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On the Significance and Originality of Nie Zhenzhao's Ethical Literary Criticism

Galin Tihanov
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Abstract This contribution discusses Nie's concept of ethical literary criticism. Nie's interpretation differs substantially from the body of work that is usually captured under the umbrella notion of ethical criticism in the West. The originality of Nie's approach lies in the fact that he seeks to rigorously differentiate moral and ethical criticism, the former being guided by the need to pass judgement from the commentator's/reader's current perspective, while the latter sets out to understand the specific evolution of literature as a tool of facing and resolving dilemmas around good and evil, duty and pleasure, loyalty and freedom, etc. This is what makes Nie's iteration of ethical literary criticism so interesting for intellectual historians; the distinction between cotemporary significance and historically evolving meaning also brings his understanding of literature and culture into productive proximity with hermeneutics. The article also offers a brief parallel with Marxist ideas of cultural evolution, particulalry those of Engels and Porshnev.

Keywords ethical literary criticism; cultural evolution; hermenetutics; Nie; Engels; Porshnev

Author **Galin Tihanov** is the George Steiner Professor of Comparative Literature at Queen Mary University of London. He is the author of five books, most recently *The Birth and Death of Literary Theory: Regimes of Relevance in Russia and Beyond* (Stanford UP, 2019) which won the 2020 AATSEEL Prize for "Best Book in Literary Studies." His co-edited volume *A History of Russian Literary Theory and Criticism: The Soviet Age and Beyond* (2011) won the 2012 Efim Etkind Prize. His work in intellectual history and on cosmopolitanism, world literature, and exile has been widely translated.

Anglophone readers will soon have access to one of the most interesting conceptualisations of literature to emerge from China in the early years of the

twenty-first century. The author of this book[1], Nie Zhenzhao, is undoubtedly a preeminent literary scholar who has gained international prominence and has been instrumental, through his publications, editorial work, and numerous doctoral students, in initiating a new version of ethical literary criticism, powerful in China and increasingly visible abroad.

It would not be amiss to place Nie's ideas in the context of his own remarkable intellectual formation. Nie began his career as a historian of English literature, writing his dissertation and his first book on Thomas Hardy, followed by extensive work on English prose and poetry of the late 18th and the 19th-20th centuries. Nie's scholarly interests and expertise proved wider still: as readers of this book would notice, his range is formidable: from Sophocles to Wordsworth to Tolstoy, and from Hemingway to Chinese literature from the 16th century to the May 4th Movement. This would have sufficed as a visiting card for any comparatist of international distinction. Yet Nie's work has gone far beyond this: it is not just the breadth of his scholarship that makes him an excellent ambassador of Chinese literary studies; rather, it is his capacity for conceptual thinking and his ability to work out new approaches and coin new terminology. The present book is testimony to this power of generating a different perspective on literature that positions Chinese literary scholarship vis-à-vis Western and Russian work in the field.

Nie has called his own approach "ethical literary criticism," and with due modesty and tact he tells his readers that this approach is in dialogue with the rich tradition of ethical literary criticism in the West (Wayne Booth and Martha Nussbaum are two of the more recognisable names he draws attention to). But his own approach, even as it is referred to by the same name, differs substantially from the body of work that is usually captured under the umbrella notion of ethical criticism in the West. The originality of Nie's approach lies in the fact that he seeks to rigorously differentiate moral and ethical criticism, the former being guided by the need to pass judgement from the commentator's/reader's current perspective, while the latter sets out to understand the specific evolution of literature as a tool of facing and resolving dilemmas around good and evil, duty and pleasure, loyalty and freedom, etc. This is what makes Nie's iteration of ethical literary criticism so interesting for the intellectual historian; the distinction between cotemporary significance and historically evolving meaning also brings his understanding of literature and culture into productive proximity with hermeneutics (certainly with Hirsch's version of it).

The scenario Nie elaborates is projected onto a large-scale historical canvas.

1 See Nie Zhenzhao, *Introduction to Ethical Literary Criticism*, Peking University, 2014.

He is, of course, well aware of Darwin's impact on Victorian literature, notably on George Eliot and Thomas Hardy; he nonetheless finds that while Darwin's teaching of evolution (natural selection) helps to explain the origin of men and women as biological entities, it fails to explain their origin as distinctly human beings, and least of all their origin as creative human beings who produce narratives in song, poetry, and prose. Nor can the latter quality be understood with reference to the habitual Marxian (Engels's, in this case) version that seeks the roots of human creativity in labour. This would remind Nie's readers of other inspiring projects of philosophical anthropology, not least the work of Arnold Gehlen or Boris Porshnev. The latter's idea that the proper history of humans is much shorter than their existence as biological species is a seminal reminder of the underlying asymmetries Nie's own project recognises as it examines the long course of human evolution. Noteworthy is also the fact that Porshnev, too, believed Engels's theory of the origin of language and art in labour to be deficient. For Porshnev, language and art originate in the need to articulate and enact suggestion and countersuggestion as nuclear forms of power-fraught human interaction; for Nie, the real story of humans begins not with the natural but with the second, "ethical" selection which facilitates the transition from animality to humanity by forcing us to move from the realm of "ethical chaos," as he terms it, into the realm of what he calls "ethical enlightenment." Nie considers the famous episode in the Bible in order to evoke the originary scene in which Adam and Eve leave the state of "ethical ignorance," as he would put it, and step over into the field of continuous ethical dilemmas. His reading of a number of novels and plays throughout the book, often in polemic with Freud's classic version of psychoanalysis, is a reading not for the plot but for the traces of such formative challenges in the narrative; to readers in the West this quest for ethical maturity may often resemble the matrix of a Bildungsroman, even where the genre itself is arguably rather different (as is the case, for example, with the classical Chinese novel, Journey to the West, which Nie also writes about).

There is little doubt that Nie's large-scale (and deep-time) thinking about literature would appeal to an audience familiar with an intellectual tradition that includes thinkers such as Bakhtin, Freidenberg, Marr, and Lotman who, in their own ways, strove to integrate the study of literature with the study of culture and grasp the mechanisms of its evolution. Nie is no doubt familiar with evolutionary accounts of literature that are grounded in cognitive science; equally, his attention will have been drawn by recent work, notably Joseph Carroll's, that elucidates the relationship between evolutionary biology and literary theory (students of world literature would recall here the importance of evolutionary biology for Franco

Moretti). Yet Nie follows a path of his own: to him, it is the ethical dimension that is key to a longue durée approach to literature; the aesthetic, as he succinctly puts it, is only an extension of the ethical—not in cognitive terms, but in terms of the late arrival of aesthetic autonomy in the economy of literary production.

Nie's bold attempt to produce an evolutionary account of literature that is at the same time sensitive to questions of poetics—while giving primacy to larger ethical concerns —, is thought-provoking and refreshing, even when it doesn't necessarily invite agreement; it offers marvellous evidence of the current stir and ambition of Chinese literary studies and promises the Anglophone reader—and this means a vast audience across the world that has access to work in English—a fascinating intellectual journey that will enrich and nuance the way we think of the evolution and ethical significance of literature.

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A Dialogue between Ethical Literary Criticism and Sociology: A Case Study of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*

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Abstract Ethical literary criticism regards literature as the carrier created and developed by human beings to show ethical relations and express their attention to them. From the abstract and comparative analysis of the ethical relations and moral problems described in the literary works and their consequences, the educational function of discovering the essence of human nature and guiding the progress of human civilization derives. When the Chinese academic discourse system constructed by Chinese scholars represented by Professor Nie Zhenzhao interacts with Durkheim's dichotomy of divinity and vulgarity, and the ensuing incest taboo theory, a complementary interpretation of the incest taboo in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* from an interdisciplinary perspective will bring us a lot of new findings. Professor Nie's Sphinx Factor points out that ethical rules distinguish human beings from beasts, while Durkheim's dichotomy separates the sacred from the vulgar. When both of them explain and criticize the history of incest in the Buendia family, the common direction is that the behavior of denying ethical rules ultimately led to the destruction of the family.

Keywords *One Hundred Years of Solitude*; ethical literary criticism; Nie Zhenzhao; dichotomy; Durkheim

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Introduction

In the theory of sociology of literature and art constructed by the thinker Pierre Bourdieu, it is true that reading literary works requires emotional understanding, but the readers are also required to analyze and criticize the social environment and realistic background reflected by them rationally (Bourdieu348). In other words, "Only a dual analysis can tell what aesthetic experience is and the universal illusions that accompany it, which essential analysis naively records" (Bourdieu344). In this context, "rational analysis and criticism" is the interpretation of literary texts from the perspective of sociology. Literature is an ancient surreal means of projecting ideals, and its reading experience is a process completed by both the author and the reader. Therefore, the meaning of the text itself must be consciously or unconsciously reflecting the social scene at that time, and its interpretation is deeply influenced by the social characteristics of the time in which the reader lives. As an art form, it is also a collection of contemporary thoughts produced by the author on behalf of the general public. As Eduardo Fuente said, "it is necessary to interpret it not only by limiting the external factors, but by introducing the internal factors" (qtd. in McCormick247). And sociology as the birth of the 19th century young subjects, using scientific positivism study to stretch the rules behind the social phenomenon, is the "center of comprehensive sciences and principles, representing the highest level of complexity, excellence and vulnerability" (Aaron97), as well as the best way to comprehensively understand society and the individual behavior logic within it. As Holgerson puts it, there has always been an inherent tension in sociology between the "scientific" and "hermeneutic" orientations. Interdisciplinary research that combines the advantages of the two approaches analyzes literary works with the theoretical framework of sociology, and extracts the patterns of social phenomenon in literary works of various countries and cultures that are popular and enduring, so as to clearly explore and demonstrate the interpretative and universal nature of different sociological schools and theories. And it can be used to guide the future development direction of real life and social structure. "Literary

works may be wrongly forgot, but will not be wrongly remembered" (Oden 11), the purpose of analysis via a combination of literature and sociological perspective is to figure out the reason why those works being "remembered" are "remembered," that is how they reflect the social consciousness and arouse the social mood which make themselves stay in people's memory. Literary criticism from the perspectives of various sociological theories will surely be capable of digging out the subconscious, social consciousness and historical reflection in the text; This particular form of comprehensive analysis mines literature's diverse charm, and thus strengthens the multi-dimensional coexistence of academic critical discourse. More importantly, this method of criticism helps to break the one-dimensional and self-effective aesthetic rules. In short, contemporary literary criticism needs scholars to add a new reading method from the perspective of sociology in addition to the traditional aesthetic reading. Professor Nie Zhenzhao's literary ethics responds to this academic requirement at the right time. Professor Nie pointed out that literary ethics is "a critical method to understand the ethical nature and educational function of literature from an ethical perspective, and to read, analyze and interpret literature on this basis" (Nie 13). It is worth noting that in literary ethics, the concept of "ethics" is different from the concept in ethics, which includes interpersonal relations, the relationship between man and society and moral order, that is, the more extensive "relationship network" in the social relations. Using this method of criticism, we will start from a new perspective and view literature as a carrier created and developed by human beings to express ethical relations and express their attention to them. Through the abstract generalization and comparative analysis of the ethical relations, moral problems and the resulting consequences of the description of literary and artistic plots, we can obtain the instruction of discovering the nature of human nature and guiding the progress of human civilization. Nie's Ethical Literary Criticism is a kind of Chinese academic discourse system. When domestic scholars work on ethical criticism of the literary pieces (especially foreign ones) from this perspective, their outcome is based on the traditional culture, and subsequently helps the long-standing moral order adapt to the new era, which is an effective way for Chinese scholars to look inward and form a reflection. A complementary interpretation of the incest taboo in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* from an interdisciplinary perspective will bring us a lot of new discoveries.

Interpretation of the Incest Taboo in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* from Dual Perspectives

With the development of history, schools of sociology spread. However, no matter

whether it is function theory, conflict theory or interaction theory, no matter whether it is apriorism theory or empiricism theory, all schools of sociological theory have a common starting point, and that is the relationship between individuals and society as well as the connection and interaction between individuals, and the mechanism of the connection and interaction is the so-called "moral order." So far, we can reasonably draw the conclusion that ethical literary criticism is an effective angle to conduct a research in sociology of literature and art by comparing and connecting the two. The two belong to different fields but blend together. The interdisciplinary literary criticism that combines ethics, sociology and literature is of great interpretative and disciplinary significance. This kind of interdisciplinary research is helpful for scholars to start from a new perspective and use comprehensive methods to dig deeper into the meaning of the text.

Nie Zhenzhao believes that an important principle of literary ethics criticism is to "lay stress on objective ethical interpretation of the text itself, rather than abstract moral evaluation" (Nie 15). This interpretive criticism stems from the inescapable historicity attached to the text itself, which always reflects the dominant moral ideas of the time it was written. Therefore, in literary criticism, readers should, as an English saying goes, "put oneself in someone's shoes," and immerse themselves into the "historical scene" (Nie 38). Only by making ourselves empathize and resonate with the characters in the historical scene can we truly understand the motives and psychological activities of them. This also coincides with the view that society exists before the individual in the sociological theory of advance, and all the institutional structures of human civilization and individual thoughts and behaviors are derived from it. The society reflected in the text constructs the character and also governs its behavior, so we ought to "interpret" it rather than "evaluate" it. Comparing these two interdisciplinary theories, it is perfectly reasonable to think that the former is the methodology and the latter is the worldview that underpins it.

As mentioned above, the principle of respecting the historical background proposed by Professor Nie Zhenzhao exactly responds to Durkheim's sociological analysis method from the perspective of literary criticism. Emile Durkheim coined a very important, if not the most important, sociological theory, the dichotomy. In his view, all the phenomena of human society can be classified as divine or vulgar. Things related to the society can make people empathize with and project the individual's worships to the abstract collective onto this concrete thing, so it is considered as "divine." And what is merely relevant to the individual is difficult to evoke a higher, transcendent feeling in the heart of man, that is, "vulgar" (Durkheim 287). By extension, the sacred and the profane are opposites that exist in all human

civilizations. Applying this methodology to ethics, Durkheim believed that the taboo of incest in human society did not originate from natural evolution, but was related to people's subconscious separation between the sacred and the vulgar, and violating this taboo would be punished by divine power (Durkheim 6). Through the study of the Australian Aborigines who have kept the traditional concepts of early human civilization relatively intact, he found that the clan is a collective with the same type of totem worship feeling as the cohesive force, not the blood relationship. On this basis, he makes a comparative analysis of family groups from the primary to the high, and points out that the purpose of maintaining the sacred feelings (family assembly) from the interference of the mundane affairs (love of children) has made the human marriage system from the very beginning exogamy, that is, men and women of the same race cannot marry. The intrinsic nature of this extrinsic institution of exogamy is the incest taboo, from which more perfect and superior family rules have evolved. The conclusion that the incest taboo is due to the individual's sense of awe for the group, rather than to the subconscious left in the brain by natural evolution, is also supported by the data. Modern research groups (Itao, K; Kaneko, K) developed a community model consisting of lineage and family groups and introduced social cooperation between relatives and partners as well as mating conflict. Each spectrum has parameters characterizing traits and mate preferences, which determine the likelihood of marriage and the degree of cooperation and conflict between lineages. The study proved numerically that the clustering of lineages in the same space led to the emergence of tabu clans. When there is a strong need for cooperation, there is widespread exchange (i.e., indirect exchange of brides between more than two clans), and when mating conflict is strict, there is restricted exchange (i.e., direct exchange of brides and children to different clans). This theory can also be supported by the related research of the psychologist Freud: "We find that early sexual pleasure in young humans has an incestuous meaning, and if this action is suppressed, it becomes part of the building blocks of neurosis in later development. Therefore, the fear of incest as a natural instinct should be ruled out" (Freud 134).

The basic meaning of "incest" is "the violation of human norms," that is, the sexual activity between close relatives and the resulting procreation. In *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, the concern of "giving birth to the pig tail children" generates from the first generation of the family, Jose Arcadio Buendia and his cousin Ursula, continues in one hundred years, and ends up with real situation that the seventh generation of the family member (also the last generation) is really an infant with pig tail, It is believed that the fear of incest, which is constantly

mentioned and emphasized, is a hidden narrative line that runs fatally through the family's history, along with "suffering from loneliness." One might even say that the Buendia family history is a history of incest. As a side note, we should be aware of Marquez's own claim that "the novel particularly interested me in telling the story of a family obsessed with incest" (from an interview with Marquez conducted by the journalist Rita Gilbert in 1971). Traditional literary criticism on incest behavior mainly focuses on the motif and metaphor of Oedipus myth, which won't be discussed here. From the perspective of sociology of art and literature, the social environment in the time when the author Marquez wrote his book was in turmoil. The native South American Indian life collapsed under the impact of European and American industrial civilization, and the marriage system of exogamy was also impacted (Jose Arcadio Buendia's marriage with his cousin Ursula). The loneliness and isolation of the Central and South American peoples during the colonial period led to their emotional tendency to look inward and search inward. In behavior, they were easily attracted by closer family members and then projected their love to ethical relatives (Jose Arcadio and his adopted sister Rebecca), even biological relatives (Aureliano Buendia and aunt Amaranda Ursula).

Throughout the narrative, most of the female clients have a great fear of such incest. For example, young Ursula always worried about herself "giving birth to lizards" ; While growing older, she warned Remedios not to have sexual relationship with any of the 17 sons of Colonel Aureliano Buendia (Remedios, as daughter of the third generation of the family, Jose Arcadio Segundo and his wife Santa Sofia de la Piedad, is niece of the 17 sons of the colonel): "Keep your eyes wide open, she warned her. With any of them your children will come out with the tail of a pig" (232). Rebecca, for example, "went back to eating earth and the whitewash on the walls with the avidity of previous days, and she sucked her finger with so much anxiety that she developed a callus on her thumb. She vomited up a green liquid with dead leeches in it" (97) , using pica to relieve the depression and pain caused by her unconventional relationship with her brother Arcadio. In sharp contrast, is the general attitude of the male participants, which is dismissive. Ursula's husband, Jose Arcadio Buendia, was dismissive of the consequences of incest: "I don't care if I have piglets as long as they can talk" (60); Aureliano Jose was equally unconcerned: "I don't care if they're born as armadillos" (153). This foreboding echoes the prophetic narrative of the family's eventual demise in the product of the incest of the freak on the parchment, suggesting that the demise may come from the male family members' indifference to incest, and reflecting the taboo and fear of incest among people (including the author) at that time. Buendia family

perishes with the birth of its seventh generation,"with the open and clairvoyant eyes of the Aurelianos, and predisposed to begin the race again from the beginning and cleanse it of its pernicious vices and solitary calling, for he was the only one in a century who had been engendered with love" (410). The only one born as a result of incest love is the only real freak, the most promising offspring for cleaning up the family's vices is also the last one before the family's collapse. This combination of traits can be seen as a microcosm of Buendia's family history, This plot arrangement precisely echoes Durkheim's view in marriage theory that "the purpose of exogamy is to distinguish between the sanctity of family feelings and the vulgarity of personal feelings" (Durkheim 53)—it is abnormal to confuse love with family attachment, and therefore the disappearance of the family is inevitable.

The Tangled Struggle of the Sphinx Factors and the Reality of Coexistence

In order to better explain the text, the author roughly divides the incest relationship into two types: ethical incest and consanguineous incest. Examples of the former include Jose Arcadio's marriage to his stepsister Rebecca, while Aureliano Buendia's relationship with Amaranda Ursula falls into the latter category. Obviously, the former introduces sexual behavior into relatives, destroying the most basic and key ethical relationship of human civilization, destroys human nature and social stability, and confuses the distinction between human and beast in the sense of morality. Furthermore, the latter also increases the possibility of reproducing defective offspring, which is not only a moral decline, but also a regression of biological evolution, objectively contrary to the reproductive instinct of human progress from low to high. This distinction can be understood by comparing the difference between kindred and family life proposed by Freud in *Totems and Taboos*: "Kindred is a group that has been integrated throughout its life and is regarded as an integral part of a common living organism. In Hebrew, when one addresses the kindred, one often says, 'I am your bone and flesh.' Therefore, the kindred represent the common participation in something shared by the group. Blood relations are something older than family life" (Freud 146), from which we can clearly see that blood incest, as well as ethical incest, is the destruction of the instinctive and ancient ethical relations of human beings.

In this regard, Professor Nie Zhenzhao puts forward the theory of "Sphinx factors" in ethical literary criticism, which refers to the image of Sphinx with a human face and a lion body in the myth to indicate that the real "human" body contains both human nature and animal nature. "Among them, the human factor is the superior factor, and the animal factor is the inferior factor, so the former can

control the latter, so that people can become people with ethical consciousness. The bestiality in man is a vestige of evolution, but it can be controlled by rationality. This ethical consciousness is the essential characteristic that distinguishes man from beast" (Nie 14). In the narrative of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, the long family history of the Buendia family is a history of incest, as well as a history of mixed human and animal nature. First of all, each character carries a different proportion of conflict between human and animal, ethic and instinct ; Secondly, we can use the dichotomy method on this basis, and consider the male and female members of the family as two collectives mirroring and reflecting each other. Men are generally dismissive of ancient warnings against incest, and even more unabashedly subject to the primal desire (that is, Freud's Libido); as a contrast, the female members were timid about the consequences of incest, that is, the birth of deformed children, which further emphasizes the seriousness of breaking the ethical relationship and violating the moral order. Therefore, the set of male members is the personification representative of the animal factor, while the opposite set of female members is the materialization carrier of the human factor. The two conflict with each other and combine together into a family, confronting each other and tangled by blood, which just represents that animal nature and human nature contradict each other and complement each other in the formation of a complete social man. The most obvious and symbolic setting in the text is in the epilogue, where the deformed child with a pig's tail born from incest echoes the incest consequences that exist in the verbal warning at the beginning. As the symbolic image of this closed-loop narrative structure in magic realism style, the "baby with a pig's tail" is not simply a defective child in physiological sense. Under the discourse system of Sphinx factor analysis, it is not difficult to find that the image of "the human factor and the animal factor coexist in the same individual" is similar to Sphinx's image with the lion body and the human face. This is the implication of the author, Marquez, is a deliberate plan—that the incest fear that haunted the Buendia family for a hundred years is the reflection of ongoing struggle between human and animal nature in the minds of social people. At last the fear becomes a reality, and the struggle manifests itself through the tangible consequence of coexistence. The family prophecy written on the parchment was deciphered, and the Buendia family history came to an end. It became real history.

As mentioned above, incest in the traditional sense specifically refers to the sexual behavior between non-marital relatives and the resulting reproduction. Ethical Literary Criticism also focuses on observing and explaining the causes and consequences of this kind of erotic incest. However, based on the ethical background

of the East Asian cultural circle, the author tries to introduce the ethical concepts of the Three Cardinal Principles and the Six Disciplines of Confucianism into literary and artistic criticism.[1] In this sense, mutual respect and friendly coexistence among family members (especially the subordination of the younger generation to the elder) is also an important ethical rule, which helps maintain family unity, strengthen clan strength, and ultimately promote the development of the family collective and individual. On the contrary, the conflict between family members or even killing each other is also an incest. The author thinks that, compared to the western culture, the east Asian Confucianism emphasizes more on the hierarchical order within households, which makes the ethical literary criticism from the perspective of "murdering within families" a creation of traditional heritage, and it can yet be regarded as an effective way to develop China's own academic discourse.

Complementing and interacting with Professor Nie's theory in literary criticism, the incest history of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is a typical structure of ethical knots forming ethical lines. From the family's first marriage, Jose Arcadio Buendia and Ursula were Cousins. This family incest even exists in the memories of the oral content about more previous "aunt and uncle" consanguineous marriages. The forming of this family created the first child with pig's tail, and thus became the fear of Ursula, and from her remained a deterrent in the family for generations – this plot remains mysterious, which may also be a metaphor for the "incest" impulse that wraps human society like a fog. Later, Jose Arcadio, the eldest son of the second generation, married his stepsister Rebecca; And both he and his second son Aureliano had sex with Perar Ternella and each had children; The third generation of the family are the two sons of Perar Telnera, Arcadio and Aureliano Jose, the former falling in love with his biological mother and the latter with his aunt Amaranda; Of the fourth generation, the beautiful Lemedes is admired by the seventeen sons of the colonel (Aureliano the second generation) and is spiritually exposed to the incestuous impulses of erotic love; Amaranda Ursula, a fifth generation member, became attached and had sex with Aureliano Buendia, a sixth generation member and also the illegitimate son of her sister Meme, giving birth to the seventh and final generation of the deformed family. This long and complex history of incest is an explicit ethical line, in which every specific incest act and every particular incest relationship is an ethical knot. Our reading task is to "untangle" these ethical knots so as to form different understandings of literary texts (Nie 39). These ethical topics serve as the deep core of the story arc from which the narrative unfolds. What is

1 from Ban Gu's *Baihu Tong* Vol. 7, in which the three cardinal principles are combined with the six disciplines.

particularly ingenious in the story design of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is that the whole ethical line echoes from beginning to end, constantly forming a cyclic pattern; The same incestuous impulse continues across generations, and this closed-loop ethical line is particularly metaphorical and readable. As Pilar Ternera noticed, "the history of the family was a machine with unavoidable repetitions, a turning wheel that would have gone on spilling into eternity were it not for the progressive and irremediable wearing of the axle" (365).

Blood Feud and the Tragic Fate of the Family

In sociological discussions, Emile Durkheim pointed out that the family unit is the earliest moral community and religious community, and family emotion, like religious emotion, is fundamentally a sacred instead of vulgar force (This conclusion is also deduced according to the dichotomy described above: "Collective" has the power to transcend individual and experience, and is the source of sacredness and religiosity, while family community is "collective" just like social community). Only by devoting themselves to the collective can individuals be affected by this sacredness. From the family to the clan to the society, with the expansion of the collective, this sacredness is gradually strengthened until religion is born: "The original source of the gods and totems of the clan can only be the clan itself but nothing else. It is the clan that is personified and represented in the visible form of totem plants and animals in the human imagination" (Durkheim 286). Thus, the representative of "sacredness" in the religious sense, the god, in Durkheim's analysis is the person who receives the projection of collective feeling. This view is also supported in the text. During the century depicted in One hundred years of solitude, a member of the first generation, Ursula, witnessed almost the entire history of family, she has been identified as a wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, making family members a union as a centripetal force. In a sense, Ursula of the Buendia family can be likened to a religious god—for example, like Jesus, she is revered by her members as the soul of the community, with a status and influence beyond that of an ordinary individual, and a longevity that is rare among mortal individuals. We may quote her self-assessment, "As long as God gives me life, she would say, there will always be money in this madhouse" (Marquez 151). Surrounding Ursula, the "god," the Buendia family is flourishing. Members may not be closely related to each other, but they all have an invisible connection with the family community, and even share the inevitable lonely fate. Before European countries colonized Central and South America and brought Catholicism (or before Fernanda brought Catholic ritual system in the text), the native religious culture of

Latin America was relatively simple. We can even say that Ursula's "Mother Earth" divinity represented the belief culture of Indian clans before Latin America was colonized. This is also consistent with Durkheim's idea of looking for the origin of religion from more primitive religious beliefs (Australian Aboriginal totems). Combined with the fact that names such as Aureliano and Arcadio constantly appear in the family for generations, intergenerational inheritance here seems to be a repeat of the spiral movement—apparently Gabriel Garcia Marquez intends to make these names represent a significance beyond the individual level—"strong and willful" Arcadios and "clairvoyant" Aurelianos (407). That is the externalization of the power of the family collective on the symbol of name. Because the small society of the family exists before the individual members, its inescapable divine power is doomed to control the individual. The inherent names are also the mold of the family fate, depriving individuals' freedom. This arrangement is no coincidence in this exquisite literary epic.

Therefore, mutual hatred, injury and even murder among family members will undoubtedly harm the sanctity of the family. Whether Amaranta murders her sister Rebecca in a dispute over love but kills young Lemedes by mistake, or Jose Arcadio Buendia is tied to a tree by his family for the rest of his life because of aging and incapacity, is against morality and conflicts with the holy. The former causes a rift in the family emotional bond due to personal relationship and eventually kills the innocent and brought pain to every family member as retribution; The latter denies the dignity of Jose Arcadio Buendia, blurring the distinction between man and beast, which is constructed by daily life rituals. This incest behavior destroys the sanctity of the family, very clearly indicates the damage sanctity is blurring the man beast, radically rejects the possibility of "being human."

From the perspective of ethical literary criticism, this kind of blood rivalry can be explained by Sphinx factors model as follows:

When Amaranta tries to kill Rebecca, this irrational decision shows that the remaining animal nature in her body prevailed, that is, the animal nature in the Sphinx factors, which represents the biological attributes of human beings before the beginning of civilization, temporarily escaped the control of the dominant human nature, which has been strengthened in the process of civilization evolution. The escape was disastrous. The lack of ethical consciousness inevitably leads to the disappearance of human nature, which in Amaranta's case is manifested as the murder of her sister. And for the famous Sphinx riddle "four legs in the morning, two legs at noon, three legs at night walking animal," the answer is "man." Solving this riddle means understanding of "man." The content of the riddle itself is the

different stages of the life course of the social people, and it is also the life that the solver is experiencing—implying that knowing others will also know himself, and knowing himself will also know others. Thus, this ancient ethical riddle holds contemporary values—that a society is only as civilized as its treatment of the weak. The rules for "four-legged animals" and "three-legged animals" are ethical rules. The prophecy of the Buendia family that "The first of the line is tied to a tree and the last is being eaten by the ants" (403) is fulfilled in this work in the following way: old Arcadio is deprived of dignity due to aging and loss of wisdom, and the last baby dies tragically due to unattended. The "three-legged animals" and the "four-legged animals," respectively, are unable to get the treatment they deserve and by no means to reach a happy ending, for the simple reason that in this incestuous family, the ethic of "respecting the old and loving the young" is often absent. The absence of ethics is the projection of the absence of human factor, and their tragedy is also the abbreviation of the tragic fate of the family, which implies the effective logic that the destruction of ethical rules will inevitably lead to disasters.

Conclusion

In *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, the core of the family history recorded on the parchment is the prophecy of "The first of the line is tied to a tree and the last is being eaten by the ants" (403). A hundred years of rise and fall can be summed up in one sentence: incest created love and hate between members that lasted for generations, and led to the eventual destruction of large families. The broad extension of incest includes both love between blood relatives and mutilation. The former essentially destroys the exogamy system based on the sanctity of family emotion under the dichotomy logic of the Sacred and Vulgar. Symbolically, the deformed child also reflects the Sphinx image of the coexistence of human nature and animal nature, representing that the destruction of ethics is equivalent to the destruction of the division of human and animal. In the text, the incest fear of the Buendia family for more than 100 years is virtual, and the incest emotional tendency and relationship as well as the child with birth defect are real. The combination of virtuality and reality generates an echo, constituting a series of perfect ethical knots and ethical line formed by them. The latter is not the incest that is normally discussed in the traditional sense, but it is an attempt to make academic discourse independent and localized by introducing it into ethical literary criticism in the context of Confucian civilization. Family members kill each other and destroy the sacred family relationship due to personal love. The fact that old people are tied to chestnut trees for the rest of their lives and babies are neglected is a denial of

ethics. The ethical destruction caused by the harm behaviors among blood relatives is the result of the victory of animal factor over human factor, which leads to the final overthrow of the family. These ethical rules hidden in the narrative of the text and the description of their overwhelming power reflect the powerful educational function of literary works, and this educational process is subtly realized in the aesthetic process of reading (Nie 14). *One Hundred Years of Solitude* has become an enduring literary classic because of its strong resonance with readers, especially its projection of the ethical disorders, and the moral lessons drawn from it.

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Postcolonizing Bildungsroman, Erziehungsroman and Zeitroman: Reexamining the (Anti) Colonial Tropes in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

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Abstract The paper examines a monumental shift in identity—colonial to anti-colonial—of the principal character of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, Changez, within the literary and theoretical tradition of postcolonial bildungsroman. The tradition of Western bildungsroman is appropriated and reconfigured by Postcolonial Bildungsroman: a new genre that radically dismantles Western nexus of power and knowledge. The postcolonial bildungsroman offers a liminal space between the colonial and the postcolonial experience -one that leads to decolonization, the recovery of indigenous and the subversion of the colonial apparatus. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* would be investigated as an erziehungsroman and zeitroman novel: two variations within bildungsroman. Postcolonizing Bildungs/Erziehungs/Zeir(Roman) focuses on the examination of central character's development of character, enlargement of vision and socio-historical factors that shape his anti-colonial consciousness. The anticolonial narrative structure and tropes decenter West from the position of authority and project (ex)colonized at the center- a major goal of postcolonial studies. The hero sheds his Eurocentric vision of the world and move towards indigenous selfhood in the quest of finding his true identity. This investigation challenges the reader's presuppositions/biases/theoretical baggage about a Pakistani hero's inability to grapple with the colonial machinery in the post 9/11 phase. It impels a reengagement of all colonial-colonized relationships in a postcolonized world.

Keywords Bildungsroman; Erziehungsroman; Zeitroman; Identity Crisis/shift and anticolonial tropes

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Introduction

Postcolonizing the bildungsroman reconfigures the traditional Western bildungsroman. "A Western-based genre, the Bildungsroman, has been appropriated and reconfigured by postcolonial writers around the world, creating a new genre as the "postco lonial bildungsroman" (Hoagland iv). Postcolonial bildungsroman is a new genre that stresses on reclaiming of identity, retrieving one's sovereignty, subversion of Western colonial machinery and decolonization of values. "The political and cultural ramifications of postcolonial appropriations of the Bildungsroman" (Hoagland 5) include coming up with "resistance literature" (6). So, postcolonial bildungsroman implies resistance to dominant ideologies of the West that undermine the colonized subjects through their system of monopolization. It is dismantling of Western narratives that reinforce supremacy of the oppressor. The colonized employ "linguistic, theoretical and ideological tools" (Hoagland 7) of the West to de-authorize West from the controlling position.

The Reluctant Fundamentalist is a classical example of Erziehungsroman and Zeitroman: two variations of Bildungsroman. Zeitroman chronicles the historical developments of the age that impinge on the central character. "This [Zeitroman] type of novel provides an interesting study of the effects of historical context on character" (Milne 72). 9/11 throws Pakistan-America relationship to an emotional rollercoaster. Similarly, Changez's relationship with [AM]erica hovers on two extremes: intimacy to oblivion. The [mis]trust between Pakistan and America in the post 9/11 phase is reflected in the relationship of Changez-[Am]erica. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is (a)n [postcolonial] Erziehungsroman novel, because the hero, Changez, evolves into an enlightened figure. "It [Erziehungsroman] is more concerned with the formal education and training of the protagonist" (Milne 72). Changez's development of character, evolution into maturity and shattering

of the American dream make *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, a typical postcolonial bildungs/erziehungs/Zeit(roman) novel.

Struggle to find one's true self lies at the center of postcolonial bildungsroman. "The quest for identity is also always a quest for authenticity: what is the 'real', 'true' I" (Ansari 8)? The protagonist continuously investigates his role in the society and the ways in which he could come into his own. "[postcolonial] Bildungsroman is. . . a form of diasporic text" (Ansari 2), it highlights the struggle of a character that is ideologically in two words. "Narratives that deal with diasporic, immigrant, or transnational identities, by virtue of occupying the fringes, or the spaces in between" (Ansari 3) highlight the mental turmoil that a protagonist is confronting. The protagonist in postcolonial bildungsroman is under the influence of colonial power, but he constantly tries to cling on to a new identity.

The colonized subject consciously drifts away from the colonial doctrines to seek authenticity in his native culture. "The most important component, however, is that the growth defined is not just anti-colonial but is towards indigenousness in language, style, religious roots and belonging" (Jussawalla 25). The chief character of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, Changez, stops examining the world from his Eurocentric optics. His intellectual enlightenment is brought about as a result of being a victim of ethnic marginalization and cultural subjugation in America. Marginalization culminates in his awakening and empowers him to structurally disempower the colonial setup. He makes an inward journey towards self-examination, so that he can unlearn the American educational influences. He resolves to work for social welfare and oppressed women in Pakistan.

An inward journey towards self-knowledge marks a watershed in the life of the colonized subject. "The child (adult) … turns away from westernization or modernization and turns towards an introspective knowledge of who he or she is within the parent culture. This is the basis postcolonial bildungsroman" (Jussawalla 31). The self-realization of being blind to the onslaught of the colonial apparatus sets Changez on a rebellious path against America. His "turning away from the colonizing culture towards authentic indigenousness" (37) to attain selfhood is a defining moment. Changez is no longer an agent of colonization; he has parted with American doctrines taught at Princeton University that shaped his consciousness. The postcolonial coming into being of Changez is a conscious rejection of Westernization; a signal of intellectual rebirth. A series of setbacks in America lead to the postcolonial bildungsroman of Changez. He cottons on the painful reality that American machinery of oppression can culturally disempower anyone, so. he puts to shame the imperial agenda of the hypocritical setup.

The Reluctant Fundamentalist is a slippery novel that centers on the paradigm shift in the life of Changez. The desire of living out the American dream at the cost of losing one's identity defines the turmoil of Changez. He turns his back on Pakistan to get social acceptance in America. He lives the romanticized life of an idealist: consummates his love with his girlfriend, Erica, gets a fairly decent salary from Underwood Samson, and attracts the attention of American colleagues by his business acumen. Recurrent instances of racial provocation in America turn him against the American empire that he once idealized. He decides to switch his ideological leanings toward his homeland, Pakistan, as a mark of protest against the bellicosity of Americans. The postcolonial bildungsroman of Changez fosters his anti-colonial self that prompts him to be in quest of his real self. In order to settle scores with America for keeping him under a colonial spell, Changez preaches anti-Americanism to his students back in Pakistan. He actively starts working as an activist to restore the psychological health of the people of Pakistan who are betrayed by colonial machinations.

Literature Review

The postcolonial bildungsroman of Changez stems from his Erziehungsroman. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* chronicles Changez's disillusionment with the capitalist camp and evolution into an anti-capitalist force. In the article, "Precarious World: Rethinking Global Fiction in Mohsin Hamid's The Reluctant Fundamentalist", Changez realizes that he belittles the surroundings of his home due to his Americanized self. "It occurred to me that the house had not changed in my absence. I had changed; I was looking about me with the eyes of a foreigner, and not just any foreigner, but that particular type of entitled and unsympathetic American" (Darda 114). This is a light bulb moment in the life of Changez. His Americanized self has completely taken over his Pakistani self, as a result of which, he looks at his own home from a foreigner's gaze. In the wake of having Erziehungsroman, Changez demeans America: "We built the Royal Mosque and the Shalimar Gardens in this [Lahore] city. … And we did these things when your country was still a collection of thirteen small colonies" (Hamid 61). Changez takes a dig at America's colonial past and highlights the rich cultural heritage of Pakistan. The Royal Mosque and The Shalimar Garden symbolize the cultural richness of Pakistan.

The slipperiness of the novel's title leaves the postcolonial reader flustered. In the article: "I Pledge Allegiance", Olsson investigates the slippery meaning of the word fundamentalist in relation to *The Reluctant Fundamentalist's* enigmatic title. "We are prodded to question whether every critic of America in a Muslim country

should be labeled a fundamentalist, or whether the term more accurately describes the capitalists of the American upper class" (Olsson 8). Changez strictly adheres to the capitalist norms: "Focus on the fundamentals. This was Underwood Samson's guiding principle" (Hamid 59). He sides with the capitalist camp to live out his American dream, but he abandoned the capitalist camp following his Zeitroman. "I found it difficult to concentrate on the pursuit … of fundamentals" (Hamid 60). Changez's journey from a fundamentalist of business to a fundamentalist of ideology is the result of socio-cultural factors. He is never reluctant to change his identity, in fact, he is a hardened ideological fundamentalist who sets out on a new course in his life.

The drastic Erziehungs/Zeit(roman) of Changez unlocks his defiant self. In the Phd thesis titled, "To enter the Skin of another: The body in 9/11 Literature", Brandt stresses on Changez's unwillingness to fully conform to the American fundamentals of capitalism. "The story chronicles Changez's hesitant evolution into a radical Muslim. The reality, that Changez is reluctant in his conversion to the fundamentals of capitalism focused on by Underwood Sampson, draws attention to the militancy of both ideologies". (Brandt 182). The cultural outrages of America leave Changez outraged. "Living in New York was suddenly like living in a film about the Second World War" (Hamid 69). In the post 9/11 phase, America assumed Hitler-like contempt for everyone, including the lovers of America of the likes of Changez. Changez held a position of influence in the U.S.: "I was a young New Yorker with the city at my feet" (Hamid 27). But he was subjected to discriminatory attitude in the post 9/11 America. "My entrance elicited looks of concern from many of my fellow passengers. … I was aware of being under suspicion" (Hamid 44). The cultural stereotyping of Changez culminated in his Erziehungsroman and postcolonial bildungsroman. Changez becomes a business-fundamentalist-turned-ideological-fundamentalist.

