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This issue is dedicated to the loving memory of

Prof. John Hospers *(1918-2011)*
on his Birth Centenary, who was a Member of the Editorial Board of JCLA and contributed 'Art and Morality' for its first issue (1978)

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ARTICLES

The Return of Gulliver: Some Reflections on Terror and Identity

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Big ideologies die hard; to many people they still sound extremely attractive because, as such people think and feel, big ideology protects them from social disorder and uncertainty in everyday life.[1] At the bottom of any big ideology lies in fact a simple idea: the present state of affairs is bad, there are too many individuals who suffer. In order to give up sufferings, the present state of affaires must be radically changed. As an ultimate result, big ideology promises happy life to all who will follow it; those who will not are profoundly misguided.

Two *a priori* assumptions condition the existence of a big ideology: first, if not to join it now, history will move on the wrong track; second, it expresses the true will of the majority even if this majority is not yet conscious of the fact. Both assumptions are difficult to disprove; both offer a consistent model of behavior that may seem seductive especially to those who seek the exist from despair. Such was the case of the Weimar Republic which came into being basically as an outcome of what Max Weber called "the domestic political consequences of the disillusionment"[2] that had swept through millions in 1914. Having discovered the ineluctability of class struggle, German workers came back brought from the trenches the hatred of the old order. The sacrifices of the war should be paid, they hoped, by fundamental social changes. Germany was defeated; worse, it was knelt down by the Versailles Treaty came into force on 10 January 1920. It had affected the mass mood to the point where even the views of the most loyal citizens were contaminated. Another important event took place in 1914 when Kaiser

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Wilhelm II proclaimed *Burgfrieden* or domestic truce calling for all political parties, including the marginalized Social Democrats, to set up a fresh climate in the country. Truly, Kaiser's call-up gave the way to the concentration of so contrasting political forces that the soon coming of a big ideology seemed to be predestinated.

A similar situation happened in the post-Gorbachev Russia when the collapse of the communist idea was compensated by the diversity of political parties and the unprecedented freedom of the press. During the Yeltzin era the climate has lasted more or less untouched; politics in the country became a "family business," namely the Yeltzin family business (composed from a juggernaut of politicians and tycoons bounded by *qui pro quo* interests). The current Putin epoch, bearing resemblance to the Restoration in England when Charles II welcomed national spirits to mature, is aimed at the big idea again coercing acquiescence from tycoons and the press. The first are forced to calm down or go into exile; the second is put under a more severe control. Power, accumulated within the family, will be channeled into those institutions that can properly work on a new ideology,[3] the way that Putin conducts his restoration consists in putting strong stints upon the political ambitions of the super-rich.

As to the Weimar Germany, the big ideology born inside it owes its birth to the appeal for national self-identification. The government attempts to revamp the country doomed to failure; finally, no significant politician with liberal views could be safe at the time. Matthias Erzberger was assassinated in 1921 for the crime of signing the armistice agreement in 1918; Walter Rathenau, murdered in 1922,[4] was called "a Jewish traitor" for a signatory of the Rapallo with the Soviets. No idea without nationalistic rhetoric could really succeed in attracting masses; since 1920 the left movements started being marginalized rapidly. German Communists, who were making themselves after the Bolsheviks, wished an immediate Lenin-like takeover, however without any notable success. The word "völkisch"[5] became the linchpin of the right movement, no matter what differences the right movement had in tactics. Right leaders began leaving underground establishing their political organizations and parties: the most notorious is the German Workers' Party (subsequently the NSDAP) run by the railway worker Anton Drexler. This man was one of the first to appreciate Hitler's oratorical gift and gave him the chance.[6] By 1923 the epoch of lonely terrorists belonging to the underground political sects and hunting the condemned leaders came to the end. Since then terror against enemies was no longer the business of extremist groups but the way the Germans have seen to tie up national sentiment with the big idea.

Fighting With the Chaos: from Grozny to Colombo

Russia in the Yeltzin era has much in common with the Weimar Republic. If the latter marked the age of classical modernism when in politics, like in other arts, tools became more important than aims; Russia of this period entered the epoch of classical postmodernism when tools filled the vacuum left after the communist idea collapsed. Soon after that, many people in Russia got a feeling that all footings they had in former life are broken; old ideals turned out to be false almost overnight; nobody really knew the way to go; money became an indisputable value, practical and symbolical at the same time.[7] Important large-scale outcome of the collapse was, for Russians, to discover strangeness in themselves, a feeling that pushed the nation to seek for another identity. Capitalism and free market along with unlimited freedom of the press were the fundamentals of the epoch.

It is likely, I think, that this strangeness caused partly those political troubles that last until today. They are territorial and identical; all the rest is secondary. If the former empire ceased to exist, if there is no *primus inter pares* nation that leads all the others, than, consequently, there is no territory which may unite different nations and different histories into one homogeneous whole. The Chechnya case is the best illustration of what happened to the "big nation" and "small nation," earlier tied up by the same Soviet identity. The roots of the conflict lie in two dilemmas: one is Russian after the empire crashed, the second is Chechen. One is how to live on the large territory without big ideology, the second is how to live on the small territory within the big ideology. Historically, both dilemmas have been solving through the wars.

Let us look at it cursorily. Differences in the social structure of both societies are crucial. Russian society, even in the Soviet period, was more or less like any other Western society that has always had its aristocracy, classes and, as Marx would say, a ruling ideology. Chechens had never known aristocracy; traditionally, they had two types of person (it even can hardly be called classes) – the *uzden*, a free man, and the *lai*, a slave who worked on the land and was deprived of any civil rights. Chief decisions were normally taken by the elders of a village during their reunion,[8] the system having some similarity with the Greek polis[9] (in *Politics* VII 1326b Aristotle says that a state composed of too many citizens will not be the true polis). The Chechen society is a network of small communities or clans (*teips*) which are tightly interwoven one with another; everyone belongs to a particular village and clan. Marriage is very important since it makes two clans interact on the blood principle. *Teip* links the Chechen to his or her natal place, then to that of wife or husband, and by this to the whole people. Brotherhood is the spiritual ground for the nation; nobody will

ever deviate its rules if the person does not want to be expelled from it or even put to death. This is not just about Chechens but all the peoples of mountain who speak of themselves in terms of religious brotherhood. The Afghan mujahideen, having struggled against the Soviet army for almost a decade, did not change their usual way of thought, nor their psychological stability showed any signs of corruption. Robert Kaplan wrote about a mujahid warrior who lost the eye and the foot but regretted nothing.

His body belongs to Allah, he said; so there is nothing to complain.[10] The feature that distinguishes the mujahideen from other Islamic movements, including the Chechen, is that they have no ideology or a true leader like Arafat in Palestine or Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran. In other words, the mujahideen don't set up political goals because it is not clear for them to what such goals might serve.

Well, come back to Chechnya. Its history, like many other histories of small countries near a big neighbor, was turbulent. In 1816 a hero of Napoleonic Wars, Alexei Yermolov was appointed commander-in-chief of the Caucasus. Hungry for power, this man liked to say that his word must be for the natives (the peoples of the Caucasus) more inevitable than death. The Chechens for him were certainly an inferior race, all of them were treacherous, villains, robbers whose best destiny is to blindly obey the master.[11] In 1825-26 Yermolov set about war companies against the Chechens burning villages and punishing the rebellious. For him, as the British historian John Baddeley points out, to conquer the region "was a matter of a few short years at most."[12] The illusion disappeared when Imam Shamil held sway over the Islamic movement (*muridism*) and led resistance to the Russians for more than quarter a century (Shamil rests a mythic figure in Chechen history equal, perhaps, to Muhammad Ali of Macedonia). His final surrender took place in 1859, at the time he was famous as a national leader fighting the tsarist imperial policy; even Marx called him a democrat encouraging other debased peoples to follow his way. The Bolsheviks promised autonomy and freedom to construe a legal system based on the *sharī'ah* principle. More, when in 1920 the Soviet invasion on the Chechen territory brought about the Said Bek mutiny, Stalin, then the People Commissar on Nationalities, proclaimed an amnesty for participants if they recognize the Soviet power. The Autonomous Republic, conflated from *sharī'ah* constitutional laws and Soviet rhetoric, existed five years; the Bolshevik promise did not last more. In the middle of World War II, in February 1943, the Politburo mooted the idea of mass deportation of Chechens and Ingush to Kazakhstan as a punishment for their war crimes, as it was said. Mass deportation was at the time an usual practice.[13] Germans from the Volga and Ukraine were sent to Siberia; the small Karachais people, lived in the mountainous region

of Elbrus were expelled in the same 1943; Kalmyks, the Crimean Tatars, Muslim Turks, not to mention others, were uprooted from their natal places before and immediately after the war ended. The pivotal 1991 marked the Chechens' turn to the national identification, again. At the Congress held on 23-25 November Chechnya has been named a sovereign state; it stood on the eve of revolution. Its outburst happened when Jokhar Dudaev, elected in November 1990 Chairman of the Chechen National Congress and President in 1991, issued his first decree declaring Chechnya as an independent state.

Tellingly, before these last events Dudaev was not a nationalist, nor was he a person who has dreamed to requite the Soviet power for its wrongs; his military career was highly successful, in 1990 he held a rank of a major-general of the Soviet Army. A devoted nationalist and separatist Dudaev seems to become not earlier then the Congress took place when he has spoken of the greatest honor for the true Chechen to defend his motherland. The man who launched the Chechen rebellion against the empire was an all-product of the empire, who in 1969 married a daughter of his superior and spoke Russian as his mother tongue. This is a paradox of any big idea – political idea – that the individuals who once decided to fight it were previously its devotees. Dudaev's solution to the second dilemma formulated above was to get rid of such dilemma at all. Precisely, he tried to liberate the small territory from the big ideology by opposing the identity of the people (Brzezinski) and the soil to the latter. The move is correct if to remember that the deportation syndrome is still alive almost in every Chechen family. However, it was not all he did. He went further stating that the nation has been suffering for three hundreds years and all this time Chechens with more or less success are conducting resistance to Russians.[14] He came with the idea that he learned from the big ideology of communism: sufferings, this is what makes people feel unhappy and help unite them.

The Sri Lankan Civil War is another example of a long ethnic conflict or a *discrete war*, as we prefer to call it, within one country. On 23 July 1983, the organization known as *Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam* (LTTE, or, simply, the Tamil Tigers) undertook an insurgency against the government, its aim was to create an independent Tamil state named "Tamil Eelam" (*tamiḷ īḷam*)[15] in the North and the East of the island. This discrete war lasted twenty six years (and cost about 100,000 lives), until May 2009 when the Sri Lankan military forces finally defeated the Tamil Tigers and brought the conflict to an end. Although the way the Tigers had conducted their struggle was named "terrorist" by thirty two countries, including the US and the majority of European states, the Sri Lankan militaries were often accused of human rights abuses, impunity for severe human rights violation, and the like. The

Israeli Army, perhaps, better than anybody else, knows such accusations when it undertakes a military operation against the Palestinian terrorists or answers to the Hamas attacks. This fundamental ambiguity, which we might call *desultory politics*, is one of the crucial features of today's political consciousness as a whole. A "terrorist" is a category of political ontology, more precisely: a gauged evil necessary for expending and balancing the current power. Such a gauged evil should not be destroyed, like the slave, according to Hegel, but kept as a guarantee of the power's living forces and its legitimacy. Power includes the terrorist in its own ontology, and doing so, it legitimizes its presence to an extent that he or she can act, even *contra* the state power, if this *contra* contributes to the extension of the power's physical and symbolical territory.

The origins of the Sri Lankan Civil war can be traced back, perhaps, to December 1948 when just after Independence a controversial law called "Ceylon Citizenship Act" was passed by the Ceylon Parliament in which the Tamil ethnic minority was actually discriminated by making impossible for them to obtain the citizenship. Then the Parliamentary Elections Amendment Act of 1949 reduced the representation in parliament of minorities to some 18 per cent. About 700,000 Indian Tamils rest "aliens," to use the term of the Latvian government applied to the Russians of Latvia after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In 1956 Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike passed "Sinhala Only Act" that changed English for Sinhalese as the only state language of the country. It was considered as an action against the Sri Lankan Tamil speaking population to keep them aside from working in the civil and public service in Ceylon. Needless to say, the overwhelming majority of Tamil speakers saw the Act as a deliberate linguistic wall between the two peoples. Finally, about 10 per cent Sri Lankan national population was deprived of their vote, nevertheless the Indian Tamils did participate in taking other constitutional decisions. During the next three decades around 300,000 Tamils were forced to return to India and only in 2003 all Indian Tamils were finally granted citizenship.

Nationalism owes much to Marx, although its leaders often silence the fact. The Marxist conception of an individual as a societal creature closely linked with the others is of crucial importance to any nationalist movement. Individual human being necessarily belongs to a class, if the class suffers, human being too, for Marx; nationalism replaces the idea of class with that of nation, leaving untouched the very concept of dependence. One may identify himself or herself only through the communication with others; being grouped with them in whatever form, class or national, individual acquires self-consciousness. But the true self-consciousness of a person implies freedom that he or she enjoys in society, the latter must guarantee it to any individual. In the capitalistic

society proletariat is suffering because it has no freedom at all, it cannot there become self-conscious without removing the cause of its suffering – the capitalistic mode of production alienating the worker from the material goods he produces. The capitalist machinery exploits the worker in a way that puts him into inhuman conditions.[16] In other words, Marx leaves no choice for proletariat save to overthrow its exploiters and acquire its self-consciousness founding a new type of society.

The idea of national liberation has much in common with this conception. A big ideology, supported by the strong military machine, alienates other peoples from the national identity depriving them of their territory (as in the case of Chechnya or Palestine) or of their history (Jews in the Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella). Marx has never denied terror (active struggle) as a weapon against the capitalist evil. Modern nationalism used it against the ramshackle regimes in the former colonial countries as Libya, Iraq or Sudan; contemporary Islamic extremists, Hezbollah or al-Qaeda, use terror to liberate not just a particular territory but spiritual values of Islam oppressed, as they claim, by the Western civilization. This marks a significant step further toward the radicalization of terror. At the initial stage, when Arab nationalists struggled for the liberation of their countries, the organized terrorism has been regarded as a tool to beat the big ideology of colonialism; terrorist groups were the angels of death (having no separate idea except that of the movement they belonged to). When after the 1952 army coup dismissed king Farouk, the colonel Abdel Nasser seized the power in Egypt, he soon established his influence over the Middle East by appealing to Arab national dignity meant a military stand against Israel and a direct support of Yasser Arafat's PLO; at that time Arafat already had the groups of suicidal fighters (fedayeen/ *fidā'iyīn*) who have been sent from the Egyptian-controlled Gaza Strip to Israel with death tasks. Notorious among the fedayeen were Abu Jihad (the nickname of Khalil al-Wazir, head of *Muslim Brotherhood*), who later took the chair of Arafat's deputy commander after the creation of Fatah in Kuweit, and Abu Iyad who run the group of kamikazes. Abu Jihad was born in Ramla and was a refugee in Gaza, but has identified himself as a Palestinian; Abu Iyad is originally from Jaffa, also a Gaza refugee who initially viewed his part in the organization to help the Palestinians conduct the struggle. None of them, including Arafat, had special political program to offer and all kinds of militant groups, competing one with another in tactics, professed Nasser's pan-Arabic worldview depending on him also economically. In 1955 Arafat, of course, could complain that Nasser kept him on a tight leash for fear of Israeli attacks, limiting his activities as one of guerilla leaders but he was certainly unable at the time to move away from the master. Once Nasser decided to take the fedayeen under his control, Arafat

got nothing to oppose except his emotional outbursts. The time was complex, the Suez Canal crisis finally exploded into open warfare, in October 1956. France and Israel negotiated with England to invade Egypt and minimize it in size. As a result, Israel occupied the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip, killed several hundreds fedayeen, England fdxand France occupied cities along the Canal. When Nasser, one year before these events, put the political interests of his country at first place, forcing guerilla enthusiasts to calm down, he has definitely kept in mind a more global project than to cover his Palestinian protégées.

Any big ideology has not only its political masters but also the intellectual gurus; Arab nationalism is not an exception. Michel Aflaq was the man who played the role. Born in Damascus in 1910, he was a Greek Orthodox Christian spent some three years (1928–1930) studying philosophy at the Sorbonne. List of his readings included Marx, Nietzsche, Lenin, Mazzini, and German proto-Nazi thinkers, as Moeller van den Bruck and Houston Chamberlain,[17] whose ideas influenced him much. After his return from France Aflaq is active in Arab student politics with his countryman Salah Bitar, a Sunni Muslim. Young people hailed Hitler and the rise of the Nazi party as well as they took the Bolsheviks and their leader as the most suitable example for the Arab case. Nevertheless, intellectually Aflaq seemed to be under the spell of the Germans more than under somebody else's influence. In 1940 in Damascus he grounded an initially small society called *the Movement of Arab Renaissance* that in 1947 turned into the Ba'ath party (the word *ba'ath* means "renaissance, resurrection" in Arabic). A decade later the Ba'ath party had grown into a leading force in the political life of Syria, Aflaq was recognized as a chief ideologist of Arab national renaissance. An eclectic doctrine, mostly composed from German nationalism, some Nazi motives and European socialist teachings, it fell on the right place and at the right time. The Arabs, whose more or less active resistance to Western presence on their territory was based on religious principles, needed a consistent political theory capable to show the future route.

"Unity, Freedom, Socialism" were the main points to which Aflaq gave much weight in his expositions. If to leave aside for a moment the fact that among Aflaq's devoted disciples was Saddam Hussein who used the ideology to shape from Iraq a sort of extreme secular state, Aflaq has never considered his ideas as the open call for terror against the infidels. Instead, he stressed Arab superiority over other cultures and its natural and ideal harmony with the divine law (*Shari'at Allāh*) of the world order. Islamic universe, grounded on the *Shari'a* model of society, achieved all that others nations only wished to achieve. So, the Arabs don't need Western creatures such as the state or

technology. The Algerian theorist Rashid Boudjedra, giving support to Aflaq, says that Islam is "incommensurable with the modern state"[18] and therefore any attempt to jam Islam in the limits of the state will necessarily fail.

Again, at the golden age of Arab nationalist movement, in its political form (Nasser) and in the cultural one (Aflaq) large-scale terror was not (and could not) the key weapon used against the other. Neither Arab state leaders, nor the thinkers wished to terrorize the whole civilisation to reach their target. Why? Because it was incompatible with the very idea of Islam as an authentic spiritual system aiming at keeping the Arab highest values in purity, untouched by the means the Westerners have always put at work on their territories fighting each other throughout history. It was a romantic period on the way the Arabs have been seeking for their identity in the world. Since last two decades the vision of terror was radically changed; terror or Jihad was transfigured in a Western type of big ideology when it sets up the global tasks and uses newest technological achievements. The latest example: the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (*ad-Dawlah l-Islāmiyyah*), a quasi-state organization founded in 2006 which considers itself as a contemporary caliphate. It claims the religious authority over the neighbouring Muslim regions including Jordan, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon among others. The Islamic State represents in fact the same kind of political psychosis as the wishes of the old Stalinists to restore the Soviet *belle époque*. This semi-physical, semi-symbolical Islamic network has neither fixed territories nor it grants citizenship; no country ever recognized its legitimacy, whence the idea of 'calipahte'. It has about 55,000 fighters in Syria and Iraq who claimed responsibility for attacks against civilians. Although its al-Qaeda origins are quite obvious, despite the ideological clashes with the latter, the Islamic State's initial goal was to establish a caliphate rule over the Sunni regions of Iraq, but after its involvement in the Syrian Civil war, it included the Sunni population of Syria as well.

Notes

[1] Jürgen Habermas points to the inutility of big ideologies (*totalle Ideologie*) such as communism in the technological era. They will be removed by new communicative relationships grounded in professional and corporative networks, he thinks. Habermas develops this idea mainly in his two books: Habermas, 1968 and 1982. I disagree with him on this point, and I will argue why in this paper. Less romantic is Slavoj Žizek who writes that the person within totalitarian ideology needs the lie it tells him or her. Cf. Žizek, 1993.

[2] Weber, *Zur Frage des Friedensschlusses*, in Weber, p. 65.

[3] The Moscow-based journalist and scholar Yevgenia Albats criticizes the Russian President for his unwillingness (or impotence) to give the state support to the small

and middle business which could have contributed much to render democracy in Russia stable. "Instead, she writes, Putin "<…> has brought Russian-style order without any law," (*Washinghton Post*, 24 Sept.) that signifies a turn to former bureaucratic rule with corruption at any level of society. A quite pessimistic view, however, it is not totally unlikely, if a tendency to smother basic freedoms has developed.

[4] In his book *The Revolt of the Masses*, published in 1932, Jose Ortega y Gasset meditates on the this murder. His conclusion is that an intellectual like Rathenau, no matter how good or bad he is, could not remain on the German political scene because he had nothing to saturate the political appetite of the masses. Cf. Ortega y Gasset, 1983. I think there was also another reason: Rathenau was killed by the members of a terrorist group shared the extreme chauvinistic ideas, at least one of them, Erwin Kern, was a member of the *Freikorps* out of which Ernest Röhm will later shape his notorious SA. For details see Waite, 1952. Rathenau was an ideal target for terrorists to demonstrate their principles of self-identification.

[5] It was a concept invented in the nationalistic circles of Germany long before the classical modernity. Its clear appearance may be dated by the mid of the XVIII century when K. Jahn established sportive camps in the forests where he had taught the youth the idea of one blood and one soil. In the second half of the XIX century *völkisch* theories were popular in Austria, it resulted in the Pangermanism of G. Schönerer (tellingly, the intellectuals who stood behind the movement were such murky gurus as Hugo von List and Franz Liebenfels preoccupied with the idea of Aryan purity). In the pre-Hitler Germany the völkisch ideology and socialism gained its numerous followers after the World War I; it was never strong as at that time. George Strasser, who might have been an alternative to Hitler and whose political views were much more socialist than nationalist, repeated that to separate the essence of the social from the concept of nation is to ignore the basic fact that it is the people who actually compose the body of a nation itself.

[6] Cf. Drexler, 1919. As it usually happens, after Hitler has grown in a quite noticeable figure, Drexler changed his impressions about him imposing on Hitler responsibility for schism in the party. Interestingly, in *My Life* Leo Trotsky addresses many similar accusations to Stalin who was, in Trotsky's mind, the traitor of revolution.

[7] This phenomenon is new for the country whose cultural paradigm has never given much weight to the money. From this point of view, communism with its disparaging attitude to personal wealth seems to be well encoded in Russian mental history. Just to mention Fedor Dostoevsky's novels where money and wealth bring about sufferings and unhappiness. Cf. also Pipes, 1974.

[8] The French anthropologist Ernest Chantre (1843-1924), who conducted his fieldwork among the Chechens in the XIXth century, noted that the Chechens formed several separate communities placed under the rule of a popular assembly. Today they live as people unaware of class distinctions. They are very different from the Circassians whose gentry occupies a very high place. Cf. Chantre, 1885-1887.

[9] Moses Finley notes that: "[polis] was people acting in concert, and therefore they must be able to assemble and deal with problems face to face." Cf. Finley, 1991, p. 56.

[10] R. D. Kaplan, *Soldiers of God*, (New York, Vintage Books: 1990), p. 7.

[11] Jews have been given similar definitions by the Nazi propaganda, especially in such issues as *Der Sturmer* headed by Julius Streicher. Obviously, the idea of an inferior nation was known to all big ideologies based on the principle of one privileged nation (for the cosmopolite Bolsheviks the inferior were the capitalists). For more details: Taguieff, 2002.

[12] Baddeley, 1908, p. 136.

[13] Cf. Gall, Waal, 1997, p. 37 and passim.

[14] The word is derived from the ancient Tamil name *īḷam* (also spelled *iẓham* that corresponds to the Tamil classical pronunciation) denoting Sri Lanka. The old Tamil lexicons, such as *Thivākaram, Pingkalam, and Chodāmani*, mention the *īḷam* as "gold, pearl." Similarly, the word *Eelavar* (*īḷavar*) is associated with the caste of toddy tapers living in the South of Kerala (India). Cf. for details Sitampalam, 2008; Stokke, Ryntveit, 2000.

[15] The idea of proletariat, which Marx formulated at the early stage of his philosophical development, was never significantly changed: " <…> total loss of humanity [by proletariat] … can only redeem itself by a total redemption of humanity… When the proletariat announces the dissolution of the hitherto existing order of things, it merely announces the secret of its own existence because it is the effective dissolution of this order…" Cf. Marx, 1964, p. 58-59.

[16] The eminent economist and political thinker van den Bruck wrote in his *Das dritte Reich* (Berlin, 1888) where he invented the notion. The key book of Chamberlain, got deep appreciation in Hitler (some say it was Hitler's bedside book), was called *Grundlagen des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Foundations of the XIXth century) published in 1899 in Berlin. For further details Lane, Rupp, 1978.

[17] Cf. Shayegan, 1989, p. 42.

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India and the Virtuous Indian in Dante

Ephraim Nissan

Introduction

Whereas in his *Divine Comedy*, the Italian poet Dante Alighieri (1265–1321) strove to embrace orthodoxy even as he was castigating such members of the clergy (even popes) he considered sinful, the fact deserves attention that when he cleverly raises an objection concerning the virtuous yet unbaptised, and how it could be fair that they would be denied spiritual salvation, he does so by providing as an example the virtuous Indian who does not know Christianity, or at any rate has not adopted it. Dante the author avoids having Dante the character voice that objection; rather, he has a mystical being in Heaven read his mind, expound the problem, and provide an answer that makes an important concession. What did Dante know about India, on the evidence of his writings? The present study is concerned with these matters.

Geography in Gabrieli's *Dante e l'Oriente*

References to India in Dante's writings, and in the *Divine Comedy* in particular, do sporadically occur.[1] We are going to quote a relevant passage from Giuseppe Gabrieli's book *Dante e l'Oriente* (1921a). Cf. Gabrieli (1921b). Gabrieli had previously published ([1919] 1920) *Intorno alle fonti orientali della Divina Commedia* [*Concerning the Oriental Sources of the Divine Comedy*], and in the controversy about whether Islamic sources had influenced the *Divine Comedy*, he sided with those generally favourable to that hypothesis, but he was opposed to how Asín Palacios in particular had dealt with the matter.[2]

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Chapter 2 of *Dante e l'Oriente, "L'Oriente geografico di Dante*", begins by identifying cosmographical sources available to Dante, then briefly surveys developments in ideas about the location of the Earthly Paradise during the Middle Ages, and next turns to actual geography. That part in that chapter comprises a list of regions or countries, and before turning to a list of cities, Gabrieli concluded the list of countries as follows (where *Mon.* stands for *De monarchia*, *Inf.* stands for *Inferno, Purg.* stands for *Purgatorio*, and *Par.* stands for *Paradiso*):

[FENICIA] (*Par.* XXVII, 83-84),
FRIGIA (*Mon.* II, III, 63),
ASSIRIA (*Mon.* II, IX, 23; *Purg.* XII, 59),
PERSIA (*Purg.* XXVI, 21),
INDIA (*Inf.* XIV, 32; *Par.* XIX, 69–70 ecc.).

In Canto 14 of *Inferno*, blasphemers are punished. The *terzina* at lines 28–30 relates that Dante sees fire come down similarly to snow when it falls. Then the next *terzina* (lines 31–33) states that the like of this, Alexander the Great had seen in India; that *terzina* is as follows:

Quali Alessandro in quelle parti calde
d'Indïa vide sopra 'l süo stuolo
fiamme cadere infino a terra salde,

[Such as Alexander in those hot parts
Of India saw over his hosts
Flames fall solid down to earth,]

Dante Inquires about the Spiritual Fate of the Virtuous Indian

In Canto 19 of *Paradiso*, the souls that in the heaven of the planet Jupiter are aggregated together into the Eagle solve a problem which Dante proposes (but Dante does not need to state the problem, as the eagle reads his mind and provides an answer right away), and later in the same canto the souls in the Eagle criticise harshly the kings of Christendom reigning in the year 1300. In the answer given by the eagle, there is this *terzina* (lines 70–72):

ché tu dicevi: "Un uom nasce a la riva
de l'Indo, e quivi non è chi ragioni
di Cristo né chi legga né chi scriva;

[As thou hast said: "A man is born on the bank
Of the Indus, and there is nobody there who would think
Of Christ, nor any who would read or write;]

It is a problem of theodicy. The next two terzine are as follows:

e tutti suoi voleri e atti buoni
sono, quanto ragione umana vede,
sanza peccato in vita o in sermoni.

Muore non battezzato e sanza fede:
ov'è questa giustizia che 'l condanna?
Ov'è la colpa sua, se ei non crede?".

[And all his wishes and deeds, good
They are, as far as human reason sees,
Without sin in life or in discourse.

He died unbaptised and without [the true] faith:
Where is this justice that condemns him?
Where is his fault, if he does not believe?"]

The reply Dante is given is that nobody who does not believe in Christ has ever gone to Heaven or will ever go there, but on the Day of Judgement (when humankind shall be parted into two "collegi", one of them to be eternally rich in the sense of spiritual reward, and the other one a loser), many who proclaim they are Christian will be judged worse than some non-Christians (lines 103–111):[3]

esso ricominciò: «A questo regno
non salì mai chi non credette 'n Cristo,
né pria né poi ch'el si chiavasse al legno.

Ma vedi: molti gridan "Cristo, Cristo!",
che saranno in giudicio assai men prope
a lui, che tal che non conosce Cristo;

e tai Cristian dannerà l'Etïòpe,
quando si partiranno i due collegi,
l'uno in etterno ricco e l'altro inòpe.

[He started again: "Into this kingdom
Never ascended any who did not believe in Christ,
Neither earlier nor later than he was nailed to the wood [of the Cross].

But look: there are many who exclaim "Christ, Christ!"
And who when judged, will be much less close
To him, than somebody who does not know Christ,

And some Christian will damn the [unbaptised] Ethiopian
When the two groups shall depart,
One forever rich, and the other deprived.]

It was especially this passage, which appears to imply that the virtuous infidels' place is in the Limbo rather than in Hell proper, that led Rodolfo Mondolfi, a school headmaster in Livorno, a Jew and a man of letters, to conclude in his *Gli Ebrei. Qual luogo oltremondano sia per essi nella Commedia di Dante* (Mondolfi 1904: an essay of 12 pages) that Dante placed the Jews in the Limbo — but it probably was wishful thinking on Mondolfi's part: the lowest place in the Cocytus, itself the lowest place in Dante's Hell is the Giudecca, in

context so named after Judas Iscariot, and yet, *Giudecca* was a medieval name for a Jewish neighbourhood. Dante relegates traitors and presumably the Jews (as can be inferred by the name *Giudecca* he gives the very bottom of Hell) to the very bottom of Hell, in the Ninth Circle, where they are immersed in a frozen lake (the fourth, and worst, section is the Giudecca, reserved to traitors of one's benefactors): the river Phlegethon changes name "in becoming the Cocytus when it reaches the bottom of Hell" (Cachey 2010: 333).

In Medieval Italian, the Giudecca was the Jewish neighbourhood in a town (and is different from the Ghetto, as instituted in the early modern period, in that residence just in the Ghetto was compulsory, rather than the Jews' own choice). Dante's Giudecca at the bottom of Hell is on the face of it so named because Lucifer is chewing the body of Giuda, i.e., Judas Iscariot. And yet, Dante's choice to name the place *Giudecca* is far from innocent: it arguably implies that in Hell, it is the Jew's Place, the place of all Jews since the Passion. (Cf. Sylvia Tomasch's "Judecca, Dante's Satan, and the Displaced Jew" [1998].)

We cannot know for sure that such was Dante's intention however, because Dante the narrating character passes through the Giudecca in a hurry, and this because Dante the poet was constrained by the fixed size of a canto: in the last canto of the *Inferno*, he had to relate about his passage through the Giudecca, then he is describing the body of Lucifer, then describing how he and Virgil pass through a tunnel from the centre of the earth to the shore of the island of Purgatory (at the antipodes of Jerusalem); so crammed is the last canto of the *Inferno*, that Dante's apparently had no room to dwell on encountering the denizens of the Giudecca, but the latter's very name is quite eloquent.

As for the frozen lake at the bottom of Dante's Hell, note that ancient Egyptians already imagined a "lake of criminals" in the afterlife. Concerning "valley of darkness" in *Psalms* 23:4, Gary Rendsburg writes (2001: 189): "As far as I am able to determine, no one has pointed to the equivalent Egyptian expression *nt kkt* 'valley of darkness', occurring most notably in the Book of the Dead, spell 130,[5] as a place to which the deceased will not go on account of his righteousness (parallel to 'lake of criminals' and other expressions)".

In contrast to Dante's conceding that the virtuous yet unbaptised Indian would not go to Heaven (thus conforming with dogma), and yet on the Latter Day, that infidel would be closer ("prope") to Christ than some Christians who proclaim "Christ, Christ" and yet go on sinning severely — in Hinduism, Knut Jacobsen writes (2009: 386):

> Naraka, niraya or hell is a possible destination after death, as a punishment for evil deeds, but not usually as a damnation caused by wrong faith as in the Western religions of Christianity and Islam. Hindu inclusivism can mean that all religions are considered as valid means leading to the same salvific

> goal. Hindu gurus who attract an international audience often encourage devotees not to change religion since it is not necessary and does not in itself serve any purpose.

And then again in contrast, an apparently early *hadith* in Islam goes as far as reserving different levels of hell to different faith communities. Einar Thomassen writes (2009: 407–408):

> One aspect that received considerable attention by later Muslim writers was the topography of hell. The Qur'an itself gives few details on this topic, though it does state, in 15:44, that Jahannam "has seven gates; for every gate there shall be a separate party of them" (that is, of those who have gone astray). A widespread interpretation of this verse, attested in a relatively early *hadith*, was that hell had seven levels. Each of these levels came to be associated with one of the names employed for hell in the Qur'an, and to each level a specific category of inmates was assigned. The result was the following architecture:
>
> 1. *Jahannam*, reserved for Muslims who have committed grave sins;
> 2. *al-Laza*, the Blaze, for the Jews;
> 3. *al-Hutama*, the Consuming Fire, for the Christians;
> 4. *al-Sa'ir*, the Flame, for the Sabaeans;
> 5. *al-Saqar*, the Scorching Fire, for the Zoroastrians;
> 6. *al-Jahim*, the Hot Place, for the idolaters;
> 7. *al-Hawiya*, the Abyss, for the hypocrites.[6]

It is interesting to note that a main motive in this elaboration is the placement in hell of the various non-Muslim groups, a fact which confirms the impression that an important function of the idea of hell in Islam is to effect identity construction and boundary demarcation vis-à-vis "the other".[7] On the other hand, Islamic tradition also witnesses a different type of systematization, in which the various levels or regions of hell are distinguished in accordance with the types of sinners consigned to each of them and/or the types of punishments inflicted.

Telling the Time, and Daylight in Relation to the Ganges

The River Ganges is mentioned in the first three *terzine* of *Purgatorio*:

> Già era 'l sole a l'orizzonte giunto
> lo cui meridïan cerchio coverchia
> Ierusalèm col suo più alto punto;
>
> e la notte, che opposita a lui cerchia,
> uscia di Gange fuor con le Bilance,
> che le caggion di man quando soverchia;
>
> sì che le bianche e le vermiglie guance,

là dov'i' era, de la bella Aurora
per troppa etate divenivan rance.

[Already the sun had reached the horizon
Whose meridian circle covers
Jerusalem with its highest point;

And night, that goes in circle opposite to him [i.e., to the sun],
Had come out of the Ganges with Libra,
Which falls off her [i.e., the night's] hand when she is above;

So that the white and vermilion cheeks,
There where I was, of the comely Aurora [Dawn]
Owing to exceeding age were turning orange.]

That is to say, on the shore of the island of Purgatory Dante was seeing that dawn was giving way to daylight. As Dante believed the Earth to be a globe, he was able to indicate the position of the sun with respect to Jerusalem (at the antipodes of the island of Purgatory), setting down as seen from Jerusalem, whereas the night was about to arrive there from India. The constellation of Libra, Dante states, could still be seen early in the night, but no longer later during the night.

Canto 17 of *Purgatorio* relates a vision Dante has in a dream, and his entrance into the Earthly Paradise. The first two *terzine* of Canto 17 are as follows, and identify the time in the day, there at the summit of the mountain of Purgatory, with respect to the position of the sun, now visible over the River Ganges:

Sì come quando i primi raggi vibra
là dove il suo fattor lo sangue sparse,
cadendo Ibero sotto l'alta Libra,

e ['n] l'onde in [or: il] Gange da nona rïarse,
sì stava il sole; onde 'l giorno sen giva,
come l'angel di Dio lieto ci apparse.

[Just as when he [the sun] makes his earliest rays vibrate
There where his maker shed the blood, [i.e., in Jerusalem, the place of the Passion]
As Ibero [the river Ebro in Spain] was falling under Libra standing high,

And the waves in the Ganges from the ninth hour he was heating again,
So the sun stood; hence, the day was going away,
When the glad angel of God appeared to us.]

In his commentary to the *Divine Comedy*, published in Venice at the Tipi del Gondoliere in 1837 in two volumes, Niccolò Tommaseo[10] at this point, in his gloss to the word "quando", explained plainly: "Il sole nel Purg. tramontava, in Gerusalemme nasceva. Quando il sole in Ariete nasce a Gerusalemme, è ora di nona sul Gange, fiume d'Oriente" ("The sun in Purgatory was setting,

in Jerusalem it was rising. When the sun in Aries rises in Jerusalem, it is the hour of the nones on the Ganges, a river of the Orient"). Then, in the next gloss, Tommaseo signalled, for Dante's lexical selection "vibra", a parallel in Boethius ("Subito vibratus lumine Phoebus", i.e., "the Sun, suddenly vibrant with light") which presumably inspired Dante to describe sunrise similarly.

The next gloss signals a textual variant of the first line of the second *terzina*: the text in Tommaseo's edition reads "E 'n l'onde in Gange da nona rïarse", but Tommaseo signals that some others read "E 'n l'onde in Gange da nona rïarse" (with the article "il" instead of the preposition "in"), and those adopting that variant reading, Tommaseo wrote, explain: Libra is opposite to Aries; Libra is on the meridian of Spain, whose river Ibero, i.e., Ebro (Iberus, mentioned by Statius) flows at that time under Libra. At that very time, as the river Ganges flows into the waves of the sea, these are very hot, because the sun warms them: it is the ninth hour, [but at its beginning, thus] at noon. Tommaseo continued: Aries is distant from Libra one quarter of a circle. He then stated that he himself rather read: "E 'n l'onde in Gange" ("And in the waves in the Ganges"), providing his own explanation for his reading: the sun in Purgatory was about to set, which was as it makes his earliest rays vibrate in Jerusalem, and as it makes its rays vibrate in the Ganges,[11] whose waves are made very hot by the ninth hour. Tommaseo continues by stating that then the line beginning with "cadendo" is like a parenthesis, and the sense of the verb *cadere* (which is usually 'to fall') here is the same as the sense of *trovarsi*, 'to find oneself', 'to be', and indeed the latter sense is (Tommaseo avers) frequent for *cadere*. The next gloss is to "Ibero"; Tommaseo quotes Solinus, "Iberus amnis totae Hispaniae nomen dedit" ("The river Ebro gave its name to the whole of Spain").

Tommaseo, in his glosses to the first line of the next *terzina*, the line about the Ganges, criticised Dante: "Il periodo è troppo involuto, e la erudizione geografica troppo" ("The syntax of the sentence is too complicated, and geographical erudition is too much"). He continues with the allegorical understanding (already current since the Middle Ages) of Dante's description: sunset is the hour of luxury, the angel is one's conscience, and Virgil stands for reason. The angel and Virgil enable Dante to overcome temptation. Then Tommaseo quotes from *Psalms*: "Probasti cor meum, et visitasti nocte: igne me examinasti" ("Thou triedst my heart, and visitedst by night: Thou examinedst by fire"). This is the incomplete first hemistich of *Psalms* 17:3 according to the *Vulgate*, but the sense of the Hebrew original is not identical: "Thou examinedst by fire" is just one word in Hebrew (three in Latin), and two Hebrew words follow, which mean: "Thou foundest not [anything wrong]".

The Ganges and Francis of Assisi

Another mention of the Ganges is found in Canto 11 of *Paradiso*. It is the canto of St. Francis. As usual in the *Divine Comedy*, Dante does not say directly what he means, and rather lets the reader infer it. Instead of stating that Francis was born in Assisi, he names other places in the region. In the place that the reader has to infer, "nacque al mondo un sole, / come fa questo talvolta di Gange" (lines 50–51) ["a sun was born into the world, / As this [the real Sun] does sometimes out of the Ganges"].

This analogy may be baffling, as if sunrise in India is meant, sunrise happens all over the world. Rather, the birth of Francis of Assisi is being likened to a turning point, to daybreak in a country (to Dante in the Far East) where sunshine, when (as opposed to the night) there is daylight, the sun is hot and shining.

The Ganges in Dante's *Quaestio de aqua et terra*

In Chapter 2 in his *Dante e l'Oriente*, Giuseppe Gabrieli concluded the list of seas and rivers with the following:

> l'INDO (*Par.* XIX, 71), il GANGE (*Purg.* II, 5; XXVII, 4; *Par.* XI, 51; *Aq. et Terra* XIX, 40–3).

Aq. et Terra stands for Dante's *Quaestio de aqua et terra* (*The Question of the Water and the Earth*), of which White (1902) is a translation into English. Alain Campbell White (by whose times, the authenticity of the ascription of that work to Dante was still controversial, but which he accepted) began the introduction to his translation by stating:

> In 1508, one hundred and eighty-seven years after the death of Dante, Giovanni Benedetto Moncetti da Castiglione Aretino — an Italian monk whose position and character have never been definitely settled — printed, in Venice, a small treatise, the *Quaestio de Aqua et Terra*, professing to be a scientific discussion held by Dante in Verona, on Jan. 30, 1320, concerning the relative levels of earth and water on the surface of the globe.
>
> At the time of its publication no interest was taken in the subject-matter of the treatise. Dante himself was read but little, the Divine Comedy and the *Convito* [i.e., the *Convivio*, *The Banquet*] being the only works of his accessible to the public. Consequently the *Quaestio* immediately sank into complete obscurity. We have no evidence that anybody besides Moncetti ever laid eyes on the manuscript from which it was supposed printed; and the first edition became so rare that in 1843 Torri knew of only one copy. Up to the present time, however, five other copies have been found.

In his "Analysis of the Treatise", White (1902: viii) has this item:

> The form of this emerging continent has been studied, and it is that of a half-moon, extending 180 degrees longitudinally from Cadiz to the River Ganges, and 67 degrees latitudinally from the Equator to the neighborhood of the Arctic Circle.

On p. 36, White (1902) has this passage in Dante's Latin (but the medieval spelling of the Latin text is standardised, as given by White): "Nam, ut communiter ab omnibus habetur, haec habitabilis extenditur per lineam longitudinis a Gadibus, quae supra terminos occidentales ab Hercule ponitur, usque ad ostia fluminis Ganges, ut scribit Orosius". On p. 37, one finds White's English translation: "For as is the universal opinion, this habitable region extends on a longitudinal line from Cadiz, which was founded on the westernmost boundaries by Hercules, even to the mouths of the river Ganges, as Orosius writes".

Indico legno ("Indian Wood") as a Name for Amber

Mabel Priscilla Cook's article "Indico legno" (1903) is in English, notwithstanding its title being in Dante's Italian. It begins thus (*ibid.*: 356, my additions in brackets):

> "Oro ed argento fino, cocco e biacca,
> Indico legno lucido e sereno,
> Fresco smeraldo in l'ora che si fiacca"
>
> [Gold and refined silver, cochineal and ceruse [i.e., white lead],
> Indian wood shining and clear,
> Fresh emerald in the hour getting tired]
>
> are the substances Dante cites in Purgatorio, VII, 73–75, as being surpassed in color by the flowers and grass of the Valley of the Princes. The criticism on verse seventy-four divides into two schools according to the punctuation assigned to the passage by commentators. One section, and perhaps the greater, holds that Dante meant the whole line to refer to one substance, some word from India; the other, putting a comma after the first word, has it that the poet had two colors in mind when he wrote the words: the color of indigo and that of some "wood shining and clear", which latter is however rather dull and obscure of interpretation. Among the substances guessed at by the commentators there is none that fits well the sense of the passage, neither ebony nor "quercia marcia" [rotten oak] having colors appropriate to a description of bright flowers. […]

Upon consideration of how Dante indicated colours, Cook reckoned (1903: 358–359, my brackets):

> With the exception of such a case as that of a color described as being

> "fra rose e viole", we have found the colors of flowers in Dante to be limited to red, white, and yellow. The "indico legno" would then seem to be some substance having one of these three colors. If we allow ourselves to be guided by the symmetry of the passage, — and Dante delighted in such formalities, — we find a second yellow to be required, and then we shall have: *oro, argento, cocco, biacco, indico legno*; [gold, silver, cochineal, white lead, Indian wood;] i. e., yellow, white, red, white, yellow (?). What vegetable substance will satisfy all the needs of the passage? "Legno" is used to denote so many of wood that it is easy to see that it may be product of a tree, natural or artificial. […] According to Pliny (*Nat. Hist*., VII, 2), "the trees, in India, are said to be of such vast height that it is impossible to send an arrow over them. This is the result of the singular fertility of the soil, the equable temperature of the atmosphere, and the abundance of water." Dante refers to this belief in *Purg*., XXXII, 40–2, where, growing by the source of Lethe and Eunoë, above all atmospheric influence, in the soil where all fertility has its origin, the tree of knowledge "spreads its top so wide and high that it would be wondered at by the Indians in their forests."

Then, having turned to "Pliny's *Natural History*, Book XXXVII, Chapter 11, [where] we find India given as one of the sources of amber: a material, which, being of vegetable origin and both shining and clear, would fit our passage well, and one whose bright yellow would complete the color symmetry" (Cook 1903: 359), and having surveyed further information about amber as would have been available to Dante (from Dante, from Virgil who in his eighth Eclogue recognised the vegetable origin of amber, and from Ovid, Solinus, and Isidore of Seville), Cook concluded that by "indico legno", Dante meant 'amber'. She felt that the passage in Isidore suits how Dante described the "indico legno" (Cook 1903: 361–362):

> Isidore in his *Origines*, Book XVI, Ch. XXIII, describes the nature of amber and recognizes its vegetable origin in the following words: "Electrum vocatum quod ad radium solis clarius auro argentoque reluceat. Sol enim a poetis electron vocatur. Defaecatius est enim hoc metallum omnibus metallis. Hujus tria sunt genera. Unum quod ex pini arboribus fluit, quod succinum dicitur." This last passage yields us three interesting points of comparison with the line in Dante's poem. "Reluceat" conveys the same idea as Dante's "lucido"; that this quality is said to be greater in amber than in either gold or silver would give an ascending scale, such as we might look for, to the sequence of the colors of the line in the *Purgatorio*; "defaecatus" means clear, free from gregs, a meaning very well embodied in the Italian adjective "sereno".
>
> The joint evidence of the various passages quoted would seem to be that the phraseology used by several of the authors with whose works Dante

> was familiar, in describing amber or using it in similes, was closely related to "Indico lucido e sereno". The Indian origin is a point of common knowledge: Pliny does not hesitate to use the word "lingo" in connection with it; and by associating it with and "adamantis" he, silently to be sure, notes those qualities which Isidore expresses by the words "reluceat" and "defaecatius".

Concluding Remark

Dante's references to India come in two categories: (a) astronomy or geophysics, in relation to daylight or heat in different places of the globe, as Dante believed that the Earth is a globe indeed; (b) theodicy, divine justice: Dante problematised, *vis-à-vis* Christian orthodoxy, the spiritual status of the virtuous Indian, as an example of non-Christians who are nevertheless virtuous. In a companion article also published in this journal, I consider how literary writers or literary critics stemming from Indian or Chinese cultures have sometimes appropriated Dante in some surprising manner into their own respective culture.[12]

Notes

[1] In articles of theirs, Claudio Mutti (1991) and, very briefly, Adolfo Cecilia (1970) have been concerned with this while writing in Italian. My emphasis and discussion in the present paper are different.

[2] At http://www.liberliber.it/online/autori/autori-g/giuseppe-gabrieli/ Paolo Alberti supplies in Italian the following biographical information. Giuseppe Gabrieli was born, the son of peasants, in 1872 in Calimera, in the Salento (the plain in southernmost Apulia). It was apparently after he read Firdusi's *Book of Kings,* in I. Pizzi's Italian translation, that Gabrieli decided to concern himself with Oriental languages and civilisations. In 1891 he enrolled at the University of Naples, and began to study Arabic. In 1893, he enrolled at the Istituto di Studi Superiori in Florence (the future University of Florence), studying especially Arabic and Hebrew, and he graduated there in 1895. He then became a teacher at high schools in Lecce (the town whose classical lyceum he had attended, and to whose province Calimera belongs), then in Santa Maria Capua Vetere and in Naples. In 1900–1902 he was headmaster of the Liceo-Convitto (a lyceum cum boarding school) in Maglie, another town in the Salento. In 1902, he became the librarian of the Reale Accademia dei Lincei in Rome. In 1915, he obtained *libera docenza* (habilitation to teach in academia on an untenured basis) in Arabic language and literature at the University of Rome, but he was met with hostility in the academic world. These difficulties with academic politics led him to focus on his scholarly writing. His introduction, "Il nome proprio arabo-musulmano" ("The Arabic-Islamic Proper Name"), to the first of the two volumes

of the *Onomasticon Arabicum* is perhaps his most important publication. He had been collaborating with Leone Caetani, who in 1924, having chosen to exile himself to Canada, entrusted his personal library to Gabrieli, who sorted it and made it accessible to the public. Gabrieli write some publications about Dante in relation to Islam, and also concerned himself with bibliography, with the inventory of Oriental manuscript at Italian library, with Egyptology, and with the early history (1603–1657) of the Accademia dei Lincei. In 1939, the Fascist regime abolished the Accademia dei Lincei, and replaced it with the Accademia d'Italia. Gabrieli, who had been the librarian of the former, was confirmed as the librarian of the latter. He died in 1942.

[3] Judaism does recognise that the spiritual state of the virtuous non-Jew is better than that of a Jewish sinner. Besides, in Judaism Adam's original sin does not have implications for the fate of the souls of his descendants, and non-Jews are only required to abide by the Noahid laws, a small set of very general rules of conduct (such as having courts of justice, or not eating the flesh of animals while these are still alive). In that manner, the legitimacy of specific differences is recognised.

Isaac Newton was aware of the doctrine of Noah's seven precepts, and incorporated this in his own esoteric doctrine of macrohistory. Garry Trompf has written: "Newton held that the fundamental principles of all knowledge relevant to our present order were divinely granted to Noah after the Flood. This knowledge springs from the 'true religion' of Noah who received seven precepts from God (prohibiting idolatry, blasphemy, fornication, murder and theft; and enjoining care of animals, and the setting up of governments [cf. Talmud, *Sanhtedr.*]). {*Quod corrige: Sanhedrin.* More precisely: Babylonian Talmud, tractate *Sanhedrin,* at the bottom of folio 56a and at the beginning of 56b}). In Biblico-Christian terms this religion was expanded in the Mosaic decalogue, reaffirmed by the prophets, distilled by Jesus (love God and your fellow human), used as a guide by the early Church (cf. Acts 15:20, 29), and discreetly embraced by Newton himself as the self-inscribed champion of *vera religio* in the Last Times. But it was relayed to the Gentiles—the Sabaeans, Confucius, the Brahmins (who owed their name to Abraham), and Pythagoras all passing on the Noachian 'basics of civilization'. Thus a stepping-stone model of recurrent reinstantiation is suggested, but different from the prevening one of the *philosophia perennis*" (Trompf 2006: 710; Trompf's own brackets; our added braces). "Noah's religion was enmeshed with natural philosophy. Thus Newton's own work on the spectrum of light was connected back to the post-diluvian rainbow; and mathematics derived from the proportions of the Ark and the cubit unit of measure used for it. Gentiles had their place in mediating this *prisca scientia*" (*ibid.:* 711). Cf. Trompf (1991).

[4] Lakes also occur in Dante's *Inferno* in a description of the effects of murder by the brigand Caco: "Questi è Caco, / che, sotto 'l sasso di Monte Aventino, / di sangue fece spesse volte laco" (*Inferno* 25.25–27: "This is Caco, who, under the rock of Mount Aventine, of blood oftentimes made a lake"). Also consider Dante's curse for Pisa, calling on two islands, Capraia and Gorgona, to move together to the mouth of the River Arno, so that a lake would result in which all inhabitants of Pisa would be drowned: "e faccian siepe ad Arno in su la foce / sì ch'elli

annieghi in te ogne persona!" (*Inferno* 33.83–84: "may the islands of Capraia and Gorgona / move in to block the Arno at its mouth / and so drown every living soul in you!", as rendered by Cachey 2010: 342).

[5] Rendsburg (2001: 189) cites for this Budge (1898: 279) for the Egyptian text according to the Theban recension of the *Book of the Dead,* and Faulkner (1990: 119) for an English rendering.

[6] "Hypocrisy is one of the most used words in the Qur'ân and Sura 63 is entirely devoted to this issue. From the second half of the seventh century onwards Islâm, in a very different way from Christianity, began to develop a theology of Hypocrisy, accompanied by an eschatological key that points directly to the afterlife. This is the starting point and the acknowledgment behind an Islamic eschatological thought that initially affected the debate on the status of the sinner" (Demichelis 2015: 388).

[7] "There is, for instance the verse that occurs twice in the Qur'an and which says: 'Surely those who believe, and those who are Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabians, whoever believes in Allah and the Last day and does good, they shall have their reward from their Lord, and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve' (2:62; cf. 5:69). On the other hand, there exists a strong exegetical tradition that claims that those verses have been abrogated by 3:85: '…whoever desires a religion other than Islam, it shall not be accepted from him, and in the hereafter he shall be one of the losers'. Nonetheless, the question of the salvation of 'the others' continues to be a significant topic in contemporary Muslim discourse. Influential theologians are currently speaking out against the idea of 'a monopoly of salvation' in Islam — though not without causing opposition. The issue is hotly debated among Muslims on the Internet" (Thomassen 2009: 414).

[8] At this point, the blood-shedding is that of the Son at the Crucifixion, and yet, Dante refers to the Maker, God the Father. His wording in this line of verse blends those two persons of the Trinity.

[9] Latin *nona* stood for the third quarter of the day. The hours of the day and of the night depended upon daylight, and thus upon the season. In the Canonical Hours, the Nones in the catholic liturgy are the daily office that was originally said at the ninth hour, corresponding to 3 pm, but now often earlier.

[10] Niccolò Tommaseo (1802–1874), a Croatian by background, also identified himself as an Italian, was a major Italian lexicographer, and was among the other things an important folklorist (with his 1841 Italian-language collection of the lyrics of Tuscan, Corsican, Illyrian (i.e., Croatian), and Greek folk songs) and Italian lexicographer.

A recent paper by Eliana Moscarda Mirković and Ivana Perišić which has appeared in 2015 in the e-journal *Studia Poliensia* (a journal in Pula [Italian Pola] in the Istria peninsula; the authors are Italianists at Juraj Dobrila University in Pula): it traces the influence of the works of Dante Alighieri on Croatian literature and culture. They point out, among the other things, that Dante was in places that now belong to Croatia, and mentioned this in the *Divine Comedy*. His translators into Croatian include Mihovil Kombol and Izidor Kršnjavi. It was only in the mid-20th century that the *Divine Comedy* was translated integrally into Croatian, but as early as the 15th century,

attempts had been made. Kombolian style shaped a generation of Croat poets. Mirković and Perišić (2015) also consider 19th-century Croat commentators of Dante who were influential in Croatia: Niccolò Tommaseo, and Antonio Lubin (1809–1900).

[11] Bear in mind that as Dante did not know about the Americas, for him the circumference of the earth (which for him was a globe) was shorter than that it actually is. India is much to the west of the island of Purgatory in the middle of the Ocean, so while it is sunset in Purgatory, it is still mid-day there. But further west again, in Jerusalem, it is sunrise. Further west, it is still night.

[12] That article is going to appear in the next issue of this journal: E. Nissan, "Some Asian Modes of Appropriating Dante—as an Immortal Taoist (by Liang Ch'i-ch'ao), as Confirmation of Indian Philosophy (by Ananda Coomaraswamy), and as Being Returned to Islam: Anwar Beg's Rationale for Iqbâl Using Dante in the *Jâvîd-Nâma* (an Analogue to Yoḥanan Alemanno's Rationale on the Theft of Philosophy and Its Recovery)".

[13] As the journal *PMLA* is usually referred to by its acronym, which appears as its only name on its covers, I am sticking to the acronym, instead of adopting its full-fledged name *Publications of the Modern Language Association*. Had the present study only been in literary studies instead of being interdisciplinary, it would have been superfluous to explain *PMLA*.

[14] The journal *Studia Poliensia* is one of several journals in science or the humanities, accessible through a portal at http://hrcak.srce.hr/ (Hrčak Portal znanstvenih časopisa Republike Hrvatske).

London

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Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*: From Despair to Meaninglessness

Michel Dion

Between Emily Brontë (1818-1848) and Virginia Woolf (1882-1941), there seems to be a change of epoch. Brontë lived during the Industrial Revolution. But unlike Woolf, Brontë has not seen the Suffragettes' movement in Great Britain, and more generally, the first-wave feminism. However, from a literary (and even philosophical) viewpoint, Brontë and Woolf could be considered as sisters in the same literary (and even philosophical) continuum. Virginia Woolf (1980, 50) admired the way Emily Brontë integrated poetry within her novel (*Wuthering Heights*). In *Emily Brontë, Her Life and Work*, Muriel Spark and Derek Stanford have well understood the historical importance of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*:

> Emily's principle characters – Catherine and Heathcliff – are figures hurled headlong on their way bu the whirlwind force of their passions. They have no sense of wrong; and small sense of the personality of others (…) Emily's novel has indeed paved the way for the modern novel of flux and sensation. The obsession of Catherine and Heathcliff with their own subjective feelings, their complete lack of any objective set of values, and their failure of interest in the outer world of opinion (…) (Spark and Stanford 1953, 267).

Spark and Stanford suggested that *Wuthering Heights* has given birth to the *stream of consciousness* literary movement, including the following epoch-making novels: *À la recherche du temps perdu* (Marcel Proust), *Ulysses* (James Joyce), and *To the Lighthouse* (Virginia Woolf). In a way or another, there seems to be a connection which goes from Emily Brontë to Virginia Woolf. It is not an

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actual continuity between Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and any novel written by Virginia Woolf. Rather, it is an issue of consciousness-oriented focus. Woolf's *The Waves* is probably her most philosophically-based novel: every reality is philosophically questioned. Even the notion of reality itself remained uncertain. But above all, Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and Woolf's *The Waves* dealt with despair and meaninglessness, although they were conveying a very different perspective. In this article, we will describe the way Emily Brontë considered the arising of existential despair and the way Virginia Woolf explained the arising of existential meaninglessness. Both processes are interconnected, although Brontë's and Woolf's focus are quite different.

