal validity of our beliefs allows us magnanimously to exercise tolerance toward those who have not yet arrived on the scene of Enlightenment.

HABERMAS'S ENLIGHTENMENT

The following question then arises: what distinguishes Europe's fundamental beliefs from a fundamentalist's fundamental beliefs? The standard answer invokes a historical narrative that traces Europe's increased religious pluralism and the emergence of secularism and the liberal neutral state – the narrative that Schmitt tweaks in his analysis of necessary neutralizations. Because of Europe's historical experience with religious schism and civil war, the modern nation-state has developed an indifference towards an increasing number of competing and divisive worldviews; it thus serves as the neutral ground upon which people espousing a plurality of incommensurable beliefs about the good life can gather and live in relative social harmony.

Jürgen Habermas has elaborated on this progressive enlightenment narrative with enviable clarity. Working within a Kantian framework, he points to basic philosophical presuppositions and the political institutions that arise from them in modern, pluralist Europe. These presuppositions are about the morally and politically autonomous, self-legislating individual and the public use of a universally valid and

normatively binding reason that, Habermas maintains, should be viewed as paradigmatic for all others who inhabit our globally interconnected planet. Only in this way can the type of difference that fundamentalism rejects be simultaneously preserved and politically neutralized.

The crucial distinction for Habermas is between secularism, on the one hand, and religion and metaphysics, on the other. Secularism, with its assumptions about the political autonomy of citizens, rational nature of the human being, and the disenchantment of politics to which autonomy is necessarily linked, remains the 'other' of all worldviews. Religious or metaphysical justifications for political, moral, or legal positions (like human rights) – because they reflect worldviews that, due to their fiercely defended partiality, cannot be universally valid – are not only superfluous but *illegitimate*.

The neutrality toward worldviews that Habermas celebrates here is precisely the European achievement brought about by the Protestant Reformation and its Enlightenment aftermath. In the face of religiously or metaphysically justified worldviews – by definition partial and that fully include only true believers – Europe created a 'political authority': the modern state, with its political and legal institutions, and agnostic to competing truth claims because putatively founded on a 'mode of legitimation that is neutral toward worldviews' (*The Postnational Constitution*, 2001.) This mode of legitimation, and the philosophical principles it presupposes and enables, must therefore *not* comprise a worldview. What founds modern European pluralism, in other words, is qualitatively different from what founded earlier, and founds contemporary, non-European societies. For Habermas, the Enlightenment is not just another, even a superior, view of how the world should be ordered, but the *Aufhebung* of all such particular views and their rivalries. Europe contains worldviews, but Europe itself is the pure medium which

allows for their peaceful coexistence.

Habermas makes another distinction, however, that troubles this picture of pacific neutrality. There are, it turns out, two classifications of worldviews; only one such worldview belongs in the fold of global civilization. What Habermas and therefore Europe requires of
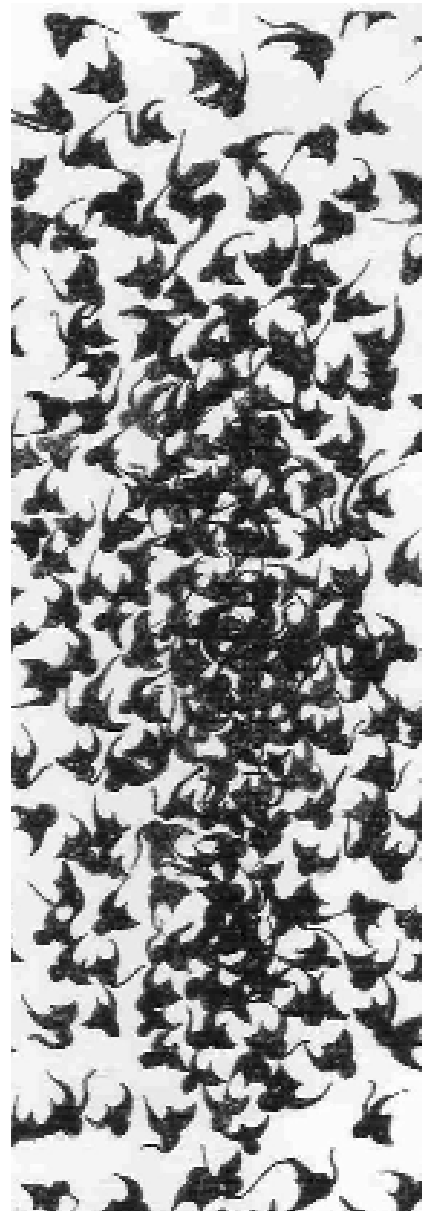
worldviews is a 'reflexive attitude' that allows for 'a civilized debate between convictions' (*The Inclusion of the Other*, 1998) facilitated by a 'relativization of one's own position' (*Philosophy in a Time of Terror*, 2003). *This* the European religions have achieved – and the rest are called upon to emulate. Acceptable and legitimate worldviews are those that have 'been brought into conformity' with

European, secular society (*The Postnational Constellation*).

Fundamentalism Habermas defines as 'a peculiar mindset, a stubborn attitude that insists on the political imposition of its own convictions and reasons, even when they are far from being rationally acceptable' (*Philosophy in a Time of Terror*). Therefore, in Europe at least, 'political integration does not extend to fundamentalist immigrant cultures' (*The Inclusion of the Other*). And since, as Habermas writes, 'autarkic isolation against external influences is no longer an option in today's world', political integration does not extend to fundamentalist cultures anywhere else either. The Enlightenment, it seems, is only for the enlightened.

EUROPE'S *WELTANSCHAUUNG*

Yet once a normative distinction has been made between advanced and retarded civilizations and worldviews, can the Enlightenment, with its liberal and secular institutions, maintain its neutrality? The answer is clearly 'no.' To return to Schmitt's typologies, we can say neutrality is not Europe's fundamental disposition. Were it so – were tolerance universal – European identity would dissolve. 'Neutrality' takes effect only after specific requirements are met. For a worldview to be recognized and tolerated by enlightened, secular Europe, it must adapt to European ways. In short, it must convert, because the distinction drawn between the reasonable and the fundamentalist is an asymmetrical distinction made, not surprisingly, by those who identify themselves as reasonable.

Precisely because it stands in an antagonistic relationship to what it identifies as its enemy – fundamentalism – Enlightenment thought mimics what it chastises: the fundamentalists' condemnation and exclusion of 'infidels'. As 'fundamentalists', the latter are banished from the civilized world, both domestically and on the international level, and, thus, are subject to civilizing violence. What Grass calls the Renaissance and the Enlightenment and Habermas a neutral mode of legitimation is, in fact, the core identity of core Europe; the

Enlightenment and all that is associated with it is Europe's *Weltanschauung.*

UNIVERSALISM

But if the claim to neutrality is not neutral, but, rather, the deceptive marker of core commitments, then Schmitt's second fear comes into play: that the claim serves an imperial function. In its glide from a particular historical development to a universal mode of legitimation, the Enlightenment presents itself in a confusing and deeply disturbing way. Reflecting on the paternalistic, asymmetrical implications of tolerance, in which one side determines both the norm and the limits of acceptable deviation from the norm, Habermas notes that, in 'a democratic community whose citizens reciprocally grant one another equal rights, no room is left for an authority allowed to *one-sidedly* determine the boundaries of what is to be tolerated'. Instead of Grass's patronizing tolerance one has 'reciprocal respect'; and reciprocity 'requires a common standard'.