The dynamic self of Changez accentuates the multi-faceted nature of a postcolonial being. In the article "I'm Very Comfortable as a Hybridized Mongrel", Mohsin Hamid gives a new insight about Changez's unfolding of character in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. "Changez feels the need to be one thing: just Pakistani or just a Muslim. I'm very comfortable as a hybridized mongrel" (Pal 33). Changez loses his Pakistaniness in the process of becoming an American; he loses his Americaness in the process of becoming a new being. He has a new self that is a combination of multiple selves: "We cannot reconstitute ourselves as the autonomous beings we previously imagined ourselves to be. Something of us is now outside, and something of the outside is now within us" (Hamid 105). Changez

cannot fully divorce himself from past selves; he becomes a new being that combines the attributes of Pakistaniness, Americaness and rebelliousness towards the end of the novel.

In the article "The Reluctant Fundamentalist", Changez examines American ethnocentrism and its implications for the world. "America's great sin is hubris—a profound conviction of its superiority and of its right to control the rest of the world" (Bush 38). In an exaggerated display of patriotism, America assumes the role of a suzerain state. "We are America... the mightiest civilization the world has ever known; you have slighted us; beware our wrath" (Hamid 47). The U.S. displays a hawkish attitude to settle scores with the terrorists. Changez has a well-founded apprehension that the colonial machinery might get him killed. "I have felt rather like a Kurtz waiting for his Marlowe … I must meet my fate when it confronts me" (Hamid 110-111). He actively preached anti-Americanism to his pupils "I [Changez] made it my mission on campus to advocate a disengagement from your country by mine" (Hamid 108).

Postcolonizing Bildungsroman, Erziehungsroman and Zeitroman: Reexamining the (Anti)Colonial Tropes in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

The ideological indoctrination through the weapon of education hijacks Changez's vision. His examines the world from Eurocentric optics, but he has a moment of truth that makes him realize the dark side of American education. "I wondered how I could have been so ungenerous— and so blind—I was a man lacking in substance and hence easily influenced by even a short sojourn in the company of others" (Hamid 75). American-tinted spectacles make Changez scoff at the interior of his home. "I recall the Americanness of my own gaze when I returned to Lahore … *This* was where I came from, this was my provenance, and it smacked of lowliness" (74). Changez's engages in self-loathing for being intellectually susceptible. Awakening to the dangers of foreign education, he embarks on a journey of intellectual decolonization to find his true self. He voluntary disengagement from American empire paves way for his postcolonial coming into being.

It comes to Changez in an epiphany that he is fully aligned with the American camp. Bautista implicitly unpacks the postcolonial identity riddle of the principal character, Changez. Changez is an active agent of American colonization betraying his own country at a crucial moment in history. "'Have you ever heard of the janissaries?' 'No,' I said. 'They were Christian boys,' he explained, 'captured by the Ottomans and trained to be soldiers in a Muslim army. . . they had fought to erase their own civilizations'" (Hamid 91). Changez is an ideological soldier of the

American empire that has split his loyalties. He decides to castoff Americanism: "There really could be no doubt; I was a modern-day janissary, a servant of the American empire ... of course I felt torn" (Hamid 92)! to forge an independent identity for himself.

Changez breaks free from American colonial influences to signal his awakening. "Changez has, in Chile, broken from the American frames of life that had earlier constrained his 'arc of vision'" (Darda 118). Changez sets on a confrontational course with America in the wake of his interaction with the financial analyst, Bautista. He expresses his gratitude to Bautista for rousing him to the existing reality. "*Thank you, Juan-Bautista*, I thought as I lay myself down in my bed, *for helping me to push back the veil behind which all this had been concealed*" (95). The deliberate identity flux: colonial to anti-colonial is subversion of the colonial apparatus and a turn towards authenticity. "The protagonist must experience some form of "identity flux," which may be connected to severed ties … exclusion from the dominant culture, or the conflict between individual desire and familial and cultural expectations" (Hoagland 10). Changez's desire of living out his American dream has dashed to the ground. The unsettling truth about America's role in manufacturing his colonial identity leaves him devastated. He abandons the American camp to construct his own identity that would be free from colonial taint.

The fall of the twin towers symbolizes the fall of the colonial hubris and fall of Changez's American self. The American assumption of imperviousness comes to an end. "I prevented myself as much as possible from making the obvious connection between the crumbling of the world around me and the impending destruction of my personal American dream ... America was gripped by a growing and self-righteous rage" (56). The provocative smile of Changez highlights his anti-American leanings. "He (Changez) appears to have been something of a cipher, until his reaction to the attacks—that sudden smile—pierces the shell" (Olsson 8). Instead of feeling saddened at the loss of life, Changez feels an inward delight. "I stared as one—and then the other—of the twin towers of New York's World Trade Center collapsed. And then I smiled. Yes, despicable as it may sound, my initial reaction was to be remarkably pleased" (Hamid 43). Changez gloats over at the misfortune of America because her assumption of invulnerability is destroyed. It is a changed anti-colonial self of Changez that feels thrilled at American helplessness. "The thematic possibilities of the bildungsroman were largely focused around adolescent flux and change" (Jussawalla 29).

Changez gives projection to his anti-colonial self through his beard. "I had not shaved my two-week-old beard. It was, perhaps, a form of protest on my part, a

symbol of my identity" (78). Flouting all the American conventions, Changez keeps beard to show his new self. "The beard is a sign of global solidarity with Muslims in Asia and the United States" (Darda 116). Following the attacks on the twin towers, America assumes hawkish attitude to fight the alleged perpetrators of the attack. Changez's anti-colonial hatred is triggered by American war rhetoric. "Affronts were everywhere; the rhetoric emerging from your country at that moment in history . . . provided a ready and constant fuel for my anger" (101). Changez betrays the fundamentals of capitalism drummed into him by the American empire. He disconnects from the American way of life, his constraining company, Underwood Samsung and the whole capitalistic machinery. "But I remained aware of the embers glowing within me, and that day I found it difficult to concentrate on my pursuit—at which I was normally so capable—of fundamentals" (60). Changez exercises his individuality by turning his back on America doctrines that constrained his vision.

Changez unsettles America through her own ideological, theoretical and linguistic tools. He believes that American ideas of ethnocentrism have caused tremendous suffering to the world: "America was engaged only in posturing … You retreated into myths of your own difference, assumptions of your own superiority" (101). The metanarrative of Changez undermines the grand narrative of American hegemony. The ideological and theoretical tools of America were to systematically otherize Changez from the position of influence and to make him feel a foreigner in America. After returning to Pakistan, Changez systematically otherizes America from the position of power by bringing to surface her delusional ambitions about the destruction of the world. He assumes colonial attitude to express his anticolonial hatred: something he acquired from his ex(master). The structural othering of America from the cultural other, Changez, shows the new order in the postcolonial world.

American imperialism disguised as a civilizing mission stands exposed. Changez's development of character leads to his postcolonial bildungsroman, which fashions him as an anti-American force. "[postcolonial bildungsroman includes] a rejection of westernization and colonizers' values as expressed in the growth of the hero or heroine's point of view" (Jussawalla 31). Changez makes a blistering attack on the U.S. for assuming the role of an invader. "Vietnam, Korea, the straits of Taiwan, the Middle East, and now Afghanistan: in each of the major conflicts and standoffs that ringed my mother continent of Asia, America played a central role" (94). Changez constructs his own self that has "the capacity for rational thought, language and self-representation, self-reflection, and the ability to think objectively to discover the truth" (Klages 74). Changez undergoes a complete ideological shift;

he considers America blameworthy for the political crimes taking place in the Asian countries.

Changez joins lectureship to guard his countrymen against the onslaught of American colonialism. “I made it my mission campus to advocate a disengagement from your country by mine” (Hamid 108). Changez wants to assuage his guilt by working for the welfare of Pakistan. The disillusionment with America provides Changez an opportunity to betray the fundamentals that he acquired in America and desert his (ex)colonizer. “Answering to his own conscience, he could not remain in the U.S. By the pull of his true personal identity, he must return to Pakistan” (Hooper 50). In the wake of intellectual awakening, Changez actively works for the oppressed women and downtrodden class of Pakistan. It is a typical feature of Zeitroman novel, because history influences the decision-making power of the central character considerably. The strained relationship between Pakistan and America directly parallels the strained relationship between Changez and (AM)Erica. Consequently, Changez assails America for making him abandon his Pakistaniness.

The hero of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, Changez, fulminates against America for launching a colonizing mission in Asian countries. “No country inflicts death so readily upon the inhabitants of other countries, frightens so many people so far away, as America” (110). Changez exposes the destructive ambitions of America in the world. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* assumes the characteristics of an Erziehungsroman novel here as the central character’s arc of vision expands during his journey. His development of character is anti-colonial owing to his obnoxious experiences in America. Changez is a reluctant fundamentalist, because he reluctantly abandons the fundamentals that he acquired at Princeton University and Underwood Samsung. But his fundamentalism does not assume religious overtones, because he has political reasons to harbour anti-America emotions. The nameless anti-America poses a grave threat to Changez’s life.

The colonial machinery issues death threats to Changez due to the murder of an American official. “I have received official warnings on more than one occasion, but such is the demand for my courses that I have until now escaped suspension” (109). Changez deserts the American empire for making him a slave to their imperialistic ambitions. He could be the author of his own death for taking such an extreme step: betraying the superpower’s camp is an act of rebellion. His newly acquired anti-colonial self is asserted: “However, I would like to show that postcolonial literary works share certain characteristics, such as those of linguistic experimentation and assertion of an indigenous selfhood” (Jussawalla 30). Changez’s life is jeopardized

for preaching anti-Americanism as a university lecturer. The only factor that saves Changez is his popularity with the University students; His death could potentially damage Pakistan-America relationship to a point of no return.

The Reluctant Fundamentalist virtually subverts America's position of subjectivity by making the nameless American mute. The narrative structure of the novel is anti-colonial and a monologue; it is Changez who drives the plot forward and the nameless American's voice is stripped by the author to signal the rise of the marginalized. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* practically undoes Eurocentrism, because the reader examines all the events from the perspective of Changez. "I am, after all, telling you a history, and in history, as I suspect you—an American—will agree, it is the thrust of one's narrative that counts, not the accuracy of one's details" (71). After launching a fierce polemic against America, Mohsin Hamid waters down the offensive comments by implicitly asking the reader to look at the novel as a historical account. History invites clashing interpretations of a single event; it is the reader's job to determine the accuracy of the narrative. Changez acts as the author's fictional mouthpiece in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist.* He puts to shame the whole colonial machinery by deserting the capitalist camp and takes revenge by enlightening Pakistanis about the dangers of becoming a modern-day janissary.

Conclusion

The Reluctant Fundamentalist is a slippery novel that challenges reader's presuppositions about Pakistan-America relationship in post 9/11 phase. Examining *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* as a postcolonial bildungs/erziehungs/zeit/(ROMAN) novel accentuates the socio-historical factors that play a key role in shaping the consciousness of Changez. He starts his journey with abandoning the Pakistani camp to wholeheartedly embrace his Americanized self. His development of character, anti-colonial self and enlargement of vision is fostered by his horrific encounters with American racism. The structural othering of America from the (ex) cultural other, Changez, highlights a reversal of roles in the new postcolonial order. He breaks the stranglehold of America, constructs his own identity and rips into the colonial machinery for making him an instrument of colonization. The postcolonial coming into being is a turning point in the life of Changez, because he reluctantly sheds the American fundamentals to initiate a decolonization drive. The deliberately muted unnamed American signals the fall of the colonizer from the position of dominance. Changez's monologue establishes the systematic rise to prominence of the marginalized and tilt of power towards the ex-colonized. America stands decentered in the narrative structure of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*: a major anti-

colonial trope that is a masterstroke of the author to complement Changez's anti-colonial narrative.

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Subverting Colonial Portraiture: Utpal Dutt's Revisionary Dramatization of Political Violence, Anti-Imperialist Solidarity and Nationalist Resistance in *The Great Rebellion*

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Abstract Utpal Dutt's didactic socio-political play, *The Great Rebellion*, set against the backdrop of Sepoy Mutiny, India's first war of Independence, of 1857, offers a gripping saga of indigenous resistance to the domination and exploitation of Western Imperialism. It is a classic exemplar of Dutt's Theatre of Revolution that exuberantly constitutes radical anti-colonial ethos, colonial violence and nationalist resistance. The drama conveys the playwright's revolutionary propaganda against the emerging trends of imperialism and fascism, and capitalism in Indian society. Dutt explicitly portrays the pain and pathos the autochthonous people went through in the wake of the British colonial expansion in the Indian subcontinent. The play chronicles the chaotic socio-political conditions and political violence that led to the outbreak of an organized rebellion against the rule of the British East India Company in 1857. Dutt's counter-hegemonic discourse delineates a violent history of western hegemony and colonial repression that have bred and given rise to a strong, cultural, intellectual and dynamic force against British Empire's oppression. Furthermore, Dutt has attempted to destabilize the colonialist myths and challenged the implicit fallacies of Western dominant discourse by reviving colonial history from his own perspective, which is in itself a form of anti-colonial resistance. He has also employed a historical setting to foster a sense of national identity among his contemporary audience. This article aims to explore how Utpal Dutt's *The Great Rebellion* produce counter-hegemonic narrative to the authoritative ideologies of control and subjugation. A re-reading of Dutt's drama as a text of resistance will provide a better understanding of the dialectic of repression and resistance that shapes Utpal Dutt's dramatic World. The study adopted Frantz Fanon's principles of

violence and resistance with a view to establish strategies of anti-colonial resistance in the text.

Keywords Colonial hegemony; Resistance; Sepoy Mutiny; Protest Drama

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Introduction

Utpal Dutt, a phenomenal actor, director, writer-playwright and theatre-activist, used theatre as a potent tool for social change and development. He was known for writing didactic socio-political plays, to spread socio-political awareness among the oblivious masses of the Indian society and to educate them in the Marxist doctrines. eHeHe revolutionized the Indian theatre by breaking away from the conventional and traditional theatrical form. He was one of the most prominent and influential playwrights who worked voraciously to bring revolution on the Indian stage, especially the Bengali stage. The indefatigable Thespian contributed significantly towards the formation of modern Bengali theatre, as his plays voiced his intransigent protest against the authoritarian government and concurrently, showed his impressive experimentation with different dramatic techniques, theatrical devices and genres. In literary parlance, Utpal Dutt is acknowledged as a pioneering voice of the radical political theatre of India that sprouted in the aftermath of independence. He strongly believed that, "theatre must preach revolution; it must not expose the system but also call for the violent smashing of the state machine" (Dutt 1971). Dutt was of the opinion that theatre should not only expose the hypocrisy, bigotry, exploitation and anachronistic practices thriving in our society, but it should also lead to revolution. To attain this far-fetched dream, he started writing radical anti-establish plays depicting events drawn wholly or partly from recorded history. *The Great Rebellion* is Utpal Dutt's one of the best-known protest plays, that chronicles a series of events leading up to the beginning of an organized rebellion against the rule of the British East India Company in 1857.

A Nation in Crisis

The Great Rebellion is one of the most influential revolutionary dramas penned by Utpal Dutt. Set against the backdrop of the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, the play addresses the discrimination, outright violent persecution and genocidal campaigns launched against the indigenous peoples of the land by the European settlers. Dutt

explicitly portrays the pain and pathos the autochthonous people went through in the wake of the British colonial expansion in the Indian subcontinent. Dutt's counter-hegemonic discourse candidly delineates the British exploitation of the Indian economy and their deliberate destruction of the indigenous handicraft industries of the country, which resulted in unscrupulous exploitation of the rural people in the hands of zamindars. The systematic exploitation of the imperial Government created a wave of resentment, discontent and revolutionary nationalism spread throughout the country, which ultimately culminated in the country's first major nationalistic revolt against the British Raj. The story of the play progresses through a series of episodic scenes, depicting the deplorable plight of the Indian weavers, and the growing discontent among them. The first scene of the play, set in the year 1840, serves as a prologue, that establishes the context, sets the tone for the play and prepares the audience for the forthcoming action and drama. The inhuman atrocities carried out by the British colonial forces have been realistically portrayed in the very first scene of the play. Imperial rule ruthlessly crippled India's handloom textile industry in order to acquire monopolistic control over Indian trade and production, seizing power by brute force and gratuitous violence. The exploitative policies of the British colonial government brought about a fundamental change in structure of the Indian economy, which profoundly affected the lives of the handloom weavers of rural India, turning them into destitute beggars. Karl Marx, in his article, "The British Rule in India" has described the destructive impact of colonialism on Indian cotton and handloom industry:

> It was the British intruder who broke up the Indian hand-loom and destroyed the spinning-wheel. England began with driving the Indian cottons from the European market; it then introduced twist into Hindostan, and in the end inundated the very mother country of cotton with cottons. From 1818 to 1836 the export of twist from Great Britain to India rose in the proportion of 1 to 5,200. In 1824 the export of British muslins to India hardly amounted to 1,000,000 yards, while in 1837 it surpassed 64,000,000 of yards. But at the same time the population of Dacca decreased from 150,000 inhabitants to 20,000. This decline of Indian towns celebrated for their fabrics was by no means the worst consequence. British steam and science uprooted, over the whole surface of Hindostan, the union between agriculture and manufacturing industry. (Marx 128)

Utpal Dutt's heart-wrenching play follows the story of a weaver family which is

struggling really hard to make ends meet, after the advent of British rule. Three generations of Budhan's family have sat at the handloom, spinning out fabric and now they are facing a grave economic crisis because of the discriminatory tariff and trade policies adopted by the British colonial government. In the first scene, set in 1840, the playwright expounds the persistent suffering and brutal subjugation of the indigenous communities after the arrival of the English colonial settlers.

Budhan Singh, a simple, honest and hardworking weaver, incurs the wrath of the Britishers by selling his hand-made cloth at a cheap rate. Determining the selling price of the hand-made products of an indigenous weaver does not come under the purview of the East India Company, especially since Bahadur Shah is the Emperor of India, alive and reigning on the throne of Delhi. Being a subject of the Emperor in Delhi, Budhan refuses to sell his hand-made products at a high price set by a foreign trading company. Unable to withstand the defiance of an independent-minded hard-working weaver, the Britishers administered the severe punishment of chopping off the thumbs of Budhan to prevent him from working again and to discourage others from committing the same offense. The following extract from the text throws light on the British imperialist exploitation of India and the growing discontent among the indigenous people against their rule:

> Panjakush: The Englishmen burnt down the weavers' settlements. Dhaka had 1,50,000 citizens, now it has less than 30,000. I hear tigers prowl the suburbs now. The Englishmen are taking away cotton from this country, turning it into cloth on their own, and selling it back to us at huge profit. (Dutt 139)

The British imperialists, taking advantage of the weak rule of Bahadur Shah, used violence against their colonized subjects to serve their economic interests and to uphold, expand and consolidate their social and political control over the people of Indian subcontinent. They flooded the Indian markets with expensive machine-made clothes, and coerced the indigenous weavers to shut down their looms. Dutt provides here a devastating portrait of how the East India Company decimated the independent cotton and handloom industry of the country:

> Budhan: The Company doesn't want us to sell broadcloth in the market.
>
> ….
>
> Panjakush: They don't want us to weave cloth. So, they've clamped a tariff of 10 percent on Indian cotton, 20 on silk and 30 on wool. Whereas English textiles pay only three and half percent. (Dutt 139)

Frazer, the agent of the East India Company, keeps insisting that India is traditionally an agricultural country and, therefore, there is no need for artisans like Budhan Singh. Panjakush refutes his idiotic claim by asserting:

> Panjakush: Agricultural, is it? You think this cloth grows in the fields? You think the Cashmere shawl and the Dhaka muslin are found in paddy-fields? You are destroying the manufacturers of this country, reducing it to absolute dependence on agriculture. You are trying to set its history back by a few centuries, to destroy its civilization. (Dutt 142)

The European settlers inflicted agony and misery of unprecedented levels upon the innocent indigenous people of the country. The gravity of the situation becomes evident when Panjakush's land is being put up for auction by the East India Company. He is the grandson of Emperor Bahadur Shah, and still he failed to save his land from the clutches of the colonizers. It bears evidence to the appalling fact that taking advantage of the weak rule of Emperor Bahadur Shah, the European traders drastically diminished the control held by the Mughals and assumed sovereignty over India. And with this abrupt powershift, the long process of colonial exploitation, political repression and brutal subjugation of Indigenous peoples began.

Resistance to Political Power

Utpal Dutt's anti-establishment plays not only provide insight into social-realities, but also instigate the oppressed commoners to muster up the courage to rise up and revolt against the entrenched social and economic injustice. The prime purpose of Utpal Dutt's revolutionary theatre was to recreate the valiant struggles fought in the past on modern stage before an audience and shed light on the fortitude and resilience of the gallant revolutionaries who selflessly sacrificed the comforts of life fighting for a better world, in which the freedom, justice and dignity of every individual was respected. As Dutt has proclaimed, "Our "program" is to bring the stories of the gallant revolutionary struggles of another people to our own people so that they too will be inspired to fight" (Dutt 1967). Dutt's play, The Great Rebellion follows this concept of revolutionary theatre. The playwright presents a dramatized version of the Sepoy mutiny of 1857, a glorious struggle against imperialism, and brings to the fore the unflinching determination and courage of the valiant sepoys who laid down their lives on the alter of their motherland. The play

extols the glorious role played by the native sepoys in the war of independence. The playwright has craftily forged a glorious image of the leading characters of the play, Risaldar Heera Singh, whose indomitable spirit and unflagging resilience grabs the attention of the audience. The leading characters of the play assert their individuality vehemently through anti-colonial resistance. Besides the struggle for national liberation, resistance to discriminatory social norms and gender biases also reverberates throughout the play.

Despite threats of violence, Budhan Singh, an efficient, free-spirited weaver, refuses to obey the direct orders of East India company and protests vociferously against the horrendous injustice inflicted on the hapless poor weavers of colonial Bengal. As the acclaimed French postmodernist, Michel Foucault has claimed: "Where there is power, there is a resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power.' Resistance is a reaction to power, and in this context, Budhan's refusal to increase the price of his hand-woven cloth can be labelled as a vehement resistance against the growing power of the imperial forces. He refuses to concede defeat before the destructive politics of the East India Company, and resolves to fight for justice:

> **Frazer:** The Company orders you to raise your price to five rupees a yard.
> **Budhan:** As the gods are my judge, even the Emperor cannot order me to change the price of my own stuff. Why don't you bring the price of English cloth down instead – to one rupee a yard?
> **Frazer:** We have to ship our goods across the ocean. We cannot cut our prices down. So, you have to raise yours.
> **Budhan:** That is not possible.
> **Frazer:** But this is suicide. We hold a monopoly over the whole of Hindustan. What will you do – a lonely helpless weaver?
> **Budhan:** You may call this a protest on behalf of all those weavers who died of hunger. You may say their blood has dyed my yarn. You may call it a final demonstration. (Dutt 139)

Budhan's noncompliance enraged the Britishers, who orders his thumb to be cut off. His thumb along with his only means of livelihood gets slaughtered, despite vehement protests from natives. This outrageous and atrocious act of violence incited Panjakush to lash out at the Britishers in an explosive outburst of anger:

> **Panjakush:** You will get your answer, a terrifying bloody answer. And you

> will wonder then why such an outbreak should burst over this country. Many thousand corpses will bar your path to salvation. Only remember – you started it all. (Dutt 143)

Panjakush made it crystal clear in his statement that the enslaved people of this land will soon take up arms against their tyrant oppressor to avenge the many wrongs inflicted upon them and their families by a barbarous foe. The acclaimed decolonial theorist, Frantz Fanon has argued that violence has always been a part of anti-colonial resistance movements and that a violent response is the only effective means to redress the entrenched systems of colonial oppression that denied them human dignity:

> The violence which has ruled over the ordering of the colonial world, which has ceaselessly drummed the rhythm for the destruction of native social forms and broken up without reserve the systems of reference of the economy, the customs of dress and external life, that same violence will be claimed and taken over by the native at the moment when, deciding to embody history in his own person, he surges into the forbidden quarters. To wreck the colonial world is henceforward a mental picture of action which is very clear, very easy to understand and which may be assumed by each one of the individuals which constitute the colonized people. To break up the colonial world does not mean that after the frontiers have been abolished lines of communication will be set up between the two zones. The destruction of the colonial world is no more and no less that the abolition of one zone, its burial in the depths of the earth or its expulsion from the country. (FANON 39)

The savage punishment meted out for insubordination, instigated the oppressed indigenous people to rise up and revolt against the dominance and exploitation of the imperial forces. Budhan Singh's noncompliance eventually led to the outbreak of an organized rebellion in 1857.

The first scene of the play ends with Budhan's son, Bishen fleeing the scene to protect his life. He turns up seventeen years later as Risaldar Heera Singh, a valiant revolutionary and a fierce patriot. Through all these years, he nurtured the seething fire of vengeance and plotted to avenge the grave injustice inflicted upon his family. Dutt has used the ploy of hidden identity to make a connection between the prologue and the main story of the play. Heera Singh's identity is revealed in the penultimate scene of the play, right before his execution, to create an intense

dramatic effect.

Scene two recounts the large-scale expansion of British rule in India, and brings attention to the social scourge of Sati Pratha worryingly persistent in Pre-independent India. The third scene prepares the audience for an upcoming insurgency, by bringing to the fore, the growing resentment and discontent among the native sepoys. The narrative skips ahead sixteen years, to 1856, when the Indian sepoys in the employ of the East India Company were preparing for an armed insurrection against the British authorities. Discontent and resentment were already growing among the sepoys of British Indian infantry, fueled by low wage, poor terms of service and pensions and increased cultural and racial insensitivity from British officers. The greased cartridge of the new Enfield rifle provided the final spark that set the country ablaze. A rumor went afloat among the native troops that the paper cartridges of these rifles were soaked in pig and cow fat. Both Hindu and Muslim sepoys refused to use these rifles, because they believed that it was an evil scheme hatched by the Britishers to render them impure, forcing them to break their sacred code and adopt Christianity. Their patience finally gave out and on 10th May, 1857, the rebel sepoys at Meerut broke out in open revolt, shot their British officers and flocked to Delhi to awaken the last Mughal Emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafar II from his slumber. Bishen, serving as a risaldar of the cavalry troop in Meerut, under the assumed name of Heera Singh and his son, Kalu, a British army Sapper, Lachman Singh, took up the leadership of the revolt against British authorities and forms of hierarchy.

The fourth scene opens in the Emperor's courtyard in Delhi, where people are drugging themselves into a stupor. The heart-rending cries of Hindustan do not reach their ears because they are busy listening to classical music. They are riding elephants and sharpening their swords while the entire country is writhing in endless pain and misery. The residents of this palace have secluded themselves in dark chambers and have filled their ears with songs against the clamor of their own countrymen. The inhabitants of this palace have turned the place into a dark enclosed fortress where night never ends. A fundamental change in the political governance of India, in the form of transition of power, was inevitable. And the indigenous merchants, taking advantage of the uncertain conditions, professed their allegiance to the British monarch. While moneylenders, like Tularam became the loyal subjects of the British Empire, the Mughal grand viziers were plotting to sell the Mughal Throne to the East India Company. A serious political crisis, financial instability and social turmoil are brewing in the state, because of the incompetence and indolence of the titular emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafar. The

obvious moral degradation of the society has been starkly depicted by Dutt in this scene. Even a petty moneylender like, Tularam, who wasn't even allowed to enter the royal chamber, now boldly asserts that he has bought aristocracy, noble birth and his privileges against hard cash. Peerage titles became commodities to be sold to highest bidder, under the rule of the last Mughal Emperor. The utter ineptness of a weak and flailing Indian emperor becomes strikingly apparent when an Englishman, Frazer refuses to follow the strict Mughal court etiquettes. When the young Price reminded him of the severe consequence of breaching royal protocol, Frazer threatened to usurp the royal throne, after beheading the King's heirs. Frazer came to deliver a letter from the Governor General of Calcutta, directing the King to vacate the royal palace and shift to a new palace near Qutub Minar. The mighty Indian emperor was so scared of losing his throne and kingdom, that he didn't even raise his voice against such an ignominious proposition made by the Britishers.

Right at this moment, Risaldar Heera Singh makes a ceremonial entry and declared stoutly as a valiant warrior for freedom, that his rebel troops have annihilated the entire British army of Bareilly. And now the sepoys at Bahadur Shah Zafar's court to beseech him to lead their rebellion. Heera Singh is a foil to the feeble and politically inept Mughal Emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafar. While the King is too afraid to take a stand and has decided to bow down to his enemies, Risalder Heera Singh marches as a pure and high-spirited person with unflinching courage. He confronted his enemies with great valour. When Frazer threatened to have him arrested and imprisoned for his audacity, arrogance and insubordination, Heera Singh takes up his rifle and shots him, without an iota of hesitation. His steer grit and firm determination to stand up to his enemies were expressed in his bold assertion:

> Heera: We know you all. Behind your smiles and courtly manners hide traitors. Yes, we are scum, and cannot flatter in sweet Persian, but we shall not sell our sovereign to the English. (Dutt 179)

Heera Singh demonstrates strong management and leadership skills, when he implores the emperor to see the light of the day and to get familiar with his latent abilities and competence. The feeble Mughal Emperor finally finds his own voice and swore an oath of allegiance to Indian freedom warriors. In this scene, Dutt has brought to the fore, Heera Singh's deep conviction, unflinching courage, humility and strong leadership skills. Throughout the scene, Heera Singh refers to him and his people as "sons of peasants, blacksmiths and weavers," "poor sepoys" and

"scum." But at the same time, he is a man of strong convictions and great integrity.

The next scene delineates the deplorable condition of the Indian soldiers who rose in revolt against the oppressive rule of the British East India Company. The sepoys are experiencing a profound humanitarian crisis and the Mughal prince is showing complete apathy to the grave crisis. They are facing acute food and medical shortages. While the Mughal Nobles are gorging on lavish meals, the poor sepoys are forced to eat boiled grass. The soldiers are shedding their blood in the war against the Britishers, while the rich merchants are selling the common man's daily essential commodities in the black market. Dutt has poignantly portrayed the gaping chasm between the royals and the poor indigenous people of the country, between the predatory merchants and the poor sepoys. The conflict with the Mughal merchants created local shortages of resources. The poor sepoys failed to obtain needed medical care or enough food to feed the troops.

Heera Dutt's empathetic leadership skills have been glorified in the next scene, when he refuses to accept food in the presence of the Indian Emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafar, since his valiant soldiers who are sacrificing their lives for the nation, are being provided with only stale food. This kind gesture on his part speaks volumes about his character. To put it in Bakht Khan's words, "Heera Singh was not only wounded in battle, but is perturbed by the sight of his soldiers in the throes of hunger" (Dutt 201). He was so moved by the plight of his sepoys that he demands a warrant to plunder the houses of the rich baniyas to recover the wealth stashed away illegally in their vaults, because these backstabbers have conspired with the European colonizers to quell the mass uprising. He demanded stricter punishment for all those people who are stockpiling tons of gold in their private vaults, while the poor sepoys are facing an acute shortage of food grains. With unflinching courage, he publicly declared a war on the rich for betraying the people of this country. He claimed that an unholy nexus was brewing between the rich baniyas and the European colonizers to suppress the great rebellion which was rapidly gaining momentum across the country. And to thwart their evil schemes, he besought the Emperor to issue an order that all the citizens of Delhi will be provided with firearms.

Dutt's sincere attempts to portray Heera Singh as a Modern Day Robin Hood, serve his ulterior motives. Being an avowed Marxist, Dutt has used the entire episode a cue for his contemporary audience, to make them realize the great peril they are in and to persuade them to extend support to the then leftist leaders who envisioned an egalitarian society. In this specific context, Heera Singh became the mouthpiece of Dutt's Propaganda Movement. Heera Singh, the valiant warrior

emerged as a savior for the hapless people of country, fighting for their rights against powerful forces. He was hailed as a hero of the common man by his countrymen. His dauntless courage and skilled leadership so inspired his men, that they composed a doggerel in his honor:

> Mirza ran from battle, letting his trousers drop,
> Till he met Heera, he didn't dare stop. (Dutt 203)

Heera Singh's growing popularity was considered a direct threat to their financial well-being, the rich elites devised a wicked scheme to repress his dissenting voice. The selfish nobles implore the prince, Mirza Mughal to take revenge on Heera Singh for his audacity. He summons him to his tent and tricks him into writing a letter to the traitor Rajab Ali, who has joined hands with the Britishers. Mirza Mughal orders his sepoys to take away Heera Singh's sword and arrest him on charges of treason. Heera couldn't believe that Mirza could stoop so low and sell his own country to serve his petty interest and ego. Asanullah offers him an easy way out, to end his life by drinking poison, so that he wouldn't have to face a trail. But as a principled ethical warrior, he refuses to go down that easily. He decides to face the punishment for his supposed treason. He didn't let anything malign his long-earned reputation. He even refuses to acknowledge his wife and sons, because he didn't want them to live with the stigma that there are the husband and offspring of a traitor. He wanted them to live with the impression that their husband and father is someone fighting like a hero for his country. To save the last shred of dignity, he demanded to be shot like a brave soldier. But his last request gets declined, and he was hanged till death like a traitor. The play concludes with the Britishers capturing the fort of Delhi, with the Emperor Bahadur Shah Jafar being taken as a prisoner.

Resistance Staged by Women

To shed light on the crucial role played by women in Indian nationalist movement, Dutt has featured the struggles and exploits of two stout-hearted women protagonists, Waziran and Kasturi, who epitomized sheer valour, selflessness and patriotism with their actions. Waziran is a prostitute, a "dirty whore," a "fallen woman," who proudly declares herself to be "a holy warrior" and a "dedicated danseuse." She has taken a vow to sacrifice her life for her motherland. For the sake of her countrymen, she has taken up arms to with the hope of contributing to the liberation struggle. Being a prostitute, she suffers harassment and humiliation at the hands of patriarchs. However, she is a paragon of resistance and fortitude, who is

not afraid to speak her mind in a society controlled by controlled by the patriarchal values and creed. She vehemently defends her participation in the country's first Independence movement:

> **Nawab:** A woman in the middle of the battle is a load of trouble.
> **Waziran:** Bastard, you think this waris your personal affair? Peasants weavers, fishermen, blacksmiths – all have joined the war along with their wives. When the Nawab of Malagarh came out in support of the rebellion, his begums fought alongside. When the chief of the Gujar Tribe, Shah Mull, fell in battle, the Gujar housewives took the field. Housewives are fighting in the streets of Lucknow, Kanpur, Gwalior and Agra…. (Dutt 183)

Despite being a "fallen woman," Waziran becomes a great source of inspiration for thousands of women. She shatters the age-old patriarchal notions regarding female submissiveness and subservience, and becomes an influential revolutionary figure. She is a valiant warrior, a rebellious woman with a dynamic personality, who bravely refutes the chauvinistc taunts of her fellow warriors. She fiercely rebuts the moral denunciation meted out against her by stating: "What do you mean 'woman'? What do you mean 'whore'? I am a holy warrior. Moulvi Fazl Huq has initiated me with regular vows and oaths" (Dutt 182).

Dutt's ulterior motive for casting a prostitute, a fallen woman who is neither a sacrificial mother or a good wife, in the role of a freedom fighter was that he wanted to refute the nineteenth-century dominant Bourgeoise discourse, one of the major prongs of which was to discover and scrutinize the 'domestic life' of the women. 19th century literature has depicted women as devoted wives, selfless and sacrificial mothers. Strong, independent women who boldly defy the sexist cultural norms that demean them, rarely feature in 19th century literary canon. As Anita Nair has argued, "Literature has always been ambivalent in its representation of women. Good women as in ones who accepted societal norms were rewarded with happily ever after. Even feisty heroines eventually go onto find content and life's purpose in a good man's arms, be it Elizabeth Bennett (*Pride and Prejudice*) or Jane Eyre (*Jane Eyre*). Alternatively, they are left to rue their lot with a contrived courage as with Scarlett O Hara (*Gone with the Wind*) or have to take their lives like Anna Karenina or Karuthamma (*Chemmeen*) or Emma Bovary (*Madame Bovary*). Dutt fiercely denounced the long-standing misogynistic tradition in Indian literature, by casting a prostitute in the lead role. Nandi Bhatia has commented in this context,

> …To account for the role of the women in this historical moment, Dutt brings into focus the nexus of gender and nationalism. However, he complicates this nexus by casting one of his female protagonists, Waziran, in the role of a prostitute, who has Lachman as her lover and sleeps with the Englishmen at night.
>
> Dutt's emphasis on the figure of the prostitute is significant, especially in the context of nineteenth-century nationalist discourse, which focused on the good wife and mother as the inspirational figure. By putting into question the status and role of women in the nineteenth century and giving women such as Waziran a voice to speak on their own behalf, Dutt ruptures this discourse. Hence, Waziran becomes a central figure who harangues the soldiers over their caste and religious parochialism, and makes them aware of their own hand in expediting the British strategy to keep them divided over issues of religion and caste to prevent unified nationalistic action. In [End Page 178] serving as an inspiration to the soldiers, Dutt creates in Waziran neither the "respectable" mother or wife, nor a woman who is socially victimized, but one who voluntarily chooses to sleep with the enemy so she can aid her own people. In acknowledging the importance of her role, Dutt defies the patriarchal bourgeois attitude that sees only the "respectable" woman as the inspirational figure. And again, contrary to the stereotypical identity of women's roles in the domestic space, Dutt pulls his female protagonist out of the realm of the domestic and places her as an equal among the soldiers. (Bhatia 178-79)

Kasturi, Bishen Singh's long-lost wife, occupies the central role in the subplot of the drama. She bears a striking resemblance to Brecht's Mother Courage. Like Mother Courage, Kasturi too makes a living out of warfare. In order to sustain herself, she sells the goods and valuables collected from the corpses of dead soldiers lying on the battle field. In the latter half of the play, she emerges as a calm, courageous and resolute figure, who valiantly defies the Patriarchal notion of motherhood. Dutt portrays her not as a submissive, weak, inspirational mother figure, rather as a strong, independent woman, who has grown disillusioned with the politics and harsh conditions of war. When she first appeared on stage, her capitalistic motives and emotional detachment were poignantly brought to the fore by the playwright:

> **Parantap:** But this is a sin. If you trade with martyrs' honour, you'll go to hell.
> **Kasturi:** Buzz off! Hell, my foot. Tell me, while I am still in this world, what sonofabitch guarantees me two meals a day? I want you all to die, so I'll have

> a fresh supply of merchandise. (Dutt 196)

The conversation between Parantap and Kasturi highlights her sheer apathy towards the soldiers who sacrificed their lives fighting a holy war. However, it was soon revealed that Kasturi's insensitive remarks actually stemmed from her growing feeling of discontent. She lost her family because of political persecution. She has been patiently waiting for seventeen long years to be reunited with her family. And the moment finally arrives when her husband, Heera Singh is about to be executed. She was again left broken-hearted. Her husband was a victim of political conspiracy. But sadly even his peers, his friends and his countrymen, for whom he embraced death in every battle, turned their back on him because of the accusations labelled against him. Appalled at the boorish behavior of the sepoys, she contends:

> There were so many of you here, each had a gun, but no one raised it.
> Such is the fear of the princes in you, a fear which is many centuries old. There are two battles raging at the same time-between us and he English, and between us and the princes. If you don't see that, you see nothing. The enemy is before you and behind you. While you fight for freedom the enemy behind stabs you in the back. (Dutt 213)

Through the two lead female protagonists, Kasturi and Waziran, Dutt defies the nationalist construction of women as pure, sacrificial and honorable. Waziran and Kasturi reject the traditional patriarchal notion that women should be confined to the domestic sphere. Dutt's female protagonists are neither pure, nor ideal or chaste women. Waziran is a prostitute and Kasturi is an aged woman, who makes a living out of warfare. They brought to the limelight the crucial role played by subaltern women, who were relegated to the peripheries of dominant narratives, in Indian nationalist movement.

Utpal Dutt's radical play, The Great Rebellion revolves around a major historical insurgency against colonial forces, in the history of India, and has deftly brought to the fore the colonial schemes of domination, the political and economic subjugation of the landless peasants and laborers, and the valiant resistance waged by the suppressed groups of the Indian society. Highlighting the great significance of historical plays, Dutt writes:

> I have tried in the theatre and the Yatra, to select stories of revolutionaries of the immediate past and show the continuity of struggle ... I have written

> and produced "Kallol," "Rifle" (about the Bengal revolutionaries of the early thirties and I drew the story forward to 1947 to show that the collaborators of 1930 had become congress ministers in 1947), "jallianwalabagh" (about the Punjab revolutionaries) , "Storm Clouds" (Baisakhi Megh-also about Bengal rebels), "Kirpan" (about the Ghadr party in the Punjab and the mutiny of the 23rd Indian Cavalry), "The Forest Awakes" (about Udham Singh in London and the assassination of Sir Michael O'Dwyer), "The Greased Cartridge" ("Tota" [or Great Rebellion], about the struggle of Delhi in 1857) and a few others, and I have watched at first hand the response of the proletarian audiences to these patriotic battles of the past. In the villages, the working masses often burst into slogans against their present-day enemy, when they watch their ancestors sing their way to the gallows. (Dutt 62-63)

The Great Rebellion is also a part of this larger enterprise, that sheds light on the inhumane oppression and subjugation of the subaltern groups of ordinary people and their uncompromising resistance to colonial forces.