Emily Brontë and *Wuthering Heights* (1847): The Arising of Existential Despair

In *Wuthering Heights*, Emily Brontë expressed a philosophical quest for the meaning of good and evil, while unveiling the intuition that good and evil can never be defined. In doing so, Brontë was designing her novel so that it could mirror a perspective of moral relativism. But how could we deal with moral issues without taking into account our habits, conventional/conformist behaviors, and social expectations? Brontë was full aware that habits are moulding our tastes and ideas (Brontë 2013, 36). The power of habits creates so close and strong ties that even our reason cannot get rid of them. It could even be cruel to loosen those ties, said Brontë (2013, 374). So, it is not an easy task to choose a moral relativism perspective, since our habits will tend to safeguard the status quo, although it would mean to keep some sense of good and evil. If such inner contradiction is not healed, then it could give birth to a process of existential despair. The inability to transform our own habits and to integrate moral relativism in our way of thinking, speaking, and acting will create inner thunderstorms. If the crisis is not well managed, then the process of existential despair will begin. Emily Brontë defined the process of existential despair in four basic steps. Firstly, we are discovering the various dimensions of our inner turmoil. Secondly, we are unable to denounce the unreasonable character of our own feelings and emotions. Thirdly, we are observing the growing feeling of meaninglessness in our heart and mind. Fourthly, we are losing any hope and falling into existential despair.

First step: Unveiling our inner turmoil

Brontë presented the inner turmoil as being made of cruelty, frustration, jealousy, and resentment. The inner turmoil is deeply harmed by wickedness, bitterness, and revenge. Pride as self-exaltation and the conviction of 'being perfect' are the most harmful ways to deal with the inner turmoil. The inner

turmoil unveils our unability to transform our habits and to adopt the moral relativism perspective. There is then an *a priori* belief to the effect that moral relativism could make people feel calm and serene, when confronting moral dilemmas and/or being pervaded by negative emotions. Facing destructive emotions then makes us unpeaceful towards such spirit poisons.

Existential loneliness is certainly the basic context in which everything that happens in one's life is interpreted. The cruelest persons are subjected to envy and are broken by existential loneliness. They desperately need to be loved (Brontë 2013, 337). Brontë was strengthening the courage to live in the unsurpassable (existentially-based) loneliness. Frustration and resentment could provoke a fit of anger. Jealousy could also give birth to anger. However, the real origin of anger is often lost in the meanderings of the self. Brontë was implicity acknowledging that the origin of negative emotions (such as anger) is often unconscious. That's why Brontë talked about the strategy of psychological forgetfulness: the real origin of one's negative emotions is hidden (to himself/herself), and then falls through the cracks. We could ardently try to repress a feeling that makes us quite uncomfortable, said Brontë (2013, 350). But how could we explain wickedness? Brontë believed that the wicked person feels pleasure, when seeing people (especially, his/her enemies) suffering, or sinking into evil (Brontë 2013, 220, 240, 337). The wicked person feels pleasurable to express hatred and malicious gossip. He/she is not really concerned with what those emotions are unveiling. Brontë argued that the wicked person tries to harm those people he/she hates. The nasty individual can conceal his/her vengeance during many years and then go ahead with his/her cruel plan, with meticulousness, without feeling any remorse or guilt (Brontë 2013, 265-267). Brontë's view of wickedness seems quite close to Stendhal's image of wicked persons. In *Le Rouge et le Noir* (1830), Stendhal (1783-1842) talked about the 'wickedness of a wild boar'. Stendhal expressed the extreme, instinctive, and wild character of wickeness/nastiness (Stendhal 2011, 494-500). Stendhal and Brontë were both focusing on passion, energy, and existence. Both writers were writing in a way to deepen the feeling of one's existing. However, unlike Stendhal, Brontë was aware of the process of despair, as an integral part of human existence.

Wickedness have very negative consequences not only for the victims, but also for the wicked person himself/herself. One of them is bitterness. Sometimes, people who feel deep bitterness are acting in such way to provoke other's hate rather than love and friendship (Brontë 2013, 97). Anne Williams (1985, 125) explained that the main principle of *Wuthering Heights*'s structure is human love as being linked to nature and passion. Human love is then defined as being disinterested (altruistic) and universal (egalitarian). Friendship and

love are considered as the real foundations of humankind. That's why Brontë asserted that we could become selfish and irascible if we deeply lack signs of friendship and love (Brontë 2013, 255). Egocentrism and altruism are both connected to self-esteem, although the way one's self is loved by an egocentric personality cannot be compared with the way it is loved by an altruistic personality. But self-esteem remains the way we are loving what we are perceiving to be (our self-perceived self). Self-esteem implies that we cannot love a personal trait we do not actually have (Brontë 2013, 187). Self-esteem is also an issue of others' perceptions. When people we love (our parents and friends) show us our defaults and even their hate, we will be doubtful of our own being and worth. Our self-esteem is then under attack. One's doubt about his/her being and worth will eventually provoke so bitterness that he/she will hate everybody, as if everyone would be guilty to have annihilated his/her self-esteem (Brontë 2013, 300). Defending our self-perceived self against any attacker thus becomes our basic meaning of life.

Like wickedness, resisting to any critique of our self-perceived self could give birth to the spirit of revenge, thus initiating the vicious circle of violence. Emily Brontë (2013, 104) showed that we could be anxious, when discovering that we are rebelling ourselves against our own feeling of revenge. Yielding to our desire of vengeance could make suffering others as well as ourselves (Brontë 2013, 215-216). The spirit of revenge tries to annihilate others' wickedness. It could also aim at destroying any critique of one's self-perceived self. It could happen when pride has reached a very high level. The inner turmoil is made of pride as self-exaltation. Pride is the real cause of every inner turmoil, said Brontë (2013, 84). Self-exaltation is not compatible with truth. It rather implies to hide the truth behind impenetrable words, so that truth remains inaccessible. Self-exaltation could also make people believe that they could have access to truth itself, while it is impossible to know truth itself. The prideful individual could feel a very intense pain when the truth he/she has hidden in plain sight is unveiled. He/she desperatly tried to avoid such disclosure, in order to safeguard his/her own self-image and self-esteem (Brontë 2013, 189). Hiding truth about the real self should then be closely linked to the way some individuals are strengthening their self-image and fighting anyone who would like to criticize the truthfulness of their self-perceived self. The self-perceived self is presented as the real image of the true self, as if there could not be any gap between what-is-perceived and what-remains-hidden within one's heart and mind. Such distortion of the true self is made possible through a deep conviction to be perfect. Perfection is a delusive notion. Seeing one's self as being 'perfect' could be considered as an unreasonable way to be oneself (Brontë 2013, 189). Looking at somebody as a perfect being (rather than someone who

suits us just fine) is distorting his/her own being. Perceiving somebody we love as if he/she would be a 'perfect being' could reduce our propensity to grow, psychologically and socially speaking. If the other is 'perfect', then we are 'imperfect'. The other overcomes our weaknesses, defaults, and wrongs. The 'perfect being' will eventually crashes the 'imperfect being'. The 'perfect being' will be the progressive destroyer of our self, that is, an enemy we have created by ourselves. Others' perfection could eventually project ourselves onto the existential despair.

Second step: Being unable to denounce the unreasonable character of our feelings and emotions

When we are deeply aware of our inner turmoil, then we will face the unreasonable character of our feelings and emotions. It is particularly the case when our attitude, words, and conduct clearly express a lack of fairness, of love, or of compassion. Sometimes, lacking fairness presupposes neglecting to use our reason (Brontë 2013, 64). Sympathizing with someone who is suffering is easy when we have been subjected to similar pain. It could even help to anticipate how the individual could suffer in the near future (Brontë 2013, 263).Cruelty and hate are directly denying any worth to love. Such negative emotions could stay in our memory for a very long period of time. Bearing somebody a grudge could make bad rememberings much more cruel that some harsh words (Brontë 2013, 199). We can hate someone simply because he/she reminds us very bad memories (Brontë 2013, 252).Being compassionate towards others and being pleased for others' happiness have common requirement: the origin of the emotion (compassion/happiness) is reasonably connected to concrete attitude, words, and conduct, without falling into extreme and abusive expressions. Sometimes, our joy is so great that we fear it could be grounded on something unreal (Brontë 2013, 127). Our joy could be meaningless, when its intensity is not compatible with the original events that make us joyful (Brontë 2013, 127). In his *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Adam Smith (1723-1790) reached the same conclusion (Smith 1999, 37-47). Life joy, anger could be meaningless, when it cannot reasonably follow from the original events (Brontë 2013, 132, 152). Melancholy is the certainty that joy is no longer possible on Earth (Brontë 2013, 215). It is not reasonably connected to its original events. When melancholy raises its height, the feeling of meaninglessness knocks on the door. The paradox of melancholy is that melancholy gives birth to a given certainty, while nothing is supposedly certain in the existence. Moreover, the paradox of melancholy conveys the message that we should denounce the unreasonable character of our feelings and emotions, while being absolutely unable to do so. Such powerlessness will make possible to fall into a feeling of meaninglessness.

Third step: Observing the growing feeling of meaninglessness in our heart and mind

Melancholy opens the door to the feeling of meaninglessness. It also makes possible for us to understand that we are not presently the totality of who-we-are. Our being is in becoming. We can only be who-we-are in becoming our own self. There would not be any meaning to be oneself if we would already be who-we-are, that is, without any possibility to become who-we-are (Brontë 2013, 112). Soeren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) defined truth as the passion for the infinite, that is, as subjectivity (Kierkegaard 1974, 181-182). An ethical life-view implies an ultimate passion for one's existing:

> All knowledge about reality is possibility. The only reality to which an existing individual may have a relation that is more than cognitive, is his own reality, the fact that he exists; this reality constitutes his absolute interest (…) the absolute demand is that he become infinitely interested in existing (Kierkegaard 1974, 280).

Our heart is the birthplace of our feelings and emotions (Brontë 2013, 212-213). Brontë suggested that living with our inner trends and conditioning factors is better than being subjected to external realities. Self-affirmation could help us to find out hidden parts of our self. But it is only possible if we have abandoned any attitude of pride and self-exaltation (Brontë 2013, 189). Abandoning pride and self-exaltation could release us from the subjection to melancholy. That's why Brontë asserted that a sensible person is self-sufficient (Brontë 2013, 56). Not being self-sufficient would be meaningless. But extreme indulgence is meaningless (Brontë 2013, 303). Even stupidity becomes meaningless, when stretched to the limits (Brontë 2013, 149). Using vain and meaningless words could make us feeling shameful. We could be shameful to have meaningless thoughts (Brontë 2013, 45). Brontë (2013, 113) suggested that it is hard to find out any meaning from the totality of non-sense, which makes us suffering. Melancholy has gathered all non-sense together, so that there would not be any existential certainty. Even fears could be meaningless (Brontë 2013, 385). At any moment, self-esteem could be erased. Anxiety (and/or anger) could come along with humiliation, and vice versa (Brontë 2013, 150, 337). Suffering could give birth to anxiety, particularly when it is accompanied by delirium (Brontë 2013, 54). Anxiety could be the ultimate outcome of an unbearable pain (Brontë 2013, 376). But it would be meaningless to complain about a future pain that could occur in twenty years, or even in some unknown point (Brontë 2013, 276). So, meaninglessness takes various forms. Every emotion (anxiety, anger, fear) could be meaningless. The growing feeling of meaninglessness in our heart and mind makes more and more hard to recover any meaning from given emotions and feelings.

Fourth step: The arising of despair as the loss of any hope

The growing feeling of meaninglessness in our heart and mind gives birth to existential despair, which is closely linked to the loss of (religious) faith. Emily Brontë talked about the 'finally earned eternity'. Eternity is then not only a life without duration limitations, but also selfless love and fulness of joy (Brontë 2013, 204). But eternity is seen as superstition, since it is contradicting common sense (Brontë 2013, 54). After death, we cannot live with the same self which was the real origin of our existential suffering. Brontë expressed a deep doubt about the belief that the self is surviving after the death of the body. Brontë strongly insisted that we cannot live without our body (physical being) as well as without our soul (spiritual being). Human being is a physical and spiritual being. If dying is the final end of physical life, then our spiritual being cannot survive (Brontë 2013, 207). Such growing loss of faith will hasten the arising of existential despair.

Losing faith means that we are falling into nothingness. For believers, death makes the dream of the after-life realizing itself. Losing faith is being in despair, that is, having lost our hope in the after-life and any other existentially-based hope. Believers look at their death with a deep hope in eternity (as the after-life). Despair is the irreversible end of any hope. Despair is even the deep conviction that any hope is delusive, vain, and self-destructive. That's what Emily Brontë used the term 'abyss of despair' (Brontë 2013, 278). Despairing is refusing any possible hope, particularly when it is quite attractive. Sometimes, the state of our heart is falling out between disdain and despair (Brontë 2013, 34). Despair could express the loss of any hope towards ardently wished change. Such hope could be lost for a more and less long period of time, said Brontë (2013, 35). Despair is not fate. It is not predetermined. We could avoid existential despair, although the potentiality of despair makes an integral part of human existence. Sometimes, we do not want to hide our despair (Brontë 2013, 197). Despair is the loss of any hope in a better world (Brontë 2013, 225). Emily Brontë analyzed the way despair could reach its height. In such situation, anxiety seems to disappear. Despair could be so powerful that it could annihilate any form of anxiety. Despairing is not only losing any hope, but also losing the capacity to feel anxiety. An overmastering despair makes existential anxiety disappear (Brontë 2013, 161).

Virginia Woolf and *The Waves* (1931): The Arising of Existential Meaninglessness

At the real beginning of her novel, Woolf (2017, 21) mentioned that the roots of oneself are disappearing into the depths of the world. Woolf defined

the process of existential meaninglessness in three basic steps. Firstly, we become aware of our compartmentalized world. Secondly, we are uncovering the underground world: impermanent life, changing I/self, existential loneliness, meaningless and useless realities. Thirdly, despair helps us to recover our world, to reinvent Time, and to give worth to life experiences.

First step: Being aware of the comparmentalized world

The well-ordered world is compartmentalized, so that every syllable has a specific meaning (Woolf 2017, 29). The real world is only the world we are perceiving from a particular perspective. It is only true for here and now (Woolf 2017, 32). The real world is my own world, not only because I am here-and-now (the historicity of my own being), but also because I look at the world in specific way (my being-who-is-interpreting-reality). Everything seems to be real, without any illusion (Woolf 2017, 141). Such sense of reality makes arising a deep feeling of belongingness to the compartmentalized world (Woolf 2017, 191). Illusion seems to be a psychological distortion. It does not explain the perceived world. The compartmentalized world is characterized by the denegation of illusions, and thus, the absolutization of self-perceived realities.

Second step: Dis-covering the underground world

Refusing the compartmentalized world, Woolf introduced the 'underground world' (Woolf 2017, 31). The underground world is not the self without world, but rather the self who does not have any existential certainty, even about its own existence. Everbody does not exist, since he/she does not have any face (or appearance). That's why everybody is searching for his/her own face as his/her own existential project (Woolf 2017, 41). Having face is opening the way for self-improvement through others' perceptions and interpretations of our own self (Woolf 2017, 218). Being without face implies that we do not have any impact on others' behavior and thought. It means that the whole world can kick us out and go ahead with its own purpose and means (Woolf 2017, 124, 218). Being in the underground world is being without face. Our own existence is only recognized when people actually need to acknowledge it (Woolf 2017, 130). Being without face is still being-in-Beauty (Woolf 2017, 263). In the underground world, nothing is stable and conclusive. Things, beings, and phenomena are always moving (Woolf 2017, 53). Everything is always changing. Reality is basically change and flux (Woolf 2017, 94). The unstable universe (underground world) in which we live cannot provide us the hidden meaning of things, beings, and phenomena. We cannot know anything. Rather, we are experiencing life in its various forms, while mixing the known and the unknown (Woolf 2017, 120), without even seeing the

frontiers between the known and the unknown. The unstable world (or underground world) cannot give us any feeling of calmness and any existential certainty (Woolf 2017, 244).

Living in the underground world makes us perceiving the overwhelming presence of impermanence. Life is always going to change (Woolf 2017, 115-116). Nothing is permanent (Woolf 2017, 242). That's why death is our ultimate enemy (Woolf 2017, 286). Life is ephemeral (Woolf 2017, 117). Every instant is passing away (Woolf 2017, 135, 176, 182). Every dying instant is tragical, since it is closely linked to the others. That's why our life does not have any intrinsic purpose. Life is an indivisible, undifferentiated, and unified mass of tragical instants (Woolf 2017, 131). Things, beings, and phenomena are combined to form a unified whole, although such wholeness is hardly perceived (Woolf 2017, 135, 198). In the compartmentalized world, Time seems to be infinite (Woolf 2017, 136). But in the underground world, living means feeling that the weight of the whole world rests upon our shoulders (Woolf 2017, 168). We can still create our own life, although it is always going on (Woolf 2017, 174). The will to live is shared by all human beings (Woolf 2017, 257). However, in the underground world, human beings are deeply convinced that the will to live is vain. Everybody feels the mystery of life, that is, its unfathomability (Woolf 2017, 258). In the underground world, nobody knows what it means to live. Individuals could have access to specific parts of life. However, they cannot grasp the indivisible life, its various contents and forms. Life then becomes chaotic. It is now a mix of cruelty and indifference. In the compartmentalized world, the mystical feeling of adoration implies that Divine perfection has triumphed over the universal chaos (Woolf 2017, 58). But in the underground world, there are only uncertainties, and thus an endless set of unreliable perceptions and interpretations.

Living in the compartmentalized world opens the door to very specific dimensions of one's self. We are presupposing that any I (self) is an history (Woolf 2017, 45). But is it really the case? What does it mean to have a personal history, if not an endless series of changes (Woolf 2017, 185, 211)? What does it mean to say that our personal history is true (Woolf 2017, 213)? True stories do not exist, so that a true personal history is meaningless (Woolf 2017, 232). Nietzsche (2008, 37) believed that every people needs some knowledge of their own past. However, such knowledge must favour the present and be used to define the future people are dreaming about. If not, any knowledge of the past become useless and meaningless. That's precisely what's the underground world all about. In the underground world, nothing is stable and meaningful. Even personal history is meaningless, since there are frail and vague frontiers between the past (who-we-were) and the present (who-we-are-

now) as well as between the present and the future, and even between the past (who-we-were) and the future (who-we-will-be). The notion of an I/self becomes elusive. Even Time has no meaning at all. Does a relentless fate actually exist? Does fate influence my own actions? Is fate determining who-I-am-becoming (Woolf 2017, 57)? Becoming who-I-am implies to get rid of inner contradictions (Woolf 2017, 59, 64). The meaning of my self could even disappear (Woolf 2017, 77, 133). Every self is becoming what-it-is. Every self has the desire to become what-it-is. However, we cannot wholly be who-we-are. We have to become who-we-are. But we do not know exactly who-we-are as well as who-we-are-now-becoming. We do not even clearly know who-we-would-like-to-be (in the near future).

One's self can never be grasped as-it-is. Everybody is always changing, although his/her desires remain the same (Woolf 2017, 131). Everybody has multiple selves. That's why it is so hard to understand each other (Woolf 2017, 81). If I have had multiple selves until now, which one is really me (Woolf 2017, 85-86)? The real self does not have any historical, social, economic, political, cultural, and even religious/spiritual ground (Woolf 2017, 86). But having multiple selves makes quite difficult to know who-I-am, even here and now (Woolf 2017, 87). It could be striking for us to find out some hidden dimensions of our self, regardless of the specific self they are unveiling (Woolf 2017, 89). Woolf was deeply impressed by the literary genius of Marcel Proust (Forrester 2009, 262; Brisac and Desarthe 2004, 194). Like Proust (2001, 14, 126, 268-269; 1987, 153; 1987a, 262; 1972, 259-260), Woolf believed in the paradox of multiple selves: everybody has multiple selves throughout his/her own life, although he/she is the same being. Every self has successive layers (Woolf 2017, 254, 267, 274). The paradox of multiple selves does not eradicate the deep sense of one's identity: everybody is continuously building up his/her own self. But we cannot build up our self without taking into account the way people are looking at us (Woolf 2017, 118, 226). Although everybody has multiple selves, he/she is an indivisible being (Woolf 2017, 229). That's the way the strong feeling of the I/self is born (Woolf 2017, 250). Reducing someone to one of his/her multiple selves is destroying his/her desire (and project) to be who-he/she-is (Woolf 2017, 93, 250). Every individual is a complex being (Woolf 2017, 94). Thus, self-understanding is not an easy task (Woolf 2017, 212). Self-awareness is always fragmentary (Woolf 2017, 260). In every self, there is something that is always changing, unattached, totally free (Woolf 2017, 82). Our true I/self could be isolated from our factitious I/self (Woolf 2017, 84), although it could be quite hard to distinguish both selves. It is particularly the case when one's self is facing various self-destructive experiences, such as lying, concealing, doubting, and fearing (Woolf 2017, 109,

259). But Woolf remained convinced that we should have the courage to be ourselves. When we feel that all human beings belong to the same body and soul (as an undifferentiated mass of people), then we lose our desire of individualization, and thus our need of self-affirmation. As long as we are unable to do so, we will focus on our individual differences, even if we have to exaggerate our weaknesses and defaults (Woolf 2017, 138, 239). The underground world will progressively make us falling into the trap of meaninglessness.

The underground world is emphasizing the incommunicability of one's experiences, and thus the absoluteness of existential loneliness. Although they could be quite similar from an individual to another, one's life experiences remain incommunicable. That's the real origin of our tragical loneliness (Woolf 2017, 155, 174, 264). As an individual, everybody is incomplete. We help each other to bridge the gulf between others' loneliness and our own loneliness, from an existentially-based perspective (Woolf 2017, 73). Things, beings and phenomena are interdependent. We cannot do anything without others' help (Woolf 2017, 160). Existential loneliness makes extremely difficult to tolerate pressure (Woolf 2017, 133). Being-in-loneliness provides us a powerful sense of Being (Woolf 2017, 134). But the underground world is exacerbating the feeling of existential loneliness, so that feeling of nothingness is now arising into our heart and mind (Woolf 2017, 213, 219). The feeling of nothingness is interpreted as being the burden of our own existence (Woolf 2017, 115). But existential loneliness could also help us to unveil very important (and often mysterious) dimensions of reality (Woolf 2017, 255). We are responsible for the mystery of things, beings, and phenomena (Woolf 2017, 281), since our own being is always interpreting reality. We know nothing about the universe, although we could believe that it is a unified reality (Woolf 2017, 282-283). Accepting our existential loneliness requires to reject the 'shroud of Being' (Woolf 2017, 284). The underground world makes us quite aware of the unsurpassable and existentially-based loneliness.

In the underground world, we are facing illusions. We believe that the world could not unveil any intrinsic meaning (Woolf 2017, 263). The world is meaningless. Any meaning of the world is a projected (and illusory) meaning that has nothing to do with the essence of the world. Idenfying any meaning makes it disappear (Woolf 2017, 214). Meanings are created by our own mind. They are not intrinsic to things, beings, or phenomena. Any (created) meaning is disappearing, since it is not a reliable ground for understanding reality as such. In the underground world, individuals are often tormented by the fact that the meaning of things, beings, and phenomena is self-evident. We have to choose specific meaning among various historically-based meanings (Woolf 2017, 96). And such existential choice is fundamentally determined by inner

and external conditioning factors. Ben Bachir (2012, 32) unveiled that Woolf's conviction that life has no intrinsic meaning makes quite difficult for her to accept her own existing. The feeling of meaninglessness provokes voidness within our self (Woolf 2017, 139). The centeredness of life expresses the absence of any intrinsic meaning. Nothing is conveying an intrinsic meaning. The underground world is unstable because of its intrinsic meaninglessness (Nietzsche 1968, 318).

Ultimately, the underground world has to deal with death and Time. If death is meaningless, then existence and Time are also meaningless. People who are fighting the formless meaninglessness (Woolf 2017, 220) are living in the 'world of fight and effort' (Woolf 2017, 261). Fighting our meaningless existence is combating existential uncertainty, that is, the fact that our existing does not have any intrinsic meaning. This is the existential struggle against the idea of God. In Dostoyevsky's *Demons* (1962, 608), Kirilov said that we cannot believe in God's inexistence without affirming our own divine (free) will. In *The Karamazov Brothers* (2002, 808), Dostoyevsky explained that the annihilating the idea of God will deify humankind and make universal (and disintered) love possible. Fighting existential uncertainty will not make the underground world disappear. On the other hand, accepting existential uncertainty seems to be the only way for learning serenity and calmness.

Third step: The recovered world, from despair to the eternal renewal

The recovered world is neither the redeemed world, nor the annihilation of the underground world. It is not the renewal of the compartmentalized world. Rather, the recovered world is the unstable and uncertain world, as we could take it upon ourselves, with an existentially-based courage, without denying any worth to the experience of existential despair/meaninglessness. Everybody recovers the continuity of his/her own self, when becoming character of a collective procession (Woolf 2017, 42). The passionate meaning of one's existence makes possible to reinvent the worth of things, beings, and phenomena (Woolf 2017, 121). Woolf seems here to adopt a Kierkegaardian viewpoint. The world could be recovered through the experience of despair. Only despair can provide the 'eternal renewal' (Woolf 2017, 286). In *The Sickness Unto Death*, Kierkegaard (1968, 175-179, 208-213) asserted that every individual existence is despair. However, Kierkegaard believed that relation to the Absolute (God) could make possible to redeem such despair (defined as sin). Woolf rather insisted on the power of despair itself. The eternal renewal does not come from God, but from the power of despair itself.

The feeling of despair follows from the conviction that our own being is annihilated, so that our own life does not have any worth at all (Woolf 2017,

97). Everything is useless: birth and death, pleasure and joy, and all types of anxiety are useless. Everything is illusory. Woolf called such phenomenon the 'impartiality of despair' (Woolf 2017, 275). Perfection, renown, and money do not have any worth (Woolf 2017, 130). Meaningless words are not helpful, since they make the feeling of voidness increasing (Woolf 2017, 98-99). Despair gives us the conviction that our actions are worthless (Woolf 2017, 115). Despair could be so intolerable that it causes very deep and unspeakable anxiety (Woolf 2017, 140, 146, 179). Words remain useless, since our existentially-based experiences are unspeakable. What are words, if not pure creations of our mind (Woolf 2017, 55, 212)? Despairing is abandoning the 'old coat of my self' (Woolf 2017, 277). But how could we describe world without any self (Woolf 2017, 277)? Without self, any world is useless and meaningless. Then, the radical absence of one's self destroys his/her existential certainty (Woolf 2017, 278). It provokes a endless set of doubts and oversights (Woolf 2017, 278).

We should never try to make despair disappearing. The potentiality of despair is an integral part of human existence. Despair gives us the opportunity to change our view on reality itself. For doing so, we must reinvent Time. Recovering our world needs to abolish the time of the clock (Woolf 2017, 179). Dorothy Bevis (1956, 14) rightly said that in *The Waves*, we cannot isolate the time of the mind from the time of the clock. Focusing on the time of the mind makes possible to dis-cover the unreal world of the past (Woolf 2017, 150). The absence of past and future makes the present moment overwhelming the flow of Time (Woolf 2017, 245, 269). In order to recover our world without denying the worth of despair, we must overcome such an 'abyss of Time' (Woolf 2017, 223). Wisdom implies not to be focused on our own future. Wisdom cannot be isolated from an infinite compassion (Woolf 2017, 155). Wisdom and compassion are the attitudinal components of the recovered world. But they imply to reinvent the worth of life experiences and to revisit the most basic human relationships. Friendship and love are the most sacred feelings of human heart, since they give access to Beauty and Truth (Woolf 2017, 143). Jealousy, hate, and envy are 'underground feelings' that make impossible to reach Beauty and Truth (Woolf 2017, 142, 159, 217). The recovered world emphasizes the importance of human body, imagination, and memory. Our own body has its own existence (Woolf 2017, 68). Our imagination is corporeally induced. We cannot imagine something that has nothing to do with our own body (Woolf 2017, 130, 216). Remembering any event is an internalizing process that could be quite harmful (Woolf 2017, 169, 256). The interdependence between human body, imagination, and memory will make possible to recover our world, without deying any worth to existential despair.

Conclusion

Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* dealt with meaninglessness, while acknowledging the presence of a powerful paradox. Emily Brontë was dealing with the process of existential despair. However, when Brontë used the emotion of melancholy, she was aware of its intrinsic paradox: we have to denounce the unreasonable character of our feelings and emotions, but melancholy is certainty about the unsurpassable existentially-based uncertainties. Existential despair is the loss of hope, and thus the loss of (religious) faith. The only way to avoid existential despair is to take the paradox of melancholy upon ourselves.

In *The Waves*, Virginia Woolf showed how refusing the comparmentalized world will make us falling into the underground world. In the underground world, we will perceive any thing, being, and phenomenon as being meaningless. Even the quest for the meaning of our own I/self will be vain, since there is no meaning at all. Nothing is intrinsically meaningful. In the underground world, we will face the paradox of multiple selves: although any self includes successive layers over time, it is a unified reality. As long as we cannot take such paradox upon ourselves, we will be unable to recover our world, without denying the existential worth of despair. The feeling of meaninglessness will crush us forever.

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Between Solitude and Solidarity: Objectification in the Existential Novels of Camus and Naipaul

Donovan Irven

> "It would be impossible to insist too much on the arbitrary nature of the former opposition between art and philosophy…They interlock, and the same anxiety merges them." (Camus 1991a, 96-97).

The Absurd and Philosophical Literature

Works of fiction become philosophical, in part, when they endeavor to glean ontological significance from the psychological struggles of their subjects. The characters in a philosophical novel are often presented as confronting the futility of their actions as they reconcile themselves to a narrative structure that is presented to them as an *a priori* necessity. It is the "given-ness" of the narrative structure that awakens the character to the absurdity of their existence. That the narrative precedes the character and presupposes their role in a story's development opens the character to a psychological schism between solitude and solidarity. Solitude – because they alone must choose whether or not to reconcile themselves to the imposition of this external structure; and solidarity – because their reconciliation must take place among those others who also occupy various roles within the external structure.

The purpose of this essay is to pursue the rift from which the confrontation with the absurd arises. From the tension between solitude and solidarity comes a reflection upon the how the subject may or may not be reconciled with the narrative structure within which it is embedded. To do so will require focus and the philosophically salient features of this confrontation will be compared

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as they manifest in the works of two twentieth-century authors who are thematically related: Albert Camus and V. S. Naipaul. Through a dialogue with these writers, we shall discover the schism between solitude and solidarity, thereby revealing the source of our confrontation with the absurd.

Camus rejects the sharp distinction between art and philosophy (1991a, 96-97) and encourages us to examine the generalities represented by a novel's symbolism so that we may derive meaningful interpretations from a text (124). With this advice in mind, we look at Naipaul's work to explore continuities in symbolic forms that might lead to a complimentary reading of two authors who speak from the post-colonial condition. Each presents us with a confrontation with the absurd that stems from primordial conflicts within the psychology of their characters. Such conflicts spring from social and historical narratives external to a character's psyche and narratives that are recounted as the characters' own, from their own subjective histories. These conflicts present characters faced with a choice between solitude and solidarity, and so give rise to the absurd condition.

Absurdity and Objectification

The absurd condition is derivative of the way in which subjects are objectified. Simone de Beauvoir has theorized this condition as the fundamental ambiguity of human existence: that we are at once a subject, for-ourselves, but also objects both within our own projects and within the projects of others (1978, 7). Human beings attempt to assert themselves in the world, to remake the world in the image of their own hopes and projects, and yet, they must also bear the recalcitrant weight of the world of which they are a part and into which they are thrown. It is in this meeting of the subject's projection and the world's obstinate resistance to that project that the absurd arises. It is there in between the human and their world that the feeling of the absurd arises (Camus 1991a, 28). On the one hand, the absurd arises because humanity has such high hopes for the world and the world answers their hopes with silence. On the other, whatever answers are ready to hand are only human answers, all to human, and find their source not in the longed for transcendental order of the universe, but only from the mean whims of human society and its history. In the story on offer the human being is nothing but a passing object and it is in this objectification that we find the point of tension between solitude and solidarity. When characters are shown attempting to live on their own terms, to claim their lives as their own, we see them taking responsibility for themselves instead of allowing not only their actions but also their values to be determined by social and historical circumstance. In their rejection of a socially constructed historic

narrative that precedes them, a character is rejecting the world as it is. The socio-historic narrative is presented to the subject as a brute fact of the world. The absurd revelation is that the socio-historic narrative is not a brute fact. This negation frees the subject to create a narrative, to tell a story instead of fulfilling a role in a story told by someone else. But once divorced from the given narrative the subject resides in solitude.

To illustrate, let us consider the title character from Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas*. Mohun Biswas is objectified according to the social rules to which his Hindu family adheres in their attempts to preserve an Indian heritage in their foreign Caribbean home. At stake are Mohu's identity and the role he will play in Trinidad society, into which he was born and in which he must live. A pundit, or holy man, comes to visit Mohun's parents shortly after Mohun is born. The pundit gives a prediction of Mohun's character and livelihood, saying, "The boy will be a lecher and a spendthrift. Possibly a liar as well" (Naipaul 2001, 16). The bizarre circumstance of his father's death secures the truth of the pundit's words for Mohun. Believing that Mohun is drowning in a pond, his father rushes in vain to save his son – but Mohun is not there, and his father drowns instead. Mohun himself was hiding elsewhere to avoid the blame for a neighbor's drowned calf, also a victim of the pond (28-30). The tragic death of his father seems to confirm the pundit's omen that he should be kept "away from trees and water" (16) to avoid the "evil this boy will undoubtedly bring" (17). By accepting and bearing the objectification forced on him by the pundit's authority Mohun must always fulfill a certain role in his life's narrative and the narrative of his social milieu. Within this role, Mohun is always at fault. He is the guilty one. He is guilty of his father's death and for his family's misfortunes before they even occur. With this role as his only solace it is easy to see how Mohun reaches the absurd. To be absolved of his guilt he must rebel against his objectification as the guilty one.

Conversely, consider the perspective of the one who objectifies others, rather than the one who is objectified. In the famous scene from Camus's *The Stranger* we see the character Meursault on a beach prior to the climactic encounter with an unidentified Arab man. Meursault's friend, Raymond, believes a certain group of Arabs to be a threat (Camus 1989, 48). Meursault is pulled into the narrative by his association with Raymond and, following a tense moment involving the group of Arabs, is given a gun for protection (56). In taking over the gun, Meursault seems to also take over the narrative, claiming it as his own and internalizing it as he slips the gun into his pocket. Meursault immediately recognizes the choice posed to him by the gun. He muses, "It was then I realized that you could either shoot or not shoot" (56). Following this exchange, Meursault heads off down the beach alone. In his mind, "To stay or

go, it amounted to the same thing" (57). When he again encounters a single Arab man, the two of them alone together, Meursault is encountering what has become an object playing a role in his narrative – the role of the enemy. This person has always been merely an enemy in Meursault's eyes. As such, the Arab man is the object that is to be shot should the decision need to be made. To make the point stick Camus gives us so little information about the Arab man except that he is, in fact, an Arab man wearing overalls. Then, he writes Meursault as carrying the reduction even further. On his approach, Meursault observes, "But most of the time, he was just a form shimmering before my eyes in the fiery air" (58). It is one thing to shoot a living subject with hopes, desires, fears, and project for the world in which you yourself could play a part. It is entirely different to shoot a mere shimmering form. Indeed, this form is Meursault's enemy. It exists now as the thing that is to be shot.

Clearly, objectification generates conflict. How to respond to the problem of objectification? If Beauvoir is correct, then it is an inescapable condition of the human experience. A choice divides us and brings us, in our ambiguity, face to face with the absurd. We must choose between solitude and solidarity.

Rebellion and Solitude

Camus writes sympathetically of the rebellion staged by the individual subject against objectification and claims that the contradiction arising from this rebellion is that "man rejects the world as it is without recognizing the necessity of escaping it…Far from wanting to forget it, they suffer, from not being able to posses it completely enough, estranged citizen's of the world" (1991b, 260). He expresses the weight of the solitude imposed by the subject's rejection of the external narratives into which it is casted. A similar estrangement figures prominently in Naipaul's *Half a Life*. In this novel, Willie Chandran repeatedly finds himself estranged from the culture in which he is making a life: first, in his homeland of India, then as a student in Britain, and finally, as a husband and estate owner during the final days of Belgian colonialism in Africa. Willie seeks to possess the world, to have it live up to his expectations. In Britain, he hopes to interact with a community of intellectuals at Speaker's Corner. Naipaul recounts Willie's disappointment:

> He didn't expect to see the idle scatter of people around half a dozen talkers, with the big buses and the cars rolling indifferently by all the time. Some talkers had very personal religious ideas, and Willie remembering his own home lie, thought that the families of these men might have been glad to get them out of the house in the afternoons (Naipaul 2002, 50).

Willie's rebellion against his Indian values led him to expect certain alternatives in British culture and especially among British intellectuals. It was, after all, Willie's father who introduces the British intellectual as a figure of esteem in Willie's life. His middle name is Somerset, after Somerset Maugham, whom his father had briefly met (2002, 3-5). Though the story of his father is one Willie cannot escape, he rejects it outright after hearing it and enters into isolation (2002, 35). Willie's own story thus begins with his rejection of the paternal narrative. Therein begins the struggle for a life of his own. But such a life is elusive as long as Willie defines his experiences in terms of his father's story. Of course, the unhappiness of Willie's solitude is predicated upon his thrownness – on the fact the he finds himself thrust into a world that he neither chose nor established for himself and yet must nevertheless make his way (Beauvoir 1978, 35). His father's narrative, against which he struggles, thereby appears to him as an irrefutable fact of the world, just as the pundit's decrees seem stamped with the seal of destiny to Mohun Biswas, or the Arab man is taken up as "the enemy" by Meursault, as if Raymond has revealed a fundamental truth of the world when he hands over the gun. Willie's disappointment at Speaker's Corner reflects his disappointment in the intellectual life of his home precisely because it does not afford him the escape for which he longed. Indeed, it is yet another facticity that he had not established. The idea of Speaker's Corner he had constructed for himself and projected onto the world in the form of his expectations was met with an incongruous reality in which people other than he had already determined the nature of the place. He had been determined to find an escape from Indian in Britain only to be greeted by a set of social rules and obligations just as hollow to Willie as those in his homeland. The discovery is both surprising to him and deeply upsetting. It throws him back onto himself, reminding him once again of his impotent efforts to make a world for himself.

Such is the emotive response to the sudden realizations that our own expectations and interpretations are proving to be inaccurate in some significant respects. Return to Meursault, who is faced with interpretations of his actions rendered by the prosecuting attorney, renditions that are antithetical to Meursault's own recollection of the same events. Meursault describes his mother's funeral and the days immediately after the burial rites. Meursault is continually cast in the values of French-Algerian society throughout these days; cast in roles by people who objectify Meursault in ways that run counter to his own perception of himself. During his trial, the prosecutor vilifies Meursault for accepting a cup of coffee during his mother's wake (Camus 1989, 91). The claim is that any moral person among the jurors "will conclude that a stranger may offer a cup of coffee, but that beside the body of the one

who brought him into the world, a son should have refused it" (91). The account is contrary to Meursault's own narrative of the event in which the caretaker serves coffee to everyone at the vigil, all of whom share in the refreshment without comment (11). Along with the coffee incident, the fact the Meursault did not cry at his mother's funeral is used at his trial as evidence to convince the jury that he is an amoral killer. He must be objectified as a coldblooded murderer for the jury to perceive him as "guilty." Indeed, he must be more than guilty – for certainly, Meursault *is guilty* of the crime – but the jury must also believe that he deserves to die for the crime he committed. Fundamental to Meursault's solitude is his obstinate bad faith. He withholds from his own consciousness, until the last possible moment, the fact of his own responsibility and the real consequences of the action he has undoubtedly committed. His "no!" is thus twofold. The negation is directed at the others, at the prosecutor's interpretations but also toward the very being of the Arab man whose possibilities have been totally usurped and annihilated by Meursault's objectification of him, but the negation is, at the same time, turned on Meursault himself, who refuses to acknowledge and thereby bear responsibility for his deeds. This self-deceptive negation of the fact of his action is the essence of bad faith (Sartre 1994, 48). Willie, too, can be seen to operate in bad faith. He is constantly negating his own being in order to find a meaning for himself already inscribed in the order of the world presented to him, though he finds this effort aborted by the failure of the world to meet his expectations for it. He thus deceives himself about the nature of his own projects and thereby defers the reconciliation that would bring him out of solitude and establish the opportunity for solidarity between he and the others with whom he meets the world.

Meursault's rebellion is waged from his self-imposed and near total isolation. It is isolation from others, certainly, but also, through his living in bad faith, isolation from his own being. Others are in control of his life and are ready to decide who is his friend or enemy and whether he is to live or die. He is alone, the absurd man. His rejection of the social roles projected on him the prosecutor, the judge, his friend Raymond, and the jury extends beyond the social setting to his very condition. Meursault is a metaphysical rebel in the end (Camus 1991b, 23). But his living, continuous bad faith leads to the ultimate self-negation in which Meursault embraces his own annihilation in death. "For everything to be consummated," Meursault concludes, "for me to feel less alone, I had only wish that there be a large crowd of spectators the day of my execution and that they greet me with cries of hate" (Camus 1989, 123). His own self-negation is solidified in the cries of the other who condemn him and he at last obtains total objectification in the final erase of his own subjectivity as such. He *becomes an object in fact*, that is, a corpse, nothing but a body.

The lesson taught by Meursault is the lesson Willie Chandran must eventually learn. The path of rebellion leads, not just to solitude, but risks absolute annihilation when carried through unto death. Nevertheless, when the negation of our condition becomes our primary occupation we must face a symbolic death of sorts and walk away. Willie's decision to leave his wife in Africa is a decision to let his life on the colonial estate die. It is a decision that arrives after a symbolic awakening. After suffering a fall on the stairs, Willie experiences a lapse in consciousness (Naipaul 2002, 127). If we understand consciousness in its existential dimension as a being for which the question of its own existence arises because it finds itself among other beings that it is not (Heidegger 2010, 11; Sartre 1994, 47) we then see Willie's loss of consciousness after the fall as an instance of the negation of the fundamental negation at the core of his being. This is to say, he finds the possibility of his transcendence toward certain possibilities becoming closed off and must, upon awakening, begin to sort out those future possibilities that remain open to him and among which he can still choose. Upon waking, he feels as though he is living his wife's life. In rejecting her he rejects the part of himself that is living by her side (Naipaul 2002, 128). But facing this symbolic death, the end of one set of possible futures, is not easily endured and must be admitted a sacrifice. In the end, doubt still overshadows Willie. Whether to stay in Africa or flee to Portugal to escape the revolution, it amounts to the same things, as Meursault had said. It amounts to Willie leaving his wife's life. To this she replies, "Perhaps it wasn't really my life either" (211).

Unless Willie will share Meursault's fate as well as his lesson he must do more than simply affirm himself against others. He must affirm himself as one self among others. This means accepting *some* of the ways in which others objectify him. That is, there must be some social roles into which he can be reconciled. Merleau-Ponty offers insight into this dynamice when he writes, "Everything that I 'am'… I never am completely for myself… I may well be these things for other people, nevertheless I remain free to posit another person as a consciousness whose views strike through to my very being, or… merely as an object" (Merleau-Ponty 2002, 505). With this in mind, we turn to consider solidarity.

Affirmation in Solidarity

If perpetual rebellion against others ultimately results in rebellion against our own selves, and thus, a rejection of our own life in death, then we must afford ourselves an alternative to Meursault's metaphysical rebellion. Though we reject objectification, we in turn objectify others in our attempts to right the world. So, it is not the case that objectification is, in itself, necessarily evil,

nor is it the origin of our absurd character. Indeed, it is necessary that my "No" to some condition of my life is at once a "No" to those who established it and the project I establish for myself is, at least in part, also a project against certain aspects of the project of the others (Beauvoir 1978, 96-97). My successful application to a job posting is at once the denial of that job to the others who applied. Further, we must take the other as an object in our projects *even when that project aims at the good of the other*. The medical doctor who would operate on their patient must, when the cut is made, view that person as merely a body to worked upon. The inner life and feelings of the patient cannot bear too heavily upon the surgeon in the moments they lay upon the table, though the doctor knows they operate under the patient's consent and for their health. The absurdity arises from the psychology of the character, from the confrontation that is experienced between acceptance and rejection, from the choice between solitary rebellion and affirmation in solidarity. It is from the given solidarity that rebellion happens. In the case of Naipaul's characters we have seen this rebellion occur from the solidarity of the family units that present cultural milieus that cannot get beyond themselves. Due to his much-expanded purview of the world Willie is finally able to generalize his rebellion much more than Mohun, breaking from the familial solipsism that dominated his youth. Camus's characters find themselves enmeshed in a society that has already provided given generalizations about the world beyond their own culture. Meursault's primary struggle is against French-Algerian society and the roles it affords him as given. His own account is always counter to what society says about him, about what other people say about him. These other people are strangers to Meursault. He finds himself beyond the reach of his own culture.

But to affirm ourselves and to affirm our own values we must be able to affirm certain ways in which we are objectified by embracing roles in society with others. We see Mohun teetering on the brink of despair groping for a way to climb back from his solitude. Naipaul writes, "He sank into despair as into the void which, in his imaging, had always stood for the life he had yet to live… He discovered in himself only a great unwillingness, and that part of his mind which feared the consequences of such a withdrawal was increasingly stilled" (2001, 474). Mohun understands intuitively that he must act. Moreover, he must act among the others against whom he wages his rebellion. Unless he is willing to destroy himself he must enter society and make his place and peace. Willie imagines there is no future life for him. The void stands for the life he has yet to live, a life he has not yet chosen for himself. As long as the choice is not made, the future holds nothing. Our projects give us a transcendent sense of a future in which the completion of a project is a fate of our own design. None of these projections occur in solitude, though the origins of a

project may reside in a void such as Mohun's. Eventually, he emerges from despair to reinvest in a social order. Indeed, the opportunity for Mohun to affirm himself is presented to him through the others from which he feels alienated: "Suddenly, quite suddenly, he was revivified… One morning he found a note on his desk requesting him to interview the newly arrived head of the Community Welfare Department" (Naipaul 2001, 475). By laying claim to this opportunity, Mohun is moving from his solitary rebellion into a new mode of being, a mode in which he attempts to redefine himself within the narrative structure. He will fulfill a new role. Mohun understands this new role to be a choice he has made and, having chosen it for himself, is a role in which the contradiction between his expectations of the world and its actuality are accepted in the fullness of their ambiguity. His expectations are open, and the world, however it may manifest, could meet them.

In his second novel, *The Plague*, Camus presents us with a way to escape the crushing metaphysical rebellion of Meursault and provides some answers to Mohun's despair. There remains a rebellion staged against the world – against the plague and the conditions of quarantine and death imposed upon the citizenry of Oran – but the struggle is one that is shared. The whole population of Oran at once feels the burden of life under the plague (Camus 1991c, 67). Camus writes, "No longer were there individual destinies; only a collective destiny, made of plague and the emotions shared by all. Strongest of there emotion was the sense of exiles and of deprivation, with all the crosscurrents of fear and revolt set up by these" (1991c, 167). In this state of solidarity there is revealed the we-subject of a collectivity of individuals whose self-identity is formed through the mutual recognition of an immutable historical context. The socio-historic narrative is recognized as more than a happenstance thrown up by weak-willed humanity. Part of the characteristic rebellion of humanity, in particular those adolescent rebellions experiences in youth, arises when we discover the subjectivity of others and begin to realize the roles in which we have been thrust are no more than the constructs of others who know no better than us (Beauvoir 1978, 39). But the brute fact of the plague and analogous circumstances overshadows everyday objectifications while alienating characters rom the roles in which they were formerly objectified. The ability to view the socio-historic narrative as a mere social construction is lost under the weight of the crisis. Facing mortality together, forced into mutual rebellion against an absurd situation, each character is revealed to the others *as such*. We acknowledge the existence of the other as subjects – that they must always be more than they appear to us as objective parts of our own projects (Sartre 1994, 429). It reveals their mortality and thus, their contingency. More than that, it reveals the importance of the other in defining roles for ourselves.

What is the surgeon without their patient? Without the other there is no place for the one (Beauvoir 1989, xxii-xxiv).

Two characters in *The Plague* illustrate the dependence of subjects on the others among whom they live: Dr. Reiux and his friend Tarrou. Camus describes the two men taking a swim together. Under the plague, the sea had been off-limits to those under quarantine (Camus 1991c, 256). Reiux reflects that, "a strange happiness possessed him. Turning to his Tarrou, he caught a glimpse on his friend's face of the same happiness, a happiness that forgot nothing, not even murder" (256). This is the acknowledgement of existence as such, without declaring roles for one another and loading the situation with superfluous expectations of prescribed behaviors. There is in fact a recognition and mutual affirmation of their rebellion against those objectifications, in this case, the roles dictated by the plague. "Really, it's too damn silly living only in and for the plague," Tarrou says, "Of course, a man should fight for the victims, but if he ceases caring for anything outside that, what's the use of his fighting" (256). Solidarity takes on a new importance in the process of defining ourselves. However, this importance can only be revealed to us from the perspective of rebellion. It is from rebellion that we break from an imposed solidarity to take stock of our own values. But the affirmation of these newly formulated self-images must occur among and with others. All that is forged in the solitude of rebellion are the ways in which we wish to be viewed by others. They become the sign and symbols by which we reveal ourselves as subject to the other subjects with whom we share the world.

New Individualities

I am reminded of a fragment of Sappho that was translated, "I don't know what to do / Two states of mind in me" (2003, 107), to which Kant could easily contribute, "One grows *weary* from *inactivity*" (1996, 38). The characters analyzed throughout this essay are psychologically torn. They rebel against the world, against society, and against themselves. But their rebellion isolates them – it puts them at an infinite distance from those around them who are rejected along with the world. To get back to those from which they are alienated, indeed, to return to themselves, these characters must enter into a new mode of solidarity in which they may make a self-affirmation. In this new affirmation we see the momentary dissolution of objectification and the reemergence of an objectification that it is possible to embrace. Reiux and Tarrou were not objectifying one another in the moment. It may even be that Willie Chandran and his estranged wife were no longer objectifying one another in those roles. In the end, they were honest. In this honesty, in openness with one another, the characters found not the old objects and roles, but a functional element of

their own identities. One character finds another upon whom they depended and from whom interdependent roles derived meaning. This happens most clearly between Reiux and Tarrou who act as exemplars. Others serves as warnings: the alienated Willie and his wife, and Meursault who ends in annihilation.

Without the social world in which we interact we grow weary of inactivity, as Kant put it. We cannot act in solitude lest we take up the burdens of the hermit and recluse or unless we accept annihilation. So, weary from the bad faith of the choice not to choose we made the leap to the only thing left to us, which is to make a way for ourselves in the world. Camus wrote about characters who make this choice, "They choose, and give us as an example the only original rule of life today: to learn to live and to die, and, in order to be a man, to refuse to be a god" (1991b, 306). The reason may be because a god can stand alone. A god is beyond the world and creating a place for the world itself. But humanity is different and can express its solitude only in reference to the community that offers solidarity. It is within community that we express our new individualities, individualities derivative of the we-subject that is shared with others. Alive in relation to others, embedded alongside them in the world, we find absurdity as well as an opportunity for transcendence. The contradiction that takes us beyond ourselves allows us to become who we are in a process that realizes more fully what we mean to be. It is between solitude and solidarity that we find out who we really are.

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The Place of Consignation, or Memory and Writing in Derrida's Archive

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More than a theoretical account of the figure and concept of the archive in general, Derrida's *Archive Fever* (1995) closely reads Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi's "Monologue with Freud" chapter in the scholar's *Freud's Moses: Judaism Terminable and Interminable* (1991). To the unacquainted, this is the missing third term, between *Archive Fever* and the relevant texts of the Freudian corpus.[1] The triangulation rests on the Moses of Michelangelo, which in turnrests on the Moses of the Old Testament. The investigation of archive as a conceptual concern—Derrida's original title was "The Concept of the Archive: A Freudian Impression"—was delivered at the Freud Museum in London on the 5th of June 1994.[2] Yerushalmi's absence on this particular occasion seems to be all the more fortuitous, given Derrida's lengthy discussion of "Monologue with Freud" as an address toan absent listener, a ghost. Yet the title of the work changed, from presentation to publication, to "archive fever," or *mal d'archive*.

To what does this enigmatic heading refer? It enjoys multiple referents: in one sense, it refers to "death drive." Later it also comes to name the need for, desire for, and sickness of desire for the archive, that is, homesickness or nostalgia for the archive. It thus entails an always situated or embeddedness in a Janus-faced relation to time and space: both looking backward and toward the future, as well as with interior consignation depending on its exteriority to some other thing. To be *en mal de* signifies to be amidst an already temporalized relationship to the past and future, that is, to history and memory but also the future and the virtual. This retrospection and looking toward

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the futurelinks to the complicated temporality of the psychoanalytic concept of *Nacthräglikeit* ("afterwardness") or *Nachträglichegehorsam* ("deferred obedience"), which conditions the form of the differing rhetorical manifestations of temporal structure in Derrida's text, as demonstrated below. Yet there are two means by which death drive is implicated by the archive, the first of which is perhaps given or explicit. The second, however, relies on the account of writing and memory posited in Derrida's early work, including "Plato's Pharmacy", "The Rhetoric of Drugs," and "Signature Event Context," and clarifies the connection between the death drive as/and *mal d'archive* in *Archive Fever*. The two means of relating death drive to the archive emerge as apparently contradictory: the death drive both *is* and *poisons* the archive, contaminates, pollutes, and sickens it. Death drive is at once the condition of possibility of the archive, but also external to it, on its surface, and intrinsic or *a priori* to it. The claims regarding writing and memory in *Archive Fever* are underwritten by the Platonic categories of *anamnesis* and *hypomnesis* explicated in *Dissemination*, which render coherent the opposition between the archive and death drive and its reversal in *Archive Fever*.

This essay begins by examining the archive's orientation toward the future that stems from its determining organization of archival material. Subsequently, it explicates the temporal structure proposed by the form of *Archive Fever* and its meta-rhetorical diction, which reflects psychoanalysis's challenge to teleological time; next, it considers the relation between the archive and death drive posited in the text, which hinges on speech and on memory; finally, it concludes by explaining the title *mal d'archive* and the relationship among Judaism and futurity.

In the untitled opening section, Derrida elucidates the split etymology of the Ancient Greek term αρχή, *Arkhe*, meaning both the beginning and the law, the "commencement" and the "commandment" (1). Both senses imply a location, as Derrida notes: either the place where things *begin*, or the place from which gods or men *command*. This meaning of a particular location informs the modern term for "archive," which, as *Arkheion* in Ancient Greek, meant the house or residence of the ruling officers, or *archons*. By dint of their authority, official documents were kept at their household. Thus the *archons* were effectively the documents' guardians, and as such, assumed hermeneutical responsibility as well: they were both keepers and interpreters. And with this domiciliation of official documents came the "power of consignation", that is, of grouping signs together, "coordinating" and "configuring" a particular body of materials. This gathering and interpreting has political and ethical consequences for the archive: those outside of it may call into question the

legitimacy of its organization and the law it commands or speaks. Its institutionalization has a history that can be deconstructed, Derrida maintains on page 4. The extended footnote corresponding to these claims considers the politicization of the archive, which Derrida deems to be beyond on the scope of his lecture.By way of introducing a reference to Sonia Combe's *Forbidden Archives*, Derrida also postulates political power stems from control of the archive and of memory. The consequences persist for the archive of Freud's *oeuvre* monumentalized on that day in June of 1994, as they do, for the synoptic proceedings of the event conserved in the Freud Museum's Digital Archive. The organization, classification, and compression of the materials presented in the latter structure a particular form of meaning that are the result of hermeneutical decisions and interpretive transformations. This is at least one of the senses of the archive's orientation toward futurity to which Derrida refers in his characterization of the archive.

Derrida's text is one that becomes increasingly clear upon multiple readings. Its elliptical syntax and enigmatic prolepses require a return that effectively instantiates precisely the forms of non-teleological time that it ascribes to the archive. The form of the book itself resembles that of *Dissemination* yet expands its premise to an even greater degree. In that earlier text, the section entitled "*Hors livre* ['Outside the book'] Outwork, *hors d'oeuvre* ['outside the work'], extratext, foreplay, bookend, facing, prefacing," foregrounds the complex dynamic of interiority and exteriority *and* the temporal performance of retrospective anticipation that characterizes prefaces in general. Barbara Johnson's commentary in the introduction to the English translation of *Dissemination* is particularly elucidating on this aspect, specifically xxxii-xxxiii. In *Archive Fever*, as Mary Ann Doane has noted, there is a proliferation of beginnings within the argument, as well as in the book's formal organization and structure. "Note", "Exergue", "Preamble", "Foreword", "Theses", "Postscript": these means of arranging the content function argumentatively as a deconstruction of the temporal and spatial parameters of the book form. In addition, they challenge the possibility of a stable beginning or origin, a target on which deconstruction set its sights from early on.[3] The deconstructive logic functions no differently in *Archive Fever,* though in this later text, the goal is not to reshuffle the categories of Western metaphysics, but instead to portray the complex temporality of psychoanalysis in different manifestations, through the figure of the archive, the Freudian signature, and Yerushalmi's address to Freud's specter. If, in the earlier works, the aim was to subvert gestures of mastery, as Johnson puts it, *Archive Fever* strives to mirror psychoanalysis's displacement of teleological time and undermine the archive's untroubled functioning as a mere portal to the past.[4]

Indeed, the references to time, both playful and grave, permeate *Archive Fever*. "I dream now of having the time to submit for your discussion more than one thesis, three at least. This time will never be given to me" (5 my emphasis). This seemingly peripheral remark, a passing transition, a platitude perhaps, or apology, inwardly winks to itself, to the author and the knowing reader. The deictic "now" always differs depending on the context its uttered in, evoking the question of writing and temporality from the outset; two mentions of time, either having it or giving it, in this case not receiving it (they did give him three and a half hours) attain an almost poetic resonance given the reflections that ensue. Thus, time's relation to writing is manifest in the form of the book, its disseminating beginnings, and in its suggestive intimations.

The opening discussion of the exergue discusses the exergue itself: originally the place for inserting the date on a coin, the textual exergue precedes the main text as the place for a citation or epigraph. Through his explication of the features of the exergue—that is "sets the stage", "capitalizes on an ellipsis", "lays down the law and *gives order"*—the resemblance to an archive becomes apparent. For Derrida, the exergue is "the first figure of an archive, because every archive is at once institutive and conservative" (7). Some irony inheres in referring to the archive as a *figure*, given the ambition of "White Mythology" to explore metaphor in the text of philosophy (as its subtitle indicates) through a reading of Anatole Frances' *The Garden of Epicurus* (1895); moreover, the institutive and conservative functions stem from those qualities of both the epigraph and the archive to implement the law and house it, to set the tone and save its place. The last reference of this associative nexus is the Freud house museum itself, the next exergue/archive: it attains the power to set the law and contain it. The archive is "eco-nomic", he claims, playing on the etymology of *economy* from ancient Greek: the word is comprised of *oikos*, as house or dwelling, and *nomos*, the law. *Eco-nomos* thus becomes the science of house-keeping. It is no coincidence that Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* begins with an invocation of an additional, 'economic' factor to the theory of psychoanalysis.[5] For the latter, the economy is the ratio of pleasure to unpleasure and a vacillating increase and diminishment in excitation. Derrida retrieves the etymology to demonstrate the inseparability of the archive with the home and the law, but capitalizing, as it were, on Freud's invocation to forge a larger synthesis. The other obvious allusion here is to Marx,[6] which metonymically insinuates the rhetoric of wager and risk, which in turn, leads to death drive.[7]

The instinct toward destruction or death drive is "no longer a debatable hypothesis" for Freud, Derrida argues in his rhetorical interpretation of *Civilization and Its Discontents* (henceforth *CID*) (10). Rather it is a necessity,

and what Freud calls a "mute [*stumm*]" one at that. This adjective is crucial to understanding the means by which Derrida links the archive to the death drive in this first articulation. However, the causality he ascribes is suspect, which is at the heart of the project of *Archive Fever*: "since [the death drive] always operates in silence," Derrida writes, "it never leaves any archives of its own" (10). The cause-and-effect relation this proposes depends on speech: without sound, there is no archive. The death drive, by virtue of its silence, has no record of having passed. "It destroys in advance its own archive," Derrida claims, denoting a dialectical temporality between past and future; to destroy its own record *in advance* of having passed suggests a dynamic view of time that reverses the temporal structure of *Nachträglikeit*. Rather than memory as rewritten according to a later development, here, memory is effaced after the passage of this drive. "It destroys in advance its own archive, *as if that were in truth the very motivation of its most proper movement*" (10). Derrida suggests, using the hypothetical *as if* to propose a thesis, that the death drive is not only bent on the reduction of excitation, but in fact, it operates toward the end of the effacement of memory; this is its very purpose. "It works *to destroy the archive: on the condition of effacing* but also *with a view to effacing* its own 'proper' traces—which consequently cannot properly be called 'proper'" (ibid). Even the scare-quotes surrounding proper in this instance, which refers to the sense of *one's own*, function in anticipation of the subsequent negation of its very usage, miming the temporal play at the micrological level of syntax. Yet the connection between death drive and the archive hinges on speech and on memory; in this, they are opposed, with the death drive characterized as *anarchivic* or *archivolithic*, that is, "archive-destroying".