Habermas identifies two candidates for such a common standard. First, a constitution: all agreement and disagreement must be articulated in the procedural and legal language of a founding instantiation of a political community – for Habermas a written constitution that allows for 'civil disobedience' and the possibility of democratic alteration of what is recognized as constitutional (*Philosophy in a Time of Terror*).

This leads to the articulation of a second, all-encompassing and putatively universal 'common standard' – namely, 'the universalistic nature of the legal and moral foundation of a liberal order.' Universalism, Habermas contends, 'amounts to the egalitarian individualism of a morality that demands mutual recognition…Membership in this inclusive moral community…promises not only solidarity and a nondiscriminating
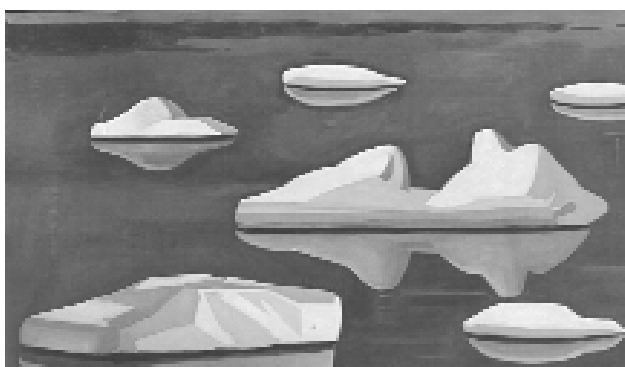
inclusion, but at the same time equal rights for the protection of everybody's individuality and otherness' (ibid). Thus tolerance is no longer called for, because within universalism asymmetrical distinctions disappear.

Yet – as we have seen – because membership in universality is restricted not everybody's individuality and otherness is protected. To secure entrance into the community of mutual recognition one must accept the common standard. Those we one-sidedly identify as fundamentalist are excluded. Habermas acknowledges the point – made by both Marx and Schmitt – that 'universalistic discourses' may hide 'particular interests' and thus serve an 'ideological function' (ibid). However, he deftly evades the problem by declaring that the critique of universalistic discourses is rendered impossible because it automatically

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validates the universalism it attempts to deconstruct: '[m]oral and legal universalism is . . . self-reflexively closed in the sense that its imperfect practices can only be criticized on the basis of their own standards (ibid).

This is Habermas's favourite rhetorical weapon, the accusation of performative paradox. Since universalism is universal, there can be no legitimate outside, no alternative

basis for critique, and internal or immanent critique is declared self-contradictory, or, at best, the involuntary self-correction of universal liberalism.

MORE POINTED MEDIA

The qualities Habermas uses to describe the essence of fundamentalism, phrases like the 'insist[ence] – even to the point of violence – on the universally binding character and political acceptance of their doctrine', might plausibly also be identified as attributes of Europe. What we call the Enlightenment – what we call democracy, liberty, liberalism, secularism, human rights and human dignity – may not only represent our fundamental commitments but be deployed in the same manner we attribute to our fundamentalist enemies. Our open and liberal values, in other words, may have their critics and opponents, whom we, in the name of an all-encompassing inclusion of 'the other', in turn exclude.

Habermas may also be correct to insist that in today's world autarky is no longer possible. One need not celebrate this fact, however. We feel compelled to think and act globally, but does that necessarily entail thinking and acting universally, as if everything Europeans do others should do too? Is the communicative double bind that Habermas wields so deftly really the last word? If it is, if lines can no longer be drawn, difference no longer displayed, and resistance no longer articulated, then should it come as such a surprise that some will use other – more physical and pointed – media with which to communicate their frustration?

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Red Herrings and Fishy Tails

Liza Griffin *examines the competing discourses that justify different environmental policies towards the North Sea*

An historical perspective on the environment tells us that there has been no single, objective, and monolithic 'truth' about nature. Rather, throughout history, in what might be termed changing 'discourses' of nature, society's relationship with, and view of, nature have changed.

We can chart these discourses, including those about the North Sea, by seeing how they are represented in historical sources – diaries, maps, even paintings. James Barry's (1777–83) painting 'Navigation', for example (see page 8), shows the mouth of the North Sea crowded with eminent scientists, merchants and statesmen; it depicts no water at all. This painting symbolizes perhaps the conquest by 'man' of an ocean space that is objectively knowable, rational, and of instrumental use to eighteenth-century elites.

Later – and partly reacting against these scientific ideas about nature – artists and poets began to show another, more 'romantic', side of the North Sea: they depicted the ocean as something not to be tamed through scientific enquiry but, instead, to be revered and appreciated for its beauty and mystery. J.M.W. Turner's 'Surge of Sea in a Storm' (c. 1835) (see page 13) shows a North Sea quite different to Barry's: wild, sublime and mysterious, with roaring waves and luminous spray; something to be regarded non-instrumentally.

By the mid-nineteenth century the ocean was also being construed as a space beyond governance and regulation, as reserved for outcasts. This view is epitomized by Benjamin Britten's opera *Peter Grimes*, set in 1830 on the east coast of Britain. This opera is about an 'outsider' who, like the North Sea, is 'violent' and 'free spirited'.

Today, by contrast, we might perceive the sea as a void or 'formless surface', beyond the space of social relations and used merely to transport goods and people between nation states.

SOD THE COD?

Much academic work has traced changing depictions of territorial landscapes. Yet representations of, and discourses about, landscape are not only of academic interest; importantly, they also tell us about the attitudes and values that inform action towards the environment, and thus help to shape it. Since, at any given time, different social groups hold different views on the nature—society relationship, they may also disagree about what are suitable environmental policies – and use representations of nature as sources of authority to justify particular environmental agendas.

For example, a free-market liberal discourse about the environment might represent nature as being capable of rapid regeneration after human interference; this would justify capitalist-style development and exploitation. By contrast, preservationists, drawing on more Romantic visions of wilderness, tend to see nature as vulnerable and at risk of being permanently damaged by human activity.

We can observe aspects of these competing discourses in current debates about how to manage sustainably the North Sea environment. The Romantics appreciated nature for its intrinsic value; for them the ocean had value because it existed, not just because it was useful to human society. Today, radical environmental groups like Greenpeace and the Sea Shepherds claim that we should preserve the North Sea and its resources for their own sake . They cite the 'imminent' collapse of North Sea cod as a reason for campaigning, and argue that fishermen are happy to 'sod the cod'. They often use emotive, vivid imagery in opposing potentially damaging fishing practices:

> The North Sea is an extraordinary natural phenomenon. [...] Plant and animal plankton of surreal beauty grow in profusion [...] At the top of the food web are seals and dolphins, as well as leviathans like orca that go unnoticed as they swim just offshore from some of the most industrialised parts of the planet. (Greenpeace website.)

> 'representations of, and discourses about, landscape are not only of academic interest; they also tell us about the attitudes and values that inform action towards the environment'

These 'Romantic' marine environmentalists appear to regard fishermen as separate from and at odds with nature: they talk, for example, of the 'horrific slaughter of the defenceless marine creatures by fishermen'. (Sea Shepherds' website.)

North Sea fishermen's groups have responded angrily to such pronouncements: they argue that, for these Greens, the 'cod is god'; and that Greenpeace's ideas are 'irrational' and non-scientific, and its attempts to preserve a marine wilderness are invalid since the ocean has never been a 'pristine' environment. As in Barry's painting, fishermen see the North Sea as a legitimate arena for exploitation and commercialization. For many of them, who believe strongly in their right to fish, it is fishing that should be sustained, not fish ; for their own sake. Fish are thus seen as a commodity and a means to profit.

