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郑　杰

Chess and the Game of Life: Jānis Ezeriņš' Novelette *A Game of Chess*

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Abstract The paper is aimed at analysing the novelette Šaha partija [A Game of Chess] (1923) written by the pioneer of Latvian modern short story and translator Jānis Ezeriņš in the context of Latvian chess history and Latvian literature. By stepping out of the ordinary world around us, any play structures its spatial and temporal boundaries to eventually transform into a game. Games, specifically brain games, being both logical and creative situational activities, not only turn chaos into a systematic order, but by organizing reality they also map humans' intelligence and unleash their instincts. While striving to reveal the great significance of apparently insignificant occurrences in human life, Ezeriņš reflects on the grotesque and absurd by delving into playful shifts and play-elements to depict both the plot twists and interchange of tragic and comic colouring, as well as the fusion of the binary oppositions the "past—present," "good—evil," "alive—dead."
Keywords short fiction; novelette; irony; modernism; game[1]
Author **Ilze Kačāne**, Dr. philol., is a Senior Researcher at the Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences and Acting Head of the Department of Languages and Literature at the Faculty of the Humanities and Social Sciences, Daugavpils University (Latvia). Her methodological expertise lies in comparative literature and cultural studies; she obtained her Doctor of Philology degree in Literary Studies (a sub-branch of Comparative Literary Studies) in 2007; she is the editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Comparative Studies*. She has broad experience in the implementation of local and international research projects on memory and identity, youth and their wellbeing, cultural literacy education.

1 The research article is an expanded and revised version of the author's essay "« Si vous ne pouvez tuer mon roi de bois... »: les échecs et le jeu de la vie dans Partie d'échecs de Jānis Ezeriņš" published in the book in French *Noir sur blanc, Jeu d'échecs et littérature en Europe médiane*. Ed. Andras Kányádi. Editions des Syrtes, 2023, 56-70. ISBN 9782940701698

Introduction: Chess and Latvia

Pilsēta—šahs
Visstiprākā figūra—
torņi.
(Ojārs Vācietis)

[A city—chess
The most powerful piece—
rooks.][1]

On the map of the world, the place of Latvia and Riga as a chess metropolis is marked through several symbolic signs and testimonies in both the city cartography, sculpture and architecture, as well as in cinematography and literature. In one of the most famous city parks — the Vērmane garden, which has been a popular meeting place for chess amateurs in the 1950–1980s —, there stands a monument[2] to the eighth World Olympic (1960) champion Mikhail Tal (1936–1992), known internationally as a "chess magician" from Riga (Kehris et al. 111-112).[3] Tal was born in Riga on the threshold of one of the most important chess events in the history of independent Latvia, and in Europe of that time, i.e. Ķemeri (Latvia) international tournament I (1937), thereby symbolically connecting two different cultural periods through time. Other city culture signs, too, — a street named after the international grand-master and "Tal Residence", luxury apartments that by their decorative elements emphasize nuances of the chess game — are not only the tributes to the great chess-player of his era, but also a historical and cultural footprint of chess on modern-day Latvia. In addition, various screen versions (e.g. the documentary film *Mihails Tāls. Pēc divdesmit gadiem* [Michail Tal Twenty Years Later] (1980) shot in Riga film studio, *Mikhail Tal. From a Far* (2017) and others[4]), as well as stagings (e.g. the Latvian National opera *Mihails un Mihails*

1 Here and henceforth the translation from Latvian is mine—I. K.

2 An informative plaque on the bronze monument states: "To the world chess champion of 1960–1961 from the grateful citizens of Riga, Haims Kogans, Viktors Krasovickis. Sculptor Oleg Skarainis. August 10, 2001." [translation from Latvian] (Spārītis).

3 See: Tal.

4 E.g., the sports drama film *Grossmeyster* [RUS] [Grandmaster] (1972) by Sergey Mikaelyan (USSR).

spēlē šahu [Michail and Michail Play Chess][1] (2014)) have been the attempts to reveal the psychological portrait of a holder of many titles and legendary chess player and explain the mysterious popularity of chess in Latvia in general, as well as to show its significance for the formation of Latvian cultural identity in particular.

According to archaeological studies, two chess pieces (a horse and a pawn, made in traditions of Eastern symbolism) were found on the territory of present-day Latvia in diggings of an ancient fisherman's homestead, and they date back to at least the thirteenth century (Caune "Arheoloģiskie pētījumi Rīgā …" 111; Caune "Viduslaiku šaha figūru atradumi Latvijas PSR teritorijā")[2]. Chess pieces from the German period were found in German castles in other parts of the territory as well (Zeile; Zanders); by the seventeenth century, chess had already become common in many families throughout several generations.

Since the end of the nineteenth century, some Latvian literary and cultural editions of that time, for instance, a monthly *Austrums*, and periodicals published in the German language, have had a chess column, which testifies to the involvement of certain circles of Latvian society into chess life, inspired among others also by the members and supporters of first chess organizations established in Riga in the 1870–1880s, such as the chess group at the trade association (*Rigaer Gewerbeverein*) and a chess section at the Riga Latvian Society. The Latvian Chess Society was founded relatively late, in 1890, thanks to the efforts of teacher and journalist Andrejs Ašarins (1843–1896), a representative of the Baltic German minority (Bērziņš et al. "Kultūra" 332).[3] In 1898, Riga Chess Society II was established, but was forced to stop its activity in 1915 under conditions of WWI until 1920 (Bētiņš et al.).[4]

After the declaration of Latvia's independence (1918), the year 1924 has been seen as a turning point in Latvia's chess life: during the first Latvian chess congress, the Latvian Chess Union was founded, and Hermanis Matisons (1894–1932) gained the victory and the title of the first master in Latvia. This paved his way to the Olympic games in Paris (1924) where he became the winner of the golden award and title of Olympic master at the chess individual tournament (Koblencs; Bētiņš et al.; Bērziņš et al. "Sports" 822). To enhance the understanding of the game of

1 Producer Viesturs Meikšāns; composer Kristaps Pētersons; in 2015, the opera received Grand Music Award—the highest prize awarded by the Latvian state in the field of music.

2 Wood turned chess pieces found on the territory of modern-day Riga testify to the fact that at the beginning of the thirteenth century chess had widely spread among the townspeople (Caune "Arheoloģiskie pētījumi Rīgā …" 88, 91, 120).

3 The number of chess circles grew in many cities countrywide.

4 Since 1936, it was known as the United Riga Chess Society.

chess in Latvia, textbooks and didactic journals of the art of chess were intensively published in the 1920–1930s[1]; columns in popular Latvian newspapers and journals of that time were devoted to the history and strategies of chess and informed about the recent achievements in it as well (Bētiņš et al.). A significant accomplishment was a decision of Fédération Internationale des Échecs (FIDE) to publish a chess card titled "Latvian gambit" (1934) (devoted to one of the most outstanding Latvian chess players—Kārlis Bētiņš (1867–1943)), which became very popular among Latvian chess enthusiasts, including in the national chess groups formed in exile (especially in the 1940s–1990s (*Trimdas latviešu*…).

All the events mentioned above promoted the rise of chess in popularity and contributed to the regular organization of chess tournaments on a national and international level, as well as chess-players' participation in various international competitions overseas.[2] However, passion for chess spread beyond the field of familial, local, national and international sports competitions and became an integral part of culture and literature which highlighted their iconic figures in gaining victories over their fictional characters or themselves, or in depicting a sequence of events in a story as if actions on a chess board. One of them is the master of Latvian short prose and "individualized speech" (Vilsons 652), the author of the novelette *Šaha partija* [A Game of Chess][3] (1923)[4]—Jānis Ezeriņš.

Jānis Ezeriņš

Mēs mūža šaham tik daudz uguns dodam,
Kaut labi zinām—neizbēgams mats.
(Imants Auziņš)

[We give so much fire to the life-long chess

1 E.g. Eklons; Koblencs, etc.

2 As a member of the World Chess Union (from 1928), Latvia regularly participated in FIDE Olympic Games until 1940.

3 After the restoration of Latvia's independence (1991), the literature of a small and young nation became gradually more accessible to West-European cultures through the translations into English, German, French and other languages. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Jānis Ezeriņš' prose works were translated into French (e.g. Ezeriņš "Le singe"). *Šaha partija* was translated into French in 2008 and 2022 (Ezerinš *L'âne rose*; Ezeriņš "Partie d'échecs" (a revised version of 2008)). The novelette has also been translated into English and known as *A Game of Chess* (Ezeriņš). Further on in the text it will be referred to by its English title.

4 In 1923, the novelette was published in the literary and art journal *Ritums* and in a collection of novelettes *Leijerkaste*.

Though well we know—unavoidable is mate.]

In 1924, when Latvia declared itself as the state of chess and its first great victories were celebrated on the national and international level, the young Latvian writer Jānis Ezeriņš (1891–1924), suffering from a severe illness, passed away at the age of 33. Ezeriņš — the recipient of the Latvian Culture Fund Award (1923) for the collection of novelettes *Leijerkaste* [Street-Organ] (1923–1925) — is the greatest Latvian short prose writer of the 1920s who has best of all represented himself in the genre of anecdotal novelette. The writer's portfolio includes also collections of stories and novelettes *Dziesminieks un velns* [The Bard and the Devil] (1920), *Fantastiska novele un citas* [Fantastic Novelette and Others] (1923), *Apstarotā galva* [Enlightened Head] (1923), and other prose works, as well as a collection of poems *Krāšņatas* [Gorgeous] (1925) and translations of works by classics (e.g. Old French legend *Aucassin and Nicolette*, Giovanni Boccaccio's short stories, Stendhal's *The Red and the Black*, Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Charles Baudelaire's poetry etc.), whom he has drawn inspiration from. He has also been known as the head of the literature department (1919–1922) of the newspaper *Brīvā Zeme* [The Free Land] (Smilktiņa "Laikmeta konturējums").

The period of maturity in Ezeriņš creative search and his contribution to Latvian literary heritage, though not very great in number but valuable, concur with a dramatic period in Latvia's history, namely, WWI and coping with the disastrous effects of this war, struggle for Latvia's independence, proclamation of Latvia's state and Latvia's Independence War (1918–1920). Along with the attempts to enforce the self-determination rights of the nation, during the period of social and political transformations, the struggle for changes in public opinion and the Europeanization of Latvian literature and culture was continued. Being open to West-European literary trends, the representatives of younger generation writers of the 1920s, tended towards the unity of innovative form and content and in their creative manifestations adhered to the principle of the value of human, the value of art itself, its uniqueness and otherness. Ezeriņš' conflicting world perception, philosophical approach to life, social and cultural experience, as well as individual features (openness, sincerity, carelessness, vitality, sociability, impulsivity, explosivity, romanticism and others) greatly contributed to the intertwining of the comic and the tragic, the regular and the paradoxical, the logical and the absurd in both his literary works and portrayals of their characters, which can be attributed to a very definite and rather independent and mature interpretation of art's mission (Ērmanis; Mauriņa; Vecgrāvis; Berelis). In his literary works, the short-prose virtuoso, Ezeriņš,

nicknamed "the God's imp"[1] and "choleric Bohemian writer", handled the problems of human's "delicate ailments" through nontypical content and form, by including domestic scenes into a fast plot, via unexpected turns and amelioration of strange situations thereby revealing "fine neurosis" of the emerging modern era:

> We can be really glad about him [Ezeriņš] where with a mathematical precision and real imagination he constructs quite expressive cases as if describing experiments in a human's life. (Sūna)

Since his first creative attempts in literature, he has always been "a searcher for his own original expression, his own world" (Veselis 35-36), whose stylistic manner of writing was improving and adapting itself for the depiction of points of human's anxious soul and sudden psychic change.

Ezeriņš lived in the era when play elements and game-playing as initially "alien" impulses gradually became customized into "one's own" literary pattern. It was the era of the chess "epidemic": chess was widely played in cultural institutions and cafes, and it was written about in periodicals and depicted in literature (Grigulis 126). In Andris Akmentiņš' (b. 1969) novel *Meklējot Ezeriņu* [Searching for Ezeriņš] (2021)[2] — a comprehensive and detailed first-person narrative about Ezeriņš' life and literary heritage from the perspective of the past and the present — chess has been sketched as an integral part of both the writer's life and culture space of the beginning of the twentieth century, e.g. chess as an element of a rural space (Taube Church tavern) alongside live music, newspapers and presence of representatives from the field of art makes this space too "correct", "light" and "delicate", which, as depicted in the novel, does not comply with the young Ezeriņš' mood and is perceived as too formal (Akmentiņš 53). On the contrary, the game of chess, becoming the attribute of Ezeriņš' rented space, i.e. of an informal space shared with a friend, is outlined as a short-time symbol of freedom, bohemianism and comradeship.

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1 The designation was borrowed from the title of Ezeriņš' poem *Dieviņa velniņš* by Zenta Mauriņa in 1926.

2 The book was published within the series *Es esmu…* [I am…] developed in the framework of the project on the interaction between Latvian prose and literary theory (2020–2024), implemented with the support of the State Culture Capital Foundation and by the initiative of writer and art historian Gundega Repše (b.1960), aimed at re-evaluating personalities of 13 Latvian writers and their contribution to the development of Latvian literature.

Chess and Latvian Literature: Brief Overview

> *Varbūt saspēlēsim šahu?*
> *Saspēlēsim.*
> *Padomā pats—vai tev policistos nav neviena ienaidnieka?*
> *Nav, nav man neviena ienaidnieka.*
> *Nu, ko tu runā kā tāds bērns! Pieaugušam cilvēkam ienaidnieks vienmēr atgadīsies.*
> (Alberts Bels)
>
> [Perhaps we can play chess?
> All right, let's do it.
> Think a little—don't you have a single enemy among the policemen?
> No, I have no enemy.
> Now, you talk like a child! An adult always manages to have an enemy.]

Games and game-playing have been a leitmotif of creative expression in literature for centuries. Various writers around the world have relied on depictions of intensive mentally-stimulating brain games to reveal the politics of diplomacy and processes of formation of individual and collective identities by uncovering inequalities by class, status, gender, and sexuality. Although brain games in general and chess as a board game, in particular, are traditionally associated with power play — the state of being at "war" and attempts to succeed in a struggle against odds or difficulties through a mental effort, i.e. by the means of strategic and logical thinking and clarity of the end goal —, they are also reflections of personality, character, and, eventually, of reciprocal social and emotional interactions.

Under the conditions of the heightened ideologization of art under Soviet occupation (1940–1941; 1944/45–1990), persons showing interest in the phenomena of Western art focusing on expressions of freedom in art were subjected to repressions and censure in Latvia; likewise, any manifestations of individualism in literature, as well as works by those Latvian writers who did not submit to the propaganda and supported trends of decadence, avant-gardism and modernism were also banned (Kacane).

Chess remained popular among intellectuals in Soviet Latvia life for decades, however, underwent some transformation, both, in their daily lives and literature:

> From the community of Latvian writers, chess has disappeared quite a long

> time ago. Still after the war [WW II], chess was played from morning till night in all editorial offices. The editorial office of *Literatūra un Māksla* [Literature and Art] was a real "chess club", therefore this newspaper often published pithy articles. At all writers' gatherings chess was played "in every corner" [...] Since the sixth writers' congress, in Writers' Association chess is no longer played. (Grigulis 125-126)

In Latvian Soviet literature, created on the basis of socialist realism as a didactic program supported by the state, chess was most frequently integrated into literary texts as a metaphor of the struggle between two conflicting sides within the frame of two moral conceptions ("good—evil"). In the USSR of the 1960–1970s, popularity of chess contributed to its perception in the context of a collision between "justice" and "illegitimacy" and class contradictions, which in this struggle manifest themselves as an eventual victory of the so-called "good"/ "the just", i.e. victory of the structures of the Soviet power and their representatives. Chess as a strategic detective game and a an intellectual tool for analysing and understanding the opponent's psychological motives and intentions, for anticipating and revealing opponent's positions and actions within the framework of a binary opposition "crime investigator/ forensic medicine expert" (representative of the structure) vs. "a (potential) criminal/ murderer/ accomplice" (metaphorical figures on the chessboard) can be seen in Latvian Soviet detective literature, e.g. in the detective novel *Šahs briljantu karalienei* [Checkmate to the Queen of Diamonds] (1971), which through the moral idea of a classical detective about the triumph of the "good" and punishment of the "evil" enhances the perception about the strength of the "just" power:

> Kā pēc spraigas šaha partijas izmeklētājs klusībā analizēs apsūdzētā gājienus, viņa rakstura īpašības, vājās puses. Un zinās, uz ko balstīties un plānot turpmāko izmeklēšanu" (Steiga and Volfs).
> [The investigator will secretly analyse moves of the accused, features of his character, and weak sides as if after an intense game of chess. And [he] will know what to base on and plan further investigation.]

Contrary to the Soviet era, a different approach had been taken earlier, in the inter-war period in Latvian modernist literature of the 1920–1930s: influenced by the decadence literature, the borderline between the "good" and the "evil" was deleted and an internally conflicting person was portrayed in a protest against national

ideology-based literature of positivism.

The table game played by two people with 16 white and 16 black pieces on a chessboard with 64 squares is defined “by a set of rules determining the properties of each of the pieces, in other words, the proper way to move them” (Liotārs 25). One of the peculiarities of chess is the unexpected turns and its, often elegant, final technique, which creates a surprise effect. The game, which keeps the balance between the tactician’s ardent impetuosity of attack and the strategist’s steady coolness, offered the modernists all advantages for the interpretations of life as a game, as well as for revealing human’s “subtle afflictions.”

The defeat of the opponent in the competition of life as a short-time acquisition, since the deepest meaning and triumph in life are a victory over oneself, is presented by Pāvils Rozītis’ (1889–1937) in his poem “Dzīves šahs” [Chess of Life] from the collection *Sarunas* [Conversations] (1936). Taking responsibility for one’s own life is shown as a feature of human character which tells about the degree of human’s maturity, of his intellectual development and his potential of growth:

The formation of human’s character is the principal theme in the novel *Sava ceļa gājējs* [On Their Own Path] (1943) by Ēriks Ādamsons (1907–1946), a poet, prose-writer and professional translator, consequently, this highlights the idea that winning a game of chess is possible only after the ABC of life chess has been acquired, namely, only “pēc lielas cīņas starp savu pacietību no vienas un neattapību, izklaidību un paviršību no otras puses” [after a tough fight between your patience, on the one hand, and your slow-wittedness, absent-mindedness and superficiality, on the other”] (Ādamsons 22).

Likewise, for Anšlavs Eglītis (1906–1993), one of the leading representatives of modernism among the young generation of the 1930s, chess, the same as life, is an aggregate of consecutive, intensive and regular-training-based actions, which in certain situations comes under the influence of external factors, unexpected turns and surprise, and for whose anticipation and prevention a calm mind, sporty frenzy and strong willpower are necessary. In one of his letters, the writer ironically writes:

> Sliecos uz domu, ka šachs ir netikums, jo atņem ļoti daudz laika. Ar šaušalām domāju par to stundu bezgalību, ko mēs ar Mazīti nositām ar zibenspēli savā labākajā jaunībā! Vienu laiku bijām kā apsēsti. Šachojām katrā mazākajā brīvajā brīsniņā. Kā lai to sauc par tikumu? Bet taisnība ir, šachisti saprotas acumirklī pāri visdažādākajām plaisām. Saprotams—uz ļoti šauras bāzes. Nekādu loģikas vai matemātikas izpratni tas šachs gan neveicina, (kā daži domā) varbūt jaunībā drusku audzina raksturu: palaisties uz paša spējām,

> neatlaidību un neizsamist priekšlaicīgi. (Tūrismagids)
> [I am inclined to think that chess is a vice, because it takes up much time. I am horrified when I think about those endless hours, we have killed at playing chess […] in our best youth! For some time, we were like obsessed. We used every small moment to play chess. How can we call this a virtue? But that's true that chess-players instantly understand each other despite any barriers. Of course—on a very narrow base. That chess, naturally, does not promote any understanding of logic or mathematics, (as some people think) maybe in the youth it helps to form a character a bit: to rely on one's own abilities, persistence and not to be despaired beforehand.]

Similarly, in Ādamsons' collection of stories *Smalkās kaites* [Subtle Afflictions] (1937), which is one of the 14 values of the Latvian Cultural Canon in the branch of literature[1], the sense of chess is displayed, and its meaning is revealed through its interpretation of life. For the second generation of Latvian modernists, whose stories' plots and non-typical protagonists have been created within the frame of unexpected turns and anecdotical surprise elements, chess is also an original art that contributes to becoming an elegant person, dandy and outsider of the time. Interest in chess, which Anšlavs Eglītis developed in his early youth[2] and maintained throughout the whole life as one of his greatest passions, was stirred up by an occasion: an accidental meeting with the French master of chess Andre Cheron (1895–1980) when he underwent treatment in a Leysin sanatorium (Switzerland) in the middle of the 1920s (Vāvere and Kalniņa). Later, as a qualification tournament participant of the Riga chess club and since 1944 as a refugee in emigration, he successfully employed modern techniques of playing, once taught to him by the master, and fought "tooth and nail" to win victories. Occasionally, Eglītis' life passion gets reflected in psychological portrayals of his literary protagonists: both in arrangements and descriptions of heroes' hobbies and interpretations of life as a game, since "in life [they] like to speculate on different combinations and try out moves of chess pieces" (Hausmanis).

Though Latvian modernist writers of the 1920–1930s, in general, showed

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1 More on 14 literary treasures included in Latvian Cultural Canon, see: Latvijas kultūras kanons [online].

2 As Eglītis' diary notes from 1925 show, depressed by the disease, he seeks help and relief in a game of chess: "I am occupied with chess all the time. Eyes ache from reading" (Vāvere, Kalniņa 183); "Right now I potter at chess. I bought 'Der Schachturnier zu Baden-baden von Dr. Tanasch 1925'." (Ibid. 188).

interest in chess, both in their life and creative writing, the pioneer of Latvian modern novelette Ezeriņš remains one of the keenest explorers of processes of social communication or "transactions" (Berns) by employing a game of chess within which its own reality, rules, hierarchy and "death" (transformation) are defined. Trying to avoid the heaviness of thought in his novelettes, the writer feels himself as a player, "whose first priority is not to express the quintessence through means of art, but rather a game, playing, charm" (Vilsons 654).

Jānis Ezeriņš' *A Game of Chess*

Un vēl viens varens vilciens —
Un baltā dāma krīt.

Ai, skaistā baltā dāma,
Tu Saha līgava!
Ar tevi pazaudēta
Ir visa partija!
(Doku Atis)

[Another mighty blow —
And the white lady drops.

Oh, lovely white lady, You Shah's[1] bride!
Losing you means
Losing a game!]

The novelette *A Game of Chess*, written in the form of memories, is considered one of the best of Ezeriņš' psychological novelettes, where great attention is given to the construction of the plot and to speculations on human's nature and destinies expressed as brief comments interweaving this plot and constituting a good part of the novelette (Vilsons 648, 650). The author depicts specific time before his birth by describing an incident between two lovers, that has once happened in summer of the second half of the nineteenth century, and dwells on the unexpected

1 Latvian nouns "šahs" [chess] and "šahs" [*Shah*—a title of the Persian monarch] are homophones and homographs and are used as a pun in the poem on chess and human relationships. At the end of the nineteenth century, when the Latvian written language was being formed, many foreign words, including chess terminology were Latvianized under the influence of literati, e.g. names of the chess pieces were updated by Matīss Kaudzīte (See: Rūķe-Draviņa).

consequences of this incident, appraised 30 years later after this past event. As an embedded narrative, it contains a story within a story, both being told by an old, grey-haired but still vigorous and joyful former scribe Mr. Sīlis. Having lost his home in a fire, he makes a drastic decision to transform his miserable life, and with the aim of saving the life roves around searching his once lost bride far and wide. On his journey, he decides to rent a room in the house of the former teacher known as the Vīcups. According to the tenant, as well as based on dialogues as exchanges of thoughts and memories between the two, the house owner, who has caught Mr. Sīlis' attention, is very vulnerable and has to be regularly consoled in his sad old-age. His depression has distorted his sense of perception of time and reminds his tenant of himself as he is "gandrīz tik pat skumjš un pieguris kā es gadu vai divus atpakaļ" [almost as sad and weary as me a year or two ago] (30).[1] The repetitions of adjectives and ("skumjš" [sad], "vecs" [old]) and nouns ("vecums" [age]) imply persistent intense feelings of sadness and loneliness in the house, since the owner's life, the same as legacy, "grimst dziļāk savas istabas mijkrēslī" [sinks deeper in the dusk of the room] (30). Having educated representatives of three age groups, now he feels neglected, pushed into a dark corner, and hated by the younger generations that perceive him as an old and odd person—the label he is aware of and agrees to. The mentions of his physical frailty and shrinking together with hints to his feeling of insignificance and self-worthlessness unveil his chronic lack of sense of belonging, paradoxically defined by him as "a curse of work" of great responsibility. The recognition vanished after the life dedicated solely to work and the feeling of senselessness of life negatively affect his physical and mental health, which is revealed in the literary work by the attributes denoting the phenomena of the outer world and symbolising the brutal power of nature ("aiz loga kļavās iegulstas beidzamais vējš" [a gust of last wind lies down on the maple trees] (30)) as well as by using adverbs in the comparative degree ("istabā paliek tumšāk, klusāk, [the room becomes darker, quieter] (30)), i.e. expressive means which underline the intensity of pain, feeling of hopelessness and approaching death, as well as evoke a negative emotional response. The dark room as a representation of one's own heart becomes increasingly sombre, and grounding oneself in the secure reality of the self seems no more possible. While mourning over his life, awareness of having become a mere shadow of his younger self makes the old Vīcups so anxious that he finds relief only in tears and music he plays on the portative organ, which at times relieves his feelings of depression and anxiety and strengthens his motivation for

1 Here and henceforth the number in brackets after the quotes indicates a page number from Ezeriņš *Šaha partija* (1996).

communication.

Two outwardly similar (old age) but since recently inwardly opposite characters (joyful/ cheerful/ active Mr. Sīlis vs. sad/ depressed/ static Vīcups father) embody two different approaches to the perception of time and life, however, they strongly resemble each other as one sees himself (his past version) in the other, thus, the Vīcups father can be considered as Mr. Sīlis' double. For Vīcups, time has become non-existent or fragmentary, whereas his companion—Mr. Sīlis, having gone through painful and long transformation that he is just about to share, finally recognizes time as a unified system from the moment of one's birth to his passing away and sees attachment to specific moments as equal to the attachment to trifles. According to the tenant, seen as an entirety, time may provide a bird's-eye view of one's life, fill it with content, and eventually become life as such:

> […] mēs pārāk daudz pieķeramies taisni niekiem, atsevišķām sekundēm, nedēļām, gadiem, bet pārāk maz domājam, ka no svara ir tikai viss tas kopā. Šo skatu uz dzīvi mēs vēl nepazīstam, kaut gan viņam jātop par vienīgo un īsto. […] Jo mūžam savās pretišķībās un izveidojumā jātop par cilvēka galveno darbu. Tad arī sapratīs, ka tie, kurus mēs paraduši nožēlot, bieži vien ir bijuši laimīgākie, un vienīgie, kurus līdz šim vērts apskaust—karaļi, kas savas galvas nolikusi uz ešafota. […] Neviens mūžs, pat visseklākais, nav tiks tukšs, lai kaut ar savām kļūdām nedotu mums nekā. (32)
> [[…] we get attached too much to trifles, isolated seconds, weeks and years, but give too little thought to the fact that only all those things taken together are what actually matters. We don't know this aspect of life yet, although it must become the only and the true one. […] Because it is life itself with all of its contradictions and forms that must become human's main job. Then we would realize that those, whom we are used to be sorry for until now, often appear to have been the happiest and the only ones worth envying—kings who have given away their lives on the scaffold. […] Not a single life, even the shallowest one, is so empty that, even via its errors, it can give us nothing.]

The old man's gradual opening up and being ready for a conversation, alongside a shift from the host's life to the event in the tenant's past, is a prelude to an embedded story that exemplifies the power of a personal choice to lessen the effect of an "occasion" on one's entire course of life. This curtain-raising paragraph marks a transition in the novelette and for the first time mentions the game of chess as a part of a thirty-year old story serving as a turning point in the then young scribe Mr.

Sīlis' life with a long-lasting impact on his life:

> Gadījums sabojā tikai dzīvi, bet dzīvot nepavēl ne te, ne tur. Viņš sakropļoja arī manu dzīvi—patiesībā tā bija kāda šaha partija—un es atnācu, lai kaut cik pielāpītu savu beigto mūžu. (33)
> [Occasion spoils only life, but doesn't bid to live […]. It ruined my life too—actually it was some game of chess—and I have come to mend my spoiled life a bit.]

Board games in general and chess in particular, are clearly related to the category of time as time in them is "compartmentalized in discrete temporal cells" (38). The tenant's story goes back the year of his youth when the young scribe and tenor of the choir fell in love with a chorister Miss Baumgarten. The feeling of love, joy and jubilation in work is conveyed by contextualizing the event within the most important national treasures of traditional culture—Midsummer's eve or the summer solstice (*Jāņi*), known for the sun cult and fertility rituals[1], and the 2nd All-Latvian Song Festival (*II Vispārīgie latviešu Dziedāšanas svētki*) (1880)—the hallmark of national unity; both serving as a code of Latvian cultural heritage. However, the familiar and "one's own" is supplemented and at the same time juxtaposed with the "non-native" and exotic elements such as coffee and a small box of chess found in a shop-café while wandering in the vibrant Old Riga during a free moment of the Song Festival:

> Kafiju gaidot, nolēmām uzspēlēt partiju un darījām to smiedamies. Jāatzīstas, ka mana jaunkundze spēlēja ļoti vāji, kaut gan ar aizrautību. Man bija jāpieliek liekas pūles, lai izturētos pret savu dāmu ar vajadzīgo cienību un neapdraudētu pārāk bieži viņas karali. Šī centība un pieklājība pret līgavu, kā es toreiz sapratu, nogāja tik tāļu, ka es ar nolūku taisīju aplamus vilcienus, lai viņa paliktu uzvarētāja. Un tā arī notika. (34)
> [Waiting for our coffee, we decided to play a game of chess and did it, laughing. I must admit that my lady played rather badly, but full of enthusiasm. I had to make great effort to behave towards my lady with the necessary respect and would not expose her King to danger too frequently. These efforts and politeness towards the bride, as I understood then, went so far that I started making wrong moves on purpose for her to be a winner. And it happened so.]

1 More on the Midsummer's Eve celebrations see: Kovzele and Kacane.

This is the game that becomes "tīrais nieks" [a naughty trifle] in the tide of the time and changes humans' destinies. The tension in the novelette is created through the motif of deliberately not capturing King (Sīlis' intentional loss to his bride): by losing one's King in the game of chess, the role of the "king" or the intended spouse of life is automatically annihilated. The writer's depiction of a literary character who follows a medieval knight's code of conduct and scarifies his victory in the game of chess for the sake of victory of his love, whom he considers a weak but passionate opponent, is an ironic representation of the modern era when gender roles and relations were reassessed. The man's defeat in chess leads to the bride's coldness, alienation, separation, and belittling of her former partner among others by calling him an incapable and narrow-minded creature ("vientiesītis", "nespējīgs un aprobežots radījums"), which after understanding the reasons of a broken relationship weakens his morale and masculinity (psychological emasculation). The status of a simpleton and the psychological trauma he went through because of his desire to be polite are reasons why his world fell apart and he was penned up in a cage of loneliness, spite and intolerance, which symbolizes death. Symbolic transformation from being "alive" to "lifeless", and the writer toying with elements of a binary opposition "alive" [a man] vs "lifeless" [a wooden chess figure], bring the category of statics/ paralysis and awareness about the destruction of a romantic prime origin into sharp focus:

> Es nezinu, ko runā piedzēruši veči, bet, ka jūs, dzīvs cilvēks, nemākat nogāzt manu koka karali, to es zinu. Tad kā gan jūs domājat ieņemt viņa vietu? (36)
> [I don't know what drunken gays talk about, but I do know that you, a living human being, can't capture even my wooden King. Then, how do you think you can take his place?]