In order to explicate the important feature of exteriority, which emerges in this context, it is first necessary to examine the two types of memory that Derrida examines in Plato's *Phaedrus*. Derrida's corpus had been concerned with the issue of writing as a supplement to memory long before the publication of *Archive Fever*. In "Plato's Pharmacy" from *Dissemination*, he examines the marginal myth at the conclusion of Plato's *Phaedrus* regarding writing and memory. In that text, the demi-god Theuth brings the technology of writing to the god-king Thamus, who is to determine the value of writing, presented as a "recipe [*pharmakon*] for both memory and wisdom" (Leitch 1839). Indeed, the source of the opposition between *mneme* and *hypomnesis* is Plato. The first describes spontaneous, living memory, where as the latter refers to "monuments," means for reminding. Writing is accorded with the latter. In the interview entitled "The Rhetoric of Drugs," Derrida synopsizes his argument, framing the consideration in terms of repetition. When Theuth presents writing to Thamus, the former maintains that it will benefit memory,

and it will do so by offering a technique of repetition. By repeating, we will remember, says Theuth's argument, thus serving *anamnesis*, or the "recollection of spiritual truths through genuine, living wisdom, [for Plato,] through philosophy" (Leitch 36). Learning is remembering knowledge from previous lifetimes or before birth. Thamus disagrees, claiming that writing will induce forgetfulness when users rely upon it rather than their own memory. Thus, it is a technique "*not* for memory [*mneme*] but for reminding" or "recollection" [*hypomnesis*], the difference here being between memory itself and mere reminders. The latter becomes referred to as "bad memory;" the *pharmakon*, writing, as both poison to memory and its aid, threatens to undercut the human capacity of memory, *mneme* and *anamnesis*. As such, it leads to forgetting and also irresponsibility in moving away from philosophical truth. The added lay that fits over this schema: *anamnesis* is associated with living memory, thus truth and thereby philosophy, whereas *hypomnesis* is associated with writing, thus sophistry and thereby rhetoric. The *Pharmakon* thus functions as both poison and remedy to memory, and to choose one over the other is to close off the polyvalent play that takes place in the term itself and generates this problematic. For the purposes of *Archive Fever*, the crucial point will be that *hypomnesis* refers to the type of memory specifically designated by writing, that is, of reminders, monuments, and bad memory, that is associated with the archive, the site of repetition that will not serve anamnesis but destroy it.

Now given this distinction between *anamnesis* and *hypomnesis,* Derrida's remarks regarding the archive shift into focus. The archive, for Derrida, is "hypomnesic," that is, depends on writing and represents the bad kind of memory, not spontaneous, living memory. Like the *pharmakon* as poison to memory, the death drive "incites forgetfulness" but also demands the effacement of the mnemotechnical supplement, writing, the reminder and monument. The death drive requires its destruction. The archive, both *like* and *as* writing, supplements living, full, present memory. As such, the claim that "there is no archive without a place of consignation, without a technique of repetition, and without a certain exteriority," seems to propose that the place of consignation is the capacity for repetition and reimpression inherent to the archive as *hypomnesis*. The archive is "*hypomnesic*," and its exteriority is its requisite condition. "Exterior to what?" Derrida asks. It seems the subject of psychoanalysis, host to the death drive, is diametrically opposed to the archive.

Death drive demands the destruction of the archive, Derrida argues on 11: "it not only incites forgetfulness, amnesia, the annihilation of memory, as *meneme* or *anamnesis,* but also commands the radical effacement, in truth the eradication, of

> that which can never be reduced to *mneme* or to *anamnesis*, that is, the archive, consignation, the documentary or monumental apparatus as *hypomnema*, mnemotechnical supplement or representative, auxiliary or memorandum. Because the archive…will never be either memory or anamnesis as spontaneous, alive and internal experience. On the contrary: the archive takes place at the place of originary and structural breakdown of the said memory. (11)

So the question is, what reason does Derrida provide for the death drive to command the radical effacement of the archive? The answer is its supplementarity, its status as a mere implement to aid spontaneous, living memory, but not to replace it. He specifies that the archive takes place where human memory breaks down, at its intrinsic limit. Human capacity for memory is finite, and the archive takes its charge at the end of its *capacity*, that is, its spatial maximum. Yet the archive itself is also finite, and its finitude forms the site where death drive picks up.

In Derrida's words, all italics in the original: "*There is no archive without a place of consignation, without a technique of representation, and without a certain exteriority. No archive without outside*" (11). Now in this articulation, there is a mutual imbrication of the archive with the place of consignation, that is, of the assembly (*con-*) of signs (*-signation*). One would hope that this would imply that the archive *is* the place of consignation. Yet subsequent sentences complicate this simple reading. In what Derrida calls the "decisive paradox [that] undoubtedly conditions the whole of these remarks," the site of the archive and the place of consignation seem to fissure, not fuse:

> If there is no archive without consignation in an external place which assures the possibility of memorization, of repetition, of reproduction, or of reimpression, then we must also remember that repetition itself, the logic of repetition, indeed the repetition compulsion, remains, according to Freud, indissociable from the death drive. And thus from destruction. (11)

This formulation suggests that the archive and place of consignation are distinct, as the place is "external" to the archive, but nonetheless makes repetition possible. Signs gather outside of the archive, not within it, as previously proposed. Unfortunately, running with this reading leads to a dead end. Instead, we must read it, as Derrida more explicitly states later, as en equation: the archive *is* the "accumulation and capitalization of memory on some substrate and in an exterior place" (12). Now in order to understand the consequence of this, one need first revisit the meaning of *consignation* which appeared innocently in Derrida's prefatory remarks, which now becomes essential. Once this all has been established, the present inquiry can return to the consequence and the means by which death drive turns the archive against itself.

In the untitled opening section, Derrida explicates two qualities of the archive: its topological principle, its quality of being a shape or place, and its nomological principle, the site of the law. The former he accords the status of place and also the designation "substrate", whereas the latter is the law and authority. These constitute a scene of *domiciliation*, which combines both senses. The "archontic" dimension refers to the aforementioned *archons*, keepers, guardians, and interpreters of the archive. There is a "function" that "topo-nomology" and "domiciliation" achieve, and they are the condition of possibility of the archive. This function is that of concealment: the "patriarchic function" of the archive's topo-nomology is "to shelter itself and, sheltered, to conceal itself" (3). The archive must be "posited somewhere, on a stable substrate". This is the first condition, the archontic function of the archive: to give it a place, but also to identify and classify the contents of the archive.[8] This power needs to be combined with—the exact word is "paired,"— what Derrida calls the power of *consignation*. Yet quickly this coupling becomes an identification, where "the archontic principle of the archive *is also a principle of consignation*, that is, of gather together" (3 my emphasis). So are they different? The principle of consignation denotes to consign in the sense of deposit, to which Derrida adds the gathering together of signs, *con-sign-ation*. The Latin *consignation* means "written proof", and Derrida extends its meaning beyond this to its presupposition: specifically, that consignation names the quality of an archive or other system of information in which all elements refer to the larger unity of the parts. There ought not to be any absolute differences among contents of an archive, Derrida claims; rather they should all comply with a network of associations and interrelations.

Let us return to the passage that brought us here:

> If there is no archive without consignation in an external place which assures the possibility of memorization, of repetition, of reproduction, or of reimpression, then we must also remember that repetition itself, the logic of repetition, indeed the repetition compulsion, remains, according to Freud, indissociable from the death drive. And thus from destruction. (11)

Consignation requires a *space* to take place, and that place becomes the *hypomnesic* archive. Indeed, the place must "assure the possibility of *memorization*," the possibility of anamnesis apart from it. The space must also assure the possibility of repetition, reproduction and reimpression, all of which can be thought as functions of mnemotechnical supplements. Yet if we grant this, Derrida claims, we must also grant that mere repetition itself necessitates the death drive; repetition is *associated* with it. The relation between repetition and death drive is here articulated as one of *association*.[9] Nevertheless, the possibility of repetition that the archive presents contains death drive within it, like an *a priori*, not just an external force that threatens it. These are the two forms in which death drive relates to the archive.

So what is the consequence, for Derrida?

> Consequence: right on that which permits and conditions archivization, we will never find anything other than that which exposes to destruction, and in truth menaces with destruction, introducing, *a priori*, forgetfulness and the archiviolithic into the heart of the monument. Into the "by heart" itself. The archive always works, and *a priori*, against itself. (11-12)

From the outset of the excerpt, there persists syntactical difficulty, evasion: rather than beginning with a subject followed by a predicate, Derrida begins his consequence with the preposition "right on" [*à meme*], effectively suspending the equation that the colon implies: the consequence is *not* "right on." Instead, the consequence is as follows. First, we require the condition of archivization, which, as we have established, is exteriority, the space of the archive as apart from, say, the psyche, which allows memorization, repetition, and so forth, that is, facilitates *anamnesis*. Specifically, the condition of the archive is its exteriority to anamnesis. Now *on* this condition, as in, on top of it, or on its surface, we will only find "that which exposes to destruction, and in truth, menaces with destruction." What is remarkable about this formulation is there is no object of exposure or menace: we know that this entity will be *exposed to* and *menaced by* destruction, yet we have no sense of the particular thing that receives this aggression. It is tantamount to saying "that which holds hostage" without indicating who or what is being held hostage. The quandary can be resolved by agreeing that refers to the exposure to destruction *in general*, that is, everything is exposed to general destruction, though this is unsatisfying. Alternatively, the archive itself could be the object of this exposure and menace, which would then be paraphrased thusly: on the condition of archivization, namely, its exteriority *to something else*, we will only find that which exposes *it* to destruction. If this latter paraphrase proves more resonant, one wonders why Derrida did not include an object in the formulation. Yet our paraphrase is only partially complete.

"Introducing, *a priori*": the reader will know what sort of temporal order this combination implies. An *a priori* is contained within the very property of the concept; to *introduce* something already suggests synthesis and the necessity of experience. Forgetfulness is introduced, along with the archiviolithic—archive-destroying—into the archive, its "heart." The wordplay that follows riffs on the common expression for memory, *to learn by heart:* forgetfulness invades the "'by heart' itself." He continues: "The archive always works, and *a priori*, against itself". A second deployment of the *a priori.* This dual emphasis proposes the anteriority of the death drive to the archive. So interior and anterior to the archive, its *a priori* conceptual containment, is repetition compulsion, the mechanical repetition of an earlier event, which reflects the subject's death drive.

On the external space of the archive, there is death drive, introducing forgetfulness into the heart of this supplement. Why forgetfulness? Repetition compulsion is a manner of memory, but it indicates a desire for mastery and the return to an earlier, inanimate state of lessened excitement.

The connection between writing and memory in psychoanalysis begins in 1895 with the unpublished "A Project for a Scientific Psychology" and ends with Freud's "Note on the Mystic Writing Pad" (GPT). In that text, Freud begins by describing the limitations of two different technical supplements to memory: the paper and the slate. While the former maintains a permanent trace, its capacity is overly brief; the latter wields infinite capacity, but the trace is ephemeral. In a graceful turn, Freud argues that the psychic apparatus overcomes these limitations: it can receive potentially infinite stimuli and produce permanent memory-traces. He then introduces the mystic writing pad (*Wunderblock*) as a device that mirrors these capacities of the psyche. This device is separated into three "adjoining systems," which receive the impressions and leaves a trace—the celluloid paper and the wax slab beneath it—thereby corresponding to the conscious sense perception and unconscious memory vault systems of the psyche. Cathexes pass through the conscious perceptual system, intermittently falling inactive, which gives the subject a sense of time as punctuation or periodicity. Derrida's seventh chapter from *Writing and Difference* [*L'ecriture et la difference*, 1967], "Freud and the Scene of Writing," observes the potential complication in the seemingly smooth functioning of the metaphor of the psyche as writing instrument. If writing is inseparable from consciousness, in Freud's view, then how can psychic writing be conceived? Here, Derrida links *différance* with *Nachträglikeit,* Freud's model of temporal deferral, and refers to *Moses and Monotheism* as demonstrating "the efficacy of delay and of action subsequent to the event over large historical intervals" (203). It seems that Derrida's reading of Freud was already in place before Yerushalmi's text, which then served as the event or stimulus through which to posit the intervention that is *Archive Fever*. In this consideration of the temporality of writing, Derrida notes Freud's Platonism in that the modern figure accords with his classical precursor on the subject of hyponemic writing (as mere reminder) as opposed to the live functioning of the psychic apparatus.

Derrida returns to this passage of *Writing and Difference* along with Freud's "Notes on a Mystic Writing Pad", where *der Wunderblock* represents an external memory aid in order to answer the question "exterior to what?" with respect to the archive's *hypomnesic* character, of which exteriority is a requisite condition. Here Derrida charges Freud for not examining the status of the mnemotechnical supplement with respect to spontaneity. The writing pad necessarily supplements the spontaneity of living memory, but this does *not* mean, for Derrida, that the machine operates in a complete lack of spontaneity:

the machine bears a "resemblance to the psychical apparatus, its existence and its necessity bear witness to the finitude of the mnemic spontaneity which is thus supplemented" (14). The resemblance of the machine—and here he begins to distinguish between the machine and the writing pad, referring to new technologies for memorization and archivization that developed between 1925-1966—to the psychical apparatus suggests that the spontaneity of living memory is limited. Thus, "the machine—and consequently, representation—is death and finitude *within* the psyche" (14). The machine, also referring to the archive, as a technique of supplementing memory, marks the site where *anamnesis* fails and *hypomnesis* begins. Derrida claims that the machine also gestures toward the future, namely in the relation between these new technological developments of archivization that can be brought to bear on psychoanalysis. So just as the death drive functions within the archive, the machine functions within the psyche—these are the characteristic reversals of oppositions that are *signature* Derrida.

But to what does the title *Archive Fever* refer? In one form, the death drive is the "fever" of the archive, that which threatens it.[10] Toward the end of *Archive Fever*, Derrida refers to the two more problems that are named by the term *mal d'archive*: firstly, the problem of historiographical writing, with its revisions and rewritings of the past, and secondly, the need for archives, the passion and nostalgia for them as home and origin. The former is also a "disorder" as much as a fever. Derrida capitalizes on the untranslatability of the French word *trouble* in order to posit, at least, that the archive presents difficulties for translation, in the sense of the reiteration of the irreplaceable singularity of a unique archival document.[11] This *trouble de l'archive* stems from *mal d'archive.* As aforementioned, there is a determining quality to the structuring of the archive that has ramifications, political and epistemological. As Derrida claims, "the archivization *produces* as much as it records the event" (my emphasis 17). This possesses a polyvalent suggestion. It refers to the role that organization and classification play in the formation of the "event", which is both retrospective and oriented toward the future. In the name *mal d'archive*, retrospection is complicated: the term designates "the mania for origins," to use Adorno's phrase, that characterizes Western metaphysics since Plato:

> [*mal d'archive*] is to burn with a passion. It is never to rest, interminably, from searching for the archive right where it slips away. It is to run after the archive, even if there's too much of it, right where something in it anarchives itself. It is to have a compulsive, repetitive, and nostalgic desire for the archive, an irrepressible desire to return to the origin, a homesickness, a nostalgia for the return to the most archaic place of absolute commencement. (91)

This is an arguably different account of the eponym than that offered earlier in the essay. It necessarily interpellates a subject—an agent, actor, consciousness, subjectivity, psyche—whose desire makes the archive its object. Rather than articulating the archive's status as fraught and unstable, the term *mal d'archive* instead refers to the way in which the subject interacts with it, thereby determining his/her relation to history and cultural memory. In this way, the archive becomes a figure for the lost past that the subject must reclaim. Yet this is only one side of the archival gaze, what we might call the nostalgic or retrospective side, which refers to a desire for origin or *arkhē*.

Derrida also specifies the archive's orientation toward the future, which pertains to hermeneutics but also the Judaism/Jewishness distinction and the question of whether psychoanalysis is a "Jewish science". Interpretation constitutes the simpler side of the archive's relation to the future: the meaning of the archive (in a literal sense, its content, but also the figurative sense of its significance: both signification and significance) will be only uncovered in the future or perhaps will never be uncovered. The reader may be skeptical that Derrida's sophistication would allow such a simple claim. Nevertheless, the passages that reference futurity in *Archive Fever* also refer to the determinant quality of the organization of an archive. For example, Derrida refers to the structure of the archive as "codetermining" its meaning (18). There is also a more complicated sense of the archive's relation to futurity: this quality is precipitated by the archive's finitude or incompleteness. Derrida drew this implication from *der Wunderblock* in "Freud and the Scene of Writing", but also from Yerushalmi's *caveat* against the reconstruction of the history of psychoanalysis according to an incomplete archive. At once, the archive determines the future according to its structure of knowledge, *and,* it leaves open to the future the determinability of the archive according to what has yet to be revealed, uncovered, or brought to the surface. Thus finitude, determination, and the future go hand-in-hand, as does the issue of the virtual. The Jewishness/Judiasm distinction enters at this intersection, by which Derrida makes sense of Yerushalmi's subtitle: *Judaism Terminable and Interminable*, a reference to Freud's article, "Analysis: Terminable or Interminable". He argues that the moment in the "Monologue with Freud" when Yerushalmi raises the question of whether psychoanalysis is a Jewish science, only to state that it may be unknowable, Yerushalmi "changes registers" and the "order of knowledge" that had hitherto governed his study is "suspended" (52). Yerushalmi raises the question hesitantly, as he is unsure whether psychoanalysis-as-Jewish-science is "at all knowable", and can only be discerned "after much future work has been done. Much will depend on how the very terms *Jewish* and *science* are to be defined" (Derrida 70-1). This

"conditional" knowledge opens to the future and to the virtual: the meaning of the two terms *Jewish* and *science* will come in the future, and the possibility of knowing is only surmised, hypothesized, speculated, wagered. The absolute determination of these unknowns can entirely remain unanswered, Derrida claims, indefinitely. Secondly, the solution "to this equation with two unknowns," that is, "Jewishness" and "science," remains in the future, and thus stipulates the condition that it is to come: "the condition on which the future remains to come is not only that it not be known, but that it not be knowable as such" (72). This is the messianistic element of the issue: it remains on a plane of knowledge that is contrary or external to the conventional domain of knowledge.[12]

The elaboration of the Jewishness/Judaism distinction (the terms of which are transparent: the first names a quality of a people, the latter a historical, religious doctrine) continues to clarify the relevance of the future. Yerushalmi sees Jewishness (interminable) as outliving Judaism (terminable). That is, he sees the quality of a people outliving a theological doctrine. Jewishness, in Derrida's extrapolation, "is already given and does not await the future" (72); yet the following paradoxical formulation emerges immediately afterward: "Now the Jewishness that does not await the future is precisely the waiting for the future, the opening of a relation to the future, the experience of the future" (ibid). One might paraphrase this as expressing that, by not waiting for the future, Jewishness awaits a relation to the future to appear or open up. That is, specifically the characteristic of *not awaiting the future* is in itself a way of relating to the future, a position with respect to the future in which it waits. The least *Jewish* thing, according to Derrida, would be "nonbelief in the future, that is to say, in what constitutes Jewishness *beyond all Judaism*" (Derrida's emphasis 74). So anticipation of the future is unique or proper to the identity of Jewishness. Yet there is also the apparently incompatible "injunction to remember" which is characteristic of Judaism for Yerushalmi; thus, Derrida reconciles these two in the concept of *justice*, both hope and remembering. Finally, psychoanalysis complicates the past future distinction through *Nachträglikeit*, *afterwardness*, which "disrupt[s], disturb[s], entangle[s]" the past and future (80). This disorder is a condition of archive fever, the "desire and disorder" of the archive (81), its Janus-faced relation to time.

As the above aims to demonstrate, the archive is a site that looks in two directions, both spatially and temporally: it looks toward the past and future, but also in its inner consignation which depends on necessary exteriority. The theme of writing as a supplement to memory, as both aiding and replacing it, pervades Derrida's thought in its earliest articulations, as in *Writing and Difference* and *Dissemination*. Without acknowledging this substrate, the complications that confront the archive remain hidden, unexposed, silent, and secret. In

concrete terms, the exposition of *Archive Fever* allows for at least two differing connections among *mal d'archive* and death drive, which, though they are not mutually exclusive, come into dramatic tension with each other. While this essay has devoted a majority of its attention to the meaning of the book's title, the subtitle deserves equal attention, which relates to the citationality of all writing and the irreducible singularity of the signature in "Signature Event Context," which would come to explain the Freudian signature and its impression. Indeed, further analysis is needed to explication how the archival contents themselves function as writing.

Notes

[1] These include, in reverse chronological order, *Moses and Monotheism* (1937), *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1929), *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), *Totem and Taboo* (1913), and the less widely known *Delusion and Dream in Jensen's Gradiva* (1907)

[2] The institution found itself in the midst of considering, self-reflexively, its role in the preservation of cultural memory. As the conference proceedings report, Derrida's lecture at this event lasted three and a half hours; and, Yerushalmi was unable to attend his delivery due to a case of bronchitis. This information can be found, appropriately, in the museum's own event archive, where a synopsis of the event is available.

[3] In *Speech and Phenomena* (1967), *Of Grammatology* (1967), and *Writing and Difference* (1967).

[4] As Derrida remarks in passing, "order is no longer assured" (5).

[5] "In taking that course into account in our consideration of the mental processes which are the subject of our study, we are introducing an economic' point of view into our work; and if, in describing those processes, we try to estimate this 'economic' factor in addition to the 'topographical' and 'dynamic' ones, we shall, I think, be giving the most complete description of them of which we can at present conceive, and one which deserves to be distinguished by the term 'metapsychological'" (*BPP* 3). Also relevant is "The Economic Problem of Masochism."

[6] "The exergue consists in capitalizing on an ellipsis. In accumulating capital in advance and in preparing the surplus value of an archive"(*Archive Fever* 7).

[7] For instance, Derrida reads the *captatiobenevolentiae*—the rhetorical attempt to capture the goodwill of his audience—that Freud presents in Ch 6 of *Civilization and Its Discontents* as a "useless expenditure," that aimed, in Freud's case, to submit the thesis of a drive of destruction and of loss.

[8] "This archontic power, which also gathers the functions of unification, of identification, of classification, must be paired with that of consignation" (3).

[9] In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud sees repetition compulsion as a curious behavior that indicates the existence of the death drive. The pleasure principle is overcome

by the compulsion to repeat traumatic events, which in turn signal a desire to return to an earlier state of things. The movement toward an earlier, inanimate state characterizes the death drive, for Freud. In this, way repetition compulsion is a symptom of the death drive.

[10] "It threatens every principality, every archontic primacy, every archival desire" (12). The last of this catalogue is in some ways the most interesting: the desire *of* the archive or the desire *to* archive?

[11] This complex dynamic of singularity and repetition here refers to the archival document, but also to the signature as writing that need affirm its uniqueness and iteration of the same, which stems from, for Derrida in "Signature Event Context", the inherent citationality of all writing in the first instance.

[12] This helps to clarify the remark that appears earlier in *Archive Fever*, with respect to the future, conditional, virtual, messianic, religious, and scientific: "[the question of the archive] is a question of the future, the question of the future itself, the question of a response, of a promise and of a responsibility for tomorrow. The archive: if we want to know what that will have meant, we will only know in times to come. Perhaps. Not tomorrow but in times to come, later on or perhaps never. A spectral messianicity is at work in the concept of the archive and ties it, like religion, like history, like science itself, to a very singular experience of a promise. And we are never far from Freud in saying this" (36).

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Identity and Ambivalence in Xu Xi's *History's Fiction*

Hawk Chang

1997 has become a focus,
A cause, a point in space,
A date to live by,
A topic for conversation.
There's always something deadly,
About deadlines,
They haunt before they occur.

–Louise Ho, "New Year's Eve, 1989"

Introduction

Identity is one of the most important concerns of literature (Culler 1997:110). Many writers are fascinated with depicting characters' struggles with their identity, including national identity, sexual identity, and cultural identity. As a world-famous city once colonized by the United Kingdom and now ruled by the Republic of China, Hong Kong is characterized by its ever-changing shift of national identity. Consequently, the concept of Hong Kong's identity has been controversial for decades. Some propose that the democracy and law-abiding culture brought by the British rule mark the spirit of Hong Kong (Horlemann 2003:12), while others contend that it is epitomized by its blend of Chinese and Western cultures (Carroll 2007:169). Despite being acclaimed as an international city in Asia, underneath Hong Kong's cosmopolitan and multicultural surface lurk the unsettling ambiguities of identity. On

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the one hand, the convergence of Eastern and Western cultures contributes to the prosperity and multiplicity found in contemporary Hong Kong. However, on the other hand, the lack of a unified identity brings about a collective sense of loss and anxiety. Such a mental disorder caused by the division of identities was manifested and aggravated further by the 1997 handover. Although the initial Chinese policy in Hong Kong, as manipulated by Deng Xiaoping, significantly engendered the economic boom and thus foreshadowed a promising future following the changeover, the fear caused by the Tiananmen Square Massacre in 1989, the proposed implementation of "One Country, Two Systems", and the drafting of the Basic Law triggered Hongkongers' doubts and uncertainty in the 1990s. Resultantly, Hong Kong in the 1990s witnessed surges of uncertainty, insecurity, and crises in confidence (Segal 1993:59–63).

As a Hong Kong writer with a Chinese-Indonesian background, Xu Xi's works often dwell on the everyday conflicts and compromises of the Hong Kong people, be they about life, love, marriage, emigration, or politics. However, it is a pity that, despite her admirable literary achievements, her works remain little researched. In this paper, I discuss the complexities and ambiguities of identity problems typical of the people of Hong Kong through a reading of three short stories collected in Xu Xi's *History's Fiction: Stories from the City of Hong Kong*. I argue that by uncovering the self-conflicted personal identities that trouble the main characters in these stories we can configure a larger-scale ambivalent national and cultural identity typical of the Hong Kong people around the 1997 handover and onwards.

Identity Problems in *History's Fiction*

History's Fiction comprises four sections: "The Nineties", "The Eighties", "The Seventies", and "The Sixties". Within the different categories, stories and history are interwoven to re-present the feelings of different ages. "The Nineties"comprises three stories that each contribute to our understanding of the collective unconscious of the Hong Kong people at the time. The first story, "Until the Next Century", discusses the ambiguity of Hong Kong's identity from the perspective of love and marriage, detailing the extramarital love affair between a Chinese man and his young lover, his *Quingfu* (literally meaning "love-wife"), living in Hong Kong. While the male protagonist is addicted to visiting his lover to enjoy his bodily pleasure, the female becomes tired of the illicit relationship. Most of the story takes the form of a flashback of their 30-year-long affair, while the rest focuses on the female protagonist's family background, her struggle, and remorse as an adulteress. Ostensibly, the story presents a very personal struggle; however, metaphorically, the personal

struggle prefigures the identity problems prevalent in Hong Kong society. An interesting analogy with China and Hong Kong is apparent in the interaction between the main characters. In a sense, the male protagonist takes the lead economically and politically. He is depicted as a successful businessman, "knighted by the queen and shaken hands with Deng (Xiaoping)," the Chinese leader at that time (Xu 2005: 12). In addition, his superiority is manifested linguistically: "After all these years, her Mandarin had become proficient; her ears were attuned to his accent. However, his *Gwongdungwah* (Cantonese) never did sound quite right" (Xu 2005: 5). In other words, Mandarin is preferred in their interactions, while Cantonese is less highly regarded. In fact, more often than not, the female protagonist submits to the linguistic superiority of her lover. As the male character speaks in Mandarin, she always holds her tongue (Xu 2005: 4). This linguistic hierarchy is associated with the fact that Hong Kong is to be returned to the rule of the Chinese authorities. As the narrator remarks, the female protagonist must be accustomed to her lover's Mandarin because "Hong Kong's transformation was already well underway; their city would enter the new century as 'China'" (Xu 2005: 4). This political implication is all the more intriguing when we consider that the female protagonist feels exhausted and asks her lover to return the key to her flat in 1984 (Xu 2005: 6), the crucial year in the history of Hong Kong when the Sino-British Joint Declaration was signed. The fate of the female protagonist reminds us that the people of Hong Kong had no say in relation to the Sino-British negotiations (Carroll 2007:181). Her invisibility and lack of identity in the love affair generate resentment and result in her refusal to maintain a connection with her lover. To sum up, although the Joint Declaration promised the Hong Kong people unchanged capitalism and legal and social systems, as well as a high degree of autonomy (Shipp 1995: 122), the break-up of the extramarital couple metaphorically connotes the Hong Kong people's suspicion of the promise.

In contrast to the use of love and marriage in dramatizing the complications of Hong Kong's identity, the second story, "Insignificant Moments in the History of Hong Kong", is set against the background of food and restaurants. The quote by Deng Xiaoping at the beginning and the setting being around 1 July 1997 both insinuate its strong political tone. At first glance, the phrase "insignificant moments" is rather problematic, as the 1997 changeover was never going to be insignificant. However, taken in tandem with Deng's remark that "It doesn't matter if a cat is black or white, as long as it catches mice," Xu Xi seems to suggest that politics is far beyond the comprehension and concern of common people in Hong Kong. Therefore, the extremely important event in its history paradoxically turns out to be something insignificant.

This story primarily focuses on Uncle Cheuk, a small restaurant owner in the New Territories, and his nephew Lam Yam Kuen, who leaves his mother behind in China at a young age and later works as a maître d' at Butterfield's Soong Club in Tai Koo Place, Hong Kong. The mixed feelings of the Hong Kong people toward the 1997 handover are alluded to in the cat in Uncle Cheuk's restaurant, a black-and-white "fat critter" (Xu 2005: 24–25) that is scared of mice. The cat has been the laughing stock of the restaurant because of its hybrid attributes, with its timidity ascribed to it being neither black nor white, far from the cat of the "honorable Sir Deng's" (Xu 2005: 25),which is a fine mouse-catcher. In a sense, the hybridity associated with the cat signifies the postmodern condition of contemporary Hong Kong in the 1990s, in which neither personal nor political identity is fixed and stable. This mixed identity characteristic, or the "hybrid nature of Hong Kong's cultural identity" (Flowerdew 2012: 201) is also evidenced in the food offered in the restaurant. For example, Yam Kuen complains to his uncle that nowadays "cooks who make too much gwailo-Chinese (foreigner-Chinese) food lose their touch for the real thing" (Xu 2005: 24). Likewise, the buffet offered at Yam Kuen's club on July 1 1997 betrays the multiplicities of food in Hong Kong, as it includes both Cantonese food, such as roast goose and suckling pig, and Western food, such as salads, lettuces, and chicory. In addition, the dishes include nearly all of the items"in an international variety of preparations—Indian and Malay curries, Thai spices, Indonesian satays—on the side, Buddhist broccoli" (Xu 2005: 28). The diversity of the food highlights the hybrid, multicultural qualities of Hong Kong in the 1990s, yet such a multiplicity contradicts the image of the Chinese regime, which is notorious for its insularity and conservatism, especially its suppression of students and democrats in the 1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre. This great discrepancy in mentality serves as the source of suspicion and anxiety for the local people in Hong Kong. In addition, Uncle Cheuk's playing of *mahjeuk* (a game of Chinese origin usually played by four people) on the night of June 30, 1997 heralds the uncertainty and capriciousness of the political situation after the handover. It suggests that after the changeover, everything will simply depend on chance.

This comparing of life in post-1997 Hong Kong to a gamble arises again in the third story, "Blackjack", which is dominated by the female protagonist's interior monologue reflecting on her decision to return to Hong Kong in the 1990s. As a *wahkiu* (overseas Chinese) living in the U.S. since 1979, the narrator is torn between the excitement of returning to her hometown and the worry that life after the 1997 changeover might be a disaster. The ecstasy of being able to be back to Hong Kong is hinted at early in the story ("I'm finally going home, going back to Hong Kong"), although the question "Why did you come back?" also reverber-

ates in the narrator's mind (Xu 2005: 32). This ambivalence lingers because people around her continually question her decision to return due to the murky future looming over post-1997 Hong Kong. On the one hand, the narrator is happy about going back because, as she contends by citing Li Po's *Geuitauhmohongmihngyuht*, moonlight always ignites her homesickness (Xu 2005: 33).[1] Moreover, the intimidation caused by her lay-off amid the economic recession in the 1980s prompts her to leave America. The decent job opportunity offered to the narrator in Hong Kong temporarily revives her belief in the future, yet she is hardly able to eliminate the panic associated with the 1997 handover. Her instinct tells her that the Chinese "are not my people, not Hong Kong *yan*, because they haven't been infected by our linguistic schizophrenia" (Xu 2005: 35). This linguistic mental breakdown must have been common among the people of Hong Kong before 1997, as they were aware that Cantonese could be replaced by Mandarin sometime in the near future. The narrator further describes the hysteria caused by her linguistic anxiety: "I dream in psychedelic Chinglish, with bits of Putonghua hovering, in preparation for my future masters" (Xu 2005: 34–35). It is intriguing that the narrator keeps mumbling the question "Why should I be afraid?" when reflecting on the future of Hong Kong. However, the meaningless repetition itself is meaningful because it lays bare her fear of the post-1997 future. This fear is clear when the narrator later recalls a friend who is well educated in England and returns to Hong Kong with her family. According to the narrator, her friend "stakes her and her children's future on Hong Kong, post 1997" (Xu 2005: 37; emphasis added). The word "stake" signifies the uncertainty over the future of Hong Kong after 1997, which is echoed meaningfully by the first and final scenes set in Trump's Casino in Atlantic City before the narrator's departure from America. As the concluding sentence – "Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose"(Xu 2005: 38) – specifies, the future of Hong Kong is invariably unpredictable and capricious, insomuch that the ambivalence typical of the Hong Kong people will remain an entanglement. In this sense, the setting, which connotes hap and chance, significantly helps underscore the story's theme–misgivings over the future of Hong Kong after 1997.

Ambivalence in the Post-1997 Hong Kong

> As a writer, I like to believe I can and will evolve. What I published in the seventies differs from later work. However, the concerns of the past remain current, regardless of when a story is written.
>
> – Xu Xi, *History's Fiction*

As Xu Xi contends, the concerns of the past are never gone, but rather endure. The identity problems and ambivalence reflected in the three stories have recurred in different ways at different times inthe post-1997 Hong Kong

society. An example is evident in the national education controversy in 2012, in which the Hong Kong government planned to impose stricter biased patriotism education in secondary schools. However, Hong Kong government officials were forced to suspend their plan because of the strong resistance of citizens against the proposed political brainwash. In addition, the"Occupy Central" movement ("Umbrella Revolution") broke out in 2014, during which some Hong Kong people fought fiercely against the police in calling for more self-determination and self-autonomy in opposition to the political manipulation of the Chinese government. More recently, on June 18, 2015, a China-based electoral reform package, which was criticized by pro-democracy legislators and activists as undemocratic, was vetoed in Hong Kong's legislature because they strongly advocated genuine suffrage.[2] These events occurred because people in Hong Kong have been developing an increasingly distinctive identity, one characterized by economic prosperity, a democratic system, an emphasis on human rights, and anti-corruption. As John M. Carroll maintains, the formation of a more localized Hong Kong identity has made many Hong Kong people feel that, although they may be culturally Chinese, they are "a special, even different, kind of Chinese" (Carroll 2007: 170).

Alternatively, as Xu Xi notes based on her personal experience, the majority of Hong Kong people may prefer a Hong Kong Chinese identity rather than a pure Chinese identity (Xu 2002: 222). This tenacious local Hong Kong identity is echoed by John Flowerdew in his study of Tung Chee-hwa's (the first chief executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region) reign after 1997 (Flowerdew 2012: 195–197). In addition, according to a survey conducted by the University of Hong Kong's Popular Opinion Program in June 2013, amid the rising tensions with Beijing the Hong Kong people's sense of Chinese identity had fallen to a 14-year record-low, with an 11% increase in the number of respondents calling themselves "Hongkongers" in the six months prior to the study (Cheung 2013: C3). This finding was emphasized on June 21 2013 in a poll conducted by University of Hong Kong that revealed the "One Country, Two Systems" principle equals zero trust, the lowest point since 1996 (Luk 2013: 8). It is noteworthy that as China becomes more politically powerful, economically prosperous, and internationally influential in the 21st century, fewer Hong Kong people are willing to identify with their motherland. Evidently, this contradicts with the views of optimists who asserted that the increasing economic interdependence between China and Hong Kong after 1997 would reduce the differences between the two economic systems and contribute to the integration of both (Wang 1995:204–205).[3] History repeats itself, and the history embedded in the three stories to a certain degree heralds the self-contradicting identities of being Chinese and a Hongkonger at the

same time. Indeed, the image of a unified Hong Kong departs from Xu Xi's conception: "We never were 'British', just as most of us are not 'Chinese' the way they are on the Mainland" (Xu 2008: 4). In a sense, many Hong Kong people are torn between the dual identities and stuck in a kind of in-betweenness in national and cultural identities. Consequently, they feel unsettled due to the neither/nor identity problem.

Conclusion

If the personal is political as some second-wave feminists assert, the personal struggles in *History's Fiction* are rendered political in that the main characters' everyday conflicts, either over love, food, or emigration, are closely bound with the larger-scale national and cultural conflicts that arose around the 1997 handover. The complexities and ambiguities are so great that it is extremely difficult to provide a definitive answer, but Xu Xi's stories provide us with down-to-earth examples that provide scope for more contemplation on, and insight into, the long-lived mystery of the Hong Kong identity and ambivalence. These stories also provide us with a window on the political turmoil that has resurfaced in Hong Kong during the past few years.

Notes

[1]"*Geuitauhmohongmihngyuht*" is the first line of Li Po's poem "Night Thoughts".

[2]These conflicts were forewarned by Flowerdew in his study, in which he recalled the words of Chris Patten, the last British governor before the 1997 handover, who was quoted as saying that the attempt to govern Hong Kong in a paternalistic way would result in "some friction," and that the friction would surely be more serious with the approach of debate on matters related to a directly elected chief executive (Flowerdew 2001: 54–55).

[3]Likewise, in his research on Hong Kong cinema and popular culture, Chu Yiu-wai found that, instead of coexisting with Chinese popular productions, Cantopop and Hong Kong local movie productions had clearly been on the decline since 1997 (Chu 2010: 131–132).

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Horacio Quiroga and Charles Baudelaire as Precursors of Contemporary Flash Fiction

Evelina Šaponjic-Jovanovic

Introduction

Micronarratives are petite, compressed streaks of texts. In a way, they arecomparable to the ice cube chunks that used to form a part of an iceberg, before breaking off beginning to roam freely all across the narrative sea. Their mere existence is a consequence of literary fragmentation and alienation from the long narrative vein.

Due to the plural nature of their structure and length, they have been called by multiple names: from short fiction to short short story and flash fiction, to the more recent, pompous titles such as: Six-Word Story, Twitterature (140-character stories), Drabble (100 words) or Dribble (50 words).

The prehistory of micro-narratives lies in the first written words, recorded from oral tales; in folk forms such as fables (notably Aesop's fables in the West) as well as worldwide parables laden with socio-cultural content (as in the Panchatantra and Jataka tales in India). The tales of Turkish populist philosopher Nasreddin or Nasreddin Hodja with their subtle touch of humour and moralising intend are another example. In China, Chan (Zen) koans compiled by the Chinese Wumen Huikai epitomize the polarities of consciousness that form and obstacle/barrier to one's insight.

In this paper, I underline the influence of Charles Baudelaire and Horacio Quirogaas, pioneers of modern short fiction. Baudelaire's *Little Poems in Prose* gave its first name to this new genre.

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Themes and motifs in Quiroga's works

One of the most important motifs present in the works of Horacio Quiroga (1878-1937) is that of death. The representation of death in his narratives is extremely realistic. Death appears as a place of no return, and almost all the protagonists in his stories die suddenly and violently. Alongside death, another recurring motif in Quiroaga is that of insanity. It is often a cause of death or linked to the motif of death, sometimes anticipating it or rather acting as its intermediary. The best example of what I have just mentioned would be the famous quiroguian story "The slaughtered hen" when the foolish children of the Manzini married couple kill their only healthy daughter. Due to their madness, they saw her as a hen. Another motif highlighted in this story is that of terror. Some of Quiroga's most successful stories are horror stories, as for example "The feather pillow". The jungle motif, as a symbol of everything that is wild and barbaric, also appears as part of the contrast between the natural and the artificial. The jungle environment serves Quiroga to interpret a sort of return to the origins of humanity, when there were still strong ties between human beings and nature. His descriptions of vast forests, rivers, wild animals (for instance, snakes) are very powerful, and he also focuses on endemic fights between humans and the untamed jungle, which in most cases end up as tragedies.

Eroticism is yet another motif which appears in many of his stories. Initially, he seems to focus exclusively on clandestine relations between men and women from different social classes. With the passage of time, the writer begins to replace the bourgeois type of woman by a sort of daring jungle woman with higher sexual inclinations. These stories were well received by his female readers' cycle. (Rocca, 81)

Finally, another type of stories are children stories. Quiroga wanted to contribute toa children's storytelling market focused towards the education system in Uruguay. This prompted him to write his own book of short stories, entitled "Tales from the Jungle". Unfortunately, his book was rejected by school inspectors which found it distasteful. Pablo Rocca, however, convinces us of the existence of didactic intentions behind the book, explaining that he was trying to offer a humanized version of animals, often portrayed as conscious beings. Other values that these stories presents are generosity, braveness, and solidarity. (Rocca, 106)

Quiroga's personal experience greatly influenced his creations, sometimes, especially in the stories he wrote after 1930. It is often difficult to tell where life ended and literature began. But Quiroga's works also feature the influences of other writers such as Edgar Allan Poe and Maupassant, Kipling,

Dostoevsky, Chekhov and Joseph Conrad. From each of these authors, Quiroga inherited a certain trait, maintaining also a personal touch (Orgámbide, 132). Critics have pointed out that Quiroga's world features permanent contradictions, love and eroticism coupled with fantastic elements, madness, fear, horror and death. A style characterized by its synthetic brevity and intense dense objectivity. He chose terms like 'concision', 'concentration', and 'strength' to characterize the primary qualities of the short story, and even created a *Decalogue for the perfect storyteller* where he emphasizes the power of the noun next to the adjective, the importance of a sharp phrasesrather than long circumlocutions, always underlying the economy of words which is precisely one of the most important features of modern short-short stories.

Charles Baudelaire and his influence on Horacio Quiroga

Charles Baudelaire, a pioneer of modern short fiction, exerted great influence on Horacio Quiroga. In turn, *Gaspard de la Nuit* (1842), a posthumous book by the Belge Aloysius Bertrand, inspired Baudelaire's prose poetry, which crystallized in the famous *Little Poems in Prose*, opening the door to the new literary genre and giving name to it. The 'accursed poet' as Paul Verlaine, called Baudelaire an appellative also used to refer to Tristan Corbiere, Stephane Mallarme, Arthur Rimbaud, and other melancholic, anarchic, bohemian authorsknown as the "Parnassians", opposed traditional social values with creations often referred to as repugnant that served to marginalized the members of the group.

Baudelaire's personality had a lot in common with the contents of his literary work, especially since the writer had lived as a prisoner of his own subjectivity. Being intelligent and perceptive, inordinately objective and flexible, the French authorwas able to capture the vices of the contemporary society in which he lived. Inspired by Aloysius Bertrand, Baudelaire wrote *Little Poems in Prose* a collection full of melancholy and images of the city of Paris.The truly wondrous thing about the book are the stylistic devices Baudelaire perused in order to describe the heart of France. He managed to do so merely by using a few words imbued in visual metaphors with a strong significance. In order to show the workings of such metaphors, let us look at one of the poems and compare its features with similar characteristics in flash fiction.

"The Stranger" is an extraordinarily well-written poem in prose, which, at the same time, possesses great many characteristics of short-short stories.

> L'Étranger
> - Qui aimes-tu le mieux, homme énigmatique, dis? ton père, ta mère, ta soeur ou ton frère?
> - Je n'ai ni père, ni mère, ni soeur, ni frère.

- Tes amis?
- Vous vous servez là d'une parole dont le sens m'est resté jusqu'à ce jour inconnu.
- Ta patrie?
- J'ignore sous quelle latitude elle est située.
- La beauté?
- Je l'aimerais volontiers, déesse et immortelle?
- L'or?
- Je le hais comme vous haïssez Dieu.
- Eh! qu'aimes-tu donc, extraordinaire étranger?
- J'aime les nuages... les nuages qui passent...là-bas...là-bas...les merveilleux nuages!

At this point, it is important to emphasize the importance of the language economy as far as short stories are concerned. One word on a blank piece of paper might offer a tremendous impact upon the reader's perceptions and comprehensions, creating a metaphorical image that expands in parabolic representation. Such is the power of the word and the void; the empty space that seems to ask to be filled in.

"L'Étranger" is a prose poem with little adjectives. Nouns stand alone in their multiple connotations, like the title itself; a visitor, a voyager, someone from abroad, whose customs may be different, perhaps a speaker of an alien language, someone who might inspire curiosity but also fear. The imaginative reader can almost feel the silent texture of the gap between the stranger and his interlocutors; "l'hommeénigmatique", without family ties (père, mère, soeur, frère); Without a country (patrie), standing at the border between the land within and the land beyond; where words, "une parole dont le sensm'estrestéjusqu'àce jour inconnu," are continuously rewritten and rediscovered and the distance between speaker and listener, author and reader, resituée, like "les nuages qui passent".

Brevity, the essential characteristic of the flash-fiction, is met. The short short story follows its own principles of a literary genre and it allows itself to start in *medias res*. Abruptly, escalating in a dialogue of questions and odd answers that rises to the clouds, "L'Étranger" is an exercise in 'estrangement' that stages the futile attempt to remove the aura of mystery that surrounds "l'hommeénigmatique". The story indulges in the shock value of the encounter with the mysterious stranger, whom we would wished reduced to a normal, common human being, with the same fears and problems that the rest of us. "Enigmatic" is one of the few adjectives in the prose poem. It has connotations related to the mysterious, the unknown, and someone or something difficult to understand and/or read.

The words that are perused are "mother", "father", "brother" and "sister" allude to the significance of the family, a sacred institution, in which a child learns how to talk, makes his first steps, and feels the first paternal and fraternal love. Such symbolic words are impregnated with meaning and they practically represent key words of the poem or a short story. The answer of the stranger is short, enumerative and sad; he has no family. He has no friends. He has no homeland. "Patrie" invokes the roots and all the connotations associated to fatherland (the term comes from Latin *pater*).

Such questions help to 'identify' a person, to make him or her known to us. But "L'Étranger" remains a stranger to his interlocutors and to the readers. Identification fixes meaning. A proper name identifies but also maps the person to a certain group, family, friends, community, nation. The stranger does not want to be 'fixed', situé. He wants to be like "les nuages qui passent", forever in movement.

At the mention of the word beauty, associations with femininity and the immortal goddess are triggered, "Je l'aimeraisvolontiers, déesse et immortelle." However, there are no indications of personal relations in this reply, of love relations (perhaps) that might have provided a hint to the more humane level of the stranger. The association of beauty with the goddess, the muse of creation, merely situates L'Étranger as an artist, interested in the beauty of life in the abstract, and whose bohemian background is further established by his rejection of 'gold': "L'or? Je le haiscommevoushaïssez Dieu." The thought of material wealth is immediately dismissed, as the stranger confesses that he hates gold just as his interlocutors hate God. The clever use of personal pronouns is there to enhance the effect of separation, the positioning of the almost invisible border between the stranger and his interlocutors. With merely two words, a deep chasm is opened, a gap widen by the use of the adjective 'extraordinary' ('extraordinaire étranger'), that informs the readers of the remote, distant, and perhaps exotic nature of the stranger.

The ephemeral image of the floating passing clouds closes the poem delving the readers into an abyss of white and blank. Cosmopolitan travellers, free wanderers, the images of clouds bring forth connotations of escape, of freedom from mundane troubles, of light hearted travel and naïf, almost pure, imagination. It immediately recalls William Wordsworth's famous "I wandered lonely as a cloud", inspired by an event on 15 April 1802, in which Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy came across a "long belt" of daffodils, as the poem is also known, when taking a walk around Glencoyne Bay in the Lake District. The topic of Wordsworth poem is recollection; in particular, his poem explores how a particular moment can be captured and almost frozen in time by a powerful image that stays in the mind and in memory forever.

This is exactly the meaning of the 'shock' that Walter Benjamin uses in his writings, inspired by Baudelaire himself. This is how short narrative operates. It saves words by indulging in connotative images that help transversal reading: Baudelaire>Benjamin>Wordsworth>Baudelaire, and not necessarily in this order.

The beauty of "L'Étranger" is that it captures the feelings associated to estrangement: the shock that makes readers wonder and wander; the extreme brevity that helps the critic write thousands of pages of interpretation; the few words, made up of white paper and cloud (imagination) that seek to be forever strange.

To summarize, Baudelaire's 'Stranger' has the following characteristics: brevity, start *in medias res*, key words with multiple semiotic connotations that yield multiple interpretations, few unnamed unknown characters, well planned structure, dialogical form open to the reader, and an unexpected turnover at the end that leaves the story open and the climax forever postponed. These features are shared with many contemporary short story and approach, epistemologically, postmodern concerns.

Interwoven in figurative speech, the play between words and tropes brings forth a break in discursive contingencies and enables the irruption of transversal readings. Similarly, the dialogical open structure creates a temporal flux, conveying the idea of change and process, present also in the image of the cloud. Such open and fragmented patterns allow interpretative gaps that work as points of connection between past, present and future events, translating the brevity of the short-short narrative in a moment of shock that allows the presentness of the past and projects it in the future.

Quiroga's Coral Reefs (1901)

Coral reefs (1901), the first volume published by Horacio Quiroga, reflects the influence of symbolism and modernism in its ability to use symbols and play with rhythms as if they were musical notes. Some critics have described the pieces as tiny musical poems, sustained by the sonority of words and their symbolic correlations. The work of an artisan, capable of working within the shadows of his room to create a private art piece that triggers the complicity of the reader. (Orgambide, 60) The volume was printed in "El SigloIlustrado", Montevideo and dedicated to Leopoldo Lugones, whom Quiroga worshiped. It was a limited edition of five hundred and ten copies, with elaborate typesetting, and today it is one of the oddities of Uruguayan literature.

The book was not well received by critics or by most reading circles, and not much attention was paid to it. Nowadays is a significant source of infor-

mation on Quiroga's motifs, style and narrative technique, with characteristics similar to the micro-stories of today. *Coral reefs* hosts an extraordinary variety as far as their content is concerned. Compositions are in verse and prose and all creations are short, distinct and varied. The poetic part of the book is shorter. Short stories have greater protagonism, showing Quiroga's future inclination towards narrative rather than poetry. We discover a general trend to name almost all the stories with the first two or three words of the tale, without revealing any further content.In fact, reading the titles one cannot deduce what the stories are about. It is a trait that his short stories share with contemporary micro-narratives, as sometimes the very title forms part of the short story. This technique also serves to attract the interest of readers, compelled discover the secret hidden within.

In the following lines I will focus on the story entitled "All Night Long…" ("Toda la noche ..."), which has less than two hundred words distributed on nine lines of text (excluding the title) and complies with the trait of brevity. The theme is the contrast between life and death; the context is a ballroom where happy couples dance merrily and carefree. They wear bright masks which represent life. In stark contrast to them, there is a man, also in disguise, that is slowly dying of tuberculosis.

> Toda la noche había estado sentado en un rincón de la sala, con las manos sobre las rodillas, sonriendo dulcemente a las parejas que pasaban bailando. Era una delicada visión de baile, solo, asombrado y enfermo, a ratos tosía, llevaba el pañuelo a los labios y oprimía con solicitud cariñosa su pobre pecho. Con los compases de la orquesta se mezclaba su seca tosecilla.
>
> Pasó una máscara y se detuvo, mirándole.
>
> —¡Pobrecito!—exclamó.
>
> Él sonrió débilmente, tratando de levantarle el antifaz con su dolorida mano. La máscara huyó riéndose. Y él volvió a los espejos de su enharinada cara de pierrot, bajo la cual dos manchas de vivo carmín agonizaban en los pómulos, tan rojas como las manchas del pañuelo que llevaba a la boca… (Quiroga, 62)

All night long he had been sitting in the corner of the room, hands on his knees, sweetly smiling at the dancing passing couples. A delicate vision of dance, alone, attentive, ill, coughing at times; a kerchief over his lips, pressing it warmly against his chest. The dry cough mixed the rhythms of the orchestra.

> A mask passed, stopped and stared.
>
> —Poor thing!—exclaimed.

He smiled weakly, and tried to lift the mask with his painful hand. The mask ran away laughing. And he returned to the looking-glass, his flouredpierrot face hiding two crimson cheeks as red as those stains on the kerchief covering his mouth.

Quiroga, like Baudelaire, chooses to describe life as a fleeting dance of masks, with the brevity of people's encounters, passing glances and gestures evaporate. The only remnant is the blood left behind. Any attempt to grasp the Other, to take off his or her mask, is futile. They dance among us and we never get to know them. The gesture of separation between the sick man and life is reinforced by the person's escape, his/her laugh, and the uncaring remark "Poor thing!" The man's silence speaks more than the words. The attempt to remove the mask of the dancer is almost the last try of the agonizing man to discover the hidden essence of life. Life pulls away, laughing. A great deal of attention is paid to the construction of the short short story, explains David Roas, with a scarce structure, lacking detailed descriptions or references to the concrete persons and places (49).

With only two words, the structural economy of Quiroga shows the man seated (weakness, immobility, illness) and the couples in the movement of life (dance is synonymous with strength, health). The adjectives and the adjectival compositions used are indicative of his poor health: "delicate vision of the dance", "alone", "amazed", "ill". The sound the "orchestra" is played along the man's "hacking, dry cough". The reader is invited to visualize the scene and also to listen to it. Metaphorically speaking, the music of the orchestra is the music of life, while the hacking, dry cough is the sound of death.

The prose poem ends like contemporary flash fiction masterpieces, in an incomplete narrative sequence. The well-known figure of the sad clown 'pierrot', a stock character of Italian pantomime and Commedia dell' Arte of the late 17th century, represents the fool in love with Columbine, sometimes his master's daughter, sometimes a dancer who breaks his heart and leaves him for Harlequin. The origins of this figure, among Italian bohemian players in France, have been traced to Molière's peasant Pierrot, in *Don Juan*, or *The Stone Guest* (1665). The character in Quiroga's story is presented unmasked among the masks, with a whitened face emblem of his naïveté and trusting idealist nature.

The figure of Pierrot invaded the arts at the turn of the 20th-century. He became an inspiration to writers, visual artists and movie makers. Inspired by the French Symbolists, especially Verlaine, the Nicaraguan poet Rubén Darío, famously used the sad poet and dreamer in opposition to the materialistic fatal woman in his 1898 prose-poem *The Eternal Adventure of Pierrot and Columbine*.

During the carnival of 1898, Quiroga had met his first love, Mary Esther Jurkovski. The parents of the young girl disapproved of the relationship because Quiroga was not Jewish. The following year, Quiroga's stepfather committed suicide by shooting himself and the poet found the body. He decided to travel to Paris, seeking to come to terms with these two losses. The trip was a failure and he came back sad and discouraged. "All Night Long…" was published soon afterwards.

Pierrot stands not just for the poor sad poet who feels like a clown. It contrasts with colorful and patterned Harlequin. Pierrot may stand also for the blank piece of paper of the short short story, the *tabula rasa* of a child-like and uncertain mind, struck by awe. Careful attention to the palimpsest reveals the impressions and shocks of life; the strong and deep marks, almost scars, when they first occur, fading, in time. Covered in patterns and lines, Harlequin is the longer story, full of itself and of words. Tinted with" two intense carmine patches…as red as the stains on the handkerchief upon his mouth," the gap between Harlequin and "the floured pierrot face", between the Stranger and his masked Other, between long and short, is as wide as the gap between sensation and imagination, between rationality and feeling, between life and death: one and the same, red. And, thus, I finish this section "Among School Children" with the ending lines of William Butler Yeats (*The Tower*, 1928):

> Are you the leaf, the blossom or the bole?
> O body swayed to music, O brightening glance,
> How can we know the dancer from the dance?

Written in third person singular, an omnipotent narrator witnesses the scene and presents it to the reader. The brief dialogue is not developed because the man never responds with words, but with a simple and eager movement to get closer to "life" by removing the mask. His failure and the laughing escape reaffirm the separation from life. Characters are economically described with no psychological traits; specific references to places and people are reduced. (Roas, 49) Several stylistic figures immediately raise as a proof of virtuosity of quiroguian narrative and they simultaneously characterize many contemporary micro-stories: they are the symbol, contrast, allegory, paradox and irony. Couples and mask are the symbol of life."Pierrot" represents decay, disease and death. It brings to mind Shakespeare's idea of life as a theatre where everyone plays a role. The time comes when you have to get off the stage and die; when the masks and costumes are removed, and both the king and the beggar are equal in death.

Maria Isabel Larrea underlines that the use of paradox and allegory giving a pragmatic feature to short-short stories (Larrea, 2). Indeed, the plot of this quirogian prose poem operates with the help of precise and carefully chosen vocabulary, with the careful words, contrast is always present, until the very end, when we realize that man is dying. We have traced a scheme to show the effectiveness of the structural organization of Horacio Quiroga's work and economy of words which the author managed in the following way. First. The pierrot is sitting and the reader begins to glimpse of his weakness and illness because the couples are dancing (a symbol of strength, mobility and health). By using these two verbs of immobility and motion, Quiroga economically

achieves the contrast between death and life. The author also uses adjectives connected to the physical and psychological state of the man: "delicate vision of dance", "alone", "amazed", "sick". The contract is emphasized in perceptual terms that included differences in visual perception but also sound. In this way, the sound of the "orchestra" contrasts with the "dry cough". Metaphorically said, the orchestra music is the music of life, while the dry cough is the "music" of death. When one of the masks senses that something bad is happening to him, it stops to look, at him, using the adjective "poor". The lack of response and silence of a man speaks louder than words. He is so weak and close to death that he cannot even talk and his effect to unmask the dancer is the last attempt of a dying man to discover the hidden essence of life. However, "life" slips away laughing. The ending is surprising and enigmatic, representing an incomplete narrative sequence, as it occurs in contemporary micro-narratives. The reader remains thoughtful, reflecting on the fugacity of life.

To conclude, this paper has try to point out the relevance of Baudelaire and Quirogas' short stories. Often known as prose-poems because of their brevity, density and poetic qualities, they share important characteristics of contemporary micro-stories, both in terms of style, descriptive concision and narrative form; in one. In the case of Quiroga, his obsession with death is most obvious in his short narratives, almost as an echo of the fragility and fugacity of life.