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Emotions Poetics in Non-emotional Discourse: *Roxana: the Fortunate Mistress*

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Abstract The purpose of the research is to analyze the stylistic originality of Daniel Defoe's novel *Roxana: the Fortunate Mistress* (1724) in the context of ideas about the nature of human essence that developed in the process of transition from the seventeenth century to the Enlightenment with its characteristic re-evaluation of the role of reason and feeling in private and public areas of human life. So, the purpose stipulates the usage of methodological basis of the study including cultural and historical, historical and literary, comparative, philosophical and aesthetic research methods. The article refers to "non-emotional discourse" firstly, as to the characteristics of the spiritual mood of the epoch, which researchers called the period of initial capital accumulation and the formation of an economic person, and secondly, as to a general characteristics of Defoe's novel style, with a tendency of a rather meagre and emphatically detached presenting Roxana' story, in which infrequent descriptions of the emotional and psychological state of the character become extremely bright and semantically significant. The analysis of novel emphasizes the ambiguity of understanding the depicted events and characters, expressing the duality of the author's position, reminiscent of a game with the reader. The analyzed form of narration demonstrates its similarity to the genre of a pseudo-memoir novel, having a particular interest in private life prevailing and seeking the French novel tradition of the early Rococo. The study enabled us to conclude that a new type of character is being formed in Defoe's novel, he is rational and prudent, upholding the values of hedonism and the primacy of his own desires, which will find its embodiment in the European Rococo novel and will be open to further modifications in the literature of next centuries.

Keywords The Enlightenment; non-emotional discourse; emotions poetics; Rococo; psychologism.

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Introduction

Historical science has had a relevant trend to study emotions in connection with psychology, philosophy, culture, art, and literature. It was Lucien Febvre who was the first to introduce *Sensitivity and History* (1941) and to speak about the necessity to carry out a comprehensive study of emotions as a result as well as the driving force of the historical process. Febvre focused on the emotions, as a part of social relationships, representing a kind of social institution and being "controlled as a ritual" (112), thus, he stated that the history of emotions, "the oldest and most relevant of all history types," deserves a comprehensive, complete, complex study and should be separated as a unique research area (Febvre 125).

However, according to Jan Plamper, the history of emotions had not been a separated field of research until the 1980s, when Peter Stearns introduced the concept of "emotionology" (P. Stearns, C. Stearns), implying to the study of emotional norms and standards (Plamper, *Emotions* 18). Today, when emotions have become a solid historical phenomenon in the leading studies (Plamper, *History*; Rosenwein; Gross; Oatley; Reddy etc.),

> this is not just an extremely popular topic but the real "emotional turnover" (or even "take-over" – "*Affect Revolution*") in humanitarian and social fields, which resulted in a new understanding of the nature and the role of emotions in human society. How do we feel? How do we express and how do we interpret our emotions, being invisible and non-verbal moments or processes inside us? Are these emotions generated "inwardly" or borrowed "outwardly," out of the emotional repertoire of an era, social institution or social circle? To what extend are our emotions individual and how much do they depend on social regulators? What role do feelings play in our thinking, decision-making and activities? (Vinnitsky 445)

The above-mentioned questions are also peculiar to fiction where emotionality is often associated with psychologism as a special form of understanding the spiritual nature of the individual, which was pointed out by Mikhail Iampolski, presenting psychologism as a sphere of "intimate experience, emotional and intellectual

wealth" (26).

The seventeenth century saw how the Age of Enlightenment in European culture, both called the "Age of Reason" and the "Age of Sensitivity" (Veselovsky), reappraised the nature and essence of the reason and feelings and their role in private and public spheres. At the turn of the seventeenth—eighteenth centuries, according to N.T. Pakhsaryan, the English society started leaving behind the "traditional isolation and regulation" (Pakhsaryan, *History* 64), peculiar to the previous era, thus, causing the search for new aesthetic priorities in art, the formation of new genres and styles, already matured in the seventeenth century. Both contemporaries and descendants often perceived ambiguously the idea of literature breaking old stereotypes, which the transitional era is characterized by. Delicacy with surgical precision, in our opinion, is reflected in Daniel Defoe's novel *Roxana: The Fortunate Mistress* (1724), where the emotionality of free spirit is interpreted in a very peculiar way. The purpose of the research is to analyze the stylistic originality of Daniel Defoe's novel in the context of ideas about the nature of human essence that developed in the process of transition from the seventeenth century to the Enlightenment with its characteristic re-evaluation of the role of reason and feeling in private and public areas of human life. So, the purpose stipulates the usage of methodological basis of the study including cultural and historical, historical and literary, comparative, philosophical and aesthetic research methods.

Social and Moral Problems and Economic Poetics of the Novel *Roxana*: the View of Modern Literary Criticism

Even in the twentieth—twenty-first centuries the last Defoe's novel *The Fortunate Mistress: Or, A History of the Life and Vast Variety of Fortunes of Mademoiselle de Beleau, Afterwards Called the Countess de Wintselsheim, in Germany, Being the Person Known by the Name of the Lady Roxana, in the Time of King Charles II* is often perceived as over straightforward and rather ambiguous from the point of M. Bakhtin's "excessive vision." Despite the fact that Defoe's works have been thoroughly studied in terms of the genre specificity, style structure, and the Enlightenment traditions, the novel *Roxana* stands out of the writer's legacy, going beyond both Defoe's creative method and the aesthetics of the English Enlightenment literature. The scholars have practically ignored the stylistic originality of the novel, its new aesthetic vectors emerging in the depths of its poetics, which were new for the English literature of the first third of the eighteenth century, however, genetically related with the artistic tradition of the seventeenth century. On the contrary, they focused on the social and moral problems in the novel, the problems of the relation-

ship between the character and the environment, and whether or not the author's philosophical intentions coincide with the trends of the era. As a result of such a selective approach to the interpretation of the novel, the conclusions drawn by scholars are unilateral (under this we mean the conclusions reached by A. Elistratova that vice is punished and "abused motherhood takes its revenge" (279); by D. Urnov—"a nameless person, without a foundation and, as a result, without a goal ... a pupil of Thomas Hobbes" who preached the principle of pleasure (33); V. Papsuev's conviction that "the murder of her daughter was prepared by all the previous existence of the character" (Papsuev); I. Erlikhson's statement that Roxana is a victim of social and gender inequality (296) etc.). The Western researchers often emphasize the "poetics of the economy" in the novel. So, Laura Linker defines Roxana as "a Restoration libertine, a Hobbesian predator of inveterate, unrepentant vice" (245). Maximilian Novak branded Defoe as "an ardent proponent of new capitalism, that his novels simply present scene after scene of unrestrained acquisitiveness, and all with the wholehearted approval and the expectation of his audience" (617). And Laura Brown expressed her quite harsh opinion: "In *Roxana* the explosion of aggressive energy and exploitation that characterized this early phase of mercantile capitalist adventurism emerges in the threatening figure of the 'man-woman'" (155). The style of the novel also corresponds to this set, being quite meagre, detailed, abundant in numbers and clericalisms peculiar to office work and commerce.

It seems that the categorical assessment of Defoe's novel, given by researchers, demonstrates a certain confusion caused by the difficulty of "squeezing" *Roxana* into the framework of only one national tradition, literary and philosophical. So, we believe that the interpretation of the topic chosen for the article would make it easier to understand this difficult work.

Non-emotional Discourse of the Enlightenment and the Stylistic Originality of Defoe's Novel

Above all, it is necessary to clarify the meaning of the expression "non-emotional discourse" used in the title of the article. Firstly, it means "the features peculiar to the spiritual mood of the era," and secondly, a general characteristics of Defoe's style of writing.

Investigating into the history of emotions, Daniel Gross notes that the seventeenth century witnessed the emotions being a field of rhetorics and "passions were function of power" (Gross 80). Gross came to this conclusion after studying the speeches of T. Hobbes, who set the tone for English philosophical polemics about the reason and feelings. In his views, Hobbes inherits and reinterprets the ideas and

reasoning of Descartes about the passions of the soul and reason and will as components of experience, being the means of overcoming passions. The idea of Hobbes about understanding the reason and passions is aimed at studying the specifics of a social structure based on the relationship between the private and the public. M. Abramov notes: "Hobbes starts with a single person, makes him the center of vested interests, and then claims that the private motives prevail in society as a whole. Public interests collide with the private ones, so mostly people prefer their own interests, since human passions are usually stronger than their reason. Public interests can win only if they are organically intertwined with the private ones. This is the disposition of the private and the public according to Hobbes" (95–96).

By the end of the seventeenth century the debates about the reason and feelings had become more anthropologized and more complicated. The reflections about the above-mentioned correlate with the reflections about human nature and the ways how to improve it, common to already heard "symphony of the Enlightenment" (the phrase introduced by M. Abramov), with the leading parties played by John Locke, Alexander Pope, Anthony Ashley-Cooper Shaftesbury. However, Shaftesbury's conviction about human predisposition to the good and noble as well as confidence in the possibility of people moral upbringing is known to be overturned by the prosaic skepticism of Bernard Mandeville, who "deliberately opposed his realistic analysis of human nature to numerous authors teaching people what they should be, but lacking the thought of telling people who they really are." Meanwhile, modern philosophers reach a common ideological ground in this heated debate. Firstly, the ideas of Locke, Shaftesbury, Mandeville and others are based on the indisputable primacy of reason over feelings and the need to curb these feelings. And, secondly, it is possible to reach harmony in "Shaftesbury's platonic space" or in Mandeville's "grumbling hive" only on a commercial basis, the choice between the virtue and vice is to be determined by what is more profitable (Abramov 103). Similar views were preached by the Church, rapidly losing its influence, due to "a strange combination of tragic visionary and mysticism, on the one hand, and a license to profit at any cost, on the other hand" (Yakimovich 281). In the era, designated by historians as the era of initial accumulation and economic man making, Defoe is reproached for a meagre business style and inability to express the feelings.

At first thought, it may seem that a way of depicting the events in the novel is a result of the substituted values and concepts in society (Mandeville's call for exploiting vice for the public sake), in its turn, causing the substituted essence of the image. "Vice" as a concept related to morality, according to religious and philosophical ideas, being an element of human sensual sphere, accompanied by the concepts

of sin, harmful passions, repentance, punishment, visitation etc. is transformed into a "profitable business" as an economic concept, with another dominating system of feelings and emotions, including fear of poverty, fear of losing money, joy of gaining and enjoying wealth, admiration for luxury, fear of being exposed, which can ruin material well-being and position in society. But in this case it may be tempting to argue that Defoe is limited to social and moral pathos, representing the image of Roxana as a sample of classicism. The other extreme and temptation, which the scholars risk succumbing to (here we mean Erlikhson's point of view) is to consider Roxana as a victim of poverty, gender and social injustice and claim she paved the way of vice fearing that her children and she may die from hunger, being humiliated with her difficult situation and insecurity in marriage. And even the absence of a maternal instinct seems typical for this era; it was really proved by the historians[1]. However, firstly, when Roxana became the jeweller's mistress nothing could actually say about the hopeless poverty, it was she who told that she was only "on the brink of the grave." Poverty and hunger only threatened her and the children (not so meagre situation is evidenced by Roxana's phrase that "for though I had good linen left still" (Defoe 40) when she was getting ready to meet the jeweller). In other words, the phrase "poverty pushed her" is not really about her. Secondly, the dispute about harmful marriage limiting the freedom of a woman is the disguise covering the fear of losing control over Roxana's own material wealth, she confesses to the reader: "…the divesting myself of my estate and putting my money out of my hand was the sum of the matter that made me refuse to marry" (Defoe 223). Put it differently, it is not quite right to consider Roxana to be a voice of the Enlightenment and empowerment of women. Thirdly, the statement about fading maternal instinct as a result of the social and legal policy of the state, justifying the character's indif-

1 Thus, I. Erlikhson cites the following statements from historians: "The low level of obstetrics and pediatrics, along with neglect and cruelty, led to extremely high infant mortality rate. The fact that children were unlikely to survive resulted in peculiar parental fatalism and special psychological mood in society. Even gentle and loving mothers rarely devoted themselves to raising children, who were most often taken care of by servants... The parental indifference was caused by numerous children in the family, thus, to be interested in each child separately was not possible". What was more critical, if not cruel, it was the attitude towards illegitimate children, also caused by the specific realities of the era. Early modern England took the measures aimed at preventing infanticide as a way of combating adultery and illegitimate children birth. According to the acts passed in 1575 and 1609, women delivering a child out of wedlock were placed in correctional institutions. According to the Statute of Monopolies (1624), an unmarried woman whose child died immediately after birth was automatically charged with infanticide, which was considered as a crime against the fruit of the womb, i.e. capital criminal offence (Erlikhson 298).

ference to her own children, is not quite accurate. Roxana straightforwardly wants some children of hers to die, including Susan, not due to imminent punishment but because they prevent her from enjoying her life. In this sense, it is worth mentioning the subtle remark of L. Linker that Defoe uses the word "murthering": "Defoe spells murder in its more archaic form, 'murther', which looks curiously like 'mother'" (252).

Roxana is not bothered about being a mistress, she does not mind spending several years in voluntary seclusion, while waiting for a prince or a king through a secret door, and considers it to be a profitable leg of a deal. And in this sense Roxana acts as an "honest business women" strictly observing the terms of the contract. Despite social injustice, the character manages to have the lifestyle that she likes, morality or money becomes a matter of priority.

This ambiguous interpretation of social problems, which seems to be present, but significantly devaluated, reveals the duality of the author's position. It reminds a play with the reader when a statement is followed by a denial, once followed tradition is broken.

As scholars and translators rightly noted, the simplicity of the novel language is deceptive as well. In an attempt to create the illusion of truthfulness, "as-a-matter-of-fact" narration, Defoe resorts to the effect of colloquial speech, abundant in detailed descriptions (also aimed at making the reader believe what is said is true), leaps ahead, frequent repetitions, returns to the events already depicted, use of colloquial, sometimes obscene vocabulary etc. According to the author's intent, to enhance the effect of reliability the preface says "the work is not a story, but a history" (Defoe xvi)[1]. However, according to D. Urnov's remark, "the simplicity of such a kind should not be confused with primitiveness ... The reader is given not the simplicity itself, but a skillfully created impression of simplicity" (94), setting the basis for the traits of character. Sophisticated simplicity is expressed in the stylistic heterogeneity of the narration.

Inserting other characters' words (uttered by Amy, the Prince, the Dutch merchant, the Quakeress) into Roxana's story, reproducing the dialogues, gives a differ-

1 Perhaps, Defoe avoids attributing *Roxana* to the genre of a novel, striving to emphasise the authenticity of the events. Natalya Pakhsaryan notes, the eighteenth century saw the concept of "novel" as a fictional narrative in prose, and it was peculiar for some writers, including Defoe, to dissociate them from the previous novel tradition, being non-credible. That is why they refused to label their works as "novels," meanwhile they played the "romantic topos" game, for example, making a so-called "true story" (genuine letters, a found manuscript, a confession heard, etc.), which started in the prefaces (Pakhsaryan, *Some Aspects* 106).

ent flavor to their speeches. For example, the speech of Amy gets hard-hitting, often expressive, the Quakeress'—flowing, dignified, the Prince's—courteous and sophisticated, the merchant's—gallant and pragmatic, Roxana's one—business, saturated with economic vocabulary and clericalism, etc. At the same time, as the scholars point out, "Roxana's simple narration hides a lot of thoughts, psychological observations, social reasoning, subtle ironic remarks" (Romanchuk).

The effect of credibility is also enhanced by the form of the narration, presented in the genre of a pseudo-memoir novel with a peculiar interest in a private life, being the center of attention, meanwhile it tends to the tradition of the early Rococo French novel (a second half of the seventeenth century). Partially, we agree with N. Pakhsaryan who points out the aesthetics of the Rococo novel in presenting the idea that

> the human life here is not driven by great passions, but by the search for pleasure and joy, being natural "delusions of the heart and mind" peculiar to people"; "a feeling of constantly interpenetrating "life" and "novel," with an attempt to render the reliable fiction and the improbable reality, to comprehend their interaction as a psychological collision. (Pakhsaryan, *Genesis* 48–49)

Following the principle of the conventional historical chronology (already mentioned by the scholars, summarizing: "So much the worse for chronology!"), Defoe focuses on the inner chronology, shaping the character's life, i.e. the events of her life and fate making her climb the financial Olympus. On the other hand, Roxana like a true memoirist also makes an arbitrary choice of events, which to describe in detail and which to mention in passing (for example, here we have a detailed description of the masquerade arranged by Roxana on Pall Mall as well as thorough "accounting" of her own income and gifts from the gentlemen favoring her, but just few words about her children, few lines about a pastime accompanied by the king, that Roxana gorgeously arrives at). This selection reveals the character's traits (the description of the events is accompanied, firstly, by Roxana's remarks about her own attitude towards them, close introspection of her actions, their motivation and the calculations of profit; secondly, by the reproduction of the same events from the point of view of other characters, for example, Amy or the Dutch merchant), thereby transforming the memoirs into psychological prose, focusing not on the eventivity of the character's adventures, but on her ("inner") understanding of these events and the following introspection, i.e. on the "adventures of the soul" providing the psychological authenticity due to which, according to N.T. Pakhsaryan, the docu-

mentary effect of the pseudo-memoir Rococo novel is achieved, "when the secret of the character's intimate behavior, revealed to the reader, gave new perception of a person, morality, and society" (Pakhsaryan, *Genesis* 48). The inclination for emotional adventure reveals the inner adventurous nature of the character regarding the assessment of her own actions. In fact, Roxana's introspection should be taken precautiously, since it as well as the character's event narration contains an almost artistic play, with a certain self-admiration, the ability of reveling in her own vices. For instance, her admiration for herself, caused by the prince's compliments, deserves a special notice, or the statement that she awakened virtue in the prince's soul remaining faithful to her: "I had kept him honest… We are both as honest as we can be in our circumstances" (Defoe 155). What is more, it is necessary to mention the transition from self-reproach to joy and pleasure: "... to draw the just picture of a man enslaved to the rage of his vicious appetite; how he deposes the man and exalts the brute... I lived in this gay sort of retirement almost three years, in which time no amour of such a kind, sure, was ever carried up so high" (Defoe 110).

In the translator's notes to the novel, T. Litvinova, when characterizing Defoe's narrative style, precisely notes:

> He makes this fallen, predatory woman, with nothing sacred, act as a militant Protestant, the one he was, as well as an "activist fighting for women equality" in modern interpretation without pretty changing the language being business-like, monotonous and meagre, nevertheless, using a full-blooded style of writing from time to time. This "without pretty changes" is one of the pitfalls that the translator risks crashing into. (Litvinova 287)

It seems that this "pretty" applies to those caveats one should perceive Roxana's sincerity. Her sincerity is undeniable only in those situations when the financial assets acquired and the character's attitude towards them are described. We agree with the scholars stating that "this ravishing citation of object and money, peculiar to Roxana, shows not so much her mercenariness but a peculiar poetics, a thirst for pleasure, the character constantly appeals to" (Romanchuk). A similar psychological picture of the character's nature is seen at the intersection of the play dominant, which the Rococo aesthetics is characterized by, and quite ponderous artistic and economic essence of the text, peculiar to the business prose of the later period. Defoe made this playful oxymoron achieve the effect of ambiguity in the perception of the character, on the one hand, and the effect of author's detachment, avoiding the assessment of the characters, thus with the intent to act as an observer, on the other hand.

The Image of the Author in the Novel

The tradition of the French novel of early Rococo is preserved in the author's involvement in the narrative structure of *The Fortunate Mistress* written in the first person. This manner (also the image of Roxana, partly) is an echo of a picaresque novel where the image of the narrator include the storyteller, the actant (protagonist) and the author merged. The image of the narrator, characterized by meagre and business-like and courteous narration, reflects the psychology of an intelligent, wise, and talented business woman, obsessed with an idea for pleasure, but meanwhile she is educated, apt to indulge in philosophizing (for example, it could be evidenced by her witty attack against the fools at the beginning of the novel), with excellent taste (albeit at a simple level) in the ability to dress and furnish the house, to appreciate the beauty of things. Interest in the private life and psychology of a person, failing to meet the standards, but being the one he/she is, questions "the measure of the psychological and social feasibility of an ideal," according to N. Pakhsaryan (*Genesis* 48). In its turn, it provides more opportunities not to judge vice, but to compromise and make concessions to human weaknesses. So, it is possible to state that this is a sign of mature Rococo, and an emerging psychological novel of the late model, and a confession novel, where the author plays the role of an observer stepping aside. However, in this case he *plays*. The author's detachment in *Roxana* is ambivalent. On the one hand, the reader often hears the author's voice in the novel in the references to historical figures whom Defoe was familiar with (Duke of Monmouth, Robert Clayton); in the lines resuming rare Roxana's repentance, which summarizes the conclusions about human nature as such:

> So certain is it that the repentance which is brought about by the mere apprehensions of death wears off as those apprehensions wear off, and deathbed repentance, or storm repentance, which is much the same, is seldom true. (Defoe 193);

in the periodic ironic assessment of the character, having received the long-awaited count's title,

> was like the Indian king at Virginia, who, having a house built for him by the English, and a lock put upon the door, would sit whole days together with the key in his hand, locking and unlocking, and double-locking, the door, with an unaccountable pleasure at the novelty; so I could have sat a whole day together

> to hear Amy talk to me, and call me "your ladyship" at every word. (Defoe 370);

in the irony the author uses to preserve the "secrecy" of some characters (anticipating the reader's desire to find a prototype), at the same time thinly veils swipe at the same prototype:

> There is a scene which came in here which I must cover from human eyes or ears. For three years and about a month Roxana lived retired, having been obliged to make an excursion in a manner, and with a person which duty and private vows obliges her not to reveal, at least not yet. (Defoe 276)

On the other hand, the detachment is felt in the author's stolidity, when mere observation prevails over approval or condemnation, showing the signs of the French Rococo tradition. However, the emerging worldview and a way of reflecting reality for the Englishman lack the private being completely individual. Roxana's image is collective (and, therefore, devoid of excessive psychological depth). First, it includes many prototypes, above all, Roxana, a wife of Alexander the Great; Roxelana, a wife of the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent (Erlikhson 291–292)[1], as well as the favorites of Charles II, among whom the scholars distinguish Barbara Villiers, Countess of Castlemaine; Frances Stewart, Duchess of Richmond; Louise de Kéroualle, Duchess of Portsmouth; and certainly Nell Gwyn, the most "democratic" of all the favorites, a theater actress who did not have a noble title, according to legend, she said "I am the Protestant whore!"[2]. It should be noted that Roxana

1 I. Erlikhson points out that Roxelana was strongly associated with luxury, atheism, ambitions and power over men. The name of the former slave who conquered the eastern despot was used to call the high class courtesans, with political and economic dividends from their power over men (Erlikhson 291–292).

2 According to the legend, "On a sunny day in 1675, the petite red-haired Nelly Gwyn got into the carriage given to her by Charles II and set off for her usual walk around London. The city onlookers recognized the luxurious carriage, but not the woman in it. The angry passers-by, who surrounded the carriage, believed that Louise de Kéroualle, Duchess of Portsmouth, being a French woman sent by the French court "as a gift" to the English monarch, was inside. Louise de Kéroualle was a Catholic, and therefore the Protestant Londoners were furious when they saw her walking around the city. While the carriage struggled through the crowd, the people cursed her passenger and the "Catholic whore". Nelly patiently endured the insults for a long time, but finally succumbed. She ordered to stop the carriage and put her red head out of the window, "Good people," she said, smiling, "you are mistaken; I am the Protestant whore!" She was enthusiastically applauded, then she waved merrily at the onlookers and proudly continued her way" (Altesse).

utters the same phrase, which is a direct reminiscence of the statement which belong to the "real" favorite: "Though I was a whore, yet I was a Protestant whore, and could not act as if I was popish, upon any account whatsoever" (Defoe 101) (in this regard, the word "whore," which Roxana likes to use to call herself, loses the negative expression, peculiar to a swear word assessing the last stage of a woman fall, and, later transforms into a "queen of whores," acquiring the symbolic meaning of a certain high status, which Roxana is proud of, so it discredits the sincerity of her remorse). At the beginning of her relationship with the Prince, Roxana mentions three dresses presented to her: "A suit, or whole piece, of the finest brocaded silk, figured with gold, and another with silver, and another of crimson" (Defoe 103). It is curious that similar dresses could be found in the portraits by Peter Lely, an artist at the court of Charles II. All the above-mentioned favorites of the king were dressed in these gowns. What is more interesting is that the portraits of Lely depict the dresses of almost the same style, which involuntarily evokes an association with the same clothes of the concubines in the harem (Roxana's Turkish outfit and her dance to seduce the king, being the pinnacle of her courtesan fame, confirm this association)[1]. It is not certain whether Defoe saw these portraits or the resemblance was accidental, but undoubtedly he visited the royal palace, as evidenced by many historians. This uniformity of style (if to assume that Defoe did see the portraits) is the evidence of conventionality, Roxana's collective character, which contradicts the author's statement in the preface that "it differs from them in this great and essential article, namely, that the foundation of this is laid in truth of fact; and so the work is not a story, but a history" (Defoe xvi), the author was particularly acquainted with this lady's first husband, the brewer, is another evidence of the author's play, which casts doubt on the carefully constructed illusion of the narrative credibility and significantly weakens the foundation of the memoir form.

Secondly, Defoe himself sometimes merges with the image of Roxana, who, as D. Urnov points out, more than once had to "choose between life and honor," like Roxana, and whose social position, like Roxana's one, allowed him to enter the high-ranking nobles' cabinets, including the king's, from a secret entrance (unlike Swift, who is known to be called a "minister without portfolio"): "It was not the rise but the curtain of Defoe's career (almost like Roxana's one, emphasis added by

1 It is worth mentioning one more distant association with the image of Angelique, the character of the novels by Anne and Serge Golon, when she gets into a harem and is forced to wear a dress exactly the same of the other concubines. But unlike Roxana, Angelique feels uncomfortable in this outfit, because it destroys her individuality and freedom, thereby personifying a completely different type of a woman. For Roxana, these dresses are a reason to feel like the Queen of France.

the author) when he approached the king... Defoe's position could be described as having access to high ranks, but with insignificant roles, unlike his main contemporary rival Swift who was once considered to be the uncrowned ruler of the country" (Urnov 77). Also Roxana used a secret entrance to meet with the Prince, the King and the Lord:

> He said my house was the most convenient that could possibly be found in all Paris for an amour, especially for him, having a way out into three streets, and not overlooked by any neighbours, so that he could pass and repass without observation; for one of the back-ways opened into a narrow dark alley, which alley was a thoroughfare or passage out of one street into another; and any person that went in or out by the door had no more to do but to see that there was nobody following him in the alley before he went in at the door. (Defoe 96)

Perhaps, it is the reason why an explicit vice condemnation is absent, on the contrary, there is just observation, that is why the ending is indefinite, almost open which suggests the continuation of the story (in Rococo style). Here we share the surprise of scholars regarding the almost unanimous assessment of the novel ending, being didactic, demonstrating the inevitability of punishment for vice. E. Glushko rightly notes that

> this view of the development of the plot is simplified and categorical in its uniqueness, if not entirely wrong. Since *Roxana* is known to be a Rococo novel which is characterized precisely by the art of an ironic hint, not an unambiguous statement. The unfinished story in *Roxana*, creating duality in its reading and destroying the unambiguous didacticism of the novel, reduces the tragic tension, the gloomy expressiveness of the last pages, asserting the compromise of perceiving the Rococo worldview. (Glushko)

The reader is given only a hint about a crime and punishment, which creates a wide scope for the reader's hypothesis, destroying the illusion of the credibility of the story.

Roxana by D. Defoe and Don Juan by Molière: A New Type of Hero Formation

The author's reflections give a rise to a new type of character, endowed with a "clear and sober self-awareness," which E. Glushko rightly called the artistic discovery of the Rococo novel (Glushko). However, we assume that the uniqueness of Roxana's

image is explained with the fact that it goes out of the Rococo tradition, inheriting, synthesizing and melting down another French tradition. The image of Roxana (some plot twists, the configuration of key characters) reminds the image of Don Juan in Molière "version," which creates a special emotional field in a meagre and business style of narration, enriching the image of Roxana and adding a certain dramatic tension, the experience of which allows calling it a psychological novel. The images of Roxana and Don Juan do not fit for the traditional classicist images created by Molière. Moliere as well as Defoe uses the a lot of author's irony while depicting the protagonist, so, even the first monologue of Don Juan contains the image of Alexander the Great, whom the protagonist associates himself with, trying to extol his love victories as if they are military conquests: "Like Alexander, I wish that there were other worlds, so I could march in and make my amorous conquests there as well" (Molière 6) (it is interesting to note two authors ironic echoing—Alexander the Great alluded by Moliere and Roxana mentioned as Alexander's friend by Defoe. Both images contain rebellious undertones, Don Juan showed disobedience to God while citing the atheistic balanced arguments ("I believe that two and two makes four" (Molière 31)); Roxana is against the gender inequality, also concentrating not on the idea of rebellion, but on careful thought (marriage, in her opinion, is, first of all, the need of transferring her fortune to her husband and get deprived of freedom). Like the image of Don Juan, the image of Roxana is characterized by love of freedom, endowed with a hedonistic view of life (Don Juan's motto "There is nothing that can halt the impetuosity of my desires" (Molière 6) determines Roxana's one). However, the thirst for pleasure, both images are characterized by, has different origin: it is love for Don Juan, it is money and luxury for Roxana to provide a lifestyle she wants. These sources also foster the sensuality of both characters and it indicates how the principle of Don Juan has been transformed in the image of Roxana, i.e. the image of Defoe's mistress lacks the erotic sensuality inherent in Don Juan (traditionally peculiar to this type of women): "For I had nothing of the vice in my constitution; my spirits were far from being high, my blood had no fire in it to kindle the flame of desire" (Defoe 57), another fire burned in Roxana's blood, igniting the desire for enjoying luxury and the thirst for increasing capital, "The subject of love, a point so ridiculous to me without the main thing, I mean the money" (Defoe 280). The traditional motif of love reunion ending in a happy marriage for Roxana is "two corporations merged" (in scholars' apt words), for example, a scene in the novel, emotionally saturated with every number of the financial inventory, every name of currency and securities endowed with a kind of poetry, expressing a feeling of sincere joy, and it is a merger which makes Roxana happy and delighted:

> He produced me in goldsmiths` bills, and stock in the English East India Company, about sixteen thousand pounds sterling; then he gave into my hands nine assignments upon the Bank of Lyons in France, and two upon the rents of the town-house in Paris, amounting in the whole to 5800 crowns per annum, or annual rent, as it is called there; and lastly, the sum of 30,000 rixdollars in the Bank of Amsterdam; besides some jewels and gold in the box to the value of about £1500 or £1600, among which was a very good necklace of pearl of about £200 value; and that he pulled out and tied about my neck, telling me that should not be reckoned into the account. I was equally pleased and surprised, and it was with an inexpressible joy that I saw him so rich. (Defoe 387)

Both Don Juan and Roxana are inclined to make concessions in the attempt to achieve their goals. So, meanwhile Moliere's character has it considered at the comic level (to seek a woman out he is constantly marrying, considering marriage as well as the church to be a convention), Roxana honestly fulfills the terms of the deal having agreed to a voluntary seclusion and considers her status among men as a convention. One more common feature of both characters is a lack of remorse and the ability to wish death to the close people who are capable of hindering or bothering their happiness (Don Juan wishes death to his father, Roxana to her children).

The comparative paradigm can be traced at the level of other characters, for example, Amy, who inherits the features of Sganarelle, not only a faithful servant, but also a confidante of Roxana, who knows all her secrets (to compare, Don Juan: "But I am really glad, Sganarelle, that I can confide in you, and I am happy that my soul has a witness to the real motives which oblige me to do the things I do" (Molière 57) and Roxana: "Then I considered too that Amy knew all the secret history of my life; had been in all the intrigues of it, and been a party in both evil and good" (Defoe 474)); the Dutch merchant, Roxana's husband, who exhorts Roxana to live virtuously, not in sin, thus plays the same role as Donna Elvira, a wife Don Juan abandoned. And even the final scenes of the novel and the play, being so different in form and ideas, symbolically reecho, Roxana and Amy pale into insignificance, i.e. they suffer a financial ruin, similar to Sganarelle's comic lamentations: "My pay! My pay! My pay!" (Molière 62)

However, we believe that the main common feature in the images of Don Juan and Roxana is the principle of aesthetic intention of their creators, aimed at destroying the models adopted in classicist literature, class and moral roles. The

image of Don Juan goes beyond the framework of a comedy character, a rogue, he is ambiguous and different from his mask of a seducer who receives a well-deserved punishment, he is not unfamiliar with genuine nobility, a sense of noble honor, valor and bravery, the ability to play a risky game on the verge of death, philosophicity, which makes the image attractive. He leaves behind the traditional Moliere's characters, like Roxana surpasses the image of a mistress with her commercial talent, often acting not as a lover (a fallen woman), but rather as a business partner, with adventurism, the ability to play a game on the edge (the situation with diamonds and the murder of Jeweller). Both characters are revealed in a marginal situation. Both Don Juan and Roxana are haunted by the ghost of a crime committed in the past, and both feel up to courage to face danger, i.e. Don Juan shakes hands with the Commander, Roxana hugs her daughter. The detective storyline associated with Susan's image gives the narrative a dramatic effect, significantly increasing the dynamism of a steady going business story, forcing a sense of danger, acuity and unpredictability of the plot, creating the marginal situation for Roxana in which the inner essence of the character is fully revealed.

Aesthetic Originality of the Novel's Emotional Palette

Meeting with her daughter (as well as meeting with the Commander in Moliere's play) is the climax of the novel and it is full of dramatic tension and emotional and psychological intensity in describing the gripping feelings Roxana experienced and the vivid expression of images, and the power of influence on the reader, hitherto unusual for the style of narration:

> I cannot but take notice here, that notwithstanding there was a secret horror upon my mind, and I was ready to sink when I came close to her to salute her, yet it was a secret inconceivable pleasure to me when I kissed her, to know that I kissed my own child, my own flesh and blood, born of my body… No pen can describe, no words can express, I say, the strange impression which this thing made upon my spirits. I felt something shoot through my blood, my heart fluttered, my head flashed, and was dizzy, and all within me, as I thought, turned about, and much ado I had not to abandon myself to an excess of passion at the first sight of her, much more when my lips touched her face. I thought I must have taken her in my arms and kissed her again a thousand times, whether I would or no. But I roused up my judgment, and shook it off, and with infinite uneasiness in my mind, I sat down (emphasis added). (Defoe 416)

In the above-mentioned extract Defoe forms what modern researchers of the history of emotions call an "emotive"—"an expression of an emotionally descriptive word or phrase (for example, I am afraid), which not only describes a real emotional state, but also enhances or even causes it up to physiological consequences (a feeling of fear causes tremor, etc.), the word as a entity affecting not only the perceiver, but also the speaker himself" (Plamper, *Emotions* 21).

A similar emotive is formed in the scene on the ship during a storm. An incredible shock, horror, fear, even religious ecstasy are the emotions the characters experience, they convey the physical sensations of a person experienced at the moment awaiting death. However, the dramatic tension here is reduced in a certain sense by a playful element, such as the remorse of the characters turns out to be insignificant, Roxana takes it as rather a tribute to prescribed emotions. Introducing the motif of travel (in the eighteenth century it was endowed with the traditional allegorical meaning as a path to God, returning to oneself and performing a moral function in the process of educating and transforming the characters) into the narration, Defoe, who usually maintains its traditional interpretation in his novels, deviates from the canon, since returning to oneself is hard-hitting and intimidating, with no educative and transforming changes for a personality. Thus, faith in the power of philosophical generalizations is shaken.

The emotional scale of the novel also has a different turn, which can be conventionally called the aesthetic one. Here we mean a unique technique of creating a vivid visual image, the expressiveness of which is achieved, paradoxically, with the help of emotionally restrained manner of storytelling. The great example here is the description of the Turkish dress and dance performed by Roxana, with the concentration of details performing the task of creating rather a plastic image than an effect of authenticity. The emotional modus (the feeling of joy when realizing her own attractiveness and the ability to make an impact on others as well as the fact of owing a beautiful valuable thing) transforms the character's dance movements, thereby creating the image of an "expressive person"—an emotional phenomenon which at the beginning of the twentieth century was described by Serge Wolkonsky as an image unifying music, movement and emotions (Wolkonsky):

> The dress was extraordinary fine indeed; The robe was a fine Persian or India damask, the ground white, and the flowers blue and gold, and the train held five yards. The dress under it was a vest of the same, embroidered with gold, and set with some pearl in the work and some turquoise stones. To the vest was a girdle five or six inches wide, after the Turkish mode; and on both ends where

> it joined, or hooked, was set with diamonds for eight inches either way, only they were not true diamonds, but nobody knew that but myself. The turban, or head-dress, had a pinnacle on the top, but not above five inches, with a piece of loose sarcenet hanging from it; and on the front, just over the forehead, was a good jewel which I had added to it... Then they began it again, and I danced by myself a figure which I learnt in France, when the Prince de * desired I would dance for his diversion. It was, indeed, a very fine figure, invented by a famous master at Paris... At the finishing the dance the company clapped, and almost shouted; and one of the gentlemen cried out "Roxana! Roxana! by *," with an oath. (Defoe 264–267)

Thus, a restrained style contributes to the disclosure of the image, having the emotional effect on the reader.

Conclusion

The uniqueness of Defoe's artistic method revealed in *Roxana*, based on the close interaction and interinfluence of the Rococo and the Enlightenment perception, shows not only the duality, ambiguity of the author's position regarding the debate about reason and feelings and the desire to take the golden mean. An elaborate game Defoe plays with the reader, balancing on the brink of "almost," highlights primarily the reflections about diverse and varied life going beyond strict philosophical doctrines. Defoe tries to demonstrate halftones rather than just black and white showing how the visible can turn out to be the imaginary and what is more important how one-dimensional and lifeless an ideal can be.

According to L. Ginzburg, the "words can remain unadorned, *naked*, as Pushkin said, but they should have the quality of an artistic image" (8; emphasis original). At first glance, Defoe's narrative, being specifically non-emotional, creates a new quality of the character's image, open to further modifications and used by literary descendants. The images of Don Juan and Roxana represent a psychological type of the character whose motto is "I satisfy myself," based on a sensual-hedonic principle and a play as a way of being in society and the attitudes towards society. Later it could be found not only in the characters created by Mark Twain and George Bernard Shaw (as already noted), but, in our opinion, in the image of Frank Cowperwood and the genre of business story by Theodore Dreiser, which supplemented the traditional paradigm: Don Juan—women (delight in love); Roxana—money (delight in luxury); Frank Cowperwood—financial fraud (delight in a game).

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Border Country by Raymond Williams: Attempting to Articulate the "Structure of Feeling"

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Abstract This article demonstrates the "structure of feeling," Raymond Williams' much-debated concept as it appears in his autobiographical novel, *Border Country* (1960). By drawing upon the nuances of Williams' cultural theory, it is the purpose of this article to trace his attempt to articulate diverse dimensions of the "structure of feeling" in this novel. Furthermore, this article touches upon Williams' various epochal classifications of culture such as dominant, residual, emergent and pre-emergent cultural elements as well as the ramifications of the communal and individual realities of England and Wales within the two time frames of the 1920s and the 1950s. Consequently, this article illustrates the manner in which Williams cultivates his artistic talent to embrace both subjective and collective experiences to capture the multi-faceted generational emotional energies depicted in *Border Country*.

Keywords Raymond Williams, structure of feeling, *Border Country*, cultural theory

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Introduction

Border Country (1960) is an autobiographical novel that traces Welsh history over the span of two generations. Throughout the pastiche-like structure of this novel, Williams employs non-chronological plotting, shifting backwards and forwards

in time in an attempt to weave together the two parts of his identity: his Welsh heritage and his London life. The duality of Williams' character is paralleled by the split in the character of the protagonist into Matthew Price of London and Will of Glynmawr. The novel covers a variety of themes and notions, most noticeably "the structure of feeling," Williams' widely debatable concept, specifically in relation to the struggle of the working class during the General Strike of 1926. Moreover, *Border Country* delves into other issues which include the contrasting characteristics of life in Wales and England, the spread of socialism and the implications of the Industrial Revolution in culture and society. This article explores how Williams utilizes his artistic creation to encompass both personal and social experiences as well as individual and collective meanings and values, and how a combination of all these varying elements manifest themselves in the structure of feeling.

Williams' "Structure of Feeling"

Williams' "structure of feeling" is an all-encompassing, yet highly fluid concept which has come under close scrutiny by critics in a multitude of disciplines and theoretical frameworks, ranging from cultural studies, psychoanalysis, political analyses, communication studies, and more recently, studies in mindfulness and affect theory. This ever-evolving force expands across various ages and spaces, both capturing the lived experiences of the moment and anticipating the changes and variations of collective and individual emotional energies to come.