Though the following life-long and revengeful practice in chess gives Mr. Sīlis new victories in competitions, they no longer give him pleasure and eventually lead to the feeling of suffocation in an old and narrow vodka bottleneck, as well as a realization about the uselessness of his life. The deliberate loss in the game of chess to the love of his life and awareness of his own "stupidity" turn out to be relative, moreover, the "sapience" of the winner doesn't ensure victory in life either. The feeling of a narrow escape and wasted time awakens him to save the "remains of the day": "The narrator concludes that life can be picked up at any age and it isn't over until it is over" (Liepiņa). Thus, the day he meets his ex-fiancé, he requests a revenge game:

> Kā? Vai tad patiesi viņa domā spēlēt? Jā, viņa atgriezās ar vienīgām figūrām, kas bija veikalā, un spēle sākās. […] Un, ja tur bija kas nelāgs, tad šo partiju es bezmaz paspēlēju. Vai nu mans uztraukums, vai arī vienkārši viņas labā spēle—es vēl tagad šaubos, ka tik viņa nav vingrinājusies visu mūšu blakus man uz kādu izšķirošu sacīksti […]. Kad es beidzot sacīju mat, mani pirksti drebēja. […]. (40)
> [What? Does she really intend to play? Yes, she came back with the only chess pieces that were available in the shop, and the game began. […] And, if there had been something wrong, I almost lost this game. Either my attack or simply her good playing—even now I have doubts about whether she has not been sitting next to me her whole life and practising to play together with me when I was getting ready for some important competition […]. When at last I said "mate", my fingers trembled […].]

The victory gained in both game and life and the mutually achieved reconciliation, which makes it possible to celebrate a wedding at least to save the life ("mūžs ir jāglabj" (40)), are based on the opinion that "[…] ir jāiziet liela skola kā dzīves, tā šaha spēlē, lai iemācītos cienīt savu pretinieku" [[…] you have to receive good schooling in both life and game until you learn to respect your opponent in school of chess]] (37). The plot of Ezeriņš' novelette is a manifestation of the writer's humanism which highlights the significance of a human's transformation from the awareness about an unsuccessful life to the awareness about the possibility of changing it, i.e. the essence of a meaningful life.

A game for Ezeriņš is a tool for mapping humans' (un)intelligence and unleashing his/ her instincts; it is the means for both depicting the change in traditional roles of men and women and organizing reality and revealing unexpected situations and atypical occasions often covered by a veil of chaos. It is through a game element, which always structures spatial and temporal boundaries, that chaos is again turned into a systematic order.

Conclusion

> *Es tev lūdzu: spēlē šahu prieka pēc, bet nepadari to par sportu.*
> *Rotaļa paliek rotaļa—lai arī tā būtu karaliskā.*
> (Rūdolfs Blaumanis)
> [I am begging you: play chess for fun but don't make it a sport.
> A game remains a game—even if it is royal.]

Ezeriņš' novelette *A Game of Chess* is a masterpiece of psychological prose which differs from the literary heritage of both Latvian novelette writers of the early twentieth century and the second generation of modernists in the 1930s. By depicting the sad individual's soul and bitterness of internal pain, when young people ruin their own and each other's lives because of the male's loss in chess, the author provides an explanation of chess that resonates with the perception of a game as an aggregate of relationships or "a series of transactions—moves" (Berns). Ezeriņš' reflective narrative challenges the unequivocal portrayal of "good" or "evil" man and rejects a categorical solution to the problem; it brings into focus the rejection of binary opposition and transformations of ambivalence important in Modernism emphasizing the fact that life is a chance game where everything flows and changes. The replacement of the paradigm "ethical stability" for that of the "ethical relativism" (Smilktiņa *Novele* 213) testifies to the existence of the "essential" and the "accidental" as equally significant values. The awareness of human's subjective feelings and self-discovery is revealed in the aspect of accidents and time strata in the chain of reactions created by transactions. Thus, in Ezeriņš' novelette, chess is an unpredictable and risky psychological game—a game of time and fate that balances on the fragile border between "life" and "death" and functions as a metaphor for gender role confrontation signalling the transformation of the epoch and cultural space the prose work represents, i.e. moving from the romantic era into a new direction illuminated by Modernism. While describing "a trifle" on the background of the synthetized historical and cultural events from two centuries the author's dramatic irony reveals human in a situation where one's world is disrupted and where the expected is substituted by the unexpected.

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Ethical Literary Criticism and a Comparative Analysis of Gorky's Two Novels

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Abstract Literature is not just a subject for academic study, but one of the chief temples of all Human spirit, in which all should worship. Eaglestone's concept attaches great significance of humanity thought to Gorky's novels. *The Mother* («Мать»,1906) and *The Life of Unnecessary People* («Жизнь Ненужного Человека»,1907) are both novels written by Gorky after the failure of Russian Revolution in 1905. However, the protagonist images in the works form a sharp contrast between "revolutionary" and "treachery." Gorky's unified and inter-corroborated ethical illustration of the contrasted protagonists demonstrates the generation and extinction of the two characters' ethical consciousness which usually goes through the ethical struggle of "humanity" and "barbarity," presenting ethical intersection of "love" and "hatred" catalyzed by ethical identity and ethical environment, and strengthening the ethical choice of "justice" and "betrayal" of human nature. Based on the comparative studies of the two novels of *The Mother* and *The Life of Unnecessary People*, this study highlights Gorky's ethical thought in the two novels, traces its communicative footsteps in modern China, and explores the contemporary significance of "abandoning the evil and promoting the good" from the perspective of human ethics. Therefore, Gorky's artistic form is considered a quality that makes art a unique and suitable carrier for audience political education. More than that, he is the creative producers of ideas. And the commonality of his works is the commitment to teaching how to think, rather than learning to think.

Keywords Ethical Literary Criticism; Gorky; *The Mother*; *The Life of Unnecessary People*; ethical education

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Maxim Gorky (Максим Горький, 1868-1936) excels in exploring his opposing ideas through the comparison and contrast of two samples. The pain and critical response definitely contribute to a deeper understanding of the author's creative soul. Since "the external ethical choices are not only the main content of literary text, but also the basis of ethical issues" (Nie 16), so Gorky's moral choice and moral evaluations can be clearly evaluated based on his novels. Gorky believes in the source of beauty and sublimity as the nature of the ideal and harmonious life. And he is certain that "the gods which reside inside human beings, and their belief in them, would bring salvation to people and to their era as a whole"(Son 265). Similarly, Eaglestone holds that "literature is not just a subject for academic study, but one of the chief temples of all Human spirit, in which all should worship"(Eaglestone 18).Therefore, educational ideology of human ethics generated by "human literature" presents the eternal value of Gorky's literary creation. Since Gorky believed that "literature—novels, novellas, etc.—is the most common and effective means of propaganda for these or those ideologies" (Gorky 1).Through the comparison and contrast of two protagonists, this paper attempts to explore the significance of Gorky's ethical education of humanity in his long novels. Of course, Gorky's artistic form is considered a quality that makes art a unique and suitable carrier for audience political education (Pickle, Sarah Elizabeth 2014). More than that, he is the creative producers of ideas. And the commonality of his works is the commitment to teaching how to think, rather than learning to think. Gorky explores the meanings of human existence and redemption, more than just showing tragic realities through the lives of the lower classes in the two novels (김다정 29) which can be seen as the ethical self-portraits of various types of men who wander, losing their way and hope for redemption.

Both *The Mother* (1906) and *The Life of Unnecessary People* (1907) are long novels written by Gorky after the failure of the Russian Revolution in 1905.

The Mother is written through the female protagonist named as Pelagia Nilovna (Леллагья Ниловна). Under the agitation of the revolutionary wave, her journey of growing from a bottom class housewife to a brave warrior of conscious revolution has shaped the image of a new socialist woman with full blood and flesh. And *The Life of Unnecessary People* is written through the protagonist Klinkov Yefsay (Евгений Клинков). The "reason" and suicide expose the "worship" essence of decadent literature in praising treason and death. The two novels, in stark contrast to the typical images of the protagonists Nilovna and Yefsey's "revolution" and "defection," demonstrate the construction and disappearance of the protagonist's ethical consciousness through the mutual reflection of ethical education. The generation of ethical consciousness often undergoes an ethical game between "humanity" and "brutality," showcasing the ethical intersection of "love" and "hate" generated by ethical identity and environment, and strengthening the ethical choices of "justice" and "betrayal." Placing the above-mentioned novels under the common perspective of human ethics in comparison, this study highlights Gorky's ethical thought in the novels, traces its communicative footsteps in modern China, and explores the contemporary significance of "abandoning the evil and promoting the good" from the perspective of human ethics. "Literary theory has shifted from the study of traditional moral values in the past to the level of ethical analysis of works"(Yang 51). It well proves the beneficial and qualitative leap of literary research.

Love or Hate: The Origination of Ethical Ecology in Nilovna and Yefsai

Gorky's "human literature" concept bridges aesthetics and ethics, injecting interdisciplinary thinking of human ethics into world literature since literature not only bears the cognitive value, but also the seriousness of moral education. The definition of human nature here adheres to the essential concept of "being good for human nature" within the framework of Professor Nie Zhenzhao's ethical literary criticism. Thus, human nature is a moral attribute of human beings, and it is their moral nature, not born of innate, but acquired later through education. Ethical literary criticism holds that the process of aggregation, adjustment, and modification'of literary works is a process in which the brain recognizes specific things and reproduces them through text. Therefore, through a close reading of the detailed texts of *The Mother* and *The Life of Unnecessary People*, we can rediscover the humanistic ethical value of "abandoning evil and promoting good"in Gorky's novels. "At the same time, the description of ethics and the exploration of the ethical education functions as the task of criticism" (Fei 79). That's to say, the educational

function of literature lays the solid foundation for ethical literary criticism. By applying Marxist dialectical materialism to the analysis of the literary ethics ecosystem, it can be seen that the overall ecology of literary ethics is generated by the interaction and reaction between the subject ecology of the character's ethical identity and the object ecology of the ethical environment in literary works.

Firstly, almost all ethical issues are closely related to ethical identity. "Ethical identity refers to an individual's belonging and positioning within a certain ethical relationship" (Du 68). In Gorky's *The Mother*, Nilovna "bears strands of white hair in her thick black hair, making her whole person appear sad and gentle" (10). Gorky vividly portrays the image of a typical housewife who has been tormented by years of labor and her husband's rough treatment through various details. One of the ethical identities of Nilovna in *The Mother* is that of the fitter Mikhail Frasov (Михаил Власов), his wife, and Pavel (Лавиль)'s mother. As a wife, Nilovna suffered domestic violence and brutal beatings from Frasov's alcoholism, often facing the disheveled situation of her husband "throwing dishes off the table" after dinner and the stern threats of "I'm fine—it's not good for you!" (10). In the memories of his son, his mother was always silent and worried all day long, not knowing when he would be beaten or where to escape from. When his father was alive, there seemed to be no mother in the family since Nilovna supposes only to be the "vent" for her husband to vent his emotions. After her husband's death, Nilovna had to rely on Pavel to maintain her ethical identity to keep the mother-and-son relationship. Although the mother is secretly pleased that her son is no longer drinking and fighting like other young workers, her increasing concern for her son permeates the mother's ethical responsibility towards him. Under the framework of family ethics, Nilovna limits herself to the ethical identity of marital relationships, silently bearing the burden of responsibility and inner torment bestowed on her by all family ethical norms.

However, the protagonist Yefsai in *The Life of Unnecessary People* is an orphan with no relatives of the same blood as himself after his parents' death in his early age. Even under the shelter of his half-blood uncle and aunt, Yefsai was just a short, slow moving, and shrill "little old man." "His lifeless round eyes blinked timidly, and his sparse yellow hair grew into a vortex" (*The Life of Unnecessary People* 3). Obviously, the presentation of Yefsai's ethical identity mainly revolves around the uncle's family. Uncle Peter "will pay attention to his life, talk to him, educate him, and send him to the city after graduating from elementary school" (5) and Yefsai appreciates the ethical identity of each other with his uncle. In his opinion, only his uncle treats him sincerely and well, so naturally he enjoys getting

along well with him. But when his uncle finally wanted to send him to the city, despite some reluctance, he was not sad because Auntie Agaphia (Агафья), who had no blood relationship with him, only loves her cousin Ashka (Яшка), who constantly bullies him, from kicking or pinching him under the table while sitting at the food table to beating him for a long time and desperately, which makes Yefsey feel that being beaten is an inevitable thing in his identity construction. In addition to his uncle, aunt, and cousin, classmates also make fun of him and beat him at school. Therefore, the memories of Yefsai's family life and school are filled with anger and hatred more than joy and happiness.

In comparison of the ethical identities, Nilovna, flowing between her husband and her son, carries the ethical responsibility of the family as the "community" and embodies the ethical emotions of the family's roots. She silently sacrificed for her family, enduring her husband's alcoholism, irritability, and domineering behavior. In this point, she is ultimately a good wife and a good mother; the latter, losing the affection and care of his original parents from earlier age, makes him the rootless duckweed wandering in the vast sea of people. The awkwardness, depression, and bitterness under the influence of others pierced his heart like a thorn. In addition to the feeling of regret towards his uncle, the memory scars of being bullied curved the indignation in his ethical identity.

Besides, the ethical environment is an objective historical condition for the generation and existence of literary ethical identity. Ethical literary criticism requires us to return to the historical context in a specific ethical environment. The patriarchal social system in Russia limits the activity space of Nilovna into the house, and strengthens male superiority by dividing the boundary between public and private spaces, "placing women in a disadvantaged position dominated by men" (Li 72). If we were to leave the historical scene and examine Nilovna from the current perspective, we would feel that she is a pitiful and cowardly woman, since today's society we live in encourages women who suffer from domestic violence to use laws to protect their rights. Obviously, a change in ethical environment might lead to misreading of literature. In fact, in the historical context of male superiority and female inferiority, the law is difficult to protect women's rights, just like the feudal society in China. It requires women to follow the three rules and four virtues, and obey the husbands following their words. Gorky's description of Nilovna being subjected to domestic violence from her husband is just another true portrayal of the real life of women in Russian society. Each woman leads her own unique life. In the interactive space with her son, Pavel, afterwards, Nilovna's meticulous care for her son can be called noble maternal love. The mother-child relationship promoted

respect for her son's faith, enough to drive the mother's pride in her son's career, and ultimately stepped forward to join the revolutionary team. Therefore, compared to the indulgence of mothers towards their sons in modern affluent families, Nilovna's love for her son is all about greatness. In the ethical environment of the family, maternal love was the driving force behind her son's continued revolutionary cause, a significant impact on Barville's life.

The plot and composition plan of the stories have updated the narrative structure that "all events and characters go through a primary motivation and converge to a point where the individual becomes aware of internal disharmony, which is not in line with the external world" (Lee 163). The unity of the chosen artistic methods enhances aesthetic expression and predetermines the compositional integrity of the narrative structure. Gorky's description of Yefsey's mother's death is more of a preparation for the changes in the ethical environment that arise from his later life with his uncle. "Due to the fact that choices must be made in a binary structure, ethical choices cannot be made in a unitary structure, so children who have lost their parents face the problem of how to make choices"(Shang 72). If the relationship between Yefsai and his uncle is in line with normal ethical relationships, then Yefsai's relationship with his aunt and cousin highlights the contradiction between them. The accumulated resentment and hatred generated by harsh ethical environment have deeply rooted in Yefsai's heart and take root of evil. On the other hand, the ethical environment of Yefsai involves his work filled with thugs such as criminals, gamblers, and thugs, and further distorted Yefsei's darkened personality. Finally, he chose to betray his cousin and Olivia (Ольга) and ended his life by committing suicide. Of course, Yefsai is a pitiful character driven to despair by poor family ethics and a harsh social ethical environment.

Historical and social imprints attach great importance to construct the "community" ethics. Nilovna's pain may have been imposed on her by the intense life and the social atmosphere of women swallowing their pride after the great changes in Russian society. Yefsai, however, with the dual abandonment of his family and society, finds no love at all and his hatred goes from root to bone. The soul that cannot enlighten wanders around the world with its accompanying mental illness, "engaging in many disgusting, blind, and cruel activities in one's life" (Gorky, *The Life of Unnecessary People* 6). Therefore, under the premise of "I am originally kind," Gorky depicts two typical images, positive and negative, and activates the ethical consciousness through ethics education. This is the best conceptual interpretation of Gorky's "human literature" to optimize human nature.

Human or Animal: The Contrast of Ethical Nature between Nilovna and Yefsai

Gorky's "human literature" calls for the spiritual construction of literary social reality, human brilliance, and ethical consciousness. "In terms of society's expectations and calls for literature, any era requires literature to guard the spirit and light up the heart with a realistic attitude"(Jiang 178). Gorky, with his romantic realism of human concern, attends more to the suffering and hardships of the "homeless," "low-class people," and the laboring masses at the bottom, and cries out for them with real brushstrokes, thus endowing *The Mother* with the brilliant progressive significance of human nature and the classic value of ethical consciousness.

Ethical literary criticism regards the Sphinx Factor as the core of appreciating literary works. In the so-called Sphinx factor, "human factor" refers to the factors that can lead to human evolution in the process of human progress from barbarism to civilization. It is precisely the emergence of human factor that generates ethical consciousness, making humans transform from beasts to humans. Therefore, the human factor serves as ethical consciousness, the most important feature of which shows the ability to distinguish between good and evil. And this ethical consciousness, for an individual, in the final analysis, is to pursue the ideal balance of the Sphinx factor and to exert the ethical teaching function of literary classic reading.

In *The Mother* and *The Life of Unnecessary People*, the presentation of Nilovna's human nature and Yefsey's bestiality is the natural different ethical choice for the two to adapt to the ethical environment through their ethical identities, reflecting the contrast between the goodness of human nature and the evil qualities of bestiality, thereby enlightening readers' good humanity and criticizing evil and ugliness. Although Nilovna has experienced her husband's domestic violence, her ethical kindness tearfully advised him to undergo surgery when he was about to die. She not only respects her husband in behavior, but also sincerely hopes that her husband keeps well. Nilovna reflects the overall epitome of the image of women in the Russian era who were diligent, hardworking, and focused on their husbands. Under the control of ethical consciousness, she paid close attention to observing her son's subtle changes. "Her dark face gradually became sharper, her eyes became more serious, her lips were tightly closed, as if she was suffocating, and her body was damaged by illness"(Gorky, *The Mother* 13). Pavel's ethical kindheartedness was generated by maternal love whose radiance melted into his son's ethical consciousness, not only activated Pavel's human factor, but also promoted the

sublimation of Nilovna's family ethical identity to social ethical identity. The power of love has deepened in her care and protection for her son's friends, as well as in her assistance and support for his career. The mother deeply felt the danger of her son's actions and was concerned about his safety, but did not insist on interfering with his activities. When she saw Barville delivering a speech in the factory, she proudly squeezed forward and bravely supported him. When Barville was in danger, she resolutely distributed flyers and conveyed information for him. Here, we witness that the human factor in ethical consciousness catalyzes the transformation of family ethical relationships towards revolutionary friendship in social ethical context.

In *The Life of Unnecessary People*, Yefsai's ethical identity faded out of numbness when his mother passed away. Despite Uncle Peter's companionship, conversation, and trust, and "his cousin's warm embrace of his heart as if it were a promise to something as well" (Gorky, *The Life of Unnecessary People* 22), the comfort of parasitic family life has been consumed in the endless beating, humiliation, and bullying of his aunt and cousin so that the seeds of revenge that lingered in Yefsai's heart took root, sprouted, and grew like a malignant tumor. In literary works, human factors are often controlled by their animalistic factors, resulting in a weak or even non-existent ethical consciousness and a lack of discrimination between good and evil. In the game between human and animal factors in Yefsey's ethical consciousness, countless struggles within himself have awakened the conscience of human nature: the thought of handing over these "happy people" to the gendarmes is also filled with "cold sadness" in his heart. Yefsai's animal factor had gradually been activated, and considering his own danger, he had to give up these "kind" ideas. In the end, although Yefsai felt sorry for his cousin, he still arrested them following the arrangement of his superiors. It can be seen that in the struggle between human and animal factors in Yefsey's ethical consciousness, the good side of human nature ultimately failed to overcome the erosion of animal factors.

In comparison of the ethical consciousness, Nilovna's human factor dominates the generation and sublimation of her ethical consciousness. The mother-child relationship under the family ethics "community" gradually escalated into a "comrade like" concern, support, and assistance for her son and his friends, which also inspired her to bravely integrate into the proletarian revolutionary cause and fight alongside the "comrades." On the contrary, Yefsai's lack of love and affection from original family, as well as the ethical identity in working environment as spies, has led to its animal factor in his ethical consciousness into moral decay. His hatred towards his cousin gradually evolved into hatred towards the whole revolutionary

cause. Certainly, Yefsai's subsequent suicide may have been an occasional flash of human nature in his ethical consciousness, leading to repentance and self-redemption of his own actions. "When a writer reflects, expresses, or reproduces life, it is not mechanical, rigid, or mirror-like imitation or reproduction of life, but rather to inject their own love and hate, thoughts and emotions, experiences and feelings, and understanding of life into their works"(Wu 10). In Gorky's two long novels, the different combinations and sequence changes of the Sphinx factors give rise to different behavioral characteristics and personality, forming different ethical conflicts and leading to different ethical choices. The ethical educational value of the above two novels lies in enabling readers to dialectically examine the protagonist's contrasting ideas of beauty and ugliness, good and evil formed in the process of ethical choice, as well as the differences in desires, pursuits, ideals, emotions, thoughts, and spirits, in order to guide readers to make positive ethical choices towards goodness.

Justice or Betrayal: Gorky's Ethics Literary Education with Its Contemporary Significance

The important spiritual pursuit of Gorky's "human literature" lies in "writing about human difficulties and liberation, as well as people's pursuit and struggle for a better life" (Wu 22). Thus, we can prove that the ethical evaluation of art flourished in the critical practices, especially in the circle of literature studies. Naturally, "If he wants more readers to participate in this contemplation process, he also needs to make his creative motivation win the recognition of readers and meet their ethical demands" (Zhu 37). Human nature is the true existence of human beings, since "human nature is inherently good" is a natural attribute of human beings towards life. However, the twists and turns of history and the cruelty of reality always challenge the human nature of original kindness. It can be imagined that both the two works of *The Mother* and *The Life of Unnecessary People* may be filled with Gorky's teachings and expectations of the Russian Revolution's positive progress, optimism, and goodness. However, the generation of ethical consciousness and human nature education is a long and subtle process, rather than an overnight achievement. Gorky has portrayed Nilovna as a positive female figure in the workers'area, advocating for "New Russian Women" to inherit traditional ethics and promote revolutionary spirit. On one hand, Gorky affirmed Nilovna's human kindness in the basic construction of her ethical consciousness. In the "community" of family ethics, she never retaliated against her husband for his beating, nor did she let her son yield to her for his filial piety. On the other hand, Gorky strengthened the revolutionary

sublimation of Nilovna’s ethical consciousness in her advanced construction. She discerned right from wrong, took risks, and devoted her to the revolution. Gorky encouraged all the “bottom-class” people (including housewives) to spontaneously participate in the socialist revolution. At this point, even the weakest force is the form of support on Russian revolution. On the contrary, Gorky’s portrayal of Yevsai’s pitiful, hateful, and antagonistic spy image aims to deconstruct Yevsai's human ethical consciousness, to explore the influence of family ethical identity and social ethical environment on Yevsai’s animalistic factors, and to satirize the dirty work of spies during the Russian Revolution, and still to expose the “worship” essence of decadent literature in praising “betrayal” and “death.”

Undoubtedly,“Yevsei Klinkov became lonely due to heavy life and personal negativity” (Yevsei Yanov Емельянов 104). The unhealthy parasitic family life has severed the ethical condensation of blood and family relationships, breeding evil such as anger, resentment, hatred, violence, murder, and disintegrating the good social ethical structure among people. The “decadence” ideology believed in during the Russian era eroded human will and faith, and extinguished the dawn of humanity in Yevsai’s heart. The detective work by committing crime as the “entry threshold” activated Yefsai’s beastly evil soul through the “professional behavior” of betraying the revolution and indiscriminately killing innocent people, washing away the only remaining bits of compassion in his human nature in the joy of trampling on life. The most essential characteristic of humans compared to animals stresses on their ethical consciousness since only when human ethical consciousness emerges can they become true humans.

The above typical examples, both positive and negative, vividly strengthen the ethical significance of Gorky’s literary creation. The two works complement each other in ethical thought and confirm the overall ethical value construction of Gorky’s literary ethics education. The significance lies in presenting the ethical essence of human nature as true, good, and beautiful, criticizing the evil behavior of falsehood, evil, and ugliness, educating readers to enhance ethical awareness, and making correct ethical choices in complex contemporary environments. Gorky takes Nilovna and Yevsai as examples to educate people the ethical philosophy of abandoning evil and pursuing good, providing readers with dialectical thinking on ethical literary criticism. It points out the direction in development for the progressive literature of the Russian Revolution. Lenin (Ле́нин В. И.) has ever highly praised *The Mother* as “the very timely book” (Gorky 411) with the educational value, and “his opinion has always influenced the evaluation trend of the academic community” (Chen 35). That’s to say, “Gorky’s writing is not just read

for fun or amusement, but for the influence of people's will and consciousness, so as to make them struggle for higher social systems" (Lunacharsky Луначарский 303).

Literature ultimately embodies the artistic presentation of people's hearts. It builds on the foundation of countless individuals, subtly expresses and conveys the ethical ideology, shaping and elevating the living souls of various ethnic groups. With the dream of "optimizing" and "transforming" people's human ethics education, "Gorky is still needed by contemporary people today because his creations can answer certain questions in contemporary life, and because contemporary people can regain something from reading his works" (Ren 4). Gorky's teachings on human ethics not only generated a revolutionary community of "contemporaries" in his own country, but also resonated with "fellow travelers" across time and space around the world. Lavrin, Janko, believes that "*The Mother* is an important social documentary and political propaganda novel" (Lavrin and Chen 68). What surprised Italian social activist M. Spinella was that "the books they read in their youth had a significant impact on them, with Gorky's *The Mother* being the first to bear the brunt... These artworks opened a window to the world for most young people" (Spinella 12). It is true, *The Mother* "is the voice of a group of people in extreme poverty and enduring humiliation in Russia, who have gone through inhumane hardships... always yearning for freedom"(Aleramo 318). "It is almost the only source of social liberation that has inspired us"(R. Bonchio 12).

Chinese translator Xia Yan introduced the two long works into China to echo Gorky after the failure of the Great Revolution in1927. Then, Gorky's ethical thought in the novels inspired countless young people to join the Chinese revolution. Xia Yan inherited Gorky' s "human literary" ideas and created movie scripts such as the play *Under the Eaves of Shanghai*, the reportage *The Contract Worker*, and adapted *Lin Family Shop* to communicate Gorky's ethical thought. His literary tension highlighted the spiritual joys and sorrows of ordinary intellectuals and the civil class, as well as the ethical education of political revolution, which almost influenced the main theme of nearly the whole 20th century. With no doubt, Gorky's ethical thoughts on human nature have played a spreading role in the development history of Chinese literature.

According to Ethical Literary Criticism, people still face the challenges in post-ethical selection era and "should adhere to the ethical value orientation of truth and goodness in making scientific choices" (Su 38).Similarly, "Scientific exploration must withstand the supervision and scrutiny of ethical ethics, and scientific production, experiments, and corresponding scientific research must adhere to scientific ethics" (Wu 55). Similarly, literary creation activities should also

withstand ethical supervision and scrutiny, and follow the conventions of literary ethics and literary morality. “In literature and art, beauty cannot be separated from truth, let alone goodness” (Chen 111). The contemporary significance of Gorky’s human ethics education lies in “abandoning evil and promoting good” by placing “humanity” and “beast,” “love” and “hate,” and “justice” and “betrayal” in the same perspective of human ethics. More importantly, Gorky’s seductive and interesting teachings on human ethics have given an eternal driving force to connect the past and the future, injecting a unique trajectory and individual pursuit of artistic classics into the transition of Chinese modern literature. Rereading Gorky’s literary classics will not only bring different pleasures to each reader, but also discover more educational surprises. Adhering to the classic theme and eternal melody of Gorky’s literary ethics of human nature, constructing the people-oriented, national, and global nature of contemporary literary creation with the ethical values towards goodness, progress, and justice, achieving the aesthetic value of praising the people and promoting human nature with exquisite artistic creation, and abandoning the dross of “sensory art,” “free literature,” “vulgar writing,” etc., is the pursuit and responsibility of contemporary literature.

Conclusion

Gorky’s *The Mother* and *The Life of Unnecessary People* are the valuable ethical self-portraits of various types of men who wander, losing their way and hope for redemption. Gorky believes in the source of beauty and sublimity as the nature of the ideal and harmonious life. Educational ideology of human ethics generated by his “human literature” presents the eternal significance of Gorky’s literary creation. Gorky’s unified and inter-corroborated ethical literary illustration of the contrasted protagonists demonstrates the generation and extinction of the two characters’ ethical consciousness which usually goes through the ethical struggle of “humanity” and" barbarity,” presenting ethical intersection of “love” and “hatred” catalyzed by ethical identity and ethical environment, and strengthening the ethical choice of “justice” and “betrayal” of human nature. The highlights advocate the contemporary consciousness of “abandoning the evil and promoting the good” as the universal human ethics.

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Kristevan Affect in Connie Willis' *Passage*

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Abstract Studying affect in works of fiction can shed light on aspects which may remain hidden otherwise. Julia Kristeva is one theorist demonstrating the semiotic in language through scrutinizing affect in literary texts. This paper is an attempt to explore the semiotic dimensions of affect in Connie Willis's neglected novel, *Passage*. This novel is categorized under the NDE genre, which is the genre of literature concerned with near-death experiences. In this novel, disastrous and traumatic events, related to the experience of death by various characters, especially the protagonist, Joanna Lander, produce fearful moments. These can be captured through the type of genre of the text, silences and pauses, different sorts of deprivation in characters, and the features of poetic language in the text itself. In such situations, the readers' identification with the characters contributes to the affective aspect of the text. A close reading of the semiotic aspect of this novel, utilizing the theories of Kristeva, demonstrates how characters' death drive can put them in disastrous situations, contrary to those with jouissance. It also depicts how traumatic events can become more tolerable in human beings' social life by the help of identification, reconciliation, social collectiveness, camaraderie, and emotional bond between characters, despite the casualties.

Keywords Connie Willis; Passage; Julia Kristeva; Affect; Semiotic Drive

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Introduction: Close to Death

Connie Willis has won numerous awards for her sci-fi and fantasy novels. Winning several Hugo Awards and Nebula Awards, she is one of the most prominent figures

in the literary scene of America today. Among her salient works, *Passage* (2001) stands as the 2001 Colorado Book Award Winner for Science Fiction and the 2002 Locus Award Winner for Best Science Fiction Novel. Here, Willis directly attends to the nature of near-death experience in the scientific fashion of sci-fi genre. Besides the complex mosaic of intertextual references, the story of the Titanic and the movie adapted from it, constitute the main structure of the novel.