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Mythical Realism in North African Fiction: Ibrahim Al-Koni's *Gold Dust* and *The Bleeding of the Stone*

Elena Imen Carruba

Introduction: Magical Realism and the North African Tradition

In Ibrahim al-Koni's "spacious realm," the reader faces an interpretation of a highly complex reality that challenges his/her understanding of fiction and reality. The reality that novels usually disclose is the one of presence as the setting is usually a city or a well-defined place. Al-Koni puts forward the reality of absence or "life in the desert" as perceived by the outsider. What is absent, invisible or imperceptible in a realist novel, becomes central in al-Koni's magical/mythical realist stories.

In this paper, I aim to elucidate what I mean by mythic realism through showing how mythic realism is different from the concept of magic realism and how it prevails in the case of the fiction on the desert in Ibrahim al-Koni's novels mainly *The Bleeding of the Stone* and *Gold Dust*.

North African ancient Tuareg culture besets the mythic and mystic systems that explained nature and life through millennia and helped them cope with the harshness of the space. Desert gods and detailed myths accounting for creation, life, and the after-life gave the space its spiritual dimension. Furthermore, myth and reality as intertwined facets of life is central to Tuareg cultural demarcation of collective lines and shared imaginary. In this case, it will be argued that the means by which al-Koni represents identity is essentially magical/mythical and that, by examining these magical/mythical narratives, the reader recognises the way al-Koni approaches his native space and how his texts recreate an authentic North African desert identity.

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Myth is the main feature of magical realism in al-Koni's work. The writer debates, in his *My Great Desert*, an auto-critical piece of writing, in which he tells of his "desert novel" as opposed to "city novel." He announces that the nature of desert novel invokes myth, because its language is derived from an alternative approach to time and space. He pinpoints to the fusion of desert novel with myth elaborating

> The secret of our being is comprehended in fusing the following trinity: the novel, the void and myth. The novel is the spirit of the secret, the desert its body, and myth its language. […]. In this cycle lies a secret alacrity and thirst for myth. Narrativity and the novel are annihilated unless preserved in mythical language. The aim from the beginning is to create myth. The aim in writing a novel is to construct myth and to dismantle prefixes. The myth of space is possible only in mythical language. It is telling myth from myth sayings and creating myth from the creation myth itself. (Ibrahim Al-Koni, 1998: 122)

Every human society needs myths, a place and a time of origins. Since myths are a "sum of useful knowledge" (Al-Koni 1998: 122) and acts already performed that aspire to a fully human experience, oblivion or destruction of this "collective memory" (Al-Koni 1998: 122) lead to the loss of identity. Without origin to cling to, society inevitably loses its substance and identity. The North African region is at the heart of this problem because its history has been continually perforated by colonisation. For several centuries, the foreigners' or the outsiders' presences were followed by long and agonistic revolts and wars.

Thus, following this guidelines, this paper focuses on the events of myth and magical tale in the realist North African novels, as well as on possible recreations or adaptations of these elements to the desert. Before going further in depth with these questions, it is vital to define mythical realism as compared to magical realism.

The concept of myth can be defined in many different ways. In one of his lectures, Leon Burnett observed, "myth is the filling of the void," (in a discussion during the Myth Reading Group at Essex University, June 2014). Burnett referred to the desert as the void space *par excellence*. In a general tentative to define it, myth comports a complex and multifaceted reality, a "dramatic human tale" that is interpreted in various ways. The most common ethnographic definition however insists on the sacredness of myth in telling an event that took place in "primordial time, the fabulous time of "beginnings" [...]. In short, myths describe the various and sometimes dramatic irruptions of the sacred [...] in the World." (Eliade 1963: 12) To consider myth as a sacred story is part of the definition because myth is also a "true story", as Eliade argues

that it always refers to realities, for instance, "the creation myth" is "true because the existence of world is there to prove it" (Eliade 1963: 12). This distinction is particularly interesting in the context of the colonised and the contemporary North Africa, as it provides two opposed visions of myth. The first is the approach of traditional societies who consider myth true and therefore a belief. The second is the Western perception of myth as fiction or invented stories.

The North African novel of our interest renders possible the intrinsic combination of myth and reality. There is a creed in the intertwining of the human with the superhuman, the species with trans-species, and the natural with the supernatural, which perforates the pages of the novels. The Tuareg transmitted his/her philosophy in the drawings or carvings and sculptures found in the Tassili paintings. Tassili n'Ajjer is a region located in a strange lunar landscape of great geological interest, this site has one of the most important groupings of prehistoric cave art in the world. More than 15,000 drawings and engravings record the climatic changes, the animal migrations and the evolution of human life on the edge of the Sahara from 6000 BC to the first centuries of the present era. The geological formations are of outstanding scenic interest, with eroded sandstones forming 'forests of rock'. Tuareg oral heritage is mainly centred on their mythological tradition, songs and stories from an unknown ancestral origin and aphorisms that act as sacred rules and sayings. Yet, Tuaregs are not isolated from modernity. These tribes grasped from the different civilisations that colonised them and, by their nomadism, they refused to adhere completely to modernity by voicing their tradition. It is in this blending of past and present that al-Koni, in his attempt to account for the intervention of mythic elements in shaping the psyche and lives of his characters, defines his genre as an attempt at "creating myth from the creation myth itself". His definition seems too complex that I would coin it 'mythic realism'.

In my attempt to explore mythical realism in the North African desert, I will adopt the native conception and adapt it to western theory. Before studying al-Koni's novels, it is necessary to define magical realism in order to show how al-Koni's work goes beyond the mere "exotic" considerations of the North African desert to include, among others, what I call mythical realism.

The major critics who defined the concept of magical realism are Carpentier, Flores, Wendy Faris, Stephen Slemon and others[1], each presents his own reflection on it, adding, consequently, to the confusion and ambiguity already inherent to the term since its first appearance.[2] In 1948, Carpentier drew attention to the differences between magical realism and marvellous realism, in his definition of the concept. He describes his visit to Haiti and his

discovery of "lo real maravilloso," a term and concept that he devises to describe a uniquely Latin American form of magical realism. Carpentier's proposition of "lo real maravilloso" is perhaps one of the rich definitions of magical realism. Carpentier distinguishes the magical realist fiction by its themes, where myth, legend, and magic are common traits. For him, it provides a new horizon for the conceptualization of magical realism as a corrective project working against monologic political and cultural systems. Hence, the literature of Latin America reflects not only the magical reality there, but also the accompanying faith of the Latin American people, which enables the apprehension of that magical reality (Faris & Zamora 1995: 6).

Alejo Carpentier, calling for a drawing on other peoples' myths, legends and experiences that precede the cultural process of assimilation of a coloniser that became idealised for his power as an example to follow to join world advancement, limits this mode to Latin American countries, as a unique experience after the colonisation of his country and people. Unlike Carpentier, Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris believe in the universality of this mode and emphasise that magical realism was mainly developed during the second half of the twentieth century around the world. They maintain that the literature of all countries is potentially capable to produce magical realist works as long as they are compatible with the belief systems of that culture. It is a mixture of realism and fantasy regarded as ordinary daily occurrence or as typical life among the characters. Regardless of the *exceptionality* and *extraordinariness* of the subjects, all involved characters should react indifferently. Zamora and Faris state that contemporary magical realists write against the mental map that needs to be "erased, transgressed, blurred, brought together" in a new/ancient text that is necessarily, but not only "subversive" never confined into one rationalism but converts the old binaries into "in-betweeness and […] all-at-onceness." (Faris & Zamora 1995: 6)

The recent anthology *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community* edited by Wendy B. Faris and Lois Parkinson Zamora is an important book in the debate on magical realism. It deals with magical realism as a universal conception. It covers a large geographical area and literary contexts as varied as Europe, Asia, North America, the Caribbean, Australia, Africa and North Africa. It is in this anthology that one of the critics, Jeanne Delbaere-Garant, first uses the concept of mythical realism in his "Psychic Realism, Mythic Realism, Grotesque Realism: Variations on Magic Realism in Contemporary Literature in English". To Garant, Ondaatje is the first to coin the concept of "mythical realism" that dates back to the 1989 afterword he writes to Howard O'Hagan's novel, *Tay John*. Garant comments that the interpretation of magic, with writers like Ondaatje, is no more "literal" than "metaphorical", nature plays a

major role in this prospect and the landscape "is no longer passive but active – invading, trapping, dragging away, etc."(Faris & Zamora 1995: 252) Although, both writers agree that landscape "is quicksilver, changeable, human – and we are no longer part of the realistic novel, and no longer part of the European tradition"(Faris & Zamora 1995: 252). The authors limited this concept to the Canadian novel, in the case of Ondaatje, and to Second World countries, in the case of Garant, referring to non-Third-World countries. My interest, in other words, is to apply mythical realism to the rest of the world, mainly the Middle Eastern and North African post-colonial space where "magic" is part of the physical world rather than a projection of the characters' psyche (Faris & Zamora 1995: 253).

In 2004, in her *Ordinary Enchantments: Magical Realism and the Remystification of Narrative*, Faris offers one of the most comprehensive critical studies of this literary genre. She adopts the same global perspective she shared before with Zamora asserting that magical realism is "perhaps the most important contemporary trend in international fiction." (Faris 2004: 136) To Faris, magical realism is a mode of narration that has five features. First, the story should include elements of magic. Second, it should depict elements of the phenomenal world. In addition, it should arouse readers' confusion in his perception of the events. In addition, the text fuses different realms. Last, it should disquiet standard perception of time, space and identity. (Faris 2004: 140-3)

In Faris' presentation of magical realism, through the creation of the narrative space between reason and mystery, the mode is able to recreate a dimension of the marvellous that is lost in the modern Western world into modern narrative. It reveals a "hidden presence of the sacred within the profane." (Faris 2004: 102) As "linguistic magic", it projects "an implicit aura of the sacred." (Faris 2004: 111) In her later work, Faris speaks more directly of the function of magical realism, arguing that the modern-day magical realist writer is like the shaman, who performs for his/her community the important spiritual function of connecting the life of everyday to the world of spirits. Furthermore, similar to the way the shaman enters a spiritual state of consciousness in order to heal the individual and the community, the contemporary magical realist writer uses verbal magic to cure the reader of the too-stifling anchoring to material reality that was the goal of realistic representation.(Faris 2004: 80) Magical realism, in addition, speaks of cultural crises; it functions to heal specific "social, political, environmental, and religious wounds" occurring in the contemporary global context. (Faris 2004: 83)

In the case of the North African desert, this heritage comes from the historical and cultural relations with Africa, Middle East and the Mediterra-

nean Europe in their peculiar magical and mythical influences. Describing two parallel systems in the world, like Carpentier's essay, al-Koni's novels show how, while other cultures lost their spirituality and magic, the desert preserves them. This idea is further enhanced in Carpentier's essay, "The Baroque and the Marvellous Real". It proposes the idea that the marvellous aspect is inherent to the human and natural realities of space and time. This idea is extended by the present work to the North African desert suggesting that the marvellous is a universal phenomenon. As Faris explains:

> In the magical realist texts […], the supernatural is not a simple or obvious matter, but it is an ordinary matter, an everyday occurrence – admitted, accepted, and integrated into the rationality and materiality of literary realism. Magic is no longer quixotic madness, but normative and normalizing. (Faris 2004: 158)

Some of the characteristic features of this kind of fiction are "the mingling and juxtaposition of the realistic and the fantastic or strange, skilful time shifts, convoluted and even labyrinthine narratives and plots, miscellaneous use of dreams, myths and fairy stories, expressionistic and even surrealistic descriptions, arcane erudition, the element of surprise or abrupt shock, the horrific and the inexplicable."(Thody 1996: 94) The magical realist mode covers accordingly all the literature that is not labelled under the Western definition of realism, thusly overlapping with postmodern theories.

To the present research, the discussions of the theory of magical realism owe the greatest debth to Stephen Slemon. Particularly to his influential article "Magic Realism as Postcolonial Discourse." (1995: 407-427) One of Slemon's central claims is that magical realism is the genre of the people on the "margins" of mainstream literary tradition. Indeed,

> The critical use of the concept of magic realism can therefore signify resistance to monumental theories of literary practice—a way of suggesting there is something going on in certain forms of literary writing, and in the modalities of cultural experience that underline those forms, that confounds the capacities of the major genre systems to come to terms with them. (Hutcheon 1989: 154)

Slemon relates magical realism to post-colonialism, which is an act of resistance through glorifying one's past, heritage and culture, which are denigrated and stereotyped as savage and inferior in colonial fiction, press and political discourses. In opposition to the existing canon of genres and modes, and against controlled order, which is the dominant style of the metropolis (McHugh 2012:5), magical realism mixes the modern and the traditional, the realistic and the fabulous, the secular and the religious, the sophisticated and the popular, and resists classical expectations of closure and unity. In the

postcolonial context, however, this also suggests that magical realism "carries a residuum of resistance toward massive imperial centre"(Faris 2004: 408) and presents a positive alternative to the colonial ideology.

Through this duality, a space is created where alternative realities and different perceptions of the world can be conceived. The issue of space is crucial to both magical realism and postcolonial discourse. The struggle between the "centre" and "periphery" is the one for space. The discourses of colonialism position the natives as subjects to be studied, observed and defined as a way to exercise hegemony over space. The imposed literary, social and political systems of Western culture effectively denied a space where native voices could express themselves. At most, literary contributions emerging from the "margin" were often described as a variant of the original and thus inferior. For these reasons,

> Magical realism has become associated with fictions that tell the tales of those on the margins of political power and influential society. This has meant that much magical realism has originated in many of the postcolonial countries that are battling against the influence of their previous colonial rulers and consider themselves to be at the margins of imperial power. (Faris 2004: 408)

By adopting the discourse of the margins, the literary genre corresponds to the postcolonial theory's claim. It is in the marginal space that magical realism and post-colonialism meet. To Faris, magical realism originates in postcolonial countries. Her claim is central to our analysis, where al-Koni appears as the magical realist novelist from the post-colonial North Africa.

Slemon remains the critic who has drawn the most attention to the importance of binaries within magical realism: such as Europe and its "Other", coloniser and colonised, and the West and the rest, which is followed the Western Rationale; and now is on its way to recover identity in the magical realist text. From a postcolonial critical standpoint, "these binaries can be read as legacies of the colonial encounter: a condition of being both tyrannized by history yet paradoxically cut off from it, caught between absolute systems of blind cognition and projected realms of imaginative revision in which people have no control." (Faris 1995: 418)

At this level of the analysis, magic realism seems to cover all the transgressive elements a writer introduces in his realist work. However, my main objective is to highlight the differences between magic and myth and see how the North African novel in its depiction of space is more likely to be mythic rather than magic. The first who used the expression "mythic realism", to my knowledge, is Ondaatje in 1989. He established the difference between magic realism as an extension of the characters' psyche and the mythic one as an outcome of the space in action. In the desert as perceived in al-Koni's work, the

characters are led by the meditative nature of the space into a spiritual being. This is how the protagonist in al-Koni's work is the desert with her ancient gods and saints reincarnated in its characters (Tanit, Anubis, Akka, the Waddan, the Lion, the Moon, Amanai, the Qibli, the Stone, etc).

Ibrahim al-Koni focuses mainly on the way the North African quester seeks to redefine and explore his cultural identity through a mythical/magical realist mode of writing. The North African magical realism is bound up with a kind of nationalism that seeks to revalue its heritage in popular Berber culture. The stories of al-Koni set forth a different perspective from the dominant Eurocentric and Arabic discourses, by evoking the myths and the spirituality of the desert where he was born and where reality is magically different from the European one.

The Libyan author Ibrahim al-Koni

The focus of this paper is on the originality in al-Koni's novels and in his exploration of the desert from the mythical realist perspective. This part is going to study the elements of mythical realism in al-Koni's novels, *The Bleeding of the Stone* and *Gold Dust*, highlighting its specificity to the North African desert.

In these stories, the desert is the ancestral place that the Saharan left behind when the conqueror had arrived to spread greed. al-Koni's desert is peopled by the tragic protagonists (like the *zai'm*, the guardian, Mussa, Akhmad, Anubi), gods, *jinn* and spirits, as in the case of the Zai'm in *The Animists* who found in the shadows his bond and support

> Azger was the only home that bridged us to the ancestral life. Our ancestors share with us by offering us the best gifts, treasures and wisdom. (Branin 2011: 18)

It is within this realm of immensity and extension that the protagonist of al-Koni dwells. The connoisseur of the desert applies one of the philosophies of desert life on his text. He textualises infinity. The stories are shaped according to desert rules, different to the European ones, which raises many questions about the genre of the metropolis. With al-Koni, the North African novel is recreated from a desert perspective where the narrator's choice of words is also of crucial importance in understanding the ways of thinking of desert dwellers. Metaphorical expressions, such as the aphorisms at the end of Al-Koni Anubis: *a Desert Novel*, show the philosophy of native Berbers in their approach to life. The aphorisms are timeless laws of the desert, they are orally inherited from generation to generation, and al-Koni textualises them and encapsulates their timelessness and immensity. They are timeless sayings that the characters refer to as the voice of the desert. Any of the characters, who does

not respect his vows and the dictates of the desert, is doomed. By transgressing one of the backbones of fiction as genre, al-Koni transforms the setting into an infinitely circular place and time. These elements of the particular setting in al-Koni's fiction more likely adhere to the depiction of mythical place and time.

On the other hand, Al-Koni's work is often described as *'aja'ibi* (marvellous) or magical. His transgression in depicting the nature of the events, characters, and settings is offspring of a magical and mythical North African reality. Indeed, the texts are filled with stories such as Anubi's awakening, instead of birth, his search for the father, or the eternal god-father that dictates an eternal quest on nomads, and the protagonist's transformation into a mythical beast. Assouf's father tells the reader of an everlasting war between the mountain and the plain, whose spirit travels from sky to earth, then to animals, and to humans.

Another instance is the *waddan* and his majestic mythical presence in the narrative of *The Bleeding of the Stone* and *Gold Dust*. In these novels, the Carthage myth of Tanit appears. It refers to the goddess of love and fertility for the ancient Libyans. The goddess's name was written tnt so that it appears that the myth can be related Phoenician and Punic cultures. Its meaning is still disputed and other scholars consider that it comes from the Semitic root "lament" and so it signifies "She Who Weeps," perhaps for a disappearing (dying) god like Adonis (Lipinski 1995: 199). Yet other scholars translate Tanit as "Dragon or Serpent Lady." "Tanit", according to this theory, derived from the same root as Tannin, the snaky, dragon-like sea monster of Canaanite myth and the Hebrew Bible (Isaiah 51: 9; Ezekiel 29: 3-5) (Olyan 1988: 53-54). In the novel, the protagonist promises to sacrifice a bull for the goddess Tanit if his Ablaq is cured. Then living through a series of disasters, he thinks of his vow and about the quality and the right time to fulfil it. Afterwards, he has no means to sacrifice the bull because he kills it for his unblessed wedding. He betrays his father and his mythical mother, and he continues to regret it in the novel. Tanit is present in the story; her symbol comes to the threshold of the narrative for numerous times. Her voice is echoed by the cave drawings that Ukhayyad observes in his last refuge; that is meant to remind him of his mistakes and his oath.

In one of his interviews, Al-Koni tells a journalist that his protagonists are different faces that constitute and construct the identity of the desert. Al-Koni recreates tradition from a mythical perspective. In his fiction, one explores the Maghreb from the perspective of the ancient and timeless elements. The relationship of man to the native desert is crucial and vital link of the novels. The path the characters take, during their lives, usually ends with their death and return to the earth's womb. There is always a physical return to

the desert earth. This concept of initiation through suffering is important as it strengthens the native nostalgia to the homeland. The homeland is "desert, void, harsh and dry". In fact, in Al-Koni's texts, a contention takes place between desert and water, as oasis, mirage, vision, flood, and mother womb. It is the metaphor of the origin in nature and to the first being.

Water stands for life, fertility and prosperity. In the desert, water is the dream to survive in the long walk through wilderness. Water element and in particular, its absence, thirst, and floods are kernel motifs in Al-Koni's novels, linked to the idea of rebirth in the natural womb of the desert. As the kernel of the creation myth, al-Koni's novels propose another representation of the origin associated with a much more positive form of rebirth. For instance, the idea of bathing, drinking and coming back to life is seen in Ukhayyad's "bottomless well"-experience before which he starts losing his senses towards a state of near-death,

> He wanted to tell him what to do as he plunged into the abyss. The piebald lavished the young man with attention, covering him with his lips and licking his face. Ukhayyad was unable to see the other's eyes and unable to utter a word. He had lost the ability to speak. First he had lost his voice […]. (al-Koni, *Gold Dust* 50)

Before plunging to bath and heal, Ukhayyad enacts his gradual loss of his senses as a way of approaching death, essential for initiation and rebirth. Drawing from the notion of initiation from the abyss, this ritual represents amniotic diving combining origin and amniotic environment as a symbolic return to the origins of the world. Thus, in *Gold Dust*, this ritual is associated with a particular experience that belongs to primordial times. This healing experience takes into the novel, a mythical tone since, as Mircea Eliade suggests, this type of ritual immersion is a common process

> To restore health, were in the presence of the patient process of the world, refreshes the emergence of the first humans in the Earth. This is because this makes present and active anthropogony [...] the patient back to health: he feels in his inner process essential emersion. In other words, it becomes contemporary cosmology and anthropogony. (Eliade 1957: 200)

To Eliade, any ritual of immersion produces the feeling of having been born out of the Earth. This notion reinforces a sense of autochthony, which is interpreted as the sensation that belongs to "people of the place." (Eliade 1957: 203) It is a place in the heart of nature that takes the value of the mother womb and is perceived as a refuge. The experience of this type is found in many of al-Koni's novels, in which the protagonist is found in a ravine in the heart of which source is of amniotic properties.

Indeed, for this dive and return, characters manifest solidarity with the

homeland against the belief of emptiness and aridity. This relationship is at the heart of the primordial nature, which is like an ancient mother, directly related to the past against which the characters seek to measure themselves. This would bring this symbolic journey towards a "pre-existing" experience of Ukhayyad and Assouf, who symbolically metamorphose into an animal, being aware of their own identity.

This almost carnal relationship with the mother and mother-earth is so important that it is also evidenced by specific Berber rituals inherited from African traditions, often described in the novels. The protagonists identify themselves with animals specific to the desert: *waddan*, gazelle, snake and Mahri. They preserve ancient rocks and talk to their predecessors in the form of *jinns*. They use the masks of these animals as their ancient fathers tell of the ancient stones. In addition, they sacrifice themselves in the open-temple space to recreate myths. The fraternity cross-species is one of the mythical structural evidence of al-Koni's fiction.

The lost oasis "Targa" is believed to be the origin of the name Tuareg. In *Anubis*, the desert is peopled by spectres, jinn, humans, gods and animals. What is noticeable about these characters is that they can change or mix being, they can metamorphose into animal or semi-animal or can acquire super-human powers. The lost oasis "Targa" or Waw plays the same role of the Promised Land, and continues to be the focus of different novels by al-Koni, where characters express their eternal desire to behold it in words of sorrow and nostalgia. The oasis Targa of *Anubis* refers to *Waw*, the lost *ferdous* in al-Koni's long novels: *the Maggie*, *the Animists*, *the Magi*… *Waw* is the dream of desert people; it acts as a deferred desire that fuels their nomadic life and animates their night feasts of singing, poetry and storytelling. There are many stories of the original Targa, in Arabian myth,

> The stories are ways of justifying the real existence of the lost paradise that Arabs called 'Wabar's land,' after the mythical Noah's sons.(Said 2000: 57)

This paradisiac oasis is not a "utopic" dream of the "deprived people" (Ibid.,) as some critics explain. For pre-Islamic Bedouins, this *ferdous* is more an everyday reality than a dream to evade a harsh reality. Tuareg's pagan reality was oppressed by Islam; nevertheless it continued to be part of their rituals. In fact, for the archaic societies, magic bestows a human quality on nature, while myth just explained it (Said 2000: 58), which explains the place of the promised oasis in their creed. Desert people renew their ancestral life by evoking the lost space and identifying with them by perpetuating their adoration. This paradise is their eternal quest that reckons them in a circular time and place.

The desert as a realistic enclave and a mystical primordial space becomes a

place of rebirth and acceptance of origin. For Eliade, there are different ways to turn back in time to witness the fabled time of beginnings or the creation time. One can live progressively one's origins passing from the present time to the absolute beginning. It is a symbolic return that allows the recovery of a time that precedes the birth of the actual world, and then to achieve a rebirth through specific rites. In fact, it is the main mythic feature of *The Bleeding of the Stone*. The different characters meet around the historical stones of the valley or *wadi* Matkhandoush. This stone, as the story narrates, is a symbol of the beginning of humanity,

> The mighty rock marked the end of a series of caves, standing there like a cornerstone. Through thousands of years it had faced the merciless sun, adorned with the most wondrous paintings ancient man had made anywhere in the Sahara. There was the giant priest depicted over the full height of the rock, hiding his face behind that mysterious mask. His hand touched the waddan that stood there alongside him, its air both dignified and stubborn, its head raised, like the priest's, towards the far horizon where the sun rose to pour its rays each day on their faces. (al-Koni *The Bleeding of the Stone*: 2)

This ritual description of the priest and the *waddan* summarises the history of the desert by taking its readers to the world in its beginnings. Matkhandoush is the happy beginning of time when the ancestors lived their "first existence" in their "lost paradise".

Assouf, whose name in Touareg means "wilderness or Sahara," (al-Koni *Maggie* I, II 477) is the first character that appears in that lost place. He is a simple shepherd who decides to exile himself from the rest of human race and to dwell in a mythical happiness. Myth allows him to befriend desert animals and to belong to its stones and sands. He believes that ancient inhabitants of the caves were his ancestors and he likes to stay where they witnessed peace. In his dream of life, Assouf, through isolation, recovers the myth of creation. He is absorbed by his mythical world to the point of praying in the front of the stone figure towering above his head instead of Ka'aba (al-Koni *The Bleeding of the Stone*: 7). On the stone as knowledge, Eliade affirms, "For those to whom a stone reveals itself as sacred, its immediate reality is transmuted into supernatural reality. In other words, for those who have a religious experience all nature is capable of revealing itself as cosmic sacrality."(Eliade 1957: 128) In the Al-Konian novel, the decision to return to the origin and reclaim identity reminds his readers of the original harmony when humanity worshipped nature and honoured the elements of earth and sky in general.

The second character that the novel presents just after Assouf is an Italian archaeologist, who lives, like Assouf, in the same mythical dimension of the world. He is so attracted to the stone that Assouf

> […] often wondered just what lay behind the Christians' interest in the ancient paintings. He decided, finally, they must be making pilgrimage to the Matkhndoush figures because they belonged to the same old religion; […]. Veneration, and supplication and surrender, were revealed in their eyes; betrayed too by the odd way their hands moved over their faces as they examined the vast figure of the king of the wadi, and his sacred waddan that rose alongside him, contemplating the far horizon. The Christians stood before the masked giant exactly as Muslims stood before God. And yet his father had told him this masked jinni was his ancestor too.(al-Koni *Bleeding* 10)

As a child, Assouf was taught by his father to respect Waddans and to never hunt them. Nevertheless, with the war and famine, Assouf betrays his promise to his father and starts following the *waddan*. He ties a cord on the animal's neck and surrenders to the drive of the animal that takes him to the top of the mountain and throws him there for a long moonless night between death and life. At the end, Assouf sees a cord and recognises the one he put around the *waddan's* neck. The *waddan* saves him, while he sees in Waddan's eyes his father's face. Before he loses consciousness, Assouf shouts: "You are my father. I recognised you. Wait. I want to tell you…" (al-Koni *Bleeding* 71) The journey of theal-Konian protagonist, reminds us of the rites of passage in the shaman's initiation, which marks his admittance to adulthood, as his ancestors would define it. Moreover, the evocation of a perilous and death-like experience and the imagery of sufferance and endurance recalls this ancient practice.

This is a rebirth scene, like the one of Ukhayyad out of his skin and entering the deep diving waters in the womb of the earth, the well. Eliade argues:

> It is only in initiation that death is given a positive value. More than an empty tomb, death becomes also the womb of change. In dreams and dramas of initiation, death represents change for the entire psyche and life of a person. It means change inside and out, not simple adaptation or switch in "life style." Initiation includes death and rebirth, a radical altering of a person's "mode of being" […] Without conscious rituals of loss and renewal, individuals and societies lose the capacity to experience the sorrows and joy that are essential for feeling fully human[…].(Eliade 1958: 8)

In this respect, Eliade's view tells of a need to look back to ancestral rituals of birth and death in terms of "change and renewal" and learn how these rituals benefited the community or individual. Indeed, Assouf is reborn and changes his natural father by a mythical one. Gilbert Durand describes this change of the father showing how having the 'son' is considered the people's way to control mortality and to win over time, while in myth there is a doubling of fathers by adding a mythical father to the natural one. The latter has a common background while the first has sacred origins. (Durand 1960: 284)

Indeed, Assouf has two fathers. The mythical father is the *waddan* to whom Assouf promises not to eat meat anymore.

The *Waddan* is presented by al-Koni in the notes of the novel as a sacred creature. No one knows how the narrator arrived to the conclusion of the superiority of this animal. What is clear, however, from al-Koni's approach is the importance of this animal for Touareg. In Tassili paintings, Henri Lhote notes how moufflon or waddan plays a central role in the ancient population's creeds, as the cave paintings repeatedly show representations of a glorified and huge *waddan* […]. Hunting moufflon has also many complex rituals, like putting a heavy rock or a waddan mask on their heads, singing specific magical verses and keeping the hunt as secret to avoid *jinns'* anger. (Lhote 1973: 154) Al-Koni's text depicts the ancient tableaus and scenes of hunting as a ritual of mixing realms and mixing species, where the human hunter puts the attire of the most perilous predator of his culture to become part of the herd and avoid offending nature.

Waddan's place is mountaintops and gazelle's is the sandy plain. Desert animals respect their spaces and if one disobeys desert rules, he should pone an end to his life. This is what happened to the *waddan* of Assouf's father. This latter "Waited until the moon had risen, then told Assouf how the *waddan* was the spirit of the mountains." (Al-Koni, *Bleeding* 20)

> I forgot to tell you that our battle happened in a wadi well away from the mountains. The waddan knew he couldn't escape because he was so far from his mountain stronghold. In the middle of the wadi there was a small hill covered with high, smooth rocks. When he saw I'd taken my rifle, he climbed the rocks in a single swift movement, then leaped to the ground and broke his neck. The blood gushed out from his nostrils, and, after he was dead, his eyes were open and that strange look was still there—the mixture of wretchedness and rancor and helplessness. (Al-Koni, Bleeding 20)

Nevertheless, the fight between *waddan* as a single mountainous animal and gazelles as bundle plain animals takes the reader to a mythic war between two deserts. Waiting again for the moon to cross the sky, Assouf's father tells the story:

> Once long ago, the mountain desert waged constant war with the sandy desert, and the heavenly gods would descend to earth to separate the pair, calming the fire enmity between them. But no sooner had the gods left the battlefield, and the rains stopped pouring down, than war would break once more between the two eternal enemies. One day, the gods grew angry in their high heavens and sent down their punishment on the fighters. They froze the mountains in Massak Satfat, and they stopped the persistent advance of the sands on the borders of Massak Mallat. Then the sands found a way to enter the spirit of the gazelles, while the mountains found a way into the spirit of the waddan. And from that day on, the waddan was possessed by the spirit of the mountains. (Al-Koni, *Bleeding* 21)

This story explains how the spirit of the mountains in *waddan* fights the spirit of the plain in gazelles. In fact, in the name *waddan*, there is an evocation of ancient deity. The linguistic root of *waddan* is (w-d-d) which is an allusion to the desert Arabs' "father Wad," which is one of the many names of the moon. Libyans today cuddle one another by calling "waddy." Ancient Arabs called wad the moon and gazelle the sun. Indeed, the *waddan* is the "god" moon light and solitude; while the gazelle is the "god" of the sun and the power of community. *Waddan* is the North African desert hero, and the bull is his Arabian alternative. (Said *Epic* 5)

In his *Epic Ceilings: the Desert Imaginary in Ibrahim al-Koni's Literature*, Said Ghanemi introduces the circular timing in the desert which accounts for the mythical realist dimension of al-Koni's novels. For desert people, daylight is blinding, the sun, heat and draught are enemies. As Ibn Manthour argues:

> The Arabs are interested in the moon because it gives them company in their nocturnal life; it indicates their ways during their travels by night; it makes them forget the heat during their long days; and it reveals the identity of the villain and the passers-by. (Said *Epic* 44)

Moreover, it is believed that Western Semites, unlike Babylonians, worshipped the moon. In Arabic, for instance the moon is called: *wad, seen, shaheer, warakh, maqa*… In their prayers, they called it by *waddan aban*, for instance. Ali Jawad argues: "Jahilits considered the moon as a father and was their favourite among other planets. It has become the god of gods, in particular for southern Arabs."[3] This place that the moon occupied in ancient history, imaginary and religion showed people's need of myth to control time. To Ghanemi, the moon is depicted as a symbol of renewal and creation, in its continual death and rebirth. Durand emphasises the importance of the moon in Arabian myth,

> La lune apparait en effet comme la premiere mesure du temps. […]. Comme l'ecrit Eliade en un important ouvrage consacre au *Mythe de l'Eternelle Retour*: "l'homme ne fait que repeter l'acte de la creation; son calendrier religieux commemore dans l'espace d'un an toutes les phases cosmogonyques qui ont lieu *ab origine*.
>
> The moon appears indeed like the first time measurement. [...]. As Eliade wrote in an important book devoted to *The Myth of the Eternal Return*: "Man only repeats the act of creation; its religious calendar commemorates in the space of one year all cosmogony phases that take place *ab origine*. (Said *Stuctures* 322-4)

Thus for Durand, the moon is a way to measure the first time and a continual promise of the return. Durand thinks of the role of the moon in following the natural changes of nature. He gives examples of the myth of moon's influence on the wind, the sea, the floods, renewal, birth and death. Both Durand

and Eliade agree on the principle that the moon is the symbol for continual change and renewal, the moon is eternal and young. (Said *Stuctures* 348)

The idea of the moon as the father of all the gods, humans and animals, leads to the understanding of fatherhood and its symbolism in these cultures. The moon is a symbolic father; it epitomises the notion of fatherhood. In this prospect, natural fathers aim at their children following them and hence, they defy death through them, in a circular time that insures their continual recreation. Ghanemi adds

> Time is not a linear succession of actions. A series of repeated actions reproduces the "first action" in a circular movement of recovery. In Arabic, time or Zaman is called daher whose roots are dour or repetition. So the name of the year sana is from san or the moon, a month shaher or a crescent, history or tarikh is from warakh or the moon again…. (Said *Epic* 48)

Indeed, both father and moon have crucial importance in al-Koni's stories. Generally, al-Koni's characters are desert people, Bedu, nomads, and exiled. They all share desert heritage of philosophy, art and aphorisms that enhance their belief in the circularity of time and space.

In contrast to the father's image, the mother is figured as desert, land and nurture. In the novel, this idea is announced in the aphorism: "if the father is spurious, the mother is always legitimate." (al-Koni *Anubis* 118) Accordingly, the father as absence is opposed to the mother as presence and reality, a dichotomy reinforced by the nostalgia of the father and the desire for the mother in these novels. This aligns the mother with that "absolute reality," the sun or gazelle figure that illuminates the path for Anubi, to survive (for instance, blinded by his extreme thirst, he had to drink the gazelle's urine and cling to her belly for days). While the father, the *waddan* or the moon is the un-reachable truth. He says, "We worship what we don't see and only love what we do see." (al-Koni *Anubis* 14)

As the father is two, un-reachable real and symbolic, mothers are also two: one real and true and the other is the goddess of all the gods in the North African desert, Tanit. In south and west Arabia, the extreme power is in the father of all the gods, the moon. In North Africa Tanit is the goddess Mother of love, fertility and war. It is present in almost all al-Koni's novels. The characters use to recall her name and run to her in a moment of crisis. Tanit is introduced in The Maggie, "Pray to Tanit who made us impeccable" (al-Koni, *Maggie I* 102)

She is also present with her symbol either in the movement of the story or the images described on the stones and the caves. Tanit is part of a collective imaginary and she is sacred. She has the overwhelming control of the desert; in one of al-Koni's stories one character is advised to put Tanit's symbol on his herd and leave it in an unattended place mid the desert with the certainty that no one will dare touch it.

Desert people depend on Tanit in their work and life; they vow offerings to have her blessings in marriages, in having children and in their commerce. However, as al-Koni shows the human and the animal on an equal ground, birds, for instance, live and procreate thanks to Tanit. In their own way, the birds:

> Stop singing and fly forming triangles as pleading Tanit to bless them in their next trip. (al-Koni, *Maggie I* 45)

With this goddess, al-Koni describes the silenced history of Berbers who adored their sacred female sovereign and relied on her support to survive and to recreate its myths through her eternal return. Tanit remains central in Berber history and spirituality. They carry on sacrificing on her behalf and fear her anger. Tanit is not only a goddess to worship; she is the spirit of the desert. So if one angers this Mother of all the gods, he is damned by nature with all its desert elements, sea, land and man. He/she then would be orphan and suffer his/her ordeal until death. Tanit for Berbers is like Inanna in Sumerian mythology, Ishtar in Babylon, Anet in Canaan, Nut in Egypt, and Aphrodite in Greece.

Tanit tells of the matriarchal system of Berbers, al-Koni adds,

> Without the gratefulness for the ancient generosity, desert people would not worship a woman who shares their children's names and to whose offspring authority is transmitted. (al-Koni, *Maggie I* 111-2)

Although this authority of a pagan goddess has been contradictory to the Islamic monolithic creed, Berbers carried on believing in the ancient goddess and vowing sacrifices in her name. They, also, call her the absolute mother and, along with the father-moon, they create a familial balance. She is the collective mother, who creates a secret union among the individuals and between the person and his land. The pagan mother and father generate a feeling of serenity and protection among tribal societies. So far, this work develops the idea of al-Koni's uniqueness or difference from magical realists. In fact, mythis the term that al-Koni states in his *My Great Desert* extract and different interviews to explain his premise and the major significance of what writing fiction means to him. It allows him to go beyond the concept of magical realism, to clarify and overcome the orientalist belief in an exotic desert reality.

Conclusion

The exact term that qualifies al-Koni's writing and mentions the timeless and the spiritual space without involving the Eurocentric hierarchy is "mythical realism" to which I may add "North African" as an expansion of what Ondaatje observed in the Canadian novel and Garant in "Second World" literature. To my opinion, the difference between myth and magic lay in their

relation to nature. If myth had been the earliest form of Man's revolution to decipher the spirit of nature, with magic, Man had shown his/her capacity to transform nature by science. In addition, the desert, in its rough nature, is pregnant of myth to explain the extremes of life/death, love/loath, sacred/profane to its children. The Sahara is the landscape that entraps the human into its ceilings and turns it into its protagonist.

Notes

[1]For further information see, Harry Ransom Center, "Collections". http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/collections/guide/latin/

[2]For further information, see "Postcolonial Studies @ Emory". http://postcolonialstudies.emory.edu/magical-realism/

[3]Jahilits are the pre-islamic population. Please Ali Jawad, The Pre-Islamic Arabian History, http://www.soundvision.com/info/seerah/hameed5.asp. 51-7.

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Ghettoization of 'Other': Tinkering Transculturalism in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*

Niyi Akingbe and Emmanuel Adeniyi

Introduction

The need for harmonious inter-cultural relations among racial and ethnic groups across the globe has significantly extended the essential thrust of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*. It is usually assumed that ethnic chauvinism brought multiculturalism into limelight, delineating ethnic identity into clearly identifiable compartments illustrated by the thematic of racialism. Cultural differences have often agitated the minds of scholars, pacifists and other peace-loving individuals over the years. Their opinion is premised on the expediency of cultural harmony and inevitability of peace in the world. Their concerns are fuelled by the persuasion that, for the world to witness peace, factors ranging from ingrained cultural intolerance, "persistent barriers of racism, fear, [and] ignorance" (Cuccioletta, 2002:1) of other people's cultures to stereotypes must end (Dobson, 1991:110).

Suffice to say that series of endemic reactions against multiculturalism that followed are discernible from America to the United Kingdom, even though their manifestations vary from country to country. These factors have left the world a fragmented global village, and highly polarized between the binary opposites of "us" and "them", white-black dichotomy, margin-centre and master-servant relations, though this is against the spirit of transculturalism which fosters in people the understanding of cultures across the globe. Similarly, ethnocentrism, tribalism, ethnicity and racism are still prevalent globally, while various catastrophic happenings in the world attest to this view. To

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validate the foregoing, Huntington (1993: 22-49), in his seminal paper, "The Clash of Civilizations?", predicts a future clash and flowering of conflicts among global civilizations, including the Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American and African. This clash, according to him, will manifest along cultural lines, other than the traditional economic or political struggles among global civilizations. To him, civilization is "a cultural entity" (Huntington, 1993: 23) or "the broadest level of cultural identity" (Huntington, 1993: 24) which distinguishes humans through the instrumentalities of language, history, religion, customs, institutions, and that "the most important conflicts of the future will occur along the cultural fault lines separating these civilizations from one another" (Huntington, 1993: 25). It bears remarking that Huntington's hypothesis takes into consideration centuries-old differences among all the afore-mentioned civilizations, and it appears to validate the tense inter-cultural relations all over the world.

This paper, therefore, interrogates the dialectics of cultural conflicts among world's different civilizations and calls for a better world order structured by the 'meliorist' mindset. It does this by interrogating the ordering of social, class, gender and race issues in Chimamanda Adichie's *Americanah*. The paper will further demonstrate how human constructs have impeded cultural encounters, nay harmonious human relations, in culturally polyvalent spaces of the world. Furthermore, it seeks to draw attention to the plight of immigrants, migrants, refugees and other people with 'nomadic' condition or consciousness in their host countries. In tandem with Adichie's pursuit of transculturalism in *Americanah*, the paper's major preoccupation lies in calling for the actual creation of Appiah's "oxymoron of global village" in countries of the world with irreversible multicultural status (Appiah 15).

Donald Cuccioletta (2002) avers that the present world order is in the throes of human conflict occasioned by "misrepresentations of cultures…hatred of different cultures, [and] an ignorance of cultures" among the people of the world (Cuccioletta 2). In the same vein, Robert Fraser singles out language as a cultural marker and an objective element which has become "the harbinger of violence" in race or ethnic relations, and that "…the confusion between labeling and describing, between objects and events, sometimes leads to genocide or war"(4). To situate cultural conflicts and their extreme manifestations within the context of Rwandan genocide, Hellen Tadjo (2002) believes that mutual suspicion, tribalism, culture intolerance, ethnocentrism, stereotyping and scapegoating–the inaccurate generalization on which prejudice is based, and holding other people or a group of people responsible for want of success respectively–actually precipitated the Rwanda war. While recounting the lamentation of an anonymous victim of the genocide, she writes:

> I am afraid when, in my country, I hear people talk of who belongs there and who doesn't. Creating division; creating foreigners. Inventing the idea of rejection. How is ethnic identity learned? Where does this fear of the other come from, bringing violence in its wake? (Lahey 15; Harriman 37)

Just like Rwanda, many countries of the world exemplify this insidious violence in their reluctance to manage tentative cultural conflicts. Worse still, the politics of division and exclusion among races or ethnic groups has further worsened race relations, as many ethnic chauvinists and racists have latched on this ideology to support their views. David Hume in Morton (2008), Immanuel Kant in Boxil (2008) and Botha in Fagbenle (2007), for instance, hinged the total exclusion of blacks and other races, other than Caucasians, on the perceived superiority of whites over other races, especially blacks, whom they described as a "symbol of poverty, mental inferiority, laziness and emotional incompetence". (Fagbenle 3)

Commenting on Immanuel Kant's Aryan racial supremacist claim in Boxil (2008), Emmanuel (2009) posits that Kant hierarchised the races of the world and attributed unfounded biological characteristics to them. This, according to him, aided the mutual race hate between white-Americans and African-Americans in the United States. The resultant effects of the foregoing racist perceptions on cultural studies and race relations are, nonetheless, human conflicts which manifest in form of race hate, violence and war. Obviously as witnessed in Adichie's *Americanah*, these perceptions and acrimonious race relations have always become "raw materials" for artistic (re)creation in literature. Many writers have ostensibly portrayed strained race relationship in their works with a view to sensitizing readers to cultural acrimony pervading the world, and calling for solutions to it. Some of these writers include: Richard Wright, James Baldwin, Alice Walker, Tony Morrison, Salman Rushdie, Wole Soyinka, Gibson Kente, Alex La Guma, Chinua Achebe, Buchi Emecheta, and a host of other Euro-American, African-American, African and Asian writers who have explored the themes of inter-cultural relations and cultural conflict in their works.

Resolving Intercultural Conflict through Cultural Ideologies

In order to resolve human conflicts and engendered inter-racial, inter-cultural harmony, scholars have come up with various ideological postulations that can address, or better still, dislodge those human negative constructs. Practices which have served as barriers to cultural understanding or appreciation among the people of the world include ethnicity and tribalism. However, various cultural ideologies have, however, sprung up in the last few years to correct this anomaly. Some of the postulations include multiculturalism, cultural assimilation or cultural integration, pluriculturalism, biculturalism, transculturalism

or cosmopolitanism and interculturality. Prior to now, multiculturalism was seen as the solution to ethnic or racial tensions and cultural misunderstandings, but its drawbacks appear to have robbed it of its lofty ideals.

Being a governmental policy popularized in North America, multiculturalism was introduced by the then Canadian Prime Minister, Pierre Trudeau in 1970 (Grosu 103). Its major aim is to accommodate all shades of cultural diversities in the country, while, at the same time, enable each of the cultures to maintain its unique identity. To Grosu, multiculturalism is "the management of cultural diversity of minority racial and ethnic groups…with a view to making the cultural groups maintain and foster their identity" (103). Hinnerova describes it as a "coexistence of a spectrum of various cultures within a group or a society…"(7). While the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLAI) also describes it as "the co-existence of diverse cultures, where culture includes racial, religious, or cultural groups is manifested in customary behaviours, cultural assumptions and values, patterns of thinking, and communicative style".[1] Multiculturalism in essence, attempts to create a "salad bowl" of cultural traditions or a convergence of cultures for greater understanding within a state or unified society, but without cultural inclusion. It emphasized that each culture is to retain and maintain its cultural uniqueness or distinction. In a sense, it encourages cultural division–a major factor responsible for the polarization of global cultures and the enthronement of rivalry, hatred and the extreme cases of violence and conflict among cultures.

Some of the drawbacks of multiculturalism could be said to have mutated into transculturalism. Scholars nowadays prefer to use transculturalism in place of multiculturalism, because of the inherent positivism of the former. According to Hinnerova:

> Where the policy of multiculturalism does not seem to be an ideal solution to the situation of mingling cultures, the concept of transculturalism is a better suited answer. As a matter of fact, the more precise terms of transculturalism or interculturalism are slowly replacing the concept of multiculturalism. (17)

One of the drawbacks of multiculturalism is that it encourages cultural division, stereotyping, feelings of estrangement and rivalry or competition among the "salad bowl" of cultures in a given multi-ethnic society. People in such a society relate with their distinct identities as well as their social, religious and cultural backgrounds, rather than see themselves as a product of a mainstream or national culture. Hinnerova has also observed that ideology, which is a socio-cultural manifestation of multi-ethnicity, is "harmful to multicultural ideal and produce a ghettoization of cultures instead of toler-

ance and interaction between them" (14). Unfortunately, various cultural ideologies identified above save transculturalism, do not seem to have any solutions to the drawbacks of multiculturalism. They could not map out sensible strategies to tackle widespread cultural conflicts around the globe. Each of them, for instance, comes up with their own unique postulations on how to acculturate other people by subsuming them under a hegemonic culture. This is noted in the *Frenchification* of Africans or cultural assimilation policy of France in its colonies during colonialism in Africa. The ideologies, rather than offer solutions, end up creating issues that leave behind a trail of cultural conflicts. With transculturalism, hope of robust global racial relations is rekindled. With it, world citizens emerge, ethnic affiliations minimize and people traverse the globe unhindered, as cultures, worldviews and belief systems conflate to evolve one indivisible cultural orientation through which individuals identify and describe themselves.

To localize this hypothesis in Nigerian cultural milieu, transculturalism tends to degrade cultural diversity conundrum in postcolonial Nigeria. Hence, rather than seeing themselves as Yoruba, Ibo or Hausa, Izon, Tiv, Igala, a conflated and monolithic *Wazobia* culture has been invented and used as a means of cultural identification among Nigerians. The same applies to Italian, English, German and Jewish separate identities which could fuse into one and produce a hybrid or hybrids of the identities, within which people of the nation-states could identify themselves. This hypothesis, therefore, engenders one culture amidst a confluence of cultures, and nothing more.

Transculturalism, Nomadic Sensibility and Ghettoization: An Exegesis of Terms

What is transculturalism? How can it be differentiated from multiculturalism and other socio-cultural ideological postulations? What is the preoccupation of transcultural literary works, and how can it be identified in texts? An attempt is made to answer these questions, so as to lay a background for the explication of issues raised in Adichie's *Americanahas* analyzed in this paper. Transculturalism, to start with, is a socio-cultural ideology that seeks the conflation of culture with a view to smoothening relations and engendering what Hinnerova refers to as "the process of dialogue" and creating a "cosmopolitan citizenship" (18). Explaining the meaning of cosmopolitan citizenship, Appiah (2005) notes that s/he is any one or a person who is better addressed as a cosmopolitan that often thinks that the world is a shared hometown, capable of creating the self-consciousness oxymoron of the global village. Cuccioletta similarly deconstructs the concept of cosmopolitan citizenship within the context of transculturalism. According to him, it is a:

> process of recognizing oneself in the other…and the citizenship [is] independent of political structures and institutions, [it] develops each individual in the understanding that one's culture is multiple, metis and that each human experience and existence is due to the contact with other, who in reality is like…oneself. (Cuccioletta 9)

In his view, the power of cultural ideology lies in its ability to situate culture in the right perspective as a unifying phenomenon, which also "places the concept of culture at the center of a redefinition of the nation-state or even the disappearance of the nation-state" (Cuccioletta 10). Lewis, similarly, states that the focus of the concept is to:

> illuminate the various gradients of culture and the ways in which social groups 'create' and 'distribute' their meanings… seeks to illuminate the ways in which social groups interact and experience tension. It is interested in the destabilizing effects of non-meaning or meaning atrophy. It is interested in the disintegration of groups, cultures, and power…[it]emphasizes the transitory nature of culture as well as its power to transform (24).

The concept was coined by Fernando Ortiz (Dagnino 5) in 1940s as "a synthesis of two phases occurring simultaneously, one being a deculturation of the past with *metissage* with the present".[2] He notes further that:

> This reinventing of new common culture is therefore based on the meeting and the intermingling of the different peoples and cultures. In other words one's identity is not strictly one dimensional [the self] but is now defined and more importantly recognized in rapport with the other. In other words one's identity is not singular but multiple. (Ibid.)

Coleman in his 1994 interview with VenBegamurde–who is believed to have coined the term, "transculturalism" in Canada–notes that Begamurde enthuses that "transculturalism assumes that there is a process of change and of evolution which is necessary among…different cultures, and that eventually we stop being Indo-Canadian or Ukranian-Canadian; we simply become human" (Coleman 36-37). Begamurde is more at home with the notion that rather than an individual getting attached to a specific culture, it is better to entrench humanity by all since multiculturalism can foster divisions among cultures.

Dagnino has described transcultural writers as "imaginative writers, who by choice or by life circumstances, experience cultural dislocation, live transnational experiences in multiple cultures/geographies/territories, expose themselves to diversity and nurture plural, flexible identities"(1). To put it succinctly, transcultural writers, just like "mobile writers" (exile, expatriate, migrant writers), are transnational writers. Their writing is dialogic; it is better read as a dialogue beyond the borders of a nation-state and across cultures to engage them in communication process, so as to engender peace and harmony.

Furthering the avowed promotion of gains of transculturalism, Dagnino also sees transcultural works, nay writers, as works or writers who often record and express the *confluential* nature of cultures, where the traditional dichotomies – North and South, the West and the Rest, colonizer and colonized, dominator and dominated, native and migrant, national and ethnic–that have thus far characterized multicultural and postcolonial discourses are superseded.

However, the major difference between transcultural writers and writers of "literature of mobility" is that their works replicate the nuances of cultural transactions and transformations. Put differently, they are "mobile writers [who] distance themselves and go beyond the politically and culturally constructed categories of the 'migrant writer', 'ethnic writer', 'multicultural writer', 'Commonwealth writer', 'Writer of New literatures in English' or 'francophone writer'…"(Dagnino 11).

Nomadic Sensibility

Nomadism is as old as the world itself. From time immemorial, individuals, tribes and people have always traversed different parts of the world, braving the elements, conquering nature, traversing borders in search of wealth, pleasure, and other essentials of life. Nomads often move from one place to another in search of pastures. Various historical texts, like the Scriptures, provide account of how historical personages wander from their places of birth to different countries in search of life's essentials. While describing the lifestyle of nomads, Sailus writes that nomads are people and tribes who "do not consider themselves attached to a specific plot of land…Nomadic civilizations move from place to place and region to region depending on variables such as climate, season, availability of water, and the movement of animal herds" (Sailus: 2015).[3] Nomadic people are defined by peregrination; they are people who live by travelling from place to place. Nomadism then means anything that involves moving around a lot. To further provide more thoughts on the defining features of nomadic lifestyle, *become nomad*, a website designed for would-be nomads, lists the following as the defining characteristics of nomads:

> A nomad constantly changes location, switching from one place to another. Most nomads have some kind of place that they can call home, which is usually where family or childhood friends are located, but they wouldn't spend more than a few months a year there. Nor would they settle down in a new home, they just keep on changing a place, never feeling really at home, change is home…
>
> Being a nomad, you never really have a feeling of areal home – something you've been upgrading, decorating, and designing. It always belongs to someone else (i.e. a hostel, short rental, a friend's place) and is always temporary.

> …A nomad breaks away from her/his attachments before taking the journey, and stays away from attachments while realizing this unique lifestyle… They are exposed to many lifestyles, cultures and situations. This constant process of change is a great learning experience, and when you learn, you become smarter.[4]

Nomadic philosophy encompasses the (re)definition of one's existence, peregrination, self-denial or sacrifice, abstention, reflective lifestyle, reconstruction of the notion of home (as constant change of location is "home" to nomads), self-independence and self-sufficiency. The concept of nomadism, as used in this paper, does not rely on the pedestrian definition of a people who own livestock and wander from one place to another with their animals in search of water and pasture. The concept is used as metaphor of journey or peregrination of people or individuals who possess powers to conquer geographical spaces and defy odds for the sake of cultural negotiation and rediscovery of selfhood. To them, life is expansive to be fully captured or negotiated within a culture, which is responsible for their shifting mentality. They believe that the expansiveness of life makes its definition and essence culturally polytheistic, hence the concept of "nomadic sensibility" referring to the need for self-discovery and/or (re)definition beyond or outside one's culture(s). Transcultural writers often project this sensibility in their works to describe the discovery of life's essence, not only within one's indigenous culture, but beyond, so as to have a glimpse of other cultures and what they say about circumstantial details of living.

In reinforcing the potency of "nomadic sensibility", there is an identification of parallel markers which run through cultures. These elements or markers are useful in self-definition that help in [re]shaping man's understanding of life's essence. Shutting oneself inside a cultural cocoon would definitely deprive one the invaluable insights that other cultures offer on life and existence. Invariably, this constitutes one of the major thrusts of transculturalism, as it basically seeks the annexation of cultures with a view to producing a monolithic and hybridized culture out of them.

Ghettoization of "Other"

An attempt is further made to deconstruct the term "ghetto" or "ghettoization" and extend its meaning beyond the semantics of communities or state of existence of the neglected, the poor, or the dregs in the society, and, to align it with the thrust of this paper–the culturally ostracized Other in the United States and England. Wacquant describes "ghetto" as a social-organizational device that "denotes a bounded urban ward, a web of group-specific institutions, and a cultural and cognitive constellation (values, mind-set,

or mentality) entailing the socio-moral isolation of a stigmatized category as well as the "systematic truncation of the life space and life chances of its members". To him, stigma, constraint, spatial confinement, and institutional encasement are four elements that shape the destiny of a ghetto, noting that it is a Janus-faced term that justifies the "confine and control" authority of the dominant category, as well as the "integrative and protective device" of the dominated category. Most importantly, Wacquant contends that multicultural and transcultural functionality of ghetto is nuanced by its "potent collective identity machine" and a "cultural combustion engine", because it "…sharpens the boundary between the outcast category and the surrounding population by deepening the socio-cultural chasm between them"– (multiculturalism), and because it "…melts divisions amongst the confined group and fuels its collective pride even as it entrenches the stigma that hovers over it…[in such a way that] spatial and institutional entrapment deflect class differences and corrode cultural distinctions within the relegated ethno-racial category," – (transculturalism)". Furthermore, Wacquant quoting Wirth (1928); Drake and Cayton posit that transcultural proof of ghettoization is reflected in the welding together of Christian and Sephardic Jews under:

> an overarching Jewish identity such that they evolved a common 'social type' and 'state of mind' across the ghettos of Europe…and America's dark ghetto…accelerated (by)the socio-symbolic amalgamation of mulattos and Negroes into a single 'race' and turned racial consciousness into a mass phenomenon fuelling community mobilization against caste exclusion. (Drake and Cayton 8)

Crane, in his description of ghetto in his study of the epidemic theory of ghettos, submits that "ghettoes are neighbourhoods that have experienced epidemics of social problems". Also, Whitehead situates ghettoization within racialised urban demography, and describes the term as referring "…not only urban areas wherein the majority of the residents are African Americans who are poor, in poverty, or in extreme poverty". The residents of these inhabited enclosures are not only marginalized but are physically isolated and consigned to poor residential areas. Whitehead has also observed that such identifiable physical isolationis essentially characterized by the distancing of Racialized Urban Ghetto (RUG) residents. Residents are quarantined from the suburban locations where jobs are being created, and the racial isolation imposed by segregated housing patterns. He simplifies the complexity of ghetto nomenclature by highlighting its features to include: high rate of poverty, unemployment, educational mismatches, social disorganization and ecological deterioration, social and cultural isolation, among others. Accordingly, in ghetto enclaves: social exclusion and isolation impede racial interaction, in as much as

"contact or sustained interaction with … individuals or institutions that represent mainstream society is hindered" (Whitehead 19).

Apprehending Failed Transculturalism in Chimamanda Adichie's *Americanah*

It will not be out of place to infer that *Americanahs*, a *magnum opus* of Adichie's overall works, in the sense that the overarching racial issues raised in the plot of the novel is in conformity with its narrative dexterity which places it within the transcultural exegesis espoused by Dagnino (2012, 2013). Grounded in the thematic of the novel is transcultural concern that strikingly utilizes the appurtenances of transculturality for the interrogation of racism and ethnocentrism in America and England, a feat which succinctly stands the novel out among its peers.

Americanah is preoccupied with conflation or confluence of races, cultures and people with a view to welding them together, for the purpose of evolving a common identity without compromising their socio-cultural peculiarities. However, as good intentioned as Adichie's attempt at initiating a cultural dialogue in America's racialized society, its untrammeled practicability is up against a brick wall. Invariably, factors such as stereotyping, racismand racial stratification ingrained in American society continually prevent the realization of her transcultural objective in the novel. American racial dilemma is succinctly reflected in the words of Dominique D. Fisher "nationalisms, racisms, religious fanaticisms, and fascisms are newly revived on all sides. At the same time, the right to difference, far from recovering a differential conception of sociocultural phenomena, has been hijacked and now seems to provoke only suspicion… "(Fisher 91). Exploring transcultural tropes in the novel, Adichie, through one of her characters, Blaine, sums up the essence of the ideology. To Blaine, a political character, Barack Obama, who is contesting the presidential election in America, epitomizes the ideal of transculturalism in view of his ancestry and exposure to different cultures:

> If Obama didn't have a white mother and wasn't raised by white grandparents and didn't have Kenya and Indonesia and Hawaii and all of the stories that make him somehow a bit like everyone, if he was just a plain black guy from Georgia, it would be different. (*Americanah* 407).