In the *Dictionary of Cultural and Critical Theory*, Jenny Bourne Taylor gives a definition of Williams' "Structure of feeling":

> Williams first used this concept to characterize the lived experience of the quality of life at a particular time and place. It is, he argued, "as firm and definite as 'structure' suggests, yet it operates in the most delicate and least tangible part of our activities." Later he describes structures of feeling as "social experiences in solution." Thus a "structure of feeling" is the culture of a particular historical moment, though in developing the concept, Williams wished to avoid idealist notions of a "spirit of the age." It suggests a common set of perceptions and values shared by a particular generation, and is most clearly articulated in particular and artistic forms and conventions. Each generation lives and produces its own"structure of feeling," and while particular groups might express this most forcibly, it extends unevenly through the culture as a whole. (670)

According to Sean Matthews, "the structure of feeling" takes a peculiar place in Williams' thought, both illustrating and mediating Williams' attempt to put forth his own and his age's distinctive priorities. As this structure of feeling surfaces, it is accompanied by the discrepancies and challenges that are characteristic of the 1950s, both of which become the focus of this concept. Just like the "interdependence of Matthew Price's life and work, the term seems precisely, directly generated from and representative of Williams' own crises and experience." Therefore, the phrase indicates "the very pressures it is devised to define, and tracing its articulation both illustrates and enables analysis of the more general emergence of new priorities" (190).

In a historical survey of Williams's concept, Stuart Middleton explains that "'the structure of feeling' has frequently served to connect subjectivity to broader social and material processes" (1). Middleton adds that this concept has proven quite valuable for "scholars following the more recent 'affective turn' in the humanities either as an analytical tool in its own right or as a pioneering step towards the development of a now densely constructed theoretical framework" (1). The term "affect" as defined in *The Affect Theory Reader* as "an impingement or extrusion of a momentary or sometimes more sustained state of relation as well as the passage (and the duration of the passage) of forces or intensities" (Seigworth and Gregg qtd. In Hogan 2) shares numerous features with Williams' "structure of feeling." In fact, affect theorists view art and more specifically literature as a highly developed form of "simulation – a fundamental, evolved operation of the human mind" (Hogan 2). In that regard, art for Williams presents the space wherein the interplay between subjectivity and cultural impressions may be most noticeably articulated. As such, the communication of 'the structure of feeling' within the realm of art best serves affective theory critics to expound upon the far-reaching vicinities of the emotional realities across generations.

Rebecca Coleman connects Williams' "structure of feeling" to mindfulness or "the cultivation of ways to become attentive in and to the present moment" (1). More specifically Coleman views "the affective relations between neo-liberalism and mindfulness as a series of relays, modulations or recalibrations in and between individual bodies and wider collective moods or atmospheres or 'structures of feelings'" (1). This correlation between 'the structure of feeling' on the one hand and mindfulness and affect theory studies on the other further exemplifies the multifaceted flux attributes of Williams' concept. It represents a site for conflict wherein individual and communal energies come together then dissipate into a myriad of directions only to realign into new manners and dispositions at the

subjective and collective levels of experience.

For Vicki Mayer, Williams' concept has recently resurfaced in cultural studies and that "the waxing popularity" of this 1950s term is in large part due to "the growth of affect theory as a way to challenge hegemonic cultural claims" (2). In the years 2015-2020 Mayer actually employs Williams' "structure of feeling" as a tool to analyze the "dual structures of feeling surrounding the development of a Google data center in the Groningen region," a remote village in the Netherlands. Of particular significance to Mayer is Williams' exploration of "felt aspects of lived experience" with regard to the relations and conflicts surrounding the countryside and the city in his two seminal essays "Culture in Ordinary" and "Between Country and the City." In the latter essay he describes "the complicated situation of urbanites who relocated to his home village, not to dominate the prior structure of feeling, but to contribute through the revitalization of public life" (3). For Williams one cannot simply classify experiences as belonging to the country or the city; rather, to fully comprehend the various urban and rural structures of feelings, it becomes essential to consider positions that are "between and across changing versions of both [country and city]" (Williams "Culture is Ordinary" 229, qtd. In Mayer 3).

> These multidimensional aspects surrounding the country / city dichotomy are captured by Williams in his autobiographical novel *Border Country* in which he attempts to articulate the varying structures of feeling that extend from his home village in Wales to his newly acquired home in London.

The Structure of Feeling in *Border Country*

In *Border Country* Williams endeavors to personally demonstrate the artist's ability to encapsulate "the structure of feeling," given the assumption that the artist is best equipped to sense and express emotional forces surrounding a generation. Sean Matthews draws a direct parallel between the duality of experience in the lives of both Williams and Matthew Price. Matthew Price's population studies represent his attempt to comprehend a whole socio-historical movement, namely the industrial revolution on the one hand, and his own private experience on the other. As Morgan Rosser points out to Matthew, his academic project is really about "what change does to people, change from the outside, the big movements. You're asking about him [Matthew's father] and yourself" (Williams, *Border* 286). Likewise, Williams' written works in the 1950s illustrate his attempt to come to terms with "changes that are of historical significance, but also of both private and he argues, representative,

contemporary concerns" (Matthews 180).

The experience of change for Williams was a combination of the personal and the public. As he explains in a 1960 published interview with Richard Hoggart,

> Getting the tradition right was getting myself right, and that meant changing both myself and the usual version of tradition…moving out of a working class home into an academic curriculum, absorbing it first, and then later trying to get the two experiences into relation. (Williams and Hoggart, qtd. in Matthews 180)

According to Laura De Michele, the Matthew / Will twofold experience along with Williams' own memories and the structure of feeling in that particular point in history all serve in the endeavor to create "a new way of seeing, and also, a new way of writing" (23). The rejuvenation of the writing experience is an attempt to articulate a new structure of feeling. As Williams himself declares in *The Long Revolution*, "the new generation responds in its own ways to the unique world it is inheriting, taking up continuities…yet feeling its whole life in certain ways differently, and shaping its creative response into a new structure of feeling" (49).

In the novel Williams tries to articulate the sense of historical transition and change in Wales and England and the interrelations between the two countries and how all these social alterations affect the individual. As De Michele argues, *Border Country* is a narrative that reveals the underlying connections between the multifaceted collective and personal elements and struggles in the Welsh village of Glynmawr on one hand, and the broader matters and social energy that were projected towards that village far from beyond the border (22). The association between general social change and the developments in rural life and its implications in the realities of its inhabitants is just what construes the structure of feeling of the time and places outlined in *Border Country.*

The structure of feeling in *Border Country* stems from Williams' personal experiences and evinces itself most strongly as an embodiment of a communal experience. His time in Cambridge had instilled a certain level of articulation in him that he could never have grasped had he stayed his whole life in Wales. He employed his newly-found mode of expression to give the people back home a voice. In the introduction to the book *Raymond Williams: Critical Perspectives* (1989), Terry Eagleton maintains that Williams brought together the best traditions of Cambridge: "close textual analysis, which Williams dubbed 'historical linguistics, and 'life and thought' which Williams termed 'society' or 'cultural history'" (3).

De Michele points out that Williams' "exile" was needed in order for him to achieve "the distance and consciousness of oneself," so that he could fully grasp the intimate bonds that tie an organic community together (28). Terry Eagleton also discusses Williams' "exile," stipulating that Williams had to "turn backwards so that he could keep moving forwards" because like other exiles he had to "discover, reinvent almost his own social history," move beyond his acquired "Englishness" and reaffirm his identity (5).

Within the pages of his literary work, Williams tries to capture the general state of transition that took place in England and Wales during two generations. By juxtaposing two historical periods Williams is able to illustrate "the residual, corporate, emergent and pre-emergent cultures" (Williams, "Literature in Society" 33-37) as they actively and progressively engage in the cultural process as a whole. The shifts in time and place help the reader see how the past, present and future intermingle to define the lives of individuals in society. According to Jon Nixon, Williams sees history as now; "that now is slipping into its own history; that yesterday is always a part of tomorrow. . . past, present and future are "structured into the experience of interpretation, a process he [Williams] terms 'the tenses of imagination'" (149).

Matthew's life in the present gives the reader a glimpse into the corporate culture of London and Wales. Williams succeeds in illustrating the contrast between Wales and England geographically, culturally and personally. On the first page of the novel the reader sees Matthew Price running to catch the bus; at this initial stage in the story, the split in the protagonist's character is established. He enjoys the spontaneous, carefree run because it is a "break from the contained indifference that was still his dominant feeling of London." He then adds that "You don't speak to people in London…in fact, you don't speak to people anywhere in England" (Williams, *Border* 9). This English reserve is a far cry from the talkative ease with which the Welsh conduct themselves. At one point in the novel, as Matthew is on a train returning to England, an old Welsh woman sits beside him and exhibits no qualms about sharing every little detail about her life with him even though it was the first time they had ever met.

On more than one occasion Matthew contemplates the map which shows the border between England and Wales. He looks at the "familiar network of arteries, held in the shape of Wales, and the east of the lines running out and elongating, into England. The shape of Wales: pig-headed…" (Ibid 12). At one point he remarks that Wales always stays with him wherever he goes: "Whatever it is, it goes with you and comes back with you" (Ibid 300). In a review of *Border Country* Brian

Morton points out that at the beginning of the novel Matthew seems to be somewhat disconnected from his past life in the village, but towards the end he realizes that he always carries his village with him; his memories are not just some abstract nostalgia. Morton continues to argue that as Matthew witnesses the last days of his father's life, he discovers "that his values are at root his father's values; that his life is a continuation of the inquiry that his father had carried on in his" (618). This aspect of the novel brings home Williams' notion of the continuity of cultural values. Matthew represents the mentality of the corporate and to a great degree the emergent culture, and he is shaped largely by Harry, a spokesman of the residual culture and past values. At numerous times in the novel, Morgan points out the similarities between Matthew and Harry. In a statement to Matthew, one character shows how Harry's experience will not die with him: "A life lasts longer than the actual body through which it moves" (qtd. in Morton 618).

In a sense, the concepts of corporate, residual, emergent and pre-emergent cultures are flux ones in themselves and their interrelations. They are not fixed in time and space. In the past narrative of the story, as Harry and Ellen struggle to establish a life in the patch, the reader can see the different dimensions of the structure of feeling as it fluctuates within the folds of the Williams' various levels of culture. At times Harry seems to convey the pre-emergent experiences wherein "the structure of feeling is so called [pre-emergent] because it is essentially different from the structure of what is already known, formed and articulated. It is often apprehended as an isolated and individual, a private feeling…" (Williams, "Literature in Society" 37). When Harry refuses to become Morgan's partner, Morgan protests exclaiming "…you never say what you really think" (Williams, *Border* 179). In a later episode the omniscient narrator remarks that as Harry hesitates to give an answer, Morgan watches him seeing "what he had often seen before in this man: an extraordinary tension between what was felt and what could be said" (Ibid 184). This tension between language and experience in the realm of feeling captures the interplay between past values and present change. Harry clings to his heritage and rejects to become a part of capitalist culture. Harry's disharmony between feeling and articulation continues into the present narrative. When Matthew comes to visit him during his illness Harry explains to his son that "I can feel…It isn't what is said" (Williams, *Border* 79).

In another linkage between past and present, Matthew shows how the historical conflicts between Wales and England still leave their marks on the landscape:

All that had been learned of the old fighting along this border stood out,

> suddenly, in the disposition of the castles and the roads. There on the upland had been the power of the Lords…Their towers now were decayed hollow teeth facing the peaceful valleys into which their power had bitten...the decayed shape of violence…where the devil's heel had slipped as he strode westward into our mountains. (Ibid 292)

Even though there is some residual bitterness in the tone here, still one gets the impression that such violence is best kept at bay in the past.

In *Border Country*, Williams attempts to bring the culture of his home country to life. The structure of feeling in Wales is best manifested in the closeness of the community in Glynmawr Valley. The protagonist relates his account of the solidarity among the members of the patch. Right from the start when Matthew / Will gets off the train at Gwenton and starts walking towards the valley, he is surprised to find that Morgan Rosser has come to pick him up even though no such arrangements had been made. Morgan states in a matter-of-fact manner "You thought we'd leave you to walk then?" (Williams, *Border* 14).

De Michele contends that the interactions between Matthew and Morgan illustrate the cultural differences between London and the Welsh countryside. In the initial encounters Matthew represents the "impersonal city attitude to human relationships," whereas Morgan gives life to "the rural community attitude to personal relationships" (23). The clear tension between the two characters arises from two contrasting mindsets that foreground two distinct social practices.

In another incident, Will objects to all the neighbors calling on his mother to inquire about Harry's health: "It's nice of them to call. But what is this, an illness or a tea-party?" Ellen simply replies "Only it's nice that the neighbors call" (Williams, *Border* 81). Matthew has been away in London for so long he seems to have forgotten the ways of the people in the patch. The neighbors' insistence on visiting Ellen and Harry is a demonstration of their solidarity and unity. They only want to show their support and dedication for their neighbors. Matthew realizes how he has been out of touch with the Glynmawr status quo when he admits " I've been away too long…I've forgotten it all, and I can't bring myself back" (Ibid 82).

Further on in the novel Matthew finds out that Dr. Evans is married to Eira, and it annoys him that no one had mentioned this fact to either of the men. He states angrily that "This is supposed to be a place where we all know about each other" (Ibid 149). Even though Matthew has been away for so long he still remembers the closeness of the people in the valley and resents being kept in the dark like an outsider. As the novel progresses, however, Matthew rediscovers his roots and once

again can embrace the communal spirit of his home country.

The structure of feeling is most apparent at the end of the novel after Harry dies. As soon as news spread of the death,

> a process began which was to take over and control all that had happened: a deliberate exertion of strength by this close community, made as always, for its members who needed help, but made also, it seemed for the sake of the village, to prevent anything reaching out and disturbing its essential continuity. (Williams, *Border* 323)

Here individuals in this society come together in order to guarantee the constancy of their shared way of life. Even though Matthew is disturbed by the way the village seems to "deliberately" forget Harry he knows deep down that the villagers are not acting out of insensitivity to his grief:

> …it was not unfeeling. It was a learned reaction, by which the process of restoring the common life was at once begun…It was as though the village had accepted death so deeply that it allowed no room for personal reaction to it…The shock was overborne and contained by this insistent application of a different energy. (Ibid)

In this emotionally-charged scene the village is portrayed as an organic unit that protects the stability of its members. The life-preserving energy referred to above could very well be the structure of feeling that is articulated by Williams.

The General Strike of 1926: Socialist Dimensions

One major dimension in the spectrum of the structure of feeling in the novel is the working class movement that began in the 1920s. Williams examines this social development by giving an account of his characters' personal experiences and recollections regarding the General Strike of 1926. This strike is explicitly dealt with in Chapter Four of the novel. The railway men go on strike to support the miners who are locked out. All the workers pull together in order to pressure their capitalist employers and the government to raise wages.

In this aspect of the novel William's socialist and Marxist tendencies come to light. The strike is an indicator of the working-class revolt against the ruling class. Morgan explains to Harry:

> …we're working class, Harry, united for common action. The miners are fighting their own battle against their employers…We're not fighting companies, we're fighting the government…We're saying we're the country, we're the power, we the working class are defying the bosses' government, going on to build our own social system. (Williams, *Border* 86-7)

The inequality of the classes has brought on what Marx terms an antithesis embodied in the working-class defiance of the government and the company owners.

In his book *Marxism and Literature* Williams refers to the emergence of the working class back in nineteenth century England as "elements of the cultural process that are alternative or oppositional to the dominant elements" (*Marxism* 127). However, the emergence of this new class exemplifies a process which is "likely to be uneven and is certain to be incomplete" (Ibid). The new working-class brought with it distinctive cultural elements which may still be seen as emergent forms in Williams' mid-twentieth century novel. His novel depicts the ongoing struggles and newly acquired cultural values and formations of the working class both personally and communally.

Even the socialist concepts of brotherhood and comradeship surface at various places in the book. When Major Blakely tries to persuade Harry to return to work because "there is no dispute about the railway men's wages," Harry responds "Part of a fair price for any man is a fair price for his brother. I wouldn't want it if the miners went without" (Ibid 117). Members of the working class need to make common sacrifices if they are to stand up in the face of the ruling class. In another instance Morgan seems to be echoing Marx's phrase, "Religion is the opium of the people" when he says "Aye-singing is the opium of the Welsh" (Ibid 208).

Needless to say, all the efforts and sacrifices of the working class are in vain. The companies and the government finally get their way. The strike is called off unconditionally and certain members like Harry and Tom Rees are penalized for taking part. Rees gets transferred and Harry loses his job for quite a while.

Morton takes up the issue of Williams' socialism. According to Morton, Williams was a relentless advocate of a common culture and a classless society due to his conviction that class division leads to a distortion of "life of both sides of the divide" (616). Morton elaborates further by stressing that Williams was against the split in labor from the "separation between mental and manual labor, between administration and operation, between politics and social life" to the "last recess of the division of labor…this recess within ourselves, where what we want and what

we believe we can do seem impassably divided" (Williams, qtd. in Morton 616).

In the novel, the reader detects Williams' objection to the division in labor in his portrayal of the General Strike. The working class does not fathom any separation between different labor occupations. What applies to the miners applies to the railway men. In their eyes there is no separation in the lives of all workers. In addition, the lack of communication between the administrators of the railway and the workers operating the trains causes the dispute to escalate beyond any reasonable resolve.

Morton mentions one further example that illustrates Williams' opposition to the division of labor. Even though Harry Price is a railway man he originally comes from a family of farmers. That is why Harry spends so much time planting and working the land. It seems to be his "effort heroic but doomed, to refuse the divisions forced upon him [Harry] by social change" (Morton 617). Although Williams yearns for the England's predominantly rural past, he does not fail to acknowledge the inevitability of industrial change as part of the ever-evolving "structure of feeling" amidst various generations.

Williams' socialism is the topic of discussion in the article "The Commitment to Socialism" by Michael Sprinkler. According to Sprinkler, Williams displayed a lifelong commitment in his writing to politics when it is perceived as a channel through which any society identifies its formations of power and distributes resources, opportunities and responsibilities to its members. Williams focused on Marxism because, to a certain extent, it combined Williams' "evolving political positivism" and the newly rising Marxists theories in the west from Georg Lukasc and Antonio Gramsci to the Frankfurt School, Jean Paul Sartre and Louis Althusser (Sprinkler 559).

The defeat of the working class takes its toll on Morgan the most. He is disillusioned by the repercussions of the failed strike and he gains "insight into the real nature of society…The brave show was displaced in an hour by a grey, solid world of power and compromise…the world of power and compromise seemed the real world, the world of hope and ideas no more than a gloss, a mark in the margin" (Williams, *Border* 153). Consequently, Morgan gives up his industrial job and starts his own business dealing. At first he is hesitant; he tells Harry that he has always seen himself as a worker whereas " a dealer's a kind of capitalist… Small, yes, but that's his economic basis" (Ibid 157). He proceeds, however, and slowly builds a business which eventually becomes an institution in the village. The various directions that the economic realities take further embody the fluidity of the "structure of feeling." Once again, the diverse cultural and personal emotional

energies are articulated by Williams in this novel to illustrate the flux dynamics of culture at the residual, corporate, emergent and pre-emergent levels; hence, the "structure of feeling" is sturdy, yet prone to fraction and realignment in an incessant flow towards a multitude of orientations.

Towards the end of the novel the differences between England and Wales seem to gradually dissipate as Matthew makes his way from the mountains of Wales to the flatlands of the British villages to the smoke and ques of London. He finally ponders that "… perhaps we are all country people come to London, but none of us look it. There isn't, hurrying through, that much difference between people…What does it matter now where we are from? Here the past is very quickly left behind" (Ibid 347). Communal living is once again emphasized; amongst the crowds in London, people are constantly on the move and, for the most part, have no time to dwell on individual differences. As Williams declares in *The Long Revolution*, "…the center of value is always in the individual human person - not any one isolated person, but the many persons who are the reality of the general life" (Williams, *Long* 279). Matthew seems to cross the border between his two ways of life and embrace both his Welsh heritage as well as the importance of his London studies. On the final page Matthew declares that after so many years of traveling to and from Glynmawr, he has finally completed that journey he started on when he first got his scholarship to Cambridge and his exile and to a certain extent, Williams' as well, has come to an end; he succeeds in jumping the border.

Conclusion

Williams employs artistic creation in his novel in order to subject the knowable to the unknowable thereby rendering it somewhat more known. By probing into the underlying diversity and correlations between England and Wales at two diverse times in history, Williams succeeds in harmonizing the two distinct constituents of his own identity. His individual experience extends to the collective as he gives rise to the voice of his countrymen and the structure of feeling, otherwise referred to as "social experiences in solution."

The structure of feeling as demonstrated in Williams' novel becomes his experiential embodiment of this seemingly elusive concept. Williams endeavors to render his complex concept more palpable by tapping into the duality of his subjective experience within the more comprehensive framework of communal interactions. It is in the arena of artistic expression that Williams attempts to articulate the varied realities of lived experience in relation to the incessant cultural process as a whole.

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A Debate on John Silver's Good and Evil: A Neuroethical Interpretation of *Treasure Island*

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Abstract Can John Silver in *Treasure Island* be simply labeled as "evil"? This paper aims to tap into this problem from the perspective of neuroethics. Silver's evil fails to obscure his impressive traits as poetical talktiveness, frugality, self-discipline and his trust in others, which is physically based on his maturely developed Theory of Mind; Besides, the witness and imagination of buccaneers' judicial execution of hanging frequently activate Silver's mirror neurons. With the mimesis of hanging in his brain, the blended sensation of horror, depression and regret buzzes in his mind. As a result, Silver sets up a principle of survival, with some altruistic behaviors as disguises, thus presenting a character before readers with moral ambiguity and the duality of human nature, which can be identified as Stevenson's strategies to break away from the western literary tradition and a future feeling as modernity.
Keywords R. L. Stevenson; *Treasure Island*; Silver; good or evil; Neuroethics
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Introduction

Robert Louis Stevenson(1850-1894), a Scottish writer in the 19th century, known for his New Romantic works, was driven out of the great tradition of humanistic thinking and moral concern in English literature by F. R. Leavis(1895-1978), who, in *The Great Tradition*(1948), pointed out that Stevenson's works, despite their "literary sophistication" and "fine writing," did not totally break away from the "bad tradition" of Walter Scott (1771-1832)(6). In *R. L. Stevenson: A Critical Study*, Frank Swinnerton was even more scathing about Stevenson, commenting, "it is no longer possible for a serious critic to place him among the great writers, because

in no department of letters—excepting the boy's book and the short-story—has he written the work of first-class importance"(188). Stevenson's first novel, *Treasure Island*(1883), is one of these boy's books. Henry James(1843-1916), however, spoke quite high of it, as he argued, "*Treasure Island* will surely become-it must already have become, and will remain—in its way a classic; thanks to this indescribable mixture of the prodigious and the human, of surprising coincidences and familiar feelings" (Smith 154-155).

The novel tells the story of the adventures of Jim Hawkins, the son of innkeepers of Admiral Benbow Inn, with Dr. Livesey and his party as they outsmart buccaneers and search for treasures. The previous studies on this romance mainly focused on the protagonist Hawkins. In fact, the buccaneer John Silver's importance in the novel is self-evident, as Michael Mendelson put it, "he is iconic..., discussion of his complexities can mobilize attention and, with guidance, catalyze interest in more expansive issues" (342). At the end of the novel, Hawkins says, "of Silver we have heard no more...but I dare say he met his old Negress, and perhaps still lives in comfort with her and Captain Flint" (Stevenson, *Treasure Island* 223). Here, Stevenson seemed to have step out of the ethical dilemma in favor of arranging a happy ending for Silver. However, he juxtaposed the happiness in this life with the punishments in the afterlife, and left the task of punishing Silver to God in whom he himself did not believe, which has prompted considerable speculation.

The Indeterminate Moral Judgment on Silver

Does the end of the novel, with the possibility of Silver's leading a comfortable happy life implicitly convey embedded meaning?

Whether to regard buccaneer Silver as a wicked person has much to do with the ethical judgment of buccaneers as a whole. The novel seems to set the "negative" buccaneers and the "positive" characters with high social status like Dr. Livesey and the local lord, the bombastic Squire Trelawney in two opposite groups. As in the very first chapter, Dr. Livesey is portrayed as "neat, bright doctor, with his powder as white as snow and his bright, black eyes and pleasant manners," while the buccaneer Billy Bones is compared to "filthy, heavy, bleared scarecrow" (Stevenson, *Treasure Island* 5-6). Binary opposition forms a sharp contrast between the "positive" figure of Dr. Livesey and the "negative" figure of Billy Bones, with a slight implication of ethical judgments of good and evil. However, simply making good or evil ethical judgment on the group of buccaneers is debatable. To begin with, it goes against Stevenson's original intention of *Treasure Island,* which is explicitly stated on the title page: "To S.L.O., an American gentleman in accordance

with whose classic taste the following narrative has been designed…" (Stevenson, *Treasure Island* XXII). Stevenson insisted that the novel was intended to stimulate readers' imagination, not to cultivate a sense of moral responsibility. He once lamented, "Ethics are my veiled mistress. I love them, but I know not what they are" (Booth 213), echoing his indeterminate and paradoxical attitude in terms of ethical judgment.

Besides, buccaneers, as a social group, emerged and thrived in a specific social and historical context. Therefore, critics who make ethical judgments about them need to take these factors into consideration. As Nie Zhenzhao and Shang Biwu proposed, "ethical literary criticism is grounded in the specific historical context or ethical environment of literature" (6). In certain period of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, buccaneers, synonymous with national heroes, were worshipped by the English. For instance, Flint, an English buccaneer worshipped by Squire Trelawney in the novel, is described as "bloodthirstiest buccaneer of whom the Spaniards were prodigiously afraid"(Stevenson, *Treasure Island* 37). Buccaneers are, in certain context, represented with various positive images in narratives, as Stevenson's poem titled "Pirate Story" chants,

> Where shall we adventure, to-day that we're afloat,
> Wary of the weather and steering by a star?
> Shall it be to Africa, a-steering of the boat,
> To Providence, or Babylon, or off to Malabar? (Stevenson, *A Child's Garden of Verses* 28)

This little poem is smudged with a layer of romantic atmosphere. From the perspective of a child, it constructs a vision of innocent, romantic and carefree buccaneer life. Hawkins, the protagonist of the novel, deeply influenced by buccaneer narratives, shows his great interest in the life of buccaneers and often dreams of sailing, looking forward to landing on foreign islands to find treasures, as he describeds, "I brooded by the hour together over the map, all the details of which I well remembered. Sitting by the fire in the housekeeper's room, I approached that island in my fancy, from every possible direction…"(Stevenson, *Treasure Island* 42). In his neighborhood are a party of younger men, showing great admiration for Billy Bone, and attributing the English supremacy at sea to buccaneers, for they call him "true seadog" and a "real old salt", and say "there was the sort of man that made English terrible at sea" (Stevenson, *Treasure Island* 4).

The vague attitude of the English towards buccaneers is embedded in literature

works. On the one hand, buccaneers are portrayed as brave and chivalrous, with much heroic potential in various nautical narratives. On the other hand, the image of buccaneers as greedy and despicable is recurring in the novel. The contradiction shows itself via the words of Trelawney. Squire Trelawney initially criticizes avaricious schemes pursued by all the buccaneers, believing that the ultimate purpose of all legendary heroic feats of buccaneers is "money" (Stevenson, *Treasure Island* 37). But when he accidentally gets access to the treasure map, he abandons his responsibility as a local lord and arranges a voyage to seek treasure urgently. In his exhortation to Dr. Livesey, "righteous" Trelawney faces the same moral dilemma as buccaneers do when persuading Livesey to hunt the treasures, "you will give up this wretched practice at once. We'll have not the least difficulty in finding the spot, and money to eat, to roll in, to play duck and drake with ever after"(Stevenson, *Treasure Island* 40). Obviously, the ultimate purpose of his treasure-hunting is money, much the same as that of the buccaneers. The ambiguous attitude of the English Government towards piracy might be the root of the above social phenomenon. English rulers issued "privateering commissions" to buccaneers, especially during the reign of Elizabeth I. Buccaneers were worshipped as heroes for the wealth they plundered prepared enough funds for the English bourgeoisie revolution. However, despite the enduring popularity of the "Golden Age" of piracy, buccaneers in Britain experienced ups-and-downs roller coaster, especially in 1698, when *Acts of Piracy* was enacted to curb maritime offenses by buccaneers, labeling piracy as illegal.

Fiona McCulloch regarded the ambivalent attitude to buccaneers of the English middle and upper classes with Trelawney as representative here in the novel to be the double-standard of colonialism, "which legitimizes itself by claiming to civilize savage nations whilst concealing the insatiable appetite of Empire" (73). On the one hand, Trelawney tries to cover up some of the evil activities of the Empire, while on the other hand, he tends to civilize and legitimize these evil and barbaric acts. The interpretation of this paradoxical phenomenon from the perspective of colonialism may not resonate among all readers. However, both buccaneers and respectable English men share the desire to extract treasure regurgitated from the treasure island, "so blurring legitimate and illegitimate intent and rendering them two faces of the same coin—playing double for doubloons" (McCulloch 73). Thus, it blurs the line between the "good" man represented by Squire Trelawney and the "evil" man represented by buccaneer Silver, in Andrew Loman's words, "dissolving meaningful moral distinctions between buccaneer and good English sailor" (2).

Since it is reckless to rush to the conclusion that all buccaneers are evil, a

closer inspection needs to be taken on the evil of Silver, a buccaneer in *Treasure Island* both appreciated and hated by Hawkins.

The "evil" image of Silver recurs in the novel. He first appears in Bill and Hawkins' conversation as a "seafaring man with one leg" (Stevenson, *Treasure Island* 3), and then he haunts Hawkins' dreams "in a thousand forms, and with a thousand diabolical expressions" (Stevenson, *Treasure Island* 3). Simple lines profile Silver as a negative figure. But that doesn't fully obscure his bright side. In the first place, Silver is tall and strong, with a face "as big as a ham—plain and pale," but "intelligent and smiling"(Stevenson, *Treasure Island* 48). Hawkins, when he first meets Silver, claims that "I had seen the captain, and Black Dog, and the blind man, Pew, and I thought I knew what a buccaneer was like—a very different creature, according to me, from this clean and pleasant-tempered landlord"(Stevenson, *Treasure Island* 48). Compared with the traditional stereotyped image of buccaneers, Silver wins the heart of Hawkins by his gentle and amiable image, successfully dragging himself away from the gang of the evil. Besides, Silver shows his undeniable charm via a spectrum of qualities manifested by the good education he once received in childhood. The coxswain sees in him no common man, saying, "he had good schooling in his young days, and can speak like a book when so minded; and brave—a lion's nothing alongside of Long John!" (Stevenson, *Treasure Island* 62) Silver also has professional and thorough knowledge of sailing. When Silver and Hawkins meet for the first time, he warmly introduces Hawkins to ships and the sea. He is knowledgeable, patient and responsible in teaching newcomers:

> [H]e made himself the most interesting companion, telling me about the different ships that we passed by, their rig, tonnage, and nationality, explaining the work that was going forward—how one was discharging, another taking in cargo, and a third making ready for sea; and every now and then telling me some little anecdote of ships or seaman, or repeating nautical phrase till I had learned it perfectly. I began to see that here was one of the best of possible shipmates."(Stevenson, *Treasure Island* 51).

Alan Sandison said Dr. Livesey's "quiet but confident authority" was enough to be the "ideal father" for the young Hawkins (55). While Alexandra Valint had a totally different story on the so-called "ideal father" as she claimed Dr. Livesey who had a privileged place as narrator was often seen as a positive figure, but was "cruel, greedy, emotionless, and quick to punish those deemed inferior… Jim resists and critiques the doctor's version of adulthood by taking refuge in an eternal

and haunted childhood" (3). Actually, Hawkins sees an "ideal father" in Silver the moment he first meets the warm, wise and knowledgeable man, foreshadowing his contradictory feelings mixed with both love and hatred towards Silver in the plots to come.

The ethical judgment of good or evil is relative. The social status of buccaneers in English society changed in different periods of time in the history. Historically speaking, buccaneers are not absolutely evil, and some of them are even seen as synonymous with patriotic national heroes. When Silver disappears at the end of the novel, Hawkins says, "Yet my heart was sore for him, wicked as he was, to think on the dark perils that environed, and the shameful gibbet that awaited him."(Stevenson, *Treasure Island* 189) Here, Hawkins' ambivalent attitude towards Silver is also understandable.

Silver's Shining Traits and Theory of Mind

Despite the villainous image in traditional literary criticism, the positive character and conduct of Silver is slightly reflected in what his shipmates comment about him. His bravery and fortitude are his distinctive marks, as the coxswain says, "a lion's nothing alongside of Long John" (Stevenson, *Treasure Island* 62). Despite the refusal of the still-honorable sailor Tom to Silver's proposal of mutiny, he gives high appraisal of Silver with "honesty" and "richness" (Stevenson, *Treasure Island* 87), which is resonated with the comparison of cowardly-profiled buccaneers in the novel. In Chapter Five, when the buccaneers are frightened by the pistol-shot of a revenue officer, they "turned at once and ran, separating in every direction, one seaward along the cove, one slant across the hill" (Stevenson, *Treasure Island* 32), and they abandoned Pew, which indirectly lead to the death of him. Later in the treasure-hunt on the island, buccaneers are dreadfully affected when hearing a voice among the trees, which is thought to be the voice of Flint Captain, "[t]he color went from their six faces like enchantment; some leaped to their feet, some clawed hold of others; Morgan groveled on the ground" (Stevenson, *Treasure Island* 206). These ironically portrayed pictures intensify Silver's brave, decisive and resolute image and highlight his impressive blended attributes of personality, which, in the context of buccaneers and treasure hunting, seems utmost important.

Silver also impresses readers with praiseworthy frugality against the extravagant life of other buccaneers. In the novel, Hawkins criticizes buccaneer-lifestyle as wasteful and undomestic, saying "they had cooked, I suppose, three times more than we could eat; and one of them, with an empty laugh, threw what was left into the fire…I never in my life saw men so careless of the morrow; hand

to mouth is the only word that can describe their way of doing…" (Stevenson, *Treasure Island* 198). Although Silver's conduct is not explicitly described here, it is already stated in the novel that Silver claims that he has laid his money safe in bank, with emphasis on saving rather than earning (Stevenson, *Treasure Island* 66). Unlike other buccaneers, he has a good vision of future life by making a dense plan of home construction. Admittedly, it has certain restraints on his conducts at the moment, highlighting his rigorous and self-disciplined character.

To profile the sea cook Long John Silver is a tough task, and obviously these shining qualities pull him away from the group of traditional-stereotyped villainous buccaneers, adding to the complexity of this character. Consequently, it is understandable that on the one hand, Hawkins, gasps after the detection of Silver's intention of mutiny and what he tends to do with still-loyal shipmates, while on the other hand, Hawkins is impressed by Silver's ebullience and resilience, admiring his independence and competence.

As traditional ethics tends not to profile a buccaneer in a positive way, neuroethics may interpret Silver's shining traits from a new perspective.

Neuroethics was born in 2002. It breaks the traditional western dualism and believes in the intimate connection between our brain and our behaviors. It implies the intersection of ethics and neuroscience "will be the area with truly profound implications for the way ethics, writ large, is approached in the 21st Century" (Roskies 22).

In neuroscience, Theory of Mind (ToM for short) is a term used to describe human beings' ability "to explain people's behavior in terms of their thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and desires" (Zunshine, *Why We Read Fiction* 6). Obviously, Silver has developed excellent ToM for his circumstantial resilience and what appears to be genuine friendliness, and he spends most of his waking hours reading other people's minds. The coxswain admires Silver's good schooling and Hawkins thinks high of Silver's calmness and his pretending courtesy to everyone, which all serve to offer clues of Silver's fine growing environment, in which to better cultivate the ToM, developing into a kind of magical power when he steps into adulthood.

Silver's mature ToM is manifested in his conversational skills. Evidently, before negotiation, he has thoroughly conjectured the thoughts and desires of Dr. Livesey and his party, and, is well aware of the importance of the dressing etiquette for business negotiation. He "was tricked out in his best; an immense blue coat, thick with brass buttons, hung as low as to his knees, and a fine laced hat was set on the back of his head" (Stevenson, *Treasure Island* 123). Even though the negotiation eventually fails to fulfill his goal, he has left a deep impression on the other party,

especially on Hawkins. In her essay, "the Poetics of Conversation in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*", Amy Wong explored a particular connection that "Stevenson was making between the powerful dynamism of talk and the philosophical principles of late-Victorian adventure romance" (902). As a result, the poetics of Silver's talk is characterized by vitality and openness, and ToM is clearly responsible for the vividness and openness that Silver brings to the conversation, both his confidential private talk with the still-loyal shipmate in his persuasion of the latter to join the party of mutineers and his rhetorical public talk during the negotiation.

Silver shows his fully developed ToM via his charming personalities as frugality and self-discipline. Silver is quite a good master of sailors' vision of future life, luring them into his company of mutiny and teaches them the philosophy of getting rich by saving. He takes blind Pew as a negative example, and presents the severe consequences of extravagance: "Old Pew, as had lost his sight, and might have thought shame, spends twelve hundred pound in a year, like a lord in Parliament. Where is he now? Well, he's dead now!" (Stevenson, *Treasure Island* 66). Silver's accurate reading of the thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and desires of his fellow sailors convinces most of them to join his grand plan of mutiny, winning strong allies for his later confrontation with Livesey and his loyalist party.

Furthermore, Silver's ToM is the physiological basis for his trust in his wife. Silver tells his shipmates that "the Spy-glass is sold, lease and goodwill and rigging; and the old girl's off to meet me" (Stevenson, *Treasure Island* 67-68). It appears to be a great risk that Silver gives what he possesses to his wife, for once his wife betrays, he will lose all. However, Silver, despite the doubt of his wife's loyalty from his shipmates, has thoroughly considered the possibilities of the future before making decision, among which he chooses a seemingly altruistic one: benefit maximization. His black wife appears to be the biggest beneficiary, while Silver with a win-win strategy, also maximizes his own benefits facing the uncertainty of the future. During his treasure hunt, his wife shoulders the responsibility as the keeper of Silver's property and the caretaker of the whole family. Once Silver escapes from being hanged, his savings and fortune kept by his wife would be the material security for him to rerun a family. Thus ToM mechanism plays a fundamental role in the evolution of altruism. We construct and navigate our social environment by attributing other people's states of mind, making seemingly altruistic decisions, which are actually self-benefited. People's ToM converts the actions and feelings of others into that of their own, with an illusion of identical emotions. In Silver's case, his trust in his wife is derived from his attributing her states of mind, knowing her

betrayal is much less possible than her loyalty to him, either for his cruelty or for his ability to manipulate a family, which to a black woman is a guarantee for a happy life.

The shining traits of Silver, such as poetic conversational skills, frugality and self-discipline, trust in others, based on mature ToM, blur his evil. The complexities of Silver's personality offer a possible explanation of Hawkins' paradoxical feelings to Silver and the great risk Ben Gunn takes to let him escape at the end of the novel.

Mirror Neuron and Silver's Principle of Survival

The complexity of Silver lies in that despite his cruelty as a buccaneer, he impresses others with traits based on his mature ToM. In addition, some of Silver's altruistic behaviors are derived from his great principle of survival.

The witness and imagination of buccaneers' judicial execution of being hanged frequently activate Silver's mirror neurons. With the mimesis of the whole process of being hanged in his brain, the blended sensation of horror, depression and regret buzzes in his mind. As a result, Silver sets up a principle of survival, with some altruistic behaviors as disguises, thus presenting a figure before readers with moral ambiguity and the duality of human nature

As is mentioned above, the *Acts of Piracy* the English Government once enacted did have a deterrent effect on buccaneers, at least on Silver. Silver has more than once witnessed the hanging of buccaneers; he has seen the "dance" of hanged sailors' "look mighty like a hornpipe in a rope's end at Execution Dock by London Town"(Stevenson, *Treasure Island* 185); he has seen the hanged prisoners "hanged in chains, birds about them"(Stevenson, *Treasure Island* 186); He has seen countless fellow buccaneers, whom he regards as heroes, "drying in the sun at Execution Dock" (Stevenson, *Treasure Island* 70). The scene of hanging restrains the frequent manifestation of Silver's evil behavior on the one hand, while on the other hand, it stimulates the generation of Silver's seemingly good conducts.