Joanna Lander, as the main character of the novel, is a psychologist who interviews the hospital patients who have undergone near-death experience. Meanwhile, Dr. Richard Wright asks for her collaboration in his scientific experiments in the same area. Getting involved in Richard's project demands her own volunteering to go under the test, due to a chain of events. There she experiences artificial death in the laboratory, by metaphorically finding herself on the Titanic on the night it drowned. This and other evidences lead her to believe near-death experience is the last SOS message the brain sends in the most desperate moment of losing one's life. Her real death in the hospital, resulted from a knife stab attack, gives the readers the opportunity to witness what Joanna experiences through real death this time.

Several pages of this novel are devoted to describing Joanna's death and corpse, among others. Moreover, the whole novel is about NDE, which is short for near-death experience. Through discussing the experience of death itself, Willis involves the readers with the fearful moments of death and the anxious moments of possible revival. This study is a close reading of *Passage* in an attempt to explore the semiotic dimension of language. By going beyond the surface of words, we analyze the affects and drives in the midst of silences, literary devices, and traumatic events. This is while we demonstrate the possible effects of identification and social collectiveness in the times of difficulties in a novel which has not been under a critical study yet.

Affect in the World of Novels

Connie Willis is a widely admired contemporary author. That is partly because she develops characters "with which many of us will readily, if sardonically, be able to identify" (Wolfe 313). Besides the outstanding characters, metaphors play an important role in her works. Duckwitz, for instance, refers to the "literary complexity" and merit of Willis' "Schwarzschild Radius", due to its metaphors, despite other sci-fi stories (1). Metaphors are also a prominent aspect of *Passage*.

Connie Willis' works are mostly written in the sci-fi genre, based on logic and scientific estimations. Time travel, as a science fiction motif, is the subject of

her "Oxford time travel duology, *Blackout* and *All Clear*" (Carpenter and Halpern 91). The significant point in this duology is that the "self-consistency of time travel prevents the past from being changed" (Carpenter and Halpern 91). This logical characteristic is also prevalent in *Passage*, where instead of metaphysics or supernatural elements, brain's function is described in relation to the near-death experience.

Connie Willis' science fiction sometimes goes against the grain. Most sci-fi novels are associated with scientific complicated terminology and context. This is while in Willis' works, "there is a stubborn insistence on the ordinary, the commonplace: the domestic, or what is often called trivial" (Kelso 67). This accessible nature can be recognized in her Civil War science fiction *Lincoln's Dreams* and *Passage*, among her other works, despite the complexity the subjects demand.

The novel, *Passage*, itself is referred to by Badley in her study of virtual afterlife thrillers. Seeing the work as primarily about the protagonist's "denial of death", she asserts that the narration of this work shows "a ghost story in reverse in which the subject is haunted by images that signal her will to go on living" (1). She suggests conceptualizing death and the life after in the form of a movie in this novel represents "cinema's awareness of its own uncanniness" (2). This NDE narrative has opted for *Titanic* (Cameron) as one of the possible frameworks of afterlife. The disaster itself provides a great opportunity for the study of affect in this novel.

Julia Kristeva is not the first theorist to mention the word, affect. Sigmund Freud has been the most prominent figure utilizing the term in psychoanalysis, while the word has been around in the realm of literary criticism, especially reader-response theory, as well. However, for Kristeva, who connects psychoanalysis and literary criticism in a sense, affect is necessary "as the precondition of any linguistic event", since its "dialectical interaction determines the nature of the event" (Kluchin 61). It is because the linguistic event involves a reader. In the process of analysis, "we must pay attention to the affective bond between the reader and text, to its strength, its quality, its tenor" (Kluchin 61). This affective bond resides in Kristeva's semiotic aspect of language.

In order to further elaborate on affect in its Kristevan sense, it is necessary to differentiate between the two aspects of language, the symbolic and the semiotic, discussed in Kristeva's works. According to Judith Butler, "Kristeva attempts to expose the limits of Lacan's theory of language by revealing the semiotic dimension of language that it excludes" (104). Moreover, Kristeva's notion of the symbolic function of language is rather different from Lacan's Symbolic, although she

sporadically refers to the latter, as well. In fact, "more sophisticated than" that of Lacan, Kristeva's "symbolic function—the ability to take a position or make a judgment—is just one aspect of signification", along with the semiotic function (Oliver, *Reading Kristeva: Unraveling the Double-Bind* 39). The process of signification is comprised of both the symbolic and the semiotic aspects of language. While both are present in any form of language, they constitute two contradictory and at the same time complementary sides in the process of signification. While the symbolic is concerned with "phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics", the semiotic relates to "rhythm, tone, feeling, or genre" (Kluchin 70). However, the text's written form is not really a barrier to semiotic analysis. That is to say, "the rhythm of a line of text belongs to the semiotic just as thoroughly as the rise and fall of a human voice" (Kluchin 70). Thus, Kristeva's theories are applicable to written forms of texts, as well as verbal ones.

Drives along with affect belong to the semiotic function of language. The relationship between the drives and the semiotic is direct. It is the semiotic which "signals the entrance of the drives into language" (Kluchin 70). Just as the presence of the semiotic coexists with drives, the passiveness of the symbolic activates them. That is to say "The motility of the subject and the subject's ability to change are the result of the interplay of semiotic drive force and symbolic stasis" (Oliver, *The Portable Kristeva* xxi). Krsiteva asserts the presence of the semiotic function more or less in all types of texts. The analysis of texts and their signification depends upon "the presence of the semiotic within every signifying event, that register of feeling, rhythm, tone, drive, without which structure, syntax, and grammar fail to mean" (Kluchin 75). What the word means in Kristevan mindset is a mixture "of dynamic bodily drive force or affect and stable symbolic grammar" (Oliver, *The Portable Kristeva* xviii). The drive force is bodily for Kristeva in the sense that it originates in human body in order to satisfy "desires", while affect is its manifestation, whether "physical" or "psychic" (Oliver, *The Portable Kristeva* xxii). Thus, affects and drives work hand in hand in their contribution to the semiotic aspect of texts and their interpretation. Kluchin asserts that "texts have visceral effects on readers, that they work on readers in distinctive ways to transmit affect, and that these effects are integral to the ways in which they should be understood" (168). The affects of fear, horror, dread, love, etc. can be traced in works of fiction as substantial elements of discussion.

Affects play a vital role in the semiotic function of language. Kelly divides them into three types: the "positive" ones include "interest-excitement" and "enjoyment-joy," the "neutral" ones include "surprise-startle," and the "negative"

ones include "fear-terror, distress-anguish, anger-rage, disgust-dissmell, shame-humiliation" (164). The coined word, dissmell, means, "the automatic response we have when we smell something rotten" (Kelly 176). In analyzing works of literature, these can be traced in the type of genre of the text, silences and pauses, different sorts of deprivation in characters, their social collectiveness, and the features of poetic language in the text itself. In addition to this, the readers' identification with the characters contributes to the affective aspect of a text.

Affect in *Passage*

Passage is a science fiction, which contains certain "modes of affect" that are related to fantasy and horror (Cherry 52). In such a text, "encounters with disruptive bodily affects" is prevalent (Kee 49). The primary setting of Willis' novel is a hospital in winter times, both helping the deathly atmosphere. Vielle, a nurse and Joanna's close friend, mentions embalming frequently throughout the course of the story. The emergency room is described by Vielle through a simile, as "like a tomb" (Willis 7). This is both because of the frequent presence of possible goners and the location of the emergency room, which is at the ground level, below all the other floors of the hospital. Snowy weather is, likewise, depicted by Vielle as the "Heart attack weather" (7) and by Joanna as "Car accident weather. Dying weather" (10). Winter's connotations of death and horror is the reason why this season has been used as the setting of the novel. Even while Joanna herself describes her NDE, the setting of this experience is likewise cold, the night Titanic crashed the iceberg. On the ship, "The walls were white, and so were the doors" (144). Joanna's description of the people on board includes, "he was wearing a white jacket . . . The other woman was in white, too . . . Her hands were white, too . . . The man had a trimmed white beard" (144). In order to connote the chilly atmosphere, Joanna delineates the place and people as all white, the color of snow and winter. Finally, when she does die, she describes the sky as "still as death" (456). The use of these death-related words by Willis contribute to the creation of the affect of fear all throughout the novel.

There are descriptions in *Passage* that are horrific to connote death, while they could be accounted in more mediated words. In such cases, "readers have to burden their memory with these horrific descriptions until they reach the" significance of those words later in the novel (El-Sayed 238). In *Passage*, one of the patients' smile is described as "a little wolfish" (11). Later, this character, Greg Menotti, is seen by Joanna during her NDE simulations. Thus, the horrific description and the activation of fear become significance, when it appears in Joanna's experience of death, as

well. The other instance is Maisie, who is a child in the hospital and a friend of Joanna. She is interested in disasters and informs others about the knowledge she acquires about this subject. However, as Richard, Joanna's colleague, puts it, "She really goes for the gory details" (46). It is when she points out how children have seen their parents being burned in Hindenburg. Hence, she refers to the most violent part of the incident. This is how she is trying to make sense of her own possible upcoming death. The mutual point between the patients who encounter death is that Joanna finds "the same terror, the same despair" in their tone of voice (94). This is when they describe what they have gone through. Although they say different things, mostly neutral, the fear of death is detected in their voice.

The characteristics of horror genre can be detected in *Passage*. One of these features is the "explorations of the borders between life and death" (Kee 49). This is manifested in *Passage* in Joanna's simulation of NDE. In these experiments, which for her happen on the Titanic, the door of the passage she finds herself in is the boundary between life and death. There, on the Titanic, she inspects the untraveled world of death. In one of such scenes, when she is trying to return to the passage, which is the only means for her to recover consciousness, she passed "the light. Into the passage, and into darkness. And more darkness. What happened? Joanna thought, panic clutching at her. Why didn't I go back" (209). Later, when she is murdered, she fully experiences this panic, knowing there is actually no way back. This exploration for Joanna, as well as the readers, is always accompanied by senses of dread, horror, and even panic.

The words in any types of contexts strive to convey messages, whether straightforward or complicated. However, in Kristevan mindset, not only do the words contain meaning, but also silences and pauses are meaningful affective aspects of texts. According to Zappen, "the literary imagination that Kristeva so frequently celebrates can capture affective-symbolic moments not only in words, such as the fractured orthography of the text messages, but in sights and sounds and silences" (307). In Willis' novel, Joanna interviews patients who undergo NDE in the hospital. During these interviews, Joanna asserts, "most people, when confronted with a silence, would talk to fill it, and all the interviewer had to do was wait" (3). Thus, instead of constantly asking for more information, she waits in silence. The silence is more effective than questions in making an affective connection with interviewees and leading them to give a blow-by-blow account of their NDEs. The opposite is also applicable. That is to say, sometimes Joanna is confronted by the pauses of the interviewees. For instance, Mr. Sage's interview is "followed by an interminable pause while Joanna waited for him to add something" (92). That

is because it is hard for them to transfer a semiotic experience into the symbolic world of the language. Pauses can arouse the affect of excitement, as well. At one moment, "There was a pause. Maybe he's leaving, Joanna thought hopefully" (26). When Joanna and Richard are stuck in the staircase, they listen to silences and they speculate on whether they can escape from Maurice Mandrake, the man Joanna does not want to encounter.

For Richard, speculations are not limited to only this one part of the novel. When he is listening to his voice messages, one of his friends' message is a mysterious one, which arouses the affect of interest. His message on the phone goes,

> "Wright?" a man's voice said. Peter Davis, his roommate when they were interns. He never bothered to identify himself. "I suppose you've heard," Davis said. "I can't believe it about fox, can you? This isn't some kind of virus, is it? If so, you'd better get vaccinated. Or at least call and warn me before you hit the star. Call me." He wondered what that was all about. The only Fox he knew was R. John Foxx, a neuropsychologist who'd been conducting research on anoxia as the cause of near-death experiences . . . Davis again, even more incomprehensible than before. "Forgot to tell you where. Seventeen. Under phantom," followed by an unrecognizable tuneless humming. Housekeeping. (43)

Davis' message is full of empty spaces, left to be guessed, like a riddle. Such "empty spaces" (Zappen 304) are the tools the narrator can use to "invite readers to share" the characters' "life-altering decisions and connect the discontinuous elements of" the plot (Zappen 300). Richard has to guess who the caller is, who he is talking about, and what he is referring to. The empty spaces are not exhausted here. His last message is that of Joanna, which is supposed to be a vital one, determining whether she finally joins the project or not. However, since the answering machine is full, he can merely hear the beginning of the voice message and loses the rest. Then he again has to estimate what the message would contain.

Sometimes in works of fiction, the characters undergo traumatic events, are deprived of their rights, or lose what they love or need. Besides their "mental aspect", traumatic events have the "ability to oppress and consume the individual" (Sherman 11). These sorts of experience are sometimes repressed and then expressed in the semiotic side of communication. The characters' reactions to traumatic events may differ. However, mainly, "Visualizing something that is an invisible, abstract

psychological concept via an essential element of life such as water is an extremely poignant means of understanding the self and others" (Sherman 5). That is why in works of literature, media, and even in *Passage* itself, death, which is being deprived of life, is depicted as somehow related to water. At any rate, traumas or losses are mostly faced through invisible concepts. Apart from NDEs, Alzheimer's disease is a form of gradual death, a traumatic situation which gradually deprives the person from memories and abilities. For Mr. Briarley, who used to be Joanna's English literature teacher and who presently suffers from the same disease, reciting lines from works of literature is a strategy to face the situation. Such characters undergo the gradual loss of "control over reality as" their "mind becomes immersed in chaos" (Staels 982). At this point, Joanna becomes obsessed with the memories of high school, Mr. Briarley, and how she can solve the mystery of NDE, without his help, due to his condition.

The other character who faces great loss is Kit, Mr. Briarley's niece. On the day of her wedding, her fiancé, Kevin, dies in an accident. Furthermore, she lives with Mr. Briarley and takes care of him. The positive affect of interest is what she utilizes to save herself. When Joanna asks her to look for a book or pieces of information among Mr. Briarley's big library, she savors the process and takes full advantage of it. When Joanna asks her whether it is problematic for her she replies, "'It gives me something to think about besides—it's kind of fun,' she amended, 'a sort of treasure hunt'" (198). Thus, she enjoys spending her time searching for things, so that she evades her own problems.

The other character who experiences trauma is Coma Carl, who used to have life-like nightmares when he was in the coma. He thought he was stuck in a canyon with apaches and rattlesnakes around. There he tried different ways to escape or at least send a rescue message. The experience has been so difficult for him that he does not dare to talk about it now. This is while when he looks out of the window of his house, which happens to be in the mountain, he stares at the river, which "flowed dark and clear, half under and half over a thin film of ice" (424). In spite of his reticence, this act conveys how the stream resembles his own life. His time in the coma is like he is half frozen. He cannot move or speak; he is blocked in a threatening exploration of a canyon, though he is alive and the blood flows in his body.

Richard suffers tremendously after losing Joanna. In addition to being co-workers in a project, they are somehow emotionally attached. Moreover, Richard feels guilty for her death, since she was looking for him in her last breath, while he had his pager off. Next, Joanna had beforehand asked him to save her, in case of

trouble. Finally, it was Richard whom Joanna's last words were addressed to. All these pose a serious threat to his mental health. One of the ways for coping with loss is for people "to lose themselves in their work" (Staels 982). Richard, after some days of shock, tries to work out what Joanna's last words meant. After a while, he realizes that "He had somehow managed to deny it, in all his running around, making maps, graphing scans, questioning nurse's aides" and that "their obsession with Joanna's last words had simply been another form of denial" (435). Searching for clues to what has been Joanna's untold discovery helps him finally recover from mourning her abrupt death.

Poetic language belongs to the semiotic aspect of language, which adds affective weight to a text. The semiotic as "the transverbal language of primitive bodily drives and affects", here, is represented "in signifying elements such as tone, laughter, symptomatic discursive repetition, the rhythm and musicality of poetic language (alliteration and assonance), and in poetic figures of speech (metaphor and metonymy)" (Staels 979). Inherently, the language becomes poetic through utilizing figures of speech.

Imageries are one of the poetic devices used by Willis to transfer the affect of striving for truth to the audience. For instance, auditory imagery, in the form of two noises is constantly repeated in *Passage*. One is the sound heard immediately after losing consciousness by patients. Various characters wonder whether it is "a ringing or a buzzing" (124). The other is Joanna's pager, which frequently beeps. It happens at times when Joanna is restless to know the mystery of death and the reasons behind each step of the NDE, including the ringing or buzzing. This activates the affect of interest in the audience, as well.

In line with the affect of interest activated by auditory imagery, the organic and gustatory imageries are also influential in conveying the same affect to the audience. Joanna's thirst for knowing the truth, suspended to be quenched, is paralleled to her constant starvation throughout the novel. This is while the cafeteria is almost always closed. Joanna herself confirms, "It had the shortest hours of any hospital cafeteria Joanna had ever seen, and she was always coming down for lunch to find its glass double doors locked" (7). As the cafeteria is closed, the truth is out of reach for her, as well. However, the truth to her seems transparent, like the food seen within the glass doors of the cafeteria, albeit not accessible. She herself thinks the hint to figuring out the truth "stayed tantalizingly there at the edge of her memory, just out of reach" (74). Even when, in a rare moment, she reaches in the cafeteria, Mr. Mandrake, the colleague she avoids to meet is also there. Therefore, she has to leave the place immediately and go as far as she can. The reason why she hides

herself from him, although he is mostly found on her way, is that he conducts false interviews with the patients in the hospital and, this way, turns the cases into nutcases. He symbolically stands as a major barrier to her attempts at finding the truth. This is while whenever Joanna is hungry, he asks Richard for food. At the same time, it is Richard's project which provides her with the opportunity to reach the reality of death.

The other literary device which advocates the affect of interest is spatial imagery. When Greg, one of the patients dies, "he was somewhere else, Joanna thought. Like Coma Carl. Somewhere too far for her to come" (25). Joanna's perception is that whoever becomes unconscious, goes into coma, or dies altogether is not conscious of the world around him or her, as if (s)he has gone to a far place. Thus Joanna describes seeing someone's dying as, "it hadn't felt like Greg Menotti had shut down or ceased to exist. It was as if he'd vanished" (24). The spatial imagery helps her talk of the state of life and death as where they happen to locate, as relative to each other.

In order to activate the affect of interest in the readers, repetitions can also be significant, especially when they lead to circularity. Joanna's presence in *Passage* begins with her interviewing one of the patients in the hospital, Richard's looking for her, and her arrival in the emergency room, in which Vielle works. Later, when Joanna is going toward death, she first interviews a patient, through which she solves the mystery of NDEs, she then naturally looks for Richard everywhere to tell him about her discovery and then, in order to meet Vielle, she goes to the emergency room, where she is attacked, stabbed, and consequently murdered.

Another instance of repetition, which leads to the affect of interest is the number fifty-eight. This is one of the last words Greg Menotti says repeatedly just before dying. Joanna searches for this number in Greg's phone numbers and addresses, albeit she finds no traces. Her obsession to know the meaning Greg was trying to convey leads her to see this number everywhere, like the number of rooms, box numbers, years, plates and the "gas station" (53). She even googles the number. She later decides, "The number fifty-eight had always been there, just like every other number, but her brain had been put on alert to look for it, like a hiker cautioned to watch for snakes (54). The repetition of the word plus the finial simile are the devices helpful in activating the affect of interest.

Metaphor is the other element of figurative speech which evokes the affect of interest. When, in a case of a "metaphor," Vielle compares Richard to "a screenplay," Joanna, spontaneously, contemplates "the feeling, out of nowhere, that she knew what Greg Menotti had been talking about" (74). This is because

what she finally finds out is that NDE is a metaphoric images the brain sends in order to ask for help at the last moments of life. However, what Vielle means is that Joanna must option Richard, quite like a screenplay. In other words, she must buy the right to own him in the future, so that if she decides to marry him, he can be within her reach. Kristeva sees metaphors as, semiotically speaking, "a radical form of othering" (Pint 93). Hence, Richard is a screenplay being optioned because his female colleagues, especially nurses, ask whether he is single and express their interest in his appearance. The competition is to achieve the right to have him. This is while for Richard, Joanna is "an island of sanity and sense in a field full of cranks and nutcase" (101). By this metaphor, Richard differentiates Joanna from the rest of specialists in the field of psychology, as an island stands apart from the ocean.

Apart from interest, when it comes to NDE novels, the affect of fear is also worthy of recognition. In order to elaborate on the reports Joanna has recorded concerning NDEs, she asserts, "Eleven percent report a completely negative experience—a gray, empty void or frightening figures. I've only had one who experienced a traditional hell—flames, smoke, demons" (68). By the help of visual imagery, she accomplishes what she sets out to do, i. e. conveying the affect of hellish fear to the audience. The other instance is a simile, when Joanna describes Mr. Mandrake as, "like a wolf on the fold" (80). This is because he strives to reach the NDE patients sooner than Joanna and shape their innocent accounts into whatever he wills.

Simile is another of literary devices which contribute to the semiotic affect in the novel. When Vielle considers Joanna's general health has deteriorated, she describes her "white as a ghost" (230). Here, the affect transferred is anguish. Joanna is suffering from the anguish of not knowing the meaning of what she experiences through her NDE simulations. She feels she can help patients in need, like Maisie, only if she finds out the secrets behind her NDEs. The other instance of simile depicts identification and empathy between characters. After Joanna is stabbed to death, Richard's guilty conscience repeatedly makes him feel various things to be "like a knife going in" (351 and 354).

As soon as Joanna discovers the mechanism of NDEs, she is accidentally murdered. What Joanna goes through after losing consciousness and death and what her friends have to face are narrated together in alternative chapters. As long as Richard remains clueless about what Joanna intended to tell him, Joanna is all in darkness after death. However, when he finally figures out her message, "Joanna saw that the sky had turned a pale, lovely lavender, and all around them, lavender-pink in the growing light, were glittering icebergs" (454). The visual imagery here

depicts the contrast between the darkness of ignorance full of fear and the joyful light knowledge brings about, between the death drive and jouissance.

When it comes to the semiotic aspect of language in the Kristevan sense of it, the fluidity of meaning is expressed. This is a process, which "may result either in violence and aggressivity (the death drive) or in a flow of jouissance (an instinct for pleasure and life) expressed in poetic language, and in a sense of liberation" (Staels 979-980). This is directly related to what lies inside us. Kristeva's "Doppelgänger motif" consists of "a 'benevolent' and 'malevolent' double — the latter 'an alien double, uncanny and demoniacal,' representing the affects and drives which the self represses" (Staels 982). Thus, the characters, based on their inner drives are driven toward life or death. The central conflict in an NDE novel is between life after death or death as the ultimate destination of humanity.

Life drive is associated with the positive forces of life, which can be manifested in language. One of the affects which can lead to the activation of life drive is "joy" (Staels 985). In Willis' novel, the character Tish is one of the nurses in Mercy General Hospital, who later becomes an assistant in Richard's project. There is a gathering of doctors and nurses, called "Happy Hour" (15), which Tish regularly attends. As the name suggests, this is the time for socialization and eating together, both for the aim of happiness. While characters like Joanna and Richard spend day and night working on a project about death, Tish enjoys her time after work in Happy Hour. It is not that Tish only enjoys her time after work. Even when she is at the hospital, which is not inherently a happy place, she is used to laughing "a tinkling laugh" (16). Hence, her manners are joyfully lively, activating drives which pull her toward life rather than death.

The other character which manifests life drive is Maisie's mother, Mrs. Nellis. Despite the hard condition of her daughter's heart, she "won't even acknowledge the possibility that Maisie might die" (29). She is always in a buoyant mood and an atmosphere of optimism dominates her vision. When Joanna asks her about Maisie's condition, "'Really well,' Mrs. Nellis said enthusiastically. 'This new antiarrhythmia drug's working wonderfully, much better than the one she was on before. I've seen enormous improvement'" (36). Every time she is asked the same question, she gives back similar answers. This is while the nurses admit that Maisie is not doing as well as her mother strives to believe. Barbara, one of the nurses admits, "Maisie's mother is Cleopatra, the Queen of Denial. And positive thinking. All Maisie has to do is rest and think happy thoughts, and she'll be up and around in no time" (41). Thus, optimism and joy describe her reaction toward her daughter's sickness and process of treatment respectively. Her method finally works. That is to say, Maisie is revived

after coding and makes it to her operation, when a heart is available.

Contrary to Tish and Mrs. Nellis, Joanna is the character who constantly manifests signs of death drive. The quotes which begin the main sections of *Passage* are all concerned with death drive. These quotes bespeak the mood of the main character, who is no one, but Joanna Lander. As soon as she joins Richard's project, her friend, Vielle, senses danger. However, apparently nothing goes wrong, up until Joanna resorts to playing the role of a subject. At this stage, Vielle sees her as "a human guinea pig", who is doing "something so dangerous" (118). This is while her joining the project is when Joanna officially enters the route of death. When Joanna insists NDE might work as a "survival mechanism", Vielle, in order to avoid the inevitable tragedy, asserts, "Trust me, I see death every day, and the best survival mechanism is staying as far away from it as possible" (118). This is what Joanna fails to do, since not only does she interview the subjects in a death-related project, but also she becomes a subject herself.

Besides Joanna, Maisie and Kit are the two other characters going toward death. Maisie is hospitalized, due to the severity of her heart disease. Every time Joanna visits her, she admits she has got worse. Kit has lost her fiancé on her wedding day and has to cope with her uncle, who happens to have the Alzheimer's disease. Joanna repeatedly talks of "Kit's painfully thin collarbones" and "her shadowed eyes" (200). The two characters, Maisie and Kit are foil, since they share a multitude of similarities. First, as soon as Joanna meets Kit for the first time, she realizes Kit "had short, fair hair like Maisie's" (175). Second, when Kit, in a manner similar to Maisie, asks Joanna to stay longer, she "sounded just like Maisie" (198). Third, when Joanna is doubtful whether to tell Kit the whole truth, she remembers, "Kit reminded her of Maisie in more ways than one, and Maisie hated not being told the truth" (200). Even though Joanna is herself moving toward death, she manages to save both the above characters. Her discovery saves Maisie's life, while her suggestions to Kit about using eldercare sometimes and involving her in research and also Dish Night literally saves her, as well. At least, Joanna's death is not without good cause.

Emotional encounters in works of literature have affective significance. Love and "reconciliation" can be expressed in the form of an "embrace" (Staels 988). This is while hatred and "fury" can be expressed in the form of a wild "dancing" (Staels 985). In either case, the expression is helpful to the character's maintenance. In other words, in order to avoid "silence, meaninglessness and uncontrolled (self-) destructive energy", it is essential to continue "acknowledging unconscious drives and affects, and expressing them in the 'disruptive' language of signification" (Staels

988). Thus, receiving emotional support and detoxifying harmful energies contribute to preventing self-destructiveness. In *Passage*, while Joanna manifests signs of self-destructiveness, Richard is mainly oblivion to her very emotional and physical state. Almost all his presence in the novel is restricted to his watching the scans, discussing them, and marshaling his arguments. However, only in one rare instance, when Joanna bursts into tears, "He was across the lab in two steps, his arms around her" (274). This support in the form of an embrace is what Joanna practically needs to overcome her emotional distress. Just before her next NDE simulation, "'Richard,' she said, groping blindly for his hand, 'if it starts to sink, promise me you'll come and get me'" (282). Nevertheless, all she receives at this moment is a frown. That is why she moves toward her self-destruction, almost at the speed of light.

The "affective identifications within larger social collectives" would "enable the characters to improve their personal and social relationships" (Zappen 300). The characters in *Passage* mainly assemble in a specific workplace, Mercy General Hospital. The colleagues and friends, Joanna and Vielle share one special night each week and that is called the "Dish Night," a "weekly movie rental night" (38). This gathering gives them a sense of collectiveness and the affect of joy. Their quitting Dish Night due to their other concerns is simultaneous with tragic incidents happening to them. Vielle hides her being shot in the emergency room to avoid being scolded by Joanna, who had repeatedly warned her to transfer from that dangerous section. Joanna is too preoccupied with the meaning of her NDE that she does not find time for Dish Night. This happens shortly before Joanna's death.

The same sense can be detected when Joanna joins Richard's project concerning NDE. At the moment of her approval, Richard says, ""I'm delighted. It's going to be great working together"; then "Richard looked happily at her. 'This is exactly the kind of thing I was hoping you'd help me with . . . We're going to make a great team.' Joanna smiled back at him" (48-49). The words, 'delight', 'happily', and 'smiled' clearly depict the affect of joy. This is a fresh beginning for both of them to, from now on, gather together for one single aim and that is discovering the mechanism of NDEs. The attempt to get "familiar" with this mechanism leads to "a circulation of affective energy" (Zappen 305). This energy has consequences on the rest of the project and their relationship. However, later, Richard is so absorbed in his research and study of scans that he is oblivious to his surroundings. His colleagues in the lab, Joanna and Tish, repeatedly feel he is blasé about whatever they are telling her, whether Tish's flirtations or Joanna's concerns about her accounts of NDE and their meanings. When Joanna finally dies, Richard instantly simulates NDE on himself, in a vain hope to revive her. However, his NDE is filled

with the affect of distress, since "He remembered Joanna talking about climbing up to the Boat Deck. How many decks had she said she'd climbed? He couldn't remember. I should have paid more attention" (346). He feels guilty for her death because he thinks he could save her if he listened to her more. The outcome of avoiding social relations can at best be the waste of time and at worst loss of life. As soon as Joanna is murdered, Richard, Vielle, Kit, and Maisie make a team to figure out what Joanna intended to tell Richard in her last breath. Each covers one aspect of this investigation, up until, with the attribution of each and every one of them, especially Maisie, the puzzle is solved.

Thus, the lack of social collectiveness has exactly the opposite outcome, which is destructive. This happens when the characters begin to deviate from each other, without paying attention to what the other ones say. The central conflict of the novel is the meaning of NDEs and what the brain accomplishes through them. What Joanna, after making sustained effort and risking her very life, realizes is that NDE is the distress message the dying brain sends to all cells in order to find a way to reactivate the vital organs. The one who has tried tirelessly to tell Joanna NDE is a message, although meaning it in a superstitious way, is Mr. Mandrake, whom Joanna constantly makes a detour not to meet. When she finally tells him, "I should have listened to you in the first place" (333), she is indirectly admitting interacting with Mr. Mandrake could be more fruitful to her because she could find hints amid his seeming nonsense. The other person Joanna constantly avoids is Mr. Wojakowsky, one of the subjects in their project, who happens to be a talkative liar present everywhere Joanna goes. Just before she reaches the elevator to go to the emergency room for the last time in her life, she meets him. At that moment, Mr. Wojakowsky tells her about the officer on the ship who was so much in a hurry all the time that he "wasn't looking where he was going, and he stepped in an open hatch and fell two full decks. Broke both legs. Spent the next year and a half in a hospital on Oahu" (331). If Joanna had listened to his story and learned the lesson, she could have escaped death. She was so much engrossed in delivering her finding that she was rushing into the emergency room without seeing the teenager with the knife.