The ideal of transculturalism finds expression in Obama being "a bit like everyone", considering his physical and psychological accessibility to varied cultures and his willingness to imbibe certain gradients garnered from these cultures. By undergoing this transcultural gambit, he belongs to all cultures: Caucasian, African, African American and Asian. He defines himself by these cultures, successfully collates their nuances and subjects these nuances to re-

definition within African American cultural matrix. To Obama in the text, being a metisor a hybrid of cultures gives a fillip to the quest for an amalgam of cultures and the evolvement of a new cultural outlook that unites all. To further establish the transcultural import of the novel, Obama's acceptance speech after his eventual emergence as the winner of the presidential election in Americaliesin the heart of transcultural consciousness:

> Young and old, rich and poor, Democrat and Republican, black, white, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, gay, straight, disabled and not disabled, Americans have sent a message to the world that we have never been just a collection of red states and blue states. We have been and always will be the United States of America. (*Americanah* 412).

Considering Obama's speech, oneness, unity, love, togetherness and the spirit of communal consciousness ought to define inter-racial relationship in America as transculturalism seeks; however, many happenings in the novel indicate the contrary. Ifemelu, through her blog, similarly notes that the simplest solution to the problem of race in America is romantic love, "…but because American society is set up to make it even rarer between American Black and American White, the problem of race in America will not be solved" (*Americanah* 341). Introspectively, the blogging in Adichie's *Americanah* is ostensibly utilized for the shaping of public opinion. Invariably, critical racial opinion and issues are analyzed via internet by using a blog as a metanarrative device (Guarracino 3).

As a new immigrant/migrant in the States, Ifemelu expresses a stereotypical view about American men and their manner of eating in the public. The man from Ohio, who boards the same plane with Ifemelu, also says black children are rarely adopted in America, because "Nobody wants black babies in this country…"(*Americanah* 15).The same sentiment is expressed by Emenike when he and his English wife, Georgina, host their friends at their terraced home in Islington: "It seemed to me that in America blacks and whites work together, but don't play together and here blacks and whites play together but don't work together" (*Americanah* 316).Outside America, Ojiugo, Obinze's cousin's wife, comments on the snobbery and superciliousness of Britons who appear to hate racial contact: "English people will live next to you for years but they will never greet you. It is as if they have buttoned themselves up" (*Americanah* 274). Similarly, an anonymous American, possibly a white American, posts this comment on Ifemelu's blog prior to the election of Obama:

> How can a monkey be president? Somebody do us a favour and put a bullet in this guy. Send him back to the African jungle. A black man will never be in the white house, dude, it's called the white house for a reason. (*Americanah* 404)

The fear of being dominated by immigrants in Britain forces English people

to talk about the influx of immigrants and migrants into Britain from countries created by it. Suffice to say that in the view of Anthony Clayton, the modernist racial prejudice currently witnessed in the United Kingdom derived from the British colonial pattern of stratification. A pattern that "prefers to see people in compartments". Asians were to be traders, Arabs junior officials and Africans, indigenous or mainland, were to be labourers"(Clayton 24). This Western-racial pattern without doubt, is a major factor that impugn the essence of transculturalism in *Americanah*:

> The wind blowing across the British Isles was odorous with fear of asylum seekers, infecting everybody with the panic of impending doom, and so articles were written and read, simply and stridently, as though the writers lived in a world in which the present was unconnected to the past, and they had never considered this to be the normal course of history: the influx into Britain of black andbrown people from countries created by Britain. (*Americanah* 299)

Boubacar, the sable-skinned Senegalese Yale professor, makes a comment that shows that he, too, resents Americans, their cuisine, just as Americans resent Africans and their culture. In a way, mutual resentment subsists between the two races or continents. According to him, "I came to America because I want to choose myown master… If I must have a master, then better America than France. But I will never eat a cookie or go to McDonald's. How barbaric!" (*Americanah* 388).

Aunty Uju also complains about the dose of racism meted out to her son, Dike, in his school by the school principal. He is accused of hacking into his school's computer network – an offence he never commits. Dike's response to the accusation underscores the depth of race hate and resentment borne against blacks in American schools: "You have to blame the black kid first" (*Americanah* 400).To further emphasize the tense race relations in America, Ifemelu writes in her blog, under the topic, "Understanding America for the Non-American Black: A Few Explanations of What Things Really Mean":

> 1...Racism is complex...Many abolitionists wanted to free the slaves but didn't want black people living nearby. Lots of folk today don't mind a black nanny or black limo driver. But they sure as hell mind a black boss. What is simplistic is saying "It's so complex."...
>
> 2. Diversity means different things to different folks. If a white person is saying a neighborhood is diverse, they mean nine percent black people. (The minutiae gets to ten percent black people, the white folks move out.) If a black person says diverse neighborhood, they are thinking forty percent black. (*Americanah* 402)

As stated earlier, in real life, stereotyping, race hate, ignorance of other

people's cultures and fear of domination work against the realization of transculturalism in America, hence the failure of transcultural ideals in the States. The portrayal of these evils in Americanahonly lends credence to its verisimilitude in the novel's spatial setting.

Nomadic Trajectory: Living in Snatches Outside Home

Many of the characters in Americanah display nomadic sensibility – they peregrinate from one place to another and from one job or mode of existence to another. They break away from attachments and switch lifestyles or locations at will in search of peace, fulfillment, greener pastures and happiness. Adichie expresses this sensibility in the novel through her authorial intrusion to capture the mood of Obinze who abandons his widow, professor-mother and his country to live a life of an immigrant ready to commit an illegality in order to secure a National Insurance number in England:

> They would not understand why people like him, who were raised well-fed and watered but mired in dissatisfaction, conditioned from birth to look towards somewhere else, eternally convinced that real lives happened in that somewhere else, were now resolved to do dangerous things, illegal things, so as to leave, none of them starving, or raped, or from burned villages, but merely hungry for choice and certainty. (*Americanah* 317-318)

Almost all of Obinze's friends, just like many other nationalities (the Senegalese hairdressers, the Ethiopian and Caribbean cab drivers in the States) in the novel, exude nomadism. Emenike moves to England from Nigeria and ends up marrying Georgina, a white attorney. KayodeDaSilva, Ginnika, Ifemelu and Aunty Uju move to US, Iloba to UK, and many other characters who swell the population of African, Hispanic, Asian immigrants in America and England. Though the movement of some of these characters from their original home countries to their host countries may be "permanent"; however, they still have spiritual or psychological attachment to their home countries. This is because their minds sometimes wander away from their host countries and become overwhelmed with the nostalgic memories of their places of birth. ToyinFalola calls this category of people "… transnationalists who talk about their … homeland and their new adopted homeland… [and] carry multiple personalities of transnationalism in one body"(61). Quoting W.E. B. Du Bois, Falola notes that the people are individuals with, "two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder" (61).

Many of these characters take time off to comment on social media about happenings at home. They monitor closely the social and political events back home, and always add their own voices to discourses on issues affecting their

countries, though not physically present or travel home physically. Even if they travel physically, it is for a short time. However, their minds always engage in psychological journeys and trips to the nooks and crannies of their home countries in search of solutions to the myriad of problems confronting these countries. To this category of immigrants, their nomadism is psychological or spiritual. Ifemelu's comment about Bartholomew as a representative of this category of people is instructive:

> He had not been back to Nigeria in years and perhaps he needed the consolation of those online groups, where small observations flared and blazed into attacks, personal insults flung back and forth. Ifemelu imagined the writers, Nigerians in bleak houses in America, their lives deadened by work, nursing their careful savings throughout the year so that they could visit home in December for a week, when they would arrive bearing suitcases of shoes and clothes and cheap watches, and see, in the eyes of their relatives, brightly burnished images of themselves. Afterwards they would return to America to fight on the Internet over their mythologies of home, because home was now a blurred place between here and there, and at least online they could ignore the awareness of how inconsequential they had become. (*Americanah* 139)

Obinze's mother, too, expresses nomadic sensibility when she says that, "One day, I will look up and all the people I know will be dead or abroad" (*Americanah* 269). The power or fear of temporality that runs through her statement further underpins the nomadic lifestyle of some characters in Americanah. Her statement creates an impression that life is ephemeral, only death makes it definite. Besides, it journeys between the trajectories of temporality and eternity. It switches location, and is in constant search of purpose and meaning. Apart from their peregrination from Nigeria to the West, Aunty Uju, Ifemelu and other characters switch from one American or English city to another, as well as from one job to another in search of better living conditions. They similarly switch from one marital/love relationship to another. Ifemelu resigns from the American company where she works as a public relations officer to start a blog, and eventually returns to Nigeria to work as a magazine columnist. Her physical nomadism may have come to an end upon her relocation. However, her nomadic love relationship and switch of job do not terminate with her relocation from America to Nigeria, as she switches from one love relationship to another, just as she quits one job for another.

Ifemelu maintains a cyclic nomadic love relationship as reflected in the way she detaches herself from her first love, Obinze; dates a rich white man, Curt; cheats on Curt and flirts with another white American living in her hostel; has an almost-enduring relationship with Blaine; leaves him eventually and moves to Lagos, Nigeria. Only to meet Obinze again; sleeps with him, has a misun-

derstanding with him; meets another Nigerian-America returnee; till Obinze finally abandons his wife, possibly to live with her. Transculturalism can be said to have been enhanced through Ifemelu's legendary sexual nomadism as her relationship with them gives her an opportunity to "experiment" with love and sex with people of diverse social and cultural backgrounds. She possibly engages in sexual switch with a view to negotiating purpose of love and seeking originality in sex and love relationship, though this nomadic experience has its inherent dangers. At the commencement of her blog, which she tags, "Raceteenth or Curious observations by a Non-American Black on the Subject of Blackness in America", Ifemelu uses the trope of sex and romantic love as a possible solution to race issue in America. She writes:

> The simplest solution to the problem of race in America?Romantic love. Not friendship. Not the kind of safe, shallow love where the objective is that both people remain comfortable. But real deep romantic love, the kind that twists you and wrings you out and makes you breathe through the nostrils of your beloved. And because that real deep romantic love is so rare, and because American society is set up to make it even rarer between American Black and American White, the problem of race in America will never be solved. (*Americanah* 341)

It is pertinent to note that Ifemelu posts this on her blog after severing relationship with Curt. She actually refers to him in the post as "The Hot White Ex". This suggests that her romantic escapade or "sexual experimentation" with Curt enables her to taste the beauty of other culture, albeit sexual, hence her recommendation of this nomadism as a panacea to racism in America. Aunty Uju's nomadic love relationship begins in Nigeria. She jilts her boyfriend, has an affair with an army general, the father of Dike, her son, marries Bartholomew, a Nigerian accountant in America, out of frustration. She leaves him, and eventually marries Kweku, a Ghanaian medical doctor. Curtis, Blaine and other characters have their own share of nomadic sensibility, too. Perhaps Blaine's younger sister, Shan, best sums up the trajectory of nomadic love relationship:

> What doesn't Shan do? She used to work at a hedge fund. Then she left and travelled all over the world and did a bit of journalism. She met this Haitian guy and moved to Paris to live with him. Then he got sick and died. It happened very quickly. She stayed for a while, and even after she decided to move back to the States, she kept the flatin Paris. She's been with this new guy, Ovidio, for about a year now. He's the first real relationship she's had since Jerry died … She's really a special person. (*Americanah* 362)

Nomads often seek new beginnings, they are an embodiment of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, happiness and sadness, peace and war. Their lives are a bunch of irony, they seek, yet they don't find. However, they are always on the

move, thinking and charting a new course for their lives. That is why Ifemelu is lost in thought about a new beginning elsewhere without her boyfriend, though she has just secured a new opportunity elsewhere. After she secures the University of Princeton research fellowship, and goes there alongside Blaine to inspect her new apartment, Adichie writes:

> She felt admiration and disorientation. She liked her apartment, off Nassau Street; the bed-room window looked out to a grove of trees, and she walked the empty room thinking of a new beginning for herself, without Blaine, and yet unsure if this was truly the new beginning she wanted. (*Americanah* 406)

All these characters maintain a cycle of peregrination punctuated by switches in location, love relationship, job and lifestyle. The overarching effect of their peregrination is that it affords them the privilege of becoming better persons equipped with cultural knowledge and ability to appreciate the uniqueness of every culture to which they are exposed. If they are cocooned in their own culture without having access to other cultures, "culture ignorance" will subsist in them; this will equally hinder harmonious race relations, culture contacts or trans-cultural relations. In essence, the peregrination enables them to see and define themselves in the light of other cultures, rather than maintaining a monocultural identity.

Uncertainty, persecution, loss, discrimination are some of the problems faced by nomadic people while wandering about looking for pasture for their cattle. Similar problems shape Adichie'scharacters, as many of them have a running battle with racism, stereotyping, hate, oppression and deportation. Snippets of the racial upheaval experienced by these characters has significantly dramatizes "a disjuncture between the possibilities of global culture and the transnational fantasies and failures …"(Wilson-Tagoe 98).Obinze is deported before his sham marriage with Cleotilde is conducted. At Heathrow Airport, he meets other Nigerians ready to be deported, while some still insist on returning to England. In her blog entitled, "Travelling While Black", Ifemelu writes that:

> Let traveling black folk know what the deal is. It's not like anybody is going to shoot you but it's great to know where to expect that people will stare at you. In the German Black Forest, it's pretty hostile staring. In Tokyo and Istanbul, everyone was cool and indifferent. In Shanghai the staring was intense, in Delhi it was nasty. I thought, "hey, aren't we kind of in this together? …And then another friend says, 'Native blacks are always treated worse than non-native blacks everywhere in the world…". (*Americanah* 379-380)

Ifemelu's travelling tales present the upheavals that often greet migrants/immigrants, especially blacks due to the colour of their skin. Another issue

that faces Adichie's characters is immigration issue and their efforts to circumvent it. Immigration law, in Adichie's view, is a human construct which poses a great danger to transcultural ideal. Apart from preventing unhindered movement of persons, it also prevents or limits racial contact and possibly heightens ignorance of cultural practices of other people. Aisha, one of the Senegalese hairdressers, laments her inability to attend her father's funeral or see him before his death, because of her immigration papers: "Last year. My father died and I didn't go. Because of papers. But maybe, if Chijioke marry me, when my mother die, I can go. She is sick now. But I send her money" (*Americanah* 415). She has flirted with an African American so as to use him as a decoy to regularize her immigration papers, but it doesn't work out, hence her intense effort to marry Chijioke, an Igbo casual worker in America, who probably has a permanent resident status in the country. Many of the characters decide to compromise and sacrifice many things in order to remain in their adopted homes. Just like nomads, they endure the hardship that comes with nomadism, while those who cannot cope with the stifling situations return to their real homes – that in itself is a further proof of nomadic sensibility.

Towards the Ghettoization of "Other" in Americanah

The ghettoization of "Other" in Americanah is in two forms: the geographical ostracism of blacks or the poor from white Americans, and the resentment of Other by another Other. A funny scenario of Otherised Other is presented, indicating a victim victimizing another victim. Ghettoization is given a new semantics beyond the geographical separation and grouping of people together in a place. As used here, it also implies using utterances, taking actions that pigeonhole the deprived, the less privileged into a category rooted in helplessness. When stereotypical views or utterances are made about people, a ghettoization of such people has occurred, because the action may remind them of their vulnerability and place them psychologically within the walls of helplessness, hopelessness, poverty, crime, grime and social vices that shape their ghettoized existence.

In one of the posts on her blog, Ifemelu interrogates the American demography, as well as social cum geographical stratification that shapes life in the US. According to her, "Why Are the Darkest Drabbest Parts of American Cities Full of American Blacks?" (Americanah358). The implication of this poser is that the vulnerable, mostly blacks, and a few Hispanics, are (deliberately?) ghettoized in America with a view to preventing racial contact, especially with white Americans. The location of Mariama African Hair Braiding is also indicative of deliberate ghettoization policy in the US. Adichie writes:

> but it would look, she was sure, like all the other African hair braiding salons she had known: they were in the part of the city that had graffiti, dank buildings and no white people, they displayed bright signboards with names like Aisha and Fatima African Hair Braiding, they had radiations that were too hot in the winter and air conditioners that did not cool in the summer, and they were full of Francophone West African braiders, one of whom would be the owner and speak the best English and answer the phone and be deferred by others. Often, there was a baby tied to someone's back with a piece of cloth. Or a toddler asleep on a wrapper spread over a battered sofa. Sometimes, older children stopped by. The conversations were loud and swift, in French or Wolof or Malinke…(Americanah19-20)

Beyond geographical ghettoization of African-Americans (African immigrants or migrants in America, as different from African Americans), this sentiment is further heightened in Ifemelu's post, entitled, "Understanding America for the Non-American Black: American Tribalism". She believes that those categories of class, ideology, region and race subsist in America, and that each of the categories "ghettoizes" another:

> In America, tribalism is alive and well. There are four kinds – class, ideology, region, and race. First, class.Pretty easy.Rich folk and poor folk.Second, ideology.Liberals and conservatives. They don't merely disagree on political issues, each side believes the other is evil. Inter-marriage is discouraged and on the rare occasion that it happens, is considered remarkable. Third, region. The North and the South. The two sides fought a civil war and tough stains from that war remain. The North looks down on the South while the South resents the North. Finally, race. There's a ladder of racial hierarchy in America. White is always on top, specifically White Anglo-Saxon Protestant, otherwise known as WASP, and American Black is always on the bottom, and what's in the middle depends on time and place. (Or as that marvelous rhyme goes: if you're white, you're all right; if you're brown, stick around; if you're black, get back)…(*Americanah* 218)

Ghettoization as a byproduct of migration has been carefully examined by Paul TiyambeZeleza "as for the factors and forces that perpetuate migration, emphasis is often placed on the role of social networks…The interplay between these factors obviously varies in specific contexts…International migration has come to be seen as an integral part of globalization…or "transnationalism"(Zeleza 12). Ghettoization is a major consequence of migration as it often triggers uneven development between countries and the "unequalizing inscriptions of class, race, gender, and nationality among the migrant themselves" (Zeleza 12). Ghettoization in America unobtrusively manifests itself when thewhite Americans/Britons give poor jobs to blacks/denying them access to good jobs. Though there are exceptions to this rule. Nevertheless ghettoization operates in different layers in *Americanah*, especially when

one considers cases of African Americans (Other) looking down on Africans (another Other) or "inter-Other hatred", African immigrants or migrants making racist remarks about other Africans, "intra-Other rivalry". The South African woman, who comes to Mariama's salon to braid her hair, for instance, typifies intra-Other rivalry. Entrenched in her comments on Nigeria, its people and film indicate the inculcation of her deep-seated hatred for Nigeria. The pile of films she sees in the salon only serves as an outlet for the release of her vituperation and repressed anger against her or her country's perceived enemies. The conversation between her and Mariama reveals this bottled-up hatred, which essentially constitutes a hindrance to the spirit of transculturalism:

> You sell Nigerian films? she asked Mariama."I used to but my supplier went out of business. You want to buy?" "No. You just seem to have a lot of them.""I can't watch that stuff. I guess I'm biased. In my country, South Africa, Nigerians are known for stealing credit cards and doing drugs and all kinds of crazy stuff. I guess the films are kind of that too."…"Yes, Nigeria very corrupt. Worst corrupt country in Africa. Me, I watch the film but no, I don't go to Nigeria!"... "I cannot marry a Nigerian and I won't let anybody in my family marry a Nigerian, Mariama said, and darted Ifemelu an apologetic glance. "Not all but many of them do bad things. Even killing for money". (*Americanah* 219)

The foregoing scenario is about African *Other* (the poor Senegalese braiders, the South African woman whose son is beaten in school because of his African accent) resenting fellow Africans and attributing negative stereotypes to them. This is also reminiscent of embedded attitude of African-Americans towards African immigrants. They unconscionably look down on Africans as Other, and not "Us", despite their pitiable occupation of the lower rung of the American race ladder. Ifemelu's African American room-mates often maltreat her. For instance, when Ifemelu complains about Elena's dog eating up her slice of bacon, Elena, tells her: "You better not kill my dog with voodoo" (*Americanah* 179). Perhaps, to achieve transcultural ideal under the current situation, both African-Americans and American-Africans should have evolved a black identity capable of ending their misery, but this fails due to persistent inter and intra-Other hatred or rivalry. Essentially, to create an awareness of transculturalism among African, Caribbean, Indian or Pacific blacks, Ifemelu sounds a note of warning to non-American blacks in her post, entitled, "To My Fellow Non-American Blacks: In America, You Are Black, Baby". "Dear non-American Black, when you make the choice to come to America, you become black. Stop arguing. Stop saying I'm Jamaican or I'm Ghanaian. America doesn't care" (*Americanah* 255). Most poor or odd jobs in both America and England are reserved for the vulnerable African-American, Africans or non-American black population. This, in a way, shows the ghettoization of this

category of people towards picking up poor jobs, irrespective of their educational qualifications. They are at the same time denied opportunity of getting good jobs. Obinze, for instance, has a stint with a company in England where he is:

> covered in white chemical dust. Gritty things lodged in his ears. He tried not to breathe too deeply as he cleaned, wary of dangers floating in the air, until his manager told him he was being fired because of a down sizing.The next job was a temporary replacement with a company that delivered kitchens, week after week of sitting beside white drivers who called him "labourer". (*Americanah* 290)

Ifemelu, too, has an encounter with a white coach, who wants her employed as a hireling for an odd job of, "keep[ing] [him] warm", because he needs "some human contact to relax" (*Americanah* 181). White Americans, who are mostly responsible for the ghettoization of other races, demonstrate the denigration of African-Americans and Africans sufficiently in the novel. White American's reluctance to embrace mutual relationship towards non-white people of other races sufficiently recalls Arjun Apparadurai's mockery of global culture as fluid and unfortunately compromised by "the historical, linguistic and political situatedness of different actors: nation states, multinationals and diasporic communities" (Apparadurai 295-310). The whites make stereotype racist remarks, segregate and discriminate against people of other races in the novel. However, it will not be reasonable to heap the entire failure of transculturalism on whites alone, since the blacks (African-Americans, Africans), Hispanics, Asians, as well as other races in the text exhibit different levels of racial stereotyping. For example, white Americans look surprised each time they see Ifemelu and Curtis holding each other wondering why the rich white American should descend so low going out with a black woman. Curtis' mother seems not to like the relationship between her son and the African woman, but has no choice because she has been mounting pressure on her son to get married. Laura's racist remarks about Ifemelu, her country and Africa, and odd jobs given to Africans, like the one given to a beautiful Ghanaian woman "…with the shiniest dark skin," "…who cleaned the ladies' toilet…"justify racial practices in the novel (*Americanah* 273). Nevertheless, examples of racial stereotyping in the unconscious of white Americans about Africans abound in the novel. For instance, the comments credited to the Senegalese Yale-professor, or Ifemelu, or the Senegalese hair braiders, and many other non-white Americans and non-African American characters in the novel showcase mutual hatred that shapes cultural relations in America.

Conclusion

The paper has argued that transculturalism could be achieved if all the factors hindering its realization are addressed. Transculturalism is, by nature, only one option among alternatives that include pluriculturalism, biculturalism and multiculturalism. But of the lot mentioned transculturalism stands out exceptionally, especially in its advocacy of cross cultural relations and the fostering of harmonious relationship among cultures in a polyvalent society. The paper has further illustrated Adichie's attempt at creating a mesh of cultures exemplified in her adoption of a broad based characterization across spectra of cultures involving nationalities of differing countries of the world. Interestingly, her characters come from Africa, Asia, Europe, the Americas, and the rest of the world, and they partake of cultural negotiations and contacts. But failure of these cultural trade-offs is a corollary of Huntington's (1993) prediction premised on cultural conflicts. Cultures do clash, and the end results are what pervade the entire gamut of Adichie'sAmericanah. Arguably, Adichie has significantly idealized transculturalism as the ne plus ultra of human wisdom and solution to cultural conflicts. Even though transculturalism in Americanahoffers absolute respite from tensions created by cultural conflicts, if one considers its lofty objectives which unquestionably dwell on idealism, most of the ideals entrenched in its locus may be difficult to achieve in most human societies. Much as Americanahcalls for cultural contacts and inclusion among nationalities and nations of the world, its acceptability and operations could drag for years. Nevertheless, Adichie undauntedly preaches meliorism and seeks an end to racism, ethnocentrism, tribalism and ethnicity in the novel. The paper concludes that if doggedly pursued, Americanah's thematic of global cultural trade-off via transculturalism may be the model for the turbulent contemporary world crowded with cultural conflicts, rather than the prevailing cultural seclusion or ostracism that clearly negates the intent and spirit of transculturalism.

Notes

[1] www.ifla.org/publications/defining-multiculturalism

[2] http://culturemaking.typepad.com/main/2007/03/tranculturalism.html

[3] http://study.com/academy/lesson/nomadic-lifestyle-definition-lesson-quiz.html

[4] www.becomenomad.com/tips-on-how-not-to-lose-your-sanity-on-the-move

1. Ghetto: This term literally means a slum or settlement occupied by the poor in any society or a minority ethnic group with terrible living conditions. Members of such a ghettoized ethnic or social group, like African Americans in the US, black majority during the inglorious Apartheid regime in South Africa, suffer unimaginable

level of economic deprivation and social restrictions. The meaning of the term is further extended in this paper to accommodate the condition of the poor, the deprived and immigrants/migrants in a foreign land who are daily subjected to inferiorisation, stigmatization, racism and untold hardship that limits their potentials and actualization of their dreams.

2. Transculturalism: While multiculturalism favours cultural pluralism, though each culture is expected to maintain its distinct identity and uniqueness, transculturalism advocates a fusion or conflation of cultures to produce a common cultural outlook with which individuals in a culturally polyvalent society can define themselves. The term is credited to VenBegamudre, an Indian-Canadian, who coined the term to describe Canada of his dream populated by people of different racial and cultural backgrounds, who, rather than define themselves as Indo-Canadian or African-Canadian, see and define themselves as simply Canadians having synthesized all cultures in the country to produce a more encompassing national culture than a narrowed cultural perspective. Cosmopolitanism is nearly similar to the idea of transculturalism because it emphasizes the coming together of different cultures, opinions and ideas to produce a synthesized one. The aim of transculturalism is to produce cosmopolitan citizens – persons who are civilized enough not to define and impose their cultural beliefs on other people or mistreat other people for not being members of their cultural or social group. Pluriculturalism, biculturalism and interculturality are other cultural ideologies advanced by scholars to solve cultural conflicts, though none of them can match the ideals of transculturalism. While pluriculturalism takes into consideration the complexities of a plural society, it essentially engenders identification or definition of self from the multiplicity of cultures that shape the society. Biculturalism is another cultural ideology with a hypothesis of two differing cultures coexisting side-by-side. Interculturalism, too, emphasizes culture contacts. It is a condition that underlies all cultural ideologies; however, it tilts towards multiculturalism in its conception.

3. Nomadism: Nomadic concept underlies peregrination and shifting practices commonly noticeable among pastoralists. It is given extended metaphor in the paper to imply persons (cosmopolitans) who defy all odds to negotiate cultural contacts as a way of discovering the true meaning of life and selfhood.

4. Other: A postcolonial term referring to the stereotyped, stigmatized persons or groups of people or individuals occupying the fringe, the margin of the society, and who are not regarded as part of the dominant group.

5. Meliorism: This is a concept held by some people that the world can actually become a better place for all through human efforts. Transculturalism is related to this concept in view of its advocacy towards negotiating peace and understanding among cultures all over the world.

6. Cultural Assimilation and Cultural Integration: Cultural assimilation describes the state of migrants/emigrants in their host nations as they are morphed with the culture of the host country. This further underscores the ideals of transculturalism. Another term for this concept is Cultural Integration.

7. Mobile Literature: This refers to the literature that narrates the conditions of

diasporic or exilic groups, or persons, as well as nomadic experiences of travelers, experiences of migrants/emigrants in their host nations, and many other tropes bordering on "mobile persons" or groups.

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The Art of Unknowing and the Unknowing of Art: A Few Alternatives to Interpretation

Natalya Sukhonos

"Art is a vision of the unseen."
–Plato

Introduction

In the early 20th century, Walter Benjamin characterized modernity by the shock of sensory overload. Of course, this is not a new problem. But unlike the locale of early 20th century malaise – the street of the urban metropolis – the information fatigue of the digital age is more pervasive because it is harder to pin down or locate. Like the God of the mystics, the computer screen is everywhere and nowhere. Like the air you breathe, information is all around you. For most people, the most radical solution to the overload of information in the digital age – to unplug – is not a viable one. But there is something else that can become an antidote to the busy drone of clicks and tweets. Rich with ambiguity and nuance, this antidote is impervious to information. And this antidote is art.

Given that information overload is the defining characteristic of our era, academics should find ways of writing about art that refuse to treat it as a storehouse of information. All too often, academic writing dulls the thrill of discovering the strangeness of Kafka or Beckett by packaging their novels into neat interpretive parcels ("existential", "absurdist") that can be safely marketed to any academic audience. Thus, academic criticism tends to become a game of imposing cookie-cutter abstractions on a writer whose works baffle or perplex. But does every experience of art have to be discursive?

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What would happen if we stood back before a painting, story, play, or song…and just decided to absorb and to *listen*?

To criticize frequently implies to extract informative content from a work of art and then mold this work into a digestible body of intellectual knowledge for the public to consume. What gets overlooked in traditional criticism is not just the spectator's own aesthetic experience but also the notion that art does not exist for the purpose of being consumed, treated like a textbook or a manual. To refresh, broaden, and diversify traditional academic perspectives on art, this article offers an alternative critical path that de-emphasizes the cognitive, the informational, and the discursive. In focusing on an artwork's formal nuances, this alternative mode of criticism preserves the wonder and pleasure a work of art inspires. It describes the work's formal elements with clarity and precision. In paying attention to the sensory details of a work of art and how they come together, we can come to a different understanding of a painting or story. This understanding is embedded in concrete nuances, techniques, and gestures that constitute aesthetic experience.

The cornerstone of the article is Susan Sontag's essay "Against Interpretation", which asks critics to re-evaluate the interpretive project and calls for greater attention to style and the minutiae of text; Shklovsky and the New Critics bolster Sontag's project. Before I proceed with Sontag, though, I want to highlight some pitfalls of interpretation as a way of doing criticism. In being prone to the biases and blind spots of certain intellectual fashions, criticism can prove to be narrow and short-sighted. In addition, some critics deplete all wonder and vigor of literary works by making them into straw men for their own ideological agenda. Ironically, it is the high priests – the critics – who have inflicted the most damage on their own field of inquiry.

To Interpret is to Impoverish

All too often, critics tend view a literary text as an illustration of a political or cultural principle; they forget that a work of art is not a manifesto or an instruction manual. Indeed, they treat the text as content neatly encased into the container of historical, sociological, and ideological context. Sacrificed are the specifics of the artwork which render it alive. Is another kind of criticism possible, where the wonder of aesthetic experience can be transmitted to the printed page?

Following Bruno Latour's notion of the critic as "…not the one who debunks but the one who assembles" (Latour 2004: 246), I want to highlight a body of criticism that relies on the careful observation of art's minutiae and not on preconceived abstract judgments; it emphasizes the artwork's nuances

of form and preserves the wonder and pleasure it inspires. Like any good teacher, this kind of criticism leaves us with more questions than answers in capturing the wonder of aesthetic experience through descriptive poetics.

Susan Sontag's "Against Interpretation" frames the parameters of my project by showing the philosophical dangers of interpretation as an academic practice, questioning the categories of "meaning" and "content", and calling for critical attention to the sensory and the experiential modes of art. The centerpiece of my essay is Roland Barthes' "The Third Meaning", a work of still analysis that describes the poetics of gesture in Eisenstein's "Battleship Potemkin". Charles Baxter extends Barthes' descriptive model to literature by writing about the unsaid, the omitted, and the implied. And Doris Sommer's *Proceed with Caution* details the political import of minority literature deliberately blocking easy access to interpretation.

Against Interpretation: Interpretation as Getting Rid of the Strange

How did interpretation become entrenched in our debates about art? Susan Sontag grounds the modern methods of interpretation in the mimetic theory espoused by Plato and Aristotle, both of whom believed that art is essentially figurative. Even though most contemporary critics no longer view art as the representation of an external reality, the tenets of mimesispersist to this day. Whether art is believed to be an image of or a statement about reality, the content of a work of art often comes first when considering the piece as a whole. According to Sontag, the project of interpretation is inextricable from the notion of seeking content in art. Defining interpretation as an activity of translation – A really means B, C is really D, etc. – Sontag situates the practice of interpretation in the culture of late classical antiquity that was characterized by the clash of myth and new scientific knowledge (Sontag 1966: 6).In this way, interpretation became a kind of intellectual shoe-binding that made ancient texts fit modern mores or concerns. It was also a way to reconcile the strange or unacceptable ideology of an old text with the current ruling order. Sontag goes on to critique elaborate interpretive systems created by Marx and Freud insofar as they destroy or alter the narratives they interpret in their aggressive search for "true" or "latent" meaning.

Arguing that the project of interpretation has become stifling in her own time –the 1960's, or the heyday of conceptual art – Sontag calls interpretation "the revenge of the intellect upon art" and "upon the word" (Sontag 1966:7). She adds that "to interpret is to impoverish, to deplete the world in order to set up a shadow world of 'meanings' (Sontag 1966: 7)." This might seem an

exaggeration. But in imposing a particular meaning, no matter how profound, on a given work of art, every interpretation takes away as much as it adds to our vision of the piece as a whole. To say that Hamlet is the first modern man in world literature is, implicitly, to deny this character a plethora of other potential epithets and descriptions.

In interpreting we translate textual complexity into a condensed summary of themes and content. In this sense, "interpretation makes art manageable" (Sontag 1966: 8). Indeed, critics have attempted to make Franz Kafka's works more palatable for non-specialists. His strange German syntax and quietly disturbing tales that erupt in paradox and *aporia* have employed no less than three armies of interpreters, according to Sontag. There are those who read his texts as social allegory and concentrate on examples of bureaucracy in his work; those who interpret his work as a psychoanalytic allegory of his own fears and anxieties; and those who see his art as a religious allegory. The point is not that these interpretations are somehow false or off the mark; on the contrary, each one can be a convincing schema for Kafka's fiction. But that's precisely it: all three are schemas which ignore the pervasive strangeness of Kafka's idiom and of his metaphysics. In engaging with the formal qualities of Kafka's work while leaving the overarching "meaning" be, a careful close reading of a single paragraph of Kafka's prose has the potential to reveal something more substantial.

At the end of her essay, Sontag calls for critics to pay more attention to aesthetic form; she invites us to recover our senses, to learn how to see more, hear more, feel more. We can find a similar calling in Victor Shklovsky's essay "Art as Technique." Significantly, his approach to art eliminates the distinction between form and content and concentrates on blocks and impediments to meaning. In emphasizing the strangeness of art as well as its capacity for cognitive shock, Shklovsky's theory of defamiliarization invites the reader to engage with art's challenging formal properties.

Formalism, Defamiliarization, and the Stakes of Art

Victor Shklovsky starts his 1917 essay "Art as Technique" with a philosophical claim that has urgent consequences for aesthetics: that perception is different than knowledge. He invokes the dangers of automatized perception, describing what happens when we glaze over familiar objects and leave phrases unfinished because we can guess at their meaning: "And so life is reckoned as nothing. Habitualization devours work, clothes, furniture, one's wife, and the fear of war" (Shklovsky 1965:12). Beginning with quotidian surroundings, habitualization comes to devour everything in sight, including personal relationships, public space, and the fear of war. Yet art defies automatic

perception and breaks through any routine by estranging an object or an idea from its normal context and making us perceive the familiar as if it were strange:

And art exists that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone *stony*. The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects "unfamiliar," to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. *Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object: the object is not important* (Shklovsky 1965:12).

Through "roughened rhythm"(Lemon and Reis in Shklovsky 1965: 5) and the deformation of ordinary language, defamiliarization increases the difficulty of the reading process and heightens our awareness of aesthetic form. Because meaning comes about through abstract reasoning while artfulness arises from the manipulation of concrete forms, Shklovsky writes that "the meaning of a work broadens to the extent that artfulness and artistry diminish" (Lemon and Reis in Shklovsky 1965: 13). And if a work of art stuns us with a form so complex and bizarre that knowledge becomes powerless and the only recourse is to look and feel, then art has made us "recover the sensation of life."

How do Shklovsky's insights relate to Sontag's arguments against interpretation? Given that Sontag's essay was written in 1963, we can read it in light of the literary concerns of the New Critics, whose 1950's essays called for attention to form and championed close reading, much like Shklovsky and his fellow Formalists had done in the 1920's. Indeed, the Formalist strain of Sontag's argument in "Against Interpretation" emerges more strongly in her essay "On Style", in which she laments that contemporary critics do not discuss the nuances of style when describing a particular work of art. She goes on to argue that the dichotomy between style and content is a false one because without style, there would be no content. Until critics pay attention to style in a work of art, Sontag argues, they will continue treating art as a statement, an expedient vehicle of philosophy, anthropology, or the social sciences. But a work of art is an experience, not an instruction manual or an answer to a question. Unlike a philosophical investigation, art does not give rise to conceptual knowledge "…but to something like an excitation, a phenomenon of commitment, judgment in a state of thralldom or captivation. Which is to say that the knowledge we gain through art is an experience of the form or style of knowing something, rather than a knowledge of something (like a fact or a moral judgment) in itself" (Sontag 1966:22). The distinction between the "knowledge of something" imparted to us by science or philosophy and the "experience of the form or style of knowing something" that we gain in an encounter with art is the distinction between theoretical knowledge and knowledge that is embedded in aesthetic experience.

Byzantine Icons: First Case Study of Writing About Aesthetic Experience

But can criticism really transmit the wonder of art to the printed page? In her 2010 study of Byzantine icons, Bissera Pentcheva provides important historical and theological context for the ways in which an icon can enchant the spectator with its sensual detail. Crucially, Pentcheva presents the icon as far more than an abstraction or a pretext for theological speculation; in fact, she is adept at describing its nuance with such precision that it seems to materialize in front of us. She describes the 9th century relief icon as a performative object that immersed the devotee in a psychosomatic interaction with the divine by imbuing her with images, sounds, tactile sensations and smells that connected body and spirit:

Dense layers of fragrance and smoke from burning incense enveloped the icon, while *polykandelia* (metal disks with multiple oil lamps or candles) and wrought-metal grilles cast lace shadows moving across its face. This luminous, umbral, and olfactory richness was enhanced by the reverberation of music and human prayer… the faithful projected their own psychological stirrings back onto the surfaces of the icon, seeing in…the shifting shadows and highlights a manifestation of inner life, of indwelling spirit…(Pentcheva 2010: 1-2).

Thus, an icon is not just a visual representation of the divine. It is a promise of a rich religious experience that is intimately bound with the world of the senses, of flickering impressions, of changing light. Because Byzantine icons were not merely looked at but also touched and kissed by devotees, Pentcheva uses the term "tactile visuality" to describe their aesthetic uniqueness and argues that the dazzling surfaces of these icons "present at taste for sensual pleasure stimulated by an abundance of textures, glittering light effects, the sweetness of honey and incense, and sound" (Pentcheva 2010: 7). (Again, notice the specificity of her language and description.) The sheer pleasure of experiencing a Byzantine icon would be lost on someone intent on extracting its meaning alone.

Through their materiality, Byzantine icons become a manifestation of the spirit inhabiting the body, a key theological concept to Greek Orthodoxy. As Pentcheva emphasizes, "they simulated and acted out presence rather than imitating it" (Pentcheva 2010: 121). The author's careful focus on presence and performance is very distinct from an attempt to read possible interpretations from the image alone. Rather than interpret the symbolism of these icons, Pentcheva wants to explore the overall sensory experience they produced for the spectator, and to argue that it is this immersive, pleasurable experience – and *not* the icon's language of signs – that constitutes the spiritual significance

of Byzantine art. This fascination with experience is a particular way of writing criticism, and it certainly makes our reading process so vivid and enjoyable that it becomes a second-order aesthetic experience.

While Pentcheva's book on icons describes a visual aesthetic experience, I believe it is possible to describe literature with the same level of vivid detail. Since Pentcheva places somuch emphasis on the experience of perceiving an icon, we can also consider reading a similarly immersive experience. If Pentcheva writes about icons by describing the communion between vibrant color, music, and flickering light, perhaps a literary scholar would think about how certain literary devices affect our perceptual consciousness, and how our attention can be attuned, deflected, or cracked open through bewilderment and wonder. In his essay on "Battleship Potemkin", Roland Barthes provides us with another (visual) model of descriptive criticism by focusing on elusive correspondences between gestures and stills in Eisenstein's film. Intriguingly, he implies that his observations may take criticism to its limits.

Barthes and Baxter – Case Studies of Filmic and Literary Criticism

In "The Third Meaning: Research Notes on Some Eisenstein Stills", Barthes decides to read Eisenstein's "Battleship Potemkin" against the grain of this film's traditional interpretation in terms of montage and Marxist dialectics. At first, Barthes explores some conventional ways of reading the movie. In the beginning of his essay, the critic establishes that a given film scene communicates meaning on the informational level, which encompasses everything a spectator can learn from the setting, the costumes, and the characters. Film can also communicate meaning on a symbolic level: the downpour of gold on a monarch, for instance, can symbolize the ritual of imperial baptism by gold, or communicate the theme of wealth as such. The informational and the symbolic comprise "the obvious meaning", which is intentional and seeks out its recipient.

Barthes suggests, however, that these levels of interpretation do not exhaust the full communicative power of a cinematic image. This is where he brings in the notion of "the third meaning," or the "obtuse meaning," which goes beyond communication and signification in opening up the image to *significance* – the play of signifiers without any visible signifieds. Because the obtuse meaning opens the field of signification up to infinity, Barthes explains that it "appears to extend outside of culture, knowledge, information; analytically, it has something derisory about it; opening out into the infinity of language, it can come through as limited in the eyes of analytic reason; it belongs to the family of pun, buffoonery, useless expenditure" (Barthes 1978: 55). The

obtuse meaning always involves a noticeable pattern of visual correspondences within a given image that don't seem to add to our understanding of the piece as a whole and even seem to mock such efforts.

If the "obvious meaning" of Eisenstein's filmic images is always the Russian Revolution, according to Barthes, where can we locate the "obtuse meaning"? By way of response, Barthes analyzes some stills from "Battleship Potemkin." Figure 1 is a still of an old woman grieving for the slain sailor Vakulinchuk, whose makeshift shrine on the Odessa shore attracts much attention to the sailors' revolt. What strikes Barthes about this still was not the woman's facial expression or the gestural figuration of grief – all this belongs to the obvious meaning of the image.

When the obtuse meaning vanishes in the next still (Figure 2), Barthes is able to see it more clearly in the previous still. He realizes that the elusive "supplement…on this classical representation of grief came very precisely from a tenuous relationship: that of the [woman's] low headscarf, the closed eyes, and the convex mouth" (Barthes 1978: 57).

Figure 1

Figure 2

The passage in which Barthes details the "obtuse meaning" of Figure 1 is worth quoting in full because it is a particularly vivid example of film criticism that offers incisive and starkly original details while withholding any pronouncements about their significance. According to Barthes, the obtuse meaning comes

> from a relation between the "lowness" of the line of the headscarf, pulled down abnormally close to the eyebrows as in those disguises intended to create a facetious, simpleton look, the upward circumflex of the faded eyebrows, faint and old, the excessive curve of the eyelids, lowered but brought together as though squinting, and the bar of the half-opened mouth, corresponding to the bar of the head-scarf and to that of the eyebrows, metaphorically speaking "like a fish out of water" (Barthes 1978: 57).

Often, the obtuse meaning emerges from a contradictory emotion expressed by the language of gesture. Barthes points out that these traits – the headdress, the old woman, the squinting eyelids, the fish – refer to the somewhat low language of "pitiful disguise", which clashes with the "the noble grief" of the obvious meaning (Barthes 1978: 57). But the critic is silent about the significance or the consequence of this clash: it is something the viewer herself should decide.

Precisely because the obtuse meaning extends outside of information, Barthes concludes that "[it] carries a certain emotion" (Barthes 1978: 59). Always bound up with disguise, this emotion never borders on sentimentality. Because the obtuse meaning of the still is a play of signifiers without a signified, Barthes contends that his reading "remains suspended between the image and its description, between definition and approximation" (Barthes 1978: 61). Significantly, the third meaning disturbs criticism (Barthes 1978: 64),and this disturbance may echo the disruptive power of art championed by the Russian Formalists.

Throughout his essay Barthes is not advocating silence or mystification as a critical response to film; rather, he wants us to develop a new language for talking about this medium, a language that takes note of visual nuance and its emotive value, goes beyond narrative or plot, and introduces a series of terms peculiar to film as an art form. In "Against Interpretation", Sontag herself argues that cinema possesses a lexicon of forms, which includes the technology of camera movement, montage, and the composition of the frame.

Film is a convenient example of art that resists interpretation because it is primarily a visual art form. Unlike a scene in a narrative, a visual image captures a single point in time and, does not necessarily follow a narrative, a sequence of actions amenable to interpretation. This is why John Berger argues in *Ways of Seeing* that "seeing comes before words" (Berger 1977: 7) and that "original paintings are silent and still in a sense that information never is" (Berger 1977: 31). Barthes' examples of the "third meaning" in Eisenstein's film work so well because they point our attention to visual correspondences in the stills (the downward curve of the headdress, the eyebrows, the mouth) that go above and beyond signification not because they transcend it but simply because they bypass the question of meaning altogether, taking the viewer into the territory of emotional nuance and conjecture. It is not always possible to explain away the "pitiful disguise" of the old woman's headscarf and eyebrows. But to notice them is to enrich the experience of watching the film; it is to enter into the realm of unconscious optics invoked by Walter Benjamin (Benjamin 1988: 237).

Just as Barthes zeroes in on minute visual correspondences and gestural echoes in his essay on Eisenstein, a literary scholar might focus on concrete

textual details that echo one another and form patterns within the fabric of a story. Paradoxically, this focus on the concrete might unearth mysterious connections that would otherwise pass unnoticed. American writer and critic Charles Baxter hints at the unspoken in his essay collection *The Art of Subtext*. Baxter sets out to describe the elements of a story or novel that continue to haunt the imagination long after the narrative has been read and explained: namely, "the implied, the half-visible, and the unspoken" (Baxter 2007:3). Baxter argues that the stronger the presence of the unspoken in a work of art, the more details are required for the work of suggestion to take place.

One strategy for building the presence of the unspoken is staging, which Baxter defines as the "micro-detailing implicit in scene-writing when the scene's drama intensifies and takes flight out of the literal into the unspoken" (Baxter 2007:14). In other words, staging involves the build-up of objects, actions, and gestures to hint at the emotional nuance and subtext of a character's inner life. In a particularly telling example of staging, Baxter shows how Robert Frost constructs the narrative of a couple quarrelling to mask their grief through the meticulous choreography of shifting positions on the staircase of their house.

What's fascinating about Baxter's approach to literature is that his search for the unknown is not clouded with abstraction and mystification. Instead, he suggests that the mysterious subtexts of a literary text will emerge only when you look long enough at the surface of the text itself. Just as, for Barthes, the shape of a hair bun or kerchief may evoke the touching and the loving, for Baxter, the unspoken is also not above and beyond the concrete details of narrative. Rather, it lies in them.

The Political Implications of Withholding Interpretation

To be silent is to do more than listen to the nuances of art. Withholding the impulse to interpret an artwork can also have powerful consequences on the political arena. It never seems to occur to literary scholars or cultural theorists that some artists do not wish for their works to be interpreted in any definitive way, or that deliberate gestures of reticence are built into the text to block facile constructions of meaning imposed from the outside. But in her book *Proceed with Caution When Engaged by Minority Writing in the Americas*, Doris Sommer is highly sensitive to gestures that block readerly access.

She remarks that similar gestures of reticence have been used by informants when they withhold information or supply false leads in order to keep ethnographers at a distance (Sommer 1999: 4). Sommer claims that minority authors do the same: "By marking off an impassable distance between reader and text, and thereby raising questions of access and welcome, resistant au-

thors intend to produce constraints that more reading will not overcome" (Sommer 1999: 8). Educated readers, she says, have a lot of trouble recognizing themselves as textual targets. We have been trained to achieve textual knowledge by uncovering baroque textual codes through a collection of clues, always hoping that textual difficulty will yield to our expertise. But what if this assumption has been naïve false, arrogant, or misguided?

In her chapter on El Inca Garcilaso, the 17th chronicler of Peru for the Spanish court, Sommer points out that Garcilaso wrote his *Comentarios Reales* as a supplement to Spanish official history "in order to overload their [the Spanish historians'] simple 'truths' with complicating detail" (Sommer 1999: 64). While Garcilaso flatters the Spanish court and professes modesty about his findings, he also demonstrates superior knowledge of Spanish language, history, and grammar. He reveals the Spanish Jesuits' poor knowledge of the Incan language, and tells us that Peru got its name because of a linguistic misunderstanding (Sommer 1999: 79). Garcilaso also offers an alternate narrative of the discovery of the New World, according to which America was discovered by a complete mistake, and not even by Columbus himself, but by a simple sailor named Alonso Sánchez de Huelva, who told Columbus what he had witnessed. Columbus, then, had appropriated someone else's story! Garcilaso tells this narrative in a precise, objective tone, and the overabundance of detail he provides is stupefying. The mestizo writer's narrative is not supposed to provide the Spanish court with a transparent account of life in the New World; rather, with his linguistic glosses, alternative histories, "just-so" stories and native mythologies, El Inca Garcilaso makes his "supplemental history" so rich with detail that it becomes opaque, like a tapestry of vertiginous design. To claim total understanding – and mastery –of the *Comentarios* would be to overlook Garcilaso's textual erotics, the game of *abrazos y rechazos* that he plays with the unsuspecting reader. What El Inca Garcilaso shows is that the struggle to understanding and the process of (frustrated) engagement with the *Comentarios* may, in fact, be more significant that any informative content we may derive from the text. Once again, the experience of reading this text takes precedent over its content, and perceptive criticism should be able to recognize this.

The Ethics of Bewilderment

To be open to aesthetic experience is to approach art without the knee-jerk rush to interpret and categorize what we're seeing. For to interpret is to explain and to translate —to translate the complexity of dense metaphors and the nuances of craft into a language we can all understand. But what if we let the works of art we describe speak in their own language?

To this end, Lee Yearley proposes an ethics and poetics of bewilderment.

Yearley argues that religious forms of bewilderment appear in key narratives by Dante and the Chinese poet Du Fu because bewilderment strikes in situations of unclear moral action. It is "a way to deal with the irresolvable" (Yearley 2010: 440). Instead of leading to clarity and illumination, forms of bewilderment "will offer you a walk into a further wild place, one which shows not only how to get lost but also how it feels not to return…" (Yearley 2010: 440). Crucially, the heroes of bewildering narratives "disclose that the human heart in a state of bewilderment does not want to answer questions as much as to lengthen the resonance of those questions" (Yearley 2010: 440). With its ability to condense complex emotions into a few words or images, poetry is the best vehicle for expressing the ethics of bewilderment.

If certain narratives want to lengthen the resonance of bewildering questions, why should we act against them? And if a text's ethics is so bewildering as to silence us, why not acknowledge that silence?

Conclusion

In the world's flat mentality of the 21st century, where information is just a mouse-click away, the blogosphere has made listening a rare commodity – there are too many of us who want to do the talking. But an encounter with art that bewilders us can also teach us to listen, to reflect, to tell better stories. By taking the time to meditate and to perceive, we will be honoring our yearning for art in the first place, which no wealth of theory could explain.

But we can recuperate the agency of the work of art by paying closer attention to its particulars, by making the reading process itself more intense and fulfilling. The next stage of writing about art, then, is to examine modes and practices that can prepare us for aesthetic experience by training our faculties of attention, focus, and perception. The growing field of embodied cognition suggests that consciousness is borne out of the interaction between brain, body, and environment – an intriguing insight that might contribute to embodied criticism. In putting theory together with practice, critics can one day attain the agility and the finesse of Borges writing about art with such lucid care and discernment that their pages – analytical, perceptive, but stubbornly well-crafted – can achieve the status of art.

Russian Aesthetic Center 'Idea'

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Intersectionality Genealogy Revisited: From Radical Writings by Women of Color to Radical Writings for Transformation

Xiana Sotelo

Introduction

Intersectionality, as the celebration and recognition of differences, is finally becoming an interdisciplinary buzzword increasignly used both as an "anlytical framework" to describe diversity in gender identities and as "a complex of social practices" (Hancock 2016: 7).Contemporary claims of intersectionality acknoweldge power dynamics at the core of social practices ad use it to explain experiences of inequality and disparate access to social resources. Not only as a key concept in Women´s/ Gender Studies it has been adopted into many other disciplines (such as history, political science, geography, philosophy, cultural and postcolonial studies) and even in decision-making processes. Indeed, UN Commission on Human Rightsofficially recognized "the importance of examining the intersection of multiple forms of discrimination, including their root causes from a gender perspective" (Resolution E/ CN.4/2002/L. 59 Cited in Nira Yuval-Davis, 2006: 194). Moreover, institutions such as the European Association for International Education- EAIE[1] embraces in his Spring 2018 edition intersectional analyses in Higher Education as the necessary pre-condition to non-hierarchical internationalization encounters. Its scope has become so inclusive that it identifies not just disadvantaged but aslo advantaged social positions; that is, not only the experience of exclusion but also that of privilege, voice and agency. Furthermore, on the realization that depending on the circumstances a person or group might be disadvantaged in one social context but advantaged in other, a growing trend

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is adopting a more balanced view on processess of marginalization and privileging. As a result, a more nuanced perspective on visibility has evolved, one which is no longer seen as an asset in its own right but the possibility of a personal choice; that is, at a particular time and in a specific social location, (in)visibility may lead to beneficial societal positions.

This is a major break through compared to the early stages of intersectionality where invisibility was not only percieved as a negative social condition but it became the driving force of the subversion of an essentialist, culturally-neutral gender. This force, mostly credited to black feminists in the US since 1980s, was nevertheless made up of heterogenous voices, women of color voices, not just black ones. This is an important fact that tends to be overlooked in contemporary historical revisionisms (Hancok 2016; Berger, and Guidroz 2009). To these regards, even though we acknowledge that the term was officially coined by a black feminist lawyer, Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, we strongly argue that its conceptual roots can be traced back to the XIX century and its theoretical roots are found in the literary and cultural women of color movement in the US, which took off in 1981 with the publication of the first women of color anthology called *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (Moraga and Anzaldúa 1981;1983). Through its pages, women of color vindications of invisibility, and their reluctance to see themselves as a part of a sisterhood that did not extend beyond "racial" and class boundaries made categories of difference so visible that they could no longer be ignored by mainstream gender theory, thus planting the seeds for intersectionality´s future articulation and reception.

Questioning therefore recurrent references to black feminisms as the origins of intersectionality, we would like to contribute to the growing body of knowledge that traces its genealogy in an Anglo-European context by questioning its strong associations with black feminisms in the US. In fact,we not only argue that expanding its historical scope, its conceptual roots go all the way back to the XIX century and the beginings of the women´s/suffraggist movement in the US. Mostly, we would like to make the case that it is thanks to its progressive dis-association with black feminisms that intersectionaly was able to become inclusive and loose its restrictive connections to identity politics vindications. As we will see, by providing a middle ground for the post-modern/post-structural divide that took place in the 90s, a new sensibility would finally crown intersectionality as an inclusive concept and theory with the potential to provide a nodal point among conflicting cultural and literary movements, not just an indicator of discrimination and exclusion.

Conceptual Origins-Historical Roots

Searching for the first documented reference to intersectional claims, Sojourner Truth, is generally agreed to be the first recorded evidence of a contestative gender. A run away slave, became an emblematic figure of the anti-abolitionist movement especially after publicly challenging 'white' suffragettes to respond to what extent they could accomodate the experience of slavery and being black into their condition of being a woman. In her speech, she defiantly asked "that man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody helps me any best place. And ain´t I a woman?" (Avtar Brahans Ann Phoenix 2004:77)

Giving voice to the invisibility of slaves in a colonial US, with the question of "Aint´t I a Woman?"(Sojourner Truth, 1985: 252) Sojourner Truth deconstructed prevailing ideas of 'womanhood' by showing how suffragettes' claims of female subordination and exclusion wereonly particular to white, middle and upper class women. Ironically, even though many suffragette leaders such as Elizabeth Cady Standonans Susan B. Anthony started off as anti-slavery advocates, as the movement progressed, the abolition of slavery remained a secondary cause and relationships of unequal power between whites and blacks were not discussed nor reflected in the foundational manifestos of Anglo-European feminist movement such as the *Declaration of Sentiments* (1848). On the contrary, her coetanial suffragette leaders completely ignored Sojourner Truth´s claims and never publicly acknowledged her figure. Regardless the fact that she was a well-recognized anti-slavery advocate, she was considered peripheral by the leaders of the suffragette/ women's movement. (Kum-Kum Bhavnani and Meg Coulson 2003: 74)

To trace intersectionality genealogical footsteps is therefore to question the reasons why these women leaders were not interested in the coalescing relationship of social and cultural categories of oppression and a new mode of oppositional consciousness articulated by the subordinated, marginalized or colonized subjects that Sojourner Truth was representing. And that takes us back to the Enlightment times, American and the French Revolutions and the creation of modern citizenship via the *social contract*.

"I think, therefore, I exist", said Descartes, and his postulates infused a new 'reason' on modern individuals, which revolted against the holy nature of absolute powers and its inquisitive history. 'Liberty, Equality and Fraternity' emerged as the new emblems of enlightenment reasoning. Thinkers such as Locke or Rousseau became the spokesmen of a new philosophical and political era: the bonding of modern citizens through social contract. However, Locke or Rousseau´s conception of citizenship was ingrained in a long history of west-

ern philosophical and religious tradition that considered women inferior to men and turned a blind eye to colonization and slavery. As an illustration to this point, in *Emilio, The Education*, Rousseau sculpts Emilio as the modern citizen, and Sofia, as his subjugated, virtuous and childish wife. Throughout his postulates, a naturalized sexual difference separates Emilio from Sofia and the existence of innate characteristics makes women and men indisputably different:

> Woman and man are made for one another, but their mutual dependency it is not equal. Men depend on women desires; women depend on men because of their desires andtheir needs. We would survive more easily without them than they would without us. (cited in Schwartz 1984: 84)

Women´s inferiority and subordination to men is therefore reasoned throughout *Emilio* on the basis that their duty is to obey and "to bear a husband's wrongs without complaining" (Ibid.,), thus establishing a line of continuity with previous western andocentric and sexist traditions. A biological determinismnot only accounts for Sofia´s statusas second-class citizens and justifies their sexual and spiritual subjugation but becomes the necessary condition for upper and middle-class Emilios to achieve active participation in the public realm and thus become full citizens (see Amorós 1985, 2005; Valcárcel 1998). In speaking of modern citizens, he completely ignores the context of the colonies and slavery therefore employing an imperialistic myopia that is found at the core of the discourse of social contract, liberty and fraternity. This imperialistic assertion is outlined and officially depicted in both the *Declaration of Independence of United States* (1776) and the *French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* (1789). Depersonalizing social interactions, "unsuitable citizens" (women, native-Americans or African slaves) are insisted to belong to the private sphere, the domestic realm, and as a result had no public voice. This is illustrated in Article 1 of both declarations: "Men are born and remain free and equal in rights. Social distinctions may be founded only upon the general good."