How does people's witness of the hanging influence their behavior? In 1980s, in the University of Parma of Italy, a group of neurophysiologists, directed by Giacomo Rizzolatti, first identified the mirror neurons. "What defines mirror neurons is that when we observe another executing an action they fire or activate the same neurons in our brain" (Deligiannis, et al. 173). It is important in imitation when the sensory stimulus are joined with the motor cells. Later, observation goes that motor neurons are not only fired by action and observation, but also "by intentionality of actions and emotions. The mirroring process takes place directly and automatically, it does not require conscious conceptualization" (Deligiannis, et al. 173). And in the

novel, Silver sees the hanging of the buccaneers, as if he were watching a play in a theatre, for he could not help replaying the whole scene of hanging in his mind. And as a witness to the scene of hanging, he also rehearses the emotions like shock, fear, remorse, sadness experienced by the hanged buccaneers at the very moment of death. Not only is the scene visually striking, but it also allows his brain to access to the scene and replay it over and over again. His neck is stiffened at the thought of the gallows, of which he is scared much more than other buccaneers. Silver confesses to Dr. Livesey that he risks his life to save Hawkins' life by offending the larger force of mutineers, hoping that Livesey and Hawkins would "testify to his protection in court" (Stevenson, *Treasure Island* 186). From the perspective of neuroethics, the brain area responsible for rewards and punishments and mirror mechanism together play a fundamental role in the evolution of altruism, pushing us to offer help at the witness of unfair phenomenon, so as to maintain social fairness. It allows us to transform the actions and emotions of others into those of ourselves.

Silver's altruistic act of saving Hawkins is ascribed to the function of the mirror neurons in his brain. Silver denies the possibility of Hawkins's being murdered, which might re-stimulate his brain and trigger his inner fear of death. Silver, on the other hand, understands that his seemingly altruistic acts of rescuing Hawkins from the angry pirates are, essentially speaking, self-saving, for Hawkins might testify to Silver's protection in court. With the help of mirror neurons, the scene of hanging flashes back and replays over and over in his mind. A mixture of shock, regret, sadness, horror, shame and other emotions haunts him, further intensifying his fear of hanging. This exact fear of death leads him to set survival as the primary goal in everything he does, both good and evil. Guided by the rule of survival, Silver further breaks down his goal into multiple objectives like making enough money, staying out of the business of piracy, starting a family, being a decent and high-status man living in a mansion and riding in carriages. The very philosophy of survival based on neuroethics is rarely found in other buccaneers, most of whom, as he condemns, "have no definite purpose in life" (Stevenson, *Treasure Island* 70). Therefore, Among a group of buccaneers without clear purpose in life, Silver's stinginess and his plan for the future and family are comparably valuable.

Silver's fear of death also stems from the previous loss of his leg. The story does not offer any details of how Silver lost his leg. Mr Trelawney tells Hawkins in a letter that Silver "lost it in his country's service, under the immortal Hawke" (Stevenson, *Treasure Island* 44). Losing his leg in a naval battle is just a gimmick for him to win trust from Mr. Trelawney. Yet it is true that Silver has lost his leg. No matter what has happened, the past life-threatening experience echoes his

understanding of death. In *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reasoning and The Human Brain* (*Descartes' Error*,1994), Damasio claimed "having a mind means that an organism forms neural representations which can become images, be manipulated in a process called thought, and eventually influence behavior by helping predict the future, plan accordingly, and choose the next action" (90). The neural representation of body states recognizes external changes as if they were experienced. Silver's experience of losing his leg strengthens his cognition of life and his awareness of the value of having life, which influences his behavior as to set up a principle of survival.

At the end of the novel, Hawkins speaks ironically of Silver, saying that no one takes him seriously except Ben Gunn, but "it was remarkable how well he bore these slights and with what unwearying politeness he kept on trying to ingratiate himself with all" (Stevenson, *Treasure Island* 220). Reuven Tsur pointed out that literary aesthetics was a special use of cognitive mechanism and in order to achieve art's end, "the process of perception" was "prolonged" (4). Why is Silver a charming character? The most probable reason is that the readers cannot easily end up commenting him good or evil. Readers' cognition of Silver is frequently disturbed, which greatly challenges their aesthetic as well as moral judgment of this character.

The mirror neurons in Silver's brain are constantly activated by his frequent witness and imagination of hanging, with fear, despair, loss, and remorse filling his life. Haunted by these mixed emotions, Silver has established a set of rules for survival, based on which a series of evil deeds are conducted. A simple attachment of the label "evil" to Silver is clearly not recommendable. The realization of the role of mirror neurons in Silver's thinking, and how those thoughts influence his actions, may drag us from recklessly making ethical judgment on Silver.

Conclusion

The "evil" buccaneer John Silver escapes and lives comfortably in Hawkins imaginary world, which prompts considerable speculation. Despite his villainous image, the positive character and conduct of Silver based on his maturely developed ToM leave an impression of his poetical talkativeness, frugality, self-discipline and trust in others. Besides, Silver's witness and imagination of buccaneers' judicial execution of hanging frequently activate his mirror neurons. With the mimesis of hanging physically in his brain, the blended sensation of horror, depression and regret buzzes in his mind. As a result, Silver sets up a principle of survival, with some altruistic behaviors as disguises. Silver's being loved and hated can

probably be attributed to the complexities of his character. The readers' cognition of Silver is constantly disturbed, challenging the aesthetic process of the novel. As J. R. Hammond put it, "in his novels and romances, Stevenson continually explore his lifelong concern with problems of duality and moral ambiguity" (18). The moral ambiguity and the duality of human nature in the case of Silver are the author's strategy to break through the traditional Western literature and signal the transformation of western literature to modernity. As is believed by Sandison, Stevenson's putative modernism is shown under three broad headings: "self-consciousness, textuality and authority" (4). This paper also believes that Stevenson's exploration of the ambiguity of morality and the duality of human nature represents another "future" feeling and trend of western literature.

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Envisioning a Bleak Future in Al-Wardānī's *Heads Ripe for Plucking*

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Abstract This paper explores Mahmoud al-Wardānī's employment of the theme of decapitation in his historical novel, *Heads Ripe for Plucking*. It shows how the author uses this physical impairment to replicate his sociopolitical concerns under the reign of successive totalitarian political regimes in his country. The novel constitutes an elastic Egyptian setting capable of providing a terrifying panorama of tyranny and political oppression throughout the history of Egypt. The leitmotif of multiple beheadings along with the fragmentary structure of the narrative function as an allegory for the historical forces which impeded the nation's development. Furthermore, the paper traces al-Wardānī's interplay of magical realist and science fictional tropes as apt modes of expression to expose injustice and lack of democracy and to reflect the future dystopian existence the author aims to warn against.

Keywords Mahmoud al-Wardānī; decapitation; magical realism; science fiction; dystopia

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Introduction

Mahmoud al-Wardānī (b.1950) belongs to the 1970s generation of Egyptian writers whose main fictional concern is to reflect the turbulent sociopolitical scene in the aftermath of the 1967 War. His novel *Heads Ripe for Plucking* (*Awan al-qitaf*) (2002) represents a vivid example of how the social and political transformations in Egypt during that period have played a prominent role in inspiring writers, enhancing their creativity, and shaping their artistic talent. As a historical novel,

it features an elastic Egyptian setting to provide a terrifying panorama of tyranny and political oppression throughout time. By so doing, it simultaneously explores the repercussions of the 1967 defeat on Egypt and denounces the brutality of the successive totalitarian police state regimes which caused the spread of corruption, poverty, and suppressed political freedoms.

Al-Wardānī and his contemporary Avant-Garde writers like Sonallah Ibrahim, Ibrahim Abdul Majid and others, departed from the conventions of realist fiction because they were no longer convinced that such conventions are capable of representing the status quo in Egypt and the rest of the Arab World. To articulate their anxieties, they experimented with narrative techniques which best replicate the chaotic and oppressive conditions in their country. In *Heads Ripe for Plucking*, the six stories about the different protagonists fragment the novel's form, whereby the novel's fragmentary structure acquires an allegorical dimension that symbolizes the conditions in Egypt. In fact, its allegorical dimension corresponds with Walter Benjamin's clarifications of the baroque allegory in Avant-Garde art. Benjamin maintains that the essence of the Avant-Garde art constitutes emphasizing the extreme fragmentation of the modern allegorical image (58). In complementing the work of Benjamin, Peter Bürger states that the Avant-Gardists are allegorists because their works "are non-organic, [and] fragmented, [from which] false appearance of totality is extinguished." Their allegories form "an expression of melancholy" because "[a]llegory, whose essence is fragment, represents history as decline" (Benjamin 68).

Magical Decapitations and Envisioning Dystopia

As a historical novel, *Heads Ripe for Plucking* goes back to the beginnings of Arabo-Islamic history to draw an analogy between past tyrannical events and contemporary ones in order to expose the injustices of totalitarian regimes. Al-Wardānī divides the novel into several stories of beheadings and uses multiple narrators; hence, the novel's allegorical form symbolizes the historical forces which impeded the nation's development. Al-Wardānī's second story recounts the historical events that led to the beheading of al-Imām Ḥusayn, the grandson of the Prophet Muḥammad, in Kūfa, at the hands of the Ummayad Caliph Yazīd ibn Mu'āwiya. Because the latter usurped the office of the Caliphate, al-Ḥusayn refused to pledge him allegiance. Upon his death, al-Ḥusayn's head was taken to Egypt, while his body was buried in Iraq. For al- Wardānī, the demise of al-Ḥusayn and his family illustrates the measures that autocratic rulers would take to stay in power. Thus, even though al-Ḥusayn is the Prophet's beloved grandson, Yazīd does not spare his

life and he sends his family into captivity. The Prophet's granddaughter, Zaynab, screams in agony, "O Muḥammad! O Muḥammad! Behold al-Husayn in this bare land, besmeared with blood, his limbs mutilated. Muhammad, your daughters are enslaved, your offspring murdered" (Al-Wardānī 118).

The title of al-Wardānī's novel alludes to the infamous speech of the ruler of Iraq, al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf al-Thaqafī, whom the Caliph Yazīd sends to al-Kūfa to suppress the mutiny of al-Imām Ḥusayn's followers. Al-Ḥajjāj addresses the Kūfans saying: "I see heads before me that are ripe and ready for plucking" (qtd. in Ḥalīm159). Because the novel's central theme revolves around the beheadings of opponents, the first story functions as a frame for the entire novel, and it connects the stories thematically. At the same time, al-Wardānī evokes literal and metaphorical decapitations of political opponents, intellectuals and otherwise throughout history. Accordingly, in the novel's context, al-Imām Ḥusayn functions as an archetypal sacrificial figure whose narrative raises the novel to a mythical level. As a result, the novel acquires a circular mythical time that suggests the repetitions of historical patterns. As such, al-Wardānī's marvelous elements fit easily with the novel's dystopian atmosphere because magical elements highlight incredible historical events.

Heads Ripe for Plucking opens with the frame narrative in which the anonymous narrator tells his story in retrospect, after which the novel recounts the beheading of the several characters that appear in six separate stories. The narrator is beheaded while travelling on a train. Jumping onto the train roof, he dances sprightly with his eyes shut for a few seconds, and the iron bridge impales his head (Al-Wardānī 2). The image of the narrator's impaled head hanging over the bridge with his wide open eyes which gaze toward the south foreshadows the horrific tales that he narrates later in the novel.

The narrator relates the details of other beheadings to create an extended image of the status quo in Egypt. These decapitations encompass the liquidation of the communist leader Shuhdi Attiya al-Shafie in detention camps during the reign of President Gamāl 'Abd al-Naṣer, and the two schoolboys who unwittingly get involved in the demonstrations of the indigent during al-Sadāt's rule. The narrator also mentions the beheading of the man who comes home from the Gulf to retire. Together, they represent the metaphorical decapitation of intellectuals and the negative impact of the weak Egyptian economy on the people.

Magic performs a pervasive element in al-Wardānī's text and it functions as the writer's most effective fictional tool through which he expresses political oppression. This element manifests itself in the form of a number of beheaded

characters which retain some human attributes and take part in the action of the novel in spite of decapitation. These physically impaired characters appear within different contexts in the novel's different settings. Even though the narrator's head gets severed in a freak accident, he is capable of thinking, contemplating, and telling stories. On the other hand, al-Ḥusayn's severed head has a will of its own and manages to fly magically from Kūfa to Egypt. However, the most intriguing of these heads appears in the futuristic setting al-Wardānī envisions in one of the novel's subplots. The government formats the brain of the slain citizen and then they reassemble his head and body once the doctors accomplish their mission of downloading the desired programs on the man's brain. The citizen resumes his normal routine after they discharge him from hospital. Al-Wardānī aptly fuses magic with science fiction to portray the most hideous dystopia where authoritarian systems regularly brainwash their citizens to guarantee their conformity.

In her article "Middle Eastern Writers Find Refuge in the Dystopian Novel," Alexandra Alter argues that dystopian themes are not alien to Arabic fiction but the "genre has proliferated in part because it captures the sense of despair that many writers say they feel in the face of cyclical violence and repression. At the same time, futuristic settings may give writers some measure of cover to explore charged political ideas without being labeled dissidents" (Alter n. p.). Likewise, in "Dystopian Future in Contemporary Science Fiction," Chintan Ambalal Mahida clarifies that the main features of dystopian science fiction include "technological advances that enslave humans or regiment their lives; the mandatory division of people in society into castes or groups with specialized functions; and a collective loss of memory and history making mankind easier to manipulate psychologically and ultimately leading to dehumanization" (2).

For al-Wardānī, dystopian tropes articulate his objection to the ongoing political oppression. After displaying the various forms of repression that autocratic regimes have exerted over the past years, he imagines how technology and science may change their life for the worse. In his opinion, rapid technological advances will provide the oppressive institutions with new means of control and surveillance instead of improving people's life. It signifies that al-Wardānī has a completely pessimistic outlook for the future. He believes that the cycles of violence and the repression of freedoms will prevail unless the nation revolts to break this vicious cycle.

In addition to the magical severed heads, al-Wardānī resorts to folktales to glorify al-Husayn's martyrdom. One tale goes that Al-Husayn's severed head miraculously flees to Cairo against Mu'āwiya's wishes; while conveying al-

Husayn's head with the procession of captives on the way to Damascus, the seat of the Ummayad court, the "noble head escape[s] . . . and land[s] in the arms of a woman known as Umm al-Ghulam in one of Cairo's alleys" (3-4). Although the narrator declares that some people discredit the incident on the ground that Cairo had not yet existed at that time, the magical incident has a fictional significance. The escape of the severed head functions as a blunt act of defiance against oppression and violence. Mu'āwiya's mundane control over al-Husayn ends with the brutal murder. Al-Husayn's head refuses to be the usurper's trophy. Death liberates al-Husayn from Mu'āwiya's tyranny and it enables him to choose his destination this time. His escape to his desired place affirms his spiritual status as a martyr with special miracles; additionally, it devalues the triumph of the tyrant who has limited and mundane powers.

Following al-Husayn's narrative, al-Wardānī sets the next stories in modern Egypt. Nevertheless, themes of political oppression, tyranny, and decapitation recur variously in each of them. Through the different threads of narrative in the novel, he shows that overthrowing the monarchy and establishing the Republic of Egypt in 1952 by the Free Officers have not fulfilled the aspirations for democracy in the country. The second half of the twentieth century has witnessed the advent of several autocratic regimes in Egypt which have betrayed the Revolution's main slogans of liberty, constitutional and economic reform, and social justice. Each of the stories represents a vivid dramatization of the tyranny and the unjust practices of these political systems. They also reflect the Egyptians' repeated feelings of frustration and disillusionment during the rule of different authoritarian leaders.

For al-Wardānī, the precursor of these totalitarian systems is President 'Abd al-Nāṣir's regime because it has established a legacy of dictatorial and violent rule in Egypt. Shortly after assuming power, 'Abd al-Nāṣir declared Egypt an Arab State with one-party political system. According to Morton Kondracke despite some of 'Abd al-Nāṣir's national accomplishments, he arrogated exclusive power, turned the country into a police state, placed citizens under strict surveillance, and violated human rights in many ways. He nationalized most of the important newspapers to be mere horns for authority (15). His Intelligence apparatus opened personal letters and taped private phone calls. Most importantly, Kondracke points out that 'Abd al-Nāṣir maintained detention camps and torture facilities where he has kept his political opponents (15). Without official and fair trials, he has imprisoned many of his rivals in remote military jails.

'Abd al-Nāṣir's autocracy crystallizes in his brutal liquidation of the leader of The Democratic Movement for National Liberation, Shuhdi Attiya al-Shafie,

in 1960. Al-Wardānī sets Shuhdi's story in Abu Zaabal Prison and narrates the circumstances of his martyrdom from the perspective of several other political prisoners who witnessed the awful stages of this shameful crime. The names of the real political prisoners who appear in his story give it more credibility and attest to the tyranny of the system towards many people. Shuhdi brilliantly explains to Nūr Sulaymān, another political prisoner, the crux of his controversy with the new born regime. In his opinion, admiring President 'Abd al-Nāṣir's national achievements should not encourage the politicians and activists of all parties to overlook their need "to uphold [their] call for democracy, the annulment of martial law, and wresting [their] rights and the rights of all the political forces to independent organization" (Al-Wardānī 29). Evidently, the regime criminalizes these demands and penalizes those who advocate them.

Al-Wardānī's use of the historical incident of Shuhdi serves to exemplify the violence and cruelty of 'Abd al-Nāṣir's regime and its repetition of the mistakes of the authoritarian system it had revolted against in the first place. In addition to that, the brutal murder of Shuhdi attests to the system's disgraceful ingratitude to its most loyal supporters. In his conversation with Shuhdi, Nūr wonders "what I find hard to understand is how a nationalist government like President Nāṣir's would actually take it upon itself to sanction the torture, humiliation, wounding, and murder of Communist nationalists who stand by it" (Al-Wardānī 28). On the other hand, it surprises Abd al-Hamid Haridi that Abdel Nasser uses the executioners of the monarchy and imprisons people without a fair trial; he laments, "[t]hey sent us Ismail Himmat, who had specialized in torturing Communists since the days of the King, to undertake disciplining us himself. We are all now detainees. Whether sentenced or not, everyone was a detainee" (Al-Wardānī 34). Replicating the mistakes of the former system frustrates people and turns their dream of democracy into a terrifying nightmare.

Despite the fact that Shuhdi belongs to the Communist Party that supports 'Abd al-Nāṣir's nationalist government, the jailors subject him to severe torture and humiliation. Shaved down to the scalp and barefoot detainees watch an officer on horseback order Shuhdi, "Say 'I'm bitch,' boy!" (Al-Wardānī 86). Shuhdi reminds the officer that he belongs to a nationalist movement that supports the President and even if he does not, it is "barbaric" (Al-Wardānī 86) to treat him in this way. The officer ignores Shuhdi's words and orders the jailors to whip him repeatedly, drag him on the floor, and then stretch him on a wooden maiden. Whenever Shuhdi loses consciousness, they dip his head into a nearby canal in order to sober and then they resume their torture. The other prisoners feel sorry for Shuhdi but the "brutality of

the butchers" (Al-Wardānī 27) does not surprise them. They get used to forced labor in the mountain, to replacing their names with numbers, and to "the regular feasts of torture prescribed all morning" (Al-Wardānī 26). All this makes them contemplate the worth of their higher education.

The procedures of announcing Shuhdi's death provoke the indignation of one of the political prisoners, Badir al-Rifai, who considers them to be "altogether surreal," and some sort of "madness" (Al-Wardānī 142). After their vain attempts to resuscitate Shuhdi, they move his body to a cell and hang on the door a handwritten sign that reads "hospital" to mislead the delegates from the public prosecutor's office. As much as Badir despises the officers for their impudence, he does not totally exonerate the rest of the prisoners from guilt because they do not retaliate when they witness such a crime. He remembers, had "we not kept silent about the murder of Farid Hadad?" (Al-Wardānī 142). The inhumane murder of Shuhdi only instances the system's readiness to shed innocent blood. Badir tries to find an excuse for the muffled prisoners as he thinks about the constant and unbearable torture they have to endure on a daily basis: "[t]hey had succeeded in turning us into animals with no thought for anything other than staying on the right side of death" (Al-Wardānī 142). The more important matter that preoccupies Badir's mind is whether there will be a fair interrogation of Shuhdi's brutal murder.

Al-Wardānī maintains a discernible parallelism between Shuhdi's liquidation and al-Ḥusayn's martyrdom. They are both dedicated to a noble cause, tolerate acute physical torture, and courageously embrace their dignified death. Despite the huge time difference between the two stories, the two heroes valiantly oppose the rulers' arrogation of absolute authority and their total neglect of the people's rights and demands. Like al-Ḥusayn, who does not heed the several warnings about the imminent danger and decides to proceed to Karbala, Shuhdi willingly assumes the role of the spokesman for his colleagues and he represents them in court in spite of the extra punishment he expects for doing so. They both refuse to succumb to their executioners when they ask them to yield. When al-Ḥurr requires from al-Ḥusayn to pledge allegiance to Yazid immediately, al-Husayn answers him defiantly, your "death would precede it" (Al-Wardānī 56). Similarly, Abd al-Latif Rushdi fails in getting Shuhdi to say, "I am Shuhdi the bitch" (Al-Wardānī 87). Instead, they withstand severe torture until al-Ḥusayn's "body had sustained thirty-three spear wounds and thirty-four sword blows" (Al-Wardānī 117), and until "Shuhdi's bones had been totally broken" (Al-Wardānī 139).

Shuhdi's executioner hits him on the crown of his head and he drops dead. The final resemblance between the two stories resides in the fact that the heads of

the murdered heroes end up with their wives. Roxanne, Shuhdi's Greek wife, has a bizarre dream that foreshadows Shuhdi's death while waiting in her car outside the doors of Abu Zaabal Prison. She dreams that her husband loses his eyeglasses and bumps into the table and she cannot help him because someone shackles her. When he "started to fall slowly to the floor . . . [she] took Shuhdi's head in her arms. Shuhdi was silent but she felt his warm, sticky blood" (Al-Wardānī 90). Shortly after that, a young soldier reports to her the death of Shuhdi under torture and affirms her misgivings.

The martyrs of Anwar Sadāt's tyranny are two innocent young boys, Mustafa and Umar, who lose their heads during the demonstrations. In spite of Sadāt's changes to Egyptian foreign policies, his presidency has been redolent of 'Abd al-Nāṣir's rule in terms of domestic strategies and interior affairs. In this respect, Jason Brownlee maintains that "[f]ollowing his predecessor's mold, [Sadāt] also expanded the internal security apparatus and detained thousands of Egyptians calling for a freer press, constitutional reform, and fairer elections" (Brownlee 641). His inability to successfully deal with the several challenges of the period enraged the Egyptians and instigated the rebellion against him. Kondracke believes that "Sadat repeatedly has raised his people's expectations—for peace, for democracy, for relief from poverty—but has failed to deliver on any of them" (15). His policy of "opening the door" to private investment in Egypt did not solve the country's economic predicament. This greatly distorted his image as the earnest reformist who understands the needs and the aspirations of the peasantry because he is one of them, as he always claimed. Moreover, his reinstitution of the political multi-party system did not relinquish the latent presence of the intelligence state during his reign.

Al-Wardānī captures the sociopolitical upheaval during Sadat's presidency in the schoolboys' story whose decapitation takes place during the demonstrations of the indigent in the streets of Cairo. On January 18, 1977, the ardent student, Mustafa, turned fifteen and feels so excited that he will celebrate his birthday with his classmates while on the school trip to Port Said. The school bus does not reach its intended destination because of the overwhelming demonstrations that pervade almost all the streets of the capital. The situation seems extremely alarming because the number of protesters grows larger and larger by the minute. When the chanting crowds block the streets, the driver parks the bus and the students disperse uncontrollably about the city. Mustafa and his two other friends, Nagi and Umar, melt into the huge crowds of angry-looking people which surge them forward in the streets and squares of Cairo. The chaos in the city leaves them no choice but

to enmesh themselves in this historical moment. After losing Nagi, Mustafa and Umar's long and tiresome day ends tragically. A group of thugs besieges them with some other people in a side street and strikes their young heads with swords and bayonets.

In the novel, al-Wardānī monitors the shortcomings of Sadāt's totalitarian regime through the wandering eyes of Mustafa. The teenager roams the streets of Cairo and reports to the reader the actions and the slogans of the demonstrators in different places. Though the events take place in one day, they perfectly reflect the sociopolitical scene during Sadat's reign which lasted for eleven years. The demonstrators voice their protests about utter poverty as they chant "[t]ell the sleeper in the palace/ [t]he workers sleep on empty stomachs" (Al-Wardānī 69). Other demonstrators who come from different directions gather in one united mass and chant: "You who rule us through your secret police/ Everyone knows about your injustice" (Al-Wardānī 69). Mustafa and his friend, Nagi, also find themselves holding a boy up on their shoulders and chanting after him "Parliament's all cronyism and spin/ While people's freedom is reined in" (Al-Wardānī 71, *sic*). Though the teenagers do not seem to fully comprehend the situation, they are capable of sensing the anger of the crowds and the legitimacy of their demands.

Through Mustafa's story, al-Wardānī registers Sadāt's violent repression of the revolting citizens to show how he denies them their basic human rights and freedom of expression. Mustafa describes a number of massacres and bloody scenes before he meets his own doom. The demonstrators sabotage the notorious Sayyida Zaynab police station where officers subject many citizens to brutal and even fatal torture. The security forces use tear gas and bullets against the angry demonstrators to make them retreat; they injure and kill many people in the process. A similar scenario takes place in front of Sadat's house where "the soldiers battered [the cursing demonstrators] with their batons and shields" (Al-Wardānī 72). Mustafa mentions that it "was another massacre that nothing could stop. People were screaming as they dropped, but no one paid any attention to them" (Al-Wardānī 73). Killing the demonstrators who express their anger about political corruption and poor economic conditions indicates the tyranny of the system which subordinates the will of citizens and confiscates their right of rejecting corruption and injustice.

In another story, the beheaded Egyptian citizen does not qualify for a martyr because of the many flaws in his character. However, one can safely consider him a victim of the corrupt regime. The story depicts the negative economic and social impact of totalitarian systems on the common man in Egypt. Al-Wardānī believes that different Egyptian regimes have repeated the same mistakes and have not

brought about any economic reforms.

This explains the indefinite time of this story which could be plausible any time in the second half of the twentieth century. The story centers on a greedy Egyptian citizen who resigns from his job with the government and travels to the Gulf to amass a fortune which he thinks will guarantee his happiness. After ten years of hard work, he goes back to his homeland dreaming of establishing his own business and of enjoying the rest of his life with his small family. However, his wife surprises him with her own plans for their future. In the presence and consent of their daughter, the wife's lover slays the husband at the night of his arrival and in his own bed.

Totalitarian regimes indirectly slay citizens when they fail to provide decent living conditions for them. Poor economy and unemployment force them to seek jobs in other countries. The citizens' constant endeavors to achieve their legitimate aspirations of living a proper life can be dehumanizing and even fatal. The retiree who returns from the Gulf represents the Egyptian expatriates who travel abroad to find job opportunities and to save more money; however, they lose their dignity in the process. Settled into his seat on the airplane on his way to Cairo, he thinks appreciatively of his accomplishments over the past years. He now owns two apartments, a taxi, a piece of land, and a fairly big amount of money in the bank. Nevertheless, he also remembers the hardship he went through to finally achieve his goals.

Before retiring, he commits himself to an arduous plan of hard work that develops into a self-imposed enslavement. He first sends his resignation from the post of librarian in the headquarters of the ministry to make sure that he has "burned [his] bridges" (Al-Wardānī 8) and that he will never think of resuming his old job. He works seven days a week and maintains several jobs. He works for a school in the morning, a private company in the afternoon, and spends his evenings either giving private lessons or fixing electric appliances for colleagues and acquaintances. His full awareness of the extent to which he has stooped renders him ready to admit "I crawled on my belly, fawned on all and sundry, and toadied up even to the Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. I was always ready to do the locals any favor they asked for" (Al-Wardānī 59). Besides his lost dignity, he notices in the last few years that his health deteriorates and he has less stamina and diligence than usual.

Al-Wardānī shows that economic problems can destroy individuals and consequently produce dysfunctional families. In spite of all of his personal follies, the returner from the Gulf is a typical victim of poor economy. His need for money wipes out his identity and turns him into a mere machine. The former librarian

severs all his familial ties because of his new work. He does not visit his parents for years and he does not contact his old friends. Similarly, he neglects his wife and children until they become like strangers rather than family members. This becomes quite evident when he refuses his wife's "insistent request to send her power of attorney so she could receive the apartment [he buys]" (Al-Wardānī 121). Likewise, his daughter does not show him any affection when he returns after a long absence and treats him with cold politeness.

The beheading of the retiree may seem to be his penalty for marginalizing his family for the sake of money. He becomes so obsessed with amassing his fortune to the extent that he only remembers his family at the end of each month when has to send them their allowance. He spends three consecutive years abroad and he contacts his family through the phone every month or two. Ironically, the taxi driver whom he hires to work for him uses the knife he brings from the Gulf to slay him. The returner from the Gulf's character typifies many Egyptians who find themselves forced to accept menial jobs abroad to avoid poverty and unemployment in their homeland. The fissure in his family also resembles the social challenges many Egyptian families face in the absence of the father figure. Rather than condemning this category for humiliating themselves in this manner, al-Wardānī censures the lame political systems which drag society to this abyss.

The "harshest and most painful of [the narrator's] beheadings" takes place at the turn of the twenty-first century and without shedding "a single drop of blood" (Al-Wardānī 36). During the reign of President Husni Mubarak, tyranny and autocracy take different forms from that of Nāṣir's detention camps and Sadāt's violence towards demonstrators. The Egyptians' major disappointment at that period emanates from the regime's suppression of freedoms and its inability to fulfill the people's long- postponed dreams of justice and democracy. Al-Wardānī depicts the plight of intellectuals and artists who live under totalitarian systems and shows how they frustrate them and impede their creativity. Repressive measures of censorship and the restriction of freedom hinder writers and artists of all types from pursuing their mission of enlightening people and of providing constructive criticism for the status quo in their country. By forbidding intellectuals from inspiring generations and from freely expressing their thoughts, such regimes "metaphorically" slaughter and impair them. More importantly, these oppressive systems disconnect the present from the past and totally disregard the significance of history. Al-Wardānī reflects these thoughts through the exiled intellectuals, artists who commit suicide, and the decapitated Sphinx which appears in this plot.

Inadvertently, Alia, the main character in this story, bears the legacy of the

previous generation which has "left everything in ruins for their successors," (Al-Wardānī 102) and she strives to make the best use of this legacy. She belongs to the young generation of enlightened and educated Egyptians whose awareness of their reality renders them with "no dreams, no wishes whatsoever" (Al-Wardānī 102). In order to function as a link between two different generations, she revolves within a circle of frustrated intellectuals who are either her relatives or acquaintances. Her father, Shaker, writes a scenario about the nationalist hero, Ahmed 'Urābī, who revolted against Khedive Tewfik. Colonel 'Urābī remains an Egyptian icon because his revolution called for freedom, social justice, and opposing foreign intervention in the country's affairs. Shaker's interest in 'Urābī's life reflects a romantic nostalgia for the heroism of the past. A soldier finds the scenario next to Shaker's headless body in Iraq during the Gulf War in 1991.

The scenario projects Shaker's disillusionment with Saddam Hussein's political policies and his own rejection of the American intervention in the Arab affairs they entail. Shaker also belongs to a generation whose main ordeal resides in "the implanting of Israel in the Arab body and the ceaseless blows it administrate[s] to the Arabs" (Al-Wardānī 108). The inability of the successive regimes to stop the growing influence of Israel in the region and their attempts to normalize relations with the enemy provoke people's fury. Shaker sees Arab leaders to be flip sides of the same coin because of their inability to preserve the sovereignty of their countries. It seems to Alia that her father "had been deliberately courting death" (Al-Wardānī 94) and it makes her wonder, "Where is his head? In Kuwait or in Iraq?" (Al-Wardānī 109). Shaker does not make any effort to return to his own country at the right time. Instead, despair leads him to embrace death in the Desert Storm.

Other intellectuals appear in Alia's life such as her paternal aunt, Iqbal, and her lover, Abd al-Wahab, who reflect other sides of the intellectuals' dilemma. Iqbal is a journalist and a political activist who has taken part in the Students' Movement back in the seventies of the twentieth century. She survives Nasser and Sadat's tyranny and outlives her colleagues only to witness further oppression and disillusionment. Because of her frustration, she gets sick and ultimately commits suicide. Al-Wardānī portrays her as a martyr since Iqbal's "entire generation owes her a huge debt of gratitude. She was the noblest of them all, and the most courageous" (Al-Wardānī 108). Her posthumously published book, *Cancer of the Soul*, reflects "the depth of the trauma of [Iqbal's] generation" (Al-Wardānī 94) and it eloquently articulates its failures as well as its dreams. Due to its leftist ideology and wide acclaim, the book finds special appeal among Iraqi intellectuals in diasporas. It also finds its way to the Iraqi poet, Abd al-Wahab, who flees from Saddam Hussein's authoritarian regime,

like many other artists and writers, to the Scandinavian countries. Being the brother of the soldier who finds Shaker's scenario, Abd al-Wahab first contacts Alia to pass the scenario to her. Their discussions about Shaker's scenario and Iqbal's book bring the two closer to each other in spite of the huge age difference.

Alia and Abd al-Wahab's intention to "inter the new millennium together" (Al-Wardānī 97), and to issue a joint book out of Shaker and Iqbal's unpublished writings symbolizes their attempt to use the legacy of the past to construct a brighter future. However, al-Wardānī indicates the futility of intellectuals' efforts when totalitarian regimes control their destiny. These political systems nip their talent in the bud and impede their accomplishment. Al-Wardānī captures the artist's situation in the image of Alia's unfinished statue. As a young child, she goes with her aunt to the museum to learn how to make a clay statue. She makes a palm tree shape and intends to shape a little girl beside it reaching for the dates. Alia does not manage to do so because they suspend all museums' activities in Cairo when the Gulf War starts. Similarly, the unwise choices of the Ministry of Culture for the New Year's gala at the Pyramids topple her effort to make Abd al-Wahab appreciate Egypt's great civilization. Because of her passion for history, she assumes the role of the tourist guide for the Iraqi poet and proudly shows him all the historical sites in Cairo. All the admiration and pride she makes him feel for Egypt's glorious history turns into disgust when he attends the gala and sees the shameful show.

Oblivious of proper historical dignity of the ancient sites, the Ministry allows a French musician to turn "the Pyramid Plateau into a discotheque" (Al-Wardānī 149). Alia apologizes to her guest for what she describes as a "fiasco;" and Abd al-Wahab reiterates that he finds the show "utterly tacky" (Al-Wardānī 150). At the end of their evening, a more shocking surprise awaits the young lady; she suddenly cries, "Where's the Sphinx's head? Am I dreaming? Isn't this the Sphinx—decapitated?" (Al-Wardānī 152). The bloodless decapitation of the Sphinx and the mutilation of this historical monument symbolize the regime's total disrespect for history and for artists alike.

Al-Wardānī sets the chronologically last story of the novel in the future. His nameless character in the story functions as a prototype for what he believes to be the typical future Egyptian citizen. Decapitation becomes a systematic process which all citizens undergo willingly and regularly. The narrator maintains that the man, like the rest of the citizens above the age of eighteen, "had to check in once every two years to get any damage in his head fixed. The doctors would hack off the head at the throat and send it to the maintenance department, where programs were downloaded and spare parts installed in place of damaged segments. During

this procedure…one stayed at the hospital without a head" (Al-Wardānī 20). Through this periodical "maintenance" for citizens' heads, the regime guarantees the conformity of all its subjects. It clears their minds of undesirable thoughts or revolutionary inclinations and downloads instead calculated beliefs and ideas. Through this technological process of regular brainwashing, the regime deprives the individual from free thinking and from exercising his free will.

The unnamed citizen leads a pathetic dystopian existence. During the dehumanizing process of changing his head, he maintains his ability to talk in a weird way, move around clumsily, and socialize with other patients. The narrator laments, for "four days they had left you without a head, bumping into others, clinging to the nurses … and exchanging disjointed words with your companions in the ward. Those were the harshest days, when your organs came apart and you were incapable of pulling them together" (Al-Wardānī 133-4). The autocratic regime uses technological advances to oppress people and to strictly control their lives. It turns them into mere robots which excel in fulfilling their assigned roles but lack the capacity for independent thinking. The crippling effect of the beheading operation becomes manifest in the man's bitter awareness of his inability to control his own organs. Headless and acting recklessly, he roams in the hospital wards until he crashes into a closed door and breaks his bones. They tie him to his bed to restrict his movement in a way that reminds the reader of the other stories' prisoners and detainees in actual prisons.

The technologically programmed citizen is socially inept. Totalitarian regimes deliberately sever the individual's social and familial ties to render him more controllable. The unnamed citizen seems to be emotionally detached from all those around him. His neutral feelings towards his family members and acquaintances make the narrator ponder, "he was stingy with … his emotions, which he tended to hoard. He could not remember a time when he was in any way demonstrative, not even with his wife Hanan, with whom he felt he had shared nothing special for years" (Al-Wardānī 21). He cheats on his wife without any feelings of shame or remorse. In the retiree's story, the oppressive political system keeps the citizens preoccupied with their poor economic conditions to distract them from protesting against their unjust leaders. Consequently, social problems arise and families become dysfunctional. However, in the dystopian existence that al-Wardānī imagines in this subplot, Egyptians lose their social bonds and their natural drive to cherish such relations because the state uses technology to dehumanize them and numb their natural feelings.

The state also dehumanizes citizens because it identifies them by their national

identity numbers rather than by their names. The security man informs the citizen that he "could have lunch at the cafeteria on the strength of [his] national identity number and the magnetic ID card while the paperwork for discharging [him] was being processed" (Al-Wardānī 135). This incident echoes the lines of one of the political prisoners' poem which all the detainees in Abu Zaabal prison know by heart; the lines read as follows: "[w]hy was it you called me by my name, mother, / when now they call me by a number/ written on my blanket?" (Al-Wardānī 35) The patients at the maintenance hospitals represent the new version of political prisoners. In both cases, the state detains citizens in government facilities to discipline them and confiscate their human rights to freedom of thought and expression.

Another dystopian aspect of the unnamed citizen's story stems from his loss of memory and his inability to recognize his identity and his own family. The man feels what he thinks to be the ordinary sense of numbness in the aftermath of the operation. However, he becomes suspicious when he notices more abnormal signs after this head-change. After he "had lunch, which was flavorless, [he] tried to exercise [his] memory; [he] looked at the magnetic card, but the data recorded on it gave [him] no clue" (Al-Wardānī 135). The man cannot relate to the information on his own identity card. Moreover, the simplest things perplex him like recognizing his belongings and finding his way to the outer gate of the hospital. As he leaves the hospital, a beautiful woman and her two daughters rush into his arms. Unfortunately, he fails to determine his relationship to the three of them and feels completely helpless and disoriented. He finally realizes that there has been "some mistake," (Al-Wardānī 136) and that the head-change has wiped out his memory. Citizens without memory are more complacent and more obedient. The regime achieves the total liquidation of the citizen's identity.

Conclusion

In *Heads Ripe for Plucking*, al-Wardānī envisions a bleak future for Egypt because of the succession of oppressive totalitarian regimes. In the words of Alter, "writers [use] science fiction and fantasy to describe grim current political realities" more appropriately (n. p.). Al-Wardānī merges the tropes of magical realism with science fictional dystopia to warn against what might happen should present political policies continue. These tropes allow him to amplify the tyranny of autocratic political systems and to portray their oppression in its most horrible way. Such narrative techniques are highly conducive because "science fiction and surrealism have long provided an escape valve for writers living under oppressive regimes" (Alter n. p.). Subsequently, al- Wardānī achieves his fictional goals of voicing his

growing disillusionment with the status quo in Egypt; moreover, he manages to pass an urgent wake-up call for his readers. The dystopian existence he envisions aims at inspiring change rather than instilling fear or despair.

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Carnivalesque in Iranian Cinema: *6.5 Per Meter*, a Social Problem Film

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Abstract This paper analyzes Saeed Roustayi's *6.5 Per Meter* (2019), a police crime drama, based on Mikhail Bakhtin's carnivalesque theory. In order to portray social problems in a new light, Roustayi utilizes carnivalesque techniques, such as mésalliance, ambivalence, disgusting characters, and abusive language in depicting the process of searching for, arresting, and executing a drug lord. This criminal is metaphorically kept in the carnival hell and forced to the carnival grave. Roustayi distances himself from the usual type of narrating social problems and crime so that he can bring unprecedented frankness, characterized by carnival, to the screen. Dialogism is depicted in the movie in the sense that both the criminal and the police officer are given voice to express themselves. Handcuffing the police officers in the movie is an instance of radical changes in hierarchies, where the dominant and the subordinate replace each other. Since carnival is associated with death and rebirth at the same time, the drug dealers who are executed at the end of the movie are replaced by others. Thus, even if the drug king is uncrowned, the audience leave this cinematic carnival shocked and disillusioned, with the sense that the drug problem proceeds, probably with other kings.