Readers of stories are sometimes invited, through affective terms, to identify with the characters. It is specifically true, when "The novel is sympathetic toward its characters and illustrative of the potential of affective identifications to bind characters to other characters and to readers" (Zappen 306). One of the ways to engage readers in the text is through the sense of mystery. That is to say, "readers need to draw these conclusions for themselves, to identify affectively with" the

characters (Zappen 304). In *Passage*, when Joanna finds "a postcard of a tropical ocean at sunset with palm trees silhouetted blackly against the red sky and coral-pink water" in her pocket, she wonders, "Where had she gotten that? She turned it over. 'Having wonderful time. Wish you were here,' someone had written over an illegibly scrawled signature" (8). Here, the readers are invited to contemplate who that person can be; hence the affect of excitement. While this question is never answered in the novel, this postcard foreshadows the events after Joanna's death. This is because when she dies, she finds herself in the middle of an ocean awaiting her fate. Thus, symbolically, it can be death wishing for her reunion. The other instance of this sense of mystery and affect of excitement is when Joanna and Richard, in order to avoid meeting Mr. Mandrake, get into a stairway. There, "A strip of yellow 'Do Not Cross' tape stretched across the stairway. Below it, the stairs gleamed with shiny, wet, pale blue paint" (23). This 'Do Not Cross' message, apart from the staircase, warns the two doctors not to cross the boundaries of life and death. It is because at the same moment they are discussing their project, concerning NDEs, for the first time. Another instance is when Joanna is repeatedly reminded of something, but she cannot exactly remember what it is. When NDE is experimented on her, she "spent the remainder of the afternoon and evening trying to place it", to find out where she has been during the NDE simulation (128). While she describes what she sees around her, the reader is invited to guess where she really is. When she finally realizes it is Titanic, among all the other memories her brain could choose from, she begins to "have this strong feeling that I know where the memory came from" (160). She spends hours concentrating on this issue, while the diverse things she remembers are outlined for the reader to identify with the protagonist and strive to solve the puzzle like her.

Amid the minute description of a short time span of Joanna's life and death, her first-hand experience of what happens after her heart goes flatline is of paramount importance through the course of novel. The account of her death and the events after it are so meticulous that the reader is automatically invited to identify with her. This is made possible by the metaphoric language of Willis. Joanna, when she finds herself again on Titanic after her real death, realizes she herself is "the ship that's going down" (341). When Joanna is accidentally stabbed in the emergency room, she feels she is drowning in blood. While she chronicles the moments leading up to her ultimate death, she simultaneously reports her presence on Titanic. There, she finds the passage which she used to enter in order to become conscious during her simulations, "is underwater" (339). Her unexpected death is compared to the unexpected incident of Titanic. As "An iceberg gashed her side", Joanna

"remembered her blouse and the little ooze of blood" (340). Both events seem as unsubstantial at first; however, casualties stem from them. The passage which is flooding is symbolically Joanna's windpipe, which is blocked and does not let Joanna transfer her message to Richard. The message is the real meaning of NDEs and the mechanism of brain at the traumatic moment of death which can eventually contribute to the cure of patients in hard conditions and close to death.

Conclusion

An NDE novel, like Connie Willis' *Passage*, is primarily about making sense of death. *Passage* is specifically a novel about disasters and the unexpectedness of death. In this novel, traumatic events are included which yield to a semiotic study of affect and drives. Based on the theories of Julia Kristeva in this regard, *Passage* manifests moments of silence, traumatic events, and poetic language in which various types of affect can be detected. Positive affects of jouissance and negative ones of death drive dominate different characters. This is while positive emotional responses and social collectiveness can be effective in overcoming difficulties. The cumulative effect of human bonds can even lead to life and death situations. In other words, characters lose their lives as a result of the lack of such a bond and revive by virtue of camaraderie. At the same time, the readers are invited to identify with the characters at their most critical moments.

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A German Literary Paradigm of Relationship Manipulation in Korean writer, Yi Cheong-jun's "The Wounded" (1966)

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Abstract This discussion highlights aspects of Korean writer, Yi Cheong-jun's short story, "The Wounded" (1966) which align with elements of Rachel Freudenburg's theories on the fictions of friendship in 20-century German literature. A comparison with Freudenburg's analysis, as she applies it to Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus* (1947), exemplifies how the still-living older brother fulfills for Yi's narrator, the same function as the deceased Adrian Leverkühn for Serenus Zeitblom. The brother's decade-long repetitive cycle of saving lives ensured that he presented as a stable, reliable site onto which Yi's narrator could project his illusionary identity of war veteran. Only when the older brother began a cycle of violence, did he shatter in the capacity of mirror for the narrator's projections. In "The Wounded" the narrator's preoccupation with assuming the problematic identity of Korean war veteran from the site of his still-living older brother is, ultimately, I suggest, an attempt to eclipse the crippling identity of economic non-entity, airbrushed out of the story, yet evident in the blind spot, that is, in the double-speak of the female characters.
Keywords Narrative Theory; Korean Literature; Thomas Mann; Yi Cheong-jun; Rachel Freudenburg
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Introduction

Freudian nightmare? Lacanian wormhole? The dizzying amount of mirroring at play in Yi Cheong-jun's "The Wounded" (1966) provokes so much analytical spec-

ulation, one would be forgiven for concluding that the story ultimately defies any definitive interpretation.[1] However, the lens of Rachel Freudenburg's theory on the fiction of friendship as she outlines it in 20th-century works of German fiction offers an interesting perspective on Yi's story.[2] Freudenburg maintains that "friendships are manipulated and exploited to produce a unified and regal self even while the person behind this image is developing a theory of self-fragmentation" (5). She applies her theory to several German narratives including Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus (1947),* Günter Grass's *Katz und Maus* (1961) and Christa Wolf's *Nachdenken über Christa T.* (1968). In order to illustrate how her hypothesis throws light on the exploitative dynamic at play between narrator and older brother in Yi's "The Wounded", I intend to draw parallels between aspects of her argument as she illustrates it in Mann's *Doctor Faustus* and similar features evident in Yi's story. I argue that Yi's narrator, like Mann's Serenus Zeitblom, attempts to project an illusionary identity onto the mirror of his significant other, namely, his older brother, in an effort to assume this identity for himself.

Ultimately, I draw two conclusions. Firstly, I argue that the narrator's utilization of his brother as a site for his own identity-projections is a self-deceptive façade in which Yi's narrator engages to avoid confronting the more denigrating identity of himself as economic non-entity. This identity, although airbrushed out of the story, is discernable in the double-speak of the female characters. Secondly, that the narrator's projections onto his brother in "The Wounded" should follow a similar pattern to those outlined by Freudenburg in German narratives of the 20th century, implies this pattern of relationship manipulation is not unique to German literature. As such, this discussion demonstrates the potential Freudenburg's theory offers as a tool of analysis in the broader field of comparative literature.

The Narrator's Desired Identity

According to Freudenburg, friendship supplies us with a myth of unified identity which although fictional, offers relief from the fragmentation of modernity (4). In the case of male friendship, she argues that friendships portrayed in many German narratives of the post-World War II period reveal a sadistic, dark side. This she interprets as an attempt to dismantle inherited myths of friendship, masculinity, heroism

1 The original title of this story, " 병신과 머저리 " has also been translated as "The Maimed and the Nitwit". In this discussion the English references to the story are taken from Jennifer Lee's translation. Thus, I am using her figurative translation of the title, "The Wounded".

2 The full title of Rachel Freudenburg's 1995 PhD thesis is: *Fictions of Friendship in Twentieth-Century German Literature: Mann's Doktor Faustus, Grass's Katz und Maus, Bernhard's Der Untergeher and Wittgensteins Neffe, and Wolf's Nachdenken über Christa T.*

and "Gleichschaltung" which had become inextricably linked under fascism (115).[1] To illustrate this point she argues that Pilenz of Günter Grass's *Cat and Mouse*, in writing about his friend, Mahlke was really demonstrating nostalgia for what had died, "for the whole, meaningful, monumental friend" (177).[2] Unable to make the transition to a post-fascist mentality, Pilenz persisted in attempting "to find and present to the reader his monumental friend" (F 177).[3] In a similar vein, she argues that the narrator, Serenus Zeitblom of Mann's *Doctor Faustus*, even after German soil had been invaded by foreign armies, still attempted in his biography of Adrian Leverkühn to perpetuate a pre-war style of male friendship by portraying his friend as national icon and genius (203).

This discussion emphasizes aspects of Yi's "The Wounded" which align with idiosyncrasies outlined by Freudenburg in *Doctor Faustus*. Firstly, the relationship between the narrator and his significant other presents as exclusive and dyadic. Secondly, the older brother, though very much alive, still fulfills for Yi's narrator the same function as that of the dead Leverkühn for Zeitblom (F 5); that is, the older brother was for Yi's narrator "as good as dead" in so far as his decade-long petrification in the repetitive cycle of life-saving surgeon made him appear as stable and reliable a site for the projection of the narrator's desired identity as Leverkühn appeared for Zeitblom. Thirdly, as is the case with Zeitblom's portrayal of Leverkühn, Yi's narrator at times presents his older brother as his own opposite; he himself is unproductive, the brother productive. He is unlucky in love, his brother contentedly married. He is timid, the older brother aggressive. However, at other times, and in keeping with Freudenburg's analysis of the dynamic between Zeitblom and Leverkühn, the narrator and brother seem to switch positions on the opposite poles of their dyadic relationship, and it is the aggressive older brother who appears timid and the timid narrator who appears aggressive. Finally, I highlight instances where the identity of the narrator and that of his older brother begin to mirror each other to the extent that the brothers seem practically one and the same. Freudenburg argues that this mixing of identities and mirror-imaging ultimately betrays the narrator's endeavor to "erase" the friend (in this case, older brother) in an attempt to

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1 "The degeneration of Weimar's democracy into the Nazi state system is usually referred to as *Gleichschaltung* or co-ordination. It applied to the Nazifying of German society and structures and specifically to the establishment of the dictatorship, 1933-4 […]" (Geoff Layton 141).

2 Although I am drawing on Freudenburg's theory as she illustrates it in Mann's *Doctor Faustus*, her analysis of Günter Grass's *Cat and Mouse* would prove equally illuminating in a comparison with "The Wounded".

3 Within the text, quotations from and reference to Freudenburg will be cited "F".

assume his desired identity from the mirror of the Other (50-51, 222).

Different Stories, Same Exploitative Relationship

Freudenburg draws on Friedrich Tenbruck among others in support of her hypothesis that "friendship is one of our major blind spots because it supplies us with a myth of unified identity which although fictional, offers relief from the fragmentation of modernity" (3-4).[1] In Yi's "The Wounded" it is not the friend but the mirror of the older brother in which, I suggest, the narrator seeks this myth of unity.[2] A relationship between Korean brothers of the 1960s can by no means be considered equivocal to a relationship between male German friends of the 1920s.[3] *Doctor Faustus* and "The Wounded" are an unlikely pairing. Nonetheless, it is my contention that both Zeitblom and Yi's narrator engage in a similar exercise of manipulating a significant other for their own ends.

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1 Friedrich Tenbruck maintains that in the modern world friendship can provide an anchor of stability for the individual, each friend keeping always before him a reassuring image of the other. "[…] In der Konzentration der Freunde aufeinander finden beide sich auf doppelte Weise auf ein Ich festgelegt. Hier gelingt in einer sozial heterogenen Welt die Stabilisierung des Daseins durch die freundschaftsbeziehung […]" ("Freundschaft …" 441).

2 It is curious to note that in the Korean language males often refer to their older friends as "older brother" (Hyong, 형), emphasizing the similarity in traditional Confucian relationship-protocol between brother and friend. Confucianism is deeply rooted in Korean culture, its introduction from China dating back as early as the 4th century CE. According to Carter J. Eckert et al.: "In 372 in Koguryŏ first, and subsequently in Paekche and Silla, Confucian educational institutions were established and works from the corpus of Chinese classics, philosophies, and histories began ever more widely to be read […]" (*Korea Old and New: A Histor*y 37).

3 Carla Risseeuw et al. expand thus on Chinese Confucian traditional views in relation to the brother and the friend:

> Brotherly affection is the permanence of sentiments and attachments of the heart: family and kinship integrated in the past, but also turning somebody unrelated into a quasi-family member by calling him/her brother and sister, etc. […] pengyou also refers to people who study together, so a classmate - depending on gender and age - can be referred to as an older or younger 'study' brother or sister (*xue xiong/jie/di/mei*). Similarly, disciples of the same master (*shi*) are called older or younger brother or sister of the same master/teacher (shi xiong/jie/di/mei) […]. (*Conceptualizing Friendship in Time and Place* 37)

Risseeuw et al. mention two types of friendship within traditional Chinese Confucian culture; the instrumental (networking for career advancement) and the personal (based on shared values, interests, and tastes) (30). The former accepted utilitarian function of an older friend is noteworthy here. The utilitarian use of an older male friend may have been an accepted norm. However, the utilitarian use of an older brother was not. Thus, when Yi's narrator manipulates his relationship with his older brother for his own ends, in a warped way he is turning a utilitarian aspect of the established Confucian friendship protocol back onto the origin from where it stemmed; back onto that of kin-brother protocol, and in so doing, distorting a Confucian protocol 1600 years in standing.

In *Doctor Faustus*, Serenus Zeitblom sets out to write the biography of his deceased friend, the genius composer, Adrian Leverkühn. Zeitblom's narrative gets off to a slow start because before launching into his friend's story, Zeitblom feels obliged to defend his own entitlement to the task at hand. He emphasizes his childhood affiliation with Leverkühn and informs us that he is in possession of certain papers entrusted to him by the composer. He also lays out his educational qualifications which include his service in Freising as a professor in the gymnasium and also his employment as a docent in the theological seminary. At length, Zeitblom embarks on the story of Leverkühn's life from the experiences they both shared together as children in Kaisersaschern on the Saale to Leverkühn's success as a composer, descent into madness and ultimate death at Buchel in 1940. In his biography Zeitblom transcribes, word for word, Leverkühn's alleged dialogue with the devil to whom Leverkühn publicly confesses to have sold his soul for 24 years of creative success.[1] *Doctor Faustus* is a work open to many different levels of interpretation, not least because of Zeitblom's continuous manipulation of the reader's attention from Leverkühn back onto himself.[2]

However, Yi's "The Wounded" is no less challenging in its own right, Kim Chong-un describing the story as one defying any neat summary (24).[3] The narrator begins with the admission that for several days he hasn't been able to add anything to his canvas. He has recently split up with Hyein, a college graduate who had been attending his art studio. He attributes his creative block, not to this emotional crisis in his life, but to his surreptitious reading of his older brother's novel. His war-veteran brother had been working successfully as a surgeon for ten years. However, recently he lost a ten-year-old patient. The narrator describes the incident as a terrible blow to his brother who began drinking, quit work and started writing a novel. The narrator is curious to know why the girl's death caused his brother to start writing. Through his secret reading of the manuscript, he obtains a window into his brother's experiences during the Korean War ten years previously.[4] However, his brother then

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1 According to Freudenburg, in *Doctor Faustus*, episodes from Nietzsche's biography are combined with elements from the Faust chapbook (45). Josh Torabi in "Music, Myth and Modernity: From Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* to Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus*" argues that the connection between music and myth at the heart of Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy*, was revitalized most prominently in the twentieth century by Thomas Mann in *Doctor Faustus* (99). In *Die Entstehung des Doktor Faustus* Mann himself describes the book as a "Nietzsche-Roman" (34).

2 Freudenburg uses Shlomith Rimmon's terminology "metadiegetic" to describe texts such as *Doctor Faustus* where every bit of information points back at the narrator (46).

3 See: Kim Chong-un's "Images of man in postwar Korean fiction" (1-27).

4 Korean War (1950-1953)

stops writing at a crucial point in the story, and the narrator becomes increasingly impatient to get to the bottom of his brother's war-time secrets. Finally, in frustration, he grabs his brother's manuscript and writes his own conclusion to it.

In his novel, the older brother described his experiences trapped behind enemy lines with Sergeant O Kwanmo who was sexually abusing another soldier, Private Kim, the injured third party in their group. After a time, Kwanmo declared that if they were to survive, they would have to eliminate the wounded Kim. The narrator in writing an ending to his brother's story, has his brother take the injured Private Kim out of the cave and shoot him. However, his older brother subsequently rewrites this ending. In his own version the brother does not shoot the injured Kim but his sadistic superior, Kwanmo. One might expect the story to end here. However, on arriving home drunk from Hyein's wedding, the older brother begins burning his novel. He then tells the narrator that he met Sergeant O Kwanmo at the wedding. Did he not really kill Kwanmo then? We are left to ponder.

Clearly, Yi's tale is of a very different nature to that of Mann's *Doctor Faustus*. However, application of Freudenburg's theory exposes Yi's narrator engaged in the projection of his desired identity of war veteran onto the site of his brother in a similar vein to Zeitblom's projection of his desired identity of national icon and genius onto Leverkühn.

A Dyadic Relationship: Two's Company, Four's a Crowd

According to Freudenburg, in *Doctor Faustus*, Zeitblom takes pains to present himself in an exclusive dyadic relationship with his friend, Leverkühn (222). She emphasizes Zeitblom's early assertion that he was the only one with whom his "friend" Adrian Leverkühn used the familiar "Du" or "you" form (220). "If I did not know how to entertain Adrian as Schildknapp did, I did have our childhood tie, our *du*, to my advantage over the Silesian […]" (*DF* 174). However, she is quick to point out that as Zeitblom knew Leverkühn since childhood, technically the use of the informal "you" indicated only that they spent a lot of time together in their youth. It did not indicate that they shared a spiritual or emotional affinity (220). Nonetheless, Zeitblom persists in harping on the exclusivity of his "Du" status with his friend. He refers to instances when Rudi Schwerdtfeger, another of Leverkühn's friends used the "Du" form to Leverkühn without any reciprocation from Leverkühn (F 221). "He *[Schwerdtfeger]* seemed to be of opinion that two years ago he had been *per du* with Adrian, whereas after all that had only been in carnival time, and even then entirely on Rudi's side. Now he blithely took it up again and desisted, with entire unconcern, only when Adrian for the second or third time refused to

respond […]" (*DF* 264).[1] Freudenburg argues that "Zeitblom's jealousy of the "Du" is indicative of his desire for the status of best friend" (221). She maintains that the narrator, Zeitblom is ultimately attempting to present himself in an exclusive dyadic relationship with Leverkühn because "he desires to use his "friend" as his only mirror […]" (222).

In "The Wounded" there are primarily four characters; the narrator, his estranged love interest, Hyein, the narrator's older brother and his older brother's wife. However, the narrator repeatedly stresses the dyadic centrality of his relationship with his brother by downplaying the role of their respective female significant others.[2] He has recently been dumped by Hyein. She subsequently comes to his art studio and informs him that she is to marry a doctor who owns his own clinic (*TW* 130).[3] However, surprisingly it is not the break-up or Hyein's impending marriage that plays on the narrator's mind. "Something peculiar was preoccupying me. My older brother was suddenly writing a novel […]" (*TW* 128). At a teahouse, Hyein invites him to her wedding. ""It's the day after tomorrow. Will you come?"" (*TW* 130). At this point, the narrator is suddenly reminded of his brother's novel and rises to leave. ""I've got some work to do." I finished my coffee and rose quickly. My large, unfinished canvas flashed painfully before my eyes […]" (*TW* 131). His large unfinished canvas he blames not on any emotional void Hyein may have left in his life. "[…] I knew that my feelings for her would pass quickly, and it would be easy to let her go. As she said, I was a painter […]" (*TW* 130). No, according to the narrator, his canvas remains stubbornly blank and unfinished because of his brother. "Simultaneously, the canvas I was working on had begun to seem immensely imposing to me […] all because I had secretly started reading my brother's manuscript. The trouble was that he had stopped making any progress at a crucial part of the story, and while he was at a standstill, I couldn't carry on with my work

1 Within the text, quotes from *Doctor Faustus* are cited *"DF"*.

2 On a surface level, that the female characters should be confined to the wings in a narrative from a country with a Confucian heritage dating back 1600 years is not completely surprising. According to Marian Lief Palley:

> Confucian thought is sometimes applied and appreciated unevenly, that is, some portions of the code are upheld while others are observed in the breach. […] Despite, centuries of inequality between the sexes and the inferior position of women in traditional Korean society, industrialization and modernization have wrought some changes in female lives. But a gap exists between industrial development and cultural response, between material and behavioral culture […]. ("Feminism in a Confucian Society: The Women's Movement in Korea" 278)

3 Within the text, quotations from and reference to "The Wounded" will be cited "*TW*".

[…]" (*TW* 129). It seems to be events in his brother's life which have stupefied him into inaction and not the loss of Hyein. This downplaying of the role of Hyein in his life reinforces the centrality of the narrator's relationship with his brother.

The exclusivity of the brothers' relationship is further galvanized by the narrator's dismissive description of his brother's wife. "I am sorry to say this about her, but she is a woman who is talkative and not too bright. […] After the marriage, his calmness and her colorlessness meant they had few serious disputes" (*TW* 129). Despite the dim light in which he paints her, the narrator still seems to confide in his sister-in-law: "That evening, when I told my sister-in-law about Hyein's wedding, she sounded delighted. "Do you want to go, then?" (*TW* 130). Finding her response unhelpful, the narrator is reduced to further unflattering deductions about her character: "My sister-in-law is the kind of person who enjoys humiliating actors by applauding when they miss their lines […]" (*TW* 130). Subsequently, the narrator again describes his sister-in-law's character in demeaning terms: "My sister-in-law disliked complicated stories. Whenever the story became difficult to follow, she would always make me backtrack a great deal […]" (*TW* 145).

Ultimately, the narrator's dismissive portrayal of both Hyein and his sister-in-law has the effect of centralizing the dyadic relationship between himself and his brother. Zeitblom perpetually takes pains to downplay the role of Leverkühn's friends in order to portray an exclusive dyadic friendship between himself and Leverkühn. A similar dynamic is at play in "The Wounded"; two's company, four's a crowd.

Playing Dead

The best friends are dead ones (F 5). Freudenburg argues that it "[…] is only after the friend—with the power to disrupt the image of unity—is gone that the narrator commences writing […]" (5). In *Doktor Faustus*, it is three years after his friend's death before Zeitblom, at Freising on the Isar, begins his biography of Leverkühn (*DF* 1). Freudenburg argues that Zeitblom, in writing the biography of his friend, is attempting to perpetuate an outdated pre-war style of male friendship in order to create an image of his deceased friend as a national icon and genius (203).

> "Today, clung round by demons, a hand over one eye, with the other staring into horrors, down she [*Germany*][1] flings from despair to despair. When will she reach the bottom of the abyss? When, out of uttermost hopelessness — a miracle beyond the power of belief — will the light of hope dawn? A lonely

1 This and all subsequent bracketed words in italics are inserted by me for clarity.

> man folds his hands and speaks: 'God be merciful to thy poor soul, my friend, my Fatherland!' (*DF* 523)

Ultimately, Freudenburg argues that by constructing Leverkühn's life as a relationship with the chronicler, Zeitblom exposes his own narcissism and desire to use Leverkühn as his own mirror (221-222). "'Rest in Peace!' Adrian is safe […] It is to me as though I stood here and lived for him, lived instead of him; as though I bore the burden his shoulders were spared, as though I showed my love by taking upon me living for him, living in his stead […]" (*DF* 257). In short, Freudenburg proposes that the image of isolated genius Zeitblom attempts to project onto his friend "[…] is innately false, it is not the actual identity of a person, but the desired identity projected upon a dead body, by a storyteller—it is a fiction […]" (5).

In "The Wounded" the narrator's older brother is not dead. However, for over ten years he has been in a state which I would describe as "dormant" or "as good as dead".

> My brother always described himself as having led a quiet life during his decade as a surgeon, "cutting open, cutting off, opening up, and sewing together." A man who seemed to have no doubts about his present life nor any memories of his past, my brother never tired of his work, taking care of his patients diligently at all hours. But despite the many patients he treated successfully, giving new life with his skilled hands, he was not satisfied. He desired more and more patients, as if it was his mission to save as many lives as possible. Cautious and precise as a surgeon, he had not had a single mishap until the incident with the girl." (*TW* 128-129)

While the older brother got on quietly with his mammoth work of saving people on the operating table, he functioned for Yi's narrator just as the deceased Leverkühn functioned for Zeitblom, that is, in the capacity of a stable predictable canvas onto which the narrator could safely project any identity he wished.

> I had always been curious about my brother's being caught behind enemy lines near Kanggye during the Korean War. […] My brother never talked to me directly and openly about the circumstances under which he had become a straggler, however, or which of his fellow soldiers he killed and how and why he did it […] (*TW* 129)

Only once, when his older brother had come home drunk, did he tell the narrator that he was able to escape and stay alive by killing one of his fellow soldiers. The narrator found the story strange. There was a lot he could not understand about it. However, afterwards his brother pretended as if he had never mentioned the subject (*TW* 129). Thus, the "quiet life" status quo of his brother's life continued.

However, let us consider for a moment the older brother's decade-long, quiet but zealous preoccupation with saving patients' lives in relation to Sigmund Freud's ideas on remembering and repeating.

> The patient does not *remember* anything of what he has forgotten and repressed, but *acts* it out. He reproduces it not as a memory but as an action; he repeats it, without, of course, knowing that he is repeating it [...] As long as the patient is in the treatment he cannot escape from the compulsion to repeat; and in the end we understand that this is his way of remembering. ("Remembering, repeating, and working through" 150)

The brother's ten-year-long repetition of the life-saving surgical process, can, I suggest, be interpreted as a repetition of his wartime attempts to save Private Kim when they were stragglers during the War.[1] "I found Private Kim with his right arm severed at the armpit. I carried him to a shelter beside a boulder and began giving him emergency aid to stop the bleeding […]" (*TW* 136). In short, the older brother, while in his decade-long repetitive cycle of saving lives, fulfilled for the narrator the same role as the dead Leverkühn for Zeitblom; he presented as a stable site onto which the narrator could project his own desired identity. The situation only became problematic when the older brother snapped out of his cycle of saving Private Kim and began a cycle of killing.

The narrator assumes that the accidental death of his brother's ten-year-old patient has taken a toll on his brother. This is the only way he can account for his brother's stepping on the hands of a beggar girl.

1 In "Narration as repetition: the case of Günther Grass's *Cat and Mouse*", Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan calls on Freud's theories on remembering and repeating in her analysis of the relationship between Pilenz and Mahlke:

> "[…] 'Are there stories that can cease to be?' […] This question, I believe, is not only an expression of desire on Pilenz's part to free himself from haunting guilt, but also an unconscious wish to put an end to their protagonist, that is to repeat the guilt-provoking action. But the concealed story, like the lost protagonist, keeps returning. Contrary to Pilenz's wishes, stories one dare not face cannot cease to be, and *Cat and Mouse* will repeatedly bear witness to the story Pilenz would rather not tell." (185)

> I guessed that his behavior was a result of the surgical mistake he had made a few days earlier, even though his patient's death hadn't been his fault entirely […] "You stepped on that girl's hands," I said, irritated. For a brief instant he looked perplexed, and then he was upset. "You must be accident-prone, older brother […]" (*TW* 134)

However, were these two incidents really accidents? It is suggestive that the brother's deceased patient was ten years old; an age that would make her almost emblematic of the ten-year time interval since the War. While the initial cycle of saving lives was a repetition of the act of healing Private Kim, the surgeon's stepping on the hands of the beggar-girl raises the question of whether the previous death of his young patient was not also an act of violence, heralding a cycle of killing that culminates in the older brother's literary murder of Kwanmo: "Slowly I raised my rifle and aimed at him. […] Bang!" (*TW* 144).[1]

While in his extended surgeon-phase and repeating the act of saving Private Kim, the older brother fulfilled for the narrator, the same function as the deceased Leverkühn for Zeitblom; he provided a stable site onto which the narrator could project his desired identity of war veteran. He functioned adequately in this role until he suddenly turned deadly, thereby shattering in his hitherto decade-long capacity as stable, reliable mirror.

The Narrator's Opposite

Many unreliable narrators "construct their tales around opposites: one friend is spectacular, the other normal, one is dead, the other alive; one is a failure, the other a success" (F 50).[2] Why does the narrator portray the friend as the opposite of the self? Freudenburg argues that this binary structure is actually the narrator's attempt

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1 Although beyond the scope of this paper, it is interesting to consider Yi's "The Wounded" in view of Ae-Soon Choi's argument that, in the wake of psychoanalysis being introduced as a treatment in the 1960s, 'fear' disappeared from Korean literature. This disappearance of 'fear' Choi aligns with the reemergence of 'psychosis' as a trope. See: "1960 년대 정신분석의 도입과 근대적 공포 코드의 전환 […]" ("Introduction of Psychoanalysis and Development of Modern Fear Code in the 1960s […]") 310.

2 Freudenburg refers in this point to the argument of Jens Rieckmann in "Mocking a Mock-Biography: Steven Millhauser's *Edwin Mullhouse* and Thomas Mann's *Doktor Faustus*" (62-69).

to eliminate the friend by imagining the friend as the self (F 50).[1] According to Freudenburg, Zeitblom, by his own admission, is a mere scribe but Leverkühn a creative genius (50). "Here I *[Zeiblom]* break off, chagrined by a sense of my artistic shortcomings and lack of self-control. Adrian himself could hardly—let us say in a symphony—have let such a theme appear so prematurely […]" (*DF* 2).[2]

Freudenburg also emphasizes Zeitblom's juxtaposition to Leverkühn when it comes to the daemonic (2, 213). He transcribes Leverkühn's dialogue with the devil: "But seen Him I [*Leverkühn*] have, at last, at last! He was with me, here in this hall, He sought me out; unexpected, yet long expected. I held plenteous parley with Him […]" (*DF* 226).[3] However, in contrast to his friend, Zeitblom claims that he himself has had very little contact with evil. (F 213). "[…] the daemonic, little as I presume to deny its influence upon human life, I have at all times found utterly foreign to my nature. Instinctively I have rejected it from my picture of the cosmos and never felt the slightest inclination rashly to open the door to the powers of darkness […]" (*DF* 2).

A similar portrayal of the older brother as the narrator's opposite is at play in "The Wounded." The narrator is unproductive, his brother productive. Although an art teacher, the narrator cannot produce the image he longs to create (*TW* 133). "For several days I hadn't been able to add anything to my new canvas: it overpowered me completely […]" (*TW* 128). He attributes his unproductivity to his brother rather than to any shortcoming in himself. "The trouble was that he [*his older brother*] had stopped making any progress *[in the novel*], and while he was at a standstill, I

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1 Drawing on Weber (*Return to Freud* ... 14), Freudenburg maintains that the friendships portrayed in certain 20th-century German first-person narratives represent "heteroreflective relationship(s) turned into […] auto-reflective one(s)". Although the friendship novels may appear "to be bipolar because there are two main characters, from a hermeneutic standpoint, they are monopolar […]" (F 76). Like *Doctor Faustus*, Yi's "The Wounded" too is all about the narrator.

2 Using Freud to support her argument, Freudenburg maintains that self-derogatory acts on the part of the narrator are in fact "accusations against the lost love object" (65). "So hat man denn den Schlüssel des Krankheitsbildes in der Hand, indem man die Selbstvorwürfe als Vorwürfe gegen ein Liebesobjekt erkennt, die von diesem Weg auf das eigene Ich gewälzt sind [...]" (So one has the clinical picture of the illness in the hand, in so far as one recognizes self-reproaches as reproaches against the loved one, which are in this way rolled onto one's own self.)(Freud "Trauer und Melancholie" 202).

3 Freudenburg suggests that it is Zeitblom's own belief in the affiliation between the devil and genius which leads him to see his friend as one having come under the influence of evil (214). "Now this word 'genius,' although extreme in degree, certainly in kind has a noble, harmonious, and human ring […] And yet it cannot be denied […] that the daemonic and irrational have a disquieting share in this radiant sphere. We shudder as we realize that a connection subsists between it and the nether world […]" (*DF* 2).

couldn't carry on with my own work […]" (*TW* 129). Thus, the narrator presents himself to us in a state of creative paralysis. In contrast, his brother has been working successfully as a surgeon for ten years. During this time, he has always "desired more and more patients, as if it was his mission to save as many lives as possible" (*TW* 129). Clearly, in a professional capacity the older brother seems to overshadow the narrator.