Incensed by males' preferential treatment and women's exclusion from citizenship, in France, two years after the *Declaration of the Right of Men* was signed, Olympia de Gouges (real name Marie Goze) wrote *The Declaration of the Rights of Woman* where she denounces a patriarchal logic that supported a conception of citizenship based on universal rights and duties but nevertheless, was depriving women of any political or social power. In fact, Olympia was giving voice to a story of betrayal, injustice and wrong-doings from part of her male comrades. Historically documented, women fought alongside men in the frontlines of the French Revolution. And Olympia was one of them. Together, women and men raised in arms to decapitate absolutist powers but when the French Revolution was over, not only were they excluded from citizenship from their male camarades, they were historically silenced and never

given the credit and recognition for the crucial role they played in the persuit of Liberty and Freedom (Puleo 1993).

Paraphrasing her male counterparts, Olympia's defending tactic was to appeal towards the same reason of equality and liberty with the intention to downplay and criticize its male-biased interests and illegitimate purposes. And even though she did make reference to how the situation of slaves was equal to women´s discrimination ironically, in article 1 of her Declaration, she replicates the same colonial logic and speaks on behalf a 'universal woman'. As she states: "Article 1: Women are born and remain free and equal in rights. Social distinctions may be founded only upon the general good." In a colonial context, this affirmation signals the ethnocentric limitations of what it can be claimed to be Sofia´s imperialist complicity (Sotelo 2012); in addition, it reveals the contradictions inherent in future feminist manifestos since her categorization of 'woman/women' comes from the same essentialist standpoint than the universal generic 'man/men' that inhabits no specific or particular historical, economical or political context.

Equally suggestive is Mary Wollstonecraft *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), published a year later. Calling into question sexist traditions, she directly attacks Rossueau for legitimazing the female sex as intellectual inferior. "Many ingenious arguments have been brought forward to prove" she defies: "that the two sexes, in the acquirement of virtue, ought to aim at attaining a very different character; or, to speak explicitly, women are not allowed to have sufficient strength of mind to acquire what really deserves the name of virtue." ([1891]; 2006: 9)

Her repudiation, nevertheless, also bore the mark of an essentialist gender, forgetting that 'the feminine condition' (Sapiro 1992:323) could not be homogenized in a colonial context. This colonial invisibilitity of gender essentialism is still present a century later, in the foundational writing of US Women´s Movement, *The Declaration of Rights and Sentiments* (1848) which takes after the *Declaration of Independence*: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal; […] with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."(Cady and Anthony, 1889: 70, emphasis added) Without any intention of underestimating how the political subject of the Anglo-European feminism led a rebellion of values and systems of beliefs artificially designed and culturally imposed to support patriarchies, it is equally crucial to recognize how the 'woman of a domineering ethnic group', through a cultural complicity, in the naturalizing process of differences among women, did discursively reproduce colonizing cultural patterns, which are clearly depicted in the reductionist nature of female oppression made reduced into a mere question of gender, where the only nuance that the difference acquires is

that of the sexual difference in public vs. private theorizing framework.

As it can be observed, "*all men and women are created equal*", in the same line than Olympia de Gouges o Wollstonecraft, what it stands for, is an extension of male's economic, legal and political rights to women without ever taking into account the context of the colonies and slavery; that is,no critical insight is explicitelylayed out into the conditions of women who lived in the outlaw of social structures.

As we can see, the vision of equality which these first feminists were claiming, was faithfully recreating the same sexist and patriarchal logic to which they were revelling against since they were discursively colonizing the material and historical heterogeneity of the lives of women, producing a 'collective feminist subject' that had the mark of the authoritative voice of Western humanist speech (Mohanty 1991: 53), Most importanty, it is precisely during this historical period when the naturalization of cultural differences within the solely category of 'sexual difference' not only becomes the bases of exclusion/subordination of women within an essencialist gender but mostly, it signals the birth of a very specific feministconsciousness and agency: western, middle-class biased (Aída and Súarez 2008: 45)

The Birth of a Subversive Gender in 1970s

A hundred years leap in time, slavery abolished either in Europe and in the U.S, we find the well-known British writer Virginia Woolf giving voice in *The Three Gineas* to a displaced 'universal womanhood' affirming that she did not belong to any country, but to all simultaneously (1938: 81). Succeeding in facing patriarchal oppression, the analytical horizons of gender nonetheless continued to be an 'outsider' status. Thus, *A Room for One's One* (1945) that Woolf was claiming for 'the women' was leaving Sojourner Truth question's unanswered: how it is possible that some women had the right to claim their own space while others didn't have the right to have a voice?

From late 1940s all the way to 1970s, mainstream foundational texts credited to contribute to the beginning of the 'second feminist wave' in the US, continued to replicate the same essentialist gender model. This can be observed in *The Second Sex* written by the French philosopher Simone de Beaudovir and published in 1949, a book that opened the path to the second feminist wave (Nicholson 1997). Her famous phrase, "one woman is not born a woman but she becomes a woman" (63) reinforced 'sex' as the 'big difference' of women and crowned the paradigm sex vs gender as one of the basic premises of feminist thought to explain how 'gender' is not the result of the innate characteristics attributed to the female sex, but nevertheless, is socially and culturally constructed. The same occurs in *The Femine Mystique* (1963) where

Betty Friedan explores "the problem that has no name" linked to the lack of happiness and fulfilment of women in the 1950s and early 1960s in the US. Her analysis and focus on the plight of middle-class white women invariably carries the mark of a feminine essentialist gender. In addition, when in 1970 Kate Millet stated in *Sexual Politics* that "the personal is the political" her claim still weave and render the different experiences of less privileged women in the US invisible. And so it did Robin Morgan´s utopian anthology *Sisterhood is Powerful* (1970) which initially foregrounded a sense of affinity across cultural lines. Imbued with gender essentialists analyses, once again cultural and social differences among women are normalized in favour of a dominant norm. (Nicholson 1990: 261)

Fed up with a long history of invisibilization and restricted emphasis on the sexual difference between women and men, black Feminists in the US first raised their voices to denoucethe lack of colonial legacy in the intersections surrounding gender. In "Double Jeopardy: To be Black and Female" Frances Beale brings into light the historical recognition that a black woman in America could justly be described as the 'slave of a slave'. Thus, as she elucidates, the category of "race" finds its roots in a capitalist system:

> In attempting to analyze the situation of the black woman in America, one crashes abruptly into a solid wall of grave misconceptions, outright distortions of fact and defensive attitudes on the part of many. The system of capitalism under which we all live, has attempted by many devious ways and means to destroy the humanity of all people, and particularly the humanity of black people. (1970: 2-3)

Echoing a long history of colonial unsettled issues, she thus emphasized the imperative to redirect attention towards racism as a much a stronger oppression than sexism. Two years later, in 1972 Gerda Lerner published *Black Women in White America* and a year later Beverly Hawkins counteracts Simone de Beaudovir with *Women is not Just a Female* (1973) aimed at making visible "race" as an oppressive social category on the basis that minority groups shared a unique history in America "since they've been exploited, abused, dehumanized, and killed because of the color of their skin." (1973: 3) The following year, the "Black Feminist Statement" was proclaimed by the Combahee River Collective. Revolting against gender intersections that entice class divisions, the fight towards imperializing nature of hegemonic universals gives voice to the invisibles and becomes itsef their force:

> We are actively committed to struggling against racial, sexual, heterosexual and class oppressionand see as our particular task the development of integrated analysis and practice based upon the fact that the *major systems of oppression are interlocking*. The synthesis of these oppressions creates the conditions of our lives. (Moraga and Anzaldúa 1981: 210; emphasis added)

Women of Color United in the 1980s

As we can see, Black Feminists were leading the claims towards intersectional identities bringing awareness to interlocking categories of identity. However, they were not the only ones. As early as 1972 Marta Cotera, a prominent figure in the Chicana movement acussed Anglo women of a "basic racism of the mind" (1977: 18) challenging them to respond if "the women's movement was a move to place just another layer of racist Anglo dominance over minority peoples?" (18). Anna Nieto Gómez, Consuelo also accused Anglo-women of being the perpetrators of "sexual racism"; "Sexist racism, she stated, "is manifested by those who consider and recognize only the needs of the single, Anglo and middle class women" (1974: 43) In the same vein, Consuelo Nieto fervent defended that "for some it is sufficient to say, "I am woman." for me it must be, "I am Chicana" (1974: 38). On this account, Marta Cotera made very clear that:

> No one can deny that we are all women, but neither can we deny that we are not The same; that many of us have not shared in the gains made in the name of "Woman" in this country. Chicana share with the Blacks and other visible minority women many gaps in benefits enjoyed as a matter of course by white women (Garcia, 1997: 216)

The following year coloring Chicana´s invisibility and oppression, Anita Sarah Duarte spoke from the vision and the pain of "The Brown Women" (1975):

> The Brown Woman
> She wonders what the hell is meant
> When the white women say "we're all alike"
> […]
> Today the Brown women declare,
> "No, we are not alike, you the white women
> Have never felt the pain that we have
> Endured and suffered. You the white women
> Have never been discriminated as we have,
> You the white women have never been
> Denied
> What we the Brown have known that we
> Should never seek.
> We the Brown women say,
> "Yes, Unite, Sisters, Unite!"
> But damn the white woman if
> She discriminates
> Against our race, and damn the
> White woman if she thinks we will
> Discriminate our race,

> […]
> Do not, we do not nor shall we ever accept
> Racism to be a friend to you,
> to be your sister. (cited in Garcia 1997: 194-5)

Driven by the need to "move the anger out" Asian Americans also had strong reservations regarding their white sisters. Like blacks and chicanas, they believed that white women and women of color came to feminism under profoundly different circumstances and with dissimilar issues in mind. (Cheng 1984 and Chow 1987) Summarizing the spirit of clashing views, Nellie Wong wrote:

> It is easy, is it not,
> To move the anger out,
> From self expression to action,
> From individuality to community
> (*Chicanas in the 80s: Unsettled Issues* cited in Moreno 1980: 92)

Envisioning a new platform of dialogue in which all women of color voices could critically interact through agender that intersects with ethnic, social, class lines in April 1979, the chicanas Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherrie Moraga, co-editors of *This Bridge Called My Back: Radical Writings by Women of Color* sent a soliciting letter:

> We want to express to all women – especially to white middle-class women- the experiences which divide us as feminists; we want to examine incidents of intolerance, prejudice and *denial of differences* within the feminist movement (Moraga and Anzaldúa 1981: Iii; emphasis added)

For women of color, intersectional approaches to gender meant the urgent need "to speak directly to the specific issues that separate us"(Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983:105). In the recognition of a new form of historical consciousnes, there is an urgency "to name and color the painful ignorance" which drives division (xvii). Thus, acknowledging complexity and multiplicity, Rosario Morales stresses the fact that some of them "were brought here centuries ago as slaves, others had our land of birthright taken away from us, some of us are the daughters and granddaughters of immigrants, others of us are still newly immigrated to the U.S". (105) Moreover, Pat Parker argues that gender revolution implies the interlocking awareness that oppression "is not simply a question of nationality but that poor and working-class people are oppressed throughout the world by imperialist powers". (240) In what it can be argued to be the preliminary stages of an incipient intersectional theory, in "I am what I am", Rosalio Morales describes herself as an unfolding identity, a multi-layered gender which does not repudiate its complexity but holds together a unity in many levels:

> I am what I am and I am US American I haven't wanted to say it because if
> I did you'd take the Puerto Rican but now I say go to Hell I am what I am

> and you can't take it away with all the words And sneers at your command I am what I am I am Puerto Rican I am US American I am New York Manthattan and the Bronx…I'm Not hiding under no scoop…I am Boricuaas Boricuas come from the Isle of Manhattan. (14)

This interectional identity comes from a deep place that Moraga describes as the "Theory of the Flesh" to depict how gender has plural meanings that are both context specific and enfleshed in one's identity; "the physical realities of our lives", she argues, "- our skin color, the land or concrete we grew up on, our sexual longings - all fuse to create a politic out of out necessity". In an attempt to make visible these categories she brought attention to the fact that:

> We are the colored in a white feminist movement. We are the feminists among the people of our culture. We are often the lesbians among the straight. We do this bridging by naming ourselves and telling our stories with our own words. (1983: 217)

Encoding a theory that highlights the simultaneity of oppressions, Barbara Smith questions if *All the Women are White, All the Blacks are Male and Some of Us are Brave* (1984) and Audre Lorde depicts on her "Open letter to Mary Daly" that "to imply that all women suffer the same oppression simply because we are women, is to ignore how those tools are used by women without awareness against each other". (Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983: 95)

Asking for new stories, new tactics and new visions, Gloria Anzaldúa, develops a more creative insight; one that would open the path towards the disassociation with radical identity politics "Our strength lies in shifting perspectives", she explains, "in our capacity to shift, in our "seeing through" the membrane of the past superimposed on the present" (1983 xxvii; her commas). Concretely, Anzaldúa speaks of interlocking vectors of signification encompassing the prospects of an all-inclusive sisterhood.

Not only praising its attention to differences among women, *This Bridge* sought to magnify alterations in order to make visible gender's interlocking social categories. At its strongest and most provocative, however, *This Bridge* does not simply emphasize difference. Rather, it redefines difference in potentially transformative ways. By using difference as a catalyst for personal and social change, "shifting perspectives" implied a force able to makevisible how the nature of their social inequality was multi-dimensional. (Cheng 1984; Chow 1987; Hooks 1981)

Intersectionality and Identity Politics in the late 1980s

In 1987, Anzaldua´s *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* brilliantly pointed out to interdependent epistemologies that move beyond self-enclosed

identities. Through mestiza alliances, gender develops a new value system with the ability to blurr boundaries, thus consolidating hybridity and complexity as defining features of intersectional identities. She states:

> Because I, *a mestiza*, continually walk out of one culture
> and into another:
> because I am in all cultures at the same time,
> *alma entre dos mundos, tres, cuatro*
> *me zumba la cabeza con lo contradictorio.*
> *Estoy norteada con todas las voces que me hablan simultanéamente* (99)

Embracing simultaniety in the "dos, tres, cuatromundos in the Borderlands", intersectionality becomes a new psychic uncharted territory longing to be explored. The following year, Deborah King in her essay "Multiple Jeopardy, Multiple Consciousness: The Context of a Black Feminist Ideology" (1988), articulates the theory of "triple oppression" referring to the categories of ethnicity, class, and sexuality in the specific reality of women of color´s concrete reality. The concept was calling for situating knowledges, nevertheless, 'triple' was too constraining and restricting in itself since it didn't allow for multiple re-conceptualizations of social categories.

From a genealogical point of view, as we have seen, by the end of 1980s, an increasing emphasis on 'situating experience' and articulating interlocking visions of gender was craving for a new "value system" to streching gender theorizing in new directions. And it is in this receptive scenario that the term intersectionality is officially coined in 1989 by Kimberlé Crenshaw. In "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Anti-discrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics" (1989), she describes '*intersectionality*' as tool for highlighting how the categories of 'race' and 'gender' are mutually interconnected in the daily struggles and experiences of women of color. In the years to come, she would further develop the distinction between structural and political intersectionality, nuanced in "Beyond Racism and Misogyny" (1993) as the mechanisms by which power dynamics could be either positional (structural) or discursive (political). According to her view, then, structural intersectionality is concerned:

> With the ways in which the location of women of color at the intersection of race and gender makes our actual experience of domestic violence, rape and remedial reform qualitatively different from that of white women. (1993:3)

As we can see, she identifies with women of color, not just black feminism, giving recognition to their heritage and movement. Nevertheless, highlighting the convergence between the structural and political dimension of intersectionality, the African American Patricia Hill-Collins in *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment* (1991) intro-

duces "the matrix of oppression" as the mechanism that informs a multifaceted gender from the standpoint of black feminism. Moreover, "matrix" points at the growing vision of Intersectionality as a complex of social practices. Collins informs:

> Black feminist thought sees these distinctive systems of oppression as being part of one overearching structure of domination. Viewing relation of domination for any given socio-historical context as being structured via a system of interlocking race, class and gender oppression expands the focus of analysis from merely describing the similarities and differences, distinguising these systems of oppression and focuses greater attention on how they interconnect. (226)

In this process of rethinking changeability, the problem with intersectional analysis was that, even though it foregrounded analytical categories which addressed cross-cultural, cross-national differences among women, the magnified emphasis on the experiences of women of color, diminish its inclusive potentiality. All these factors contributted to a clouded reception in mainstream gender theory in the decade of 1990s. To be sure, as we will see, the exclusive nature of identity politics categories such as 'black-women of color' would be therefore attacked by post-structuralist and postmodern feminists on the grounds that reproduced a discourse of division and separation among women.

Posmodernist-Postructuralist Divide in the 90s

1960s and 1970s, the politization of marginality and the des-identification of identity became a hallmark of critical western thought. Drawing strongly on the methodologies of Marxism, psychoanalysis, and linguistic structuralistic theories, gender theories had empathized with their struggles against the grand narratives of the Western enlightenment and modernity as much as with their focus on the de-articulation of a universal subject; a 'post-modern condition' situated in the context of the radical changes in social, economic and political structures brought about the intensification and globalization of capital. Within these rapid changing scenarios of meaning, the transformation in communications led by computer technology and cybernetics turned 'globalization forces' into 'super-structural elements' (Frankfurt School Marxists) of a new dispersed, flexible identity and subjectivity (Andermahr, Lovell and Wolkowitz 1997:206). Postmodern feminists therefore combined a criticism to an endocentric subject of modernity with an emphasis on partial, fragmented identities mediated by highly technological and virtual scenarios. Their focus on the collapse of boundaries and fixed categories of meaning would be a source of engagement with women of color, for whom the vexed concept of gender and its intersectional "new value system" (Anzaldúa 1987:103) was

now foregrounding of a recognition that commanded the capacity to 'blur boundaries' (mestiza consciousness). Postmodern emphasis on 'fragmentated identities' nonetheless, would distance themselves from women of color imperative to attend to multiplicity as a whole, not as a fragmentation. In turn, omen of color demanded the recognition of multiplicity and hybridity, but not fragmentation.

In this academic scenario, a range of post-structuralist feminist theorists, influenced to various degrees by Derrida, Foucault and Lacan, sought to focalized the center of the analysis to the exploration of subjectivity as an 'engendered performance' (Weedon 2003: 26). RosiBradotti, for example, approaches the body as an-interface, a threshold a field of intersecting the material and symbolic forces. "The body is the surface where multiple codes (race, sex, class, age and so on) are inscribed". (1998: 206) In the same line, for Teresa de Lauretis, gender is semiotic; is representation. Drawing on Althusser´s theories on 'ideological state apparatuses' ('no one exists outside ideology') for her, the construction of gender implies the realization that gender is at the same time "*the product and the process*" specifies de Lauretis "*of both representation and self-representation*". (9; her emphasis)

However, it will be Butler "performative gender" (1990) which would temporally divert intersectional identities as a potential theory or method. Her strategic response would be to renegade of the concept of 'subject' in favour of a plurality of contingent, historically specific, power-laden discursive regimes that construct various 'subject positions' from which 'agency' (capacity for action) is possible. According to her view then, gender compromises: "the discursive/cultural means by which "sexed nature" or "natural sexes" is produced and established as "pre-discursive" prior to culture; a politically neutral surface *on which* culture acts." (1995: 46, emphasis in the original)

That is, gender is a set of socio-cultural acts that individuals perform, and identity categories become "a site of permanent openness and resignifiability". (52) This explains her reaction against 'women of color' as a totalizing identity politics category, an oppressive paradigm that needed to be questioned. In *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (1993) she further elucidates how the very paradox of subjectivation (*assujetissement*) "is precisely that the subject who would resist such norms is itself enabled, if not produced, by such norms. Although this constitutive constraint does not foreclosure the possibility of agency, it does locate agency as a reiterative or rearticulatory practice, immanent power and not a relation to external opposition to power." (15)

Thus, a performative agency and an (un)mediated voice burst into feminist theory to complement the intersectional awareness of social categories. However, the most controversial part of Butler's view was that if identity was

oppressive, then, social liberation would depend on the freeing from normalizing categories of identity; that is, eliminating categories all together, something that women of color could not afford to do. Indeed, to Judith Butler's claim that identity is oppressive and therefore empowerment comes from the freeing of this identity, women of color replied that "yeah, it's easy to give up identity, when you've got one". (Hooks, 1990: 28) Adding on to this, theorist Chandra T. Mohanty while analyzing the problematic effects of the post-modern critique of essentialist notions of gender identity, she foregrounds the dangers implied in the dissolution of the category of 'race' since it is only "at the expense of recognition of racism". (1992: 75)

Differing however in their methodological approaches, for postructuralists and postmodern feminists their main condemnation towards women of color intersectional identities was directed towards an identity politics model ('women of color' as a category of collective identity) which recreated a tendency to articulate essentializing discourses (see Pattynama & Phoenix 2006: 187) and was thus reasserting the very dualisms they were trying to undo.

On the contrary, Women of Color argued identity politics allowed for the recognition of another's specificity and that 'women of color- category' had become both an identity and a location at the margins of hegemonic gender theory. Indeed, women of color claim that differences between women could not be treated as abstract categories but rather as embedded in the individual personal relationship with a located experience. They agreed to 'blur boundaries' as long as they foregrounded its accountability for the power dynamics implied in its overlapping nature and its specific locations, since the relation of experience to discourse is what they believed to be at issue in the definition of intersectional identities.

Amid these methodological clashes, by late 90s, the emphasis on intersectional gender continued to be relegated in favor of the linguistic turn of the time. Additionally, due to the power dynamics operating within the academy, the critical insights by women of color/ third world feminism in the US remained to be considered second-class theory by 'mainstream scholars'. Postmodern and post-structuralist thinking governed academic circles and women's studies departments. As a result, as we will see in the following section, 'intersectionality' would be temporarily emptied out of its potentiality and its restricted emphasis on 'women of color experiences' would conceal its inclusive potential.

As a response to the contested nature of an intersectional approach strongly affected by its association with radical identity politics, a remarkable twist occurred in the latest edition of *This Bridge: This Bridge We Call Home*, in which *radical writings by women of color* turn into and become *radical writings for transfor-*

mation (Anzaldúa and Keating 2002). In its very title this transformation is put forward: the bridge made up by joining backs (1981, 1983) had become a home for many different voices (2002). In the Foreword "After Bridge: Technologies of Crossing" Gloria Anzaldúa strongly affirmed:

> It questions the terms *white and women of color* by showing that whiteness may not apply to all whites, as some posses women-of-color consciousness, just as some women-of-color bear white consciousness […] intends to change notions of identity, viewing it as a more complex system covering a largerterrain, and demonstrating that the politics of exclusion based on traditional categories diminishes our humanness. (2)

As we can see, boundaries are torn and apart and conventional identity categories such as whites-women of color are now "obsolete", "outworn", "inaccurate". (ibid) Having confronted criticism towards an exclusive theoretical focus on women of color's experiences of subordination, this anthology was intended to demonstrate a radical transformation towards the understanding of differences. In this process, an intersectional mindset becomes a source of radical connectivity. "This Bridge we call home is our attempt to continue the dialogue, rethink the old ideas, and germinate new theories" Anzaldúa explains (ibid); "We stand at a major threshold in the extension of consciousness", she affirms "of systematic change across of fields of knowledge. The binaries of color/white, female/male, mind/body are collapsing". (Ibid)

No longer delimited to restraining identifications with women of color's experiences, intersectionality finally demands inclusiveness to move into a new era of "post-identity politics" (see Verloo 2006). This is clearly depicted in Renea Bredin´s analysis when she affirms: "We have come so far from the bridge…only to find that the way home is a return across that same bridge". (330) In these words, a new sentivity towards transformation acknowledges commonalities and contains difference: identity labels only spilt, they do not heal.

By enhancing therefore moves toward a more inclusive theory that continually reinvents universal claims by particularizing their meaning, intersectionality offers a critical alternative to identity politics since it calls into question any homogenized or essentialized group-identity category such as 'women of color', or 'whites'. In the realization that identity politics only reinforces divisions, openness and whole-ness are embraced as the healing properties of new intersectional theories. In this process of dis-association from radical writings of blacks-women of color to radical writings for transformation, a new stage for intersectionality was bound, to some degree, to entail a new response within the academia.

Current Reception of Intersectionality: Inclusiveness, (In)visibility and Agency

After the publication of *This Bridge We Call Home* in the first decade of the 21st century, intersectionality progressively disassociates with the previous strong focus on black-women of color experiences. In doing so, it constructivelly grows out of the richness of postmodern-poststructural interaction of the 1990s becoming in itself a bridge between methodological clashes in the Anglo-European academia. Indeed, intersectionality turns into a more ecclectic and inclusive gender identity formula that expands over the radical writings of blacks and women of color to accomodate all-inclusive writings for transformation. It does so by embracing the multiple codes that postructuralists were claiming with postmodern capacity to blurr boundaries. And in turn, these positions enriched intersectionality with a perfomative dimension in which voice an agency account for much of its current success. In addition, intersectional identities offer an alternative to identity politics by calling into question any essentialist approach to "women of color" or "whites".

As a result, through this process of searching for whole-ness and inviting deconstruction, an emerging "intersectional approach" (see Berger and Guidroz 2009) is currently recognized and celebrated as the on-going interaction of multiple identities and experiences of exclusion, subordination and priviledge (Davis, 2008:67) which "produce different kinds of social inequalities and unjust social relations" (Lykee 2010: 50). As Kathy Davis points out, the new intersectional gaze matches perfectly with the postmodernist project of multiple and dislocated identities and its mission of deconstructing normative, totalizing and foundationalist categories. (2008: 71) In the same vein, Brah and Phoenix argue that intersectionality has unexpectedly provided a way to overcome incompatibilities between women of color's theory and post/modern, post-structuralist feminism (2004: 82) since not only commits itself to make visible the material consequences of social and cultural categories of identity it applies however a methodology compatible with the deconstruction of these categories, the rejection of hegemonic universalism and the investigation of dynamics of power.

The power of intersectionality then, relays on the fact that is has become a new inter-disciplinary dynamic site of knowledge that tackles unequal social relations of power, both privileging and/or marginalization, in gender identity formation processes. It also reminds us of our capacity for action (agency) and our right to choose our (in) visibility in various societal positions. Furthermore, it challenges convetional assumptions of inclusivity and wholeness while inviting us to keep our eyes open on the challenge of meeting affinities

that collectively binds us to one another over our differences or group identities. In treating social categories as relational, intersectionality allows to both deconstruct these categories and examine the power dynamics implied in the meanings we contest, which provides a more balanced view on processess of marginalization and privileging. Consequently, differences are not in themselves divisive but potentially enact community building and solidarity. This nuanced approach is fostering a new consciousness and inspires assertive (in) visibility to become a permanent site of of re-signification and agency.

In this spirit, we make the case that intersectionality´s own journey towards inclusivity holds the key to its contemporary success. As a result, the genealogical gaze here suggested aims at shedding light into the fact that only through a process of dis-association and whole-ness, intersectionality embodies and captures much of the analysis and vision that stands for today.

Notes

[1] See Spring 2018 edition of *Forum* https://www.eaie.org/our-resources/library/publication/Forum-Magazine/2018-spring-forum.html

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A Study of the Transvestite(s) Demasculinized in Alfred, Lord Tennyson's "The Princess"

Shouvik Narayan Hore

I

The *Random House Dictionary of the English Language* defines the word 'Transvestism' as "the practice of wearing clothing appropriate to the opposite sex, often as a manifestation of sexuality" (1397). Three things should not escape the readers' eye before inferring its meaning in Tennyson's poem.First, the act of "practice" induces an act of habit which also engages in the act of repetition. Essentially, the word practice *creates* in the habituated a sense of pleasure somewhere, which proceeds by being voluntary at first, and transforms itself into an involuntary pleasure upon deliberations. I do not suggest that practice cannot be discontinued, or that it might not yield displeasure. On the contrary, I strive to demonstrate why the act of "practice" is cyclical in general and in particular. Secondly, Transvestism, which is often limited to the man dressing himself in a woman's attire, gains an equivocal benefit from the meaning provided by the lexicon- something that I shall work upon in detail with *The Princess* in perspective. Lastly and most importantly, I emphasize not on the "sexuality" of any of the characters in this long verse poem; instead, penetrative focus on the various meanings (or lack of it) of the word "manifest" (from its original Latin *Manifestus*, meaning clarity) reveals how this thoroughly ambiguous word defines the larger ideologies and its illusive presence all throughout the versenovel.

My manner of dealing with the question of manifestation is different than the usual deciphering of its meaning. The question "What does the poem manifest?" is substituted in this critique by "What is manifested when the poem

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no longer exists?". As the question demands, I shall not expatiate upon what the transvestites signify in this poem; my answer shall focus upon what it is to suffer from the loss or gain of gender (specifically, male sexuality) which, as I opine, is more philosophical than specific to the poem. In the Prologue to *The Princess*, Tennyson begins with a Romantic limning which has similar implications:

> 'Take Lilia, then, for heroine,' clamor'd he,
> 'And *make* her some great princess, six feet high,
> Grand, epic, homicidal; and be you
> The prince to win her. (135, ll. 217-220, italics mine)

The internal rhyme in the first two lines signify the act of procuring and creating in succession.On a larger canvas, it might identify with the fact that there is no natural"heroine" but one to be procured and created suitably. The question naturally goes backwards further- assuming that a heroine isa construct, is Lilia a woman that can be "taken" for granted, or simply improvised upon what characterizes as "womanly" in her? This is not speculation, for Tennyson ends the line with the masculine "he", which means the "womanly" is always alongside the "manly", and the "heroine" taken is a "hero" taken too.

As I began by saying, the question of manifestation is not what belongs to the poem. It is more worthwhile to dwell upon what man-infestation is in scenarios where there are no men in the making but women, theoretically. When H.W. Longfellow commentson "a discordant note somewhere" (164) in this poem, I think we have identified the discordance. The discordance is furthered by the dismissive use of "some" in the next line, and that too beside the culturally significant word "great". Either the culture of greatness is sham, or a princess being great too often, no longer is. If that "some great princess" were "grand, epic, homicidal", then she is a by-product at once of fiction, of stereotype and of public fancy created beyond the individual. Is not the princess gender-neutral then, as the poem seems to suggest?

It is not so–at least not in the manner in which I want Transvestism to be understood as the critique progresses. By using the term "gender-neutral", I do not imply the absence of gender, but the even and proportionate presence of both genders in such a way that one disqualifies the other.It helps explain Tennyson's frequent use of "half" all throughout the poem, as Eileen Tess Johnston rightly points out.[1] The fourth line of the section quoted creates not so much a prince, but a victor. Naturally, the other "half" is the relinquished half, and so are its adjectives disqualified and re-appropriated, although we cannot completely be sure of this. This, for Johnston, qualifies the poem for a "medley" where although we know that the prince wins the princess or the hero lurks without the heroine, we can never know self-assuredly what each gender fighting the war qualifies as in terms of an individual: "self-sufficiency

be it biological, imaginative or spiritual is an imperfect ideal; interdependence is the condition of life, and its recognition is life-giving" (561). The woman as princess or the man as prince is anything but a gendered being.

In Part I of *The Princess*, the readers come across the first "thought" acted upon by the prince and his friends in order to win Princess Ida primarily:

> A thought flash'd thro' me which I clothed in act,
> Remembering how we three presented Maid
> …We sent mine host to purchase female gear;
> He brought it, and himself, a sight to shake
> The midriff of despair with laughter, (139-40, ll.193- 99)

The actions are stifling. First, the prince "clothed" his act of thought, implying that the objective of action involves nothing that challenges the codes of accepted etiquette. Secondly, his action is not the performance but the repetition of a performed action, hinting at his awareness of the consequences that *could* follow as a result. The third is an open-ended act- why would they laugh at the "sight", and what are they laughing at exactly–the individual, the memory of the action or the action itself of dressing once again in a woman's raiment? Paul Turner's observation is pertinent in this situation: "The Prince plays only a supporting role, and the admirable side of her (Ida's) character is deliberately high-lighted by exaggerating the feebleness of his" (105). This, in the context of the poem, would suggest that they are laughing at themselves–their own feebleness, but it answers half the question. It also explains why despair and laughter coincide, and why it is the mid-riff that shakes. What I think as an alternative concern is the lack of significance that they attach with the opposite gender, and consequently with themselves. If "female gear" procured would familiarize them with the feminine, then surely, they were never masculine enough to shake off their unmanifested maleness either. This originates at the beginning of Part II of the poem where Ida is introduced in a Shakespearean manner:

> There at a board by tome and paper sat,
> With two tame leopards'couch'd beside her throne,
> All beauty compassed in a female form,
> The Princess; liker to the inhabitant
> Of some clear planet close upon the sun
> Than our man's earth; (141, ll. 18-23)

I could jokingly suggest that the Princess is Venusian. From a cursory reading, the conclusion would hint at the fact that the stereotypical gender roles are reversed. Much as it might delight some admirers of the poem, it is far from it. To begin with, "her throne", as the poet suggests–its decorative and overall adjectival value, likens the "beauty" more with power. The "two

tame leopards" are symbolic of power tamed in order to represent beauty, but the throne is masculine to the utmost degree, and if she were to use the tamed power to heighten her own sovereignty, it should make her more powerful, not more beautiful as the verse lines fool us into conjecturing. What we have now is a masculine female on a male throne resembling a man, a "liker". This is interesting because contrary to the poem's prologue, we have, critically speaking, a quest where a man is not attempting to court a woman, but a transvestite determined to win over a man or a manly woman, and in the process of becoming a higher man, allow the subjugated manly woman to *create* femininity in her.[2] This disturbs Donald E. Hall who, as I believe, can prophesy the covert future of such an expression: "Tennyson answers that men will continue to speak for women and can even be relied upon to bring about changes that will benefit both sexes" (56). Here at least, one can evince nothing of this kind unless the poem is read this way; either the man administrates, or the manly–sometimes the female, but never the feminine.

What I propose as my theoretical position has equivocal standards, though I believe the general remarks are neat. The ambiguity arises in wrongfully assuming the prince's seizures as a medical condition understood so by most critics. Cyril, in a conversation with Florian confesses to a condition not easily apprehensible:

> do I chase
> The substance or the shadow? Will it hold?
> I have no sorcerer's malison in me,
> No ghostly hauntings like his Highness. I
> Flatter myself that always everywhere
> I know the substance when I see it. (150, ll. 386-91)

The two questions asked by Cyril challenge the validity of at least two planes of consciousness. The first question is a philosophical pursuit of the mental condition, but the second is a pursuit of the material and its mental manifestation. What is interesting is, in midst the serious pursuit of both questions, the resultant middle path for Cyril is humour that embodies irony, sarcasm and a certain darkness that I cannot concretely define. This is of prime interest because Cyril's reference to the Prince's seizures is not medical, but touches upon elements of materialism and immaterialism, magic, the paranormal and theperceptive. The syncretism of all these, I argue, is how a seizure can be more imaginatively defined in the course of this poem. Barbara Herb Wright oversimplifies this when she believes that during a seizure, "he remains a participant in, and an observer of, the split between objective and subjective realities" (68). It does not explain why an observer "seizes" the split or why he transcends the seizure. The Prince's seizure is not so much an illness as it the transcendence from one state to another, and its heaviest consequences

are in the department of gender creation. Florian's love for Lady Blanche could be one such instance where contrary to the other 'created' genders in the poem, the feminine gender is made available to him:

> An open-hearted maiden, true and pure.
> If I could love, why this were she. How pretty
> Her blushing was, and how she blush'd again,
> As if to close with Cyril's random wish!
> *Not like* your Princess cramm'd with erring pride
> Nor like poor Psyche whom she drags in tow. (Part III, ll. 81-86, my emphasis)

The phrasing is downright of value since it begins in the present, identifying the virginal model of the woman and its larger moral implications to begin with. Almost immediately, it suspends itself to the faculty of possession–a prime example of the Transvestite coming to terms with the demands of the opposite sex. The transcendental values that Transvestism had allowed him now determines the sexual reality it best chooses to adopt and adapt with. The present paves way for the future, and it treasures the past which he wants as an act of repetition. The sense of possession gives him the impulse for a conjugal relationship which "becomes a literal growth towards a oneness which does not obliterate difference" (60), as James R. Kincaid rightly points out. It must be brought to light that this is the easiest of such Transvestal realizations since it places the woman in a buffer zone where the Princess is a man and Lady Psyche too feminine even for a female. In that way, Florian's gender is not as much created as it is improvised into creation – one among the many one finds in this verse epic.

I shall digress here a little. What I argue in favour of both Transvestism and transcendence engages the man demasculinizing or demasculinized. It is by no means similar to what I define by Transvestism. Demasculinizing is one form of Transvestism no doubt, but Transvestism in its proper moral function is transcendental–something that either gender roles renunciated cannot be equated with. The digression this time is in favour of the feminine (or the female?) and their ratification of the moral role of the child:

> O-children-there is nothing upon Earth
> More miserable than she that has a son
> And sees him err. (157, ll. 243-45)

I emphasize here the child because in the schema of a demasculinized transvestite trying to feminize the lady and re-masculinize, the woman is father of the offspring. The "Earth" was a metaphor introduced as fatherly in a previous section, and the pun on "son" in the second line intimates the presence of both genders symbolically. Alisa Clapp-Itnyre is right in identifying the children as "less bodies than symbols of women's creative capacity" (240). Also interesting is the way the child's moral failure is unconsciously attributed

to his gender; it could signify that the male child is born amoral, only to explore the possibilities of redefining his gender through a transcendental experience. This is a breakthrough because the male is a mistaken gender if analyzed critically– it can un-err only upon the mother being fatherly during his moral experience till the father can prolong his masculinity post its man-infestation.

One last point requires to be made before I conclude the first section of this essay. Duly understood, *The Princess* is a poem on the necessity of education among the women, but how much does the female identify either with the feminine or with the masculine in the long run? In Part III of the poem, an anticipated opinion is finally blurted out by Ida herself:

> No doubt we *seem* a kind of monster to you;
> We are used to that; (157, ll. 259-60, my emphasis)

Gerhard Joseph, in a study not similar to what I propose, says something quite similar to the faith that the poem loosely upholds in the poem: "It is from the primordial maternal principle that the male ego must wrest an independent notion of self even *before* coming to terms with the paternal" (10, original emphasis). I must emphasize that the "primordial maternal principle" is what Ida calls a "monster" from the perspective of the percipient. This is very problematic in case of this poem since it is not the woman who is in touch with the principle but is thought to be by the relative generalization of the other. On the other hand, to be a "kind of monster" qualifies her not so much for the maternal principle asit qualifies her for monstrosity- something that the poem creates through its queer propriety. To be used to monstrosity also stretches the argument to a limit where the woman, who is masculine, gets *used* to neither gender but to the asexual monstrosity. The larger question created from this state of eternal deferment is, can the male "wrest an independent notion" of masculinity, manliness or manhood from this monstrosity, or is the deferment of such values the compromise of the Man?

II

The fracture of womanhood is what gathers strength as the poem advances to its end. It is from a wobbling feminine masculinity that the Transvestite recovers his masculine nature from; in other words, he re-masculinizes himself. Observe how Lady Blanche frames her wrath towards Princess Ida:

> Yet I bore up in part from ancient love,
> And partly that I hoped to win you back,
> And partly that you were my civil head,
> And chiefly you were born for something great,
> In which I might your fellow worker be,
> When time should serve; (Part IV, ll. 284-89)

In each of these sentences strung together by conjunctions, the first arises from an instinct; the second and third complete each other by performing the Kantian task of desire and necessity, whereas the last harks back again to that original question of the instinctive. This is crucial, since Lady Blanche avidly critiques the philosophical stance that greatness can be acquired, which in this case disqualifies the Princess of all the accomplishments she has had, for she *might* not have been "born" for masculinity or greatness. The use of the progressive "should" in the last line does not signify an achievement, but a deferment. What time serves therefore becomes a 'lag' however progressive, best understood by Jeanie Watson's use of the phrase "progressive amelioration" (72) in her essay. If amelioration involves deferment of the growing masculinity in the female, the Transvestite stands to gain from it, but in what ways? As Lady Blanche's ire amplifies, it transforms into a gender failure:

> I will not boast;
> Dismiss me, and I prophesy your plan,
> *Divorced* from my experience, will be chaff
> For every gust of chance, and men will say
> We did not know the real light, but chased
> The wisp that flickers where no foot can tread. (IV, ll.334-39, italics mine)

As the word "divorced" clearly suggests, Lady Blanche was playing second fiddle to Ida; her femininity was what Ida had *created*and conserved her masculinity from. Blanche's transparency educates the readers of the immaturity in the scheme of perpetuating this gender-reversal since it was sustained by a 'feminine' fiddle by a female. The "plan" falls apart in her monologue. This contrives the formation of a moral vulnerability–the lack of "real light" (or the real dark) will be compensated by a new moral code: what the "men will say". As can be seen, their judgment is philosophical; it does not hurt their actual practical scheme but affects its ideological value and morale- something that E.K. Sedgwick sums up in a more literal context: "he (the Prince) gets what he wants by losing the (physical) battle, not by winning it." in order to "retain the privileged status … along with the implicit empowerment of maleness" (615). The "effeminized" man has taken two steps towards male and maleness, but his capability of living the abstracted reality or dealing in a compromise is the most important question that the poem ruffles us with.

One must take a step back before posing to answer this question. Whether a man becomes a man in the concrete or abstract (here also as a cultural imposition) sense is dependent upon his re-masculinizing or his remaining demasculinized in a wholly new way. The solution to both questions can be tackled by critically answering if the act of Transvestism or the act of transcendence was successful or not. By the end of Part IV, an answer is supplied to some effect:

You have done well, and like a gentleman,
And like a prince; you have thanks for all.
And you look well too in your women's dress.
Well have you done and like a gentleman.
You saved our life; (ll. 507-10)

The Transvestite is now "like" a prince in his "women's dress", and his act is successful. Its success metaphorically establishes him not as the prince, but like the prince; the metaphor naturally positions itself, in a different context, between being a man and being like a man. This ambivalence remains although we cannot deny now that the prince is being re-masculinized both physically and morally. The act of transcendence initiated by the "women's dress" has upgraded him to his original position, but perhaps no more than realizing its peremptory deed–the deed that "saved our life". One should read the meaning at different levels in order to construe that the prince is not a man in the more abstract attributes that one attaches to the word (manly, manliness, manhood, masculine etc.) but purely concrete and agential. This critical deduction of man, I strongly emphasize, is executed to deny the imperious and more abstract mis-formulation of the word by the Prince's father:

Look you, Sir!
Man is the hunter; woman is the game
The sleek and shining creatures of the chase,
They love us for it, and we ride them down. (V, ll. 146-49)

Almost immediately, the newly created man from his Transvestism has a semi-defensive offence to his father's assailable allegations:

"Yea, but Sire!" I cried,
'Wild natures need wise curbs'" (164-65)

The alliteration is intelligent; Tennyson astutely brings home the argument that the wild does not need domesticity but knowledge and wisdom–something that the Transvestite had acquired through transcendence. It need not necessarily mean that in his empathy for the feminine sex he lessens the acquired manhood he demonstrates; what he does more dexterously is identifying with the female sex while differing with them and deferring from the abstract imposeddefinition of manhood simultaneously. This gains clarity when Gama *wisely* eulogizes the Prince's accomplishments:

You talk almost like Ida; she can talk;
And there is something in it as you say:
But you talk kindlier; we esteem you for it. (V, ll. 201-03, emphasis mine)

In Marjorie Stone's phrase, "Tennyson's position… ultimately reduces to "Vive la difference"" (112). There is no need to condescend; one understands that the difference is enforced on both sides and technically, it is the plot's position

and not Tennyson's by any large measure. The estimation by Gama is an estimation of the cognizance of the difference, not strictly the difference itself.

A study of both the songs and the animal imagery in the poem has been appositely done by Jane Wright. The meaning of lines like

> The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
> And murmuring of innumerable bees. (VII, ll. 206-07)

Or of Ida's songs, most specifically

> Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,
> And slips into the bosom of the lake.
> So fold thyself my dearest, thou, and slip
> Into my bosom and be lost in me. (ll. 172-75)

Have been critiqued with efficiency.[3] I cannot but estimate such a study where desire is in question. However, there are equivocal lines where desire becomes a moral question that has relative autonomy over both genders:

> Like to like!
> The woman's garment hid the woman's heart. (V, ll. 294-95)

It is a moment of stereotypical revelation for the re-masculinized Transvestite. The desire of the mind, according to him, is never dissimilar to the physical desire that constitutes the gender. If it is "like to like", it is reciprocative with nature as witness to the axiom, and we can slightly tweak Wright's statement into the heterosexual's "desire", not the "heterosexual man's". This could be one way of justifying why the Transvestite finds both his mind and body not fundamentally, but derivatively in this process. As I have stated earlier, it does not intimate the 'man' with the abstract principles that float around conceptions like manhood or manliness. The realization through transcendence is far practical in approach by the time the poem achieves its natural end:

> Know
> The woman's cause is man's; they rise or sink
> Together, dwarf'd or godlike, bond or free...
> [She] shares with man
> His nights, his days, moves with him to one goal. (VII, ll. 242-46)

The quote begins with two halves united by a cause; they face the tribulations both morally and theologically–informing them that no matter however distinct, in their oneness lies their synchronicity with the accepted ways. There is no cloying talk of principles (ethical, moral or spiritual) that each adheres to, but Tennyson accepts the biological differences without negating the moral equanimity which is the implied "effect" of the quote. That the cause *creates* the Transvestism is no secret; it furthers transcendence which in Eagleton's words, "reinforces his maleness" (79). The maleness is conjured up by relieving

the princess of her masculinity, creating a causative void fulfilled with the woman's 'womanliness' reinforced upon her rather than manifesting her as we might think. As the poet himself says,

> For woman is not undevelopt man,
> But diverse. (VII, ll. 259-60)

The word "diverse" contains the sense of both the different and the deferent; Since in her purported divergence the Transvestite becomes a man, he cannot but subscribe to the diversity himself. In his participation, he cannot "achieve full manhood" (81) as Eagleton offers us. Instead, he achieves a diversity that is neither "manhood" or womanhood, but a diversity that we would proudly call a 'Man' and nothing more.

Notes

[1] pp. 559-60 of Johnston's essay are citeworthy. The entire reference is in the *Works Cited* section.

[2] Terry Eagleton's analysis is splendid on this occasion: "The bare bones of its narrative, after all, concern a 'feminine' male assuming female disguise in order to woo a 'masculine' female to whom he plays the roles of both child and lover." (77). Citations at the end of the essay.

[3] "Ida ventriloquizes a literary representation of one kind of heterosexual man's desire; her 'sweet' voice is someone else's." (268). See "The Princess and the Bee", *The Cambridge Quarterly*, 2015, pp. 251-273.

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Perspectives on Culture, Technology and Multiliteracy in India

V. Anitha Devi

Introduction

Culture is seeing and sensing the tangible and intangible in the development paradigm. This has to be imagined, visualized, experienced, explained, narrated and criticized by us. In the words of Radcliffe (2006), Culture has gone from being a "background" factor in development paradigms and practice. Culture has gone from being a "background" factor in development thinking to becoming a new buzzword, seen to be central in the dynamics associated with development processes. (Weiss, C.H.1995)

There are many definitions of culture. Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn (1952) compiled a list of 164 definitions of culture. According to E.B. Taylor, culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.

Above all the verbal definitions, culture is a phenomenon that is to be experienced rather than understanding it through books or any other manuscripts. Culture has evolving traits and can change quickly. However, if we have the tendency to become multiliterates, we can get a glimpse of world culture through Web 2.0 and Web 3.0. Because of the ease in computing and connection through technology, the world seems to be converging with its cultural diversity into a global village. According to Appadurai (1996), "The central problem of today's cultural interactions is the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization." Perhaps we might be living in a world with only one culture in the future.

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Developing countries must develop more technological capability and greater flexibility to succeed in the more demanding and asymmetric global environment. The stark differences in culture in the historical past and the cultural transitions due to technology and internet in the 21st century resulted in the emergence of a nation with peoples of varied sensibilities that are both intangible and tangible. Evidently, a new culture has become common with multiliterates in a global village.

Methodology: Discussion of Culture, Cultural Literacy and a few Perspectives of Culture

Cultural literacy is a part of general literacy in today's world. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2004), "Literacy" is not just the ability to read, write and do mathematical calculations. Literacy is the ability to "identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, and compute". This involves the ability to use printed and digital materials in different situations. One has to be involved in lifelong learning to realize one's goals and increase one's knowledge and potential. They need to network with people all over the world. Many learners lack proficiency and cultural competency, or cultural literacy and the skills to integrate that with the digital tools such as face book, twitter and so on. There are indeed many countries which are still underdeveloped and yet to find a way to the process of technological improvement. In those countries, the terms like digital literacy and technology are still alien. In today's world, cultural developments go hand in hand with the technological, professional, economic and social developments. Therefore, literacy activities should focus on individuals who require the above-mentioned developments.

Developments in various civilizations have led many societies to flourish with patterns of behaviour and interaction. It is obviously judicious to cite an example to substantiate how cultural transformation affects the status and outlook of a society in due course of time. The social history of India could provide necessary inputs to this end.

Brief Glimpses of Culture in Medieval and British India

During the medieval period, there was a remarkable influence of the foreign culture on the Indian culture in terms of religion, language, customs and architecture. As Linton (1956) said, "Culture is an organized group of ideas, habits and conditioned responses shared by members of a society". Indians have adapted and appreciated to the changes in culture, accommodating it as their own. This intangible factor has to be experienced only through the synthesis that has taken place during the medieval period and its influence

stills exists in literature, music, dance, monuments and education in the 21st century, which is protected and promoted online by academics and through tourism and research projects.

The growth of foreign languages and literature in India like Urdu and Persian has to be noted. Subsequently, the literature of various Indian languages like Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi and Telugu flourished along with translations that became popular and fostered exchange of ideas.

The Engineering and Architectural Feats of Ancient India range from metallic bronzes to stone monuments. Indian arts had its early manifestations during the Indus valley civilization (3200-2000 BC). Many miniature sculptures made of metals, rocks and clay representing humans and animals remain as a testimony to the glorious past ranging from the medieval times to British period.

Dutt (1904) observed, "The sources of a nation's wealth are agriculture, commerce and manufactures, and sound financial administration. British rule has given India peace; but British administration has not promoted or widened these sources of national wealth in India". The British administration continued to exercise its power with better transportation to carry natural resources from various parts of India to the UK for its manufacturing industries. Therefore, they developed better transportation facilities by enslaving Indians. The following section looks at some of the aspects of transportation.

Transportation, Education and Typewriting Machines

The major developments were in transportation leading to better commutation of people. The development in communication was the telegraph, which was mainly associated with sending the raw materials to London. The major development was in the area of transportation. David Daiches (1993) in his work The New Companion to Scottish Culture has described how the introduction of railways in India and how it helped in exploring the remotest places in India paving the way for development. The nineteenth century railway network was very extensive, ensuring that while certain parts of Scotland remained inaccessible to all save walkers and climbers, less active travellers also had a chance to get to know different regions. (The New Companion to Scottish Culture 333)

The cultural changes have to be noted due to ease in the commutation. Earlier people used to travel by bullock carts and palanquins with lot of pomp and show. The number of travellers increased comparatively for various cultural programmes because of the developments in transportation. The people of that period resorted to travel by train, trams and motor cars as well. In the 21stcentury, we have the advantage of using trains without any problems associated with race, colour and creed. We have cultural trains in India such as "Palace on Wheels."

At every destination of the train, the tourists can experience the culture of that place in the form of folk dances and music performances and puppet shows. Therefore, travelling has increased the level of migration for the purpose of education, employment, cultural communication, for tourism and for health care. However, during the British rule, travelling by train and pursuing higher education became common amongst many Indians.

Education

According to Dharampal (1983), India had an extensive indigenous system of education before the British came. India was experiencing a low ebb period. With all the developments that India acquired during the British Raj, the unique diversity in culture existed in spite of the English education system. However, India experienced the lowest literacy rates. The Gurukul system of education was almost lost.

Lord Macaulay (1835) who was a historian, essayist parliamentarian and a member of supreme council of the East India Company from 1834-38, has recorded in the Minutes on Indian Education, the introduction of English schools in India. He said,

You do not know this Indian society is a peculiar one. Here the Brahmins are respected and the peon belongs to that caste … it is impossible for us with our limited means to educate all in English. We must at present do our best to form a class of persons Indian in blood and colour but English in tastes, in opinion, in morals, and in intellect. He followed the "Downward filtration process".

To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population.

He was instrumental in making India a bilingual country because of imposing the English as a language from class sixth onwards. English had to be learnt by Indians instead of Sanskrit or Persian. Many Indians benefited because of the English education.

There have been a number of intangible cultural changes and developments due to English education. Educating the mass in the secretarial skills is the prime focus. Typewriting skills was necessary.

Typewriting Machines

Indians learnt to adapt, learn new languages and skills and retain their culture. This is a cultural development to be noted. The beginnings of multiliteracy can be identified with respect to the development of employability skills during

the British rule. One such development was developing secretarial skills. The culture of having assistants with specific skills in typing, shorthand and English was most sought after by the employers. Typewriting and shorthand were skills that most youngsters were encouraged to learn. Because of these needs, Isaac Pitman in 1837, developed a shorthand for English language and Stenographic Sound Hand was started in 1886 by the Pachaiyappa Charities. They taught the language in a commercial school. Today we have the Stenographer's Guild of India, teaching all these skills including training in computers.

Machines to make Bats and Balls, Radio, Gramophone Record, TV and Films - Multimodal Literacy

Indians had their initial footage in cricket and polo. Other post-colonial countries like West Indies, South Africa, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Pakistan have also taken these games with interest. These new sports for Indians during the British rule in India have made many people support and learn these sports. Now many players have made India proud for having retained these sports after independence. Multiliteracy during those days was inclusive of secretarial skills, learning English and sports. The concept and scope of multiliteracy was different during the British rule in India. But during the industrial and digital revolution, the technological influences in the industries, education sector and the home front in the society have given different dimensions to the concept of multiliteracy.

The advent of gramophones, radio, and television and film technology has fostered cultural knowledge, language and literacy among the masses. All these developments supported cultural developments worldwide. The Indian masses adapted to these developments for their benefit even when the freedom struggle continued during the British rule. When the people saw the instruments like gramophones for the first time, they were excited to see as well as listen to the music came out of it.

The following sections show how radio, television and film technology developed culture and paved the way for a multiliterate world.

The history of radio broadcast in India could be traced back to the setting up of a private radio service in Chennai in1924. Following it, the British government in India issued license to the Indian Broadcasting Company to put up a private radio service in both Mumbai and Kolkata. When the company became bankrupt, the possession of the transmitters was taken over by the British Government and continued its functioning as the Indian State Broadcasting Corporation. Later in 1936, the Indian State Broadcasting Corporation got the name of All India Radio (AIR). Since then the Department of Communications managed and functioned it. It was also a peculiarity espe-

cially considering the era in which it happened that in All India Radio, the women also were employed.

After Indian independence, All India Radio was converted as an autonomous organization.It was during the mid-1980s that television became an integral part of the private life of the Indian people. The introduction of colour televisions by Doordarshan (state owned broadcaster) during the Asian games that India hosted marked the real advent of a television era in India. The installation of transmitters for terrestrial broadcasting was processed in rapid succession nationwide. During this period, as a part of the project, the then Indian government made it mandatory that no private agencies should set up TV stations or transmit TV signals. Though the Doordarshan offered a virtual world within the Indian families, the programmes that it offered were rather dull and less entertaining except the serialized versions of a couple of mythological dramas such as Ramayana (1987-88) and Mahabharatha (1988-89). Apart from these, the programmes that Doordarshan focused were dull, less commercial and directed more towards socio- educational development.

If the introduction of colour TV in mid 1980s is regarded as a first wave in the process, there is indeed a second wave in it. The broadcast of foreign channels such as CNN and Star TV, followed by the introduction of a few domestic channels such as Zee TV and Sun TV, led to an immediate increase in the number of television viewers in India.

When the urban Indians learnt that it was possible to watch the Gulf War on television, they rushed out and bought cable dishes for their homes. Others turned into entrepreneurs and started offering the signal to their neighbours by flinging cable over treetops and verandahs. From the large metros, satellite TV delivered via cable moved into smaller towns, spurring the purchase of TV sets and even the up gradation from black & white to the colour TVs.

Tracing the history of motion pictures in India, the year 1896 is significant because six soundless short films were unveiled in Mumbai, the then Bombay. This happened exactly after one year when the Lumiere brothers set up their cinema company in Paris. Harish Chandra Sakharam Bhatvadekar alias Save Dada is considered as the first Indian to create a movie. He created two short films. He has used Edison's Projecting Kinetoscope to project the films where the exhibition was held in an artificial tent erected by the filmmaker himself. While considering the first feature film produced in India, the name Dhundiraj Govind Phalke also known as Dadasaheb Phalke cannot be forgotten. He produced the first feature film, "King Harishchandra" which was also a silent movie, in India in 1913. By1920, many film- making companies had emerged in the private sector and in 1960, most of them had their own studios, artists and technicians.

At present, India is in the forefront among all the developing countries in terms of both the number of films produced in a year and in terms of advanced technology that is used in the process of film production. In India, there is a production and screening of more than 800 films in a year at present in various languages. Apart from Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam and Bengali are the leading languages in which the largest number of films are made. Though the fact is such, the films from India often turn stereotypical in its theme and structure whereas films with highly innovative themes and technologies are being produced with less expenditure in many other developing countries.

Results and Discussion: Transformation of Multiliteracy through Technology

With the advent of internet and computers, people began to experience changes frequently. They had to learn new ways of communicating using gadgets. Communication was just not restricted to communication by text or sounds but also through images, pictures and video clips. Sending e-greeting cards with voice and songs can be noted as a common cultural practice. This cultural development in the global village is prevalent in the multiliterate world only because of the facility of e-mail. All age groups of people are using it across the global village. There is frequently a thank you e-card or e-mail sent as a reply. Cultural transmission has been high in the past three or four decades because of e-mail and other web chatting tools. In the 21st century, "literacy" does not stop with basic ability to read and count but with multiple ways of using technology and the English language with different culture groups. We cannot still use the term literacy in the same sense. This new experience with the technology is intangible to a person who belongs to the 1950s unless they communicate on live chat with a person either in Russia, Japan, Brazil or in any other country. This experience has been termed as "Multiliteracy" by the New London Group. According to them, "the multiplicity of communication channels and increasing cultural and linguistic diversity in the world today call for a much broader view of literacy than portrayed by conventional language-based approaches"(Cazden, et.al, 1996).

Multiliterate world brings in a lot of heterogeneity and homogeneity with language and behaviour on the cyberspace. People who try to hang around in the virtual space quite often tend to share information. Sometimes one does not feel strange in the multiliterate world. People around you do make you feel comfortable. One major development to be noted is the ease of availability of information. But the ability to cope with information overload has to be noted.

With multiliteracies the world of learning has become dynamic. There is always a new way to teach and learn the same idea. The socio-cultural world is inextricably linked with technology. How a person communicates reflects his literacy level and experience. Multiliteracy refers to this cultural practice and knowledge. This aspect is like the flowing river and the changing process is never ending. Like how people of yester years acquired culture and developed along the banks of the Indus River in the Indus Valley Civilization, people who belong to the dynamic culture of the cyber world also experience higher thoughts, ideas and new learning, every time they encounter a new invention.