However, some North Sea pro-fishing groups have a more Romantic view of fishing. They argue – surprisingly, perhaps, given the mobility of the resource that binds fishing communities – that fish are not just tradable commodities but also signify 'livelihoods' and an emotional attachment to 'place'. These groups' discourses posit fishing communities and fishermen as part of, not separate from, the environment. Indeed, fishing, unlike most other industries, has been inextricably bound up with the idea of community. Fishing communities are commonly thought of as being traditional, local, and in communion with nature. Yet such bounded or homogenous communities rarely exist in reality. And while fishing might be a key industry in many North Sea 'communities', it is usually not the only one: the oil industry, for example, has thrived in some parts of the North Sea. Like the

> 'By perpetuating discourses policies also help to construct the limits within which ideas and practices are considered 'natural', 'inevitable' or 'reasonable'.

fishing industry, oil is implicated in local, national and global processes.

EUROPEAN DISCOURSES

Differing discourses of ocean space are evident in the marine policies currently being instituted at European and UK level. Policy documents not only contain policy substance: in representing a policy or course of action they are also – analogous with 'paintings – the products and the producers of discourse; they constitute and communicate social meaning. By perpetuating discourses policies also help to construct the limits within which ideas and practices are considered 'natural', 'inevitable' or 'reasonable'. This, in turn, influences how policymakers decide on particular courses of action in fisheries governance; it may also have a bearing on the likelihood of these policies' success.

New EU policies instituted in the North Sea have included plans for 'Marine Protected Areas': specified regions that are partly or totally protected from fishing and potentially damaging activities like dredging or drilling. Because they are excluded from such industrial practices – they are 'reserved for nature' – Marine Protected Areas, therefore, partially project the historical discourses of 'romantic vulnerability' and 'wilderness' onto ocean space. Marine Protected Areas appear to embody a concern for the sea as a 'special place' rather than as a 'void' between land-based territories.

At the same time, however, these areas are also construed as 'rational', 'knowable', and, therefore, divisible into discrete units; this reflects a technocentric perspective in which the sea is valued instrumentally – as a material base for capital accumulation. Nevertheless, fisher-men have also claimed that the introduction of protected areas will undermine their businesses; while radical Greens argue that such areas do not do enough to protect the North Sea environment.

CREATING IDENTITY

The EU Commission is also deploying history to lever support for new policies. For example, the European Union's Green Paper, 'Towards a future maritime policy for the Union: A European vision for the oceans and seas' (2006), asserts that the EU's policies have roots in Europe's 'historical' relationship with the sea. The paper presents this relationship in a discourse of 'Europeanness' – it

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NEW DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1 September 2008 will see the launch of the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Westminster. The department is a merger of CSD and the undergraduate Politics and International Relations section of the University of Westminster's department of Social and Political Studies.

The Department's key aims include:
* consolidating high-quality research and scholarship;
*increasing student recruitment to, and improving the quality of, taught programmes at BA and MA level (for the MA courses, see next page); and

* building on CSD's scholarly activities and events programmes including: the CSD Seminar; the CSD Encounter; the C R Parekh Lecture; the Westminster International Relations Forum; the Democracy Club; the Democracy and Islam Seminar; the Governance and Sustainability Seminar; and the Visiting Fellowship programme.

A new head of department is being appointed. Simon Joss, currently director of CSD, will take up his new post as Director of Research in the School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Languages on 1 August.

CSD's Masters Courses

CSD's Masters programmes (one year full–time, two years part–time) offer innovative and intellectually challenging theoretical and empirical frameworks for postgraduate study in International Relations, Politics, and International Studies, including Asian Studies. The programmes exploit CSD's reputation as a distinctive and well-established centre of exellence in these areas. The United Kingdom Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education has rated teaching at CSD as 'excellent'.

MA INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
Core modules:
* International Relations 1: Theoretical Perspectives;
* International Relations 2: Beyond International Relations?;
* International State-Building: Exporting Democracy?;
* Dissertation and Research Methods.
Elective Modules: 3 from the list

MA INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL THEORY
Core modules:
* International Relations 1: Theoretical Perspectives;
* The Human Sciences – Perspectives and Methods;
* The State, Politics and Violence;
* Dissertation and Research Methods.
Elective modules: 3 from the list.

MA INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND EUROPEAN POLITICS
Core modules:
* International Relations I: Theoretical Perspectives
* The Governance of the European Union
* The European Union as an International Actor
* Dissertation and Research Methods
Elective Modules: 3 from the list

MA INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND SECURITY
* International Relations I: Theoretical Perspectives
* Theories of International Security
* Contemporary Controversies in International Security: Intervention, Terrorism and Self Defence
* Dissertation and Research Methods
Elective Modules: 3 from the list

> Students may begin the MA International Relations and the MA International Studies (East Asia) only in September (Semester 1); the other four courses may be started in September **or** January (Semester 2)

MA INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND GLOBAL CHANGE
* International Relations I: Theoretical Perspectives
* Global Change: Toward a new non-Western Order?
* Postcolonial International Relations? Theories and Concepts
* Dissertation and Research Methods
Elective Modules: 3 from the list

ELECTIVE MODULES
(*See website for information about which electives are available on which course*)
* Controversies in United States Foreign Policies and Processes
* Democracy and Islam
* Environmental and Urban Governance: International Perspectives
* The European Union as an International Actor
* European Immigration Policy in International Perspective
* Governance of the European Union
* International Humanitarian Law
* Theories of International Security
* Introduction to Contemporary Chinese Societies & Cultures
* Latin America and Globalization
* Modernity, Postmodernity and the Islamic Perspective
* Perspectives on Post-Cold War Chinese Foreign Policy
* Politics, Public Life and the Media

* * * * * *

For specific enquiries contact:
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Tel: +44 (0)20 7911 5138
Fax: +44 (0)20 7911 5164
Email: owensj@wmin.ac.uk

FURTHER INFORMATION/APPLICATION FORMS

For detailed information about our Masters programmes go to http://www.wmin.ac.uk/csd (Click on 'Masters'; for online applications see 'How to Apply').

Or write to: Admissions & Marketing Office, University of Westminster, 16 Riding House Street, London W1W 7UW. Tel: +44 020 7911 5088; Fax: +44 020 7911 5175; email: regent@westminster.ac.uk. .

MA INTERNATIONAL STUDIES (EAST ASIA)

This MA programme in International Studies offers students an integrated programme of a regional specialism with political and cultural studies. Students focus on East Asia, drawing on the research expertise of CSD staff in political science, cultural studies and international relations.

This MA gives students a critical introduction to the political, economic, social and cultural aspects of contemporary China (including Hong Kong), Taiwan, Japan, and Korea, such as Chinese cultural politics, media across Greater China, and Japanese politics, as well as the inter–relationships between these states and regions.

For specific enquiries contact:
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London W1T 3UW, UK
Tel: +44 020 7911 5138;
Fax: 7911 5164.
Email: evansh@wmin.ac.uk

JULIA KRISTEVA

Julia Kristeva was the subject of the 2007 CSD Encounter on 7 December 2007.
A roundtable discussion chaired by Professor Harriet Evans of CSD brought together Jacqueline Rose and Marian Hobson (University of London), Michael Sheringham (Oxford University), and Chris Weedon (University of Cardiff). This was followed by Julia Kristeva's guest lecture, 'Thinking Liberty in Dark Times'. A video-recording was made of the Encounter; with luck, some or all of it will soon be available on the CSD website: www.wmin.ac.uk/csd

CSD STAFF NEWS

March 2008 saw the publication of the second edition of **Abdelwahab El-Affendi**'s book, *Who Needs an Islamic State?* In April, Dr El-Affendi was a Senior Visiting Professor at the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civlisation (ISTAC) in Malaysia.