The contrast between the brothers is also in evidence on the romantic front. "[…] my brother had carried on a long and exhausting rivalry for her [*his wife*] with another man. I didn't think my brother would win her, given what I considered his lack of tenacity, but he did. […]" (*TW* 129). The narrator's portrayal of his brother's wife and marriage may sound like nothing to envy. However, his brother's relationship is none-the-less a dazzling success compared to the narrator's own botched love affair. Hyein, a recent college graduate and amateur painter had started coming to his studio at the urging of his brother's friend. Initially, it looked hopeful when one day she kissed him in the studio. However, she subsequently told him she would have nothing more to do with him because he was an artist. She followed this up with the announcement that she was marrying a doctor who owned his own clinic, the wedding having been decided before she had stopped attending his studio (*TW* 130). Thus, in love also, the narrator portrays himself very much in his brother's shadow.

The narrator's timidity too is, at times, in stark contrast to his brother's aggression. "My brother stood in front of my canvas and then said to me belligerently, "Hmm! The person Teacher is drawing looks lonely. You didn't give this person any facial features." […] I stared at him blankly. "I've only just started," I said […]" (*TW* 133). This unsolicited critique of the narrator's work in front of his students seems aggressive and intimidating. However, still further evidence of the older brother's aggression in contrast to the narrator's passivity is evident when the older brother steps on the hands of the beggar girl. "There were always a few blackened coins in her hands. As we were passing in front of her, my brother, who was walking several paces ahead of me, absentmindedly stepped on the girl's hands. […] I was angry at my brother but said nothing […]" (*TW* 134). The narrator cannot believe his brother did not realize he had stepped on the girl's hands. Instead of confronting him immediately he tries to rationalize his brother's actions: "I guessed that his behavior was a result of the surgical mistake he had made a few days earlier […]" (*TW* 134). Not until they are finally sitting down in the bar does the narrator confront his brother: "The girl didn't look like she was in pain, but then you couldn't have known that because you didn't turn around to look […]" (*TW* 134). This delay in confronting

his brother on such an appalling act seems again to highlight the narrator's timidity in contrast to his brother's aggression.[1]

On several fronts then, the narrator presents himself in stark juxtaposition to his brother. Yi's narrator is unproductive, his brother productive. He is unlucky in love, his brother contentedly married. He is timid, his brother aggressive. This portrayal of himself and his brother on opposite poles of a dyadic relationship parallels Zeitblom's presentation of himself as Leverkühn's opposite in *Doctor Faustus*.

A Mixing of Identities

Echoing the argument of Jens Rieckmann, Freudenburg maintains that either member of the relationship dyad can occupy either pole (60). Zeitblom presents himself as modest biographer to the arrogant genius, Leverkühn. As Rieckmann puts it: "Zeitblom, the self-styled "simple man," feels privileged to be the witness of the "life of an artist … this unique specimen of humanity" […]" (64). Yet, despite his protestations to the contrary "he does bring himself into the foreground to a degree that no narrator in a factual biography ever would […]" (Rieckmann 65). The following quotation illustrates this with Zeitblom casting himself into the foreground through his very insistence that he belongs in the background: "This too I say […]; certainly not to direct the reader's attention upon my inconsiderable person, to which only a place in the background of these memoirs is fitting […]" *(DF* 360).

Meanwhile, as we have seen, Zeitblom professes to have always found the daemonic foreign to his nature, in contrast to his friend, Leverkühn who was wedded to Satan (*DF* 2, 509). Still, for one who professes to have rejected the daemonic from his picture of the cosmos, Zeitblom labors a lot on the subject and is meticulous in detailing the lively daemonic discourse at play in the lives of others:

> Professor Kumpf's good out-and-out ways with the Devil were child's play compared to the psychological actuality with which Schleppfuß invested the Destroyer, that personified falling-away from God. For he received, if I may so express myself, dialectically speaking, the blasphemous and offensive into the divine and hell into the empyrean […] (*DF* 100)

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1 The older brother's aggression is further on display in contrast to the narrator's timidity after the narrator takes it on himself to write an ending to his brother's novel. The older brother comes to the studio and tears a hole in the narrator's canvas to minimal protest from the narrator. ""[…] I didn't want you to misunderstand," he replied, pressing his finger into my canvas until he tore a hole. I stood up. But with one hand he continued to widen the tear, and with the other he motioned me to sit back down […]" (*TW* 141). We can infer that the narrator sat back down.

Meanwhile, in "The Wounded" the otherwise-timid narrator is, as we have seen, not too timid to invade his brother's room and read his manuscript: "I glanced around. As expected, my brother had not come home yet. I'll bet he's dead drunk, I thought. As soon as I finished eating, I went to his room and searched his desk drawer […]" (*TW* 131). The hitherto timid narrator becomes subsequently even more emboldened and takes it upon himself to write a conclusion to his brother's story: "[…] I concluded the story by having the narrator [*his older brother*] drag Kim out of the cave and shoot him […]" (*TW* 140). Meanwhile, the narrator, in the conclusion he writes, decidedly categorizes his older brother's shooting of Kim as timid and cowardly by making blatant reference to Kwanmo's description of his brother's "sparrowlike heart" (*TW* 140). Thus, in a similar vein to Freudenburg's analysis of the dynamic at play between Zeitblom and Leverkühn, in "The Wounded" the narrator and older brother appear as opposites, yet opposites who seem on occasion to switch positions on the counter poles within their dyadic relationship. At times we are confronted with a timid narrator in the face of an aggressive older brother. At other times it is an aggressive narrator in juxtaposition to a timid older brother.

The Object of the Narrator's Aggression

For Freudenburg, rare are the narrators who in some way support the friend or try to avert their death. (51). While friends can be seen as an "autonomous version of identity which is admired, they also represent the objects of the narrators' aggression", some narrators even participating in the murder of their friend (F 51). Freudenburg points out how in *Doctor Faustus*, Zeitblom expresses a "perennial desire to serve his friend—a desire which, he regrets, was denied any sort of satisfaction during the composer's life" (F 211). "[…] the always cherished desire to serve, to help, to protect him—this desire which during the lifetime of my friend found so very little satisfaction […]" (*DF* 257). Yet, she goes on to note how, after an unusually strong bout of headaches and Leverkühn's subsequent indulgence in a lengthened discourse on the mermaid, Zeitblom agrees with his friend's decision not to get a second medical opinion (F 211).

> It was this that made me agree to his rejecting the proposal which Dr. Kürbis at the time in duty bound put before him; he recommended or asked consideration for a consultation with a higher medical authority; but Adrian avoided it, would have none of it. He had, he said, in the first place full confidence in Kürbis; but also he was convinced that he, more or less alone, out of his own nature and powers, would have to get rid of the evil. This corresponded with

> my own feeling. (*DF* 352)

Freudenburg interprets Zeitblom's agreement with Leverkühn's decision as ominous given that Dr. Kürbis had misdiagnosed Leverkühn's illness as an ulcer (F 211). She suggests that ultimately Zeitblom does not want his friend to recover because illness is linked with creative powers (F 212). As Zeitblom himself puts it: "[…] genius is a form of vital power deeply experienced in illness, creating out of illness, through illness creative […]" (*DF* 362). Ultimately, Freudenburg argues that in attempting to apply the inherited image of isolated, ill genius to his friend, the narrator actually contributes to Leverkühn's demise (212).

In "The Wounded", the timid narrator's hijacking of his brother's novel can likewise be interpreted as an act of aggression in an attempt to reestablish the previous status quo, i.e., the hitherto stable and predictable mirror of his surgeon brother:

> I could wait no longer. I carried his unfinished manuscript and some blank sheets to my own room and began venting my anger on Private Kim. I pounced on him the way a leopard pounces on a rabbit. Of course I didn't know if this had actually been the case, but I concluded the story by having the narrator [*older brother*] drag Kim out of the cave and shoot him. As for my brother's escape, that part really didn't matter to me. I fell asleep near dawn, after writing about the thumping of my brother's "sparrowlike heart," which Kwanmo had called "hesitant and scared." (*TW* 140)

Depending on how one looks at it, the killing of Private Kim could be considered an act of bravery or an act of cowardice. It is an act of bravery in the sense that it takes guts to kill someone in cold blood even if the deed is intended to release another from suffering. Private Kim's life was a misery both physically and mentally. "The flesh around the injury was crumbling like a mud wall […] and soon his eyes became dry, as if the tears had stopped forever. His gaze remained fixed on the ceiling. And it was then that I [*older brother*] thought it would be all right for him to die […]" (*TW* 139). Thus, the killing of long-suffering Kim could have been a euthanasic act of bravery on the part of the older brother. However, it is an act of cowardice in the sense that Private Kim was infinitely easier to murder than the sadistic Kwanmo. "Kwanmo began dragging Kim to his feet and pushing him out of the cave. The narrator [*older brother*] grasped Kwanmo's arm to hold him back, but Kwanmo turned on him with a vicious look. The narrator [*older brother*] let go and looked away […]" (*TW* 142).

In choosing to have his older brother shoot Private Kim and not Kwanmo, the narrator, in his ending to the novel, is aggressively annihilating his brother's character; the older brother who has lately, in instances, been aggressive in contrast to the timid narrator, he now distinctly categorizes as "sparrowlike", "hesitant and scared" (*TW* 140). The sadistic Kwanmo clearly did not think that the narrator's brother had what it took to shoot Private Kim, even for the sake of his own self-preservation. "A sparrow-heart like yourself is better off not seeing this. Didn't I tell you to pretend as if nothing's going on?" Kwanmo spoke in a low, caressing voice […]" (*TW* 143). In echoing Kwanmo's words, "hesitant and scared" and describing his brother's heart as "sparrowlike" the narrator is labeling his brother's murder of Private Kim not as a brave act of mercy but as a timid act of cowardice.

In switching from a decade-long cycle of saving lives to a new cycle of violence, the older brother destabilized as a site for the narrator's projected identity. The otherwise passive narrator is then driven to the aggressive act of hijacking the conclusion of his brother's novel in which he figuratively kills this lately-turned-deadly brother in an attempt to restore the previous status quo, that is, to reinstate the mirror of his brother of the "quiet life". Thus, in line with the dynamic at play between Zeitblom and Leverkühn, and as outlined by Freudenburg (50-51), Yi's narrator can also be said to "erase" the other of the dyad in an attempt to assume his desired identity from the mirror of his brother.

Mirror Images

Although the narrator, in telling his story, highlights the differences between himself and his dyadic counterpart, Freudenburg maintains that the process of the elimination of the other may also manifest itself in a mixing of the polarized roles of friend and narrator (51). She comments: "Psychoanalysis has shown that the narcissistically generated mirror image is a false impression of self-integrity and self-unity, and the text [*Doctor Faustus*] certainly supports this conclusion. Zeitblom and Leverkühn can be seen as mirror images of each other […]" (222). By way of illustration, Freudenburg notes "the echo-effect" of Zeitblom and Leverkühn's speech (222). She highlights how the word "Durchbruch"[1] seems to ricochet between them: "Zeitblom mentions it [*Durchbruch*] in connection with the euphoria preceding the First World War, and the hope of breaking through to some new world […]" (F 222). "A new breakthrough seemed due: we would become a dominating world power—but such a position was not to be achieved by means of mere moral 'homework.' War, then, and if needs must, war against everybody, to convince everybody

1 *Durchbruch* … the breaking through

and to win; that was our lot, our 'sending' […]" (*DF* 307). Freudenburg emphasizes how Leverkühn later "transposes it [*Durchbruch*] from the political level to the aesthetic in a discussion in which he expresses a longing for art to break through its own coldness of spirit to a very human level of feeling" (F 222). "[…] -the break-through, you would say; whoever succeeded in the break-through from the intellectual coldness into a touch-and-go world of new feeling, him one should call the savior of art […]" (*DF* 328).

In "The Wounded" it is the older brother's ending to his own novel which drives home the mirror-image likeness of the siblings.[1] All through the story the narrator has professed to be oppressed by his blank canvas. "I had a strong premonition of a certain face. I hadn't actually met a person with that face, but I sketched an outline, using a firm oval - this was unusual for me - that was full of tension. For several days, I agonized over the outline" (*TW* 133). The older brother looks at this canvas and says: "I think a newly created person's eyes and lips should show vengefulness" (*TW* 134). However, at the end of the story the narrator's still incomplete canvas lies "in pieces like a broken mirror" (*TW* 147). Meanwhile, in stark contrast, a hitherto elusive face has materialized at the end of his brother's novel:

> It was a face I'd [*older brother*] been yearning for, like a face I had known in my mother's womb, a face I had known forever. If only I could remember […] I closed my eyes. And I pulled the trigger again and again. The shots echoed through the valley. The salty liquid kept flowing into my mouth. When my ammunition was gone, the sound of the shots stopped.
> I saw a smiling, blood-covered face. It was mine. (*TW* 144)

Thus, as with Zeitblom and Leverkühn, Yi's narrator and older brother seem also at times to be mirror images of each other. The face that eludes the narrator's canvas materializes at the end of his brother's novel.

The Lord Set a Mark Upon Cain

According to Freudenburg, in *Cat and Mouse*, Pilenz, in attempting to portray Mahlke as his "monumental friend", demonstrates his own inability to transition

1 The narrator's sister-in-law certainly seems to see similarities between the brothers. She says at one point to the narrator: "You're unknowable, too – like him" (145). Indeed, her glances back and forth between husband and narrator in the book-burning scene almost suggest she has trouble telling them apart. "I decided to put up with him a little longer. My sister-in-law glanced back and forth between us […]" (145).

to a post-fascist mentality (F 177). Similarly, in *Doctor Faustus*, even as German territory is being occupied, Zeitblom still endeavors in his biography of Leverkühn, to perpetuate a pre-war style of male friendship in order to create an image of his friend as national icon and genius (F 203). Speaking of Korean literature in the wake of the Korean War, Chong-un Kim remarks that, "[…] No portrayals of heroism or military valor adorned the fiction of the war-torn country […]" (5). The reason for this, according to Kim, was the nature of the war itself: "[…] it was a civil war in which no real or worldly gain or glory was at stake except that elusive thing called ideology. An instinctive abhorrence to portraying tragic fratricidal battles probably lay at the root of this […]" (5). Yet, in so far as his utilization of the site of his brother echoes Pilenz and Zeitblom's exploitation of their deceased friends, I suggest that Yi's narrator too is attempting a perpetuation of his desired identity of war veteran by projecting this identity onto his brother.

However, why would anyone wish to perpetuate the identity of tortured war veteran, especially given the sordid war scenes with which we are confronted in the story? The text appears to answer this question. "[…] my brother was a war casualty, but I had a wound without a source. Where is my wound? Hyein had said that there ought to be no pain where there was no cause for pain […]" (147). The implication seems to be that the brother's suffering is somehow more bearable than the narrator's because it has a definite source and nameable origin.[1]

"I've been thinking about the garden of Eden, Cain and Abel, and what qualities are inherent in human nature […]" (*TW* 133). Yi's narrator ponders the story of Cain and Abel. However, this story is, in a way, a nutshell of the multi-mirroring at play throughout "The Wounded". "What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand […]" (Genesis 4:10-11). The aggression of Cain toward Abel parallels, I suggest, the older brother's aggression toward the narrator. Cain's spilling of his brother's blood is also evocative of Kwanmo's killing of Private Kim, but no less so of the older brother's literary killing of Kwanmo. They are, in the end, all one, blood brothers.[2]

1 "The communication of pain generates an imperative – an imperative to belief in that pain and an imperative to answer to that call in commiseration (Freda "Discourse on Han in Postcolonial Korea […]" 25). The implication that suffering, however horrific, is more endurable with a labeled source and name may hold credence in light of the above quote from Freda).

2 In line with Seo Eun-hye's argument that Yi uses his characters to indirectly criticize the political regime of President Park, Cain's murder of Abel may also be emblematic of the suppression or "killing" of people's right to democracy by various Korean governmental regimes. See: "이청준's 소설 속 인물들의 자기기만과 실존의 조건" ("Existentialism and Self-deceit in the characters of Yi Cheong-jun"), 337-373.

Elsewhere, in Daniel Corkery's "Colonel Mac Gillicuddy Goes Home", I have argued that the impossibility of portraying an Irish war hero during the Irish War of Independence may, in a similar vein to Freudenburg's argument, have led to Corkery's narrator projecting an illusionary war-hero identity onto his friend.[1] In the case of "The Wounded", I suggest that the presence of a narrator attempting to acquire the impossibly problematic identity of "war veteran" from the site of his older brother is symptomatic of an absence of sustainable identity roles in the political and economic climate of the post-War years.[2] The label of "war veteran" categorizes and contains the older brother's pain. "[…] the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him […]" (Genesis 4:15). The older brother, like Cain has murdered his sibling. Like Cain, he bears that terrible but distinct mark of definition. However, the narrator's pain, has no mark or definitive label: "[…] Perhaps I would never be able to find a face. Unlike the one behind my brother's pain, there was no face in mine […]" (*TW* 147).

The Face Outside the Mirror

Yet, in "The Wounded", there is, I would argue, a possible face all the time in plain sight. To see it one must disengage from the loop of mirroring at play between the narrator and brother and look in the blind spot of the story. Here, I suggest, is the face of poverty.

Curiously, Yi's story is set against a markedly banal and decidedly unKorean backdrop. There is no mention of the harvest moon festival or the Lunar New Year. The narrator lives with his brother and sister-in-law, a household of three, smacking more of the modern nuclear family than a traditional Korean network of grandpar-

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1 See: "A German Literary Paradigm of Friendship in the Irish Short Story, "Colonel Mac Gillicuddy Goes Home" (1919)".

2 The post-War years were tumultuous. In Seoul on April 19th, 1960, thousands of people staged a demonstration against the entrenched governmental and electoral corruption of Rhee Syngman's "democratic" regime. According to Andrew Nahm C., this protest was triggered by the discovery of a student's body with a tear-gas shell imbedded in one eye. Fifteen-year-old, Kim Ju-yeol had been killed on March 15th, 1960, during the government's crushing of a demonstration on election day in Masan, South Kyongsang Province (*A History of the Korean People …* 406). After the uprising of April 19th, President Ree stepped down. On April 27th, a National Assembly appointed Foreign Minister Ho Chong as the head of a temporary government (406-407). However, in May 1961, a group of military officers under the leadership of Kim Jong-pil and Major General Park Chung-hee carried out a coup and overthrew the government of Ho Chong (413-414). Park Chung-hee was to remain in the seat of power in "democratic" Korea until October 26th, 1979, when he was assassinated by Kim Chae-gyu (431).

ents, aunts, uncles, and extended family.[1] There is no doubt that 1960s Korea had cultural, political, and indeed, economic idiosyncrasies unique unto itself. However, despite the widely-lauded economic "miracle on the Han River"[2] on November 13th, 1970, workers-rights activist, 22-year-old Jeon Tae-il committed self-immolation in protest at the appalling and long-ignored working conditions in Seoul factories.[3] This I mention to illustrate the milieu airbrushed out of the story and yet, I would argue, present in its gaping absence.

"One day, when my other students had left early, Hyein stood alone in front of a plaster bust. […] Suddenly, she turned and kissed me. She later said she'd kissed me because I was an artist […]" (*TW* 130). It's hard to imagine a female art student in 2020s Seoul making a pass at her male art teacher. What can account for Hyein's boldness back in 1960s Korea?

"You never wanted to take any kind of responsibility, and my attempts to pressure you to be responsible never succeeded. I realized finally that there is nothing you can take responsibility for anyway […]" (141). A non-Korean reader might be forgiven for thinking that Hyein became exasperated waiting for the narrator to make the first move let alone propose and in frustration married a doctor. For me, however, Hyein's words are merely aesthetic double-speak for what the times would have dictated she say: "You're an economic non-entity. You can't support me." The narrator's sister-in-law uses similar aesthetic double-speak. "There was something

1 Such a nuclear family seems removed from the reality of Korean life. However, at the same time, the Korean War both decimated and divided families. According to Ki-baik Lee in *A New History of Korea*: "South Korean casualties in the fighting alone are estimated at 150,000 dead, 200,000 missing, and 250,000 injured, while more than 100,000 civilians were abducted to North Korea and the number of war refugees reached several million. North Korean casualties were several times these figures […]" (380).

2 According to Carter J. Eckert et al.:

> "[…] development of the South Korean economy is one of the great stories of the post-World War II era. It is a tale whose drama is heightened by breathtaking contrasts […] a war-ravaged Seoul of gutted buildings, ruble, beggars, and orphans in 1953 versus the proud, bustling city of the 1988 Summer Olympics […] Given these remarkable facts, it is not surprising that many popular writers and even a few scholars have taken to calling South Korea's economic transformation "the miracle on the Han […]" (388).

3 According to Kwon Huck-ju and Yi Ilcheong, the Park Chung-hee government (1961–79) "shifted economic policy from import substitution industrialization to export-led development in the mid-1960s, at which time the economy recorded impressive growth, simultaneously with a reduction in poverty […]" (772). Jeon Tae-il's 1970 suicide in protest at the poor working conditions in Seoul factories indicates the extent to which this reduction in poverty was unfelt by many.

persistent about him *[the older brother*], so I guess I assumed he was uncomplicated. A complicated man cannot be persistent about one thing, and women hate complications. To put it frankly, I thought I could depend on him completely […]" (131). Her words are deep, reflective, analytical. However, I suggest that, were she to truly put it frankly, she would say: "He's a doctor; I knew I could depend on him financially."

The narrator's contradictory description of his brother's courtship is peculiar and, I would argue, likewise, latently supportive of this argument. The narrator describes his brother as having conducted a "long and exhausting rivalry" for his wife with another man. In the same breath, he expresses surprise that his brother won her, given his lack of tenacity. "[…] my brother had carried on a long and exhausting rivalry for her with another man. I didn't think my brother would win her, given what I considered his lack of tenacity, but he did […]" (*TW* 129) To my mind, "a long and exhausting rivalry" is in no way reconcilable with "a lack of tenacity". Here too, I suspect the narrator's contradictory reflections are more double-speak, masking the economic factor, again airbrushed out of the equation. I suggest that in the long and exhausting rivalry, the older brother's secure economic status may have compensated where his tenacity was lacking. The narrator has no such crutch. As previously discussed, the two brothers seem, at times, to exchange positions on the opposing poles within their dyadic relationship. In certain instances, they even appear to mirror each other. Yet, when it comes to economic viability, the narrator is nailed firmly to the impotent pole of the dyad.

Hyein's letter to the narrator on the morning of her wedding is sadomasochistic.

> I thought of you when my fiancé told me that your brother's war wound had never healed, that he's still suffering from it. You on the other hand have a wound with no origin. I wondered then what kind of casualty you are, suffering from a wound that isn't a wound. Your symptoms are more serious, and your wound is more acute because you have no idea where it's located or what kind of wound it is. (TW 141)

A letter of reproach; the narrator did not ask Hyein to marry him, so she married a doctor. However, if he had asked her to marry him, I suspect she would still have married a doctor. Hyein is disingenuous. It is my contention that she knows the location of the narrator's wound. To avoid looking into its face, that is, into the face of poverty, she is marrying a doctor. Ironically, if anything, it is her own sadomasoch-

ism in the form of repeated contact with the narrator after their break-up that gives his wound its acuteness and defines its location. "*And now, I want to be happy no matter what. I know I have to forgive myself before I can forgive anyone else* […]" (*TW* 142). She has to forgive herself for marrying financial security before she can forgive the narrator for not having any.

Conclusion

> … those who have lived for years under dictatorship, compared to those who haven't, are at once more conservative and more radical, more shameless and more moralistic, more traitorous and more jingoistic, more corrupt and more upright—in short, they become schizophrenic. (Kim Young-hyon "A Bird in a Cage: An Autobiographical Sketch" 108-109)

In "Images of man in postwar Korean fiction", Chong-un Kim emphasizes the flair for experimentation evidenced in the work of Yi and several of his contemporaries and notes the possible influence of Western literature on their writing (4, 22). Meanwhile, Seo Eun-hye argues that Yi, in his work, encases his narrators in various levels of self-deceit and by this means attempts an indirect critique of the Park Chung-hee regime (337-373).[1] It would be naïve to suggest that Yi's work was not influenced by foreign literature given that he graduated with a degree in German from Seoul National University. However, can the parallels here highlighted be said to expose an attempt by Yi to covertly attack dictatorial oppression?[2] The narrator's preoccupation with his older brother and his older brother's war-veteran identity masks, I suggest, an inability on his part to confront economic impotence. In so

1 See: Seo Eun-hye's " 이청준 소설 속 인물들의 자기기만과 실존의 조건 " ("Existentialism and Self-deceit in the Characters of Yi Cheong-jun") 337-373. According to Jonathan C. Stalling and Eun-Gwi Chung, the three decades following the Korean War "saw the rise of explicitly political literary groups such as the National Literary Movement and most writers publicly allied themselves with oppositional politics or political groups […]" ("Introduction: Korean Literature, Then and Now" 41).

2 Hwasook Nam argues that Park Chung-hee's "promises of overcoming poverty, eliminating corruption, and creating a new "social welfare" state for all seem to have struck a strong chord with many reform-minded Koreans" ("Progressives and Labor under Park Chung Hee […]" 888). However, ultimately, in his eighteen-year rule, Park Chung-hee was to run "the political gamut from military totalitarianism to party politics before finally establishing what he called a "Korean-style democracy," a harsh authoritarian system with, in fact, barely a suggestion of democracy about it […]" (Carter J. Eckert et al., 359).

far as this economic impotence may have been caused or exasperated by the Park Chung-hee regime, its encasement in the blind spot of the story, that is, in the double-speak of the female characters, makes this argument not inconsistent with Seo Eun-hye's suggestion that Yi was attempting an indirect critique of the Park administration by enshrouding his characters in self-deceit.

Ultimately, the parallels here demonstrated between "The Wounded" and Freudenburg's analysis of *Doctor Faustus* highlight the complicated wormhole of mirrors into which Yi's narrator continually draws the reader's focus. Only by extracting one's gaze from this labyrinth of mirrors can the reader perceive in the blind spot of the story, the otherwise-evasive face of poverty. This application of Freudenburg's theory to Yi Cheong-jun's "The Wounded" demonstrates that the phenomenon of manipulating a significant other for the purpose of facilitating one's own desired identity-projections is by no means exclusive to German first-person narratives. As such, this discussion illustrates the extent to which Freudenburg's theory is valid as a tool of analysis in the broader field of comparative literature.

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Nomadism as Lifestyle: The Construction of a Narrative Borderland in *Un Beduino En El Caribe*

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Abstract This article analyses the short story collection *Un beduino en el Caribe* (*A Bedouin in the Caribbean*), written by the Sahrawi author Ali Salem Iselmu and published in 2014. Although the Saharan desert remains at the core of the collection, representing the quintessential and predominant place in the author's literary universe, these short stories also depict an amalgam of places, the cohabitation of different cultures, and thus, the Sahrawi migration as a multi-space phenomenon. Drawing on the idea that fictional literature can be an effective tool for political resistance, and that the negotiation of an alternative identity within a hegemonic order requires a space, this article argues that Iselmu's short stories project resistance literary spaces where the author expresses his disapproval of the Moroccan occupation of Western Sahara and vindicates a nomad and transboundary identity. This resistance is achieved through the construction (and habitation) of a borderland at a narrative level, characterized by a fluid and flexible identity and multiple and juxtaposed geographical spaces, where the Sahrawi narrative voices can reimagine their identity and their sense of sovereignty.
Keywords border poetics; borderland; Sahrawi literature; refugees; identity
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Introduction

Un beduino en el Caribe (*A Bedouin in the Caribbean*) is a collection of short stories written by the Saharawi author Ali Salem Iselmu and published in 2014. It portrays the experiences of displacement and political refugeehood that Iselmu's generation underwent, and still undergoes, because of the Moroccan occupation of Western Sahara in 1975. As early as in 1960 the UN urged Spain to initiate a decolonization process (through a referendum of self-determination) of what was then known as Spanish Sahara. The UN's backing of Western Sahara's independence triggered the emergence of the Polisario Front in the early 1970s. This is a group that embodies the national liberation movement that had been gaining support in the Spanish Sahara for a decade. However, to everyone's surprise, in 1975 the Spanish government ended up transferring the administration of the territory to Morocco and Mauritania without the consent of the Saharawi people. The transfer of the territory to Morocco and Mauritania was carried out in secret tripartite negotiations that led to the Madrid Accords, a text that granted Morocco and Mauritania the power to occupy and annex the ex-Spanish colony. Morocco's intentions to invade Western Sahara dated back to the early 1970s, when the North-African country turned to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to claim this territory. Morocco based its claim on its historical links with the Sahrawi tribes prior to the Spanish occupation of the land at the end of the 19th century (Fernández-Molina & Ojeda-García 2020). Even though the ICJ's conclusion was unfavorable to the Moroccan government, rejecting the country the right to assume control over the Spanish Sahara, the Moroccan government decided to invade it through the so-called Green March of 350,000 civilians. After the UN Security Council's failed attempt to call upon Morocco to withdraw from Western Sahara, and the parallel Spanish abandonment of the Saharawi people through the Madrid Accords, the Polisario Front started a guerrilla war against the Mauritanian and Moroccan armies, resulting in the flight of half of the indigenous Sahrawi population to refugee camps near Tindouf, in south-western Algeria. In 1979, Mauritania made peace with the Polisario Front and relinquished its share of the territory, which was rapidly appropriated by Morocco. However, the Moroccan government still refuses to accept Sahrawis' independence and imposes strict measures of national control over the annexed territory (Fernández-Molina & Ojeda-García 2020).

Drawing on the idea that fictional literature can be an effective tool for political resistance (Harlow 1987; Adichie 2009; Mayer 2014; Borst 2019), and that the negotiation of an alternative identity within a hegemonic order requires

occupying a space (Hall 1986; Said 1990; Rose 1995; Agnew 2008), this article argues that, in *Un Beduino en el Caribe,* the author builds a liminal literary territory where Saharawi narrative voices reimagine their identity and their sense of sovereignty. The term "border poetics," or the study of how narrative and symbolic representations can give form to territorial (or metaphorical) borders have been a widely discussed topic in the academic sphere during the last two decades (Schimanski 1996; Sidaway 2005). Iselmu's short stories generate a border poetics and project literary spaces of resistance where the author expresses his disapproval of the Moroccan occupation of Western Sahara while claiming a nomad and transboundary identity. These spaces are, in essence, borderlands (Anzaldúa 1987), characterized by the juxtaposition and intermingling of geographical spaces and a nomad and mutable identity. Significantly, they could likewise be viewed as "third spaces" (Bhabha 1990), "contact zones" (Pratt 1992), and "spaces of refusal" (Jones 2012) since they "provide the [liminal] terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood—singular or communal—that initiate new signs of identity" (Bhabha 1). Considering this, I will also be using Anzaldúa's concept of "borderland" to address the interstitial spaces that are built within the narratives.