Theory of Change: A Hold Up to the Transforming Conditions in India

Change is inevitable and nothing left in this universe, which do not undergo the process of change. Anything that is tangible or intangible is subject to change. Theory of Change is essentially a comprehensive description and illustration of how a desired change happens in a particular context. It is focused in particular on mapping out or "filling in" what has been described as the "missing middle" between what a program or change initiative does (its activities or interventions) and how these lead to desired goals being achieved. A definition could be given to the change in the social outlook and material conditions of a society. According to Vago (1992), social change means that large numbers of persons are engaging in group activities and relationships that are different from those in which they or their parents engaged in earlier times. Lauer's (1977) definition of social change is even more pertinent as far the changing scenario in India is concerned. According to him, social change is an inclusive concept, which refers to the modifications in the social phenomena at various levels of human life, from individual to global. The developing trends in the field of science and technology are obviously the torchbearer of the elements of change in any social scenario and the situation is not different in India. Ogburn's (1964) theory on technology and social change substantiates the role of technology in the drastic mutation of social conditions. According to him, technology is the fundamental driver of social change and it comes through mainly three pronged process, invention, discovery and diffusion. Invention according to him is a combination of existing elements and materials to form new ones. Discovery is nothing but a new way of looking at reality and diffusion is the spread of invention or discovery from one area to another. Of all the three Ogburn observed diffusion as the vital cause for the social changes which can create deeper impacts on the outlook of the people. As far as the situation of India is concerned, the doors to changes are always open. Plenty of job opportunities for the Indians in European and other continents and emergence of foreign

companies in Indian cities have paved ways for a cultural collaboration and this has its effects on the social life and outlook of the people. Hence, the Indians themselves do the role of diffusion (in Ogburn's theory, 1964) so as to bring the social change to the Indian society.

It is again a fact to be noticed that the modernization that burgeoned in India was an exact replica of what had happened in Britain during their period of industrialization. The textile industry in India is a true testimony to prove the previous statement. Tripathi (1996) explains that the Indians developed a textile industry, which was an exact preserve of Manchester and the most telling example of the British interference in the Indian textile industry. Another significant innovation that the British introduced is the introduction of mule spindle in the Indian cotton mills. The mule spindles were invented as a part of industrial revolution in England during late eighteenth century and it was introduced in Indian textile industries during the mid-nineteenth century. The ulterior motive behind this act was to accelerate the textile production in India and to export as much products to the Europe. One of the main reasons for Indian textile industries being made use for the advantage of the British is explained by Otsuka, et.al.(1999). According to their findings, most of the promoters of textile mills in India came from the mercantile family and they never had the experience of dealing with technology and administrating these industries. As a result, they bequeathed the technical affairs to the British officials who already had a previous stint with technology and industries in Britain. These officers had a natural bias for the British and hence made the maximum use the Indian industries in favor of British. Similarly the introduction of railways in India, though considered as a step to development, but was not bereft of an ulterior motive. Hurd (1983) explains that the poor condition of the land roads especially during the monsoon season has made the transportation of heavy goods to markets in the smaller regions inconvenient to the British. Hence, only when the British confronted heavy expenditure in logistics, they opted for the introduction of railway system in India, which makes easy access to any remote place with less expenditure. Similarly, many of the developments brought by the British in India were intended for the Benefit of the British themselves. A postcolonial reading of this phenomenon leads us to the fact that the colonial process in essence was never absolute. Anderson (2015) describes that "The empire has tilled across the world, showing that dominance is never absolute—that imperial or authoritative knowledge, despite colonial fantasy must always adapt to local conditions, mix with other traditions, and incorporate difference" (p.652)

Changes in the social order have obviously affected the life style and culture of the Indians and have tremendous influence to the changing culture in the world of technology.

The New Culture in the World of Technology

One major development in education that has to be considered as part of culture is the relationship between the teacher and the student. Changes in culture can be noted mainly because of the improvisations that people adopt for better standards of lifestyle. Culture changes because of the people. Majority of the youth who belong to the student community adapt to new technologies quickly. However, the need to know about new literacy and lifelong learning has become the norm of life. The increase for techno-literate individuals with ability to learn smartly increases. Every minute a new techno-innovation is introduced to the market for corporate, education, domestic or government purposes. The profile of a skilled person in the present century would be different from the skills demanded from a person twenty years ago. A person with multifaceted skills includes the knowledge of all media elements, the smart technologies and the ability to synthesize and create new ideas and technology. Spontaneity in networking and communicating efficiently would be the utmost criteria for any onlooker to be successful in future.

Cultural life is being shaped by technology and vice versa. There is a link between cultural developments and technology in a multiliterate world. The demand is to have the willingness to be involved in participatory culture and learn to gain knowledge. Apart from this, intercultural knowledge is also required to be multiliterate and survive in the virtual world. Being aware of the intercultural aspects in the real world or virtual world is essential for sharing information and peer-to-peer pedagogy. In a virtual world like Second Life, global communication takes place. People from different religious, social, ethnic, and educational backgrounds interact and most of them belong to geographically distant places in different countries. So to be really multiliterate with good intercultural communication in real life or virtual life means having good understanding of social attributes thought patterns, of different language speaking people, and their customs and beliefs. There is an intangible zone that has to be understood in the virtual world because there is more to be experienced and understood.

Culture and the cultural are autonomous entities, processes, and contexts. So intercultural literacy within Second Life (SL) is more than knowing a process of cultural exchanges within one context: it is understanding a convergence of cultures, identities, economies, politics, histories, and technologies; it is understanding the attraction and activation of cultures and cultural identities through discourse by having a telepresence within a virtual reality; and it is understanding that a context in SL is connected to numerous other contexts within the virtual and the real, each influencing the other.culture is reflected in

the interactions through technology which is seeping culture. In a virtual environment, anything that is 'virtual is cultural'. What we had as artefacts and monuments can be recreated in the virtual world. Moreover, the intangible that becomes tangible in the virtual environment is the experience of the convergence of cultures in the global village. We should also be aware that virtual worlds allow fictional elements to mix with real cultural elements in Second Life. Every time there is a new invention in the technology which is put to use for the public. These new inventions are borne out of anxiety: "We know that whatever we use today will be replaced by something better tomorrow." (Steve Jones, 1997page.3) What probably beholds as real today will be unreal in calculated days. Innovation and novelty will become the buzzword, showing transient nature in even concrete structures and knowledge banks. People would show off a strange culture with a different definition for impatience and anxiety. Their way of expressing impatience and anxiety in terms of time will be in fractions of seconds. The firmness of what is literacy would be rated high with the ability to sustain as a lifelong learner. According to the UNESCO (2010), "Mutual appreciation of diversity among cultures creates positive and constructive engagement. Dialogue promotes mutual understanding, knowledge, reconciliation, and peace, which are essential for social stability."

Technology has transformed our existing practices in our day-to-day routines. The different practices in the world have converged many diverse cultures in the cyberspace. The diversity exists only because of different geographic places and languages. The extinct languages are being revived by the data made available on the World Wide Web to a new world of internet users. In the past literature that was recorded on palm leaves have been lost because of climatic conditions and manmade destructions. The digital form of saving and storing literature helps in the revival of old traditions and customs. Diversity will coexist with the understanding of different cultures in the cyber world and physical world.

Automation and computerization have influenced every sphere of life. This is called cyberculture, which shows social conditions associated with quickness, efficiency and enjoyment. The cyberculture may be endemic to online communities and may span in the real world and virtual world. Cyberculture shows social conditions where marriages and divorces take place virtually, but have real effects in the physical world. Culture can transform the way people live within few seconds. While cyberculture has positive aspects in allowing handicapped people to know the world, the adverse effects can be due to hacking of information, money and wealth. Culturally one has to be aware of cyberculture to safeguard oneself from cyber thefts. Therefore, the developments can be positive and negative.

One major positive development of cyberculture for the students and the people who are interested in learning is being in touch with the experts and other students of similar interests. They can participate in discussions and forum post with their identity. The credibility of such interactions need not be doubted and are to be considered much the same way as in the physical world. Another cultural development is one's online identity in terms of our email ID, Skype username, blog, and web profile. Along with the physical identity in terms of residential address and official address, the online identity is mandatory for being connected with the world. These are the passes for entering into the multiliterate world. In the past, multiliteracy referred only to basic and performing arts, maths and science but with the advent of technology, multiliteracy has an extended meaning of being literate in conventions and technology along with the basic developments of literacy.

Online shoppers in a multiliterate world are known for moving around, surfing virtually with their virtual identities like people in the physical world, who are accustomed to window shopping and buy products. Online shoppers have the advantage of shopping from anywhere in the world in a few minutes. The culture of staying at one place and getting every requirement at one's desk is favourable for the online seller.

Thus, the changing phases of multiliteracy have made an impact on the culture of the people through the various developments in India and the world. Some of the glimpses summarised below reflects the evolving changes for developing learners' literacy and understand the need for multi- modal learning. Because of British imperialism, some of the important factors responsible for the growth of Indian nationalism have to be noted. Secondly, the developments in the means of transportation and the mode of communication have allowed cultural transfer of knowledge among the people from different parts India, bringing in unity in diversity. Thirdly, the influence of English language and literature on Indians through western education fostered the spirit of nationalism in press and literature. Indian writing in English flourished with great writers like Rabindranath Tagore. Fourthly, the British did not consider the need for better jobs for the Indians because the British government did not allow the Indians to hold higher ranks in the administrative sector. However, many Indians sought higher education and many learnt Pitman shorthand and typewriting, aspiring for secretarial posts in the government offices.

The fervour for building literacy amongst the masses was felt nationwide and the middleclass came forward and improved their intelligence. Cultural influences and developments in literacy in both the periods in India have influenced the other parts of the world, for instance especially because of the

geographical diversity and the success of the Indian Railway during British rule. However, no one can forget the hardships of many Indians, who worked to lay the tracks in diverse terrains. Indians and other colonial counterparts for the overall development have retained all these and many more developments. Following then post- independent period in most of the countries, sophisticated technology with WiFi and mobile technology has made India and the world a global village always on the lookout for multi-modal literacy.

Conclusion: Convergence of Culture in a Multiliterate World

Culture in the multiliterate world is intangible. New culture arises out of convergence of new ideas and inventions. Technology reflects new culture and change as a constant factor in a multiliterate world. Indian society witnessed a series of cultural and social changes. The recent social and cultural trends are nothing but a continuation of the technological changes. The views in this paper records glimpses of intangible constancy of changing culture due to tangible influences like the British rule, technological inventions, cyberculture and multiliteracy and many more. Multiliteracy and learning new technologies initiates the origin of the tangible media of intangible cultural factors.

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BOOK REVIEWS

PLATO'S LABYRINTH: SOPHISTRIES, LIES AND CONSPIRACIES IN SOCRATIC DIALOGUES. By Aakash Singh Rathore. New York: Routledge, 2018. 186 p.

Plato's Labyrinth by Aakash Singh Rathore makes a powerful case for reinterpretation of the Greek tradition. It revisits Plato's texts using a diverse range of methodology from Leo Strauss' hermeneutics, Derrida's deconstruction, Umberto Eco's and Dan Brown's reconstruction. Paying attention to the much neglected dramatic elements of the text, the introduction dramatically called the *parados* (the first song sung by the chorus at the beginning of Greek drama) claims to expose Plato's artistic works as layered with sophistry, lies, contradictions and controversies.The book is a unique contribution to existing literature on Plato as it explores the possibility of reading the text without using conventional philosophical method that typically pitches Plato as an advocate of reason, opposed to rhetoric, emotions, mythology and art. Contributions of British scholars (to name a few) like, Benjamin Jowett's *Dialogues of Plato*(1875)[1], W. T. Stace's *A Critical History of Greek Philosophy* (1920)[2], G.C. Field's *The Philosophy of Plato* (1956)[3], and Indian scholars like S. K. Ookerjee's *Human Reason and its Enemies* (2009)[4] are examples of the same. *Human Reason and its Enemies* explicitly attacks what it terms as post modernist attempts to question reasoning and advocate the indeterminacy of truth and meaning. It is critical of all positions that explain truth as that which is enmeshed in endless intertextuality, without any origin or source and that which destabilizes all claims for stable foundation.[6] In contrast, *Plato's Labyrinth* establishes the legitimacy of philosophical approaches that challenge singular readings of texts as it alone allows for a truly democratic engagement with texts towards constructing inclusive morality.

The book has six chapters, and in a dramatic style, has a *parados* (that explains the central claims of the book), *exodus* (that acts as a conclusion in a dramatic way of offering new perspectives and reflections) and two intermissions. The *parados* explains Strauss' re-reading of the classics, his historicism, his exploration of the tension between the city and philosopher and his hypothesis that certain classical texts are written with esoteric (private) and exoteric (public) teachings. The objective of the book becomes clear: to understand the classical literature (here Plato's dialogues) as exoteric literature that speaks of truths existing, which may not always be accepted as healthy and the consequence of the articulation of these truths may lead to public or private harm. The importance of such a project being to counter forces that homogenize world politics and legitimize freedom achieved through dominance of reason which claims total conquest over social political cultural and natural

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environment.[6] It does so by revisiting and reconstructing Plato's *Parmenides, Republic, Symposium and Meno*. It also revisits Xenophones' *Hiero*, Plato's conspiracy against the Sophists as intermissions to the discussions of the same and lastly, attempts to explain the conspiracy theory against Plato by reading Plato via Homer's *Odyssey*.

The first chapter titled "The Dramatic Labyrinth: On Plato's *Parmenides*" (p. 1) urges the reader to rethink Plato's dialogue *Parmenides*. The author suggests *that Parmenides* is not merely an investigation into the abstract question of what essentially exists, rather its central engagement is with existential questions of ethics and justice that seeks investigation in the public realm.[7] Conventional discourses have emphasized the content of the dialogue, if one concentrates on methodologies, fantastic particularities and details such as choice of characters (which are the same as *Republic*, a dialogue on justice), one is able to engage with the text differently and delineate an entirely new purpose and intent. Similarly, chapters investigating the dialogue *Republic,* namely "Love of Laughter: on Plato's Republic 1.0" and "Joy of Sex: on Plato's Republic 2.0" make a radical case that questions Plato's "spirit of seriousness" in proposing the Utopian state and revisiting the dialogue by examining the relation between *eros* and tyranny respectively. The author, with precision states the proportion of laughter, absurd and comic in the dialogue. He suggests an inquiry into the same and suggests that the humour that gives us sufficient reasons to believe that Plato could not have been serious about the teachings in the Republic. It seems a tyranny of lies and deception, eugenics, murder and even more significantly (for Plato's concern) "…one where a Socrates would be a priori impossible"[8]. The intermission, the reading of the *Hiero* with the dialogue *Republic* (Chapter 3) explores the interrelation between tyranny and *eros* that provides an interesting entry point into the third chapter. By re-reading *Republic* from this perspective the author claims that moral *eros* is suggested one of the definitions of justice![9]. Chapter 4 "How to train your Demon: On Plato's *Symposuim*" makes a case of relation of *eros* with divinity. The two are identified as identical and the chapter makes a case of reading *Symposium* as a dialogue explaining erotic divinity of Socrates. The second intermission addresses Plato's conspiracy against the sophists. It deals with few obvious questions (as the author puts it), why did Plato and Aristotle set out to systematically destroy the reputation and legacy of the Sophists? In answering the same, the author not only questions Socrates and Plato's integrity (and claims of sacredness of knowledge) but also makes a bold proposal of sophists as social reformers[10]. Most relevant is the book's attention to thinkers like Susan Jarratt and the readings of the marginalization of the sophists (in history of philosophy) being analogous to marginalization of women by mainstream, patriarchal philosophy. Jarratt suggested that the signifier sophist and the signifier woman shared much the same fate in philosophical discourse. They were considered as disruptive, anti-logical, relativist and so forth. More striking, Jarratt posits that we might see the Sophist *Gorgias* as a proto-feminist[11]. Making references to Socrates being charged of sophistry and Plato's attempts to set them apart in the dialogues, the book dwells deeper into the social changes that the Sophists encouraged and the political changes that Periclean Athens witnessed. The author

claims that Sophists had an important role to play within the emerging democratic power structure, and they were a critical voice against established aristocratic and traditional structures that served to strengthen democratic institutions in the process of deconstructing egalitarian social ones. Infact without such a challenge Plato could not have crafted his labyrinth![12] The fifth chapter "The Morality of the Master: On Plato's *Meno*" explains the relevance and the urgency of such an exercise in times when moral philosophy is equivalent to negative sophistry. The author analyses how virtue has come to play a counter productive role, by explaining the etymological meanings of the terms war, man and virtue, he explains how all are somehow fundamentally related in the so-called Western tradition. The author also explains its transnational nature as a similar understanding is observed in Hindu philosophy prescribed in *Bhagwat Gita*![13] Explaining the abiding significance of the dialogue *Meno*, the book explains ethics as a contentious issue, its origination closely related to politics. The sixth chapter "Reading Plato through Homer's *Odyssey*: A Conspiracy Theory" revisits the debate between the philosopher and the tyrant, the virtuous and the *eros*. Using examples of Rodin's *Thinker* and Myron's *Discuss Thrower* and characters from Homer's *Odyssey*, the author explains the final conspiracy. Plato's notion of philosopher ruler and a *polis* based on mastery of physical and intellectual pursuits is the ideal ground of thriving democracy! (contrary to conventional readings that explain Plato's dislike for democracy). Lastly, the exodus, not only hints towards new beginnings, it also aims at getting all readers, students and teachers of Greek philosophy infected by the passion, frenzy, sophistication and excitement of the Greek times to re-examine both classical as well as contemporary times.[14]

Such propositions would be scandalous for people who adhere to the conventional British literature on Plato and advocates of *Human Reason and its Enemies*. *Plato's Labyrinth* would face charges of being, a "…straight massacre or torture and mutilation…"[15] of truth. Further, it would face charges of being a conceited stance that unnecessarily banishes existing body of knowledge without giving sufficient reasons for the same[16]. They would argue that just because one doesn't fully understand the text, it does not permit the reader to believe that the thesis is contrary to existing explanations. The presence of two narratives also does not mean that there can be two ways of explaining a truth, it merely requires an investigation into the inadequate one. They would further argue that *Plato's Labyrinth* clearly advocates a dangerous sort of relativism, fraud that treacherously promotes an anti-reason culture.[17] Yet, the point in *Plato's Labyrinth* seems to be exactly the opposite. It strives to legitimize all attempts that aim to establish what might seem a mystery or an impossibility from the standpoint of established norms of reason but might have a causal explanation that could reveal another type of causality. It is simply making a case of non coherence of thesis presented to us traditionally! Its "relativist" position makes the reading not only interesting but also emancipatory as it provides a more intelligible understanding of morality than the conventional Platonic epistemological theory of forms and particulars. Advocating *Parmenides* as a text concerned with ethical considerations, imagining the utopian ideal of republic as a casual hypothesis (as

Plato himself said he was day dreaming)[18], proposing erotic divinity and ideal of philosopher ruler as the potential basis of democracy, questioning the legitimacy of Socrates and Plato's claim to truth and dismissing sophists from the history of knowledge (to name few conspiracies highlighted by the author), does not destroy the text. Instead these interpretations bring in perceptions that once again open the book for critical examination. Supporters of *Human Reason and its Enemies* would strongly dismiss such claims as baseless, systematic distortions and demand reinstituting the authority of reason (over emotions). Undoubtedly, the aim of *Plato's Labyrinth* is to show the limits of reason and explain the alternate claims that can legitimately claim truth and universality. By doing so, book exposes the dangerous one sided ideologies that have brought a closure to its reading.

Yet, *Plato's Labyrinth* and *Human Reason and its Enemies* constitute a binary, the latter privileges reason while the former privileges passions. It keeps intact discourses that construct notions of self (and abilities) by creating notions of non self (and disabilities). Thus, though there is sufficient mention of disabilities and treatment of people with disabilities in the dialogue *Republic*, it finds no mention in the book. In the discussion on education (in *Republic*) of the children of the state Plato puts emphasis on rigorous physical and mental education of potential guardians that excludes people from disabilities.[19] He sanctions secret disposal of defective offsprings,[20] there are several references of knowledge being compared to the power of sight,[21] also blindness and other disabilities is used to explain inferior people and state. Conventional readings of the text charge Plato of sanctioning murder and infanticide[22] and justify his state as oppressive and cruel. Yet, in the spirit of *Plato's Labyrinth* it would be interesting to discuss passages 488b-e (from the *Republic)*, the famous captain ship analogy that describes the prejudice against philosophy and corruption of philosophical nature in contemporary society. The captain of the ship (analogous to the philosopher) is described as "…a bit deaf and short sighted, and similarly limited in seamanship."[23] This could surely be pitched as a "conspiracy" and an alternate reading of the *Republic* could be attempted that does justice to the post-structuralist engagement with opening up the in-betweeness of binaries. They might, disclose spaces for resistance that create a new discourse that signifies the text and its engagement with disability in radically different ways. Though *Plato's Labyrinth* contains this potential it falls short of radically altering the discourse as it keeps intact the stability of interior states such as intelligence, attitude, personality, disposition, attribution, social perception, cognition, emotion, ability and competence to explain notions of self and the other. Thus, it fails to address the philosopher ruler as potentially someone who breaks the conventional norms of abled/disabled bodies. In suggesting the ruler either as embodiment of reason or as personification of erotic morality/divinity it suffers from "…disablist epidermal schema…".[24]

Yet, *Plato's Labyrinth* is important as it provides the opportunity to explore Plato's philosophy in a way that does not endorse a complete closed system.This resistance to closure, opens the possibility of re articulations where the unresolvable nature of contradictions do not affirm anything, nor does it cancel anything, it re-evaluates

and reinscribes the position as a problem or a question. In exposing the limits of meaningful structures, by tracing the absences and discontinuities within the systems it gets re invented each time. Such as exercise is urgent for democracy and resisting forces of homogenization that deter all critical thinking. In times of violence inflicted by positivism, such as inquiry is not only relevant but also urgent.

References and Notes

[1] Jowett, Benjamin. (1875) *Dialogues of Plato*. Oxford: Clarendon. 4 Volumes.
[2] Stace, W.T. (1920) *A Critical History of Greek Philosophy*. London: MacMillan and Co.
[3] Field, G.C. (1956) *The Philosophy of Plato*. 1949. London: Oxford University Press.
[4] Ookerjee, S.K. (2009). *Human Reason and its Enemies*. New Delhi: Promilla and Co.
[5] p. 16
[6] Rathore, A.(2018) *Plato's Labyrinth* (South Asia Edition). New York: Routledge p. 7
[7] pp. 32-33
[8] p. 46
[9] The author cites several instances to justify the same; taming of Thrasymachus from an abusive opponent to one who starts blushing 66-67), sex education of the guardians to build a harmonious soul that is trained in sexual moderation (73-74), mention of sexual pleasure as rewards of war and a mechanism to control sexual expressions in form of marriage fairs and family (74-75); all make a claim of sexual moderation as justice. True philosophical pursuit is described by comparing with true lovers (75) and tyranny is described as a frenzied erotic soul (78), thus the author suggest that these arguments systematically construct a case to read *Republic* as text specifying erotic justice (80)
[10] pp. 101-109
[11] pp. 109-110
[12] p. 114
[13] pp. 118-119
[14] p. 149
[15] Ookerjee. S.K. *Human Reason and its Enemies*. p 56
[16] p. 68
[17] pp. 335
[18] Plato. (2007). *Republic*. Trans. Desmond Lee. London:Penguin Classics. para 450d
[19] para 404b
[20] para 460e
[21] para 507b
[22] Popper, Karl. (1966) *The Open Society and its Enemies,* Vol. 1: *The Spell of Plato.* (Fifth Edition) London: Routledge and Kegan Paul) p. 51
[23] Plato. (2007). *Republic*. Trans. Desmond Lee. London: Penguin Classics. para 488b
[24] Goodley, Dan. "In Discourse: Poststructuralist Disability Studies" in *Disability Studies: An Interdisciplinary Introduction*. London: Sage Publications 2011. p. 101.

The author has adapted the term from Fanon, F. *Black Skins, White Masks* (3rd edition). London: Pluto Press. 1993. p.112 to explain how the interior horizon of the self and others in environment affects the "disabled" person's sense of self.

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THE UNBILLED HOUR: ESSAYS ON LITERATURE, CULTURE AND THEORY. By Bijay K. Danta, S. Deepika, Tyagraj Thakur (Eds.). Bhubaneswar: Kitab Bhawan, 2018. xxviii, 295 p.

The Unbilled Hour: Essays on Literature, Culture and Theory is a Festschrift for Himansu S. Mohapatra who taught at Utkal University, Bhubaneswar, from 1994 to 2018 and held a professorship in English for seventeen out of those twenty three odd years. The word 'Festschrift' is not used in the front cover or in the inner cover of the book. Nor is the usual descriptive epithet, 'Essays in Honour of ...' that announces a Festschrift, to be found in the book. The editors seem to have settled for the relatively milder 'Presented to ...' Perhaps they have done this so that the festschrift is seen for the scholarly undertaking it is, and not mistaken for an uncritical eulogy on a person. This is not to say that *The Unbilled Hour* is lacking in the spirit of felicitation (the meaning of the German word Festschrift is celebratory writing). The book does, in fact, combine tribute and scholarship in roughly equal measure. It is felt from the heart and thought with the head. It publicly honours a person for his academic accomplishments, using the occasion for providing fresh perspectives on the canonised and non-canonised fields of English studies in which the person himself has left some traces. In fact, the fine back cover endorsement from Chandrahas Choudhury, Indian English novelist, would attest to the fact of the person having credentials as a teacher and scholar. The essays in the book certainly show it.

The book certainly has a beautiful, though a somewhat intriguing title. But what is 'the unbilled hour'? If it is the hour that is not shown in the pay bill that is drawn by a professional, then it is matter of discredit to the professional. Why cannot the hour be shown? Maybe because the hour is undistinguished by any productive labour. Yet, as Bijay K. Danta explains it in his preface (which he calls 'in lieu of preface' in a spirit of playful banter), the unbilled hour is the heart of the matter in the scholarly profession. The scholar, unlike the lawyer, does not foot a bill for the most 'productive work' he/she does, because that work, as Ralph Waldo Emerson reminded us a long time ago, involves 'the slow, unpaid task of observation.' One might want to add to or derive from the hallowed Emersonian activity the other features of the mindscape like reading, reflection, analysis and writing. So, as the preface nicely puts it, the title, by its technique of reversing the expected, helps us to

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understand what a teacher or a scholar makes. The word 'makes' has to be understood to carry the full resonance that Taylor Mali gives to it in his famous poem "What a Teacher Makes", which Mali later on made into a nice little book of the same name.

So the book does seem to live up to its name by embodying the results of many different kinds of scholarly and critical labours within the traditionally unified field of literary studies. The rubric 'literary studies' must be seen in its now expanded sense as a combination of literature, culture and theory, as the subtitle of the book makes explicit. The essays assembled here demonstrate this diversity within unity. For here are lucid and thought-provoking expositions on the usual fields of literary studies: the Indian English novel (by Rajeswari Sunder Rajan, New York University), Dickens (by Ellen Handler Spitz, University of Maryland, Baltimore Campus), the cinematic imagination (by Ravi S. Vasudevan, CSDS, New Delhi), Dickens and Joyce (Bijay K. Danta, Tezpur University), translation studies (Paul St-Pierre, University of Montreal, Snehaprava Das, Utkal University), literature in the 21st century (Kalyani Samantray, Utkal University), using a comparative frame to read the two most well-known autobiographical texts from Odisha and Assam (Farheena Danta, Tezpur University), the Indian novel (Tanutrushna Panigrahi, IIIT, Bhubaneswar), Chinua Achebe (Tyagraj Thakur, Silicon Institute of Technology, Sambalpur, Odisha), the crime novel (Debasmita Paul, M.P.C. Junior College, Baripada), 'bookishness' and the rise of alternative reading culture (S. Deepika, Utkal University), and Odisha studies which itself encompasses critical essays on Odishan archaeology (Kishor Kumar Basa, Utkal University), the rise of the scientific temper in colonial Odisha (Siddharth Satpathy, University of Hyderabad), not to speak of interesting new readings of the two architects of the modern Odia novel and an iconic modern poet whose memoir is in focus here: Phakirmohan Senapati (Debendra K. Das, eminent scholar of Odia, Odisha Education Service, and Dipti R. Pattanaik, Benares Hindu University), Gopinath Mohanty (Mauricio D. Aguilera Linde, University of Granada, Spain), and Sachidananda Routray (Ashok K. Mohapatra, Sambalpur University).

A look at the list of contributors would show that scholarly efforts in the making of *The Unbilled Hour* are a blending of the international, national and local. There are seventeen essays contributed by sixteen scholars. Indeed, one is reminded of an oft-quoted remark made by Chanakya that holds good even now: " A king is honoured in his own kingdom, but a scholar is worshipped everywhere" (*Swadeshe pujyate Raja vidvan sarvatra pujyate*). To round off the collection, the editors, in their wisdom, have included two essays by Himansu S. Mohapatra. The two essays illustrate, at once, the scholarly and the belles-lettristic sides of the person to whom the essays are presented. The book ends with a fairly comprehensive listing of Himansu S. Mohapatra's publications and a carefully selected photo gallery telling the life story of the person in pictures.

If one was looking for one thing that threads the essays together in *The Unbilled Hour*, it has to be the warmth of the essayists for the subject-object. This is reflected not only in their pleasing style but also in their scholarly expertise. These essays are genuine contributions to their respective fields. It is not possible within the scope

of a short review to show how every essay in the book breaks new ground in its chosen area. But mention may be made of a few path breaking essayistic attempts like Rajeswari Sunder Rajan's refutation of the 'national allegory' theory (advanced by Fredric Jameson) in the Anglophone novel of India, Ellen Handler Spitz's seamless interweaving of Dickens, Freud and John Dewey, Ravi S. Vasudevan's fine analysis of how cinema is not only invaluable resource in the literature classroom but also is a classroom in its own right, training the senses in explosively new ways as only it can. Mention may also be made of Debendra K. Das and Dipti Ranjan Pattanaik's brilliant demonstration of the early intimations of Phakirmohan Senapati's late style. But of course the most fetching thing about *The Unbilled Hour* as a work of scholarship and criticism in the field of literary studies must be, as Harish Trivedi pointed out, its adding of 'some new localized dimensions which can be called postcolonial.'

This obligates the present reviewer to talk about these 'localized dimensions' in the book. In fact, Odisha and Odia literature constitute the focus in seven out of the seventeen essays in the book, thus helping to balance the global concerns with the local ones. Three essays, in particular, stand out for the sheer weight of archival research on display. One is Siddharth Satpathy's historiographic essay which masterfully exposes the links between the language of science pedagogy and the middle class morality against the backdrop of missionary education and conversion history in colonial Odisha. The second is Paul St-Pierre's superb staging of the history of translation in Odisha, especially during 1855-1879, in order to highlight the unfolding of Odia identity through shifting choices of texts to translate. The third, however, deserves a special mention because it is outside the domain of literary studies considered even in its expanded sense. This is Kishor Kumar Basa's critique of Odishan archaeology through a postcolonial lens. Besides being a moving tribute to a childhood friend, his article touches upon the heart of the matter—Odishan knowledge systems and their representation in colonial Odisha by giving a brilliant reading of Odisha's temple architecture and the overarching politics of representation surrounding it. As the senior-most editor puts it in his preface, 'for the students of postcolonial representation politics, this essay is a must-read.' The volume has, in fact, done full justice to one of the key ideas of Raymond Williams—that of culture being a whole way of life. It would not be out of place to note here that Raymond Williams has been the engine of Himansu S Mohapatra's critical engagements.

A festschrift, as we know, is a public acknowledgement of debts owed to persons when they leave the stage either of career or life. As such it is an important way in which academic genes can be passed. Although a staple of intellectual life in the West, festschrifts are, unfortunately enough, not so common in India. Some notable Indian names in this genre in the recent times would include *New Bearings in English Studies*: *A Festschrift for CT Indra* (2008) and *India and the World*: *Postcolonialism, Translation and Indian Literature*: *Essays in Honour of Professor Harish Trivedi* (2014). (In fact, a nice comment from Prof. Trivedi is also found to adorn the front inner flap of the book.) Thus, coming as it does in a situation of scarcity, *The Unbilled Hour* is a refreshing new development. A showcasing of scholarship and collegiality, real and imagined –

the latter in a Coleridgean sense – the book is certain to be cited as a precedent for future attempts in this field in the academic world of India, Odisha more particularly.

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DOCUMENTING CITYSCAPES: URBAN CHANGE IN CONTEMPORARY NON-FICTION FILM. By Iván Villarmea Álvarez. New York, Walflower Press, 2015. 258 p.

Documenting Cityscapes is a book written by Iván Villarmea Álvarez that pursues "to avoid theoretical frameworks that lock researchers in a sole field of study" (Villarmea 2015, 10). In order to do so and give his study an interdisciplinary character he makes use of a vast variety of sources: from sociologists to architects, urban theorists, film makers, philosophers or artists. Amongst them we find Alain Touraine (sociologist interested in the postindustrial society and the social movements), Daniel Bell (Sociology professor), Saskia Sassen (sociologist and writer), Paul Virilio (cultural theorist and urban planner) Manuel Castells (sociologist, economist and urban planner), Rem Koolhass (architect), Francés Muñoz (urban planner), Gilles Lipovetsky (philosopher and sociologist), Jean Serroy (writer and film critic), Henri Lefebvre (philosopher and intellectual), Michel de Certeau (historian and philosopher), Edward Soja (urban theorist), Marta Traquino (artist and contemporary art researcher), David Harvey (geographer and social theorist), Mike Davis (sociologist, historian, urban theorist and political activist), Richard Koeck (professor and chair of Architecture and the Visual Arts), Kevin Lynch (urban planner and writer), Ewa Mazierska (professor of contemporary cinema), and many others.

The book has an introduction of ten pages titled "Place, Images and Meanings", followed by two chapters: "On City and Cinema" and "Documentary Film at the Turn of the Century". These two chapters function as an introduction to the rest of the book. After that there are seven more chapters grouped into three sections dedicated to "Landscaping", "Urban Self-Portraits" and "Metafilmic Strategies". The first and second sections contain three chapters and the last one, "Metafilmic Strategies", only one. The volume also includes a four page conclusion titled "Cinema as Agent of Urban Change" and an Appendix with a map where all the film locations appear.

In the introduction of his book, Villarmea explains that the way we perceive a city in a film has more to do with the evolution of the cinema itself rather than with that of urbanism. That is the reason why he decided to focus on the formal device chosen by the filmmaker, the dispositif (Villarmea 4), as the tool to analyse the films.

By using his main interests, i.e. contemporary history, urban geography and non-

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fiction films, Villarmea chose to concentrate on the crisis that followed the 1973 oil shock until the present economic crisis that commenced at the beginning of the 21st century. This was characterised by the destruction of cities by private developers with the aim to get rid of rundown areas and obsolete infrastructures, the final result being the destruction of people´s references to their past and the loss of urban identity in both, North American and European cities.

Immediately after the Introduction, in Chapter One, "On City and Cinema", the author explains concepts such as the post-industrial city, the postmetropolis, the social production of space and the difference between place and space. Besides that, he distinguishes between the different points of view that have traditionally been adopted by urban documentary makers: the voyeur, the walker, and the driver.

In Chapter Two, "Documentary Film at the Turn of the Century", the author explains the reasons for the return of documentary films. Villarmea distinguishes between observational, participatory, reflexive and performative documentaries and explains how the inner tensions existing between objectivity and subjectivity have had an undeniable impact on non-fiction films over the last few decades.

In "Landscaping", the first section of the book, Villarmea explains three categories of his own creation: "Observational Landscaping" (Chapter Three), "Psychogeographical Landscaping" (Chapter Four) and "Autobiographical Landscaping" (Chapter Five). In the first category (Chapter Three) he refers to James Benning´s One Way Boogie Woogie/27 Years Later and his California Trilogy, and concludes that even in the case of the most detached filming category, that of observational landscaping, we can find subjective, emotional and lyrical traces that reveal a way of looking at the world (Villarmea 61).

In Chapter Four, Villarmea explains that in Psychogeographical Landscaping there are historical references that are missing in the Observational one. In order to explain both concepts further he compares Fabrice Ziolkowski´s L.A.X. and James Benning's Los. Althought both films use Los Angeles as the main setting, Ziolkowski´s version displays the historical exploitation and corruption behind the city's growth. This concept is also studied in William Raban´s Thames Film, a documentary about London produced in 1987 where the history of the city is narrated from the perspective of the river Thames.

Chapter Five, "Autobiographical Landscaping", deals with different types of films where autobiography is the key. Their authors are all interested in showing the historical world through their own subjectivity. Villarmea particularly analyses Chantal Akerman´s News from Home and Jem Cohen´s Lost Book Found, where New York´s cityscape is exhibited.

The second section of the book deals with "Urban Self-Portraits", a subgenre defined by Villarmea as the one "that places the author at the centre of the discourse without necessarily following a narrative logic" (103). Villarmea states that there is a clear connection between the evolution of academic discourses and documentary films, the rise of individualism and narcissism, the separation between public and private spheres and the emergence of neoliberal policies. To compensate for this trend the author explains that

there is also an increasing tendency to produce documentaries that contribute to the construction of a common identity looking for social transformation.

Next, the author analyses six films from the 1980s to the 2000s that address the emotional relationship between the filmmakers and a city of their choice that is especially meaningful for them.

Within this section, Chapter Six, titled "Self-Portrait as Socio-Political Documentary" Villarmea analyses Michael Moore´s film, Roger & Me as an example of an autobiographical approach to filmmaking and highlights Moore´s strong relationship with Flint, his hometown, during the 1980s economic crisis. Another example of an autobiographical documentary is Tony Buba´s Lightning Over Braddock, where the filmmaker presents Braddock as a bankrupt town.

Chapter Seven,"Self-Portrait as Essay Film", is dedicated to a hybrid type of documentary that usually contains all kinds of visual material guided by the filmmaker's subjectivity. The two case studies chosen are Les homes du port (Alain Tanner, 1995) and Of Time and the City (Terence Davies, 2008), both using an essayistic approach to explore what happens when port cities (Genoa and Liverpool respectively) are threatened with the loss of their local identity. Both documentaries are about recovering the traces of old rituals and both recreate memoryscapes.

Chapter Eight, the last chapter of this third section, presents two case studies within the category described as "Self-Portrait as Self-Fiction", Porto da Minha Infancia (2001), by Manoel de Oliveira and My Winnipeg (2007) by Guy Maddin. Both films use fictional sequences but they can still be considered documentaries because of their filmmakers´ intention to document their memories and those of their inhabitants. For his part, Maddin presents a subjective description of the decline of Winnipeg, one of the main industrial centres in Canada, by offering a "docu-fantasy". In Maddin´s own words, this is a technique quite appropriate to portray the love/hate relationship he has with his hometown. In fact, both, Oliveira and Maddin´s works are closer to fiction than to documentary since the cityscapes they describe become mindscapes in both cases.

The last section of the book has only one chapter, chapter 9, titled "Metafilmic Strategies" that makes reference to several Hollywood Films about Los Angeles and Hollywood to finally concentrate on two films: The Decay of Fiction and Los Angeles Plays Itself. The first one recounts the story of the Ambassador Hotel, demolished between 2005 and 2006 while Los Angeles Plays Itself consists of a series of interviews with some blacklisted screenwriters, most of them communists.

Villarmea concludes the book by stating that "Cinema is an Agent of Urban Change". As in many non-fictional films it conveys a critical perception of late-capitalist urban planning and draws public attention to the politics that filmmakers want to question and change. Therefore, current urban documentaries have evolved into political weapons. Also according to the author, the triad formed by cityscapes, memoryscapes and mindscapes in films where feelings are as important as facts, can explain as well the recent popularity of film tourism, with an increasing propensity to visit popular film locations.

All in all, Villarmea´s volume is indispensable for all those trying to imagine the city of the future as well as for those interested in the city of the past. As he

promised he would do in the introduction of this volume, he deals with aspects in connection with urban planning, architecture, history, sociology and of course, cinema, his great passion. This makes the volume truly interdisciplinary and useful for any all-rounder postgraduate student or even an experienced professional interested in cities. Furthermore, there is plenty of space for those who prefer to keep on walking along the same path, as the point of view chosen by Villarmea to revise both, cities and films, the "dispositif", proves to be a useful analytical tool.

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FOU LEI: AN INSISTENCE ON TRUTH. By Mingyuan Hu. Amsterdam, Brill Publishers, 2017. 251 p.

In her book *Fou Lei: An Insistence on Truth* (2017), Mingyuan Hu meticulously sheds light on the life of Fou Lei (1908-1966), who is considered to be the "most accomplished translator of French literature in China in the twentieth century" (Hu 2017, 1). In the prologue she lays out the fundamentals of her "investigation" of Lei's life as she compartmentalizes it in two dimensions: intellectual and linguistic. In his short life span Fou Lei witnessed his father's imprisonment in Xinhai Revolution (1911), partook in the May Thirtieth Movement (1925), survived through Mukden Incident (18 September 1931) and Shanghai Incident (28 January 1936). Eventually he chose not to survive the Anti-Rightist campaign and killed himself with his wife during Cultural Revolution in 1966. In Hu's investigation we see a man whose life was immersed in the world of literature, art, politics as he also dealt with the issues of belonging in the binaries of Orient/Occident. Through his correspondences and translations Hu exhibits a portrait of Lei both as a translator and as a person.

The book examines Fou Lei's life in three parts and nine chapters. Its organization is predicated not on chronological life events but on Lei's journey in writing. Part one "Shanghai in Revolution: An Unlived Youth" consists of one chapter entitled "Everywhere a Stranger". Hu gives an account of Fou Lei and his family. As a kid he witnessed the death of his father, who was imprisoned by "local powers" (Hu 7), his mother's mourning and the death of his siblings. He received a thorough education, a combination of both private tutoring and school education in Shanghai. His affiliation with literature started to manifest itself during his studies at College St. Ignace Zi-Ka-Wei, where he had a curriculum in French. As Hu depicts the early stages of Lei's life, she also describes the intellectual landscape that surrounded Lei at the time: A China in between the New Culture Movement (1915) and the May Fourth Movement (1919). A common denominator of these two movements is dilemma between East and West, a struggle of binaries

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and epistemology around individualism, progress, liberty, science, morals. In this environment, at the age of nineteen Lei decides to leave for France to continue his studies. The chapter ends with Hu hinting the beginning of some of the themes she will delineate in Fou Lei's life: anguish and dilemma between between Orient/Occident.

Part two of the book entitled "The Spleen of Paris: A Bildungsroman" unfolds in five chapters. It starts with Chapter two "Crisis: What Bruges Did not Appease", which depicts his Parisian years and exhibits the development of Fou Lei's character both as a person and as a translator. His Paris years starts with his studies at Sorbonne, which he does not follow until the end. Hu delineates Lei's relationship with religion—or lack thereof— and with his friends. In Paris Lei joinsan "intellectual hub" (37) called *La Maison Jeunesse*, guided by his friend Daniélou, where he read and discussed authors such as Henri Bergson, Charles Péguy, André Gide, Hippolyte Taine, until it closed in 1929. Hu also offers us a glimpse of Fei's meticulous work as a translator. She draws our attention to linguistic details and characterizes Fou Lei's interest in translation as "cultural translation" (45). In this chapter Hu also presents us a crisis of cultural identity among the educated Chinese, who strive to learn from the West while preserving their own cultural identity.

In chapter three "Malady: Child of the Century by Lac Léman" we find Fou Lei as a solitary character during his stay in Lac Leman in Switzerland. In this chapter Hu offers an account of Lei's own *mal du siecle* which she claims to be "paramount importance to our understanding of his youth" (73). She makes connections between Lei and his choice of texts to translate. Delineating Western romanticism, she points to the "catastrophic" occurrences (61) in China in a comparative spirit with the West.

In chapter four "Remedy: The Promise of Tainean Scientism" Hu continues with Lei's time Paris and dedicates this chapter to his translation of Hippolyte Taine's (1828-1893) *Philosophie de l'art* (1865–82). Initially he translated only the first chapter and then went back to translating it twenty-nine years later. Taine is an author with whom Fou Lei had an affinity. Hu details Lei's admiration of Taine and his method of determinism. In this chapter Lei's dwelling on China vs. West occurs again as Hu offers an account of Lei's own interrogation into science and truth in the modern China.

In chapter five "Fever: From Werther to Beethove" Hu moves onto Lei's translation of Romain Rolland's (1866-1944) *Vie de Translation*, which was published in 1946 and which had two versions, one in 1934 and one in 1942. As if undertaking the task of another translator in between Lei's translations, Hu details the discrepancies between the poetics of these two translations. A prevalent theme of comparison between China and the West as well as a theme of personal ennui still follow Fou Lei. He forms an emotional bond with this book, which Hu characterizes as a "temporal extension of a spiritual event" (96). However, this spiritual moment was interrupted in 1942 with the Japanese invasion of Shanghai which leads Lei to call for moral heroism. Again, a prevalent sense of a man trying to find a salvation in the midst of crisis hovers in this chapter.

In Chapter six "Light: A Willed Metamorphosis" Hu undertakes the theme of Orient/Occident binary in Lei's thoughts through his article "La crise de l'art chinois modern" published 1931 in *L'Art Vivant*, and in his letters to his son. This time

through the optics of aesthetics, we encounter Lei pondering about the questions of Chinese philosophy, metaphysics and art as opposed to their Western counterparts.

Part three unfolds in three chapters. Chapter seven "Moralising in Times of War: A Critic was Born" focuses on Fou Lei's personality as a moralist, a critic and on his short academic career at Shangai Art Academy in the background a brief war between China and Japan and a civil war. Here, we see Leias a political commentator with his articles in newspapers. In 1931 Fou Lei encounters Mukeden Incident and a China in upheaval. In this chapter Hu also touches upon the journey of the classical and vernacular Chinese. According to Hu, Fou Lei's "the maturation of style" is linked to the way in which he exerted the languages at his disposal, making him a quadrilingual translator (142).

In chapter eight "Translating, or the Search for a Brother" Hu continues to explicate Fou Lei's linguistic abilities as she gives more space to his family life in Shanghai. Lei is a father of a daughter and a son named Fou Min and Fou Ts'ong respectively but we read more about his relationship with his son. In the footnotes Hu mentions how Lei paid more attention to his son's education believing in his artistic abilities and deemed his daughter not as talented. When Fou Ts'ong goes to Europe for education Lei tries to anticipate his son's emotional needs during his studies and tries to console him in the face "low-spiritedness" (173). In regards to Lei's identity as a father Hu draws a parallel between Taine's and Lei's life, pointing out how both writers didn't have fathers. Hu also claims that in 1950s Lei was happy both as a father and as an intellectual. Content under the communist regime, he was "engaged in helping the party rebuild the nation" (177). However, this peace was interrupted with the commencement of Hundred Flowers Campaign in 1956. An Anti-Rightist Campaign began in 1957, unleashed a Left-Right labelling and wrongfully labelled him as a rightist. Nonetheless, amidst all the national and personal turbulences Fou Lei gained a loyal, generous friend for the rest of his life: Rene Etiemble, the chair of Comparative Literature at the Sorbonne at the time. One day he pays a visit to Fou Lei during his trip to China and starts a friendship of a lifetime.

In the final chapter "Creatures of Prometheus, or Unresolved Grief" Hu offers us more window to Fou Lei's personality and draws parallels with Lei's childhood and of the authors he had translated. Here we witness that Fou Lei had to give up on reading and writing due to his poor health. We also witness how Red Guards raid their house, throw accusations at Lei and his wife. Thus, refusing to live under accusations they hang themselves on September 2, 1966.

Mingyuan Hu organises Fou Lei's life around his work. She does not merely confine him to textual practices but also depicts his personal journey in between languages. This book can be considered as one of the fundamental sources into Fou Lei's life and work. It may also serve as a crucial source for the investigations of cultural exchanges between France and China as well as translation studies and studies of life-writings in general.

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MOUNTAIN TRAVELOGUES ON THE HIMALAYAS AND TIBET.
By Vijay Prakash Singh. Varanasi: Pilgrims Publishing, 2012. 260 p.

Surprisingly when travelling has become so common because of the globalisation, travel literature as a genre has suffered a decline. Once a popular genre, travelogue has now become a path less trodden by.

Mountain Travelogue on the Himalayas and Tibet by Prof. Vijay Prakash Singh is a recreation of the magic of the mountains. Inspired by the awe inspiring beauty of the Himalayas, Singh undertakes a soulful journey to the hills. His childhood fascination with the Himalayas and frequent visits to the hills lay foundation for this book. Six years of exhaustive research into the book is part of his mission and an earnest plea in conservation of the Himalayan ecology.

The narrative is infused with the Wordsworthian romanticism, Singh clarifies in the introduction that his book is not an anthropological survey of the Himalayas but rather a traveller's account of the society, culture, history, myths and the politics of the region. Singh draws his understanding of the travelogue in the words of the Italian travel writer Fosco Maraini as "There are two ways of travelling. One is to cover a long distance in a short time, taking in the general outline of mountain and valley and the most obvious characteristics of the people. The other is to stop, go deeper, strike root to some extent, and try to imbibe from the soil the invisible spiritual sap which nourishes the inhabitants of the place"

Undeniably, the book arrests the reader's interest in the Himalayan territory not only with the exquisite account of its myriad flora and fauna and picturesque serene landscape but also with the symphonies and echoes of the mystical and ethereal spirituality, especially the chanting of *Om Mani Padme Hum* inscribed on the stones.

Singh neatly divides the book into two parts. The first part which is titled as 'Romancing the Spirit', is a challenging review of the existing Himalayan Travelogues and the second part is 'The Roof of the World' which is a critical insight into various perspectives on Tibet.

The first part invokes H. D. Thoreau's *Walden* as Singh poetically traverse, halts and ponders over the curves and crevices of the hill. Extrapolating a rich and varied scholarship on the Himalayan landscape, Singh presents a critical appraisal of the existing travel accounts of the region. Their success and failures in depicting the Himalayan sojourn becomes Singh's main concern. Among many travel writers, the one who shaped Singh's pristine love for the summit is Bill Aitkens. Singh indentifies with the Aitkens's spirit of a devout and not a mountaineer's zeal of conquering the summit. Singh uses Aitkens's *Footloose in the Himalayas* and *The Nanda Devi Affair* as a guiding light to his exploration of the Himalayan region. Situating the travelogue in the geographical, historical, and cultural ethos of the Himalayas, Singh delineates a rich travel scholarship like Hebers's *Himalayan Tibet and Ladakh*, Janet Rizvi's *Ladakh Crossroads of High Asia*, Andrew Harvey's *A Journey in Ladakh*, and Percy Brown's *Picturesque Nepal* to name a few. Unencumbered with theoretical framework, the book focuses

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on the lived experience of the people. Singh's notes minute gastronomical details in the preparation of tea "with fresh butter added to a well boiled infusion and is kept hot in copper pot". The large intake of tea amounting to thirty to forty cups a day in the Mountains is a daily source of "warmth and nourishment"

At one place, Singh describes the practice of polyandry in Ladakh as "sharing the wife means a collective paternity that ensures a small family" in the face of limited resources and livelihood, polyandry is a practical strategy of limiting the family size also limits patriarchy by providing more options to the women, as Singh quotes Ladakhi women chuckles "I am never a widow".

As a cultural historian, Singh recounts various myths and rituals that are deeply embedded in the Mountains. The ritual of the Oracle with the elaborate performance of the one who is being possessed for the prognostication is described by earlier travelogues as "bone-chilling spectacle' is contextualised by Singh as ancient Hindu feminine energy which is often misinterpreted by the western travellers in their travelogue as frightful. Singh reveals another peculiar ritual common in the Bapsa Valley of Himachal Pradesh where Devi is honoured when the harvest is good but is also punished when the harvest turns bad by locking the idol in the tower. The book is interspersed with such unknown and intriguing myths and rituals. Gara Devi legend in Kullu, where a Thakur, impressed by a mason's work granted his wish of marrying his beautiful daughter Gara, while Gara dutifully agreed, later not happy in her marriage made a *jal samadhi*, and hence elevated to a goddess with a temple and a beautiful *pahari* style carved statue. Singh also explains in detail the *gaddi* occupation of sheep rearing and shearing as part of folk culture and tradition and makes a passionate case to preserve these historically culturally and ethnically rich groups.

The book will appeal to any traveller, nature lover and students of travelogue literature. It is an indispensible account for researchers in the Himalayan region and also a timely contribution to the eco criticism, making a clarion call for action in preserving the fragile ecosystem of the Himalayan region. Implicit in the book is the deep faith and longing for the unadulterated nature. Despite his spiritual approach parallel to a devotee searching for inner peace, Singh cannot be accused of platitudes as herrings out the contradictions and the existing anomalies in his analysis. Nepal, a confluence of Hinduism and Buddhism, practice some of the most brutal slaughtering of animals like buffaloes as part of religious rituals, according to Singh, it deserves condemnation rather than reverence. Also Singh highlights the problem of stray dogs in Bhutan where as per the Buddhist philosophy, taking life of any sentient being is prohibited, yet in the contemporary Bhutan, stray dogs are kicked and beaten routinely. The paradox remains, while maimed and sick stray dogs are not allowed euthanasia because Buddhism prohibits taking of life, they are made to die slow painful death.

The second part of the book entitled 'The Roof of the World: Perspectives on Tibet', focuses on historical, cultural, and political life of Tibet. Singh assiduously divides his account of Tibet between the pre-1950 Chinese occupation of Tibet as

old remote and idyllic past and post-1950, as the land mired with war and bloodshed along with rampant materialism.

Singh analysis of Montgomery McGovern's *To Lhasa in Disguise/A Secret Expedition through Mysterious Tibet* explores Tibet as a cultural centre with their unique customs and rituals. Singh revels in small details about the food and meticulous tea culture and its elaborate servings in the monasteries where tea is kept warm under the clothes. Singh conscientiously debunks the Utopic image of Tibet as how it is often projected in many travelogues and critically examine various rituals and practice like death ritual where the dead body is hacked methodically and fed to vultures, despite its altruistic purpose of being useful in death to vultures, yet the unseemly sight appears bizarre and irreverent. Adding to this ritual is "post mortem cannibalism" where it's an act of consecration to eat of the corpse of spiritually elevated person. Widely prevalent practice like *rolang*, a mouth to mouth resuscitation of the corpse until it gets animated and rises indicative of the hidden and macabre aspect of Buddhist rituals and beliefs. And Monks are not just ascetic, apostles of compassion and tolerance but can be capable of violence and hatred as observed by Singh and also works as moneylenders with high rates of interest akin to the clergy of the Middle Ages in Europe. The latter narrative on Tibet takes a form of political critique as Singh enumerates the devastation and large scale destruction caused by Chinese aggression in Tibet through account of living cannibalism and poignant personal stories. Singh says "Any claim of China that Tibet is culturally a part of China is their untenable and only a convenient argument to justify its occupation of Tibet"

Far from the land of mystics, after the flight of the XIV Dalai Lama from Tibet to India, under China's hegemony, Tibet's cultural and spiritual life is fast dwindling and is now reduced to tourist consumption. In what Singh describes as "cultural genocide" is crass commercialisation and rampant modernisation where many Tibetan women are systematically employed in prostitution. Singh laments the materialistic hegemony of China which has subsumed the spiritual and cultural life of Tibet.

From an exotic Shangri la to a vulnerable land of trauma under constant threat of annihilation, Singh critically delineates the multilayered perspectives on Tibet and its rich legacy. Just as Singh begins the book with a dedication to the XIV Dalai Lama, it closes with his quote forming a circle of life. The book remains a laudable effort in bringing the forgotten Tibet back into focus.

Although not the scope of the book, with such vast knowledge and lived experience of the terrain and people, we do expect Singh to suggest probable solutions at ground level as well as at the level of planning to preserve the fragile ecology and vanishing culture.

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FROM THE ARCHIVES

Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics, begun in 1978, has accumulated an enviable repertoire of cross-cultural and inter-disciplinary readings from some of the best minds in the fields. As the journal prepares to publish its forty-first issue under a new Editor, we deem it fit to introduce a new feature that will make the journal more viable to the newer generation of readers and scholars.

From this point forward, the journal shall carry a 'From the Archives' section where an essay, previously published in JCLA, shall be reprinted, based on its content and its communicative potential. It will hopefully serve the purpose of opening up a dialogue between the journal's present and its past by integrating the old with the new, and the contemporary with the archival.

As we commemorate the Birth Centenary of Prof. John Hospers (1918-2011), who was for long a Member of our Editorial Board, one cannot think of a more auspicious occasion to flag off this new venture. 'Art and Morality', a seminal essay by the author published in the very first issue of the journal, is reprinted in the present issue.

We welcome suggestions from readers and intellectuals about other measures to be taken to enhance the appeal of the journal.

Art and Morality

John Hospers

"If Art must take cognizance of Morality, then equally Morality must take cognizance of Art. Indeed, almost everything that is alive and imaginative about morality comes from the leavening influence of Art. The chief moral effect of art, including literature, I would like to say, lies in its unique power to stimulate and develop the most important human faculty, the imagination. And, as Shelley says, the Imagination is the greatest single instrument of moral good."

What is the relation of art to morality? We could spend a great deal of time at the outset trying to define the words "art" and "morality". Instead, however, we shall evade these trying questions, and assume that we already attach some common meaning to these terms. Paintings, sculptures, musical compositions, poems, plays, and novels can all be works of art; we shall not stop to argue which works in these media succeed in being works of art. We shall be concerned to discover what the effect of these works is on the moral conduct of the persons who see, hear, or read them– whether, for example, it leads them to violate any of the Ten Commandments or other rules that would generally be called moral; and what is to be done when aesthetic values, which we experience primarily through works of art, conflict with moral values.

I

Let us consider first the most prevalent conception of the relation between art and morality – what we may call the moralistic conception. According to this, art is, at least, a harmless interlude in the serious business of life, and at worst, a menace to society and morality. Art is so considered because it gives people

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unorthodox ideas; it disturbs them; it emphasizes individuality rather than conformity; and it may be dangerous in undermining beliefs on which (it is thought) our society rests. Art is a kind of gadfly stinging at the body of established beliefs, often at precisely those places where custom does not wish to be disturbed; art is always at work, breeding discontent, rebellion, individual difference, conformism – and it seems as if art is always being directed against the established mores of the day, never in their favour. Witness the complaints of *Life* magazine and others about twentieth-century American writers, who for the most part make heroes out of rebels and emotionally "maladjusted" people, and refuse to sing the praises of the solid citizens without whom industry and technology could not progress. Because of this, art is looked upon with suspicion by the Guardians of Custom. When art does not affect people much, it is considered a harmless pleasure, an escape, a luxury, something which is unfortunately there and has to be put up with because some people seem to want it – but which may become, at any moment, insidious and dangerous, gnawing at the substructure of our most cherished beliefs and attitudes.

The most famous historical representatives of this view were Plato and Tolstoy; and this is the more surprising since both of them were great artists. Plato was no moralist in his less famous works in which he discussed art – in the *Ion*, the *Symposium*, the *Phaedrus*. But in his most renowned work, the *Republic*, Plato takes a highly moralistic view of art. There he is concerned to setup an ideal state, or republic. Everything hinges on the kind of ruler that is at the helm of the ship of state, for the rulers are all-powerful and not subject to popular vote. Plato spends many pages describing in detail the training of these rulers-to-be. If their morality is to be pure and undefiled, they must be kept away from all undermining influences, however subtle. They must not be permitted to listen to sensuous music, or to witness stage presentations in which bad people triumph, or in any way exposed to art which would loosen the moral fiber of the impressionably growing child or cause him to swerve from the path of austerity which must be his if he is to remain incorruptible in his future position of state. We could spend considerable time, if we had it, debating whether or not Plato's stricture upon art, in the interests of the future rulers of state would (if adopted) make the rulers more capable or less so than they would otherwise have been. Personally I find this extremely dubious: a ruler-to-be should know the full facts of life as early as possible; and it would seem that the only way to combat evil is first to know something about it. But whatever we may decide about this, we should note that all these strictures are imposed for a reason; the delights of

art are sacrificed, reluctantly but firmly, not because Plato had no respect or love for art, but because he was convinced that the most important thing of all, even more than art, was the welfare of the entire state – a state in utter chaos or corruption could produce nothing, including art itself. Where the welfare of the state was involved, even so great a price as that of art was not too great a one to pay. For no lesser reason would so great a thing be sacrificed. And for the masses of humanity, where the education of future rulers was not concerned, there was to be no limitation of art at all.