Keywords *6.5 Per Meter;* carnival; Iranian cinema; police crime drama; Mikhail Bakhtin

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Introduction: Iranian Cinema

The undeniable attraction of movies and cinema provides an ideal opportunity to present ideas to a wide audience. Cinemas in Iran are the modern form of "coffee house narrative paintings" and "*Naqqali* (public storytelling)" in their "audiovisual" perspective (Dabashi 15), influencing people's morality and political worldview more than anything before (20). Outstanding Iranian movie makers, such as Asghar Farhadi (1972-), Dariush mehrjui (1939-), Bahram Beizai (1938-), and the successful young director, Saeed Roustayi (1989-), take this chance to portray social issues involving poverty, unemployment, divorce, women's rights, extramarital relationships, effects of war, the youngsters, politics, and traditions, in their movies in order to raise awareness. The Iranians are adept at their indirect techniques because of their habit of understanding multifaceted symbolic figurative Persian literature (Zeydabadi-Nejad 10). Such adroit directors have made Iranian cinema a major "social/political" organization (5). Besides other hits in the *oeuvre* of Roustayi, *6.5 Per Meter* (2019) (in Persian, *Metri Shesh Va Nim*), is a recent prominent one.

At this point, *6.5 Per Meter* is an Iranian box office hit besides being nominated in and winning several prestigious national and international film festivals. It won Special Mention at 2019 Zurich Film Festival, Best Actor Award and Best Director Award at 2019 Tokyo International Film Festival, Crystal Simorgh for Best Editing, Best Sound Recording, and Audience Award Best Film at 2019 Fajr Film Festival and several awards at 2019 Hafez Ceremony, not to mention myriads of nominees in all these festivals and more, which provides a compelling reason for its critical study.

Directed by Saeed Roustayi, a writer, producer, and director of other successful movies, all broaching Iran's current social problems, this one is about arresting a cunning drug lord. Naser Khakzad, played by Navid Nohammadzadeh, a popular Iranian celebrity, comes from a rather poor family. Within a span of a few years, he temporarily reaches the status of a very wealthy man who lives in a luxurious penthouse, even though he could never be more comfortable than when he speaks his filthy language. He has also provided his family members and his ex-girlfriend, all from poor backgrounds, with fairly the same comfort. Although Naser implicates other wrongdoers at first, for him and his family, this is a carnival per se, which they savor for a short time. Soon after, his family have to return to the same ordinary lifestyle they used to lead, while Naser's property is confiscated before his execution. His execution at the end and another drug dealer's accidental living

burial at the beginning of the movie depict the same doom, awaiting people with the same profession. This can be a synopsis of the movie.

Carnivalesque in Realism and Social Problem Movies

Carnival theory is elaborated in Bakhtin's (1895-1975) books *Rabelais and His World* (1984) and *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1999), which examine the writings of the French novelist, Francois Rabelais (1532-1564) and Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky (1821-1881) respectively, but is also applicable to other literary or artistic works. Based on Bakhtin, Carnivalesque was basically the short period of entertainment in middle ages, associated with carnival ambiance (*Rabelais* 5). The traditional customs and ceremonies included "parish feasts," which were recognized as outdoor funfairs, "mysteries," and "agricultural feasts as the harvesting of grapes" (5). The core activities of this rite, whether "folk" or civic, was to caricature the solemn ceremonies like honoring the winners at contests, the transmission of social privileges, or the introduction of cavaliers (5). The most salient feature of such a ceremony was to be distinctly differentiated with the somber formal, "ecclesiastical, feudal, and political cult forms and ceremonials" (5). The "second world" and the "second life" these carnivals presented were entirely diverse, informal, "extraecclesiastical and extrapolitical" (6). Carnival is generally manifested in three related types: "[r]itual spectacles," "[c]omic verbal compositions," and "[v]arious genres of billingsgate" (5). It has myriads of features, which are discussed below.

The first section is devoted to the element of laughing in carnival, which has its own characteristics. It involves everybody; it is a collective laughter, not a single person's response to a secluded comical occasion (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 11). It is also "ambivalent" in the sense that it is cheerful and parodic simultaneously, while it is also addressed to the people who laugh (11-12). Laughter is what overcomes horror, which is the drastic "expression of narrow-minded and stupid seriousness," causing absolute freedom in a totally courageous life (47). The function of hilarity is degrading and materializing (20). Another part of the attraction, which is also connected to the idea of degrading is hurling invectives and cursing, sensual or not, connoting the freedom and veracity inherent in carnivals (27-28). Therefore, liberation and reality are dominant in carnivalesque traditions.

In addition to liberating one from fears, laughing is also able to release the rite entirely from all Christian pious sentiments and theological interpretations (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 7). This ritual is not associated with wizardry or worshipping, whereas it is completely another domain, far from commanding, which parodies religious

extremism (7). It involves a cosmopolitan atmosphere and an exceptional case of the whole universe, in which everyone is involved in the earth's revitalization and rebirth (7). The "clowns and fools" of the carnival, who were "neither eccentrics nor dolts," were not "comic actors"; however, since wherever they went, they were still jesters, they depicted a simultaneously "real and ideal" type of living, standing "on the borderline between life and art, in a peculiar midzone as it were" (8). Hence, carnival is part of reality itself, the part that is associated with birth.

When it comes to the question of earth, Carnivalesque is the place of fertile soil and the "womb," making the "parody" inherent in the carnival, distinctive (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 21). Moreover, "the grotesque concept of the body" is the central theme in "medieval parody" (27). However, "a gay parody of official reason, of the narrow seriousness of official truth" can be recognized in "the theme of madness" for the new outlook it causes, rather than the "normal" one (39). Another rejection of allegiance is inherent in the comical and complicated "theme of the mask," which is relevant to "transition, metamorphoses, the violation of natural boundaries, to mockery and familiar nicknames (39-40). The nature of mask is concealment, mystery, and deceit (40). People in the carnival enjoy participation in practice.

What people savor in the Carnivalesque is the utopia of "community, freedom, equality, and abundance" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 9). Nonetheless, the idealism intrinsic of utopia is mingled with realism, since this is not only imagined, but also practiced (10). Due to its liberation from all conventions and courtesy, its frankness and close companionship, this kind of "communication" is unattainable in our daily routine (10). This communication's manifestation can appear in celebrations such as "[t]he feast of fools" and "the feast of the ass," which focuses mainly on "the ass and its braying" (78) or on "jokes and stories" (79). These characteristics are fundamental to the definition of the carnival.

Bakhtin defines carnival as "a well-known festivity that has been often described throughout many centuries" (*Rabelais* 218). This is while he declares, "carnival is far from being a simple phenomenon with only one meaning" (218). Nevertheless, "carnival developed in the narrow sense of the word and became the center of all popular forms of amusement," e.g. cinema (220). Although Mikhail Bakhtin has devised his carnivalesque theory for "the novel genre as a celebration of linguistic and stylistic variety as a counter to tight canonical formulas," it is also applicable to "media" studies and movies (Holquist xvii). Hence, this can be utilized as a theory for the "analysis of more modern cultural phenomenon" (Osgerby 105), such as a film.

Carnivalesque is not alien to Iranian media. Although this technique has been

used in comedies such as the sitcom *Kolah Ghermezi* (Tahmasb, 1993-2016), in which "the social classifications are deconstructed" (Ghandeharion & Heydari 573), the Iranian moviemakers have been using this technique in order to have significant impact on the audience, even in serious genres, such as dramas. Ultimately, carnival blurs "genres" (Bakhtin, *Problems* 134). Additionally, every innovative work "renews" carnival independently (Bakhtin, *Problems* 160) and signifies "uniqueness" (Anoegrajekti et al. 2). Bakhtin's theory of carnivalesque has been influential in "critical scholarship in the fields of rhetoric and media studies, comic and otherwise" (Achter 281). Dabashi refers to Kiarostami (1940-2016), a remarkable Iranian director and his movie, *The Traveler* (1974) to argue, "[t]here is a matter-of-factness about Kiarostami's form of irony, a kind of conspicuous carnivalesque in his weaving reality and romance together" (48). Since the nature of carnivalesque is reality, it can contribute to the movies in the school of realism. In fact, "because of the fundamental post-revolutionary changes to the grammar and focus of Iranian cinema, realism became a major concern for filmmakers" (Jahed 145). "Realism" in Iranian cinema is different because of the "sacred visuality that informs Iranian cinema," "affected by unconscious forces that open up spaces within the continuity of narratives" (Mottahedeh 68-69). Realistic narratives are ubiquitous in Iranian cinema.

The realistic sense and setting of Iranian movies like *6.5 Per Meter* (Mona Jalali) is embodied in social problem films. Iranian cinema depicts "social ills and inequalities" in the atmosphere of "soul searching, national epistemophilia, and a desire for self-representation" (Naficy, *Social History* xxiv). Iran, as a revolutionary country, reinforces "the official ideology of support for the downtrodden" (Naficy, "Iranian Cinema" 550); that is why the Iranian cinema and social problem movies such as *6.5 Per Meter* have the same preoccupations. Carnivalesque is an appropriate mode for it, since "social criticism" (Achter 283) is an inseparable component of carnival.

Carnivalesque in *6.5 Per Meter*

6.5 Per Meter can be read as a carnival in which the meaning and etymology of "names" is of utmost importance with parodic features (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 192). The main character's name is Naser, which means helper. Naser is the one who attempts to help and save his family by producing glass drugs. His family name is Khakzad, denoting the one born of soil. It has two connotations for this character, first that he comes from a poor family and second that he is executed at the end, going back to soil and grave. The other main character is Samad, the police officer.

Samad means who does not need anything or anybody. It is significant, since he is characterized as an independent successful agent. His family name is Majidi, which means glorious. Naser's ex-girlfriend is Elham, which denotes inspiration. While she is the one, who under pressure, gives Naser's address to be arrested, she is the one whom Naser desperately wishes to see once more before his death. However, all the phases of Naser's life, which are depicted in the movie, are of carnivalesque significance.

6.5 Per Meter is a carnival because it breaks "the usual norms of" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 201) social problem and police crime dramas. It presents ideas in the cinema that are new to the screen. Although addiction, poverty, smuggling, prisons and courts do exist in society, the pathos of carnivalsque candor (Bakhtin, *Problems* 174) by which Roustayi portrays these issues in his movie as a carnival, "where the tabooed and the fantastic" are all of a sudden feasible (Osgerby 105) is unprecedented. The scenes Roustayi depicts in his movies, although sometimes didactic (Hoseini) are also shocking and lead the audience to disillusionment (Mohammad Amir Jalali), at the same time suggesting the drug addiction tragedy is almost inevitable (Vafakhah). What is more, Roustayi has his own orientations. He especially presents addiction in relation to families (Ostad), raising questions in the audiences' minds (Majidi). He directs the movie in the way that can make it the most believable, overcoming the difficulties. For instance, the presence of three thousand real addicts in this movie, which makes it more tangible for the audience (Matin), contributes to creating a carnival atmosphere, since carnivals blur the boundaries between "actors and spectators" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 7). In addition, Roustayi, like many writers before him, utilizes carnivalesque "for satire" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 119). This is while carnivals do occur in different forms, serving different purposes.

Carnivals in their medieval sense were closely connected "to the feasts of the church" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 8). This, in Althusser's words, is the "religious apparatus," included in the category, "Ideological state apparatuses" or the acronym, "ISAs" (75). This is while Roustayi in the movie *6.5 Per Meter* utilizes jail and the police force as the frame of the carnival. Althusser includes "the government, administration, army, police, courts and prisons" as what is called "Repressive State Apparatus" or RSAs (75). Therefore, because of the shift in apparatuses, although this movie is in the form of a carnival, it is mostly associated with "physical violence (direct or indirect, legal or illegal)" (Althusser 75). Furthermore, "the defiance of the democratic cleric" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 72) in the carnival is replaced by the police in the movie. Apart from the general criminal framework, this film is a

long one, which has many different features.

The movie can be divided into two halves. The first half is spent on the efforts of the police force to arrest Naser, who is concealed in his luxurious penthouse, which is a "temporary liberation from the prevailing truth" of his poverty and also "from the established order" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 10). This is yet another aspect of the carnival when the authority is mocked by the useless attempts to find him. The second half, which depicts him as a criminal in jail offers a panorama of carnival features. Naser, with his pricy clothes has to spend the night beside the disheveled addicts and traffickers. The "people who were usually divided by the barriers of caste, property, profession, and age" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 10) are treated all equally in the jail. These scenes, like a carnival, present people as "eccentric" (Bakhtin, *Problems* 175), stinky, and grubby. The crummy room, the less serious offenders, and the drug users taking naps are celebrated with friskiness when Naser, the symbolic elected "king" presides this "banquet" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 5). He pours water from a hose on everyone, which is a carnival accessory (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 216), therefore making unlikeliest of people unitedly cheer with joy. This is an instance of the "carnivalistic mésalliances" Bakhtin discusses (*Problems* 123). After all, the carnival is a time of play. When the poor and the rich gather, this scene of the "[c]arnival world is transferring and the people are altering and imitating their higher or lower classes" (Navidi et al. 71). This is while in carnival, everyone, whether high or low, can be given a voice.

Figure 1. Naser pours water from a hose on everyone, Screen shot.

Dialogic voices are another aspect of the carnival. The movie, instead of introducing the monologic voice of the authority, gives voices both to the police officers and the criminals. For instance, Naser justifies his influence on addicting loads of people by explaining his shocking social conditions. This is the polyphonic nature of the carnival. The presence of narcotics agents as gray characters is unprecedented, since Iranian cinema and state TV are consistent in depicting the police officers as perfect heroes. However, officer Samad in this movie, although the epitome of duty, is not always innocent (Nasrollahi) or one dimensional (Khodabande). For instance, since violation is one of the carnival's features (Knowles 6), he repeatedly bullies the criminals. The other related characteristics of the carnival, such as "anatomizing dismemberment" of the body (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 202) and "thrashings" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 197) can be noticed when Samad threatens to break the teeth of a drug dealer with his heel or to beat Naser's face with his knee. Another aspect of the carnival is when the place of the offender and the police changes. Carnival involves "the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 10). Twice in the movie, we see the police officers handcuffed, thus "uncrowning" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 79) the carnival king. This incident confirms that in a carnival, "established authority and truth are relative" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 256). Hence, pro tempore the dominant and

Figure 2. Several large obese men as drug mules are employed to use their big stomachs as containers of illegal drugs, Screen shot.

the subordinate replace each other.

Having said that, the carnival features of this movie are not exhausted yet. The "clowns and fools, giants, dwarfs" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 4) category Bakhtin includes in the carnival is manifested in portraying several large obese men as drug mules employed to use their big stomachs as containers of illegal drugs in order to transport them to another country, i.e. Japan. The gigantic men, the "potbellied men of carnival" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 22), are depicted as bare-chested, the case Bakhtin calls "disrobing" (*Rabelais* 75) in order to add humorous features to the scene. The "exaggeration" of their bodily features (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 63) and their "gluttony" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 74) enhances the carnival spirit of the movie. Besides the physical characteristics, the linguistic ones are also carnivalistic.

In all movies, dialogues play a prominent role. The "new type of communication" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 16) which carnival brings about is manifested in the witty repartee exchanged between Naser and Samad. These two, now equal in the world of carnival, try to persuade, humiliate, and threaten each other amusingly. Their conversations involve "abusive language, insulting words or expressions, some of them quite lengthy and complex" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 16). There dialogues "at the same time revive" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 16) the audiences' minds by raising fundamental questions. This is while they also contribute to the carnival sense of the movie.

There are subplots added to the story so that the carnival spirit becomes more salient. The "material bodily principle" of the carnival is demonstrated in the movie in all forms of "food, drink, defecation, and sexual life" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 18). First, Samad buys pizza and soda for the young boy in the prison. Next, there is a bathroom in the prison room, which is the location of several scenes. Finally, the sexual life of Naser and his ex-girlfriend, Elham is referred to by Samad in her interrogation. By attempting to impute part of Naser's guilt to Elham, Samad succeeds in forcing her to squeal on Naser. When Elham mentions Naser's idiosyncrasies, Samad tells her,

> I just want a simple address, I don't want the address of the places you were having dinner with each other, I want the address of his house, the place you, not married to him, saw he slept in his sneakers (Roustayi).

Although the reference to Naser's personal life is not a direct one, the interrogator is saying as much as he can in the cultural framework of Iranian cinema. However, what he is implying is crystal clear to the audience.

Next, the "ambivalence" of the carnival (Bakhtin, *Problems* 150) is depicted in the destructive affectionate personality of the main character. Throughout the movie, Naser is shown as family oriented. He gives his family love, financial support, education, and protection. In lieu of focusing on the devastating effects of his business on society, he satisfies himself by sacrificing his life (Freidooni). In the last days of Naser's life, just before his execution, all his close family members come to visit and farewell him. There his nephew, who has been sent to gymnastic classes by Naser, delivers a gymnastics performance before him to please him in their very last meeting. This scene is supposed to blend the darkness of death with a sweet taste (Sadeghi). The boy is wearing a tight suit. Thus, he has to disrobe in order to perform. His performance, while he is in his underwear, can be construed as the "pageant" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 5) of carnivalesque.

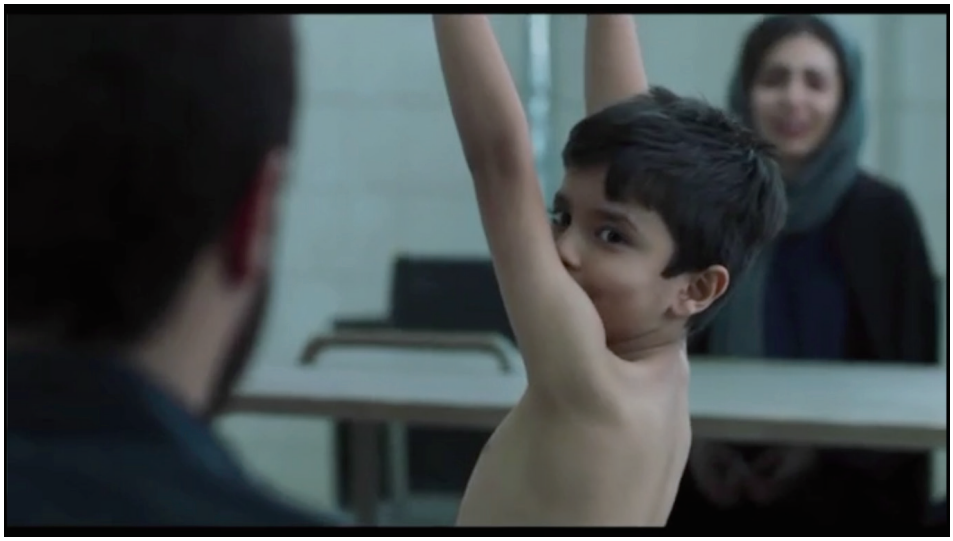

Figure 3. Naser's nephew delivers a gymnastics performance before him, Screen shot.

Naser is not only kind and supportive toward his family members, but also toward all sympathetic children in general. While he is in prison, he meets a child and a crippled father who are kept together in the same room as him for selling drugs. He hears the parent, who has been released just two months earlier, convincing his son to shoulder the blame and consequently go to prison instead of his father. Agitating the boy against his father (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 237), which implies carnival's arguments between "parents and children" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 434), he desperately tries to avoid the tragedy, all in vain.

The presence of the boy is also influential in another sense. The "dualistic"

Figure 4. Naser is kind to the child in prison, Screen shot.

nature of the carnival necessitates the presence of opposites, such as the young and the elderly at the same time (Bakhtin, *Problems* 126). Whereas the child mentioned represents one extreme on the spectrum, there are also two old men in the jail who are foregrounded. One is the man who dozes while standing up. Samad points to him telling Naser, "this is the result of your work" (Roustayi, 2019). The other old man who is kept temporary in the clinic accidentally with the boy is found to be intoxicated by the gas in the bathroom. This man, who declares, "neither is my age suitable for quitting taking drugs, nor do I wish to" (Roustayi) can signify the other end of the continuum. Carnivals emphasize such "contrast[s]" (Bakhtin, *Problems* 126), among other characteristics.

Figure 5. The old man dozes while standing up, Screen shot.

Another characteristic of Carnival is its association with "love of abundance and wealth" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 22). This is displayed properly in Naser's life. When the judge asks him, "the last time you were released, why didn't you stop (production and smuggling drugs)? You had money and you didn't have these problems," Naser answers, "I couldn't be satisfied." In another scene, he tells the judge, "with five years of crime, I lived the way the Shah couldn't," referring to the extravagant life of Mohamad Reza Pahlavi (1919-1980), the last king of Iran, just before the revolution. Therefore, if Naser is more than a king in this movie and he has been humiliated ever since he was arrested and drawn out of his regular living (Bakhtin, *Problems* 292), we can say he is the clown king who experiences a "metamorphosis," "uncrowning," and "death" respectively (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 197). Navid Mohamadzadeh (1986), now fatter in the role of Naser than his previous hit, *Life and a Day* (2015), in Persian, *Abad va yek rooz*, by the same director, Roustayi, indicates the importance of "fat belly" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 22) in carnival. The "realistic" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 52) style through which Roustayi depicts social problems is created by not only the "material bodily images" of a work (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 23), but also the "carnival culture" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 52). This will be discussed shortly.

Carnival is associated with "kitchen" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 210). In the movie, the expression for the clandestine laboratories in which glass drug is produced, is actually the word 'kitchen'. When the judge declares Naser's arrestment has increased the price of glass drug, he answers, "tomorrow somebody else starts a kitchen (laboratory) and the price would reduce, you can't stop it" (Roustayi). While the judge believes they will all go to the court one by one just like him, this implicates the "debasement" and "renewal" themes of the carnival (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 214).

The setting chosen as prison is of significance. As soon as Naser is arrested, he is metaphorically in the "hell" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 91) setting of the carnival or "a globe ejecting flames" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 158). While the hell of the carnival "was solemnly burned at the peak of the festivities" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 91), Naser shouts, "I'm catching fire" (Roustayi) because of his addiction. Later, after months of court sessions, he enters the level of the "defeat of fear" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 91), when he tells the judge, "I've thought of death and grave, and everything. I don't fear anymore" (Roustayi). These are his last words in the court before being condemned to death and swallowed up by "the earth" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 91), before his "living body turned into a corpse" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 197). What is more, after he is sent to prison, he is deprived of his fancy clothes and thereby deprived of "his disguise and

mask" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 197) of a rich man. When all his property is confiscated, he becomes the same poor person he used to be.

The movie portrays the critical time in Naser's life, that is to say his "degradation," his "lowering" from his kingly penthouse to a disgusting prison room (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 19) just before his execution, hence going "downward" to "the grave" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 21). Like a carnival, it is "linked to moments of crisis, of breaking points in the cycle of nature or in the life of society and man" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 9). The ending is justified based on the etymology of the word carnival, which comes from German "val or wal," meaning "dead" and "killed" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 393). Likewise, carnival signs are all associated with "death" (Bakhtin, *Problems* 125). His execution represents the "moments of death," Bakhtin refers to, while Samad's giving money to an addict in the final scene, just after Naser's execution, can be construed as the "revival, … change and renewal" aspect of the carnival, whereby results "a festive perception of the world" (*Rabelais* 9). Although the judicial system punishes Naser with death penalty, drug addiction mocks the state by not being on the threshold of, so to speak, extinction at all.

Conclusion

Carnivals are opportunities to distance oneself from the official everyday life. Since they are associated with laughter and jokes, they liberate one from fears, religious extremities and individuality, causing a real ideal utopia that is unachievable in everyday life. Nevertheless, carnivals are realities, one day in your life, in which even a fool is a real fool. Parodies in the carnivals are practiced by utilizing themes such as madness and mask. The frankness, aggression, and at the same time death and rebirth associated with the carnival can provide a suitable background for presenting ideas in different works of art. Although the anti-official nature of carnival makes it completely applicable to analyzing the novel genre as counter canonical, modern media such as movies are not irrelevant to the carnival cause, either. Whereas carnival techniques permeate comedies, they can also be present in dramas. Since carnivals reveal realistic scenes, they are of use in Iranian cinema, which is known for its realistic narratives and social problem movies. *6.5 Per Meter*, as a box office hit, is a social problem movie and a police crime drama, which utilizes such techniques to present the drug problem in Iran with unprecedented openness. Etymology of the names of characters in this carnivalesque works is of utmost importance, while it breaks the norms to represent a new paradigm. Shifting the framework from ISAs to RSAs in Althusser's terminology, the movie presents unavoidable violence. However, this movie portrays myriads of carnivalesque

features. While Naser's luxurious life is a stage of carnival, his avoidance to be arrested illustrates another aspect of carnival by mocking the authority. After his arrest, carnivalistic mésalliances appear in the prison room, where the poor and the rich are united. Naser and Samad make the movie more interesting by their repartees and abusive words. The materialism of the carnival is manifested in eating, drinking, etc. Ambivalence in Naser's characterization and performances are other aspects of the carnival present in the movie. This is the carnival in which even children and parents can be put against each other. The dualistic spirit of the carnival is manifested in the presence of old men and children side by side in the prison room. Greed for abundance of money is characterized in Naser, the carnival king, who is degraded, uncrowned, and replaced by others at the end. The symbolic hell Naser feels helps him overcome his fears of death. Roustayi screens the bitter fact that problems such as drug addiction are renewed in a carnival sense instead of being fundamentally solved.

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The Breath of Silence: Tracing the Origin of the Poetic through Mallarmé and Yeats

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Abstract Based on insights offered in the Symbolist oeuvres of Mallarmé and Yeats, this paper posits an interpretation of the *Idea* as the quasi-originary source of language, tracing the origins of the poetic to the notions of rituality and iterability. These qualities are characteristic of the prayer (considering, in particular, the Angelus devotion) and the *neume* (the earliest form of musical notation, which amounts to a chanting without words, a pure vocalization): the essence of poetry requires a suspension of knowledge, as in learning "by heart." We ultimately locate the beginnings of the poetic in the "body of the letter" or the "carnality of sense": at the zero point of metaphor where meaning is purely literal, the poematic, as passion of and for the origin, entails a self-voiding of language, a casting-aside of being. The contact with the body of sense is only possible if the poetic soul, bypassing the cogito, can derail absolute knowledge, since the quasi-originary promise of language—as the very condition of its possibility—is anterior to reason and to knowledge.

Keywords Angelus prayer; Derrida; Mallarmé; poetics; Yeats

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Introduction

The term "caught" appears in Yeats's "Vacillation" within the familiar context of tutoring the soul of the aged poet in the "learned school" (*Poems* 203) of

masterpieces of "intellect or faith": "No longer in Lethean foliage caught / Begin the preparation for your death …" (255). The "Lethean foliage," at first sight, seems to refer to the quasi-Arcadian refuge, so prominent in early Yeats, where one can forget a "world more full of weeping than you can understand" (16), and then, seduced by the ideal beauty of the "Rose upon the Rood of Time" (27) or by the *mysterium tremendum* of the "Secret Rose" (66–67), set "thought-woven sails" (33) for an inner Odyssey on the perilous sea to fight God's battles and be inevitably vanquished. Thus, this type of poetry takes two forms that often overlap in Yeats: (i) the poet dreams, in a familiar Romantic gesture, of a retreat to nature, of coming away "to the waters and the wild" (16–17), of building a small cabin in the "Lake Isle of Innisfree" where he "shall have some peace" (35); (ii) the poet engages in solipsistic self-contemplation in the "chilly Palace" (Watson 50) of aestheticism where he holds captive the monster of self-love. In either case, the poet appears to subscribe to a passive detachment from the incarnate human world, intending to remedy or rather "sweeten" (Yeats, *Poems* 46) the overwhelming "wrong of unshapely things" (52), whether that wrong consists in loss of esoteric truth, inherent impermanence of forms (namely, love and beauty), or lack of national identity, by rebuilding things according to idealistic, inward-gazing, and radical, if not Utopian, values: "A man in his own secret meditation / Is lost amid the labyrinth that he has made / In art or politics" (212). In other words, the poetry of the "Lethean foliage" would seem to suggest familiar Romantic and Symbolist modes of escapism that dominated the nineteenth century. The poet chooses to remain deaf to the sound and the fury of the modern world, to be transformed into the hollow reed on Lethe's shore, unburdened of outward-gazing thought, "brood[ing] on hopes and fear no more" (39).

Needless to say, this oblivion into the labyrinth of solitary self-reflection, turning the key to one's own prison of the mind, to be "alone amid the obscure impressions of the senses" (Yeats, *Early Essays* 252) can bring about incapacitating anxieties, of the kind Yeats held responsible for what he called the "disaster of my friends" (*Autobiographies* 235)—the nervous breakdowns and early deaths of his Rhymer's Club companions and their larger circle in the 1890s London, young artists exploring artificial paradises with absinthe, hashish, dandyism, flaneuring and a specifically British brand of decadent poetry, guided by Walter Pater's nihilistic aestheticism. According to Yeats, Pater "taught us to walk upon a rope tightly stretched through serene air, and we were left to keep our feet upon a swaying rope in a storm" (235). In other words, there is danger in the waters of Lethe, and in crossing the river one risks drowning in its murky depths.

Recognizing a similar threat, Mallarmé, in "L'Azur," pleads with *Ennui* to rise

from "étangs léthéens" (Lethean ponds) (*Oeuvres* 37)[1] as a thick miasmic cloud of memory, a memory of the same impervious decay of ordinary reality experienced on the near side of the window in the hospital-room by the speaker of the earlier poem "Les fenêtres," the same "encens fètide / Qui monte en la blancheur banale des rideaux / Vers le grand crucifix ennuyé du mur vide" ("pall / of stale incense rising from drab white drapes / to the big crucifix tired of the blank wall") (*Collected Poems* 10–12) that had prompted the poet to long for a window-shattering leap into the Lethean infinity of the Ideal (the azure of the sky). The memory of ennui, or, more precisely, ennui *as* memory, allows for a form of art that serves to tether the poet to reality, a reality which is, as far as "L'Azur" is concerned, deemed preferable to the unbearable horrors unleashed in the alluring confrontation with the radical alterity of *l'Infini* (the Absolute) in which the self-alienation of the poet is to be restored to the unity of self-knowledge: "Art now appears as a substance which one tries to interpose between the unbearable brightness of the sunlight and the divided soul of the poet" (De Man 40). The extent of this horror can be measured by how Mallarmé describes the apocalyptic encounter in "Les fenêtres": a mystical or artistic experience in which "Je me mire et me vois ange! et je meurs" ("I see myself—an angel!—and I die") (*Collected Poems* 12–13). Hence, in "L'Azur," Mallarmé conjures the memory of decay to ward off any temptation to engage in the pursuit of the ideal, by filling up indefatigably "les grands trous bleus que font méchamment les oiseaux" (the large blue holes malevolently made by birds) (*Oeuvres* 37) in the dense fabric of the veil that poetry has erected against the perilous inundation of the Light of l*'Infini*, in effect, rendering the liminal window-screen opaque.

The borderline separating the subject from the Ideal, which is ironically also the subject's very means of access to it, acts as an aesthetic medium of self-reflection, translating the experience of the Ideal into a mirror-play involving the subject and his self-image, a horrifying *mise en abyme* staged at the threshold of the absolute. It is this complex mirror-play at "le matin chaste de l'Infini" ("the chaste dawn of Infinity") (Mallarmé, *Complete Poems* 12–13) that defines the, at first sight, contrasting attitudes of the two poems: (i) the speaker of "Les fenêtres" engages in but despairs of ever emerging victorious from the game, owing to the perceived impenetrability of "le vomissement impur" ("the foul vomit") (12–13) of the beastly world of matter, that has unfeathered his wings, and hence, exposed him to the "risque de tomber pendant l'éternité" (risk of falling away for all eternity) (*Oeuvres* 33) into the regressive infinity of the same type of dialogue of self with self that

1 All translations are the authors', unless otherwise indicated.

Yeats, following Arnold, diagnosed as "at once the fault and the beauty" in the "sad soliloquies" of his contemporary poetry and the "disfiguring introspectiveness" characteristic of modernism (Watson 40); (ii) the speaker of "L'Azur" recoils from playing the game in the first place, yet ultimately bears witness to the triumph of the Ideal, succumbing to its indestructible enchantment, with the poet's voice being ominously abolished by other voices of language created in the text. In this respect, Helen Abbott's reading of the last two stanzas of "L'Azur" in *Between Baudelaire and Mallarmé: Voice, Conversation and Music* is very enlightening. She traces the roots of the fin-de-siècle cult of synaesthesia in Baudelaire's notion that a particularly skillful use of poetic language, namely *sorcellerie évocatoire* (evocative sorcery), can allow colors to speak (for themselves) as disembodied voices—a silent but productively resonant language menacingly infiltrating the poet's voice: "the poetic voice allows for *evocation* [which] hints at a dislocation between voice and subject that is a feature of disembodiment, and also reinforces the notion that using language is part of an act of remembering (in the sense of evocation as conjuring up times past)" (Abbott 169; emphasis added). Mallarmé demonstrates a rich example of such poetic evocation in the penultimate stanza of "L'Azur." The "éternel azur" introduced in the first line of the poem (the eternal vast of the blue vault of sky, which we may translate simply as "the azure") is gradually transformed, in the poet's desired oblivion of "l'Idéal cruel," from a generic symbol of the Unity of Being to a mark of irremediable separation between the "inutile" (useless) fantasy of a dead *Sky* ("Le Ciel est mort") and an increasingly overwhelming *Azure* ("l'Azur") (*Oeuvres* 37–38). This *l'Azur*, now capitalized, is officially "personified" in the first line of the penultimate stanza as a man singing through the bells: it is given a "poetic voice," challenging that of the poet himself, and, moreover, this gift is given in the form of a "voiced" entity capable of singing. But this is just the beginning of Mallarmé's evocative sorcery: in the next line, we learn that, in order to augment his minatory presence, *l'Azur* turns itself into a voice, that is, the disembodied voice of a color (azure-blue), a color that itself has been given a voice: it rings the Angelus bell which calls to prayer the performers of the Angelus, the Catholic devotion commemorating the Incarnation. It *calls* to prayer, i.e., it addresses the congregation, through the repetitive ringing of the bell, as if animating the metal of which the church-bells are made: the metal functions like a mouth for the voice of *l'Azur*. This is not a far-fetched imagery since speech in general is generated by the rhythmic interruption of breath, that is, the intermittent opening and closing of the mouth, a repetition with-in difference, not unlike the ringing of a bell. In fact, Baudelaire used a similar idea in the poem "L'Horloge" ("The Clock")

concerning the diabolical inexorableness of time: "Mon gosier de metal parle toutes les langues" (My metal throat speaks all languages). Regarding the significance of the haunting monotony of the synaesthetic voice in "L'Azur," most conspicuous in the finishing line of the poem ("*Je suis hanté*. L'Azur! l'Azur! l'Azur! l'Azur!"), Abbott writes: "Like the voice of the second hand in Baudelaire's 'L'Horloge' with its 'gosier de métal' (v.14), the metallic timbre of the voice of 'l'Azur' reinforces its menacing regularity of recurrent repetition which chisels away at the poet's own weakened voice" (170). Mallarmé's analogy of the Angelus bell will provide us with an opportunity to sound the very depths of the poetic in the following sections.

Idea as the Source of the Poetic

The *Idea*, in its more demonic and sinister aspect (as *l'Azur*), speaks all languages ("parle toutes les langues"), even though this speech is constrained by the same time limits as the poet's voice (the ringing of the bells will eventually stop). This capacity to speak in all tongues issues from the fact that the *Idea* is the very source of speech, a source which, in and due to its non-human ("metallic") nature, increasingly differs from what we recognize as articulated speech until it altogether vanishes into silence when the corresponding oscillation of the Angelus bell is damped to zero. The *Idea* serves as the '(non)origin' of language, the common *source* of speech and writing: speech in its most graphic aspect and writing in its most vocal form—that is, the gestural or the rhythmical beginnings of language, as in the oscillatory motion of a bell, or the back and forth movement of the hand waving a fan such as the one poetized in Mallarmé's "Autre éventail." As we will see shortly, the (im)proper mode of this gesture is one of *assent*—a sometimes unspoken, almost Joycean, *yes*. But, for the time being, let us focus on our choice here of the term '(non)origin' instead of 'origin' and on what precludes us from attributing an absolute, static, and stable 'point of origin' to the anteriority of the *Ideal* gesture. The answer lies in the subtle distinction that has to be made between the terms *origin* and *source*. In examining the *proper/literal* meaning of "source" in Paul Valéry's oeuvre, Derrida restates the question we've posed here in terms of the very possibility of knowing such meaning prior to its entanglement in the metaphorical play of language: "Is not the source the origin, the point of formation, or rather emergence, of a flowing body of water, brook, stream, river? Nothing is more familiar to us than water, and than the very familiarity of the earth with water, which is sealed here and there, and unsealed in the *point d'eau*—incalculable syntagm—that is called source: *origo fontium*" (*Margins* 279). The problem is the impossibility of getting rid of the supplement, of metaphoricity, of repetition anywhere within the territory of

language: for one thing, to claim that the "source" is an *origin* we should already have a notion of what *origin* means in the first place; to make a claim about language itself, to ask the question of language, i.e., to define its proper source or origin, is already to be caught up in language in that very questioning. It is as if at any point we engage with/in language, including when inquiring about its very nature (that is, asking the "question of the question"), we have already *assented* to what makes language possible. We have always already made a promise—a *given word*, as it were, but one that is always yet to be received but never is, a *word* that is not yet a word but which is the condition of possibility of any word that is to be uttered or written. A retrospective logic is at work here: this *gift* is never *given*, or, more precisely, is *given without giving*, since, otherwise, it would stop being a *gift*; this *present* eludes *presence*, since it has always already been given, a *debt* that has always already been *paid* for. In *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, Derrida explains that this promise, "opening every speaking, makes possible the very question and therefore precedes it without belonging to it: the dissymmetry of an affirmation, of a *yes* before all opposition of *yes* and *no*" (94), some un/representable presupposition as the condition of possibility of all representation. He continues: "The call of Being—every question already responds to it, the promise has already taken place wherever language comes. Language always, *before any question*, and in the very question, comes down to [*revient à*] the promise" (94).Thus, the "sometimes wordless word" of assent (130) is the (quasi-)originary gesture of language, like the waving of a fan[1] or the ringing of the Angelus bell in Mallarmé's profound analogy. The bell rings: on this auditory cue, a pause strikes the daily routine of the devotee; wherever he stands he abandons whatever he is doing, almost instinctively, to heed the call to the devotional prayer. The devotees respond to the call with obedience, a repetition of the promise, reconfirming the pledge to the *Ideal*, re-*paying the debt* to the Christ who bought them their salvation with His blood. This obeisance (which gesture takes on a vocal as well as a physical quality, as the ritual is performed in accordance with the text and instructions of the Angelus prayer), this *yes*, resonates through the metal-speech of the bell and clapper (the tintinnabulation) and through the august silence of the Azure.

As that which precedes and exceeds the question, the promise consists in an event that is not an "event"—a (non)event our recollection of which precedes all possible attempts at remembering it. Hence, this is a memory of that which can

1 Mallarmé's poem about the fan, "Autre éventail" ("Another Fan"), was inscribed, in elaborate typographical detail, on the paper folds of an actual fan and given as a gift to his twenty-year-old daughter, Geneviève.

never be remembered, can never become a remembrance: a memory of oblivion, of (the act of) forgetting. A gap at the heart of memory forever separates the past from the present: this is the caesura of the present, the absence built into the structure of presence, the split within being. This memory is not of the past, but, paradoxically, of the present: it is the (painful) memory of the quasi-originary divide that constitutes temporality itself—the irremediable self-division which is the very predicament of the post-Romantic thought given deliriously to thinking itself with-in the same dis-jointedness of time Hamlet observes following the visitation of his murdered father's ghost. To put it in Heideggerian terms, albeit risking a certain degree of oversimplification, it is a "thoughtful remembrance" [*Andenken*] that expresses its thanks [*danken*], i.e., *pays its debt*, in the form of mourning—mourning the loss of what was never there, or, was always already there without being there—there in the beginning, which is not a beginning. Mallarmé projects the primeval mode of memory discussed here in the poet's sense of being haunted (by the *Idea*), expressed at the end of "L'Azur," following the angelus imagery of the penultimate stanza. The poem concludes with a confessional tone: "Je suis hanté" (*Oeuvres* 38). Now the question arises as to the nature of this haunting and how it relates to the memory of the present.

