Adventures of Two Captains' Trilogy and U.S Exceptionalism in their Foreign Policy: Manifestation of Think Tanks in a literary work

Ellias Aghili Dehnavi[1], Radoslaw Fiedler[2]

[1]Ph.D. candidate at Adam Mickiewicz university, Faculty of Political Science and Journalism, Poznan, Poland, ellagh@amu.edu.pl
https://orcid.org/0009-0001-9238-056X
[2]Full Professor at Adam Mickiewicz University, Faculty of Political Science and Journalism, Poznan, Poland,
radoslaw.fiedler@amu.edu.pl ORCID: 0000-0003-1573-9898

Abstract— International relations are often perceived as a dry discipline characterized by diplomacy, calculations and realpolitik. However, behind treaties, tariffs and statecraft lies a tapestry of stories, ideas and values that define how we see the world around us. All forms of literature have been used to explore international relations for many years because it provides an insight into human conflict experience among other things like cooperation and cultural exchange. Literature may be sweeping such as Tolstoy's "War & Peace" or biting satire like Orwell's "1984" but they all reveal what makes nations tick; why people do what they do on behalf of their country or themselves alone. In this paper review, we will look at some intriguing ways in which the Adventure of two captains trilogy, as a modern literary work, can shape (and reflect) our understanding about global politics plus tips on how reading more could turn you into a better citizen of the world – one who is empathetic, knowledgeable and reflective; we will also discuss how this work and most of its characters act like the components of a universal think tank with a dynamic mechanism of policy making on a regular basis.

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I. INTRODUCTION

While we try to figure out the world, it can be hard not to pay attention to what political scientists and historians say. However, have you ever thought that maybe there is a more detailed, compassionate and interesting way of understanding global politics? This is where literature comes in handy as an unrecognized hero of international relations. For centuries, writers have been able to express the human experience in such a way that they condense complex relationships between nations into understandable narratives which deeply touch us. Whether it is through large stories like those found throughout War And Peace by Leo Tolstoy or small personal tales such as Half Of A Yellow Sun by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie; books offer insights about life on earth that schoolbooks rarely do because they connect with our hearts instead of just our brains. Literature does this by sharing emotions behind international disputes alongside people's motivations and

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[1] Dehnavi, E. A., & Jafari, E. (2021). Adventures of two Captains as world literature. ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/355807774_Adventures_of_Two_Captains_as_World_Literature

universal events that can be seen from both close-up view points' as well vast ones, too; Adventures of two captains' trilogy, as a modern work is not an exception but rather a prominent example; the authors in this trilogy have created a metaphorical "Earth Politics" and deal with different ideology, regional policy and individual political philosophies all across the book[2].

In *adventures of two captains*, readers can witness the hard politics in the format of a "dynamic narration", this means that the notions and symbols are being personified in the format of connected stories and episodes; even some international relation presumptions that do not have external practices have been well displayed.[3] Other personifications found across the book deal with different topics of importance in the political sciences and international relations, i,e, foreign policy (in this case, the U.S foreign policy) and also real policy making centers (think tanks) this leads to the main question of this study: How Adventures of Two Captains depict the role of think- tanks in shaping exceptionalism tendency in the U.S foreign policy towards other countries? The proper hypothesis is that the adventures of two captains depict the role of think- tanks in shaping exceptionalism tendency in the U.S foreign policy by adopting a metaphorical political narration; this adoption can be explained through the post-modern theories of international relations, meaning buildings, signifiers and signified theoretical roles[4].

II.   THEORETICAL FRAME WORK

2.1   Post Modernism: Themes and notions.

As an approach to art, philosophy and culture, postmodernism arose in the 19th and 20th century, mostly as a response to the idea and principles of the modernism; it might seem to some extend radical to regard this theory a new paradigm (in other words, a revolutionary approach) but this theory has some revisionist beliefs at its core, this theory states that there exists no dominant belief and all the phenomenon has their own diversity and complexity; regarding its approach towards languages, postmodernists embrace the plurality of the languages and praise the idea of

intertextuality and meta-narratives, Postmodernism is believed to provide an alternative to fresh methods of analysis and thinking in knowledge, especially by prioritizing the principle of respecting differences in plural particularities, as a counter to the thesis of modernism which believes in the importance of the principle of uniformity and universality[5].