Liza Griffin's 'Good governance and sustainability' will soon be published in *Geography Compass;* her 'Food security and fisheries governance' will appear in *Globalisation and Security: An Encyclopaedia* (2008).

In April **Nitasha Kaul** gave a lecture at Harvard on 'A Himalayan Experiment: Bhutan's Unique Path to Democracy', and one at Stanford on 'A Snapshot of a Changing Kingdom: Democracy and Identity in Bhutan'.

John Keane, currently a Leverhulme Major Research Fellow, has been awarded a two-year research grant by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation for research on the future of representative democracy. His new history of democracy, *The Life and Death of Democracy*, will be published early in 2009.

John Owens's *America's 'War on Terrorism': New Dimensions in US Government and National Security*, edited with John W. Dumbrell, was published in April 2008. A paperback edition will be out in June 2008.

In February **Chantal Mouffe** gave one of the Amnesty Lectures in Oxford. Her topic was 'Can human rights accommodate pluralism?'

PHD PROGRAMME

CSD has a highly- regarded MPhil/PhD programme with over 25 research students enrolled. These high quality students are attracted to the work of the Centre's internationally renowned staff. Staff members' research covers various geographical regions and a broad spectrum of interests in political theory, international relations, cultural studies, and media and civil society, among others. Several of our students have received scholarships from both British and international funding bodies.
Current PhD topics include:
* Nationalism and identity
* Anti–terrorism legislation and the future of dissent in the Muslim community

* EU integration and subjectivity
* How art can influence democracy and the formation of an active public sphere
* The construction of the discourse of secularization in the Turkish Republic, 1924–45
* Reinventing democracy in the era of the internet

FURTHER INFORMATION
For initial enquiries about CSD's PhD programme, contact:
Dr Patricia Hogwood
(P.Hogwood@wmin.ac.uk) or
Dr Maria Holt
(M.C.Holt01@westminster.ac.uk).
For more detailed information, and the PhD students' web pages:
http://www.wmin.ac.uk/csd

CSD EVENTS

CSD hosts a range of events and academic programmes, including:

The CSD SEMINAR, at which speakers from CSD and other academic institutions – in the UK and abroad – present papers on a wide range of subjects in politics, international relations and cultural studies. Recent speakers have included:

Dr. Lisa Griffin (CSD)
'Red Herrings and Fish Scales: The Politics of North Sea Fisheries Governance'
(see article on pages 7–8, 13)

Adrian Rifkin / Irit Rogoff
(Goldsmiths College, London)
'Politics : Seeing and Making'

Norman Stone
(Bilkent University, Ankara)
'Turkey and Europe'

William Rasch
(University of Indiana at Bloomington)
'Enlightenment as Religion: On Being European – and Human'
(see article on pages 3–6)

Hong Lui
(Centre for Chinese Studies, University of Manchester)
'Transnational Asia and Its Challenges'

Andre Schiffrin
(The New Press, New York)
'Controlling the Press: Publishing in the USA'
*
The WESTMINSTER INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS FORUM

Recent speakers:
Tom Moore and *Paulina Tambakaki*

(CSD/University of Westminster)
'The "global" capacity of constitutionalism'

The DEMOCRACY CLUB, which encourages participation among CSD staff and students and visiting researchers in discussions about democracy, considered as a language, a way of life and a set of institutions.

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The DEMOCRACY AND ISLAM programme.

*

The ASIAN STUDIES programme.

*

The GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY RESEARCH PROGRAMME
(See page 18 for information about recent events)

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The annual CR PAREKH LECTURE, at which a distinguished speaker explores various aspects of democracy. The 2008 CR Parekh lecturer was *Professor Ashis Nandi* of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) in Delhi.

*

The annual CSD ENCOUNTER, at which CSD members and outside academics discuss in detail the work of a leading thinker in his/her presence. The 2007 Encounter was with *Julia Kristeva*
(see page 11 for details).

For more information contact CSD

The Centre for the Study of Democracy (CSD) is the postgraduate and post-doctoral research centre of Politics, International Relations and Asian Studies at the University of Westminster.

Well known for its inter-disciplinary work, CSD is led by a team of internationally recognized scholars whose teaching and research concentrate on the interplay of states, cultures and civil societies. CSD also supports research into all aspects of the past, present and future of democracy, in areas such as political theory and philosophy, international relations and law, European Union social policy, gender and politics, mass media and communications, and the politics and culture of China, Europe, the United States, and Muslim societies.

CSD is located in the School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Languages (SSHL). It hosts seminars, public lectures and symposia in its efforts to foster greater awareness of the advantages and disadvantages of democracy in the public and private spheres at local, regional, national, and international levels. It offers a number of MAs (see page10 for details). CSD's publications include a series of working papers entitled *CSD Perspectives* and this bulletin.

THE CSD BULLETIN aims to inform other university departments and public organizations, and our colleagues and undergraduates at the University of Westminster, of CSD's research activities. The *Bulletin* comprises reports of 'work in progress' of our research students and staff and contributions from visiting researchers and speakers. Comments on the content of this *Bulletin*, or requests to receive it, should be directed to Dr Patrick Burke, *CSD Bulletin*, 32-38 Wells Street, London W1T3UW. As with all CSD publications and events, the opinions expressed in these pages do not necessarily represent those held generally or officially in CSD or the University of Westminster.

reveals the sea as a force supposedly conferring unity on the member states throughout time:

> With 68,000 km of coast, Europe is a maritime continent. The seas and oceans have undeniably shaped our history through discovery, trade, travel and our use of marine resources.... The European Commission believes that the time has come to approach the sea as a whole. As well as preventing potential conflicts, it [the EU's marine policy] would help optimise the returns from the sea.

This kind of discourse not only aims to legitimize EU-level (rather than, say, national-scale) policy; it is also using marine history to promote a modern, single and shared European identity. The Green Paper devotes an entire section, 'Reclaiming Europe's maritime heritage and reaffirming Europe's maritime identity' to this end; and the Paper's introduction provides an evocative representation of 'our' historical relationship with the sea:

> Many Europeans take their holidays beside the coast, with the bustle of fishing ports, seafood meals in a harbour restaurant and walks along a beach beside the surf.... How many are conscious that they are citizens of a maritime Europe? ...The Commission believes that there is much to be gained by encouraging a sense of common identity in Europe among all those who earn their living from maritime activities or whose quality of life is significantly connected to the sea.... The EU should give attention to promoting mari-maritime identity.
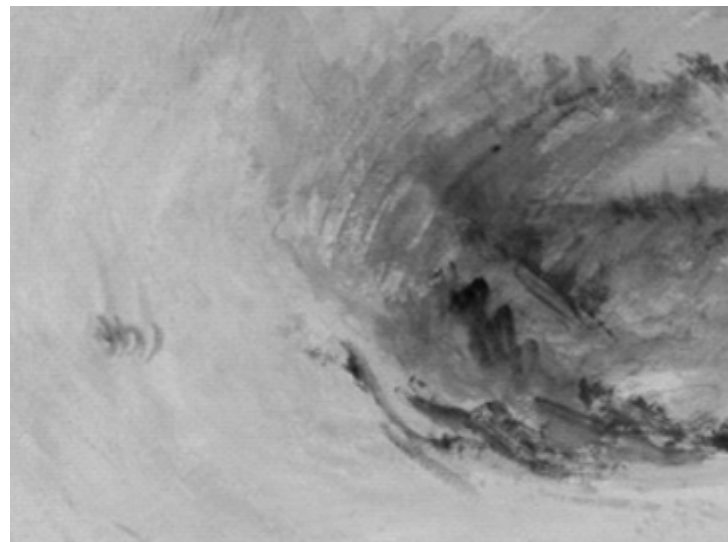
This is an attempt – by referring to 'citizens of a maritime Europe' – to produce the identity of the European citizen through reference to an historical relationship; effectively, Europeans are 'called up' or 'interpellated' to be maritime citizens. These citizens are ideologically 'hailed' in relation to ocean space to perform their roles as active, consensus-seeking stewards of the ocean. The corollary is that ocean space is brought into the 'scale of Europeanness' and made into a space of citizenship.