Idea and the Poet's Haunting

The poet is haunted. Haunting is not an event that has befallen him at a particular point: he can never know when he was haunted. Nor is haunting a case of demonic possession, as if some demon had entered his mind (or soul or body) like an uninvited guest and had taken residence there. After all, the personification of the Idea as *l'Azur* is a mere attempt on the poet's part to familiarize the radically Other by giving it a name or a face—a fictional reduction through tropology. The poet's haunting is not an intrusion from without: it is the illusion of poetry that registers the threat to the constitution of the poet's "I" as an exteriorized totality (the *Idea*), projecting the voice of *l'Azur* as a "separate" or independent poetic voice. While Romanticism, in its signature concern with the consciousness of the poet as a subject, regards the poet's voice itself as a poetic voice present in the scene of poetry, the Romantic poet is not particularly concerned with "I" as his *property*, as *my*self, since this "I" often borders on the impersonal and the universal, and tends to embody such large notions as imagination and autopoiesis; that is, until his identity is threatened, with the advent of Symbolism, by the sudden revelation of a defect at its very foundation, a fundamental inconsistency, a fatal lack, exposing the subject *qua* subject, putting the subject on trial for the first time in the history

of poetry—what we may refer to as the "crisis of logos." Any attempt to remedy the flaw, in the form of an intrusion by the Other, creates a plethora of other flaws since the intrusion is from within: it is (quasi-)originary. Every crumbling piece of the fictional subject's identity constitutes another partial-*I* or non-*I* within an *I* that is no more *one* and is *more than* one (le *plus d'un*)—multiplying representations of the *self*, contending and conflicting irreconcilably for the throne. The poet's voice becomes a barely audible poetic voice among many others, what Jean-Luc Nancy in a rather different context (his heart transplant surgery and its aftermath) describes as follows: "I become indissociable from a polymorphous dissociation" ("L'Intrus" 12). In other words, the poet "cède l'initiative" (gives the initiative) (Mallarmé, *Oeuvres* 366), at this stage, to the "others with-in me" as the "I" disintegrates into a *possible* autonomy of language itself, an ideal delegation of enunciative authority to the words themselves, an act which would amount to the creation of the Grand Work (the alchemical project of Symbolism). If irony is defined as the dissociation of the enunciating subject from the subject of his enunciation, generating a duality of voice, then the poet's haunting exhibits the most radical, or, if you will, irremediable, case of irony: a heterogeneous self-interruption no alignment of poetic tropes can supersede—a multiplicity of voices. It is like a Greek play that consists entirely of choruses addressing each other instead of an actual audience. Yeats considers the chorus as what endowed Greek drama with the "emotion of multitude," a quality created by "vague symbols that set the mind wandering from idea to idea, emotion to emotion," allowing the mind to go on "imagining other shadows, shadow beyond shadow, till it has pictured the world" (*Early Essays* 159). The (post-Romantic) poet's haunting, in which one self-intrusion is shadowed by another, *ad infinitum*, engenders a most intense "emotion of multitude" within the singular, a feeling of self-ruination and vanishing (évanouissement), of "a passage through nothingness, of an entry into a space emptied of all property, all intimacy" (Nancy, "L'Intrus" 7). The absolutely proper *I* (which we may refer to as Narcissus) is brought to the brink of extinction, of an almost *nothing*, and thereby to the fulfillment of the golden dream of Symbolism, through the becoming-multitudinous of excrescences of nothingness, of the traces of *néant*—the reciprocal self-erasures of the expanding congregation of non-*I*'s within the *I* that is, by the same token, not *one*.

The poet is haunted, namely, by the *Idea* (which is self-materialized as *l'Azur* in Mallarmé's poem). First of all, this spectral *Idea* allows the relation of the poet to himself, opening a primeval space for poetry as autobiography, hence marking the poet's (quasi-)originary ruination since this space of "réciproques

néants" (reciprocal nothingnesses) (Mallarmé, *Oeuvres* 435), based on our speculations in the previous paragraph, is (de)constitutive of the subject as self-intruding *I*. The *Idea* as *néant* can never be but that which never is, i.e., an opaque (almost) "nothing" never presenting itself. If the *Idea* is to be equated with the *source*, the question arises as to the ontological condition of the *source*. Here, we may refer back to the distinction between *source* and *origin*. The source is "often described *as* a glance, as the site of the glance" (Derrida, *Margins* 284) in a theatrical allegory: everything related to this source is put onstage as a visible object, and hence given presence to, through the objectifying glance of this perpetually self-erasing I/eye, this cosmic mirror which opens the space for the poet's haunting—this *I*, no longer an individual, is what Derrida, à la Valéry, refers to as the "singular universal" pronoun (282). However, this eye's "brightening glance" (Yeats, *Poems* 221) cannot brighten itself: "being always opened wide and thrown toward the visible, [it] cannot itself perceive itself, never emerging from its night … always turned in the same direction, toward the outside" (Derrida, *Margins* 284), like a supermassive black hole at the center of most galaxies including our Milky Way. As the absolutely proper *I*, as the Idea *per se*, the source, in its attempt to elude the nihilating effect of the multiplicity of self-intrusions, "withdraws to an infinite distance" (Nancy, "L'Intrus" 12) and almost completely destroys itself: the desperate echolalia of "L'Azur! L'Azur! L'Azur! L'Azur" (Mallarmé, *Oeuvres* 38) is all that remains of the poet's voice, which continues to fade away as the ringing sound of the Angelus bell turns into silence. Thus, the supposedly pure *I* of self-consciousness, the Romantic source of all presence, is rendered "almost impersonal, very close to being a non-I" itself, "this I which is not an I, this unconscious consciousness, this X which probably has or is nothing" (Derrida, *Margins* 282, 283). The source inhabits, or rather, haunts, a space opened for the elision of the *I*: Mallarmé's post-Romantic poet is haunted by what he cannot put into words, as he utters "Je suis hanté!" (I am haunted!) (*Oeuvres* 38) which implies "Je suis hanté par je ne sais quoi" (I am haunted by I don't know what) inviting an entire congregation of specters, a multitude of spectral possibilities with no actualization in sight. This elision reduces the pure I "to an abstract point, to a pure form, stripped of all thickness, of all depth, without character, without quality, without property, without an assignable duration. This source therefore has no proper meaning" (Derrida, *Margins* 281).

The *Idea* sets in motion a concatenation of metaphors, bringing together notions such as obedience, assent, prayer, veneration, mourning, and memory. It calls to us with the divine serenity of an azure sky above a church as the Angelus

bell is rung and the metal-speech of the bell and clapper begins, the source sending forth, successively, centrifugal ripples of sound, "*échos esclaves" (*slave-like echoes) (Mallarmé, *Oeuvres* 76), with every ripple ultimately to "glide fatally ('so couler') into the ripples which preceded it and merge ('au fond de l'unanime pli') into the indifferentiation of silence" (Pearson 200). The source always remains radically anterior to the vibrations it generates, just like a stone thrown into a river maintains a definitive alterity to the ripples it creates: "Nothing of that which proceeds from it belongs to it" (Derrida, *Margins* 281). The incarnation of the Idea *as such*, that is, the poet's voice, become merely one poetic voice among others, as the absolutely *proper* (non-)*I* adrift within the multitude of all the non-*I*'s that (de)constitute the poet as subject, is reduced to an almost-nothing, an infinitely withdrawn non-word, indissociable from and yet other to the entire system of representations which allows us to speak of the *Idea*, such as the imagery of the blue sky and its intimidating force, the Angelus bell and its metallic tongue, or haunting and its ineluctable repetitions: "it is nothing outside its metaphors, nothing except that which transports it outside itself and throws it outside itself at the instant of its birth, as the irruptive welling up, the sometimes discreet, but always violent effraction of the emerging source" (283). The origin point of flowing water cannot itself be part of the structure of rivers and streams it gives birth to, at least insofar as a 'spring' is not confused with the 'stream' that gushes forth from it; in other words, the "point *d'eau*" (source of water) is always already "*point* d'eau" (no water at all): "As such, this source, in the purity of its waters, is always disseminated far from itself, and has no relation to itself as source" (283). The absolutely proper *I* is nothing outside its own self-annihilation(s).

On the other hand, all these speculations about the nature of the source are only possible through and within the medium of language which, as we have discussed in length, presupposes the radical anteriority of a *yes*, of an always already expressed *assent*, of a pledge or promise to that which precedes and makes language possible without belonging to it. Concordantly, in order to find its own seat on the stage of representation, the source has always already been reduced, by the tropological *turn* of the signifier, to the incessant play of difference, to its "presque disparition vibratoire selon le jeu de la parole" (vibratory near-disappearance according to the play of speech) (Mallarmé, *Oeuvres* 368): "In order to speak of the source, which remains interdicted, first it has had to be *turned*: by means of a trope, it must yield to being seen and yield to seeing" (284). The tropological turn allows the *Idea* qua source to divide itself so that it can itself become a mirror-effect, the same as everything else that has been rendered visible and present only by being presented

to this source as an object, only through *being seen* by the impoverished I/eye of a cosmic mirror that is itself always already broken into a multitude of shards of glass.

If in the beginning, at the source, there (is) the turn, the repetition, the representation, the response, or the metaphor, if the source (is) itself a result, a trace, an effect, then there is no beginning, or, rather, the beginning has always already begun: "at first" and "once again" go hand in hand in the construction of the present. This repeatability, or, if you will, iterability is the condition of possibility of language itself. Sure, the bell eventually stops ringing, but it will ring again upon the next Angelus, just like it has rung again and again before—the specter-*Idea* returning, that is, returning to returning. This iterability is built into the nature of any prayer, at least in the formal sense of the word: it is a form of "ritual." An obsession with the ritual was characteristic of *les Symbolistes* in France and the Pre-Raphaelites in Britain, a quality which Yeats inherited and which shaped his approach to poetry, particularly in his early career.

The *Idea* calls to us, it speaks to us and for us, through the Angelus bell: a call to prayer, a call to re-cite the words "Domini nuntiavit Mariæ / Et concepit de Spiritu Sancto…" (the Angel of the Lord [Gabriel] declared unto Mary / And she conceived of the Holy Spirit…), to reconfirm the fundamental principles of Christianity that are always already accepted at the point of prayer (if you were not already a Christian, saying a Christian prayer, at least in the formal sense of the word, wouldn't make sense): not only the Annunciation and the Incarnation but also Christ's Passion, Crucifixion, and Resurrection are recounted, and therefore commemorated, in the text of the Angelus. It is a form of re-paying the debt the Christian owes to the Savior, a repayment that is never, i.e., always-already, finished but repeated upon each prayer, as an en-gagement to the *source* of Christian Truth, that is, God's *mystery* (μυστήριον). The Angelus bell each time bears witness to this *yes* of the *quasi-originary mystery*. Hence, *Idea* as *mysterium* shares with the quasi-originary *yes* of language the infrastructural quality of irreducibility to the binary structures of language and metaphysical philosophy: for instance, in the context of the Incarnation, the form its revelation was to have taken is neither flesh nor word even as it is both flesh and word.

The Body of the Letter

One crucial implication of our argument here is that the 'iterability' and 'rituality' that are so prominently built into the fabric of the prayer approximate it, albeit asymptotically, to the very origins of language and to the condition of possibility

of poetry. Furthermore, there is a certain automaticity or mechanical routine in the act of saying a prayer, a certain ellipsis of knowledge—of the substance, of the subject or even of speech: it is a matter of saying *by rote*; you recite what you have memorized, what you have "learned by heart," without being preoccupied or paying particular attention to the words themselves. Prayer is the closest speech can get to the immediacy characteristic of divine inspiration; it is the closest speech can get to its own disappearance. The manner in which prayers and incantations, such as the Angelus, have been set to music in the history of the Church is rather enlightening in this context. The Gregorian chant tradition is of particular interest to us since the earliest form of musical notation, the *neume*, was invented for this plainchant, employed from the eighth or ninth to the twelfth century. Unaccompanied and monophonic, the neume is a "pure vocalization" which corresponds to "chanting without words"—a mode of manipulating the "breath" (a short recapitulation of air) in a manner that suspends the knowledge of articulated speech, including the form of articulation embodied in modern notation protocols for accent and melody. The "breath" most effectively erases—or at least blurs—the difference between the three kinds of voice defined by Rousseau, that is, the speaking voice, the singing voice, and the affective voice: breath is what they have in common, "a speaking and singing breath, breath of language which is nonetheless inarticulate" (Derrida, *Of Grammatology* 249). This breath is none other than the *neume*.

The *neume* is linked via *pneuma* (πνεῦμα: breath, wind, soul, spirit, divine inspiration, angelic being, life-giving fire, etc.) to the Holy Spirit (Άγιο πνεύμα), and hence the Annunciation which is the subject of the Angelus prayer. Concordantly, the neume is divinely inspired and is accorded to God alone, whose ineffability disarms the capacity of words to celebrate Him properly in words. According to Rousseau's *Dictionary of Music*,

> The Catholics authorize this singular custom on a passage of St. Augustine, who says, that no words being possible to be worthy of pleasing God, it is laudable to address him in a confused music of jubilation. "For to whom is such a jubilation suitable, unless to an ineffable Being? and how can we celebrate this ineffable Being, since we cannot be silent, or find anything in our transports which can express them, unless unarticulated sounds?" (qtd. in Derrida, *Of Grammatology* 249)

Mallarmé finishes his essay "Le mystère dans les lettres" with the mention of "l'air ou chant sous le texte" (the melody or song under the text) (*Oeuvres* 387): this

infrastructural rhythm approximates a mode of music comparable to the neume, as defined here. Furthermore, in a similar manner to Yeats's so-called 'posthumous' poem "Cuchulain Comforted," the neume "aim[s] at an unearthly music beyond the human" (Vendler 98): the bird-like shades or shrouds the fallen hero Cuchulain joins in his afterlife sing a song in chorus which has "nor human tunes nor words" (Yeats, *Poems* 340), what Vendler aptly describes as "a pure avian vocalization" (98). The breath which embodies the neume "cannot have a human origin and a human destination. It is no longer on the way to humanity like the language of the child, but is rather on the way to superhumanity" (Derrida, *Of Grammatology* 249). In "Che cos'è la poesia?" Derrida redefines this superhumanity in terms of a (desire to) return to an impossible primeval state of language: the non-metaphorical, the purely literal, the non-mimetic, a P/poem before poetry, the *poematic* limit-experience. Derrida writes, "*Literally*: you would like to retain by heart an absolutely unique form, an event whose intangible singularity no longer separates the ideality, the ideal meaning as one says, from *the body of the letter*. In the desire of this absolute inseparation, the absolute nonabsolute, you breathe the origin of the poetic" (*Points* 292–295; emphasis added). The *body* of the letter: meaning is no longer bound by the metaphorical abstractions that separate the poet from that nascent state of joy, adoration, and passion (the a-topos of the *heart*). It is the state of the absolutely proper *I* chased by the multiplicity of self-intrusions to its zero *point*, where there is nothing, nothing but this very *nothing*, this *almost nothing*—an infrastructural void beyond language(s) and "older than 'logic'" (303), "very low, an all-low, absolutely low" which is a low "without opposition to height" (325). The *body* of the letter: the passion of natural voices is inscribed upon the corporealized meaning. It is this carnality of sense that opens up the origin of the poetic: the poematic experience is one of touching, smelling, tasting, hearing, seeing, feeling, breathing, in short, 'sensing the sense.'

At one point in "Ellipsis" Derrida underscores the relationship between passion and the origin: "It is the origin itself which is impassioned, passive, and past, in that it is written. Which means inscribed" (373). Later in the text, Derrida compares two approaches to writing, the affirmation of play *and* the pronouncement of the absence of a center, asking a pivotal rhetorical question, "is not the desire for a center, as a function of play itself, the indestructible itself? And in the repetition or return of play, how could the phantom of the center not call to us? It is here that the hesitation between writing as decentering and writing as an affirmation of play is infinite. This hesitation is part of play and links it to death" (375): it creates a *rhythm*, a dance, if you will, that is bound up with a primordial state of pain, a pain inseparable from,

and perhaps even prior to, feeling pain. This pain is neither objective nor subjective, neither infection nor homesickness, neither monastic self-abnegation nor Adam's curse of hours of labor the artist takes upon himself in order to "articulate sweet sounds together" (Yeats, *Poems* 78): "The body is not bruised to pleasure soul, / Nor beauty born out of its own despair, / Nor blear-eyed wisdom out of midnight oil" (221). It is still pain, but one which consists in the tension of the in-between of multiple non-*I*'s, like a membrane always about to be punctured (yet, for the same reason, never punctured). The body of meaning is not a body in the proper sense of the word, in the same manner that, through the Incarnation, *both* Word and flesh undergo an essential transformation, namely the Word itself *becoming* flesh, logos corporealized qua logos. This body has not yet entered the economy of language, and consequently, is not yet implicated in the Cartesian duality of mind and body, or in the double bind of life and death: it is intra-uterine, pre-natal, fetal, matrixial, always-being-born. This fetal body, naturally, is in tune with an extension (in all senses of the word) of the mother's heartbeat which resonates through the amniotic fluid wherein floats the fetus (whose movement within the womb is the source of the particular mode of pain we have associated here with the body of the letter). Thus, it is a body inseparable from its corporeal rhythmicity: it is a rhythmic corporeality which marks the primordial stage wherein we can never "know the dancer from the dance" (221) or sense from its sensuality. The possibility of poetry rests in this sensuality of sense laid bare by the painful yet indestructible passion of and for the origin, and it could be claimed that no passage describes this passion more accurately than the following excerpt from Nancy's "Sens elliptique":

> C'est ainsi que l'écriture est dite "passion de l'origine." Cette passion ne survient pas à l'origine: elle est, elle fait l'origine elle-même. L'origine est une passion, *la passion de soi dans sa différence*, et c'est cela qui fait le sens, tout le sens. Tout le sens est toujours passion, en tous les sens de ce mot "sens." […] Ce qui fait sens dans le sens, ce qui l'origine, c'est qu'il se sente lui-même sentir. (Sentir le sens, toucher à l'être sens du sens - fût-il insensé- , c'est la passion de Derrida. Toucher au corps du sens. Incorporer le sens. Griffer, entamer, tatouer. Mettre à feu et à sens. Je n'écris ici que sur ça.)
>
> (Thus writing is said to be the "passion of and for the origin." This passion does not arise at the origin: it is, it makes the origin itself. The origin is a passion, *the passion of and for oneself in its difference*, and that is what makes sense, all the sense. All sense is always passion, in all the senses of this word "sense." […] What makes sense in the meaning, what engenders it, is that it

> feels itself feeling. (To feel the meaning, to *touch* its "meaning-being"—even if it has no meaning in and of itself—this is Derrida's passion. To touch the body of the sense. To give flesh to meaning (to render it corporeal). To scratch, cut into, tattoo. To set on fire and give meaning to. I will speak on nothing else than that.) (328)

If the origin of the poetic is in the zero point of metaphor, then only a self-voiding of literary language may bring the poematic into the light of day (*mettre au jour*). For Yeats, the origin seems to lie in the contact with this infra-liminal Darkness, this *nothing*, this almost nothing. It is darkness pulsating with possibilities of life and of death, heartbeats barely heard through the metal chest and ribcage of history, through the crust of conventional wisdom and "enumerate[d] old themes" (*Poems* 355) which does not constitute tradition in Yeats's view. This heart is not very different from that which Derrida describes in "Che cos'è la poesia?": "A heart down there, between paths and autostradas, outside of your presence, humble, close to the earth, low down" (Derrida, *Points* 295; emphasis added). In this marvellous text, Derrida uses the hedgehog (*hérisson*) as his catachrestic figure for the poematic: a hedgehog, rolled into a ball, self-stranded on the road, with the ominous sound of a vehicle approaching to crush it. According to Derrida, "Un hérisson est bas, très-bas, 'humble,' humilié peut-être, ce qui veut dire près de la terre, terre-à-terre, mais le bas aussi comme 'signifiant,' prononcé *tout bas*, à voix basse, presque sans voix, et puis le coeur qui bat, là-bas, au loin" ("A hedgehog is low, all-low, 'humble,' humiliated perhaps, which means close to the earth, down-to-earth, but low also as 'signifier,' pronounced very low, in a lowered voice, almost without voice, and then the heart that beats, over there, far away") (*Points de suspension* 335; *Points* 325; emphasis added). The pun on the term *tout bas* is essential: "all-low, very low" (spatially speaking) and "almost silent, whisper-like." The poematic experience consists in listening to this near-silence, this almost nothing, this rumor or hearsay (*oui-dire*)—what practically amounts to eavesdropping. David Solway finds a similar quality in Irving Layton's poetry, based on Derrida's reading of the *neume*, discussed above, as the origin of language (a pure vocalization, untainted by supplementarity, and divinely inspired) which Solway relates to "the irruption of the sense of festival" and "the plunge into the conjugal amalgam of the Creation": "This may account for the feeling one often has in the presence of great poetry, as in the best of Layton's work, that one is not listening or reading directly: *one is eavesdropping*" (95). Yeats is delving down, without really delving, down to the zero point "where all the ladders start," where all poetry begins, "the foul rag and

bone shop of the heart" (*Poems* 356), down there, too low, close to the earth. There lies the humble, perhaps helpless, hedgehog of the poematic: "One would like to take it in one's hands, undertake to learn it and understand it, to keep it for oneself, near oneself" (Derrida, *Points* 292–293)—to learn it by heart [*apprendre par coeur*] or to eavesdrop on it. One would like to recite it, to repeat it like a prayer, as though it were dictated by a nameless other or inspired by God, but not so as to 'know' it, or to 'name' it, or to treat it as a center of will or individual consciousness. As Peter Dayan explains, "the poem, like the animal, gives itself no name that belongs to the living. […] The poem must be abandoned by the living. It must be left. It cannot be known; it cannot speak its name; it can only be learnt by heart, entire. It is not individually alive, and therefore it cannot die" (11).

The peculiar relationship, discussed here, between the fruitful void and the heart, between the luminous emptiness and the origin of the poetic, may direct us to Heidegger, especially, in this case, his reading of Hölderlin. Poetry for Heidegger is the "setting-into-work of the truth" of Being, the opening in language of a space for the ontological epiphany attendant upon an authentic encounter with *nothing*, a way of using language through which beings stand revealed in the truth of their being; in other words, poetry allows the unconcealing-illuminating encounter with a "clearing" [*Lichtung*] in the middle of the forest of beings, a space from which all the trees have been removed, as if set fire to (17–86). This un/concealing fire originates from the heart or, in Heideggerian terms, the *soul* [*Gemüt*]: Derrida, following Hölderlin, names the poet "the *Beseeler*, not the animator or the ringleader but the one who insufflates the soul" (*Of Spirit* 79). The poet as the *Beseeler* [soul-giver] is "consumed in fire, close to becoming ash" (81). It is the passion of this poetic soul that, undermining the sovereignty of cogito, can render meaning palpable and let it set itself on fire [*se mettre à feu*]. The body of sense is never far from the mystery of flames and ashes: it is not without significance that Mallarmé intended his manuscript of the Book to be consigned to fire. The poematic event "always interrupts or derails absolute knowledge" (Derrida, *Points* 299): the poet has to reduce the Tree of Knowledge to ashes, "to disable memory, disarm culture, know how to forget knowledge, set fire to the library of poetics" (295). The blankness of the blank page is none other than the whiteness of these ashes, words gathered in the urn of language, no longer merely words, but in-corporated non-words, down there where a heart beats in near-silence, where one could feel the meager heat emanating from the word-cinders, smoldering in the hesitant presence of the breath (πνεῦμα)—a mode of passion so eloquently described by Mallarmé as "lucide désespoir" (lucid despair) (qtd. in Chapman 21). We have come a long way from the Æolian harp of

the Romantics and the "wild and various … random gales / That swell and flutter on this subject Lute" (Coleridge) so as to quicken its strings into a highly subjective, self-reflective poetry of totalizing individuality.

Conclusion

An overview of the dangers of solipsism in Symbolist poetry leads one to a vision of the post-Romantic subject stranded between two different but interrelated responses to the encounter with the Ideal as *L'Azur* (the blue infinity of the sky), both equally frustrating. This prompts the question of what happens to the Symbolist poet's voice in the vicinity of the ideal: the poet's voice, the *I*, as a poetic voice in its own right, is threatened and penetrated by other poetic voices that become more and more multitudinous as we approach the critical origin-point of the Ideal. Thus, the absolutely proper *I*, supposedly designating as such the poet's voice among the rest of the poetic voices, could be described as, and has always already been disseminated into, "a multiplicity of self-intrusions" or *non-I*'s, or to put it in other words, a tension between fragmentary *I*'s as poietic identities, resulting in the experience of a schism within the poet's psyche, an ontological anachrony. In this regard, the Ideal could be interpreted as the quasi-originary source of language, the infrastructural *yes*, and the origins of the poetic could be traced to "rituality" and "iterability," qualities characteristic of prayers (considering, in particular, the Angelus devotion), and the *neume* (the earliest form of musical notation, which amounts to a chanting without words, a pure vocalization): the essence of poetry, or, borrowing a term used by Derrida, the "*poematic*" limit-experience, requires a suspension of knowledge, as in learning "by heart." The origin of the poetic is located in the "body of the letter" or the "carnality of sense," the perfume of words. At the zero point of metaphor where meaning is purely literal, the poematic, as passion of and for the origin, entails a self-voiding of language, a casting-aside of being: the contact with the body of sense is only possible if the poetic soul, bypassing the cogito, can derail absolute knowledge, since the quasi-originary promise of language (*yes*), that is, the very condition of possibility of language, is anterior to reason and to knowledge. Down there, low, too low, close to the earth, the humble "hedgehog," Derrida's catachrestic figure for the poematic, is rolled up into a ball, self-stranded on the autoroute, with the ominous sound of a vehicle approaching to crush it—buried laughter, lucid despair, smoldering ashes.

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Teaching *Waiting for Godot* to Undergraduate Students of English Literature: A Reader-Response Approach

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Abstract This study investigates undergraduate students' perceptions about *Waiting for Godot* at a public sector university in Pakistan. The study explores how students' identification of the existentialist themes from the play is affected by pedagogical approaches and teachers' philosophy. Rosenblatt's (1938/1994) reader response and Sartre's (1956) existential framework have guided this study. The findings are based on data collected by semi-structured interviews from 15 participants. The study applies the qualitative mode of inquiry employing the thematic analysis method propounded by Braun and Clarke (2006). The key arguments based on findings reveal that participants' responses were affected at first, by their social and educational background. Participants connected existentialist themes that were very close to their life experiences and observations. Furthermore, study highlights the role of teachers in developing participants' understanding of the play. The results are useful for teachers, curriculum designers, and researchers as they bring some implications in the context of literary pedagogy.

Keywords Existentialism; Reader response; Literary Pedagogy; Undergraduate Students; *Waiting for Godot.*

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Introduction

The study has explored the perceptions of undergraduate students regarding Samuel Beckett's play *Waiting for Godot* at a public sector University in Pakistan. Students study this work as a part of their BS English Literature curriculum in almost all universities of Pakistan. At the research site where study was conducted the play was taught by a single teacher. The data was collected from the BS III literature students of varying socio-cultural background. In contrast to urban background, students from rural background have more stringent family systems where they strictly follow religious norms (Lloyd et al. 9). Hence they do not allow any kind of flexibility in the context of religion or their ethical and moral values. In addition, at public sector institutes students do not get exposed to such platforms where their critical thinking skills could be better polished(Andrabi et al. 2). Students' educational background and capabilities are therefore, different as they come from various private or public sector schools and colleges and also from rural or urban social backgrounds. Such socio-cultural factors hinder in promoting learners' autonomy in Pakistani universities (Hameed 1; Yasmin & Sohail 20). Moreover, in public sector universities, the teaching and learning process takes place in large classes.

Waiting for Godot is commonly interpreted in the context of existentialist thoughts. Correlating the basic principles of existentialist philosophy, it gives an impression about incomprehensibility, absurdity and resilience of the universe in which a man waits for divine help which never comes. While coming in contact with the play, students of Public Sector University discover a contrast between their beliefs and the themes in the play. This point of conflict alludes to complications regarding critical reading and interpretation of the text. Since it is a common practice to relate oneself to works of literature (Rosenblatt 02; Flynn 16), the current study has investigated perceptions of undergraduate students regarding meaninglessness and the conditions of human world as highlighted in the play. To

explore the perceptions of students, this study has followed frameworks of Sartre's Existentialist theory and Rosenblatt's Reader response theory.

Research Question

How undergraduate students' perceptions of the existentialist themes in *Waiting for Godot* are affected by the teaching strategies and teachers' philosophy*?*

Literature Review

Sartre's Model of Existentialism

Philosophers have been dealing with the problem of 'being' and 'existence' for ages. The world of art has been highly impacted by existential thoughts. Jean Paul Sartre (1956), one of the central figures of existentialist school of thought, took the traditional assumption, 'Essence precedes existence' and challenged the long tradition in philosophy that had always prioritized abstract, universal and impersonal essence over actual human existence. By conferring precedence to essence, Sartre completely denies the idea that there is some inherent meaning prior to existence. He claims that we create ourselves by our actions. Sartre holds the view, "At first [man] is nothing. Only afterwards he will be something and he himself will have made what he will be. Man, first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world and defines himself afterwards" (526).It implies that man is what he makes of himself. Sartre rejects the notion that we are born with any inherent meaning or predetermined fate but rather humans are artisans of their own existence. There is no a prior human essence, model or blueprint that determines man.

The problem of 'Being' is the center of phenomenological exploration of Sartre. He discusses being-in-itself that refers to objects that are just there, having no awareness or value for themselves. It implies the being of things which are fixed like body, place of birth, historicity etc. but man is more than these fixed certainties. Man is not mere being-in-itself but also being-for-itself where man is a conscious subject, not in accordance with any definition, essence or generalization. He defines his own essence and gives meaning to his existence through the choices he makes. Man is always more than what he was, in a continuous restless urge to create his own meaning (Wild 45). These two aspects of being represent facticity and transcendence respectively. Sartre maintains that though the being of man is characterized by facticity, it nevertheless does not prevent us from being free and exercising our freedom. Sartre has encapsulated this idea as, "I am condemned to exist beyond my essence, beyond the causes and motives of my act. I am condemned to be free" (439). It reflects that man's essence is never completely fixed

but he is yet to be. He gives meaning to his life by exercising and practicing his personal freedom, making choices and exercising freewill.

Waiting for Godot as an Existentialist Play

The notion of waiting and contesting one's decision to wait for a subtle hope that may change one's life has appealed audience throughout time. The selected play published after WWII and evokes provocative questions concerning the meaning of human existence. The philosophical pathways and entangled structure of the play have drawn multifarious research attention. Kern in her study maintains that there are Kierkegaardian echoes in Beckett's very assertion (8). Gilman points out that the play is closer to Camus' concept of the absurd as that divorce between the mind that desires and the world that disappoints (5). Many critics have labeled *Waiting for Godot* as an existentialist play in the more contemporary view of Sartre. Esslin notes the truly astonishing parallel between Sartre's existential philosophy and the creative intuition of Beckett, focusing on such facets as nothingness, freedom and the need of consistently creating ourselves in a succession of choices (19).

Critics have been divided over the topic. Since few maintain that the play has many religious undercurrents as Beckett concerns theological questions, dealing with the relation between God and mankind and waiting for salvation (Wang 14). He also commented that the play seems absurd but with a deep religious meaning. The text tries to explore the themes in four parts of God and man, breaking the agreement, repentance and imprecation and waiting for salvation. Loran interpreted *Waiting for Godot* in the light of Christian theology, propagating the idea that the play is embedded with the deep religious meaning where the waiting appears as a manifestation of the characters' unflinching hope in God (1). Stempel views the play as completely Christian, simplistically allegorical. He sketches the character of Estragon as representing the Jew who waits for the Messiah, making Godot a figure for the Messiah either way (2).

Many researchers repudiate the theological stance of the play and align Beckett with the skeptical thought of hope and waiting as a futile illusion. They leap an association with existential philosophy, a fitting undertone preoccupied with the meaning of human existence. In the MLA's guide to teaching the play, Williams (3) reflects that the play dramatizes elemental human experience to embody fundamental truths of the human condition as it construes meaninglessness of human existence through its unusual form. Different dimensions of the play: characters that are in absolute boredom of despondent life, the setting that only has the enigmatic road and a leafless tree, plot less narratives and the language that is devoid of content, all collectively and undoubtedly offer a shocking picture of the

painful realities of human life (Styan 16; Nealon 13). Kennedy further elaborates, "Wherever we look in Beckett's play, we see images of spiritual loss and of human suffering and waste" (157). Play reveals the catastrophic, deplorable and apocalyptic human condition. It highlights the perplexing issues of hopelessness, meaninglessness, uncertainty, skepticism and anxiety that shackle and weaken one's firm faith.

Rosenblatt's Model of Reader Response Theory

Rosenblatt puts forward her Transactional Reader Response theory in which she gives importance to transaction between the text and the reader. Rosenblatt puts her idea as,"The text brings into the readers' consciousness certain concepts, sensuous experiences and scenes. The special meanings and associations the words have for the individual reader will largely determine what the work communicates to him" (31). It implies that transaction with textual elements and signs stimulate areas of consciousness where readers' responses constitute reading. Literary texts bring some concepts, ideas or experiences that readers can easily relate to their own life experiences and observations. They identify themselves in characters or in the storyline. This may influence reading transaction.

Rosenblatt highlights the role of teachers in developing readers' understanding of texts and offering literary responses. Beard comments that the process of reading and responding is like a triangle where learners' role is on the inside and the teacher's role is on the outside, bringing awareness, prompts and promotes the reader to make contextual links (9). Without teachers' intervention, the response can be too narrow and restrictive. However, if students fail to have literary experience, it is the teachers' role to construct a schema to increase their interest and involvement in the text so it should be enjoyed (Benton 20). Hence, it advocates a pedagogy that acknowledges the importance of individual responses. McGee also notes that with guided reading and discussing literature, students will call on their analytical thinking(3). Clifford also reflects that appropriating reader response theory requires a shift of emphasis from 'analysis' to 'experience' which in turn requires a balanced, harmonious pedagogy(3). Wherein, neither readers, nor texts are predominant. Thus, pedagogical approaches, instructors' interpretation and interests also influence the readers' personal responses to literary texts.

Relevant Empirical Studies Employing Reader Response Theory

Students' literary interactions and levels of engagement in transactional process often depend on students' textual understanding based on socio-cultural expectations. Schrijvers' study examines the impact of literary education on students' self and social perceptions. It aims to explore relationships between

students' learning experiences and teachers' classroom practices. Findings reveal that nearly all students reported to have learned something about themselves and others through literary works: mainly personal characterization of oneself and others, evaluation of people's behavior, life lessons and positive attitude towards literature. Skarstein's study has explored readers' literary experiences in Norwegian secondary schools. The results of the study reflected that the participants took the selected fictional texts as didactic tools for stimulating their critical thinking skills. Through their literary exploration, the participants entered into new contexts and discovered other perspectives than their own.

The themes of text allow readers to see themselves, access their own experiences as mirrored in the work where they closely engage with the text (Enciso 19; Rogers & Christian 7). Taiwanese students' responses to five American short stories were researched by Liaw. The findings revealed that students went beyond mere comprehension of the text and actively constructed meaning through transaction with the text because the themes were closer to their social realities. In the context of thematic closeness, Dutro presented third graders' experiences with a unit from their reading curriculum, *Hard Times* in which children made strong connections between the theme of family's economic hardships and their own lives and social context where their own poverty paralleled with the story. Cox and Many's study examined fifth grade children's written responses to selected works of realistic literature from reader response themes of stance and personal meaningfulness. The study, based on its findings also argued that participants focused more on the themes and events close to their own life experiences and social observation.

More recently, students' responses towards three young adult novels, included in UK school curriculum were researched by Syed. The study used literature circles and Google documents where students responded to social and personal issues such as death, inequality, racism, war and contemporary politics as presented through the medium of the selected literary texts. This study helped readers to have cross-national social interaction as the participants were from the UK and Norway. Thus, reader response approach pushes students to think beyond literary texts to deepen their thinking. The application of Iser's RRT on William Faulkner's *Rose for Emily* showed the effects of the reading experienced by the readers who came to the subjective opinions after reading (Khrais 1). Participants made personal judgments by endowing cultural setting in the novel with their social reality.

The reviewed literature reflects that there is a dearth of research on students' responses to literary texts, specifically in the context of Sindh, Pakistan. Thus, the

present study is an endeavor to fill the void in this context.

Research Methodology

This study follows a qualitative research approach in which the data is interpreted in descriptive form to present the major findings of the research. Qualitative research is the research that aims to understand, discover, and clarify perceptions, values, beliefs and feelings of the population. (Kumar 68). Furthermore, the study follows Creswell's five steps of qualitative data collection. Firstly, identifying research site and sample of the study; secondly, gaining access to site and participants through permission. Thirdly, prioritizing data according research questions fourthly, choosing instruments and designing protocols for data collection, and finally collecting data with focus on ethical issues.

The study relies on interviews as its data collection tool. Cohen et al. reflects, "Interviews enable participants to discuss their interpretation of the world in which they live and express how they regard the situation from their own point of view" (267). It shows that interview is helpful in understanding the point of views regarding any situation (Bryman 216). Keeping the demand of data collection in mind, researchers conducted in-depth interviews that allowed the participants to exchange in-depth perceptions regarding the matter. Semi-structured interviews were designed in which researchers did not pose pre-planned questions to validate all the information collected. Kallio et al.'s model of developing an interview schedule was followed.

Sampling was done according to Cohen et al.'s guidelines about considering size, access, and representativeness and sampling strategies. Data was collected from 15 participants who were undergraduate students of BS III English Literature at a public sector university. The number was kept small as the target was rich data not generalizability (Ritchie et al. 20). The targeted class was very large, thus participants were selected through purposive sampling. In purposive sampling, researchers choose selective participants to get an in-depth understanding of a small population (Creswell 217; Yin 20). The students were selected on the basis of their active class participation and involvement in discussion groups, specifically in the course of Drama. Participants had varied educational exposure and social backgrounds. Eight out of fifteen participants had urban background, whereas seven were from rural Sindh (See Table 1). Eight participants had exposure to private institutes whereas seven had exposure to public sector institutes. Out of 15, eight participants were female and seven were male. The collected data was analyzed through thematic analysis model proposed by Braun and Clarke. This followed a

systematic process. Data was coded, code patterns were observed, and themes were designed and reviewed. The themes developed from the analysis are reported in the section of findings.

Codes	Female Participants	Male participants	Total No. of Participants
Rural background	04	03	07
Urban background	04	04	08
Private sector schooling	03	05	08
Public sector schooling	05	02	07

Table 1: Demographic Information of the Participants

Ethical issues were considered significant for this study. Data was collected ethically as suggested in methodological literature. Participants were fully informed of the purpose of the study. They were given informed consent forms explaining the project and assuring them of their voluntary and anonymous participation. Translation issues were also considered. Researchers realized the challenges of translation as it involves interpretation (Birbili 212; Temple and Young 22) and checked the work to ensure reliability of translations.

Findings

Participants' Perceptions on Existentialist Themes as Reflected in the Play

Participants delve into multiple facets of the play on the theme of meaninglessness of human life. They viewed the play as capturing basic experience of being in the world. They reflected that the play has addressed human limitation, agonies, anxieties and state of helplessness. They identified the theme of meaninglessness through characters, plot setting and dialogues, further added by circular plot, setting of a barren road and a leafless tree, distractions of conversation and the act of characters' waiting, all collectively reflect the given theme.

Participants viewed the theme of human freedom as characters were not exercising their freewill. Estragon and Vladimir were dependent on each other in power-relation. Similarly, Pozzo and Lucky were also confined to one another in power-relation. Thus, their over-dependence made them inactive. Participants reflected that the characters were lacking individuality. The element of 'I' was missing in them. The other major issue with them was their indecisiveness. They did not attempt to make any changes. They all were devoid of decision-making power. Though the characters could have opted to leave but they carried on with the choice of waiting. Their acts of waiting were making urgent demands of action.

Participants analyzed the theme of human responsibility as the characters were not accepting their responsibility. Participants quoted from the text, there was an instance when Estragon got his boot off, looked inside to see what was causing him the difficulty. There, Vladimir remarked, that was his own mistake that he was unable to remove the boot and was blaming the boot. Participants took this act as reflection of human tendency to blame external sources. The character was also blaming the boot for the pain in his foot. Participants further elaborated that characters were not accepting their responsibility. Their act of waiting and not accepting responsibility made them passive and stagnant.

Relating Existentialist Themes to Life Experiences and Social Observations

Participants exhibited personal involvement by having a sense of personal identification with characters of the *Waiting for Godot*. They related to characters' acts of meaningless by sharing that they all do wait and hope that things will come to them by themselves. Participants also elaborated that they all fall in the trap of waiting. It is not only about Estragon and Vladimir: it is about the entire mankind who helplessly, in different phases of their lives wait for someone that would take the lead of their lives. The situation of the tramps is an allegory of human condition.

Participants also contextualized the theme and responded experientially by recalling the tough phases of their lives. They discussed their own life experiences in relation to the theme. One female participant connected to the theme by expressing that characters' passiveness reminded her of her father's death. She shared that when her father died, she was like Estragon and Vladimir: alienated, undecided, passive, waiting and not knowing what to do. She was living meaninglessly without any aim as she felt the absence of her father. But then, her family made her realizes that she has to live her life, to struggle and not to give up.