The title of the collection—*Un beduino en el Caribe* (*A Bedouin in the Caribbean*)—encompasses the Saharawi's history of nomadism as well as their experience of exile by connecting two distant and, in many ways, divergent worlds: the refugee camps in Tindouf and Cuba. The connection between the Caribbean country and Western Sahara was reinforced during the Cold War due to a common political and ideological position, and the assistance that Cuba offered Western Sahara in the face of the latter's social emancipation processes (Gómez Martín & Correa Álvarez 2014). The Cuban revolutionary ideology, led by Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, spread internationally to other Latin American countries, and to European, and African political contexts. For example, the revolution had a direct or indirect influence on some decolonization processes such as the Algerian revolution and the Saharawi national liberation movement. Indeed, Cuba and other "friendly countries," such as Poland and Algeria, participated in the construction of the Polisario Front's political project of independence through civil cooperation and the provision of financial support. In 1980, the Cuban government officially acknowledged the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) as an independent State, which caused the breakup of Morocco's and Cuba diplomatic relations. As the alliance between the Polisario Front and Fidel Castro's government grew stronger, the latter encouraged the arrival of exiled Sahrawi people to its territory between 1980 and 1999 (Monje 2012) to receive an education in different disciplines. The

lengthy stay of many young Sahrawis in Cuba (some stayed for up to 15 years) fostered strong affective bonds between both cultures, which translated into these Sahrawis' preservation of Caribbean idiosyncrasies once they left the island. Due to this significant influence, which manifests through their Cuban accent when speaking Spanish, their Latin way of interacting with others, or their distinctive way of understanding life, they are known as *Cubarauis*. The term alludes to their stay in Cuba as a cornerstone of their identity (Gómez Martín & Correa Álvarez 87).

Ali Salem Iselmu, the author of the short story collection at hand, belongs to the generation of Sahrawi children who received an education in Cuba. He was born in the old town of Villa Cisneros (Western Sahara) in 1970, and as with most Sahrawis of his age, his childhood was marked by war and exile. In 1979, when the war between the Polisario Front and Mauritania ended, he had to flee with his family to the refugee camps in south-east Algeria, where he stayed until he was sent to Cuba in 1982. He lived in the island for 14 years, obtaining a degree in Journalism from the University of La Habana. In 1995, he returned to the refugee camps in Algeria and started working in the Spanish department of Sahrawi National Radio. Nowadays, he lives in Spain, and has participated in several anthologies of contemporary Sahrawi poetry, such as *Añoranza. Imágenes del pueblo saharaui* (2002), *Bubisher. Poesía saharaui contemporánea* (2003) and *Aaiún, gritando lo que se siente* (2006). He is a solo author in the book of poetry *La música del siroco* (2008), and the short story collection *La luz de cuatro velas en el Sáhara* (2018). In addition, he is a member of the so-called *La Generación de la Amistad* (The Sahrawi Friendship Generation), a group of Sahrawi writers constituted as such during a meeting in Madrid on July 9 in 2005 with the goal of "raising awareness about Saharawi political limbo and advocating for international recognition of their territory" (L. Ellison & College 75). This literary cooperative includes the authors Mohamed Salem Abdelfatah, Bahía Mahmud Awah, Chejdan Mahmud Liazid, Limam Boicha, Zahra Hasnaoui and Ali Salem Iselmu, among others. Although its members share evident political experiences of migration and could be approached as a "generation" in the conventional meaning of literary history, they also constitute a network of interconnected heterogeneous members. These authors have made their literary work known both individually and collectively, with the intention of bringing visibility to their life experiences as displaced people as well as to the Sahrawi political cause. This is the case of the anthology *Don Quijote, el azri de la badia saharaui* (2008), to which Iselmu contributes with his short story "La Libertad del ingenioso hidalgo" to highlight the figure of Don Quixote, who is, due to his own status as a knight-errant, a true epitome of the eternal nomad. Some

of his short narratives, such as "Reencuentro" or "El barco y la camarera" have been included in *La fuente de la saguia* (2009), a short story collection in which various members of the Friendship Generation try to convey the suffering and hope of their people.

Even though since the beginning of the 21st century the Sahrawi community in Spain has maintained a prolific literary production and their texts have started to receive some academic attention, scholars such as M'bare N'gom Faye have noted that African literature written in Spanish is still relatively little studied and that, more specifically, the Spanish literature from Western Sahara remains quite unexplored (N'gom Faye 2011). There are, however, relevant studies that have encouraged the emerging critical attention on Sahrawi literature and that have hugely contributed to shedding light on the border as a Hispano-Sahrawi space of creative expression (Odartey-Wellington 2017), as well as the poetic representations of the Saharan desert (L. Ellison & College 2018), the migratory question in Sahrawi literature (Gómez Martín 2013), and its search for alternative political spaces through their writings (Odartey-Wellington 2018). But such studies are scarce and do not really analyze short narratives written by Saharawis deeply. They rather approach Sahrawi's literature from a holistic perspective and/or mainly focusing on poetry, the predominant genre in Sahrawi literature. While it is true that poetry has always been intrinsic to Sahrawi culture because it fits well into its traditionally nomad character, the desire to document oral history from one generation to the other, and its capacity as an effective literary tool of political resistance (Deubel 2012; Robles et al. 2015), it is important to highlight that short narrative (in the form of popular tales and legends) also constitutes a relevant dissemination tool of Sahrawi traditional values, beliefs, and desires. Indeed, Barreras Gómez has pointed out that this genre's features (briefness, intensity of action, importance of themes) make it ideal for marginal authors to denounce certain political and social situations, as it has been historically used by those who have never formed part of the dominant narrative, such as exiles, women, and migrants to provide alternative point of views to the dominant discourse (Barreras Gómez 2014). Thus, there is a need for more studies that analyze Sahrawis' short stories as another key instrument for these authors to mold a Sahrawi identity, as well as research that explores how short narratives engage with other literary genres to enhance a transborder spirit and a mindset independent from Moroccan domination. The present article finds inspiration in Odartey-Wellington's understanding of physical barriers as sites of aesthetic production in Saharawi creative expression (Odartey-Wellington 2017), and in Bahia Mahmud Awah's approach to *Un beduino en el Caribe* as an example

of cultural multi-stratification (Mahmud Awah 2018), to provide a close analysis of Sahrawi short narrative and, more specifically, of Iselmu's short story collection. The main purpose of this study is to highlight short narrative as an equally important genre of Saharawi cultural expression, and to demonstrate that these stories contribute to a better understanding of Sahrawi literature as a site of political resistance.

Un beduino en el Caribe (*A Bedouin in the Caribbean*) contains thirty short stories that narrate Iselmu's and other children's daily life in the hostile Tindouf camps and their subsequent journey to Cuba, the land where the author, and many other Sahrawis, spent their youth as political refugees. They also tell the experience of departure from the Caribbean Island many years later, and the strangeness of the return to the place where these Sahrawis spent their childhood after having spent so many years abroad. Such return caused them a consequent feeling of being uprooted, even though their Saharawi origin had always been inherent in their hearts. Some of the short stories also aim at dignifying the Saharawi culture by presenting several popular tales and legends which highlight the nomadic and peaceful lifestyle of Sahrawis, their tough spirit and their adaptation capacity. In essence, Iselmu combines autobiographical literature with journalistic chronicles and popular legends. The book forms a portrait that is rich in perspectives, simple in its composition, but that fulfills its objective: to bring us closer to the reality of the Sahrawi people from the period prior to colonization to the present, passing through exile and the war. *Un beduino en el Caribe* is, as the author brilliantly explained in the book's introduction,

> la historia de un niño que creció fuera de su tierra persiguiendo la libertad de su pueblo y aceptando los retos y desafíos que supone para una persona vivir durante muchos años y de forma indefinida, los amargos momentos de la separación de su familia y la fractura de su pueblo mediante un conflicto originado entorno a la soberanía del Sáhara Occidental (Iselmu 11).

> the story of a child who grew up abroad, pursuing his people's freedom and accepting the challenge of living for many years, and indefinitely, the bitter separation from his family and the fracture of his people, due to a conflict originated around the sovereignty of Western Sahara (Iselmu 11)[1].

More specifically, the short stories in this book revolve around four themes:

1 All translations, unless otherwise indicated, are mine.

the projection of past childhood memories in Western Sahara as a symbolic act to claim this territory, the migratory experience outside the Sahara, a negative portrayal of Moroccan occupation while claiming independence, and the special relationship between the Saharawi people and the desert. In fact, these four themes are recurrently used in literary texts that fall under the *Generación de la Amistad* (the Sahrawi Friendship Generation)**.** Their unifying themes are the depiction of an errant condition, the experiences of exile and displacement, the evocation of a lost land and its reclamation though memory, and the use of the Spanish language to reach an international audience and look for alliances in their self-definition project (Odartey-Wellington 313). Thus, Iselmu's book, *Un beduino en el Caribe* (*A Bedouin in the Caribbean*), is an archetypal piece of writing within the Sahrawi Friendship Generation for two reasons. Firstly, it aims at shedding light upon the Moroccan occupation and, secondly, its four thematic areas are characteristic of the literary works of other Sahrawi writers from this group.

In some of the narratives conforming this book, such as "La amarga noticia" or "El sueño de Chej," the author aims at reclaiming Western Sahara by projecting past childhood memories that lead to strong emotional links between the characters in the stories and the Moroccan-occupied territory. While the former story narrates a Sahrawi child's long journey through the desert to escape from Moroccan armies and his conversion into a refugee, "El sueño de Chej" also depicts a child who lives in a camp in the middle of the desert, but dreams of sailing the seas like his grandfather once did, presumably when the coastal part of Western Sahara was not yet occupied by Morocco. The last sentence in the story carries a powerful political burden and confirms the child's inability to reunite with his grandfather due to her exile and the so-called "wall of shame," a physical barrier between Moroccan-occupied Western Sahara and the Sahrawi-controlled areas: "the wet blue sea is still lost, and a human barrier of hatred prevents Chej from reuniting with his grandfather's boat" (el mar azul y húmedo sigue perdido y una barrera humana de odio impide a Chej reencontrarse con el barco de su abuelo) (Iselmu 74). These stories, as others in the collection, project a stolen childhood marked by war, conflict, displacement, and the Sahrawi children's subsequent traumatic separation from their relatives, and highlight their right to return to the occupied territory.

The second thematic area focuses on an imposed migratory experience and the depiction of the Sahrawis' displacement. "El barco y la camarera," "El largo paseo," or "Un beduino en el Caribe" focus on the characters' stateless condition and their hybrid identity in between Cuba and the Sahara, while "Los olivos y la escarcha" and "La prisa de Madrid" portray an immigrant who feels misunderstood by the

natives. All these stories depict a transnational and nomad identity in permanent flight, moving through borrowed lands, and representing the voice of Sahrawis in the diaspora.

The exaltation of a nomad identity in *Un Beduino en el Caribe* is accompanied by a negative portrayal of the Moroccan government and the passivity of international entities regarding the Moroccan-Saharawi conflict. “Atrapados en el desierto” or “La Güera y el barco de azúcar,” adopt the form of journalistic chronicles to shed light upon the suffering of thousands of Sahrawis, while vindicating their right to reclaim the Moroccan-occupied Western Sahara. The former story recalls the abandonment of sub-Saharan immigrants close to the “wall of shame,” as the Moroccan government did not allow them to trespass, consequently letting them die in the middle of the desert. While the narrator acknowledges the immigration issue as a complex one, he also criticizes the passivity and cruelty of governments and international organizations. The latter short story focuses on La Güera, a city in Western Sahara where in the 1990s the Moroccan government tried to build here the necessary roads and infrastructure. However, they later realized that the land was not suitable for such constructions because the sand swallowed everything as it was built. In 2016, the Polisario Front was established in the city, and it has become a symbol of Saharawi resistance to Morocco. The narrative is another example in which the author employs the journalistic tone to raise awareness about certain historical and political incidents, such as the attacks that La Güera suffered in 1975:

> La Güera suffered an attack by the Mauritanian army in 1975, when this country decided to occupy the southern part of Western Sahara. The population resisted in their homes and fought for every meter of the city. [...] With the support of the Saharawi guerrillas they were able to reach the border with Algeria and save their lives (Iselmu 71).

> La Güera sufrió el ataque del ejército mauritano en 1975, cuando este país decidió ocupar la parte sur del Sáhara Occidental. La población resistió en sus casas y luchó por cada metro de la ciudad. [...] Con el apoyo de los guerrilleros saharauis pudieron llegar a la frontera con Argelia y salvar sus vidas (Iselmu 71).

The last thematic area in *Un beduino en el Caribe* explores the powerful link between Sahrawis and the desert in emotional and identity terms. “El enigma de la bahía,” “La sabiduría de los cien dromedarios” or “El calendario de mi nacimiento"

portray Sahrawis' traditions and positive values, such as loyalty and wisdom, with the purpose of molding a common Saharawi identity in relation to the land they inhabit. Following the Saharawi literary tradition of contributing to the mythification and personification of Tiris and other desert areas occupied by displaced Sahrawis (Odartey-Wellington 2017; L. Ellison & College 2018), Iselmu provides the desert with an ideological dimension and depicts a symbiotic and symbolic relationship between the Saharawi people and it, where the former's identity is influenced by the inhabited territory.

The Construction and Habitation of a Narrative Borderland as a Means of Political Resistance

Drawing on the idea that cultural and aesthetic practices can be used to negotiate borders, disrupt expectations of what they are, and redefine them through the creation of imagined and imaginary borderlands (Schimanski & Stephen Wolfe 2010), I argue that the four thematic areas in *Un beduino en el Caribe* serve as strategies for creating a space of resistance at a narrative level. Indeed, they are counter-sites where the boundary that marks the nation's selfhood […] disrupts the signification of the people as homogeneous" (Bhabha 1994: 198), and "the frontier between differences also operates figuratively as a conceptual space for performative identities beyond the fixed essentialisms of fundamentalist or absolutist identity politics" (Friedman 273).

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie has narrowed the relationship between aesthetic production (more specifically fictional writing) and political power since, as she puts it, power is "the ability of not just to tell the story of another person, but to make it the definitive story of that person" (Adichie "The Danger of a Single Story"). In a similar fashion, Julia Borst has supported the potential of literature to unsilence "immobile voices" (Borst 2019: 113), echoing scholars such as Frederick W. Mayer, who acknowledges that "fictional narratives can be as powerful as non-fiction in establishing ideological interests" (Mayer 92).

In fact, the role of literature as a potential weapon for political resistance stems from its ability to create spaces and, consequently, shape identities. In this analysis, I am using Ludger Pries' definition of space, approaching this concept as "different from place in that it encompasses or spans various territorial locations" (Pries 67). It does "not only refers to physical features, but also larger opportunity structures, the social life and the subjective images, values and meanings that the specific and limited place represents to immigrants" (40). In this regard, I base myself on Ian Chambers' belief that writing is a key activity when it comes to the construction of

alternative spaces, as he claims that "to write is, of course, to travel. It is to enter a space, a zone, a territory […] writing opens up a space that invites movement, migration, a journey" (Chambers 10).

Indeed, the short stories in *Un beduino en el Caribe* give shape to different spaces that are key in the construction of the territoriality that the author pursues. As is common among the Sahrawi authors of the Friendship Generation, the Saharan desert is a pivotal element in the book, acting as a common thread between the stories and assuming a symbolic function that articulates "Sahrawi conceptualizations of identity, community, […] and also political legitimacy" (L. Ellison & Bridgewater College 75). As in much of Saharawi literature, such as in Bahia M. Awah's memoir *La maestra que me enseñó en una tabla de madera* (*The Teacher Who Taught me on a Wooden Board*), the short stories "La otra despedida," "La despedida de mi abuela," and "El sueño de Chej" connect the desert with the maternal lineage by portraying the figures of the mother and the grandparents as representatives of the land. By means of this connection, they legitimate claims of matrilineal links and hereditary rights to both the Moroccan-occupied territory and the refugee camps. Similarly, in "El deseo nómada," the narrator claims that "the inexperienced shepherd is amazed at how a person feels the desert as his own, that runs [it] through his blood [...] his existence has no meaning without the immensity, in it he finds his reflection and that of his ancestors" (el pastor inexperto se queda asombrado de cómo una persona siente el desierto como algo suyo, que corre por su sangre ... su existencia no tiene sentido sin la inmensidad, en ella encuentra su reflejo y el de sus antepasados) (Iselmu 54).

By emphasizing the emotional ties to the desert homeland through short stories in which characters and narrators conceive of the desert as their home and deny any government or institution the right to own it, the author claims the desert as part of him, and vice versa, inhabiting it from exile. As L. Ellison and College suggest, in the work of Iselmu and other Saharawi authors the Saharan Desert appears as a "blank canvas onto which humanity projects its hopes and fears" (95). For instance, in "El reencuentro," the first—person narrator claims that one night in the desert, while watching the stars next to his mother, he understood that his land is "free from armies, United Nations' motions, free from peace and war missions" (libre de ejércitos, de resoluciones de las Naciones Unidas, libre de misiones de paz y guerra) (Iselmu 63), and that he felt that, for a moment, they were the real owners of the night. Thus, as happens in many other stories in Iselmu's collection, the desert works as an "emotional canvas" in which multiple narrative voices express their desire to see a free Western Sahara, the frustration that exile produces in them, or

the longing for their loved ones.

Nevertheless, although pivotal, the desert is not the only setting of the stories, nor is it the only space that works as a "blank canvas" for the author. Likewise, the narrative voices project their emotions on other settings such as Madrid in "La prisa de Madrid" or "Atrapados en la penumbra," Teruel, in "Los olivos y la escarcha," and Cuba, in "El corazón de la música." The first three texts depict the migration experience in Spain by dealing with the difficulty of finding a job, the harshness of the long, precarious working days, and the individualistic and shallow life in European cities to dismantle the image of an idealized welcoming and racism-free Spanish society. In "Atrapados en la penumbra" the narrative voice claims that in Spain,

> el primer acto de supervivencia era la lucha constante por sobrevivir sin papeles aceptando trabajos desde limpiar granjas, coger fruta. […] Ser inmigrante, exiliado y apátrida es algo imposible de asimilar. A veces presentas en una comisaría de la policía la documentación que acredita que eres refugiado saharaui pero el funcionario que tramita los papeles sólo entiende que eres argelino o mauritano. La burocracia y las leyes injustas de este mundo le impiden a un saharaui ser lo que realmente es (Iselmu 34).

> the first act of survival was the constant struggle to survive without papers, accepting jobs from cleaning farms to picking fruit. […] Being an immigrant, exiled and stateless, is something impossible to adapt to. Sometimes you present the documentation at a police station that proves that you are a Saharawi refugee, but the official who processes the papers only understands that you are Algerian or Mauritanian. The bureaucracy and unfair laws of this world prevent a Saharawi from being who he really is (Iselmu 34).

This excerpt shows the precariousness that Sahrawi immigrants experience in Spain because of the native's inability to understand their situation, caused by a deep ignorance and lack of empathy. Later in this story, the narrator compares the European country with other territories to feed a negative image of the former. He asserts that "when you travel to South Africa or Cuba and see how they treat you, you are simply surprised and moved knowing that there are countries in the world that support the Saharawi cause boldy" (cuando uno viaja a Sudáfrica o Cuba y ve cómo le atienden, simplemente se queda sorprendido y emocionado sabiendo que existen en el mundo países que asumen la cuestión del Sáhara sin complejos) (Iselmu

34), and concludes that "no immigration law can ignore the fact that the Sahara was the fifty-third province of Spain" (ninguna ley de extranjería podrá ignorar que el Sáhara fue la provincial número cincuenta y tres de España) (Iselmu 34).

In "El corazón de la música," as in other short stories in the book, the experience of displacement is addressed to in positive terms, as the author depicts Cuba as a hospitable place that welcomes displaced Sahrawis and provides them with an education. Cuba is a territory on which the author projects a variety of positive feelings, that go from the happiness he feels "in the middle of the Santiago Carnival" (en medio del carnaval santiaguero) (Iselmu 49) to the warmth he experienced on his arrival to the island, as told in "Un beduino en el Caribe." Iselmu's love for Cuba and his *cubaraui* identity are reflected in "La vuelta a las raíces," which tells of the sadness that the author feels upon leaving the island. This story explains the trauma that, in the early 1990s, many young Sahrawi graduates experienced upon their return to the refugee camps (Gómez Martín 230). The feeling of being uprooted and the cultural shock of those who had grown up in Cuba, away from the Arab cultural influence, is depicted when the narrator claims that when he saw his family, after fourteen years, he could only recognize his grandfather, or when, once in Tindouf, the narrator gets off the plane and a mass of warm air burns his face, so he decides to get inside the plane again.

Although the desert takes center stage in *Un beduino en El Caribe*, the short stories are also set in other geographical spaces such as Santiago de Cuba, Madrid, or Teruel, and refer to La Güera and other specific places. The book has a multi-spatial character that allows the author to establish a connection between distant geographical spaces and cultural contexts and, in this sense, acts as a bridge between these territories at a symbolic level. The different settings dialogue with each other, allowing the reader to travel from one story to the other smoothly, across borders, and the interconnection of these settings contributes "to mitigate the feeling of detachment that the loss of their land of origin [and displacement] generate" (Gómez Martín 239). The juxtaposition of geographical spaces is explicitly portrayed in "El corazón de la música," which opens with the sentence,

> Esta noche mi cuerpo viaja despacio entre los copos de nieve y se acuerda de cómo la arena caliente le quema los pies y en medio de los contrastes el ritmo obsoleto de las cosas continúa, mientras la húmeda lluvia en las calles de Santiago de Cuba es una tormenta tropical (Iselmu 49).

Tonight, my body travels slowly among the snowflakes and remembers how the

hot sand burns its feet and, in between contrasts, the obsolete rhythm of things continues, while the wet rain in the streets of Santiago de Cuba is a tropical storm (Iselmu 49).

Elements such as the snowflakes, wet rain, obsolete rhythm, and the warm sand evoke distant lands and contribute to an amalgam of geographical spaces. Later in this text the narrative voice specifies that he wants to talk about several places: Santiago de Cuba, the *jaimas* in the Saharawi camps, and the small villages in Guipúzcoa, in Northern Spain. This interconnection of distant geographical and cultural contexts is also very present in the literature of other Sahrawi authors belonging to the Friendship Generation (Gómez Martín 2013; Odartey-Wellington 2018). Such as in Mahmud Awah's poem "Húérfano en un Starbucks," where the author establishes a link between Tiris and Europe, Salem Abdelfatah's "Nómada en el exilio," built upon the association of desert and ocean, Tiris, La Habana or Paris, or Iselmu himself in his poem "Translation," with a clear transnational message. The nexus among the places that the narrator mentions in "El corazón de la música" is precisely the music. He begins an inner journey upon hearing the Cuban singer Isaac Delgado. Then he continues travelling through the "catchy rhythm of the Oriental Conga" (el contagioso ritmo de la Conga Oriental) (49), the sound of the *tbal* (a Saharawi drum) and the *txalaparta* (a Basque instrument). This metaphorical journey positions music as a powerful vehicle of communication among faraway lands. In this sense, Iselmu joins other authors from the Saharawi Friendship Generation in the construction of a more fluid, dynamic and relational space, an imagined alternative territory in which the Moroccan government does not exert any control over Saharawi citizens. The blurring of the political borders between nations and connections across cultures occur in the borderland that the narrative voices in this book inhabit since, as Odartey-Wellington suggests, "the identity of the Friendship Generation, and by extension that of their nation without its own territory, depends on their collaboration with others […] in their aim to recover their lost sovereignty" (la identidad de la Generación de la Amistad, y por extensión la de su nación sin territorio propio, depende de su colaboración con otros […] en su propósito de recuperar la soberanía perdida) (313). This interconnection between geographic spaces, despite being an omnipresent aspect throughout the book and a unifying axis between the stories, reaches its maximum expression in narratives such as "La resignación de Brahim'" or "El barco y la camarera." The former narrates the departure of Brahim from Cuba and his separation from Carmen and the rest of his friends on the island. The story itself is set in a borderland, a space in

between Cuba and the Sahrawi Camps:

> Aquella madrugada era la última de Brahim en Cuba, después de quince años seguidos […]. El hecho de tener que marcharse, dejar a Carmen y a sus amigos era una prueba de fuego para sus sentimientos. Él, que conocía la palma real, la cotorra, la yuca, el boniato, y el batido de zapote y todos los sabores y colores que había vivido intensamente a lo largo de esos años. Pero también sabía que al otro lado del océano le esperaba su madre, su padre, sus hermanos y todo su pueblo abandonado en unos campamentos de refugiados (Iselmu 35).

> That morning was Brahim's last in Cuba, after fifteen years in a row […]. The fact that he had to leave, leave Carmen and his friends, was a litmus test of his feelings. He was a person who was familiar with royal palms, parrots, yucca, sweet potatoes, and sapote smoothies and all the flavors and colors that he had experienced intensely throughout those years. But he also knew that on the other side of the ocean his mother, his father, his brothers and all his people were waiting for him, abandoned in some refugee camps (Iselmu 35).

The character in this short story gets access to a "third space" where distant elements such as yucca, parrots, sweet potatoes, and royal palms, representing Cuba, converge with some members of his family and the refugee camps. The connection between these two worlds is constant throughout the narrative. Later, the narrator claims that Brahim is overcome by a vague feeling that reminded him of his mother and the *jaimas*, and to calm his anxiety he goes back to the hostel and finds a Cuban cigar in his pocket. The in-between territory that the character occupies is further represented by liminal spaces in the story, such as the sea, José Martí International Airport, and the Sahrawi embassy, where he collects the necessary documentation to leave the island. Airports, embassies, or maritime areas can be approached as in-between spaces in that they act as "contact zones" (Pratt 1992), or inter-national spaces, where different nations converge. Even though in this short story the sea is mentioned superficially, it constitutes a key symbol of liminality in "El barco y la camarera," a story that also epitomizes the interconnection between distant territories because it tells the departure of a Saharawi child from the refugee camps heading to Cuba. As in the former story, the protagonist accesses a "third space" on his way to the opposite shore. Elements representing distant territories, such as the Oran Port, America, the Mediterranean, Cuba, or Tatiana, the woman from Leningrado who takes care of the refugee children, intertwine giving rise to

a transnational space. There is indeed a fusion of distant elements, symbolized by Tatiana's words when claiming that the desert and the sea are alike in that both are monotonous, but the jump of dolphins and lizards break their uniformity.

The Redefinition of a Sahrawi Identity

All the narratives in *Un beduino en el Caribe*, and in particular the aforementioned stories, depict the displacement of Sahrawis as a complex and multi-layered phenomenon due to its multi-spatial character (occupied territories, Northern Mauritania, refugee camps in Tindouf, Cuba, or Spain) and the diversity of population flows. Indeed, as some scholars, such as Gómez Martín, have pointed out, the vital experience of those Sahrawis who have emigrated from the refugee camps since the second half of the 1990s, complicates the phenomenon of Sahrawi migration, as they face a real lack of land of origin. The place from which they emigrate is represented by a refugee camp anchored in a perpetual state of transience, which means that, to this very day, it is conceived of as an intermediate, ephemeral space (Gómez Martín 233). Consequently, the search for a Saharawi identity acquires a higher level of complexity, as it must combine several identities, mainly the Saharawi, the Cuban, and the European. Indeed, the short stories in *Un beduino en el Caribe* corroborate a resistance to the Moroccan occupation through the construction of a liminal identity that results from the inhabiting of spaces of transit.

The notion of space as a site of political resistance in that it is closely attached to identity has been widely discussed in academia and, more specifically, it has been argued that the negotiation of a subcultural and alternative identity within a hegemonic order requires achieving "a space […] to mark out and appropriate territory" (Clarke et al. 45). Gillian Rose and J. Agnew have highlighted the relevance of space in the construction of identities, asserting that "identities themselves, our self-definitions, are inherently territorial" (Agnew 2008: 179), and that "the meanings given to a place […] become a central part of the identity of the people experiencing them" (Rose 88).

In *Un beduino en el Caribe,* Iselmu finds an alternative way of interpreting his reality and reaffirming a nomadic consciousness (yet preserving his Saharawi identity), by rethinking a space in fiction where the narrative voice of a refugee can build an identity freed from national territorial boundaries. The nomadism that Iselmu's short stories and a lot of literature written by other Sahrawis such as Bahia Mahmud Awah or Liman Boicha depict, serves them in two ways. Firstly, it must be approached as a sociological phenomenon that is characteristic of Bedouin and

other desert pastoral communities. Its enhancement helps these authors highlight an aspect of Sahrawis' idiosyncrasy that differentiates them from Moroccans and feeds the feeling of community. Secondly, nomadism in *Un beduino en el Caribe* can be understood as being attached to Iselmu's and other Sahrawis' migration experience. In this respect, Gómez Martín remarks that "the life narratives of the members of the *Friendship Generation* show the existence of an intense dialogue between the migratory experience and the process of literary creation" (las narraciones de vida de los componentes de la *Generación de la Amistad* muestran la existencia de un diálogo intenso entre la experiencia migratoria y el proceso de creación literario) (238). In this light, she also adds that "the Saharawi writer perceives himself as a nomad without a desert, wandering, with no clear destination, among different realities, diverse cultures, and a variety of geographical spaces" (el escritor saharaui se percibe a sí mismo como un nómada; un nómada sin desierto, moviéndose, sin rumbo fijo, entre realidades distintas, diversas culturas, diferentes espacios geográficos) (238). This nomad identity, detached from the Moroccan identity, emerges from the spatial amalgam that the author builds in the book. In other words, the renegotiation of the space triggers the redefinition of his Sahrawi identity as nomadic and free from national impositions**.** Consequently, nomadism as an inherent aspect in the construction of the Sahrawi selfhood is explicitly portrayed in many of the narratives that make up Iselmu's book. For instance, "La amarga noticia" and "El fuego de las piedras" depict the flight from the Moroccan army, escaping from the bombs, and the conversion of thousands of Saharawis into refugees, while "El largo paseo" and "La resignación de Brahim," further portrays an identity in motion that travels from refugee camps to Cuba and vice versa.

Likewise, the short stories whose central thematic axis revolves around the special relationship between the Sahrawi people and the desert, with the purpose of enhancing and promulgating the Sahrawi lifestyle, seek to shape an identity project based on highlighting the nomadic spirit as the main characteristic of the inhabitants of the Sahara. Thus, "El viajero nómada" tells the story of a sixty-year-old traveler riding Zeireg, his camel. Due to high temperatures, and dehydration, this man loses consciousness, and miraculously he is taken by Zeireg to a small water well where another man assists him and is surprised that such an old man manages to survive. In the last lines of the text the narrator mentions that,

> el viajero nómada volvió a nacer volvió a nacer del polvo de la arena; una vez más salía victorioso en su permanente huida de la muerte. Él era un amigo del agua de los oasis, de las tormentas de arena y amaba el desierto desde la

> profundidad de aquel pozo que le devolvió el último aliento cuando creía que todo estaba perdido (35).
>
> the nomad traveler was reborn from the dust of the sand, once again he was victorious in his permanent flight from death. He was a friend of the water of the oasis, of the sandstorms and he loved the desert from the depth of that well that gave him his last breath when he believed that all was lost (35).