This 'European identity' can then be used to legitimate or reinforce a particular power relationship. The current deployment of the discourse of fish as a mobile common resource is used to construct territorial and supranational identities to legitimate EU rather than national-level governance. The Commission reasons that, because fish move in and out of national waters, only a supranational authority's *common* policy could possibly manage exploitation of this *common* heritage.

'The current deployment of the discourse of fish as a mobile common resource is used to construct territorial and supranational identities to legitimate EU rather than national-level governance.'

However, it is important to recognize that, while the transboundary mobility of North Sea fish is used to legitimate EU-scale rather than national governance, these same migratory species have also been deployed to reproduce and define a discourse that advances the idea of national sovereignty In Britain, for example, nationalist groups and political parties use jingoistic discourse about 'saving Britain' from what they see as the oppressive EU's 'draconian measures' or to reassert a 'natural right' to the resources next to 'her' shores. The fugitive cod fish has even entered into the iconography of Britain's national history (cod and chips are a 'national' dish, for example). These nationalist claims to ocean resources are not new. Ocean territorial rights were first recognized and contested in the twelfth century, when sea resources were seen not as common property but as an extension of land rights. But, powerful as such rhetoric may be, in history there has been no such thing as 'British fish': other 'nations' have always fished around the UK's coast, just as 'British' fishermen have always fished far from the UK's shores.

The new EU Green Paper tries to create a marine space that is fixed in place, natural and inevitable; yet this construction of an identity based on 'marine citizenship' is, in fact, new: it is the specific product of governance reform and of the desire to control valuable ocean resources. As we have seen, North Sea identities and discourses have changed over time. Ocean space is far from being a neutral surface; it is, rather, an area within which struggles about the governance of nature have been played out.

*Liza Griffin is a Research Fellow on the Governance and Sustainability Programme at the University of Westminster. (*http://www.wmin.ac.uk/sshl/page-2803*). This is an edited version of a paper she gave to the CSD Seminar in January 2008.*

The 'dönme conspiracy'

Foreign Office documents give insight into a secretive community's role in the revolutionary upheavals in the late Ottoman Empire. **Eyup Sabri Carmikli** *explains*

In 2008 celebrations are taking place in Turkey to mark the centennial of the 1908 revolution, when the Young Turks – an umbrella term, coined by Europeans, for modernizing and westernizing groups in Turkish politics – forced the Ottoman sultan, Abdulhamid II, to restore the 1876 constitution. In the same year, the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), the main Young Turk party, issued a 'Proclamation for the Ottoman Empire'. This set out a liberal constitutional monarchy, the subjects of which would have the kind of rights and responsibilities enjoyed by British subjects. Yet, for its part, the British government – as contemporary Foreign Office documents show – was concerned about a group apparently at work beneath the surface of the Young Turk movement, one until recently largely ignored in accounts of the Young Turks, the 'dönmes'.

Dönme (in Turkish, 'convert'; *dönme* is the modern Turkish spelling) was the name Muslim Turks give to the Jewish adherents of Sabbatai Sevi who embraced Islam at the end of the seventeenth century. Highly secretive, in public they were strict Muslims; in private they practised a Jewish way of life. The dönmes prefer to call themselves *ma'minim* (in Hebrew, 'believers'), which indicates their belief that theirs was a new messianic sect within Judaism. However, they are not officially recognized by Jewish authorities. Until the 1924 population exchange between Greece and Turkey, when many dönme families came to Turkey, Salonica (part of the Ottoman Empire until 1912), was the largest dönme centre.

The dönmes are of interest because, as the Foreign Office documents illustrate, they played a part in the CUP and in the Young Turk movement in general. The dönmes' discreet network helped the Young Turk movement survive the police state under Abdulhamid II. Moreover, the dönmes – westernized from the

> 'The dönmes' existence and influence and , indeed, their role in the Turkish revolution   have, until recently, rarely been discussed in Turkey.'

nineteenth century by their commercial ties and education – were instrumental in spreading a secular, western culture and lifestyle among the educated classes in Turkey. They played pioneering roles in fields such as journalism, modern education, and

theatre. Yet, their existence and influence, and, indeed, their role in the Turkish revolution have, until recently, rarely been discussed in Turkey. This makes the Foreign Office documents particularly interesting.

A CONSPIRATORIAL WEB

In his 1910 report to the Foreign Office, the British ambassador to Constantinople, Sir Gerald Lowther, expresses strong concern about the influence and power of the dönmes. The report, which displays a marked level of anti-Semitism (and in which the categories 'Jew', 'crypto-Jew' and 'freemason' are used interchangeably) states that there is a great deal of 'freemasonry' in the Salonican CUP; this freemasonry, Lowther claims, is 'generally regarded' as a vehicle for Jewish influence. The Young Turk movement is said to be 'principally Jewish and Turkish'; indeed, he asserts, the Young Turks appeared to many to be 'rather [a] Jewish than a Turkish revolution'.

The report also mentions other 'Jewish freemasons' including Talaat Bey ('Mr Talaat') (later the interior minister and one of the CUP triumvirate that ruled Turkey during World War I). The British, who had just entered an alliance with Russia over military intervention in Persia, were above all worried that the Young Turks, being 'mainly directed or inspired by Jews', would be anti-Russian.

Another report in 1910 states that there are 20,000 member of the 'Sabbatai Levi' sect, or 'crypto-Jews', in Salonica and another 80,000 'Spanish [Sephardi] Jews', many of them allegedly also freemasons. The general tone of the report is that the CUP has been 'infiltrated' by crypto-Jews and freemasons.

In a letter on 29 May 1910 to the Foreign Office, Lowther describes a complex conspiratorial web: Jews, Judeo-masons and Young Turks from Italy to America to Salonica are conspiring to acquire economic control of Turkey. Their aim is to establish a Jewish state in Palestine or Babylonia (both under Ottoman/Turkish control). This plan,
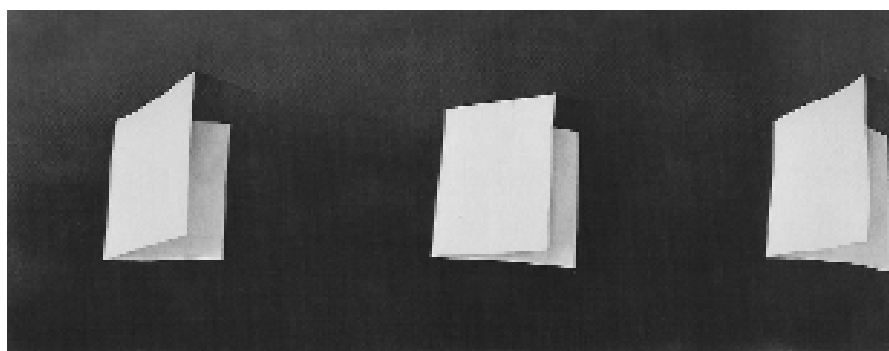
he says, has been laid out by Israel Zangwill in the April 1910 issue of the influential magazine *Fortnightly Review*. Further, Jewish elements in Salonica, led by Talaat Bey ('of gipsy descent') and Djavid Bey ('a crypto-Jew') were united by their masonic beliefs. (The latter was to be finance minister in CUP cabinets in 1913—18. He was executed for his part in the attempted assassination of Mustafa Kemal Pasha [Atatürk], Turkey's first president, in 1926).