Tolstoy's condemnation of art was more sweeping. After he had written *War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina*, and almost all of his great fictions, he underwent a religious conversion which caused him to condemn all art except that which, as he put it, "tends to deepen the religious perceptions of the people". Art which did not have a religious theme was still acceptable as long as it tended to unite mankind into one great Christian community. But art which concerned itself with the political squabbles of a particular time or place, or sexual conflicts and disturbances, or with the life of the upper classes and its ensuring triviality and boredom, all this Tolstoy condemned without further ado. Even more sweeping, all art which was not simple enough to be understood and enjoyed at once by all people, even the simplest peasant, was given the axe. Thus Shakespeare, Milton, Beethoven, Wagner, and countless others, together with almost the entire corpus of nineteenth century literature including Tolstoy's own great novels, were all, at one stroke, thrown into the trash heap. One cannot accuse Tolstoy on inconsistency, or of shrinking from the task of applying his own principles. One can, however, question the principles that implied such a wholesale condemnation as this. But to do so here would require a detailed critique of that form of early and rather primitive Christianity which Tolstoy embraces at this period of his life; and that is far removed from our subject here. Tolstoy, like Plato, condemned art for reasons of morality, being convinced that when it comes to a conflict between them, it is art that must go. From the point of view of morality, art is The Enemy, and this enemy must be utterly squelched. For Tolstoy, art is not merely the harmless pleasure of an idle moment – art (most art, at any rate) is a disturber and uprooter of the True Morality. Art, in order to be permissible at all, must be used completely and utterly in the service of morality.

Not all of us would go along with the special twists given the moralistic theory by Plato and Tolstoy, but many people, including perhaps the majority of Americans, tend to accept the general position of Moralism. They may not think that art and morality conflict as readily or as often as Plato and Tolstoy believed but they think that art is a servant of morality, and

that in cases of conflict between art and morality it should always be morality that is the victor.

II

Let us, however, turn to an exactly opposite kind of view, which often goes by name of aestheticism. According to this view, art is above all other things of significance in this world and nothing should interfere with its freedom to do whatever it pleases. If morality disagrees, so much the worse for morality. If the masses fail to understand art or to appreciate its enormous power to receive the sublime experiences it can give, at least to the select few, well then, so much the worse for the masses. As an extreme example of this, let us listen to the poet George Moore:

> "What care I that some millions of wretched Israelites died under Pharaoh's lash or Egypt's sun? It was well that they died that I might have the pyramid to look on, or to fill a musing hour with wonderment. Is there one among us who would exchange them for the lives of the ignominious slaves that died? What care I that the virtue of some 16-year-old maid was the price paid for *Ingres' La Source*? That the model died of drink and disease in the hospital is nothing when compared with the essential that should have *La Source*, that exquisite dream of innocence…"

We may also remember Mussolini's son-in-law waxing lyrical in his description of a bomb exploding among a crowd of unarmed Ethiopians.

Most of us would feel revolted at such all extreme version of the Aestheticist's hypothesis. And, of course, we need not go so far. But before attempting to dilute the force of such remarks as those of George Moore, let us see wherein lies the power and the peculiar force of the Aesthetician's position. What is the goal of life, the Aestheticist asks, if it is not be as fully, as richly, as intensely alive as we can possibly become – or in Walter Pater's words, "to burn with a hard gemlike flame"? or

> "to choose one crowded hour of glorious life, to seize experience at its greatest magnitude? And this is precisely our experience of art; it is living in the best way we know how. Far from being a hand maiden to other goals, art gives us immediately, and richly, the best there is in life, intense awareness – it gives us what life itself aims at becoming, but seldom achieves outside of art." (Monroe C. Beardsley, *Aesthetics*, p. 563.)

So if there are any morally undesirable side-effects of art, they do not really matter beside this all-important experience that art can give us and nothing else can. Art and art alone can make us really alive; art and art alone can give us an experience of unmatched richness, unity, intensity, complexity – all at the same time. Art and art alone can give us in miniature, in capsule form, the characteristic values of existence, all concentrated in one aesthetic object, it can draw all the loose and varied strands of human experience into a sharp and vivid

focus. Great works of art alone are capable of giving us this experience, which can be at once sublime and ecstatic in its beauty and shattering in its intensity. Only in art do we really come alive; in all the rest of life the waters of experience run sluggishly and turgidly, but in art we find them pure and distilled. What can compare with the value of this experience? What is even fit to be mentioned in the same breath with it?

I think we can shorten our discussion by granting everything that the Aestheticist claims here about the nature of the aesthetic experience and the value of the aesthetic object, except the last sentence. Aesthetic experiences are very worth-while indeed, as only those who have had them can know; perhaps they are the most worthwhile of all experiences in this neither world, but they are not the only experiences there are. Even though the skyscrapers of New York are the tallest buildings in the world, they are not the only buildings in the world, and we do have to consider the others. Aesthetic values, though far greater than most people are aware, are still just a few among many. This being the case, we can hardly behave as if the others did not exist. We must examine the relation of the aesthetic values in life to all the other values that life has to offer.

III

So let us turn to a third possible position – not that art is the servant of morality, or that morality is the servant of art, but that the two are co-inhabitants of the same world, each with its specific function in that world, but neither fulfilling its function in independence of the other. We must try to see what the relation is between them, and this will take us to the heart of our problem.

Morality is not, on the whole, particularly enjoyable. Moral codes are devised in order that people may be able to live in peace and security with one another. Morality is required because people often trespass upon one another's rights. As for art, it has a different role to play; it has much more to do with pleasure and enjoyment – that very which civilized life (indispensable without a certain degree of morality) makes possible. But "pleasure" and "enjoyment" are pallid words; would prefer to say that art gives us (in accordance without description of a while ago) in a highly concentrated form an experience of great richness and intensity – an experience which we may well enjoy but which may also simply move us, or prick us, or shock us, or change our whole outlook upon the world around us; it may simply please us, or it may shatter us by its power. This great potency of art is felt because art does not deal merely with a fantasy-world, it is not simply an amusement to while away an idle hour: it deals with the world of everyday experience, the same world over which morality legislates. The very experience which we treasure in art draws its significance

from the world and life outside of art. Thus already we see that they are related. We shall try now to examine some of the strands of that relation.

1. First, then, art sometimes does teach us lessons that we need to learn if life is to be nobly, or even tolerably, liver; and thus it may enter directly, at times, into the service of morality. Art can sometimes be didactic; even great art can be didactic; as Dante's *Inferno* and Milton's *Areopagetica* will show.

I do not wish to deny this value to art; it undoubtedly exists. Sir Philip Sidney devoted a long essay to extolling this value of art. But I fear that it is all too easy to overemphasize it; and those who place much emphasis upon it are apt to be those who do not see the other things which art is in a far better position to give us – even to morality itself. Those who praise art because it teaches or preaches or edifies by its message, or because works of art sometimes have moral or a lesson, do not speak falsely, but if this is all they have to say about the value of art for morality, they are using art for far less than it is able to give. To use a figure that Clive Bell employed in another connection, the didacticists in art are like people who use a telescope for reading the news, or who try to chop blocks with a razor. A telescope can, with some difficulty, be used for reading the news, but this is not what telescope is built for, and if they use it for this purpose alone they are using it to do jobs that far less subtle and valuable things could do much better. High School teachers of Shakespeare who tell their pupils that Shakespeare wrote *Macbeth* to prove that crime doesn't pay, are unwittingly putting Macbeth on the same level with the most ordinary cops-and-robbers movie. It is no wonder that after a year or two of literature courses taught in this way, the pupils come to hate Shakespeare for life, and would almost rather perish than approach his works again.

Art does teach us, but not by explicit preachment. As John Dewey once put it, art teaches as friends and life teach – not by preaching but simply by being. The variety of situations presented, the human characterizations, the crises and struggles and other experiences through which these characters pass, these alone, when set before us by the writer, are sufficient to produce a moral effect. Why do we need preachment as well, a moral tagged on at the end? If the tag were all that was needed, the author might have done better to write an essay or a tract instead.

2. But how then does art achieve a moral effect, if it does not state its moral? Literature, at least, does so by presenting us with characters in situations, usually situations of moral conflict or moral crisis, in which we can enrich our own moral perspectives by deliberating on their problems and conflicts, which usually have a complexity and a richness which our own moral situations seldom possess. We can learn from them, in the school

of experience, without ourselves having to undergo in our personal lives all the moral conflicts, or make the moral decisions, which they (the characters) must do; for we can view their situations with a detachment which we can seldom achieve in daily life, when we are immersed in the stream of action. And by viewing these situations and reflecting on them, we are enabled to make our own moral decisions more wisely when Life calls upon us in turn to make them.

It is difficult, for example, to see how one could read Shakespeare's *Hamlet* or *Othello* or *Macbeth* without the exercise of his own powers of moral reflection. We see these characters in situations of moral crisis in which they must make important and often agonizing decisions; and we can hardly follow their careers without ourselves going through some of the processes of moral reflection which are required of them. And in doing this we surely grow ourselves in moral insight. It happens when we follow Raskolnikov in Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, or Anna Karenina in Tolstoy's novel or Dorothea in George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, to name but a few. Literature is often a stimulus to moral reflection, and one not equaled by any other, for it presents the moral situation in its total context, with nothing of relevance omitted and nothing less than this is required, of course, in making a moral decision.

3. We have already expanded our notion of the moral impact of literature considerably beyond the rather crude didacticism with which we begin. But we can go still further. I want to bring out an aspect of art and morality that we have not yet touched upon, though perhaps it is implicit in which has already been said. The chief moral effect of art, I would like to say, lies in its unique power to stimulate and develop that most important human faculty, the imagination. This answer to the problem of the moral potency of art was given more than a hundred years ago by Shelley in his essay, "A Defense of Poesy", and it stands unchallenged to this day. Shelley said, "The imagination is the great instrument of moral good, and poetry administers to the effect by acting upon the causes." Through great literature we are carried far beyond the confines four narrow provincial world of daily life, into a world of thought and feeling more profound, more varied, than our own, and in which we can enter directly the experiences, the thoughts, and feelings, of people far removed from us in space and time, and we are enabled to share these feelings in a way that no other medium enables us to do. It is not science, but art, that engenders in us a universal human sympathy and understanding for it enables us to enter directly into the affective processes of other human beings, often with mores and cultures far different from our own. Once having lived in the world of Dostoyevsky's characters, we can no longer condemn or dismiss in toto a

large segment of humanity as foreigners or strangers who are therefore wicked or beneath us; we can no longer use the customary slogan-thinking on them and treat "Russians" or "wastrels" simply as a mass, for they live before us now as individuals, animated by the same passions as we are, facing the same conflicts, and tried in the same crucible of bitter experience. Through such an exercise of sympathetic imagination, art draws all men together in mutual respect and togetherness. Far more than preachment or moralizing, even more than descriptive and scientific discourses of psychology and sociology, art tends to unite mankind and reveals the common human nature which exists in all of us behind the facade of our divisive doctrines, political ideologies, and religious beliefs. We realize that to condemn those depicted in novels is to condemn ourselves also. And from this, if nothing else, we learn the lesson of tolerance.

This is not to say, of course, that those who read great works of literature are always tolerant or sympathetic human beings. Reading literature alone is not a cure for human ills, and people who are neurotically grasping or selfish in their private lives will hardly cease to be so as a result of reading works of literature. Still, there is an undeniable effect of a wide and serious reading of literature: people who do it, no matter what their other characteristics may be, are more understanding of other people's conflicts, have more sympathy with their problems, can empathize more with them as human beings, than people who have never broadened their horizons by reading literature at all. No one who has read great literature widely and for a considerable period, so as to make it an integral part of his life, can any longer share the same provincialism, and be dominated by the same stupid prejudices which unfortunately seem to characterize most people most of the time.

Literature, more than anything else, is a leavening influence on the bread of morality. It loosens us from the bonds of our own position in space and time, it releases us from exclusive involvement with our struggles from day to day, it enables us to see our own local problems and trials (in Spinoza's phrase) under the aspect of eternity; we can now view it all as if from afar off, or from an enormous height. And through this exercise of the imagination, art enables us to do these things more than anything else does.

To have moral effects, it is not necessary that a work of art presents us with a system of morality, much less a true system of morality. It need not present us with any system at all; in fact its moral potency is greatest when it presents us, not with systems, but with people and situations, preferably those quite different from our own, so that through the imagination we can see our own customs and philosophies as we see theirs, as one among many of the

endless proliferations of adjustments and solutions to human problems which varying circumstances and our endlessly varied and resourceful human nature have produced.

Works of art, then, develop more than anything else the human faculty of the imagination. And, as Shelley says, the Imagination is the greatest single instrument of moral good. Perhaps this sounds like an absurd over-statement. But let us consider. Consider what morality is like without the imagination. Consider the average morality of a small community, relatively isolated from centers of culture and unacquainted with any artistic tradition. Their morality is rigid and circumscribed; the details of a person's life are hedged about with constant tiny annoyances, and everyone's life is open to the prying eyes of the others who are unfailingly quick to judge with or without evidence. Outsiders are looked upon askance; people of a different religion, a different race, or different culture are looked upon with suspicion and distrust; and anyone who does not subscribe to the last details of whatever moral code and religious belief is dominant in the particular community, is condemned and ostracized. No doubt these people are all very sincere; they are dreadfully sincere, deadly sincere, killingly sincere. That is just the trouble; sincerity without enlightenment can be as bad as intelligence without wisdom by political leaders playing around with hydrogen bombs. These people have not known the leavening influence of art. Their morality is rigid, cramped, and arid. What is needed in their lives is not more morality and more religion – they are surfeited with that already – but the fresh breath of art. If these same people had been exposed from early youth, in the right way, to great masterpieces of human literature, and learned through them to appreciate the tremendous diversity of human mores and human beliefs that go along with the same degree of sincerity that they possess, plus the complex workings of the inner heart as portrayed by a Tolstoy or a Henry James, they surely could not find it in them to be as harsh, as intolerant, and as ungiving as they are.

Such is the nature of morality without art. Art alone may seem like a meagre influence – that we are making too much of it in the moral life. But I do not think so. I don't mean to say that if you read Shakespeare you will then go out and do good deeds for your fellowmen; the influence is not as direct as that. It is a slow steady influence, like the continuous rain that falls into the ground and all of it is absorbed; it cannot be absorbed in a few fitful cloudbursts. It leavens the whole personality, but it is not traceable to the influence of any one artist or to any one encounter with art in their lives. To illustrate this, let us try to imagine what human life today would be like without art. Imagine the world without Shakespeare, without Shelley, without Beethoven, without

Da Vinci, without any of the (say) hundred major figures of the world's art. I do not mean without just one of them – I mean without any of them. Try to think of the enormous influence which these men have made, not only on other artists, but upon the great mass of men, one generation after another, filtering down into the life of everyday humanity, even when the people themselves do not realize where the wisdom (or even just the quotations) they are using comes from. Try to imagine, I say, a world without art, and you have a scene of such barren and awful desolation and sterility that it would not be too much to say that life would hardly be worth living. At least, if I had to choose between life without any of the great works of art of the last three thousand years, and life without any of the great advances of science in that same period, I would reluctantly but unhesitatingly choose a world without science. Without modern bathrooms and finned automobiles and heated swimming pools we could still get along; but without the great art of the ages, we would surely die of poverty of the spirit.

People are far too inclined to separate art and morality into two hermetically sealed compartments. People talk as if Morality were already complete and self-sufficient without Art, and that Art, if it is to be tolerated at all, can grudgingly be admitted provided that it conforms to the moral customs of the time and place of those judging it. But this is surely to conceive the relation between Art and Morality in far too one-sided a manner. If Art must take cognizance of Morality, then equally Morality must take cognizance of Art. Indeed, almost everything that is alive and imaginative about morality comes from the leavening influence of Art. Take our examples from Greece alone, what would morality be today without the influence of Aeschylus and Sophocles, without Socrates as described in Plato's dialogues, without even Herodotus and Thucydides with their quiet humor and gentle prodding scepticism and tolerance for other customs and other views? It is through great works of art that we get our greatest vision of the moral life itself. What is about other times and other places that we most remember? Is it their political squabbles, their wars, their economic upheavals? These are known in general to intelligent people and in detail by historians, but even then they do not usually make the dent on our personal lives that art does. What is alive today about ancient Egypt is its sculpture and its pyramids; what is alive today about the Elizabethan period, even more than the defeat of the Spanish Armada and the reign of Queen Elizabeth, is its poetic drama with its rich and vivid characterization and boundless energy. Other civilizations and other cultures may be sources of facts and theories which may fill our heads; but what makes us feel within ourselves the

same vibrant life they felt, is not their politics, not even their religion, but their art. Art alone is never out of date; science is cumulative, and the science textbooks of even ten years ago are now out of date: we study of the science of the Greek and the Elizabethans only as historical curiosities; as facts, they have long since gone out of date. It is only their art that is not dated; it can still present to us its full impact, undiminished by time. Shakespeare will never be out of date as long as human beings continue to feel love, jealously, conflict in a cruel and troubled world. It is the art of a nation that is timeless. To paraphrase a saying in the Gospels and apply it to past cultures, we can say "By their arts shall ye know them." The artists whose works we now revere may have died unsung, and most of them even if appreciated in their lifetime, were considered far less important than the latest naval victories or the accession of the current king, and yet today these things have all passed into history, but their art alone survives and stands with undiminished vigor. The art of the past moulds in countless ways the attitudes, responses, dispositions of our daily lives, including our moral ones. This is how art injects life into morality, and it is because of this that a morality that has lost contact with art is dead and sterile. And yet people tell us that Art is the slave of Morality!

IV

Thus far, in tracing the relation between art and morality, we have considered the moral effects of the characters and situations upon our own moral lives, through the imagination. And perhaps this is the most important moral function of art. But it is not the only one. If it were, we would have to conclude that literature, virtually alone among the arts, has a moral effect. Indeed, some writers are convinced that this is so. And it may well be that literature has a more marked moral effect than any of the other arts, since it deals with human beings in action in a way that the other arts cannot do. Still, it is not literature alone that has relevance for morality. Let me list briefly some of the ways in which all the arts can be said to bear upon morality.

1. First, there is an effect upon the artist himself. The creation of a work of art of individuality and complexity must necessarily occupy a considerable portion of an artist's waking hours; as such, it imposes upon him a self-discipline which can well be used in other areas of his life. Even if it isn't, the self-discipline in itself is a considerable moral influence. Not only must the creative artist discipline himself in submitting his will to the difficult requirements of his artistic medium; he must also use that medium to express feelings and ideas from life – and to do this he must appreciate these values in life, whatever values he is expressing in his art. This activity, which is too easy to state but so difficult to do, must exercise upon the artist a profound moral influence.

At first this may seem to be refuted by the fact that many artists lead immoral lives. But I do not really think that this proves what it is supposed to:

a. It is true that many artists do not lead moral lives, if by morality we mean conformity to the moral codes of the local time and place. Being citizens of the universe and spectators of all mankind rather than of a particular nation or community, artists tend to ignore or even trample upon some of the moral ideas and institutions that are held sacred in their particular time and place, even though they may be exonerated in the court of morality by their descendants.

b. Besides, the charge of immorality against artists, even by standards of conventional morality, applies not to art as such but only to some individual artists, just as it probably does to some engineers and some ditch-diggers. Many people, especially those who do not have real artistic ability, like to live what they romantically think of as the life of artists while not giving society in return the works of a real artist. This bohemian kind of existence is, more than anything else, a pose – not integral to art as such but put on by certain artists or would-be artists who are greatly influenced by the Romantic tradition. "Since society won't recognize me as an artist unless I live like one, I'll live profligated life and pull my hair and in general play the role of the mad artist, and maybe they'll think I really am one"– this seems to be the formula. Now some genuine artists such as Wagner doubtless fulfilled rather well in their own lives this ideal of the artist. But prior to the Romantic era this was not at all characteristic of artists. Think of Bach, a hard-working organist and choirmaster who lived a conventional life, almost a dull life, with his wife and large family, a solid citizen of his community, who declared with too much modesty that anyone who worked as hard as he did would be able to write music as good as his. Or think of Haydn, employed throughout most of his life in the palace of the Esterhazys, who considered himself an artisan among other artisans, in no way different from his peers except that he was playing a different trade, and who fell on his knees each morning and prayed sincerely to his Maker for strength to create fine music during the course of the day. No Romantic pose for these artists.

c. Even those who did in their personal lives embody the Romantic conception of the artist, however "immoral" they may have been in other aspects of their lives, were not so in the creation of their art. Whatever the personal life of Byron may have been like, and it was full of Romantic posturing and over-dramatization, when it came to his poetry there was not a whit of dishonesty or charlatanism about him. He labored for exactly the right words and exactly the right effects, as every true artist does, and he never allowed a line to be published if it was less perfect than he was able to make it.

In any case, when we weigh whatever immorality an artist possesses in his personal life against the great value of his work for his age and for generation to come, surely there is no doubt that the latter weighs far more heavily in the total balance. What if Wagner was unfaithful to several women, hypocritical, domineering, and generally unpleasant to live with? This occurred, but it has long since passed. Wagner was intent upon creating music whose fame and value (at least at first) were unknown and unsuspected by those who were around him; and we can only be thankful that he did compose and complete it, even if the achievement of this prodigious creative effort meant some distress to the persons around him. Those whom he injured are long since dead and gone, but his music lives in undiminished splendor.

One more word about the morality of artists. It is usual to think of artists as selfish, egotistical, demanding, and insensitive to the feelings of those around them. I have tried to show that for the most part this picture of the artists false, but even if it were always true, we could still reply: so what? Some artists are selfish and egotistical – very well, but most of the people in the world who are selfish and egotistical are not artists – in fact they contribute nothing to the world's culture or the world's productivity. They are simply selfish people, and that's all. If anybody is to be condemned, why pick on the artists? The artists, at any rate, are adding something to the world's worth by their existence, something that far outweighs the consequences of their own personal idiosyncrasies.

Psychoanalysts tell us that artists are products of undigested infantile conflicts having to do with exhibitionism, voyeurism, and misdirected libido. This may well be so. But even if certain emotional and temperamental character-traits that we may consider undesirable occur in artists more frequently than they do in ordinary people, it does not follow that the undesirable character-traits occur because they are artists. This is a popular superstition which we should do everything in our power to squelch. The truth is rather that their being artists and their having certain temperamental characteristics (which are held, at any rate, to be undesirable by the uncreative middleclass) are both effects of a common cause, namely certain unconscious predilections which were developed in the first two or three years in their lives. It is not true that their emotional instability and other personal characteristics were caused by their being artists. If they were, then if these people ceased to be artists they would no longer be selfish, emotionally unstable, and soon. But this of course is not true. If they stopped writing or painting or composing, they would still have the same character-traits as before, only now they would have no works of art to show the world to compensate for

the traits of character which are found so annoying to some of the people around them.

2. So much for the morality of artists. We should also mention the moral effects of art upon the secondary artist, that is, not the original creator of the work but the performer. There was a violin teacher I knew as a child who told his pupil, "Keep up your violin playing, no matter what else you do, it is the best moral influence you could have." Perhaps he was exaggerating; certainly very few people who undertake the violin do so in order to improve their morality. Still the music teacher was not quite talking up his sleeve. The moral influence may have been subtle, and a sociologist compiling statistics on the student's subsequent moral life might have been quite unable to distinguish him from non-musical performers in the number of times he violated one of the Ten Commandments. Yet I am sure that a moral influence was there, subtle but pervasive; and that the coming to grips with the works of creative genius, together with the constant training and discipline required to master and perform expressively the works of that genius, cannot be without effects upon the subsequent temper of his existence ("the fibers on his soul") which in a broad sense, can be called moral. At least, it is the doing of what is both difficult to do and greatly worth-doing – and this can hardly help having some effects.

3. So much for the moral effects of art upon the creating artist and upon the performing artist. Now what about its effects upon the consumer, the person who reads or listens to or views the work of art, and for whom it was created in the first place?

Historically the most famous theory about the moral effect of art upon the audience is Aristotle's Theory of Catharsis. According to Aristotle, tragedy in particular – though it has often been extended to art in general – acts as an emotional cathartic, a purgation of the emotions. Specifically, certain emotions – which need not be limited to Aristotle's examples of pity and fear – are generated during the course of daily life which we would be better off without and which we should try therefore to expel from our system. Art is the principal agency that helps us to do this. By witnessing a powerful drama or reading a novel or hearing a symphony, we can work off these emotions instead of letting them fester inside of us or taking them out in unpleasant ways on our fellow men."Music hath charms to ease the jaded soul"– especially the soul that is so full of pent-up inner disturbances that it must find some channel for their release. Art effects this release, and herein lies a moral value – not the positive production of anything, but the negative value of siphoning off undesirable inner states and working them off innocently through the experience of art, rather than letting

them grow rancid within us or venting them destructively on our families or friends.

As it stands, this view is undoubtedly somewhat crude, especially in the light of modern psychology. We are offering a picture or model of the psyche as a vessel containing an accumulating quantity of liquids which must be drained off if there is not to be an increasing inner turmoil or even an explosion. And undoubtedly the psyche is not a vessel of liquid, and the parallel between emotions and liquids is far from complete. Yet at the same time it is, I think, considerable – notice how far Freudian theory carries out the analogy between emotions and liquids.

We may wish to argue at points with details of the Aristotelian theory of Catharsis. Yet, somewhat restated, I am sure there is something in it. Perhaps we do not work off specifically the emotions of pity and fear when we witness a tragedy; at least, to students who have witnessed many tragedies the Aristotelian theory usually comes as something of a surprise. But let us make the view a bit more general. The experience of reading, viewing, listening to a work of art does give a peculiar relief, a release, a feeling of freedom from inner turbulence and disturbance. It is no accident that many people find surcease in listening to music when they are troubled in spirit. The mere act of plunging ourselves, for a few hours, into an entirely different world when we go to see a play, is often enough to help heal our wounds, to renew our spirits and give us a new lease on life. It is not merely that for a few hours we can forget all our troubles: this is true, but any form of entertainment however worthless, can do this; and in any case alcohol helps many people to do it too. No, the cathartic effect of art is more than this; it does not merely provide a break or interruption in the course of our worried lives, at the end of which they are exactly what they were before – or worse than before, in the case of alcohol. It is that through the aesthetic process itself, in the very act of concentrating our energies on an art-object of unity and complexity, our spiritual state is improved; there is a release from tension, an inner calm, a kind of inner clarification, that was not present before. Professor Monroe Beardsley describes it as follows:

> "Suppose you are in a restless frame of mind, faced by several obligations that all seem to demand attention, but no one of which predominates to give you a singleness of purpose. Sometimes, under these circumstances, you may read a story, or fall into the contemplation of a picture, or hear a piece of music, and after a while, when you go back to your problem, you may find yourself in a very different state of mind, clearer and more decisive. This is the exhilaration, the tonic effect, of art." (*Aesthetics*, p. 574)

We may extend this concept even further. Taking our cue from William James' essay "The Moral Equivalent

of War", we can say that human beings harbor within themselves many hostile and aggressive impulses which, if not permitted some release, will lead to destructive activity against other human beings, often in the form of the mass aggression we call war. Now there are some things, but unfortunately a very limited number of them, which enable us to work off those natural impulses of aggression in ways that do not mean distress or destruction to others. One of them is the excitement of the hunt – and in the hunting and fishing stage of man's development, when man's very life depended on the outcome of the chase, this channel for release of energy was probably sufficient. But this source of release is not open to most of us now in the state which we euphemistically call civilization, save only occasionally on a vacation or along weekend away from the office, when we can set out for the woods and hunt down the innocent creatures of the forest for sport. But most people most of the time must find some other outlet. Competition is one – in sports, in industry, in the professions. This often provides real release, but when unsuccessful it may only increase further the course of our frustrations. The most promising outlet lies in creative endeavor – creative activity particularly in the sciences and the arts. Even if our paintings are not very good paintings, they may provide great personal satisfaction. And since it is not competitive, and since it does not carry with it high financial stakes and since we can do it to suit our own mood and proceed with it at our own pace, it is not frustrating in the way that business competition may be. Here, then, is one "moral equivalent of war".

4. But perhaps we have bled Aristotle's Theory of Catharsis long enough. In any event, it is not the only moral effect of art. Here is another. Imagine what life would be like if we could constantly be surrounded by beautiful buildings, beautiful streets and avenues of trees, and have our houses filled with beautiful works of furniture and china. Would this not provide a moral uplift to help lighten our daily burdens and see us through many trying situations that confront us from day to day? It would certainly be a moral tonic. The greater part of our daily environment, at least in the city, is just the opposite of the aesthetic ideal just sketched. And what is the result of this? We are more irritable, more borne down by the daily burden of cheerless chores, than we would be if we lived in an environment that was aesthetically pleasing. The presence of pleasant shapes arid colors and sounds, in and of themselves, help to soothe and smooth our personalities in such a way that we are better prepared for the daily round of practical activities with which we all have to be more or less continuously concerned.

5. Along the same lines, the experience of giving ourselves to an aesthetic object itself has a moral

effect. If we are really concentrating on the details of a work of art, and not just passively letting it play upon our senses, this effect, the heightening of our sensibilities, of refining our capacities for perceptual discrimination, making us more receptive to the world around us, is again a moral effect in the broad sense; it heightens the tone of our daily lives and helps to make the experience of the world we live in richer than it was before.

Most of what passes for the aesthetic appreciation does not begin to do this; but this is only because it is not aesthetic at all–it is a kind of tired reverie rather than an intense absorption in the aesthetic object. Hanslick said that most people, when they hear music, simply allow themselves to be inundated by the sheer flow of sound. Many people automatically turn on the radio as soon as they enter their rooms – not that they ever really listen to the music, but it is there as a background, soothing the mind possibly warding off the horrifying experience of being alone with themselves, For most people, music is simply a soothing background. They do not really listen to it, they are not even aware of even the most elementary kinds of ebb and flow that take place within it; they passively receive it instead of actively participating in it. They do not listen to the music; they only use it as a springboard for indulging in an emotional debauch of their own, or a private reverie for which the music is merely a backdrop – a reverie which has very little to do with the nature of the music itself. Beyond taking in the general mood effect, they are aware of almost nothing that takes place in the music, but only of what takes place in their own psyches. And this of course is not an aesthetic effect; it is more like an anesthetic effect. Santayana's ironic definition of music is "a drowsy reverie interrupted by nervous thrills."I am not contending that just hearing the music will have a moral effect (snakes and toads hear it too). I am saying that the aesthetic experience – which involves nothing less than a total concentration on the perceptual details of the aesthetic object – is something which, by heightening our whole consciousness, by toning up our capacity for perceptual awareness and discrimination, by helping us come alive to the beauties in the world around us, has by this very fact a strong moral effect – or at least it is, again, a moral tonic, one avenue to mental health, one toning-up of the psyche, which artists and aesthetically sensitive observers have open to them, whatever else may be their weaknesses and troubles and whatever other vicissitudes may mar or dull the course of their daily lives.

6. But perhaps we have said enough about the instrumental values of art – that is, the good things toward which the appreciation of art is an effective instrument. Aesthetic experience is, first and foremost, not an instrumental

value at all, but an intrinsic value. Most of the things we value in life are valuable not in themselves but only for other things that we can get by means of them; so it is with money, with fame and fortune, even with morality itself – for morality is primarily an instrument for the promotion of a happier society. But the value of aesthetic experience is different from most other values in that it is not instrumental but intrinsic. Art provides us with experiences which, whether or not they have further consequences in our daily lives (and as we have just analyzed in detail, they do), are intrinsically valuable – worth having for their own sake, quite apart from the results they may lead to or the goal they may enable us to attain. Like jewels they shine by their own light; they do not depend for their worth upon goals which they help to realize or anything whatever outside themselves to give them value. In all our talk about the moral effects of art; let us not forget that moral values; whether crude or subtle, whether incidental or integral to art, are instrumental values. And in this respect, art goes morality one better: it is not merely instrumental to the achievement of things which are intrinsically worth attaining, it is itself (or the experience it provides) something of intrinsic worth – perhaps the most intense, concentrated, and worthwhile of all the intrinsically worthwhile things that exist in this workaday world.

V

We have examined how, in some detail, the positive ways in which aesthetic and moral values are interrelated. But now, in conclusion, I want to examine one final problem concerning the relation between art and morality; what happens when aesthetic values and moral values clash? Granted that the two are related and tend to vitalize one another, may there not be times when the one is absent and the other is nevertheless present in high degree, or when the promotion of the one means (to some extent at least) the destruction of the other? The usual view is that in such cases the work of art should be suppressed or censored. Is this conclusion justified? Let us take some sample cases:

Case1: For years James Joyce's *Ulysses* was banned in the United States until, in a famous court decision, Judge Wolsey admitted the book saying that in spite of certain passages the predominant intent was not in any way pornographic and that the book, being primarily an aesthetic object intended for a comparatively small number of sophisticated readers, would work no ill moral effects. However, D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (in the unexpurgated edition) continued to be banned in this country until recently (it is still banned from the mails).

Case 2: In Los Angeles, a few years ago, police raided a performance of Aristophanes' play *Lysistrata*, demanding the arrest of the author.

Case 3: F. J. Mather in his book *Concerning Beauty* cites the case of a male student in his elementary art class who complained to him about the erotic quality of the female nudes in some of Botticelli's paintings. The professor smiled and told the student that he'd just better get used to it.

Case 4: When the French motion picture *Rififi* was shown in Mexico City, it had to be withdrawn by local authorities because there were so many cases of attempted robbery, copied after the robbery scene which takes up almost one-third of the picture. In Paris, however, the showing of the movie had no such bad effects: the Paris police said that by the time the movie appeared this method of robbing department stores was already out of date.

Case 5: Large numbers of adolescent thugs have been asked by the authorities after their capture where they got the ideas for the crimes they committed, and some of them cited certain television programs and comic books (mostly the latter) in which crimes exactly like these were planned down to the last gruesome detail.

Well, these are a few examples; they could be multiplied indefinitely. Now, what are we to say about them? Should the works in question be banned or censored because they affect some people in a morally adverse way? Or should they be permitted to continue, accompanied by severe tongue-lashings and moral excoriations and expressions of righteous indignation on our part? Or should we simply ignore the conflict entirely and let the aesthetic object proceed on its uncensored way?

I cannot attempt here to examine each individual case of censorship to see whether it is justified; for this we would have to examine a great many more details of each individual situation than we can do here. All I can hope to do is to present a few principles and observations which may help to guide our thinking in this important matter.

The first point I want to make is that it is hard for me to conceive of any really worth-while aesthetic object, certainly any great work of art, as being morally objectionable enough to ban, if one approaches it in the right way – and I mean by 'the right way' the aesthetic way, which is the way the artist intended his work to be taken. If one views the work of art aesthetically, with his full powers of concentration directed upon the work of art to reveal its aesthetically rewarding characteristics, this task already requires so much attention that it tends to cut off all undesirable side-effects. If one views Joyce's *Ulysses* as the work of art that it undoubtedly is, the four-letter words and the passages some readers find indelicate if not indecent shade into insignificance; they are absorbed at once into the total organic unity of the work of art; and even the severest critic of *Ulysses* could not honestly say that the work taken as a whole is morally objectionable. The same is doubtless true of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Indeed, there are passages in the

Bible which could be taken as far more objectionable than any part of these novels – and if these portions of the Bible were to be sent to a publisher today in manuscript form, there are many publishers who would deny them publication for fear of outraging the moral sensibilities of the public.

A great work of art, simply because it does give us an aesthetic experience is practically immune from adverse moral effects; its aesthetic power tends to paralyse any incipient 'immoral' tendencies. The aesthetic way of approaching a work of art is incompatible with wholesale practical effects, such as going out and committing immoral deeds or setting out to change the world. When someone objects on moral grounds to an admittedly fine work of art, one usually finds that the person is not approaching the work in anything like an aesthetic way – he is using it for some other, and alien, purpose.

The best example that comes of mind of an admittedly great work of art being objected to on moral grounds, not be an ignorant yokel or even an aesthetically sensitive untrained person, but by a person of great aesthetic sensitivity, in fact a professional literary critic and aesthetician, is the attack on Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* by Professor W. K. Wimsatt. His charge is that this play celebrates voluptuousness and sensuous abandon. Here is a bit of his description:

> "What is celebrated in *Antony and Cleopatra* is the passionate surrender of an illicit love, the victory of this love over the practical, political, and moral concerns, and the final superiority of the suicide lovers over circumstances … There is no escaping the fact that the poetic splendor of this play, and in particular of its concluding scenes, is something which exists in closest juncture with the acts of suicide and with the whole glorified story of passion. The poetic values are strictly dependent – if not upon the immorality as such – yet upon the immoral acts. Even though, or rather because, the play pleads for certain evil choices, it presents these choices in all their nature interest and capacity to arouse human sympathy."(From his essay "Poetry and Moral", in *Thought*, pp. 281-299. Reprinted in Vivas and Krieger, *The Problems of Aesthetics*, the above passage on pp. 541-2)

Now, one might question at length this interpretation of Shakespeare's drama. But let us leave Wimsatt's interpretation unquestioned, and ask, supposing that it is correct, would this justify us in banning or censoring the play? And I think the answer is surely No. I cannot reply in this case, as one could in most of the others, that the person in question is insensitive to the aesthetic values in the play or is approaching it in a non-aesthetic way. But I can adopt another line of defense: I can say that until there is some evidence that the play actually has (or has had) an undesirable moral effect on a considerable body of readers (such as causing them to do likewise), I can see no reason whatever

for depriving mankind of a supremely valuable object of aesthetic experience. For where is there evidence that people who read the play will behave like the two lovers because they read the play to in any other way be demoralized thereby? On the contrary, if they read the play right, they will not be minus any moral stature – in fact the play is, at the very least, another example of a complex moral situation which they can reflect on – and they will be plus the aesthetic experience of a great drama to which they can return again for scenes of acute characterization, dramatic splendor, and poetry which is among the most sublime in our language. And this aesthetic experience is (as we have already tried to show) something of intrinsic value. To ban this play, then, would be to deprive ourselves of a source of intrinsic value and not to gain an instrumental value – a very bad deal indeed.

I am inclined to think that this is true in general, though not always as clearly so as in the *Antony and Cleopatra* case. We are told, for example, that American youth has been demoralized by such writers as Hemingway and Faulkner, and that although these men are excellent writers their views of life are demoralizing and they have set a bad example to the young. But I see no evidence of this. (1) To say that Hemingway or Faulkner or James Joyce or even Shakespeare is capable of demoralizing a generation of human beings is to attribute to these writers far too great a direct moral (or immoral) influence. How can they have demoralized our youth when very few of our youth, comparatively, have even read them, and most American youth have never even heard of them? Art has moral potency, but not, I think, that much. (2) Even among the intellectualist few who do read serious literature these days, I cannot see any harmful effects. What I do see is that they are better off, yes even morally, for having read the works of these writers; their horizons have been expanded to include other views of life than those they have previously known, and this acquaintance has been brought about through works of fine writing, sometimes even splendid writing, which they would do well to emulate; and which should have given them, in the reading of it, experiences well worth having for their own sake. And finally I must add, parenthetically, that those who are incited to lives of sensuous abandon by reading Hemingway or Faulkner must have been very much inclined in that direction to begin with – else the reading of a few novels could hardly have triggered off such a great response.

Again, it is said that novels of crime and detection should be censored because reading them may cause people to commit murders and thefts themselves. Again I can see that this might have been the case, but I can see no evidence that it is the case. People whose favorite bedtime reading is mystery or detective novels are, on

the whole, extremely law-abiding people, who are in no way incited to commit robberies or murders no matter how many of them they read about in Agatha Christie or Mickey Spillane. In fact, if anything, the shoe is on the other foot: the reading of these things probably helps the reader to work off any aggressive tendencies he may have to begin with; it helps to discharge innocently, in the experience of the novel itself. Any tendencies which might, if unreleased have become dangerous. Here we may put Aristotle's theory of Catharsis to good use against those who say that art is morally dangerous.

It would seem, then, that no case at all can be made for the censorship or suppression of works of art. But let us consider two factors which we have not yet mentioned: (1) there are many works which may have bad moral effects, which can hardly be called works of art at all, no matter how generously we try to extend the use of this term; and (2) even great works of art, though not morally harmful, if taken in the right way are often not taken in the right way.

Thus, our elementary art student, though he was confronted with great works of painting, was not concentrating on them in an aesthetic manner, and perhaps at that time he was unable to do so. But in time he would, and the professor's advice was probably wise: "You'll just have to get used to it." But the professor might have gone on to tell the student what he should look for in the painting, and by the time the student succeeded in doing this he would find that what bothered him initially no longer played any part in his response to the total aesthetic object.

In the case of the Botticelli, this is easy; but perhaps it isn't always. No matter how great something is, it can always be misused by other people who have little appreciation for its true source of value and no conception of what the world can give them. There is nothing so wonderful in the world that it cannot be used, misused, and abused by other people who are alien or hostile in spirit and who will not or cannot seek in it the values which it has to give, but will attempt to eke out of it other, and wholly foreign, values (or disvalues) instead. This is unfortunate, but it is a fact; and it remains a possibility that we have to censor certain works because there exist in large number people who will always persist in doing bad things to good works of art. At least this is so in principle, whether or not there are ever actually cases in which the evil accruing from misinterpretation and distortion far outweighs the good (both instrumental and intrinsic) that the work of art is capable of perpetuating if it continues to enjoy public and uncensored perusal.

That is one factor; but the other, and far more important, is that most of the works from which people get their alleged cue to immorality are not works of any aesthetic value at all.

Consider the case of the hoodlums who imitate the acts of crime they see pictured in comic books. Here there is not even the pretense of aesthetic value to compensate for the undesirable moral effects. And for my part, I would experience not a tremor of regret in seeing every existing comic book thrown into the trash heap – good riddance of bad rubbish. If youngsters can't read anything better than that, they might as well not read at all.

There are, then, times and places in which it would be much better if certain works (though usually these are not works of art) did not exist or were not shown. Should we say, therefore, that they should be censored? But this does not follow. It is one thing to say that something is bad in its influence on some people or even on everybody; it is quite another thing to say that therefore it should be banned or censored. It is one thing to know that the influence of something is undesirable, that certain people would be better off without it, and even to advise or preach against its being read or heard or seen; but to forcibly prevent someone from reading or hearing or seeing the work in question is to play God with other people's lives. Shouldn't they be free to make up their own minds whether they should see or read it nor not? How can a person's character ever develop if he is not permitted to make his OWN decisions, for better or for worse, but must have them made by others while they yet affect his life? If a movie or novel is banned before I get to see it, I do not know from personal experience what it is that I am not permitted to see; I only know that a group of other people have by their action prevented me from making the choice myself – and I do not even know whether their choice was a good one, or that the novel or movie in question would have influenced mine for the worse. I am supposed to take someone else's word for it; and the assumption underlying this is that I am so weak as to be unable to make the decision for myself. Indeed, the assumption is that the censors are better able to make it than I am; and how does either the censor or I know that this assumption is correct? The censors themselves, after all, are not gods; they are finite and fallible human beings just as I am. When censorship occurs, one body of human beings is sitting in judgment over another body of human beings, telling them what they may and may not read or see. And who are they to tell me what I shall or shall not see? What guarantee is there that they are worthy to do this? And even if they are, is not every such act of censorship a loss to my own freedom? Perhaps I would be better off for not reading the book, but is it not better for me to take that chance, than to have the opportunity to exercise my own freedom of choice to be taken away from me without even so much as my consent? Viewed in this way, every act of censorship is

an immoral act, involving some people who sit in judgment upon others and so not permit other people to exercise their own human power of choice. The good that is achieved by some people not reading certain books is now counter-balanced by the evil involved in dictatorship – in one human being or group of human beings refusing to permit other human beings to make choices for themselves.

This last evil is so great that I am tempted to believe that, for this reason alone, the evils of censorship always outweigh the benefit. However, I do not want to assert this dogmatically for all the cases that might ever arise: there may be cases in which the people affected are extremely immature and unable to make wise choices, and in which there is an undeniable "clear and present danger" to morals in permitting the reading or showing of the works in question, so that even the great evil involved in censorship is more than off-set by the evil resulting from the public availability of the product. I am not convinced that such cases exist, but I do not deny that they may. But human nature must be a weaker thing than I am inclined to think it is, if such a procedure is ever justified on a large scale. If someone is a mouse rather than a human being, I would rather see this shown by his own behavior than to see him prevented by the edict of others from exercising the choice that would show what manner of creature he is. Moreover, when one work is censored, there is a much greater chance that others will be; it is so easy to ban things at the source that the habit grows and increases like a bodily infection until it covers all of life's activities. Even if one act of censorship is justified in extreme circumstance, other acts of the same kind will follow inevitably in its train, until the rivulet becomes a river; one act of censorship, justified by extreme conditions, will lead to other acts of censorship which are not thus justified.

As for the censorship that does exist in our society, it seems to me to be wholly misplaced. We make a big fuss over a few passages from D. H. Lawrence or Edmund Wilson's *Memoirs of Hecate County*, and it never occurs to us to condemn the tremendous output of trashy literature that does not contain objectionable four-letter words of over-descriptions of immoral acts, but does contain a cheap, oversimplified, sentimentalized, and thoroughly misleading picture of what life is like. If anything is objectionable, it seems to me that it is superficial characterizations which make people out to be far simpler than they actually are, and Pollyanna endings which give the growing child (or even the immature adult) the rosy impression that there is always a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow and that everything always comes out all right for the people who are good, and that if your heart is in the right place and you are an American you simply can't lose. This attitude, I am sure, is extremely dangerous for our society;

and it is exemplified – most of all in Hollywood movies, which unfortunately happen also to be the medium most consumed by the impressionable and aesthetically untutored. The Legion of Decency and other organizations condemn many fine motion pictures which contain a few eyebrow-raising words or amorous situations or refer to some subject which the respectable members find offensive to their pure and unsullied sensibilities; but at the same time they see nothing objectionable in the judge and endless mountains of trash that issue from the film capital of the world, which give the naive consumer of this trash the impression that the victory always goes to the man who can draw the fastest gun, that Americans always win over their enemies because they are more virtuous, that the people in the world are divided into the goodies and the baddies and it takes only a minute or two of causal acquaintance to tell which is which. Here are the harmful effects of mass media – I shall not say of art for of course this stuff isn't art; here is the stuff consumed by youngsters *ad nauseam*, and which will send them into our next world catastrophe with completely empty minds, thinking that victory is certain because We are good and They are bad, or that (on the other hand) you might as well rock and roll because the world is going to the dogs anyway and there's nothing that anybody can do about it. If anything should be censored, it is the literature that promulgates this utterly false picture, this ignorance, this slick and oversimplified distortion of human nature and the world. But our censors are even more stupid than those who endlessly consume these hideous movies and television melodramas. They strain at the gnat and swallow the camel.

One more word about censorship. I have talked as if censorship, if imposed at all, should be imposed on morally inflammatory material dealing with sex and crime. But there is something else that is, surely, even more important: the intellectual content of works of art, the ideas they contain (and of course not all works of art do). Much as I deplore the censorship of movies and plays for the things they are now censored for, I would rather see a hundred of them banned for indecency than to see one banned because it contained new or foreign ideas which the censors found disturbing or subversive. I do not say that it should never be done, but that it should be done only under conditions of the most extreme danger, and abolished the moment the danger lessens. As we have already observed, censorship of ideas deprives us of one of our most precious freedoms, the freedom to makeup our own minds and arrive at our own decisions, even if in doing so we make mistakes. This freedom of decision is vitally necessary in a democracy. In this connection, I can do no better than to remind you of one of the famous passages in John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*:

> "If all mankind minus one, were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind … To call my proposition certain, while there is anyone who would deny it if permitted, but who is not permitted, is to assume that we ourselves and those who agree with us, are the judges of certainty and (are fit to be) judges without hearing the other side." (Mill, *On Liberty*, Chapter 2)

And this is true even if the idea that is squelched is false. For how are we to know whether it is false if it is never permitted to be freely and openly discussed? How are we expected to know that Soviet Communism is bad if as some have suggested, we should not permit such views to be discussed in our colleges and universities? If an idea is false, then a free and open discussion in the full light of day should reveal this fact. If it is false, we should not be afraid to discuss it openly, to discover its falsehood for ourselves and expose the reasons for it publicly but if the powers-that-be simply say that it is false and then clamp the lid on it, then we have reason to be auspicious that perhaps the view is true after all and it is only to their interest to make us believe that it is false.

Besides, true views are appreciated only when they are contrasted with false ones; a false view is eminently worth discussing, and of having sincere proponents, so that we can discover and appreciate a new in every generation the worth of a true view. Once a view, however true, is taken for granted, people come to give only lip-service to it, and no longer appreciate it as did those who fought to preserve it. This is what has happened to democracy in our day: it was a living thing to Washington and Jefferson, but it is so taken for granted by 99 percent of our population now that we are not even concerned to defend its tenets rationally against opposing views which we believe to be false.

And what if the idea or view that is being suppressed is true? Then, even more, mankind is being deprived of something of inestimable value, perhaps for generations. Generations later, perhaps, the same truth will be rediscovered by someone, and not be banned or censored the second time, but meanwhile mankind will have been deprived of something that may be vitally important to its progress or welfare. Unfortunately there is nothing about truth per se that makes it come out triumphant, and countless times in the history of the world the ruling powers have kept truths from the people and thereby cheated not only their people but generations of posterity. Even where the political power permits the truth, if the people are allowed to remain in ignorance or somnolence, or are so fearful to public opinion that they dare not openly defy it, the truth may once again be caused to die.

Never in the history of the world were we more in danger from this source than now. We live in a dream of indifference, and a tyranny of public opinion. And while we sit at our television sets absorbed in the latest escapist melodrama, systems of thought are arising around us in the world which, if they could, would impose on our freedom of thought the total suppression of a police state. The worst feature of such a system would not be its autocracy – Italy during the Renaissance was ruled by a series of autocrats who left considerable freedom of private life and creativity to the people. Even worse than this autocracy would be the rigorous suppression of all ideas opposed to the regime, through brain-washing and other techniques which are now being so thoroughly perfected that if the regime triumphed there would be no way of opposing it, for it could soon stamp out all opposition, even in thought. All works of the mind, including all works of art, which failed to conform to these ideas would be mercilessly suppressed, and all its proponents exterminated or psychologically conditioned into a passive acceptance of the ideas of the regime. In the light of such a threat, it is all the more essential that we be constantly sensitive to new and different ideas, subjecting them (whether true or false) to the fierce light of open and public discussion. If we do not do this, if we continue in our lassitude, then history may still write on the tombstone of our once-great nation. "Here lies a government that was of the cattle, for the cattle, and by the cattle, and therefore it perished from the earth."

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– **John Hospers** was an American philosopher and political activist. He was interested in Objectivism. In 1972, he became the first presidential candidate of the Libertarian Party, and was the only minor party candidate to receive an electoral vote in that year's US presidential election. His books include *Meaning and Truth in the Arts* (1946), *Introductory Readings in Aesthetics* (1969), *Artistic Expression* (1971), *Libertarianism: A Political Philosophy for Tomorrow* (1971), *Understanding the Arts* (1982), *Law and the Market* (1985), *Human Conduct: Problems of Ethics* (1961), *An Introduction to Philosophical Analysis* (1953). He was editor of three anthologies, and contributed to books edited by others. He wrote more than 100 articles in various scholarly and popular journals. Hospers was editor of *The Personalist* (1968-1982) and *The Monist* (1982-1992).

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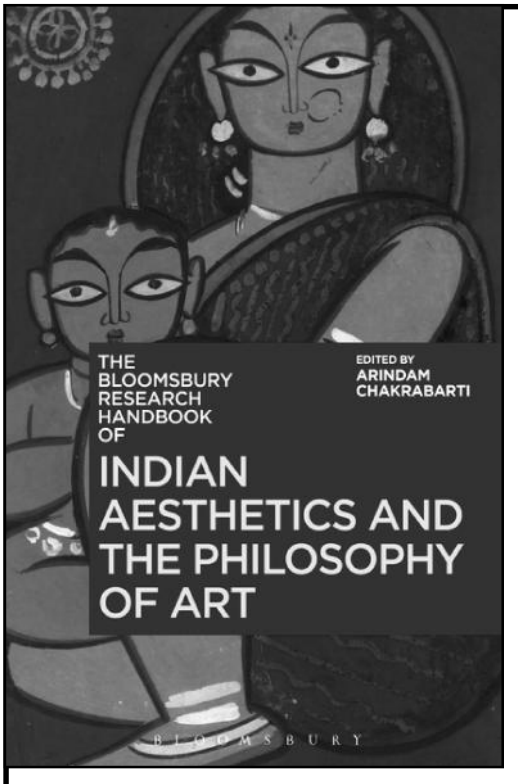

The Bloomsbury Research Handbook of Indian Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art

Editor: Arindam Chakrabarti

The book provides an extensive research resource to the burgeoning field of Asian aesthetics. Featuring leading international scholars and teachers whose work defines the field, this unique volume reflects the very best scholarship in creative, analytic, and comparative philosophy.

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Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews

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Rashmi Poddar, Director, Jnanapravaha Mumbai, India

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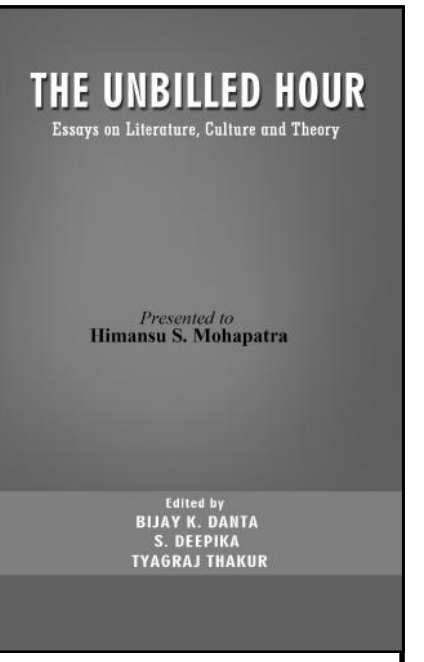
THE UNBILLED HOUR
Essays on Literature, Culture and Theory

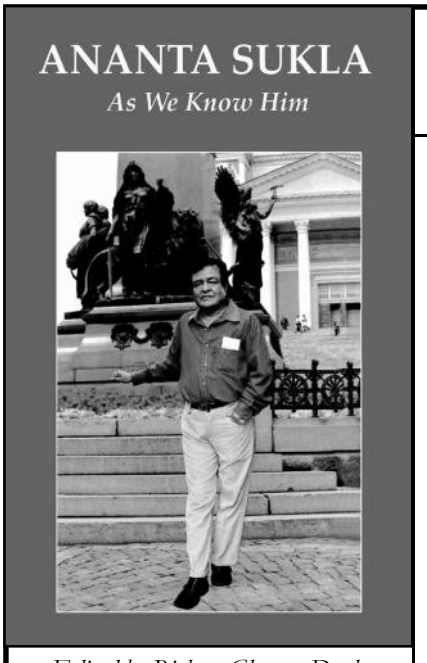
This timely volume is put together to honour Prof. Himansu S. Mohapatra as he retires from active teaching in April 2018. Seventeen essays -- written by friends, colleagues, former students and scholars from home and abroad -- use as take-off points, themes and subjects that figure prominently in Prof. Mohapatra's work. This feast of ideas is a celebration of the 'unbilled hour' both in his life, and in the lives of the contributors.

Prof. Himansu S. Mohapatra has for over three decades been a dedicated teacher and researcher of English, American and Indian literatures. As he retires, he leaves behind a legacy of many dimensions. He is an elegant and sophisticated critic who writes in both English and Odia and also translates between these two languages. The essays by several distinguished colleagues collected in this festschrift fittingly reflect and extend his own critical preoccupations.



Edited by Bijay K. Danta, S. Deepika, Tyagraj Thakur

Kitab Bhavan, Bhubaneswar



Edited by Bishnu Charan Dash

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ANANTA SUKLA
As We Know Him

A cross between a felicitation volume and a Festschrift, this book was precipitated into birth by the sudden and alarmingly downward spiral in the health condition of the person at its centre: As the book materialises, one is able to see the most astounding compilation of the labours of love of his many peers, collaborators, friends and scholars from home and abroad. They have showcased Prof. Sukla's astonishing scholarly range within the unified field of comparative aesthetics in their memoirs, appreciations, assessments and impressions. Almost every single essay has touched upon that marvel, namely Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics, which Prof. Sukla created in 1978 and has sustained single-handed for forty long years.

Read in its right spirit, the book is not merely a personal profile but an exemplary story of an intrepid and passionate comparatist who has successfully negotiated between the East and the West.

JOURNALS RECEIVED

British Journal of Aesthetics, The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, Comparative Literature, New Literary History, Critical Inquiry, Poetics Today, Journal of the History of Ideas, Philosophy and Literature, Philosophy East and West, Journal of Modern Literature.

Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics (ISSN: 0252-8169) is an international half-yearly journal published by Vishvanatha Kaviraja Institute, Odisha, India since 1978. The Journal is committed to multidisciplinary and cross-cultural issues in literary understanding and interpretation, aesthetic theories, conceptual analysis of art and literature, philosophy, religion, mythology, history of ideas, literary history, criticism, scholarship and translation. Scholars in a variety of fields including philosophers, linguists, historians and critics of religion, fine arts, performing arts and literature have been contributing essays that offer in-depth analysis and multi-faceted views.

The Journal has already published Rene Wellek, Harold Osborne, John Hospers, John Fisher, Murray Krieger, J. B. Vickery, Trevor Ling, Milton Snoeyenbos, Mary Wiseman, S. C. Sengupta, P. S. Sastri, K. R. S. Iyengar, V. K. Chari, S. K. Saxena, Suresh Raval, Robert Kraut, Charles Altieri, Ronald Roblin, Richard Shusterman, Robert Kraut, T. J. Diffey, R. B. Palmer, Keith Keating, Jonathan Culler and many renowned scholars.

JCLA is indexed in the MLA International Bibliography, Master List of Periodicals (USA), Ulrich's Directory of Periodicals and EBSCO. Celebrated scholars of the time like Rene Wellek, Harold Osborne, Mircea Eliade, Monroe Beardsley, John Hospers, John Fisher, Meyer Abrams, John Boulton and many renowned foreign and Indian academicians were Members of its Editorial Board.

Call for Contributions to a Sustaining Fund: The Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics (JCLA) is the official organ of the Vishvanatha Kaviraja Institute, Odisha, India registered under the Societies Registration Act No. XXI of 1860 (No. 13094/2030 of 1977-78). The Journal has continued for over 40 years. However, the need for a sustaining fund has been felt of late, in order to continue its undeterred publication. The Founding Editor, who took upon himself the necessary responsibility for years, is not keeping well and fast running out of financial resources.

The Journal appeals to patrons and sponsors in order to ensure the quality and smooth publication of the journal. All contributions, institutional or individual, to the Sustaining Fund of the Journal will be gratefully acknowledged, and are deductible from income tax returns under Section 80G of the Income Tax Act since the Journal is a non-profit, educational enterprise. For information about contributing to the Sustaining Fund, please write to jclaindia@gmail.com. Advertising space in the Journal (limited to material of scholarly interest to our subscribers) is also available.

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