Relating the theme of human freedom, few participants exhibited personal relation to indecisive acts of the characters. Some participants shared their personal life experiences where the theme was relatable to their various phases of life as their inability of decision-making in various life aspects. They connected that often, they are also like the characters of novel, where they do not understand what is happening with their lives. Usually they do not struggle for life's meaning but invent a number of diversions to entertain them. They just create an impression that they exist. They also lack decision-making power like the characters. They connected to the theme by sharing that they also live in expectancy that hangs them upon tomorrow and loses today. Thus, the inability of the characters to make choices showcases as a catalyst for their own transformation: making choices, living life

and giving meaning that one chooses to give. The participants proclaimed that one must take their own journey to gain life's meaning rather than being indecisive and hoping for other sources. One male participant shared that the play reminded him of his pre-university days. The other participant shared that after experiencing failure in the medical field, she did not stop her struggle. She made the choice to pursue BS Degree in English Literature. She had plans, aspirations and desires and she put her efforts for those. Thus, while going through the play, she connected to the theme as if she had not made the choice at that time, her life would have been filled with meaninglessness. Hence, that is the power of making choices and taking decisions.

Some participants connected the theme to social observation by giving illustrations of political, religious, familial and societal norms. They illustrated that Lucky's enslavement by Pozzo is actually reflecting our enslavement to familial and social chains. We are also tied by a rope held by government, religious and social institutions. We also recycle others' ideas instead of creating our own. Further, participants connected characters' state of mind with theirs as characters were not realizing the purpose of their existence: participants also exhibited that they, sometimes involve themselves in disillusioning repetition of the daily routine and at the end, they blame that life has no meaning. But with the help of this play, they can draw on their experiences and gain sense of self-realization to accept their responsibility for the life they have. Participants also reflected that the play has filled them with a sense of curiosity about what the point of life is. They highlighted that the play explores the key issue of life's meaning: an outlook on life pursues the question of the meaning of one's life.

Role of Teaching Strategies

Participants' responses were affected by teaching strategy applied by the teacher. Few of the participants responded positively as they were helped to seek a vital personal experience in transaction with the play. They shared that the methods used to teach shaped their way of understanding, evaluation and responding to the text. They worked in groups where they were directed by the teacher to relate or to evaluate the given textual lines. Hence, in this way the teacher devised strategies which allowed students to draw personal relevance, access one another's' experiences and participate more productively in the meaning-making process. This facilitated them to discover deep meaning from the play. They further elaborated that the teacher used to put them in different situations and posed various questions about the characters existential crisis. This activated their intellectual integrity and ability to express their independent judgment. They took teaching methods as appropriate where they were exposed to open up many avenues of exploration.

Four participants exhibited their dissatisfaction by sharing that pedagogical implications were not appropriate as their interest and willingness to engage with the text was not stimulated. Few participants denied having a personal engagement with the play. As one female participant remarked, "The class during the play was solely based on lecture method. I sensed myself completely out of touch and indifferent." Participants recommended implementing various pedagogical approaches to help students interact with the texts. Participants' responses also indicate that their textual understanding and literary experiences towards *Waiting for Godot* were influenced by the way teacher interpret the play. Majority of the participants reflected that when it comes to responses, their teacher was concerned more about learning academic responses rather than their own reflections. Teaching approach did not allow participants the freedom to express the meanings they had created while reading the play. One participant commented, "Teachers wanted us to see the same layers of meaning in the text that they had seen." In this context, participants suggested that teacher should focus on how to express an interpretation rather than formulating one. They suggested that teacher should inspire a love of learning among students for better literary exploration and to develop their literary taste.

Discussion

Participants' responses suggest that participants' literary experiences with the play were affected by their educational and social environmental factors. Along with it teachers' teaching tactics also affected students' responses towards play. Rosenblatt states that readers construct their own meaning through bringing their individual experiences, social conventions, literary repertoires and contextual values while transacting with the text. After analyzing participants' demographic information and their responses, it is argued that participants from urban background and private institutes were more critical and open in their discussion and reflected their deep textual understanding as compared to those who had rural background and had exposure to public sector institutes. Participants from urban background took the play served as a source of motivation, were more open in their discussion. In contrast to this, participants from rural background were indecisive in their responses and interpreted the play in the context of their religious beliefs took existentialist philosophy as anti-religious. They exhibited that this philosophy is actually posing hard questions about one's existence that enhances skepticism and stimulates obsession with the idea of nothingness. Hassan & Hassan's study of students' perception about literature also brings forth rural and urban divide in

English classrooms. They claim that urban students with exposure, freedom and English language proficiency in comparison to rural students are expressive, open and interpret the literature in multiple ways.Thus, participants' familial background, educational exposure and social environment were important in informing their interpretations. Rosenblatt also supports this argument that a reader brings personality traits, his contextual ideas, preoccupations and many other elements that determine his response to the peculiar contribution of the text (4).

Teaching strategy was also one of the main response- affecting factor that helped students to seek a vital personal experience. The reviewed literature also highlights the role of teachers in developing readers' understanding of texts and offering literary responses. It can be interpreted that responses of participants reflect the role of teacher as a great factor in navigating their literary experiences with the play. Teachers' compliance to teaching techniques that are reader response in nature results in academic excellence of students. As Junejo & Shaikh (01) state that teacher who asks open ended and contextual questions and invite students to come up with their personal interpretation, his classes are engaging and fun filled in comparison to the teacher who strictly focuses on literary themes, symbolism, characterization with close ended and textual question. Thus the students' interest is generated not only by the text but also by a teacher. Similarly, data of the current study indicates that a literature classroom can be interesting when students are encouraged to discuss their personal interpretation of literary text. Therefore, study suggests, teachers' training and academic excellence affect the degree to which a literature class can be interesting and engaging. So, it is necessary that teachers should be aware of reader response methods and the ways of its application in the classroom. The interactive environment created by the teachers fosters students' ability to articulate their reading and literary experiences.

Participants' responses also reflect the way teacher approached the play and influenced participants' understanding. Participants recommended that since the play touches very sensitive issues, a teacher needs to be neutral and impartial while teaching the play. This relates to Young's views that by removing any partial position from the teacher, the readers can respond freely in their own autonomous ways. This can be interpreted that in our social context and educational culture, teachers occupy a dominant position in classrooms. In most of traditional teaching, teachers do not allow students to speak up their thoughts and ideas. What teachers deliver and how teachers interpret literary texts, students formulate the same interpretations. Hence, it affects students' own creative interpretations related to literature. Participants' responses towards teaching strategies and teachers' ways of interpreting the play

suggest that readers' responses and the role of teacher in guiding that response can be a dynamic rewarding experience if pitched appropriately.

The results indicate that reading literary texts can be optimized through aesthetic stance. Such evocation generates diversity of responses among learners. If students become personally involved with literary texts, they would be more likely to attain cognitive and affective goals. It provides a signboard for articulation of readers' personal responses to the world.

Conclusion

The study reveals that participants' responses towards existentialist themes were affected by pedagogical approaches and instructors' interpretations of the play. Recognizing the limitations of the study, it explores importance in further developing this area of research to incorporate students' responses to literary texts. The participants consisted of an age group that ranged 19-22. Future research can also be done on postgraduate students to check if age also serves as a response affecting factor. This study has focused on a single play. Research scope on the same area can be further extended to highlight perceptions of students to other literary works and reader-response application in literature classes.

The findings have brought some implications in the context of literary pedagogy. It is suggested that teachers should encourage students to interact with the text and draw individual responses. Teaching strategies should be devised in a way that moves readers towards critical appreciation of the text. It should allow students to access each other's experiences and participate more productively in meaning-making process. It also recommends that teaching should focus on how to express an interpretation rather than formulating one. Participants' responses also signal for curriculum designers. The results indicate that learners' active engagement with literary texts depend on thematic relevance of the work. Hence, it is recommended that curriculum designers should focus on the works that are thematically relatable to readers' experiences and observation. Thus, to strengthen learners' connection with literary texts, works should be selected having consideration over the themes and contextual proximity.

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Ludovico Nicola di Giura's Translation of "Non-equivalent Words and Expressions" and "Functional Equivalence" in *Liao Zhai Zhi Yi*: From the Perspective of Cultural Translation Theory

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Abstract The Italian doctor Ludovico Nicola di Giura (1868–1947) translated *Liao Zhai Zhi Yi* (聊齋誌異, literally meaning "Strange Tales Recorded in the Studio Liao") in Italian. The book *I Racconti Fantastici di Liao* (*Fantastic Tales of Liao*), printed by the publishing company "Arnoldo Mondadori" in 1955, is the first complete Italian version of *Liao Zhai* in the western world, and until now is the only complete version in Italy. The essay applies different theories and typical research methods of translation studies. In particular, it uses the methodological approaches proposed by Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere, known as "Cultural Translation Theory." Through the application of these theoretical methods, the essay summarizes the work of *Liao Zhai Zhi Yi* translated by L. N. di Giura and, finally, analyzes the rewriting peocess of the translator in order to find out the ways in which he uses different methods and translation strategies in dealing with "non-equivalent words and expressions" to achieve an effect of "functional equivalence." The author hopes that this work could attract more attention of both Italian and Chinese scholars concerning the translation of *Liao Zhai Zhi Yi* made by L. N. di Giura, providing a starting point for further studies and deeper researches.[1]

Keywords Ludovico Nicola di Giura; *Liao Zhai Zhi Yi*; functional equivalence; domestication and foreignization

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Introduction

Liao Zhai Zhi Yi (聊齋誌異) is a collection of classical Chinese stories comprising more than four hundred "marvel tales" which serve to implicitly criticise societal issues.

It was written by author Pu Songling (蒲松齡 , 1640–1715) in the seventeenth century. The main characters of this book apparently are ghosts, foxes, immortals and demons, but the author focused on the everyday life of commoners. He used the supernatural and the unexplainable to illustrate his ideas of society and government. He criticized the corruption and injustice in society and sympathized with the poor. Besides its far-reaching social significance and vivid images, the simple and straightforward languages are also very impressive. These features combined make such work of high artistic value, no wonder it is considered as "the culmination of the classical tale" (Zeitlin 4).

From the nineteenth century and throughout the whole twentieth century, *Liao Zhai*'s fame spread worldwide, especially since the work was translated into more than twenty different languages such as English, French, Russian, Japanese, Korean, etc., becoming the most translated Chinese classic novel.

In Italy, thanks to the contribution of sinologists over time, "the *Liao Zhai* has been translated into various editions" (D'Arelli 212), and today "it has become a particularly well-known Chinese work." (Miranda 11) Among these publications, The book *I Racconti Fantastici di Liao* (*Fantastic Tales of Liao*) stands out. It was printed by the publishing company "Arnoldo Mondadori" in 1955. "It is the first complete version of *Liao Zhai* in the western world, and even today is the only complete version in Italy" (Lanciotti 138). The Italian translator is doctor Ludovico Nicola di Giura (1868–1947), and the book has achieved a very great success.

In this paper, I will employ different theoretical and methodological approaches in "transaltion studies," especially the "Cultural Translation Theory" proposed by Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere. Such theory indicates that translation is a

rewriting process, the purpose of which is to achieve a "functional equivalence" between the target and source languages. "The translators should bear in mind that the culture is a critical element, whether translators correctly and completely delivers the cultural factors of source language to the target language is the standard to measure the quality of his translation" (Tan Zaixi 222). Simply speaking, "translators should make great efforts to convey the cultural meanings effectively and achieve the purpose of intercultural communication" (Liao Qiyi 363).

Based on these theoretical theories, the paper intends to carry out an analysis of the Italian version *I Racconti fantastici di Liao* (*Fantastic Tales of Liao*) translated by L. N. di Giura. The analysis focuses on the translation of "non-equivalent words and expressions" in *Liao Zhai Zhi Yi*, for the purpose of assessing how the translator deals with the cultural factors in the source text to anchieve the cultural "functional equivalence" through the flexible use of different translating strategies and methods.

L. N. di Giura as a Doctor and Mayor

Ludovico Nicola di Giura was born on February 18, 1868 in an aristocratic family from Chiaromonte, currently in the province of Potenza, in the Basilicata region of southern Italy.

In May 1891, Di Giura graduated in Medicine and Surgery from the University Federico II of Naples; afterwards, he joined the Italian Navy as a doctor.

In the summer of 1900, the Boxer Rebellion broke out in China. The foreign powers in Chinese territory supported the imperial troops of Empress Widow Ci Xi（慈禧,1835–1908) to suppress the rebellion. The Italian government decided to intervene, sending a military and diplomatic mission. Di Giura took part in the mission as the "on board doctor" of the Italian naval ship Ettore Fieramosca, and reached Tianjin in August 15, 1900. Immediately, he started working as a doctor in Tianjin and Beijing.

His medical skills were so great that his fame spread fast all over China. People from all the country, no matter rich or poor, came to visit him to receive medical assistance. They called him affectionately "Yiguo Daifu"（意国大夫, Italian doctor). Once, after curing the disease of a prince in the imperial family, the Empress Widow Ci Xi named Di Giura as her "court doctor" (Gu Qianxi 15). Thanks to his outstanding medical ability, he was even conferred by the Empress the first class of mandarin honor.

In 1931, at 63 years old, L. N. di Giura decided to return to Italy. He came back to Chiaromonte, where his family owned some lands, and there he served as a mayor until his death in May 9, 1947 (Antonelli 69).

L. N. di Giura's works and his translation of *Liao Zhai Zhi Yi*

During his thirty years in China, Di Giura deepened his knowledge of Chinese language and literature. Under the guidance of an old Chinese tutor, Di Giura studied the Confucian classics and other important Chinese literary works.

He then began to translate some classical works from Chinese to Italian. In 1926, Di Giura published a book titled *Scelte di Massime Confuciane* (*Selection of Sayings of Confucius*), which contained 55 articles picked out from *Lun Yu* (论语 , *Analects of Confucius*), in 1929 he published a book with the title *I Fiori Orientali* (*The Oriental Flowers*); which was a collection of 7 poems selected from the novel *Hong Lou Meng* (红 楼 梦 , *Dream of the Red Chamber*), etc. In 1931, Di Giura published a partially autobiographic novel, which was titled *Fiore d'Amore* (*Flower of Love*). It narrates the impossible love story between Guido Genta, an Italian naval officer and a young Chinese girl named Fior d'amore, in the background of a China ravaged by wars and political interference by western powers.

However, Di Giura's most significant literary work is the translation of *Liao Zhai Zhi Yi.* His translation was published for the first time in 1926 by publishing company Arnoldo Mondadori with the title *Fiabe Cinesi* (*Chinese Tales*). It was the first Italian version translated directly from the original text in classical Chinese. This book collects the first 99 stories of *Liao Zhai* (the *Qing Ke Ting* edition)[1], from the novel *Kao Cheng Huang* (考城隍 , *The Choice of the Protector of the City*) to *Quan Deng* (犬灯 , *The Dog Light*).

In the *Preface* of the book *Fiabe Cinesi*, Di Giura wrote:

La mia traduzione dal cinese è rigorosamente letterale, e se il lettore troverà spesso la dizione disadorna, pensi che ho cercato di attenermi il più possibile al testo, nonostante le grandi difficoltà a volte incontrate, e che frasi molto brillanti in lingua cinese perdono nella traduzione. Ho aggiunto qualche nota perché sia più agevole comprendere le allusioni che spesso s'incontrano.

> (My translation from Chinese is strictly literal, and if the reader finds always some dictions unadorned, please think that I have tried to stick to the original text as much as possible, despite the great difficulties sometimes encountered,

1 *Qing Ke Ting* edition: Pu Songling finished writing *Liao Zhai* around 1679 and later the novel spread slowly in the form of manuscript in the area near Zichuan (淄川), the author's hometown. In 1766, for the first time this collection was engraved in bronze by Zhao Qigao (趙 起 杲). The *Qing Ke Ting* edition played a very important role in the spread of *Liao Zhai* and had numerous reprints.

> and the fact that these brilliant sentences in the Chinese language still lose their color in translation. I added some notes to make the allusions that are often encountered in the text easier to understand.) (8)

From these statement, we understand that L. N. di Giura tries to respect as much as possible the stylistic and semantic structure of the original text, choosing to elaborate a very faithful translation rather than a fluent one.

After his death, his nephew Giovanni di Giura (1893–1989) reorganized his writings, and entrusted the new publication once again, to the Arnoldo Mondadori publishing company. This new edition dated back to August 1955 and contained 435 stories titled *I Racconti Fantastici di Liao* (*Fantastic Tales of Liao*). According to the most recent research, this book is "the first complete version of *Liao Zhai* in the western world, and until now is the only complete version in Italy" (Bertuccioli 233).

Giovanni di Giura was an excellent diplomat, but he could not speak Chinese. During the revision process, he modified the translation of some phrases to make them sound more fluent in Italian, and corrected some printing errors, while preserving his uncle's translation methods and choices. As it is written on the cover of the book *I Racconti Fantastici di Liao*:"Unica traduzione autorizzata dal cinese di Ludovico Nicola di Giura" (The only authorized translation from Chinese by Ludovico Nicola di Giura). (*I Racconti Fantastici di Liao* 6).

Theoretical Basis: "Cultural Translation Theory"and Application

In the 1970s, the study of translation had no position at all in the newly developing cultural studies, and it was just a small part of applied linguistics, an even smaller part of literary studies.

The term "Translation Studies" was coined in 1972 by the Amsterdam-based American scholar James S. Holmes in his paper *The Name and Nature of Translation Studies* (Holmes 1), which is considered a foundational statement for the discipline.

During the 1980s and 1990s, attention towards the cultural significance of the translation process began to increase, thanks to the work of some scholars who gradually shifted their research approach from a traditional literary perspective to one that was closer to the models of cultural studies. Susan Bassnett (1945–) and André Lefevere (1945–1996) are the representative for this *Cultural Turn* (Agorni 27).

In 1980, Susan Bassnett published a book titled *Translation Studies*. In this

work, she clarifies some specific problems in literary translation such as "poetry and translation," "translating prose," etc., and discusses some fundamental themes of translation, for example, "decoding and recoding," "problems of equivalence," "untranslatability," etc. Particularly noteworthy is that Bassnett emphasizes the relationship between language and culture at the beginning of the book:

> Language, then, is the heart within the body of culture, and it is the interaction between the two that results in the continuation of life-energy. In the same way that the surgeon, operating on the heart, cannot neglect the body that surrounds it, so the translator treats the text in isolation from the culture at his peril. (14)

Susan Bassnett points out that culture and language are very closely connected, and a translator, while translating, should bear the culture in mind as a critical element.

The association between translation studies and cultural studies is even more evident, in another book written by Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere — *Translation, History and Culture*, published in 1990 in London. In the Introduction part: *the Cultural Turn in Translation Studies*, the scholars argue:

> "Faithfulness," then, does not enter into translation in the guise of "equivalence" between words or texts but, if at all, in the guise of an attempt to make the target text function in the target culture the way the source text functioned in the source culture. Translations are therefore not "faithful" on the levels they have traditionally been required to be – to achieve "functional equivalence" a translator may have to substantially adapt the source text. Translators, on the other hand, can be faithful, and they are said to be when they deliver what those who commission their translations want. [...] (8)

According to the translation theories of Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere, the aim of translation does not consist in the pursuit of a "textual equivalence" but rather in the achievement of a "functional equivalence" between the target language and the source language. It is a very complex process of rewriting the original text, translators should take into account the source language and target language, their implicit cultural connotations, as well as the balance between cultural transmission and acceptance of the text by the reader.

This essay has been considered as the manifesto of the "Cultural turn" in translation studies. Bassnett and Lefevere tried to show how the study of translation had moved on from a formalist approach and turned instead to the larger issues of

context, history and convention, etc.

In 1992 André Lefevere published a book titled *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame.* There, for the first time he proposed the concept of "rewriting":

> Translation is, of course, a rewriting of an original text. All rewritings, whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given wany.
> Rewriting is manipulation, undertaken in the service of power, and in its positive aspect can help in the evolution of a literature and a society. Rewritings can introduce new concepts, new genres, new devices and the history of translation is the history also of literary innovation, of the shaping power of one culture upon another. But rewriting can also repress innovation, distort and contain, and in an age of ever increasing manipulation of all kinds, the study of the manipulation processes of literature as exemplified by translation can help us towards a greater awareness of the world in which we live. [...] (Lefevere VII)

According to Lefevere, the reasons that push a translator to carry out such "rewriting" belong to two categories: "ideological" (conforming to or rebelling against the dominant ideology) or "poetological" (conforming to or rebelling against the dominant poetics):

> If some rewritings are inspired by ideological motivations, or produced under ideological constraints, depending on whether rewriters find themselves in agreement with the dominant ideology of their time or not, other rewritings are inspired by poetological motivations, or produced under poetological constraints. (7)

Lefevere points out that a literary work can be delivered and received by the receiving society only if it is translated or rewritten in accordance with the dominant values of that society. "Since all forms of rewriting are affected by the particular ideological and poetic conceptions of the target society, it is natural that they alter the literary message of the original work" (Munday 200).

The interactions between "poetics," "ideology" and "translation" lead Lefevere to point out an essential statement:

> On every level of the translation process, it can be shown that, if linguistic considerations enter into conflict with considerations of an ideological and/or poetological nature, the latter tend to win out. (Lefevere 39)

Lefevere's approach is original in understanding the multifaceted nature of translation and extending the frontiers of the discipline to contiguous fields of research. "*Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* represents a milestone in the field of contemporary translation studies" (Ulrych IX).

In 1996 Lefevere died of acute leukemia. Despite the sorrow, with great courage Bassnett continued their studies on translation. In 1998 Bassnett published an essay collection titled *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation* in memory of her friend Lefevere. This collection brings together her and Lefevere's studies in the discipline of translation. These essays cover a wide range of fields, and combine theory with practical case studies involving the translation of literary texts. In the chapter *The Translation Turn in Cultural Studies*, Bassnett states:

> Both cultural studies and translation studies have tended to move in the direction of the collaborative approach, with the establishment of research teams and groups, and with more international networks and increased communications. What we can see from both cultural studies and translation studies today is that the moment of the isolated academic sitting in an ivory tower is over, and indeed in these multifaceted interdisciplines, isolation is counterproductive. Translation is, after all, dialogic in its very nature, involving as it does more than one voice. The study of translation, like the study of culture, needs a plurality of voices. And, similarly, the study of culture always involves an examination of the processes of encoding and decoding that comprise translation. (138-139)

In this essay Bassnett examines not only the cultural turn that has taken place in Translation Studies over the past decade, but also shows how parallel trends can be discerned in Cultural Studies. Thanks to the work of Bassnett and Lefevere, the relationship between translation and culture has become a pull factor to promote the development of interdisciplinary research between translation studies and cultural studies, and other disciplines involved.

In nearly thirty years, Bassnett and Lefevere have made a great contribution to the translation studies, and have built a bridge between translation and culture. As representatives of the cultural approach in translation studies, they attached great

importance to the role of culture in translation, the social background, the influence that cultural tradition imposed on translation, the subjectivity of translators and the research, shift from linguistic to culture, thus improving the literariness of translated texts. Such method of study expanded the scope of translation studies enormously, opened a new field of study, thus it enhanced a further and more comprehensive development of translation studies.

"Non-equivalent Words and Expressions"

Mona Baker (1953–) is a professor of translation studies in England. In 1992, she published a book titled *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation.* In the Chapter "Equivalence at Word Level" she interprets the concept of "non-equivalence at word level":

> Non-equivalence at word level means that the target language has no direct equivalent for a word which occurs in the source text. The type and level of difficulty posed can vary tremendously, depending on the nature of non-equivalence. Different kinds of non-equivalence require different strategies, some very straightforward, others more involved and difficult to handle. [...] I will keep the discussion of types of non-equivalence separate from the discussion of strategies used by professional translators. It is neither possible nor helpful to attempt to relate specific types of non-equivalence to specific strategies. [...] (Baker 19)

Then, professor Baker lists 11 types of "non-equivalence at word level" that can often be encountered in the translation process:

> (1) Culture-specific concepts, (2) The source-language concept is not lexicalized in the target language, (3) The source-language word is semantically complex, (4) The source and target languages make different distinctions in meaning, (5) The target language lacks a superordinate, (6) The target language lacks a specific term (hyponym), (7) Differences in physical or interpersonal perspective, (8) Differences in expressive meaning, (9) Differences in form, (10) Differences in frequency and purpose of using specific forms, (11) The use of loan words in the source text. (Baker 21-26)

According to professor Baker, it is unnecessary and impossible to reproduce all aspects of meanings of each non-equivalence word, and translators should strive to

transmit to readers the meaning of those terms whose semantic value is decisive for the understanding of texts.

> In dealing with any kind of non-equivalence, it is important first of all to assess its significance and implications in a given context. Not every instance of non-equivalence you encounter is going to be significant. It is neither possible nor desirable to reproduce every aspect of meaning for every word in a source text. We have to try, as much as possible, to convey the meaning of key words which are focal to the understanding and development of a text, but we cannot and should not distract the reader by looking at every word in isolation and attempting to present him or her with a full linguistic account of its meaning. (Baker 26)

In the Chapter "Equivalence above Word Level," professor Mona Baker also explains the main problems and difficulties that a translator may encounter in the translation process of "idioms and fixed expressions":

> The main problems that idiomatic and fixed expressions pose in translation relate to two main areas: the ability to recognize and interpret an idiom correctly and the difficulties involved in rendering the various aspects of meaning that an idiom or a fixed expression conveys into the target language. (71)

Regarding how to translate "idioms and fixed expressions," professor Baker states that it is a very complicated question:

> The way in which an idiom or a fixed expression can be translated into another language depends on many factors. It is not only a question of whether an idiom with a similar meaning is available in the target language. Other factors include, for example, the significance of the specific lexical items which constitute the idiom, i. e. whether they are manipulated elsewhere in the source text, as well as the appropriateness or inappropriateness of using idiomatic language in a given register in the target language. The acceptability or non-acceptability of using any of the strategies described below will therefore depend on the context in which a given idiom is translated. [...] (71-72)

Since *Liao Zhai Zhi Yi* is a work of classical Chinese literature, in the translation

process it is quite common to come across "non equivalent words and expressions" with strong allegorical meanings. Sometimes even for the Chinese readers these "words and expressions" are difficult to understand, and they are even more difficult for the Italian readers, whose culture background is very far away and very different from that of the Chinese.

Strategies and Methods Applied by Di Giura in Translating "Non-equivalent Words and Expressions" in *Liao Zhai*

Eugene A. Nida (1914–2011) was an American linguist and one of the founders of the modern discipline of translation studies. In 1945, he published an article titled "Linguistics and Ethnology in Translation-Problems" in the Journal *Word* (Journal of the International Linguistic Association). In this article, Nida divides the "problems of equivalence" into five categories:

> Words are fundamentally symbols for features of the culture. Accordingly, the cultural situation in both languages must be known in translating, and the words which designate the closest equivalence must be employed. An examination of selected problems in various aspects of culture will make it possible for one to see more clearly the precise relationship of cultural information to the semantic problems encountered in descriptive linguists. Translation-problems, which are essentially problems of equivalence, may be conveniently treated under (1) ecology, (2) material culture, (3) social culture, (4) religious culture, and (5) linguistic culture. (Nida 196)

At this point, I will analyze the translation process of L. N. di Giura in order to assess the ways in which the translator uses different methods and translation strategies in dealing with "non-equivalent words and expressions," so to achieve an effect of "functional equivalence."

These "non-equivalent words and expressions" are to be analyzed according to the categories proposed by Eugene Nida. However, in the analysis of the texts there are some words and expressions appearing, that cannot be taken into consideration with regard to any of these five categories, so we decide to add a sixth category: "other types non-equivalent words and expressions." Here is the final classification this essay proposes:

(1) ecological "non-equivalent words and expressions";
(2) material "non-equivalent words and expressions";

(3) social "non-equivalent words and expressions";
(4) religious "non-equivalent words and expressions";
(5) linguistic "non-equivalent words and expressions";
(6) other types "non-equivalent words and expressions."

The following will analyse these categories accordingly this order.

(1) Ecological "non-equivalent words and expressions"

Ecological situation varies from territory to territory. Words and expressions of this type are usually related to plants, animals, climate, etc.

Example 1:

> 《促織》：既入宮中，舉天下所貢蝴蝶、螳螂、油利撻、青絲額一切異狀徧試之，無出其右者。(Pu Songling 214)
> Una volta entrato a palazzo, fu provato con tutte le specie rare che da ogni parte erano state inviate all'imperatore: non ve n'era alcuna che gli fosse superiore! (*I Racconti Fantastici di Liao* 694)
> (Once it entered in the palace, it was tried with all sorts of rare species that had been sent to the emperor from all places: there was none that was superior to it!)

Facing the names of different crickets that are cherished by the emperor, like *hu die* (蝴蝶 ,butterflies), *tang lang* (螳螂 , mantises), etc., the translator Di Giura chooses to omit them, mainly because these names are not crucial for the development of the story.

Besides, some names like *you li ta* (油利撻) e *qing si e* (青絲額) don't have "equivalent words" in Italian language, and they are very difficult to translate.

As far as *you li ta* is concerned, the character *you* 油 indicates "oil," *li* (利) alludes to "sharp," while *ta* (撻) means "beat or whip." Therefore, *you li ta* would indicate a very ferocious species of cricket.

With regard to *qing si e*, the character *e* means "forehead," *si* refers to "thread," *qing* is the color Cyan, which is a color between green and blu. Therefore, *qing si e* indicates a kind of cricket that has Cyan threads on its forehead.

These names, even if translated in Italian, would not conform to the language habits of Italian readers. Furthermore, they will feel uncomfortable and transmit a sense of confusion to the translation. Therefore, in order to conform to the dominant poetics in the receiving culture, in this case Di Giura applies the "omission" method and the "domestication" strategy.

(2) Material "non-equivalent words and expressions"

Words and expressions of this type indicate material aspects of daily life, including things such as tools, furniture, musical instruments, etc. Due to different cultures and social customs, every country and nation has its own unique things.

Example 2:

> 《小翠》：[…]，或髻插雉尾，撥琵琶，丁丁縷縷然，喧笑一室，日以為常。 (Pu Songling 288)
>
> […], poi si mise tra i capelli una coda di fagiano e suonò la mandola le cui corde vibrarono soavemente, e così i due sposi riempirono di chiasso e di risate la camera. Ogni giorno fu la stessa cosa. (*I Racconti Fantastici di Liao* 956-957)
>
> ([…], then she put a pheasant tail in her hair and played the mandola whose strings vibrated softly, and so the couple filled the room with noise and laughter. It was the same every day.)

Pipa (琵琶) is a traditional Chinese musical instrument, belonging to the category of plucked instruments. Sometimes called the "Chinese lute," the instrument has a pear-shaped wooden body with a varying number of frets ranging from twelve to thirty-one. The pipa is one of the most popular Chinese instruments and has been played for almost two thousand years in China.

The mandola is a fretted, stringed musical instrument. The mandola, though now rarer, is an ancestor of the mandolin. It is commonly used in folk music, particularly Italian folk music.

Since the Italian readers are non familiar with the Chinese musical instrument pipa, in order to achieve an effect of "functional equivalence," Di Giura, when translating, replaces "pipa" with "mandola," using the "substitution" method and the "domestication" strategy.

(3) Social "non-equivalent words and expressions"

Both China and Italy are two countries with a long history and a splendid civilization. Their cultures are, however, very different from each other: from mythology to the historical events and figures, from the wedding ceremonies to the funeral ones, from the education system to that of officials, etc. In the translation, numerous Chinese words and expressions of this type, don't have correspondents in Italian.

Example 3:

《瑞雲》：餘杭賀生，才名夙著，而家僅中資。素仰瑞雲，固未敢擬同鴛夢，[...]。 (Pu Songling 114)

C'era un certo signor Ho, di Yü-Hang, che aveva fama d'uomo d'ingegno, ma apparteneva a una famiglia della classe media. Da tempo egli pensava a Jué-Yün, ma non aveva mai osato passare la notte con lei. (*I Racconti Fantastici di Liao* 351)

(There was a certain Mr. Ho, from Yü-Hang, who had a reputation as a man of genius, but he belonged to a middle-class family. He had been thinking of Jué-Yün for some time, but he had never dared to spend the night with her.)

The character *yuan* (鴛) refers to *yuanyang* (鴛鴦，Aix galericulata), known as "mandarin duck" in western world. It is a perching duck species native to the East Palearctic. The character *meng* (夢) means "dream," the expression *yuan meng* (鴛夢) can be literally translated as "dream of mandarin duck."

In traditional Chinese culture, mandarin ducks are believed to be lifelong couples, unlike other species of ducks. Hence they are regarded as a symbol of conjugal affection and fidelity, and are frequently featured in Chinese art. In this case, *yuan meng* (鴛夢) represents a metaphor which signifies "sexual intercourse between man and woman" (Yu Tianchi & Sun Tonghai 2649).

Di Giura translates this expression as "passare la notte" (spend the night), adopting the "free translation" method and the "domestication" strategy.

In dealing with the "words and expressions" regarding sexuality erotism, Di Giura chooses to translate them in a very vague way. We don't know the exact year when Di Giura finished the translation of *Liao Zhai*, but it was most likely between 1926 (the year of publication of *Fiabe Cinesi*) and 1947 (the year of his death). During this period, in Italy the general spirit of society was very conservative, and people didn't talk openly about sexuality, as there was also strict censorship in this field. Therefore, we can assume that Di Giura deliberately chose this translation method so to coform to the ideology of Italian society at that time.

(4) Religious "non-equivalent words and expressions"

Words and expressions of this type concern religious objects, sutras, deities, etc. of a certain language community. Religion in Italy is characterized by the predominance of Christianity, and most Christians in Italy adhere to the Catholic Church, whose headquarters are in Vatican City, Rome. In China, however, the most widespread religions are Buddhism and Taoism. Naturally, there are many "non-equivalent words and expressions" in this field.

Example 4:

《成仙》：休止樹下，見羽客往來甚眾。(Pu Songling 29)

Allora sedette sotto un albero per riposarsi e vide andare e venire moltissimi preti taoisti; […]. (*I Racconti Fantastici di Liao* 69)

(Then he sat down under a tree to rest and saw many Taoist priests coming and going; […].)

The character *yu* (羽) indicates "feather." The character *ke* (客) has many different meanings, but in this case it means "people who practice one profession" (another example, *jian ke* (劍客) means "swordsman"). (Zhang Shuangdi & Yin Guoguang, 821)

In general, the Taoists carry on spiritual practice is to ascend to Heaven and become immortal. This process is known as *yu hua* (羽化), which literally means "fly to the sky as if you were endowed with feathers." For this reason, Taoist priests are called *yu ren* (羽人), *yu shi* (羽士) or *yu ke* (羽客), which can be literally translated to "people with feathers."

Di Giura understands very well the cultural connotation of this word, and translates it as "Taoist priests," adopting the "paraphrase" method and "domestication" strategy. If he translated it in a literal way, it would not conform to the poetic of the receiving society, and the Italian readers would hardly understand its meaning.

In general, as regards the translation of idiomatic expressions and rhetorical devices (such as metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, etc.), Di Giura frequently deals with them with the "paraphrase" method.

(5) Linguistic "non-equivalent words and expressions"

Since *Liao Zhai* is a classical Chinese work, there are many words and expressions originating from *Four Books and Five Classics*, *Shiji* (*Records of the Grand Historian*), etc., as well as numerous proverbs and idioms, which make the language more complex to translate.

Example 5:

《宮夢弼》：日望宮至，一為紀理，而宮滅跡匿影，去如黃鶴矣。(Pu Songling 188)

[…], e si augurava continuamente che Kung arrivasse, per accomodare le sue cose, ma di lui non si vedeva neanche l'ombra, era veramente scomparso come la gru gialla (1)!

Allusione a una poesia di Ts'ui Hao, nella quale si parla di una gru gialla che,

partita, non fece piú ritorno. (*I Racconti Fantastici di Liao* 606)
([…], and he continually hoped that Kung would arrive, to accommodate his things, but you could not even see the shadow of him, he was really disappeared like the yellow crane (1)!
Allusion to a poem written by Ts'ui Hao, in which he mentions a yellow crane which left and never returned.)

The character *huang* (黄) means "yellow," while *he* (鶴) "crane." The literal significance of *huang he* (黄 鶴) is "yellow crane," however, in illustrations it is often depicted as a red-crowned crane; snow white in color; black on the wings, cheeks, throat and neck.

In Taoism, such crane is a symbol of longevity and immortality. In art and literature, immortals are often depicted riding on cranes. A mortal who attains immortality is similarly carried off by a crane.

The expression *qu ru huang he* (去如黄鶴) "leave like a yellow crane" refers to the famous poem *Huang He Lou* (黄鶴樓 , Yellow Crane Tower) composed by Cui Hao (崔顥 , 704–754) , a poet of the Tang Dynasty. The first lines of the poem are:

"*Xiren yicheng huanghequ, cidi kongyu huanghelou.*
（昔人已乘黄鶴去，此地空余黄鶴樓）。
Huanghe yiqu bufufan, baiyun qianzai kongyouyou.
（黄鶴一去不復返，白雲千載空悠悠）。"
("Long ago one's gone riding the yellow crane, all that remained is the Yellow Crane Tower. Once the yellow crane left it will never return, for one thousand years the clouds wandered carelessly.") (Benedikter 55)

The expression *qu ru huang he* indicates, consequently, "go away and not come back."

Di Giura translates this expression as "era veramente scomparso come la gru gialla"(he was really disappeared like the yellow crane), adding an explanatory note. In this case, he uses the methods of "literal translation" and "annotation," while the strategy adopted is "foreignization."

This translation is very faithful to the literal meanig of the expression, but when reading it the Italian readers will falsely think that the crane is yellow. Without any explanation, the associations put forward by the translation of "yellow crane" are totally different from the original figures. Despite the efforts made by translator,

it is regrettable that some parts of the traditional Chinese culture are still difficult to convey to a foreign audience.

(6) Other types "non-equivalent words and expressions"

In addition to the five categories of words and expressions that Nida mentions in the article "Linguistics and Ethnology in Translation-Problems," in *Liao Zhai* there are also other types of words and expressions whose equivalent in other languages are very difficult to find. For example, words and expressions relating to units of measurement, time, colors, onomatopoeias, etc.

Example 6:

> 《阿纖》：北去四五里，村中第一門，有談二泉者，是吾售主。(Pu Songling 112)
> A nord di qui, a quattro o cinque "li" (1), alla prima porta del villaggio, c'è un certo T'an Ehr-Ci'üan, nostro acquirente abituale.
> Un "li" equivale a 1.894,12 piedi inglesi. (*I Racconti Fantastici di Liao* 345)
> (North of here, four or five "li" (1), at the first door of the village, there is a certain T'an Ehr-Ci'üan, our usual buyer.
> One "li" equals 1.894,12 English feet.)

In this case, to achieve the effect of "functional equivalence," Di Giura translates the unit of length li (里) with "li" and adds a explanatory note, adopting the methods of "transliteration" and "annotation" and a strategy of "foreignization."

Conclusion

As we noticed, in dealing with the "non-equivalent words and expressions" in the process of translation, Di Giura adopts two fundamental strategies—domestication and foreignization.

Domestication means bringing the foreign culture closer to the reader in the target culture, by making the text recognizable and familiar. Foreignization, on the other hand, means taking the readers into the foreign culture, making them see the differences. "These two strategies are not opposite but overlapping to some extent, and they can be applied in translation by reproducing a functional equivalence" (Venuti 19). In such process, different methods can be chosen with regard to different contexts, which include: transliteration, literal translation, annotation, omission, free translation, paraphrase, substitution, contextual amplification, conversion, etc.

The role of the translator L. N. di Giura is fundamental. He acts as a cultural mediator, who knows well the Italian and Chinese cultures and is able to adapt the

original text to the cultural needs of the readers. Facing the literary text, Di Giura identifies the differences between the Chinese (source) and Italian (target) culture, evaluates how to proceed in his work in order to: decide which elements to keep, which to adapt and how to present to the Italian public the peculiar elements of the Chinese culture. Therefore, the translator acts as a bridge between the Chinese and Italian culture.

At the same time, the translator Di Giura cannot remain neutral since he does not operate the translation in a cultural vacuum: consciously or not, the translator manipulates the text. Sometimes it is an involuntary "manipulation," as it fails to get rid of the historical-cultural heritage and ideologies acquired from the Italian cultural context. Other times, however, it is a voluntary "manipulation." In addition to linguistic and textual constraints, Di Giura's activity is also conditioned by a series of historical, social, cultural and ideological constraints.

As an eminent scholar of Chinese literature and culture, L. N. di Giura spent years of work and study in transmitting the centuries-long Chinese culture to the Italian readers of his time. From the comparison between the original Chinese texts and Di Giura's translations, it is not difficult to grasp the translator's deep understanding and knowledge of *Liao Zhai Zhi Yi*. Thanks to his efforts and an adequate preparation in the Chinese language and culture, the famous Chinese collection is translated into Italian in a very accurate way.

Although inevitably there are some small errors in the translation, and sometimes semantic connotations related to the original texts are lost during the translation process, Di Giura's edition still played a decisive role in the diffusion of *Liao Zhai* in Italy. Thanks to outstanding skills, Di Giura succeeds in making the contents of the stories in *Liao Zhai* accessible to the cultural sensitivity of the Italian public. All in all, the translator Di Giura certainly managed to achieve the effect of "functional equivalence" and make the fantastic stories of *Liao Zhai* and many other aspects of Chinese culture known to the Italian readers.

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