This story highlights the link between the Sahara and its inhabitants, showing a symbiotic, almost sacred relationship between the traveler and characteristic elements of the desert, such as camels and oases. Likewise, it shows that the capacity for survival and resilience are intrinsic aspects of the Sahrawi identity, and that they contribute to the creation of a nomadic spirit. In a similar fashion, other narratives in the collection such as "El deseo nómada" and "La nostalgia del andante" delve into the Sahrawi lifestyle while creating a nomadic consciousness that is intrinsic to the desert dwellers. The former story contains a dialogue between a Bedouin grandfather and his grandson. The old man tells the young boy about some of the traditions that people in the desert follow and the ways of surviving in such extreme climatic conditions. He says that "the Bedouin speakers speak of water wells, pastures, livestock and merchandise" (en la palabra de los oradores beduinos se habla de pozos de agua, de pastos, de ganado y mercancías) (53), and that "the autumn is a warm movement of people, animals, and winds blowing in all directions" (el otoño es un movimiento caluroso de personas, animales, y vientos que soplan de todas las direcciones) (53), which stresses their wandering lifestyle. Finally, the wise man also addresses this nomadism by concluding that "the inexperienced shepherd is left amazed at how a person feels the desert as his own, that runs through his blood and his happiness is tied to the valleys, mountains and plains that he traveled for many seasons" (el pastor inexperto se queda asombrado de cómo una persona siente el desierto como algo suyo, que corre por su sangre y su felicidad está atada a los valles, montañas y llanuras que recorrió durante muchas estaciones) (54). "La nostalgia del andante" likewise reflects an individual in motion, as it narrates the story of, presumably, an exiled Saharawi who "wanted to embrace the horizon and feel free from attachments" (que quería abrazar el horizonte y sentirse libre sin ataduras), that is, to return to the Moroccan-occupied Western Sahara. He regrets not being able to go beyond the wall that divides the Western Sahara in two, referring to the so-called Moroccan "Wall of Shame" and, mentally, decides to travel from his exile the places of the Moroccan-occupied

Western Sahara, "with his bare feet chasing seagulls and snails" (con sus pies descalzos persiguiendo gaviotas y caracoles) (51).

Most importantly, the identity fostered by the spatial amalgam created in the narratives is a fusion of different selfhoods that are mutable and open. In other words, the multi-spatial character of the book (and the Sahrawi migration itself) shapes a Sahrawi selfhood as the sum of multiple identities. As in many other texts belonging to the Friendship Generation, in *Un beduino en el Caribe* the author perceives the Sahrawi immigrant as the conjugation of a triple identity adscription: the Sahrawi, Caribbean and European (Gómez Martín 63-64). Thus, in "El corazón de la música" the narrator understands the Caribbean nights, the Sahrawi *tbal*, and the isolated villages in Northern Spain as part of his inner self. The triple identity of the author is further projected onto the short stories using words in *Hassania* (the language spoken by Sahrawis), such as *jaima* or *badía* (house in the desert), the love that the narrative voices show towards Cuba, and the inclusion of multiple Spanish elements, such as Seville, Madrid, or Basque music, that also shape the Sahrawi immigrant's selfhood and way of thinking.

Conclusion

In short, the combination of geographical spaces shapes a narrative borderland where a liminal and mutable identity is created and where the author resists Morocco's political impositions. This resistance is fueled by the creation of a nomadic consciousness that constitutes the axis on which the short stories are based, and that allows Iselmu, as a Sahrawi exiled immigrant, to rethink his selfhood, his individual autonomy, and the Sahrawi people's sense of sovereignty. Indeed, *Un beduino en el Caribe* is built upon four thematic axes that shape a Saharawi identity and a resistance space at a narrative level. Drawing on Odartey-Wellington's idea that the liminal status of Sahrawis (both in the refugee camps and abroad, from a geographical and political point of view) incites the creation of alternative boundaries within which Sahrawis reimagine their identity and their sense of sovereignty (1), I have argued that the short stories in *Un beduino en el Caribe* serve the author in the construction of an alternative and liminal space, or "third space," which results from the multi-spatial character of the book. In this sense, the reader can travel throughout the narratives across time and space since the stories do not follow a logical chronological and spatial order. The nomadic consciousness that the book generates, and the juxtaposition of distant geographical elements, allow the author to build his identity freed from territorial and ideological impositions. Therefore, *Un beduino en el Caribe* constitutes itself a symbolic borderland in between territories where Iselmu

finds refuge and can resist the Moroccan occupation of his territory by depicting it as borderless. By using the words of Odartey-Wellington, I define the book as "no home to monoliths, […] an ode to transformations, to cultures in motion" that "sum[s] up quite accurately the Saharawi reality put forth by the author" (11). Iselmu's literary work constitutes, indeed, a place of aesthetic production that challenges the Moroccan hegemonic ideology.

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Archetypes, “Others Inside” and Social Types: A Combined Literary Analysis of Eugene O’Neill’s *Strange Interlude,* J. M Synge’s *The Well Of The Saints* and William Faulkner’s *As I Lay Dying*

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Abstract In this article, the analysis propounded is, on the one hand, phenomenological because it centers on the transcendental aspect of each main character in Eugene O’Neill’s Strange Interlude, J. M Synge’s The Well of the Saints and William Faulkner’s As I Lay Dying. Examining a character’s consciousness and psyche might help grasping the meaning of life and world as perceived by it. On the other hand, this literary investigation requires that O’Neill’s, Synge’s and Faulkner’s characters are to be approached from a hermeneutic perspective in order to show the possibility of selecting or winnowing, from their emotions, reactions and standings, new meanings and interpretations, which might have never been anticipated by the authors themselves. Thus, this article proposes to bring about a probable and unpredictable relation between past and present in the lives of the major characters, and to demonstrate that these texts can manifest connectedness with the cultural and psychological concepts as developed by Raymond Williams, Julia Kristeva and Carl Gustav Jung. It is assumed that the new meanings, the heroic combats and the most often tragic experiences of the major characters may line up with the cultural materialist notions of Williams. Williams advocates that characters in literary texts ought to act like dissidents so that they might subvert and display fissures within the dominant cultural institutions of a society. They may also be engaged in unstoppable philosophical and intellectual questioning of the mainstream discourse. The delineation and portrayal of the characters in the three texts exhibit

tangible embodiment of Jungian and Kristevan psychoanalytic concepts. Both of them advocate that a literary critic needs to activate and construct an archetype, and discover the several but essential presuppositions of economic, social and political order in the analysed text, for they intercede between the reader and the text in the process of understanding its mythical and psychological rationalization of the inner life and of the world around each character in. Henceforth, this article will assert the argument that archetypes, psychic troubles and social (cultural) types are to be interpreted and examined in relation to some central issues like the gendered place of women, family, social status and the cultural prejudices within modern society. Jung's, Kristeva's and Williams's psychoanalytic and cultural concepts will sustain our analysis which is devoted to the effort of bringing into awareness the way female and male characters, though they might be rebels at miscellaneous instances, are obliged to submit to patriarchal discriminatory cultural order of the society they live in. In sum, all the aesthetic inclinations throughout which Jung's, Kristeva's and Williams's different theoretical and philosophical views can interact and correlate with O'Neill's, Synge's and Faulkner's texts are also to be highlighted, and be given another significant artistic dimension.

Keyswords Archetypes; 'Others inside'; Semiotic; Symbolic; Social types

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Introduction

In the nine-act play *Strange Interlude*, O'Neill portrays the instinctive and intuitive emotions of the manipulative Nina Leeds, who is obsessed by the death of her fiancé at war. This obsession controls and impends the relationships of Nina with her father, Professor Leeds; with the family friend, Marsden; with her lover, Edmund Darrell, and with Sam Evans, the husband who adores her. In this play, there is a sort of an Aristotelian agony and damnation for an immoral act done. Eugene O'Neill depicts the unconscious lives of all the personages in the face of the unavoidable changes caused by Nina's sentimental confinements. As for Synge's *The Well of the Saints,* Composed in 1902-03, it is a three-act comedy which narrates the story of two blind beggars, Martin and Mary Doul living in a desolate district in the east of Ireland one or more centuries ago. A saint has restored their sight by pouring

water brought from a holly well. However, their sight recovery has engendered tension and collision between their past [love, dreams, and the imagination] and the reality of the present. Synge situated this work in the past to question some cultural and identity issues crucial to people in Ireland. Synge seems to be engaged in a process of rethinking the past from within by focusing on the subjective responses of the two main characters cited above. As far as Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* (1930), it narrates the story of Addie Bundren's funeral; she requested to be buried beside her family in Jefferson town. At her death, the whole family takes the trip with her corpse in a carriage toward Jefferson Town. On their way there, each member of the family narrates a part of the journey.

Thus, the study of every character's psychological state and outer behavior seems to offer, in all these texts, on the one hand, possible assistance for the identification and the understanding of the psychological, cultural and archetypal figures, which might potentiate Kristeva's Semiotic and Symbolic realms and Carl Gustav Jung's 'Transcendent Function'. Either psychic or external distinctiveness might show deep and complex relations of the character with its cultural, social, and material environments. On the other hand, I will resort to Raymond Williams' explanation of the process by which a character's innate potentialities may clash in varied ways with imposed social norms and ethics. It will be demonstrated that, while progressing toward autonomous selves, Martin, Mary, Nina, Marsden, Darrell, Darl and Addie Bundren have all a unique life history which would make them withdraw from outer dominant cultural world. In order to observe the singular combat of a character who is willing to wreck and supersede his/her society's values and morals, our comments and expositions will also acknowledge Williams's social types/beings such as *member, subject, servant, rebel, exile* and *vagrant*.

Strange Interlude: Shadow Inside and Identity Tribulation

Marc Maufort shows that O'Neill in *Strange Interlude* brought new dramatic forms so as to represent the debate about cultural pluralism. He expresses the minorities' ambivalence and resistance. Maufort also points to some dualities within most of O'Neill's plays like resistance/assimilation, margin/centre or hegemony/difference (strangeness) (Maufort 3). On his part, Ronald Miller directs his attention to the fact that O'Neill looked to self- realization as an important theme in much of his drama. For him, the idea of possession is related to the achievement of self-realization; it is also a projection of an unconscious research for a true belonging. Americans were all driven by the opportunity and unreachable dreams of possession and of belonging. Others like Martha Bower provided us with psychological studies

about this play. Bower underlines that the characters are victims of a psychological dysfunction and cultural confusion while attempting to establish their identities. A lot of cultural, social and psychological obstacles impede and delay their desires of wanting to belong, causing final destruction and decline. Joel Pfister replaces O'Neill within the history of a middle class aspiration and self-doubt. After offering a brief but richly documented history about the cultural changes during the first half of the twentieth century, Pfister remarks O'Neill's preference of the individual's psychological depth and private subjectivity over public actions. Most of his penetrating drama is related to family background. Pfister also quotes O'Neill's declaration to his friend R. Edmond Jones, “I am tremendous pleased with The Strange Interlude” (Pfitser 4) for the play is full of modern psychology and interior monologues. John Henry Raleigh's *Crosscurrents Modern Critiques* (1964) signals O'Neill's share and contribution to the shaping of a middle class Irish American self. On the artistic level, Virginia Floyd compares between the mask-face dichotomy in *The Great God Brown* and the thoughts-aside technique employed in *Strange Interlude*. She writes that, “The mask is the inhibited, conscious, visualized self; the thought aside, the verbalized projection of the uninhibited unconscious. Because it exhibits the dark, unexplored region of the psyche, the thought aside makes O'Neill's characters multidimensional and thus intriguing to audiences” (Floyd 335).

On their part, R. King, J. Connell and P. White underline the domination of the theme of exile, and attest that such literature captures anxiousness, stress or emotional crisis felt by those individuals and families that moved from rural to urbanized areas in America. As noticed from what is said above, many critics introduced the psychological traits of O'Neill's work. They examined psychological subjectivity, characters' restlessness and the confusion of the American cultural psyche. They also sought to put emphasis on particular insights into their traumas, disillusions, oedipal desires or death wishes. Therefore, Jungian and Kristeva's psychological views may give evidence of the difficulty of constructing a new identity and of growing to be an autonomous self in *Strange Interlude.* To defend his art, O'Neill declares,

> Authors were psychologists, you know, and profound ones before psychology was invented […] As far as I can remember, of all the books written by Freud, Jung, etc., I have read only four, and Jung is the only one of the lot who interests me. Some of his suggestions I find extraordinarily illuminating in the light of my own experience with hidden human motives. (Cited in Fall 66)

To start, Nina Leeds's inner suffering and distress, to which every fluctuation in the plot is related, may refer to what Carl Gustav Jung calls the archetype of *The Shadow*. Nina's *Shadow* is the death of Gordon Shaw, her fiancé, which is synonymous to a repressed sexual desire. On the plea of nursing in a military hospital, she defies patriarchal tyranny; she leaves her father's home, seeking to reinstall an identity harmony. According to Jung, "The Shadow can never be eradicated; coming to terms with it is an integral step along the path of Individuation." (Cited in Miller 73) Therefore, it is essential to every significant quest for identity harmony. In doing so, Nina must consummate her mourning about her fiancé, and accept his death before indulging and involving herself in the process of reaching personal unity and wholeness. But at home, the middle class code-bounded education of her father oppresses her. *The Shadow* cannot come up to the external world, so it becomes darker, denser, and very disturbing. Nina assures that,

> Gordon wanted me! I wanted Gordon! I should have made him take me! I knew he would die and I would have no children, that there would be no big Gordon or little Gordon left to me, that happiness was calling me, never to call again if I refused! And yet I did refuse! I didn't make him take me! I lost him forever! And I know I'm lonely and not pregnant with anything at all, but---but loathing! Why did I refuse? What was that cowardly something inside me that cried, no, you mustn't, what would your **father** *[sic]* say? (O'Neill I)

She regrets not to have had sex with Gordon, and she associates her father's education to cowardliness and weakness. As a result, she has prostituted herself to every war victim at the military hospital where she has worked as a nurse. Nonetheless, this promiscuous and sexually indiscriminate experience has only accentuated her feeling of guilt, and obtruded more her way toward *Individuation*.

At her father's burial a year later, she comes back home older, pale, thinner, and much more disorganized than ever. This specific physical trait may show that she has failed to recognize her *Shadow* while being beside those military-lovers. Willing and eager to provoke the *Transcendent Function [A dialogue between unconscious and conscious]* and realize personal uniqueness, she marries Sam Evans in order to become a mother and bear children. Marriage would probably deliver her from the dangerous and unacknowledged *Shadow*. In Act II she confesses, "I want children. I must become a mother so I can give myself. I am sick of sickness." She becomes pregnant, but very soon her step-mother wants her to make an abortion because of a family secret curse. Nina accepts peremptorily since she is totally unaware of her

inner disturbance or *Shadow*. So far, prostitution and marriage have not been much secure and effective to provoke a dialogue between her unconscious and conscious. Subsequently, she tries another unconventional means: adultery. She has engaged in an adulterous relationship with Darrell, the family doctor.

In the two last Acts of *Strange Interlude,* Nina passes the ordeal of Sam, refuses to marry Darrell, and wants to spoil her son's marriage to Madeleine Arnold, for she has not yet come to terms with *The Shadow* inside her. She has interfered in the lives of all the men around her, always searching her lost fiancé in every one of them,

> Yes, you're here Charlie—always! And you, Sam—and Ned! Sit down, all of you! Make yourselves at home! You are my three men! This is your home with me! Ssshh! I thought heard the baby. You must all sit down and be very quiet. You must not wake our baby. (O'Neill VI)

According to Jung's psychological theory, the three men have not helped her to start and activate a *Transcendent Function* in order to be guided toward the understanding of her *Shadow* so that she possibly fulfills personality renewal. This inability of Nina to recognize the *Shadow* within herself may correspond to the melancholic/narcissistic depressed of Julia Kristeva as explained in *Black Sun (1987). A narcissistic depressed* or *a melancholic* is wounded inside and often has not the ability to judge or name what is lost. Very often detached and indifferent to life around, Nina feels like *an orphan* in *the symbolic realm* and regresses. The external symbolic world does not provide her with a sense of coherence, distinctness and self- identity. She may either continue to regress or be saved to life by *The Imaginary Father* or by *Maternity [Mothering].* As to the amount of her suffering and regression, Nina has committed abortion and attempted to vitiate and corrupt her son's marriage. In this first situation, the melancholic Nina is driven to crime and self-destruction.

However, Kristeva explains that *a melancholic subject* like Nina may reconcile with the lost object by identification to the *imaginary father* who may secure her to another dimension; a dimension of faith which would enable her to reintegrate *the semiotic* world and to enjoy a happy life. But Nina's father, the representative of the American middle class oppressive education, cannot help her live on the borderline of the symbolic and semiotic worlds, and or grow into an autonomous subject.

Being a woman, *Maternity*/Mothering can help her withstand and thwart the inevitable drive toward death as explained in *The Heretical Ethics of Love*,

republished in 1987. Kristeva construes how a woman can embrace difference/ otherness and how a man can find shelter in a woman against unbearable experiences of life. Addressing women, she writes that *maternity* is already a stage where the distinction between self and the other erupts. *Maternity* demonstrates the borders of selfhood to a woman who until then has been comfortably located in the *symbolic external realm*. Coming at a later time in the play, the pregnancy and delivery of Nina's son Gordon could have reconnected her to the unconscious semiotic realm, opening for her the possibility to name what she lost.

From the view point of Raymond Williams, Nina can be condemned of being subserviently conventional and obsequious to the social norms of the cultural world she lives in. She has had a free and adulterous sexual life and aborted despite the society's conservative attitude. Nina can be considered to be an existentialist who asserts the centrality of her personal choice. Therefore, she is a *rebel* for she thinks that the cultural and social morals are not hers. She seeks to establish another social and cultural pattern. She is committed to this aspiration of offering a useful new way of life. The result is that she cannot succeed in establishing a new social and cultural world. She would tragically fail in loving and cherishing her family and friends.

As for the three lovers though here the case of Sam Evans, her husband, is not discussed, each has attempted to win Nina. Charles Marsden, the family friend, has always been living with his mother and sister. He is psychologically very disturbed by the memory of his first encounter with a prostitute; a sexual experience which hovers over his existence from the beginning to the end of the play. O'Neill has made his world oscillate between withdrawal and togetherness, one of the most used dichotomies in O'Neill's literary art. Marsden desires Nina but when she is nearby, he acts like as though she is his daughter. The omnipresent memory of the prostitute raises the difficulty for Marsden to prompt the *Anima Archetype*, which would permit him to engage a dialogue between his conscious masculine aspects and the unknown, yet disturbing feminine aspects of his unconscious. It seems to be the reason why he does not hesitate to provoke and encourage Nina's marriage to Sam Evans despite his secret love for her.

According to Kristeva's psychoanalytical theory in *Powers of Horror (1980)*, whenever a person is in love with another, they experience a to and fro of energy, desire and memory that will impact on their future lives and their self-understandings. She calls this process the *transference process*. This *transference process* very often engenders an ailing distinctiveness like abjection, a fundamental concept of Kristeva's literary criticism. Marsden loves his mother but he feels

repulsion and longs for a narcissistic union with her. As a result to the death of his mother (Act V), he is tormented and becomes depressed and melancholic, and to be secured to the symbolic world, he needs an imaginary father. Therefore, Marsden sought to befriend Professor Leeds, Nina’s father, and has himself been a paternalist to her. He imitates Professor Leeds’s voice and encourages Nina to marry Sam Evans, “Oh, Nina—poor little Nina—my Nina—how you must have suffered! I forgive you! I forgive everything! I forgive even your trying to tell Madeleine—you wanted to keep Gordon—oh, I understand that— and I forgive you!” (Act VIII) The intimacy and familiarity with Nina has taught him to act as a true father. When at the end of the play, they marry each other, Marsden seems to enjoy a dilatory psychic serenity and seems to reconcile with the *“Other melancholic inside”* him only because old Nina would not remind him of the first sexual encounter with the prostitute. Her beauty has evanesced and both have passed beyond desire. He accepts to be called *old Charlie* by the old Nina.

According to Williams, Marsden is a *servant* who identifies himself with life as socially and culturally organized by the society. Yet, Williams notices that, “At many levels of his life, and particularly in certain situations such as solitude and age, the discrepancy between the role the individual is playing and his actual sense of himself will become manifest, either consciously or in terms of some physical or emotional disturbance” (Williams 105-6). Alone especially after his mother’s death and in his secret love to Nina, the social situation of Marsden has become critical and crucial. Thus, his identification to society’s dominant cultural values tragically breaks down. He has come to acknowledge that the established public and cultural life has very little compatibility and harmony with his private and personal desires.

For his part, Darrell is a clever, observant doctor who is convinced that he is immune to love because he pretends that love is nothing more than its sexual instinctive attraction. He thinks that Marsden is weak and psychologically fragile when he notices that, “Poor Marsden is completely knocked off balance, isn’t he? My mother died when I was away at school. I hadn’t seen her in some time, so her death was never very real to me; but in Marsden’s case—” (V). According to Jung, Darrell’s identity is founded on the *Persona* archetypal figure which is, a compromise between individual and society as to what a man should appear to be. He takes a name, earns a title, exercises a function, he is this or that. In a certain sense all this is real, yet in relation to the essential individuality of the person concerned it is only a secondary reality (Smith 69). Darrell conforms to every cultural norm of the society, but this is a mistaken identity. As a social construction, *Persona* does not offer enough substance upon which to construct a meaningful

and lasting selfhood. Therefore, Darrell grows more and more jealous of Sam, and as time passes, he sustains with great difficulty Nina's absence. Unconsciously, he continues to look for identity stability, which is hampered and delayed by the rigidity of his *Persona* archetype. He has never been able to confess his adulterous relationship. He recognizes, "(thinking abjectly) I couldn't! ... There are things one may not and live oneself afterwards…there are things one may not say…memory is too full of echoes! ... There are secrets one must not reveal…memory is lined with mirrors! ..." (O'Neill VI). At this moment of his life, Darrell dares not to engage a dialogue between the opposite aspects of his personality in order to transcend the social norms to which he conforms. Therefore, he can never achieve totality and wholeness to his self.

To Kristeva, Darrell's personality is likely to be dominated by the Symbolic realm. The result is that Darrell's *dynamic signifying process* is basically regulated by *the symbolic realm*, which is not enough to make him thrive, change and live normally on *the borderline* between *the semiotic* and *the symbolic worlds*. Darrell needs Nina, who recalls his mother, to provoke his *semiotic realm*'s upheaval against the *symbolic world*. So, Darrell endures an "*Other automaton inside*" himself and has to achieve *a psychic revolution*, which Julia Kristeva believes to have very lasting effects, for the stabilisation of his identity. Struggling to realize identity stability, he has joined an institute, studied in Europe and transferred his paternal affection toward Preston, an inventor with whom he collaborates in scientific research. For Kristeva, it is "To elsewhere that the runaway has directed his hopes, has concentrated his combats and is organizing his/her actual life" (Kristeva 46, my trans). Being a fugitive, Darrell escapes his family, his abject mother, not succeeding to awaken the due revolt of his semiotic realm against the symbolic one. Throughout the play, Eugene O'Neill makes Darrell balance between the two possibilities of *repossession-dispossession*; Darrell, when feeling being dispossessed of Nina and his son, comes back to repossess them but none of his attempts has been successful. In the last Act, he humanely professes to Nina, who rejects his marriage proposal,

> Thank you for that! And that Ned will adore his beautiful Nina! Remember him! Forget me! I'm going back to work. I leave you to Charlie. You'd better marry him, Nina—if you want peace. And after all, I think you owe it to him for his life-long devotion. (Act IX)

Despite the emphatic sadness and softness of his love to Nina, Darrell admits his incapability to find peace. In fact, his encounter with Nina has served to re-

equilibrate his continuous wanderings. A reciprocal but temporary acquaintance between the host Nina and the visitor Darrell has made them separate and reunite several times. "Their happy encounter will be torn if it lasts for a long time," writes Julia Kristeva (Kristeva 22, my trans).

From what is said above, Darrell has internalized social, economic and cultural necessities as if society is embodied in his person. Darrell refuses to confess his adultery in order to release his self from its psychological sufferance. To Williams, Darrell is a *subject* who, "at whatever violence to himself, has to accept the way of life of his society, and his own indicated place in it, because there is no other way in which he can maintain himself at all; only by this kind of obedience can he eat, sleep, shelter, or escape being destroyed by others" (Williams 105). As a consequence, Darrell will continue all his life to conform to the dominant cultural pattern, and will never grow to be an autonomous self.

The Well of the Saints: Blindness as Metaphor to Identity Construction

As regards *The Well of the Saints*, it is worth reviewing the trait of the metaphor of *blindness* in western literature so as to understand the philosophical inclination in J.M. Synge's play. Blindness as a metaphor in the western world's mainstream literature has been prevalent from the old times. In ancient Greek literature, the arrows of Cupid, in the tales of *Cupid and Psyche,* introduced the issue of erotic sensuality and male's serving love. Blindness also fascinated the Enlightenment philosophers whose thoughts were grounded on "the foreign spectator in an unknown country, and the man born blind restored to sight." as Foucault remarks in *Birth of the Clinic* (Ibid. 92). Reinventing the tale of *The Beauty and the Beas*t by Gabrielle Susanne Barbot de Villeneuve in her *La Jeune Américaine, et les contes marins* (1740), Victor Hugo, in *L'homme qui rit* (1869), narrates a love story between *Gwynplaine*, a monstrous and disfigured man, and *Déa,* a blind woman. In the core of all these literary tales, the metaphor of blindness celebrates romantic pairing and contrast between melancholic interior and external virtue and goodness. At this point, it might be assumed that Synge, prone of putting forth peculiar ideas about love and gender issues, could have transposed all these literary connotations in *The Well of the Saints.*

To begin, *The Well of the Saints*' story is set in a lonely mountainous district in the east of Ireland one or more centuries ago. Synge avoids making reference to dates or to any historical frames, preferring not to situate the narrated story within a pre-existing linear image of History. The dominant western discourse has to be combated and opposed by the inwardness of the Douls's essence. In Act I, the reader

is informed about Martin's and Mary's blindness albeit not born as such. Their love, which is neither erotic nor distressful, might suggest a denial of the misogynous mythical love, perpetuated by western world's literature from antiquity to modern times.

The other information implied at the beginning of the play is Jealousy. It is at the bottom of Martin's and Mary's love. The Douls would not suffer more if separated contrary to *Cupid*, *The Beast* and *Gwynplaine* who can be ruined without their beloved females. Thus, jealousy is essential to furnish information about the 'others inside' Martin and Mary, and understand Synge's view toward love and gender. Early in Act I, Martin takes Molly Byrne's defence against his wife's hostile observation,

> If it's she does be telling she's a **sweet**, **beautiful voice** *[sic]* you'd never tire to be hearing, if it was only the pig she'd be calling, or crying out in the long grass, maybe, after her hens" and adds in a very pensive way "It should be a **fine**, **soft**, **rounded woman** *[sic]*, I'm thinking, would have a voice the like of that. (Act I)

On the one side, these words may reveal that Martin does not trust his wife, who pretends to be more beautiful than Molly Byrne. On the other side, it can reasonably be thought that Martin is longing for a lost thing [His mother], which he awfully misses. The gentle and delicious voice of Molly Byrne might evoke something to the "*Other inside*" Martin, whereas the *queer cracked* voice of his wife is repulsive to him. To test the truth of this argument, the dark origins of Martin and his wife, though not informed by Synge, would reveal hidden information about their personalities if investigated.

To set in motion this inquiry, it is commonsense to notice that Martin was not born blind. Though it is the only information supplied by Synge, it may help understanding this couple's conflictual relation. Martin grew up as every child receiving the values and psychical marks from his family and his immediate environment. Thereupon, he certainly went through the '*thetic phase'*-the stage at which a child starts the process of separating from one's mother- to enter *the realm of symbolic* and enjoy the state of being a different person. This process might have lasted some years, for he could remember and observe that a sweet voice had always been associated to a pretty woman. He remembers "for the time I was a young lad, and **had fine sight** *[sic]*, it was the ones with sweet voices were the best in face" (Act I). He had known the main traits of beauty before he became blind, so

one might well claim that he lost his sight at twelve or even more. Unfortunately, blindness came to devastate his symbolic world. He is no more *on the borderline of the semiotic* and *the symbolic* since the *semiotic* becomes prominent and destabilizes his identity process.

At this moment of his life, he has to learn again to grow with this new handicap: blindness. As he could not stand this situation, he left his family wandering in the *seven counties of the east.* According to Kristeva, *the semiotic* remains an eternal companion of the subject in process. Thus, Martin is looking for another identity though he cannot forget his family, his land and his mother. This *abjected mother* is never banished from his inner world. He is "Like an orphan whose love for a lost mother swallows" (Kristeva 46, my trans). His memory engenders altogether suffering, melancholy, exaltation and force inside him. He is, all at the same time, a traitor, a brave and a melancholic subject in process. He chooses to flee elsewhere carrying his inner frustrations. On his road, he very probably met with Mary and married her. She is like him and might have gone through the same experiences in life, for she informs us, "—and I a dark woman since the seventh of my age?" (Act I) Both of them have become strangers. They denied their origins to become citizens of the world, cosmopolitans whose voices, thus, may justify Synge's subversion and implosion of the main cultural discourse in Ireland.

Mary brings some relief to Martin, but she also reflects his dark and misunderstood *semiotic realm*. All the frustrations inside him are transferred onto Mary. Therefore, she can stand for *his abject mother*. Although she is his wife, he cannot help it to reject her, to mock at her and not to believe what she says of her supposed beauty. She represents the hated body of *the abject mother* from which he must get freed in order to realize his own identity. For her part, Mary also sees him as the representative of *the oppressing father*. As a result, their relation is most often tumultuous and turbulent.

Both of them have expressed different attitudes toward what sight recovery might bring to them. Martin feels an inner fear while Mary proves to be very athirst and desirous. Synge introduces Timmy, the smith, on stage in order to announce the news for the couple and raise the emotional reaction of the reader/spectator. The humbugging talk about thieves to hang or all sorts of heard wonders before the saint's arrival is a theatre device used by Synge to lengthen the suspense. It also allows observing that Martin, who is full of *excitement* at the beginning, hesitates to recover his sight fearing the "Other inside" him. He disappointedly confesses, "It'd be a long terrible way to be walking ourselves, and I'm thinking that's a wonder will

bring small joy to us all" (I). Contrary to him, Mary *gropes up to* Timmy imploring him, "You're not huffy with my self, and let you tell me the whole story and don't be fooling me more [...] Is it yourself has brought us the water?" (I) Either Martin's fear or Mary's enthusiasm are generated by *their semiotic realms.* Something inside them turns Martin from the state of excitement to the one of doubt, and Mary's tranquillity to agitation and extreme enthusiasm.

When sight recovery occurs, it has pushed outwardly Martin's and Mary's inner frustrations. Martin becomes delirious and raving. He is destabilized by the inner feelings which explode outwardly. He is driven by his inner frustrations; he is becoming more vulgar for nothing is forbidden for the "Other inside" him that comes out to life. This is why he remorselessly treats the people around him of being "*pitiful beasts"* the moment he is looking for his "*wonder of the western world*": Mary. The "Other inside" him permits all the obscenities and the sexual frenzies hidden before. Martin does not realize that he is destroying the social taboos concerning love and sexuality. Moreover, respected conventional familial and linguistic restraints are being trampled by him.

The same thing happens to Mary though the *"Other inside"* her is not driven by sexual desires but by *an inner image of a father* who would help her to move on to another dimension. Very similar to Martin, she has unconsciously hated her blind husband because he could not secure her to the other dimension, or assist her identity fulfilment. According to Kristeva, the return of the repressed- due to the sight recovery - makes the cosmopolitan subject in process either sexually perverted or ill. "The subject in process is caught between deeply interiorized parental prohibitions and the exterior pressings pent up inside him" (Kristeva 47-49, my trans). This is why after being disillusioned, Martin and Mary have quarrelled by the end of Act I.

Concerning Mary, from the moment she reprimands her husband, "I wouldn't rear a crumpled whelp the like of you" (Ibid), she only reappears mischievous and sickly at the end of Act II, for she is lonely, sad and introverted into her *inner semiotic world* which cannot provoke her identity change. She cannot give *a crumpled whelp* [a child] to Martin who wants it. Subsequently, she is now *a psychotic*, completely governed by *her semiotic*, for her ugly Martin has not crystallized the image of the *imaginary father* who would aid her to overpass and understand *the symbolic,* the external oppressing cultural world.

