

Cultural Debasement

by chris murray *Wednesday, Jul 12 2006, 5:56am*

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The systemisation of the words we use to describe "things" is part of our cultural debasement.

As women, poets and singers our great voices loved, love to describe, in Sylvia Plath's words: "The Thinginess of things". Personal items and their textures filled their songs and made their poems and their loss or fear of their loss were/are a personal tragedy.

The dispossession and its diaspora currently evinced in war, to our sisters is incalculable; it daily divorces women from the things that hold their stories, items which represent friendship, love and family. A small golden snail lives on my bookshelf. My son's fingerprints can be seen through the gilding effort. This is a thing, an intimate thing that is irreplaceable, but in a capitalist juggernaut economy it is an object, an item without value.

The systemisation of our words or their bastardisation through a false use of language, which is a result of narrowing democratic principles, endows it with a disposability -- conspicuous consumptions' sidekick. A small gingham dress, awaits in a drawer, this item tells the tale of the first steps of a little girl (she knows its story).

It is a micro-cosmic simplicity. When a museum is bombed/sacked or heritage wasted by the land grabbing propensities of the capital market the forces of debasement become macrocosmic.

In Ireland, words that accompany creeping systemisation go hand in glove with the erosion of democratic rights. Masculinist, they belong to the favourite expressions of a current Minister for justice, who is fond of talking of the triple arm of good governance: the offices of the state, the judiciary and the police.

The majority of women in Ireland are completely alienated from these democratic processes, we have an extremely low vote turnout, which results in inadequate numbers of women/female representation in parliament.

Favoured words used in gender-proofing and equality are "road-map", often used in relation to The Middle East. Prevailing notions of partnership, progress, prosperity lack balance as the female contribution is almost non-existent in the process of defining and endowing broadly used terms with meaning. The caudillo's that decide the meaning of 'progress' etc, tend to be male dominated.

Quasi-partnership aside; in the advancement of the Irish economy and the concomitant upscaled cost of living, fear dominates and the 'branding' of politics through visual means and language bastardisation leads to a type of hypnosis wherein things become valueless/priceless or easily disposable. Intimate family traditions are clung to and nostalgia is rife.

Fear therefore is the electoral partner, it creates a facility within the state for interference in private matters; it facilitates civil rights erosion. It turns elections and referenda into mockeries of true

democratic feeling. Women abstain from voting which results in lack of representation. We (women) are becoming willing partners in our own repression.

Prevailing systems and social structures promote alienation and create a willingness to participate in cultural debasement!

Cultural debasement equals divorce from community and collective identity, which in turn encourages a multitude of social ills.

Cleaves Alternative News. <http://cleaves.lingama.net/news/story-262.html>