Building on the mentioned notions, adventures of two captains can be probed from a post-modernistic perspective, the core belief of this work is universal, multi-lateral with an emphasis regarding respecting the plurality of cultures and beliefs; the "inter-universal symbiosis "is a key term which attacks the unchanged belief of "difference" and this notions invites for a more organic togetherness among different cultures and notions.

2.2   Different Realities

Knowledge is contextually produced and shaped; therefore there exists no single reality as a direct production of some precise objective measurements; realities are subjective and inter-personal entities that can be shaped and perceived differently; imposed realities are not definite phenomenon and might change during the recognition and learning processes; metaphorical realities of this trilogy, through a reconstruction of the believed realities, open the perception corridors of the readers to the new worlds with their new belief system and hierarchy.[6]

2.3   Deconstruction of signifiers and the signified

Postmodernism, with its roots in deconstruction, aims to rebel against traditional identities and structures, in other words, through deconstruction post-modernists embrace a fluid and undefined sense of self. Through purposeful dismantling of established structures, we establish a space of disruption and growth, allowing for unique connections and innovative concepts to emerge[7]; adventures of two captains, through the use of metaphorical discourse, deconstruct the concreteness of notions and the signifiers.

III.   CONCEPTUAL DESCRIPTION

3.1   Think-Tanks in the U.S and the Foreign Policy[8]

[2] Dehnavi, E. A., & Amord, P. J. (2019). Adventures of Two Captains: an epic science fiction poem. ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/379565767_Adventures_of_Two_Captains_An_Epic_Science_Fiction_Poem

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3.2 An Abridged Comparative Study

Think Tanks are not modern unknown entities for the societies or the politicians, rather, they are socio-historical centers with various functions and perspectives; they can be divided into different categories based on their function, their funding resources or their dominant political orientation; these centers are different from their academic counterpart in a sense that they can influence the public policy and public opinion, something that universities or academic centers might not be quite successful at .[9][10]

These centers for interconnected policy making can influence the foreign policy of the countries through manipulating public opinion and the centers of power within one society, in the U.S, this interconnectedness is more visible than other countries for variety of reasons, first, think tank receive their main sources of funding from firms that hold the capital in circulation; these businessmen and businesswomen usually support the think tanks to advance their political preferences in higher hierarchy of one society (ideological tanks are prominent examples)[11] second, some political figures are among senior members of specific subnational* tanks, these officials might even step further to influence the foreign policy direction of the country in a particular era; example of such can be traced back to Georg Bush administration era when the neocons (PNAC)[12] influenced the policy making process involved in the U.S foreign policy and guided the country towards war and invasion of Iraq.

As being said, statistics and the linear line of history well prove that think tanks can and perhaps "should" influence the process of policy making; one can approach this idea from a post-modernistic perspective by stating that the tanks have the capacity to shape the narrations and reconstruct them in more pluralistic forms; in adventures of two captains, "**Black Star**" is a post-modern think-tank that is fluid and adoptive; black star is both ideological and practical, and to some extent, " specialist" readers can figure out that in most of the visited realms, the discussed initiatives in the black star are conveyed to the elites of that

society hoping for a deeper influence on their foreign policy blue prints[13].

3.3 Public Opinion and Exceptionalism in U.S foreign Policy

American exceptionalism has special linguistic attributions and during the course of history they have been repeatedly used by different scholars and historians; empire of liberty," a "shining city on a hill," the "last best hope of Earth," the "leader of the free world," and the "indispensable nation." These enduring tropes explain why all presidential candidates feel compelled to offer ritualistic paeans to America's greatness and why President Barack Obama landed in hot water — most recently, from Mitt Romney — for saying that while he believed in "American exceptionalism," it was no different from "British exceptionalism," "Greek exceptionalism," or any other country's brand of patriotic chest-thumping; but the truth is that the believers in American exceptionalism think it likely that the American political system, history and values are worth of an international admiration by other nations and countries around the world[14].