PAN-TURANIANISM

The dönmes appear in Foreign Office documents again in 1917. The British seem to have become increasingly concerned about a pan-Turanian movement in Turkey, which they thought might have links to the CUP. (Pan-Turanianism aimed to unite peoples speaking various Turkic languages and dialects in order to form the 'Great Turan State'). An October 1917 Intelligence Bureau report by 'AJT', which claims that pan-Turanianism poses a threat to British security, contains the fullest account of British views on the movement, and provides a rare example of intellectual reflection on Turkish nationality, language, the Ottoman Empire, the Young Turks and the CUP.

Central to 'AJT's argument is his claim that *The Turkish and Pan-Turkish Ideal*, a book by 'Tekin Alp' (a Salonican Jew called Albert Cohen) contains a programme for creating a future Turkish identity; namely, that, if the Turkish state is to survive, it must create alliances with its Turanian allies. Because Salonican Jews are inseparable from the CUP, 'AJT' states, 'Cohen' would not advocate pan-Turanianism unless he thought the CUP backed it, too. 'AJT' further claims that the CUP has exploited both pan-Turanianism and pan-Islamism with the aim of converting the Ottoman Empire into a highly organized militaristic state on the German pattern.

Gad Nassi (*Los Muestros* 12, 1993) argues that this view of the CUP ignores the strongly pro-British stance of Djavid Bey. Furthermore, Zionist leaders such as David Ben Gurion and Itzhak Ben Zvi were so impressed by the reforms of the Young Turk revolution that, on the eve of the First World War, they accepted the idea of establishing a Jewish settlement under Ottoman auspices, as opposed to an independent Jewish state. Nassi wants to show that it was not in the interests of Jews in the Young Turk movement to be Zionists; the same can be said of the Dönmes who (because Jewish authorities did not recognize them as Jews) had nothing to gain from the dissolution of the Ottoman, and the creation of a Jewish, state. Albert Cohen himself, as the representative of Ottoman Jewry at the First Zionist Congress (1897), had argued that Ottoman sovereignty over Palestine was the best guarantor of Jewish security.

MORE CONSPIRACIES

In March 1919 the British High Commissioner in Constantinople sent Westminster and Whitehall a long report about the CUP's organization and leaders; its relationship with the Sultan and Turkish governing bodies (the Caliphate and local elites) and with Turkish political parties; its influence on the Turkish press; and about the CUP's resources and finances. Again, conspiracy theories abound: the report assumes that the leadership of the CUP is inspired by both Germans and Jews; and claims (without evidence) that the CUP has 'place-men' in the police force who both allow crime to rise (particularly against Christians) and commit political crimes in order to discredit the government.

The Sultan is said to hate and perhaps fear the committee, and to have tried, with some success, to remove CUP members from the Cabinet. Two, however, remained: Haidar Mollah, Minister of Justice and Mustapha Arif Bey, Minister of the Interior. The latter was 'the more dangerous of the two' because, as a 'Deunme', he was in league with two other influential 'Deunme', 'Djavid Bey' and 'Ahmed Emin Bey', a journalist. Djavid Bey, the High Commissioner claims, was friendly with many Jewish financers and those in the higher circles of freemasonry; Ahmed Emin Bey was in 'German pay'; and both shielded their fellow 'masons'.

TURKISH IDENTITY

These documents (and others written between 1891 and 1922) indicate not only that the Foreign Office showed a significant degree of concern about the dönmes in this period but also that the dönmes, as a component of the Young Turks, did indeed play a part in the developing politics of Turkey. The CUP acquired a conspiratorial manner, in part from the dönmes; this continued to characterize them even after the 1908 revolution: election rigging, assassinations, and *coups d'état* became hallmarks of their politics. This was part of the Young Turk political legacy to the Mustapha Kemal Pasha regime. Like the Young Turks, the Kemalists saw it as their duty to modernize and westernize Turkey, even if that meant carrying out reforms 'for people, despite people.' In so doing they pushed aside the diverse and pluralistic cos-mopolitan culture that had existed in the Ottoman period and, instead, created a narrow monolithic notion of Turkish identity that persists to this day.

Eyup Sabri Carmikli is a PhD candidate at CSD. His thesis focuses on the role of 'pro-westernization' and secularism in shaping the Kemalist ideology of modern Turkey.

War in Search of Meaning

War! What is it good for? To give Western leaders a sense of mission, argues **Philip Hammond**

In recent years we have grown accustomed to the idea that war is a media event; that Western military operations are conducted with a view to creating media-friendly stories and photo-opportunities. This development goes beyond the familiar issue of propaganda. Traditionally, war could be understood in terms of some tangible purpose – defeating a rival, acquiring territory – and propaganda was secondary to achieving that end.

Today, presentation is paramount. From the special forces staging 'covert' operations in order to film themselves in Afghanistan in 2001, to the statue-toppling efforts to generate the 'defining image' of the Iraq campaign in 2003, it often seems that military actions are undertaken primarily in order to generate good publicity.

In response to declining political contestation and engagement at home, activism overseas has repeatedly been seized upon as a means to demonstrate some sense of purpose and mission. This is what makes image and spectacle so central to contemporary warfare. Yet the more the military and political authorities work at staging the spectacle of war, the less convincing the results. The very fact that interventions are geared toward creating the 'right' image draws attention to their contrived and inauthentic character.

WARS THAT DON'T TAKE PLACE?

The idea that contemporary warfare lacks authenticity, that it is somehow fake, was first raised by Jean Baudrillard. His declaration that the 1991 Gulf War 'did not take place' seemed nonsensical to many at the time, but has since become part of mainstream discussion. Baudrillard's insight, however, has been poorly understood. Although many have echoed his point about war's unreality, this has usually been interpreted as a result of essentially technical changes – a product of sanitised media coverage featuring much footage of hi-tech 'surgical' strikes. Yet Baudrillard was less concerned with the technology of warfare and its media presentation than with the new political context of the post-Cold War era.

Baudrillard's argument about the Gulf War's lack of 'reality' is best

> 'It often seems that military actions are undertaken primarily in order to generate good publicity'

understood as a political proposition: that war is no longer politically meaningful. However real the destruction and death, war has become a political non-event in the West. His insistence that the war 'did not take place' was meant as a refusal of the common ground of debate about the war; the assumption that it was a significant historical event in that either supporting or opposing it could be tied to some grand narrative of liberation. 'To be for or against the war is idiotic', Baudrillard argued, 'if the question of the very probability of this war, its credibility or degree of reality has not been raised even for a moment' (*The Gulf War Did Not Take Place* 1995).

'Incredulity toward metanarratives' was the marginal outlook of a few disillusioned French leftists when Jean-François Lyotard announced it as the defining feature of the postmodern condition in 1979. But the end of the Cold War precipitated a more general collapse of belief in political narratives which had claimed to make sense of history, leaving us, as Zaki Laïdi puts it, in 'a world without meaning'(*A World Without Meaning*, 1998).

This crisis of meaning has transformed the character of warfare and the role of propaganda. Propaganda is usually understood in terms of *dissimulation*, but the point today is to produce the *simulation* of 'real', 'meaningful' war. As Baudrillard observed of the 1991 Gulf conflict:

> Unlike earlier wars, in which there were political aims either of conquest or domination, what is at stake in this one is war itself: its status, its meaning, its future. It is beholden not to have an objective but to prove its very existence….In effect, it has lost much of its credibility.

The lack of credibility derived from the absence of a shared framework of meaning that would make the war politically 'real' and historically important. In this sense, Baudrillard suggested, the war was less a battle with Saddam than a struggle to make sense of the West's role in the post-Cold War world:

> It is not an important match which is being played out in the Gulf,

between Western hegemony and the challenge from the rest of the world. It is the West in conflict with itself, by means of an interposed Saddam.

Unlike in the past, he argued, war 'no longer proceeds from a political will to dominate or from a vital impulsion or an antagonistic violence'. Rather than being a means to realise definite political aims or interests, this 'non-war' was 'the absence of politics pursued by other means'. It is their lack of any future-oriented purpose, in other words, which drives Western leaders to attempt to use war as a way to rediscover a sense of mission for themselves and to galvanise their disengaged societies. As Laïdi remarks, 'War becomes not the ultimate means to achieve an objective, but the most "efficient" way of finding one'.

WARS FOR VALUES?

Today, Western leaders often state that their armies fight for 'values' rather than for territory or some other strategic goal. Critics tend to assume that this is just a cover, and search for the 'real' interests behind the values talk. Such efforts are misdirected: contemporary war *is* about values, though not in the self-flattering way that political leaders claim. The main attempts to rediscover meaning and purpose in the international sphere – humanitarian intervention and war on terror – have been narcissistic, shoring up the Western self through actions which are ostensibly other-directed. As Michael Ignatieff acknowledges, for example, Western policy in Bosnia was 'often driven by narcissism':

We intervened not only to save others, but to save ourselves, or rather an image of ourselves as defenders of universal decencies. We wanted to know that the West 'meant' something (*The Warrior's Honor*, 1998).

The desire to 'save' Bosnia was a desire to restore meaning to Western societies which had ceased to believe in grand narratives. Yet the attempt was unsuccessful.

Even at the highpoint of armed humanitarianism, during the 1999 Kosovo conflict, disappointment was expressed in terms which recalled Baudrillard's doubts about the reality of the Gulf War. The *Independent*, for example, asked 'was it a "war" at all?' (editorial, 10 June 1999), and Ignatieff (*Virtual War*, 2000) described Kosovo as only a 'virtual war'. The main reason the war was thought to lack 'reality' was that no Western troops were killed. The *Independent* said there was 'no sense of triumph, or of virtue rewarded', though there 'might have been, had NATO suffered some casualties', while the *Guardian*'s Isabel Hilton interpreted the reluctance to risk the lives of Western

'The values proclaimed by political leaders seemed to be undermined by their unwillingness to risk the lives of their own troops to defend them'

troops as a symptom of the fact that 'we are in a war that has no storyline we can believe in' (5 April 1999).

Again, the lack of 'reality' was essentially a lack of meaning. The values proclaimed by political leaders seemed to be undermined by their unwillingness to risk the lives of their own troops to defend them. Mary Kaldor complained that 'Western leaders still privilege the lives of their

own nationals' (*Guardian*, 25 March), for instance, while Hugo Young wondered whether, if NATO forces were 'not prepared to match their enemy's risk with their own', they 'cannot expect to win, and maybe don't deserve to?' (*Guardian*, 1 April). Such arguments were ostensibly about how best to safeguard Kosovo Albanians, but the underlying concern was the self-image of the West: Kaldor was worried about 'NATO credibility'; while Young feared that 'all this passionate rhetoric of human solidarity will turn to ashes, and NATO, quite possibly, will be ruined.' That some commentators supported the war while wishing for more casualties on their own side seems perverse. What bothered them was the suspicion that 'humanitarian intervention' did not offer a new source of meaning for the post-Cold War world.

The war on terror has been even less successful, though it too is evidently understood as a way to discover some 'values' for the West. Tony Blair, for example, suggested that the struggle for democracy in Afghanistan and Iraq could help the West to overcome its own internal problems. The courage of Afghans and Iraqis, he said in 2006, 'should give us courage; their determination should lend us strength; their embrace of democratic values…should reinforce our own confidence in those values' The Iraqis' struggle for democracy, according to Blair, could give 'renewed vigour and confidence' to the West. The clear intention was to bolster confidence in 'our values' by discovering people fighting for them somewhere else.

MEDIA CYNICISM

It is the attempt to use war as a way to discover 'values' and purpose that makes contemporary war so image-conscious. Yet in the 2003 Iraq war the effectiveness of the propaganda was

undermined by the way that the media drew attention to its deliberately manufactured quality. Rather than simply reporting events, journalists often discussed them in terms of news management and image projection, such as when one BBC presenter contrasted pictures of angry, protesting Iraqis with the day's 'intended message' from the coalition (*Newsnight*, 29 April 2003), or when another BBC journalist noted that 'the Americans very deliberately drove captured Iraqi missiles past the media hotel in Baghdad' (BBC1, 17 April). 'The day's big message was Saddam's neglect of the Iraqi people', said Quentin Letts in the *Mail* (26 March), subverting the impact of the message by noting how Blair's delivery of it seemed stagy and affected: 'At this point, to accentuate his sincerity, he put on his reading glasses.' Such comments rarely implied opposition to the war. Rather, they indicated that the media had trouble taking it entirely seriously.

Perhaps the non-existent WMD did most damage to coalition credibility. Yet in itself this was a secondary issue; a symptom of the fact that the war was devoid of meaning. Despite all the effort that went in to constructing the 'right' image of victory, the result was incoherent. Traditional ideological standbys – celebrating a martial, national or Western identity – seemed to cause disquiet instead of rallying

support. This was why news audiences witnessed the Stars and Stripes being proudly hoisted in Iraq one minute, only to see it hauled down in embarrassment the next. One US spokesperson said that commanders had been told not to fly the flag even from their own vehicles: to do so would be 'inappropriate' and might 'send the wrong message', since it could 'give the impression of conquering the Iraqi people' (*Times*, 22 March). The absurdity of invading and occupying a country while denying any desire to conquer it illustrated the difficulties the coalition encountered in trying to craft an inspiring image of victory.

Worries about appearing too militaristic also troubled the British debate about whether to hold a victory parade, a 'cavalcade' or a church service after the Iraq campaign. In the event, a 'multi-faith service of remembrance' was held at St. Paul's Cathedral, designed to be 'sensitive to other traditions, other experiences and other faiths', including Islam. As the Dean of St. Paul's explained: 'I don't believe in today's world we can have a national service behaving like little Brits' (*Independent*, 11 October 2003). Similar considerations applied beforehand, one journalist revealed:

> We were not allowed to take any pictures or describe British soldiers carrying guns. I was told that there was…a decision made by Downing Street…to not portray…the British fighting man and women as fighters.
> (*Correspondent*, BBC2, 18 May)

An inability to celebrate victory or to portray soldiers as fighters is symptomatic of elite incoherence; of the very 'absence of politics' that the war was supposed to address.