The spread of this ideology among the subjects of the American society can shape the public opinion of the mass in a way that they do not question the "actions and directions" of their politicians regarding the foreign policy of this country; This unchallenged faith in American exceptionalism makes it harder for Americans to understand why others are less enthusiastic about U.S. dominance, often alarmed by U.S. policies, and frequently irritated by what they see as U.S. hypocrisy, whether the subject is possession of nuclear weapons, conformity with international law, or America's tendency to condemn the conduct of others while ignoring its own failings. Ironically, U.S. foreign policy would probably be more effective if Americans were less convinced of their own unique virtues and less eager to proclaim them (same source-14) Metaphorical discourses presented among the lines of adventures have challenged this common belief and instead, have introduced a pluralistic direction that embrace the "good for the all" and praise the merits of collective actions;

s_in_the_American_Politics_Volume_II_Conservative_Think_Tanks_and_Their_Foreign_Policy_A_Booklet

[9] Think tanks (Research institutes & policy institutes). (2021, September 2). Career Advising & Professional Development | MIT. https://capd.mit.edu/resources/think-tanks-research-institutes-policy-institutes/

[10] Think tanks. (n.d.). Oxford University Careers Service. https://www.careers.ox.ac.uk/think-tanks

[11] Lewis, S. (2023, January 10). think tank. CIO. https://www.techtarget.com/searchcio/definition/think-tank

*subnational think tanks: These government-related think tanks work at smaller stages than the national level. For example, think tanks that focus on a specific state's policies.

[12] Project for the New American Century. (n.d.). The Library of Congress. https://www.loc.gov/item/lcwaN0011283/

**Black Star is the space shuttle in the adventures of two captains and is regarded to be the main headquarter for their mission control and planning.

[13] Dehnavi, E. A., & Amrod, P. J. (2021). Adventures of Two Captains Volume III: Home, Sweet Home! ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/379566625_Adventures_of_Two_Captains_Volume_III_Home_Sweet_Home

[14] Walt, S. M. (2019, May 9). The myth of American exceptionalism. Foreign Policy. https://foreignpolicy.com/2011/10/11/the-myth-of-american-exceptionalism/

the pluralistic notions of master "Yimina" are "counter-narratives" of the accepted earthling's exceptionalism; the captains as the counter-narrators of the accepted signifiers are spreading this newly embraced philosophy; through this way they imply the new connections between their own signifiers and the signified.

3.4 Deconstruction of the Narrations

"Discourse are not saying what they say" or "narrations are not for the sake of narrations" can be attributed to the notion of the deconstruction; we have to deconstruct a text in order to figure out the hidden meanings, or in other words, each text has a hidden meaning that can't be understood directly; meanings are deciphered in contrast and in opposition to their antonyms (and by antonyms, we mean a conceptual antonym) the meaning of being is understood when being juxtaposed to not being or nothingness.

In the realm of political philosophy, identities and political terms can be defined in the same way; democracy can be better understood when it's contrasted with terms of the same nature with different functions (in this case, dictatorship) thin tanks sometimes do the same to amplify the process of policy making in the American society, the PNAC juxtaposed the notions of democracy, human rights and the related concepts with other terms like weapons of mass destruction (and we all witnessed the consequences[1516]) the authors in the Adventures of two captains deconstruct the accepted mainstream's discourses (advertised oriented beliefs, etc.) and introduced the other side of the believed trends.

IV. CONCLUSION

Works of literature can convey a variety of meanings; these works can also bridge different fields of knowledge and broaden our understanding of various subjects; the nature of these works allow us to analyze works and events from new perspectives that we haven't experienced before. Adventures of two captains' trilogy acts as a political literary work; this project is filled with different political notions and hidden meanings and each political subject can be studies separately from a totally new horizon; in this paper, we went through the interconnectivity of disciplines, then narrowed down our scope to some specific political and philosophical terms (such as postmodernism, think tanks and foreign policy) and made a meaningful connection between them; it was then mentioned that adventures of two captains have employed a

deconstructivist method to discuss new narratives; besides, metaphorical political-l discourse have also been employed to show the function of some hard politics' theories in real life (think tanks and exceptionism style in foreign policy) works of literature and fiction can be effective in explaining some concepts that might seem difficult to define or understand in real life.

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[11] Lewis, S. (2023, January 10). Think tank. CIO. https://www.techtarget.com/searchcio/definition/think-tank

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