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Masculine Men

Derek Hird *explores Chinese conceptions of masculinity*

Having a coffee in any sleek coffee shop in China's major cities, one is surrounded by latte-sipping young Chinese male and female urbanites in smart office attire. Much has been written about the emergence of white-collar workers (*bailing*) in general, but little on white-collar men's attitudes and lifestyles. The idealization, since the 1990s of the white-collar man in urban China, is a response, though perhaps not a conscious one, to the search in the 1980s for a model of Chinese masculinity suitable for modern China.

MALE MODELS

There is a common narrative of historical masculinity in China. This outlines a process of emasculation of Chinese men that began in the Song dynasty (960—1279 AD), whereby men lost the vigorous martial valour they had once possessed and became the effete scholarly dreamers emblematic of men in the Qing dynasty (1644—1911 AD.) By the late Qing, reformists decided they needed to 're-masculinize' China; masculinity thus became part of the rhetoric of modernization and nationalism. By the early years of the Republic (1912—49) there had been a shift from a Confucian metaphysical conception of gender to a scientific biological perspective that posited essentialized gender identities. In these conditions – a physiological understanding of gender and a drive for re-masculinization – and in the face of colonial oppression, a strong male body became central to the establishment of a new kind of Chinese manliness.

After the Communists took power in 1949 the emphasis shifted towards giving women equal rights; many saw this as an attempt to masculinize women. However, by the early 1980s, with the introduction of economic reforms and a more open political climate, masculine and feminine characteristics were once more 'naturalized'. A strong search began for an authentic Chinese model of real manhood (*nanzihan*): this model was manifest in artistic works of the 'root-seeking movement' (*xungen yundong*), such as the 1987 movie *Red Sorghum* (*Hong Gaoliang*) with its portrayal of tough, earthy peasants; or in the 'manly' 'northwest wind' (*xibeifeng*) music craze of 1986—89. These works sought to build modern Chinese masculinity out of mythological Chinese characteristics. Softer males were derided as 'cream boys' (*naiyou xiaosheng*) – *xiaosheng* being a traditional role in Chinese opera representing a young refined romantic scholar. This more robust masculinity was finally, and fatefully, manifested, and then quashed, in the challenge to the state in Tiananmen Square in 1989.

UNIQUELY CHINESE

With the post-Tiananmen emphasis on intensified economic development and tighter political restrictions, white-collar masculinity has firmly established itself, in local and international men's lifestyle magazines, as a prominent discursive image.

Historically, the term 'white-collar' has been bestowed on Chinese office workers in foreign enterprises. Although numbers are expanding beyond this group, the overall percentage of white-collar workers remains relatively small: 4.1 per cent in one recent survey. Chinese white-collar masculinity is not simply an emulation of its forerunners in developed economies. Rather, global and local discourses and practices of masculinity combine to produce something uniquely Chinese: this both draws on and differs from masculinities in Chinese history *and* white-collar masculinities in developed economies. It reflects and shapes the 'new desired urban identity', projecting – as seen in the triumph of gentle balladeers in the pop market since the 1990s – a softer masculinity reminiscent of Confucian notions of refinement.

Alongside this 're-emasculation' of men *vis-à-vis* the state – compared to the more openly confrontational 1980s – lies a sense of heavy economic responsibility that men have for themselves and their families, and a general discomfort with the idea of a wife or girlfriend outshining men in career achievements. Feeling beleaguered by the state and higher achieving women, white-collar men generally eschew politics for enthusiastic consumerism. The adverts for cars, alcohol and men's clothing on CCTV 5, the state broadcaster's sports channel popular with men, tend to depict success and happiness in terms of white-collar male consumption.

For most urban men, a white-collar job, lifestyle and attendant wealth and status remain aspirations. In an increasingly pluralistic and competitive society, however, this dream has reached far into the imaginations of Chinese youth, more and more of whom are striving to make it their reality: so much so, indeed, that the white-collar man is now at the forefront of changing notions of manhood in contemporary China.

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Bhutan Broadcasting Service, which is on for a few hours each day.)

In undemocratic Bhutan, by contrast, life was better than it is in many democracies. (In the more than one hundred years of the Wangchuck dynasty's rule [1907—2008], a new, hereditary, monarch took the throne only four times: in 1926, 1952, 1972, and 2006). The state has provided substantial support for the population: education and healthcare are free, and until recently, educated people could get comfortable, permanent jobs of their choice in the civil service. While there is poverty in rural areas, there is no starvation (partly because of the strength of communities). Every Bhutanese had a right of final appeal to the king, and it was common for the landless to be granted land under the *kidu* (welfare) system.

Guided by the development philosophy of Gross National Happiness (GNH), which sees growth as a means to overall well-being, the new government has its work cut out. In a small domestic market it has to deliver better services to the population; the development of the country's infrastructure is hampered by a difficult terrain (a conservation commitment made in the constitution means 60 per cent of the country will remain under forest cover in perpetuity; and Bhutan's major resource and revenue earner is hydropower, which cannot be transported overseas); trade is affected by Bhutan's being landlocked between two rising powers, China and India, each with different approaches to governance; and international relations are conducted with development partners (aid-donor nations).

Bhutan has not blindly emulated development elsewhere. Not only has the pace of modernization been slow enough to avoid massive upheavals, but also modern trends have been 'indigenized'. For example, on the *Norling* private TV channel, Bhutanese fashion models walk the ramp in their *ghos* and *kiras* (traditional male and female dress); sometimes they also wear traditional masks. In the auditions for the 'Bhutanese Idol' TV show that began in April 2008, contestants competed in the three Bhutanese music genres: *zhungdra* (classical); *boedra* (folk); and *rigsar* (modern).

Public culture is – for the present, at least – not confrontational. This is evident, for example, in the ECB rules for the live presidential campaign TV debates: the audience was asked to not jeer or cheer (people understood that cheering one speaker might be construed as an insult to the opponent). Similarly, the two political parties voluntarily decided

> 'In undemocratic Bhutan life was better than it is in many democracies'

not to have political rallies (in a small society heavily charged political rivalry does not appeal to anyone).

What will be the likely characteristics of a democracy inherited as a 'responsibility' and not a 'right'? People will have high expectations of the new system that they have been persuaded to adopt; there is a strong chance that they will be disillusioned if promises are not kept. Local matters will be important: for example, the distance of settlements from the nearest road-head (this affects how quickly agricultural produce can be brought to markets); the maintenance of water channels, *lhakhangs* (temples) and mule tracks; increased rural electrification; and crop insurance.

In urban areas, the challenge is greater. In the absence of extended rural farming family setup, people have to be persuaded to care about their democracy as a responsibility; and there are specific long-standing problems on which government has to make progress (in addition to the universal problems such as unemployment and rural—urban migration, which will be addressed in the tenth five year plan, beginning in 2008). These problems include dust pollution from increasing construction; getting people to volunteer to help put out forest fires; stray dogs; and solid waste disposal (a landfill site near Thimphu, the capital, built in 1993 with a capacity of 8 metric tons per day for 10 years is still being used today – with waste levels at 35 tons per day).

In the years ahead, under the new governance system of parliamentary democracy, the notion of a Bhutanese 'national interest' may coalesce around the categories of sovereignty, economy, and the environment; accordingly, government policies may focus on reducing aid dependence by diversifying the economy; curbing corruption – especially in the construction industry, where it is perceived to be most rampant; lowering unemployment amongst urban youth; generating revenue by developing private sector enterprises; promoting commerce in those Bhutanese goods and services that have a niche market; and using resources wisely – for example, hydropower. The next five years (until elections in 2013) will test the performance of the world's youngest, almost unwilling, and yet awesome democracy.

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