By contrast, Martin has set his frenzy of sex and language free. He is a sexual pervert. His inner sexual desires are released. He goes to work in Timmy's forge to be hither to his fiancée, Molly Byrne, reflects the body he desires. One time,

Martin has diverted Timmy, whom he compares to ‘*an old scarecrow stuck down upon the road’,* by sending him to wash his face. Thereafter, he reaches at Molly near the well. Considering his self free of any borders/constraints/taboos whether familial or sexual, he announces to her, “It’d be little wonder if a man near the like of you would be losing his mind. Put down your can now, and come along with myself, for I’m seeing you this day, seeing you, maybe, the way no man has seen you in the world. Let you come on now, I’m saying...” (Act II). He is about to commit a rape, not minding what others would say. It is a rape for *he takes her by the arm and trys* [Sic] *to pull her away softly to the right*. The quoted words are generated by Martin’s *semiotic realm*. He has awaited a long time to *seeing* her. He has repeated the word “seeing” at least three times because it is the *‘Other sexually pervert inside’* him who now utters these words.

As for the fact of comparing Timmy to a *scarecrow*, it is “an unusual liberation of language.” (Kristeva 48, my trans) For instance, Martin, time and again, uses erotic, obscene and strange words he would never have used before his sight recovery. In fact, for Kristeva, the *‘Other sexually pervert inside’* Martin, who manifests himself now, does not hear what he says. Therefore, those indecent and lascivious terms and statements do not repel him (49). But I think it would now be for us enthralling to see what might happen if Molly Byrne rejects him solemnly? Would he go looking back for his lost Mary? Or not?

Martin’s abusive use of his freedom turns into an execration and damnation. At the beginning of Act III, Synge brings back Mary Doul to the same place, foreshadowing the return of the Douls to blindness. Mary stays alone mourning for the *lost imaginary father*, and Martin joins her a while later, because Molly Byrne has reprobated him. Just as Mary fails to realize her new identity, Martin, who is bearing a degenerate narcissistic wound, also needs to travel more deeply into his psyche in order to achieve identity stability. For a time, he has believed himself to be a strong subject, but now things are reversed. He might not be able to avoid the destruction of his body and psyche. He firmly refuses to recover sight again, which can be an example of body destruction. When the villagers insist to cure Mary, Martin ‘*strikes the can from the Saint’s hand and sends it rocketing across stage’* and ‘*defiantly’* says, “[...] keep off now, and let you not be afeard; for we’re going on the two of us to the towns of the south [...]” (Act III) Martin and Mary might well be drowned and lost forever because they have to cross ‘*deep rivers with floods in them’.* Despite this danger, they need to quit, always looking for a never reached identity though they know inside themselves that *death* is the inevitable step that would put an end to their suffering. Thus, Martin and Mary might have failed

to counter the mainstream discourse of their society before sinking into madness, which is shelter against dominant mainstream culture (Chase 4).

In this respect, Julia Kristeva's definition of a cosmopolitan as the one who has "*no father, no mother, no God and no master*" (Kristeva 35, my trans) may epitomize the whole metaphoric message which is meant by Synge. The Douls' absent parents combined with their blindness are Synge's point of departure in the process of subverting from within the mainstream cultural discourse and identity of Ireland. Throughout their release from their parents' burden and constraints, the playwright displays the polymorphic identity change he projects for his country. Wanderings and intensive feelings of freedom are exploited to launch some of his new ideals. Being under the ecstasy of extreme pleasure or foolishness, Martin and Mary are opposed to the other people around them, mainly Timmy the smith and the Saint. Martin dares to speak rudely to the latter, a Church or God's representative in Catholic Ireland. Thus, it is almost inevitable that the *"Other sexually perverted inside"* Martin and the *"Other psychotic inside"* Mary are doomed to endure indifference, disgust and misunderstanding from the external world in which they are evolving. Their search for a new subjectivity/identity remains bound to the hidden but never forgotten parents. The Douls flee away from them, but they idealize them. Martin hates and loves his *abject mother*. Mary is seeking her *imaginary father* to regenerate. Both of them have not succeeded. At the end of play, they come back to where they started their quest for a new identity. Synge may have reunited Martin and Mary to make them help each other before ultimate death though it seems that Mary is joyous to have gained Martin's sympathy again.

According to Williams's theory of social types, Martin and Mary Doul can be considered as *errant/vagrant* characters who previously suffered from a social and a spiritual alienation caused mainly by their visual handicap. So, they sought to become others. By making these two main characters blind and peripatetic, Synge intended to discuss segregated female aspects as *beauty, sexual desire (body), gender* and *love* in his traditional Ireland. Throughout his two characters, Synge freed and sublimated the body. Because the two lovers do not see each other, he might have suggested that the best beauty is that which is located inside every person, the beauty of the soul. Most important of all, he redefined the mythical love of the transcendental subject of the Western world by attempting to explain it psychologically- it is this inner sentiment that binds the Douls to one another.

An analyst of a work of art, in Jung's words, has to seek for the significance of every symbol within in order to reveal its secret by understanding how an unconscious archetype might be identified and activated. Archetype is an unfamiliar

expression of fears, dreams, and of all uncanny thoughts that emerge to life coming from "The abyss of pre-human ages" (Jung 106). In order to compensate the one-sidedness of their identity, Martin and Mary have attempted, as shown above, to engage a dialogue with their unconscious and come to good terms with their respective shadows [mother and father] and attain Individuation. However, neither Mary's isolation nor Martin's eagerness and zealous freedom to be loved has prompted their archetypes of the '*Shadow*' so as to help themselves transcend their psychic difficulties and grow to be renewed, whole and essential persons. As vagrants-to be in agreement with Williams's definition, Martin and Mary find the society's principles and values purposeless and irrelevant. Williams writes that, "There is nothing in particular that the vagrant wants to happen; his maximum demand is that he should be left alone" (Williams 109). Martin and Mary accord no importance to themselves and refuse to play any role in society; they do not even desire to oppose it; they only plan to quit, seeking temporary survival.

As I Lay Dying: A Tumultuous Southern Universe

William Faulkner, like Synge and O'Neill, was much concerned with the psychological impact WWI had on American society and its individuals. He had been very concerned with the identity of the South. In his works, he usually represents the southern universe which is affected by the sin of violence, decadence and debasement toward the blacks. As a southerner, Faulkner experienced the shadow of South's History and its decline in most of his works. *As I Lay Dying* (1930) narrates the story of Addie Bundren's funeral; she requested to be buried with her family in Jefferson town. At the beginning of the story, Addie Bundren, wife and mother to a poor white rural family, is on her deathbed. Friends and family come home to comfort her. Addie is a proud, irreverent and resentful woman who only loves her son Jewel. She despises her husband, her neighbors, and all others around. At her death, the whole family goes with her corpse in a carriage to Jefferson Town. On their way there, each member of the family narrates a part of the journey, stating the inner and true reason to his/her trip. Many incidents have spoiled and disturbed Addie's funeral procession in its progress toward her home town and grave.

As I Lay Dying shows the psychological identity experiences of the main heroes. Speaking about Faulkner, Robert Penn Warren notices that, "Here is a novelist who, in mass of work, in scope of material, in range of effect, in reportorial accuracy and symbolic subtlety, in philosophical weight can be put beside the masters of our own past literature." (Warren 124) Olga Vickery thinks that in *As I Lay Dying*, the central theme is Addie herself and her relationship with each

member of her family (Olga 96). In Irving Howe's *William Faulkner: A critical study,* which continues today to be a good introduction to Faulkner's literary art, the moral vision of the novelist, his use of southern History and its social organization in clans are emphasized (Howe 55). Other critics like R.W. Franklin, however, accuse Faulkner of inconsistencies in his narrative method and of using improbable facts and incidents (Franklin 123). Following this discontent, Dean Schmitter also describes the journey to Jefferson as, "An outrageous denial of significance […] We are challenged […] to confront and, so far as possible, to bridge the gulf that divides our personal systems of value from those adhered to by the characters […] and resolve the contradictions that necessarily follow from the use of multiple points of view" (Schmitter 93). Wanting to draw parallels between Brazilian and American literatures, Catarina Edinger gives account of Carlos Fuentes's observation about Faulkner's art when she acclaims that, "Only Faulkner, in the literature of the United States, only Faulkner in the closed world of optimism and success, offers us an image shared in by the United States and Latin America: the image of defeat, of separation, of doubt: of tragedy" (Cited in Hahn and Hamblin 74). As a matter of noteworthiness, these critiques appear to be of great interest to the object of this article which endeavors to reveal every character's inner and psychic disturbance in the process of understanding their identity construction.

As already mentioned, a work of art to Carl Gustav Jung is certifiable and authentic only when every archetype is ignited. Our analysis confides on the archetype of the *Shadow* to show the psychological turmoil in *As I Lay Dying*. Subsequent to what is announced above, discussion will center upon each important character in order to demonstrate whether s/he has engaged in a dynamic psychic debate in the process of attempting to fulfill a stable identity comfort. Their combats will give better perceptiveness into the development of the psychological and intellectual explorations of their psyche.

In *As I Lay Dying*, Faulkner organizes the funeral procession to Jefferson around two levels of action: the exterior cultural world and the interior realm of personal feelings. The reader is given insight into the inner desires and obsessions of all the family members. To this end, the archetypical figure of *Anima/Animus* might serve as mediator between the conscious and unconscious of Addie Bundren. The protagonist Addie has many similarities with her favorite son, Jewel. She is as violent because she sometimes whips her school children,

> I would look forward to the times when they faulted, so I could whip them. When the switch feel I could feel it upon my flesh, when it welted and ridged

> it was my blood that ran, and I would think with each blow of the switch: Now you are aware of me! Now I am something in your secret and selfish life, which have marked your blood with my own forever and ever. (Faulkner 157)

According to Jung’s definition of the archetypal figure *Anima/Animus*, Addie Bundren can be viewed as a male violent force. At school, her relationship with her pupils reveals the male characteristics of her personality. The dialogue between Addie’s conscious and unconscious can be manifested if connected to the *Anima/ Animus* Archetype. Jung defines, “The Anima as an important archetypal structure that holds the feminine aspects of man; its counterpart, the animus, similarly holds the masculine aspects of women” (Cited in Miller 66). Addie, like every human being, has eccentric and atypical sexual attitudes and pervert feelings hidden in the unconscious, so the development of her whole personality requires that that sensitiveness and inner desires have to be assimilated into her conscious. Addie is cold, proud and tough like any man in the American countryside. She longs to reconcile her inner masculine desires with her outside world, which conventionally confines her to the domestic feminine tasks and imposes constraints to her freedom. Unfortunately, the Transcendent Function [or the unity between the masculine and the feminine aspects of her personality] cannot work and the unity of these opposites, which constitute her personality, will remain unreached. Therefore and for at least two other reasons, she seems not to be able to build a new, unique and whole self. The first reason is that she refuses to admit the world of the Bundrens, and asks to be buried in Jefferson with her own family. The second is related to her incessant quest for sin; she had adulterous relationship with Mr. Whitfield. She has sinned because she has been looking for personal life felicity in the midst of a rigorous and unmerciful world of men. She affirms,

> I would think of the sin as garments which we would remove in order to shape and coerce the terrible blood to the forlorn echo of the dead word high in the air. Then I would lay with Anse again- I did not lie to him: I just refused, just as I refused my breast to Cash and Darl after their time was up—hearing the dark land talking the voiceless speech […] Then I found that I had Jewel. When I waked to remember to discover it, he was two months gone. (Faulkner 118)

Even after her death, she has remained estranged and distant to Anse, her husband, the representative of society’s repressive masculine force. Except for Jewel, she has also been detached from her other children. From the point of view of Jung, Addie

Bundren has not succeeded to construct a well adjusted and harmonious personality or give birth to a 'New Living Third' which might conjoin the opposite masculine and feminine aspects of her personality. Therefore, the *Transcendent Function* [the dialogue between her conscious and unconscious] has neither compensated the one-sidedness of her external emotional life nor has it captured the significance of her unconscious desires. In other words, her Individuation process- or gradual change of personality- will fail to occur. The modern society, which Faulkner describes as dehumanized and mechanized, collides in a brutal way with its individuals. Jung states that, "The animus of the woman is not so much the repressed Masculine as it is the repressed Other, the unconscious Other that she has been prevented from living out" (Cited in Singer 193). Thus, the activation of the archetype of Anima/ Animus has revealed that Addie Bundren cannot be saved to life; she must be destroyed.

From the view point of Raymond Williams's theory, Addie Bundren submits herself to the selective tradition when she imitates 'man'; she wants to belong to the rough masculine farm world which refuses to recognize her as a woman. She cannot emerge into a new cultural force. As a creator of strong cultural institutions, 'Man' has repressed every residual feminine alternative since the beginning of human History. The dominant masculine cultural discourse "Cannot allow too much residual experience and practice outside itself, at least without risk" (Parker 463). The fact of quitting her job as teacher to marry Anse Bundren is worthy of being accepted as a presumptive sign to the beginning of her tragic decline. As a servant social type, Addie is given the illusion of choice while working as teacher. This job has allowed her pretending to identification with her society. At the country house, she grows older and lonely, so the identification and illusion of choice get confusing to the servant's self and cause her emotional and psychic disturbance as shown below.

As to Julia Kristeva's psychoanalytic theory, it can be assumed that Addie could have been a *subject on the borderline* living more or less a state of well-being and contentment between the semiotic and the symbolic worlds, for she freed herself from her mother's love and been secured by her father to the external symbolic realm. She has grown up in the big town of Jefferson, but begun to lose identity stability after starting work as a teacher in a small rural village. Added to difficulties inherent to her job, others have continued to unfold much more since her marriage to Anse. In fact, she associates her claim of being a fortunate subject on the borderline of the semiotic and symbolic realms back to the period of her life she was with her family, father mainly, and to Jefferson town. Her rural life has plunged

her into a very lonely life. She is closed off and very solitary. According to Kristeva, an identity disaster is actually operating since *the semiotic world* is becoming more prominent than *the symbolic one*. Addie is bearing a *"psychotic other within"* her. In order to rehabilitate and amend her identity stability, the "*Other psychotic inside"* Addie has to revolt against *the symbolic*. This is why she has very probably been recalling and longing for her father, family and Jefferson town. As advised by Kristeva, Addie has used *mothering* to put forth a solid subjectivity. *Mothering* would help her to reconcile with the symbolic man-dominated world. However, *mothering* alone is not sufficient to ensure identity stability for a woman. Addie has to be of *body and mind* -or have children and a career. Her marriage seems not to have offered her such a possibility. She quitted her job; this event might have hindered the success of her *psychic revolt*. As a consequence, Addie's subjectivity is strongly disordered. The *"Other psychotic inside"* drives and propels her toward sinfulness and perversion. Nothing to be done by her husband and children could provide her with a sense of self-confidence and coherence. Addie is driven to self-annihilation by what Kristeva calls '*death drive'*. Despite the short, elated and entranced time with Anse at the beginning of their encounter, she has fallen to *indifference* toward her murderous life as Meursault, Camus' estranged character in *L'étranger*. Like him, Addie is condemned to die, since "the murderous and irreconcilable singularity which inhabits inside subjects" as her "would not permit them to found a new world" (Kristeva 45, my trans).

As far as Darl is concerned, Faulkner makes him the chief narrator in *As I Lay Dying*. He is imbued with a large imagination, for he is intuitive and intelligent. His sensitivity and isolation inform about his personal behavior, which has been loyal to the family at some times and indifferent at others. His memories as a child show his detachment and alienation from the other members of his family. He remembers, "When I was a child […] Then I would wait until they all went to sleep so I could lie with my shirt-tail up, hearing them sleep, feeling myself without touching myself, feeling the cool silence blowing" (Faulkner 8). Darl seems to protect his inner fears using the shield of isolation. However, Darl carries a *Shadow,* which comes to the surface in order to hinder his efforts toward finding meaning and constructing a lasting stable selfhood. To Jung, "The basic idea of Shadow was the unacknowledged, hence unconscious, dark side of the personality that is blocked out by the accepted, conscious side" (Cited in Shorter and Plaut 138). In this respect, the various interpretations of Darl's behavior may help provoking the divulgation of his real and true self.

Within this family environment abounding misfortune and affliction, Darl

seems to be much more moved by Addie's death than the others are because his *Shadow* manifests itself along the funeral procession to Jefferson. The humiliation of bringing the body to Jefferson has traumatized him. He thinks that this act is an affront to his mother. He is the only one to disavow that initiative within the family. He is an introverted psychological type whose thought is, for Jung, dominated by *thinking*. As a result, he cannot be given an opportunity to achieve unity and identity comfort in this world. He thinks that all his family is against him, and that he has never had a mother, for he always knew that Addie preferred Jewel. He sometimes expresses his grief through physical bursts of defiance, anger and repugnance. Because his Shadow is repressed and isolated from his conscious, it cannot be eradicated. Therefore, it can never be corrected. For all these reasons, Darl sets fire to the barn. He cannot recognize and integrate that which is unacceptable to him- the death of his mother. Thus, he cannot come to engage in the path of *Individuation* in order to grow to a *New Living Third*-a rebirth or revelation of a new essential man. The *Transcendent Function* [That is the dialogue between his unconscious and conscious] has not been engaged. The action of burning the barn is an act of a desperate and traumatized man than that of an insane. As a consequence to this deed, Darl has descended into a deep distress, and has lost his mind thoroughly. The trauma of being betrayed by his family has pushed Darl into a critical breakdown. He has lost all sense of self- hood. Darl's life takes a tragic turn. Opining on Darl's insanity, his brother Cash's remarks, "But I aint so sho that ere a man has the right to say what is crazy and what aint. It's like there was a fellow in every man that's done a-past the sanity or the insanity, that watches the sane and the insane doings of that man with the same horror and the same astonishment" (Faulkner 161). Cash has been struck by Darl's complex psychological state. Darl experiences a destructive tragic identity collapse because he has been incapable of reaching down to the deepness of his unconscious in order to grow to a new essential man.

According to Williams, every authentic historical analysis is necessarily interested in interrelations between movements and tendencies though it excludes "What […] may often be seen as the personal or the private, or as the natural or even the metaphysical" (Cited in Parker 465). [sic] And Darl's hidden love or sentimental attachment to his mother can be described as being private, natural and metaphysical. As a result, it is repressed by the dominant cultural thought and Darl is doomed to experience that psychological decline. Darl, like his brother Jewel, stays in his society and desires only to be left alone. He is a modern vagrant for whom conformity, rebellion, exile or service are all alike insignificant. He cannot achieve a true personal identity; therefore, he is to be indexed as an 'unauthentic'

individual.

Family has been for its young individuals the source of disappointment in America during the first decades of the twentieth century. Darl is living identity disaster and has discordant relationships with the members of his family though he could have had a successful life. It seems that Jewel has accentuated Darl's feelings of depression. Darl has not only developed a natural longing for a narcissistic union with his mother but also hatred and abjection. The *'Other melancholic inside'* Darl, that cannot be secured to the symbolic world by his father, descends into a deep depression.

As a result, Addie and Darl have committed themselves in the battle of contesting their fates and struggled to become new individuals within their social and cultural world. To Jung, each of them has sought to construct his/her integral self. They have sustained much effort to this goal, and each has experienced differently the *Transcendent Function*, which has not potentiated significant changes to their lives. Thus, their destinies will remain unfulfilled, for "The Self is the ultimate Transcendent Archetype, a perfect union of opposing qualities harmonized and represented by the symbol of balanced mind. It is the fulfillment of promise and prophecy, the enlightened spirit of both Western and Eastern systems of belief and religion" (Northrop 50). As regards Williams's cultural perspective, it has demonstrated that Faulkner's characters have attempted to resist unsuccessfully the selective dominant cultural values of their society. At the end of the journey to Jefferson town, Darl seems never to have mental strength to recover from his deep psychic depression and despondency.

Conclusion

In order to analyze the complex emotional states, the social positions and the life combats of the main characters, Jung's archetypes, Williams's classification of social types and Kristeva's psychoanalysis have provided incumbent methodological direction for the understanding of the innate and cultural potentialities of the main characters. The study of William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying,* Eugene O'Neill's *Strange Interlude* and J.M Synge's *The Well of the Saints* has shown the extent to which modern heroes and heroines have experienced disastrous social and psychological lives. In *As I Lay Dying,* Darl and Addie have neither aroused to *New Living Thirds* nor have they enjoyed identity easiness. Addie Bundren has not activated the archetype of *Animus*; it would have helped her to understand the masculine aspects of her personality, and live a happy life with her husband and children. But she died without expressing her inner masculine force. For his part,

Darl's *Shadow* manifests itself through his mother. He has not admitted her death, so he sinks into a damaging psychic neurosis.

In *As I Lay Dying*, Nina Leeds' *Shadow* in *Strange Interlude* resurfaces through her sexual desire for Gordon, her dead fiancé. She has married, aborted, and engaged in an adulterous relationship, but has always failed to get in touch with her *Shadow*. However, she may grow onto a *new essential woman* the moment she sets free all sexual desire and appeal. Concerning Charles Marsden, his archetype of *Anima* is not understood because of his one and last ineradicable encounter with the prostitute. As for Darrell, he can be considered to be the opposite of Darl in *As I Lay Dying*, for he is well-installed in the outside cultural world. He refuses to activate a dialogue with his unconscious personal realm. In a way, he is also a victim of the social values he conforms to.

In *The Well of the Saints,* the Douls sought to reconcile with the irrecoverable absence of their parents. To show the originality and inwardness of his characters, Synge purported to combat and change the unwavering, and oppressive Irish cultural discourse. That is why the *"Others inside"* Martin and Mary are doomed to endure indifference, disgust and misunderstanding. That is why they both decide to withdraw from society, impeding the process of engaging a dialogue with their unconscious.

According to Williams's cultural and historical perspective, it has also been noticed that most of these characters in the three works have failed to grow to autonomous selves because their private desires and histories are placed against the conventions and traditions of the dominant cultural worlds they live in. When confronted to any particular cultural and psychological situation, each of them has attempted to make a significant response by putting forth his/her personal mental view of a self-imagined world. However, almost all of them have come to realize that these imaginative and psychic worlds must perish and suffer identity ruins. As a result, most of the heroes and heroines in Faulkner's, O'Neill's and Synge's texts are destroyed by society whose traditions and cultural values are never shaken or redefined. At the end, it is demonstrated that these modern personages fall and experience psychological declines despite their revolutionary commitment in the battle of contesting the selected dominant values within their societies.

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Audience Participation: Avant-Garde in Bertolt Brecht's *The Good Woman of Setzuan* and Femi Osofisan's *Esu and the Vagabond Minstrels*

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Abstract German playwright Bertolt Brecht and his Nigerian counterpart Femi Osofisan are noted to propagate the epic theatre tradition riding at the back of avant-garde creative consciousness. They challenge existing dramatic status quo and the tyrannical, Aristotelian, classical composition on stage. Given their epic theatre commitment, many critics interpret their plays from the prism of socio-political involvement, perceiving their works as social, critical commentaries with a Marxist bent. While these kinds of interpretations are valid and capture the playwrights' ideological enthusiasm, they disregard the more enduring legacy of audience participation which in effect has granted their works global acclaim. Using *The Good Woman of Setzuan* and *Esu and the Vagabond Minstrels*, I argue that audience participation is a practical theatrical technique which provides a genuine substratum for the two texts to flourish. I further submit that the two texts provide theatre practitioners an option to adopt audience participation technique to involve spectators on stage in a world caught viciously in the stranglehold of adverse social hegemony. By providing the option, Brecht and Osofisan uphold the argument that the playwright and the audience are active participants in restoring the theatre to its evanescing glory as an instrument of social reawakening.

Keywords epic theatre; avant-garde; Marxism; audience participation; classical period

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Introduction

In the twenty-first century, one can profitably argue that theatre, stagecraft, and various dramatic expressive outlets seem to be gradually losing their social, creative, aesthetic, and artistic appeal. This is due largely in part, to the consistent infusion of different dramatic styles couched mostly in the theoretical convictions of playwrights some of which lack socially penetrating immediacy and ideological cohesion. Hitherto existing classical theatrical forms such as tragedy with its rigid, restrictive boundaries of unities (time - place - action) and comedy adopt a fixed subjective approach which emotionalizes the audience, entangling it in the dramatic thicket of events on stage. These developments have stagnated the evolution of theatre, whittled down its encompassing potential and circumscribed the roles drama ought to play as an instrument of public cleansing and social interrogation besides entertainment and didactic objectives. One of the essential components of theatre which has ensured its success over the years is the audience. Without it, the entire theatrical engagement is incomplete. According to Orr Shelly, "the presence of an audience is the key component that constitutes a theatre event" (369). The audience primarily functions as a barometer to gauge the success or otherwise of a theatrical production. However, in the classical Aristotelian era, the role of the audience was passive and unheralded until the advent of epic theatre which demands the involvement of the audience in the determination and outcome of dramatic enactment. German playwright Bertolt Brecht's introduction of the epic theatre coincided with the inexorable rise of avant-garde, an innovative and experimental artistic mode which led to the revival of multilayered imaginative lineaments in arts and entertainment. Ribut Basuki remarks that "Brecht's theatre—which is known as epic-theatre—, was clearly an avant-garde. In fact, it has been considered as one of the most important and influential modern avant-garde theatres. His aesthetics has continued to influence theatre until the present day, when the school of thought has shifted from modernism to post modernism" (137). The enduring impact of Brecht's epic theatre remarkably ensures its dominance of two notable periods in literary development - modernism and postmodernism with a regional affirmation in Africa, Asia, and South-America. Audience participation, it can be argued, is one of the most distinguishing attributes of Brecht's epic theatre.

Epic is an Aristotelian term which means that a work of art transcends time,

in other words, it is relevant throughout all the ages. However, given the practical evolution of epic in Brecht's hands, he renamed his epic theatre 'dialectical theatre' to capture the conversations, arguments, and public scrutiny which his drama provoked among the audience. Although Brecht christened his epic theatre 'dialectical theatre', the literary world is more attuned to the epic theatre label. He also broke away from the artistic, commanding heights of Aristotelian theatre by rejecting preconceived replication of events on stage, imitation and purgation in favour of manifest demonstration and capability for action. His dramatic depiction emphasizes socialist orientation through the inscription of Marxist identities. The Brechtian approach to theatre performance influenced many playwrights across the world with Nigeria's Femi Osofisan acclaimed as a genuine apostle of the Brechtian theatrical philosophy. Hope Eghagha is convinced that Osofisan's ideological proclivity conforms to Brecht's theatrical objectives. According to Eghagha "Bertolt Brecht's *oeuvre* was his strong views on how drama can be used as a tool for re-awakening. In this regard, the works of Osofisan have paralleled that of Brecht" (72). By his submission, Eghagha establishes a remote contiguity between the creative works of Brecht and Osofisan.

Brecht's epic theatre redefined the world of theatre by first challenging the classical notion of drama with its stereotypical themes both in composition and dramatization. His epic theatre directly confronted contemporary socio-political issues urging the audience to confront and oppose issues rather than reconcile and rationalize them. According to M.H. Abrams, in Brecht's epic theatre "his hope was to encourage his audience to criticize and oppose, rather than passively to accept, the social conditions and modes of behaviour that the plays represent" (84). Through his early plays, Brecht spoke and advocated for the underclass and in 1920, he publicly avowed to be a committed Marxist. Femi Osofisan, while borrowing from the Brechtian theatrical philosophy utilizes African traditional elements such as folktales, animism, history, and myth as potent catalysts to recreate and address class issues in his contemporary Nigeria. Thus, these African traditional elements become elastic, active ingredients that shape Osofisan's social vision in theatre and performance. There is therefore, an existing artistic, creative, and ideological affinity between Brecht and Osofisan which is why many critics, engaging their oeuvres juxtapose the two playwrights. Given this existing proximity between them, it is almost impossible to mention Osofisan without attributing his artistic inclinations to the Brechtian theatrical ideology.

While the successes of both playwrights have been attributed to new formulations through the epic theatre mode and the attendant avant-garde

intensity, audience participation has been the defining parameter in their theatrical composition. Brecht introduced the alienation effect, through which he encouraged the audience to detach themselves from the play on stage, de-emphasize emotions and accept that they are not watching reality but a recreation of reality. The most obvious audience participation approach in Brecht's theatre is the open-ended style where the audience is called to determine how the play should end. Osofisan utilized this method to good effect in most of his plays. However, besides Brecht's open-ended audience participation approach, Osofisan devised his audience participation possibilities by appropriating the African oral narrative style through songs and response where a rhythm is achieved between the narrator and the audience. Osofisan's oral narrative style of audience participation falls short of any ideological substance beyond entertainment. Therefore, his inclination to Brecht's open-ended style of audience participation is more plausible, profound, and popular. A closer scrutiny of Brecht and Osofisan's plays reveals that they have achieved artistic success based on the introduction of the following as new models to theatre which sustains their avant-garde fervency — the use of songs, music and dance, the introduction of a narrator who narrates events on stage, frugal, sparse setting, lightening and props, character disembowelment, the use of placards, and freeze moments. However, of all these new, radical theatrical variations, there stands out one which is regarded as the torchbearer of the avant-garde movement - breaking the fourth wall. As a style of audience participation, breaking the fourth wall is the most commanding spectre which defines the epic-theatre, avant-garde mode invented by Brecht and nourished by Osofisan respectively.

Breaking the fourth wall in Brecht and Osofisan's epic theatre significantly accounts for the success of *The Good Woman of Setzuan* and *Esu and the Vagabond Minstrel* (henceforth, *Setzuan* and *Minstrels*) given that the outcome of the plays are determined by the participation of the audience who are called upon to make a decision at the end of each production. Brecht's epic-theatre, although political in nature, seeks to awake the audience from a seeming lethargy and provoke them into becoming active participants in contemporary social issues. In the same breath, Osofisan's theatre seeks to stir the people into action, to ask questions and reflect on their roles as social actors. Echoing Brechtian theatrical and dramatic philosophy, Osofisan unequivocally declares that "my aim, I must say, has never been to achieve a consensus, but rather to provoke dynamic exchange, to stir the audience into argument and discussions, into a revision of stale and sterile opinions" (22). This mode of ideological communication is evident at the end of each play where the audience is invited to determine their conclusion, thus they go away from the

theatre thinking, ruminating and masticating issues they were confronted with on stage. The concluding part of the plays provides a more penetrating inquest into social dynamics. By giving the audience the chance to participate in the plays, the playwrights subliminally divest themselves of omnipotent, all-knowing personality, a style which was more prevalent in the Greek theatrical, classical tradition. The open-ended, inconclusive style of the epic-theatre promotes a form of social awakening and consciousness by which the opinion of the society is assessed towards major issues. It gives the audience a sense of belonging and responsibility, infiltrating the inner recesses of the people's psychology, thus uncovering their temperament which may have been concealed due to a lack of platform to ventilate or express them.

Generally viewed as a reflexive instrument of collective and individual examination, theatre reinvents every aspect of society from politics to religion, love, vengeance, exploitation, gender issues and most importantly, class, social contradictions. It challenges different defining boundaries of social reality before a large audience and through the audience participation technique, gives every member of the audience a voice irrespective of social status. Today, European and Asian audience will react differently to various political issues in Europe and Asia when Brecht wrote his plays. For example, in *Setzuan* the twenty-first century audience will be divided in deciding Shen Te's fate whether she is guilty of character transposition, cross-dressing, and gender manipulation seeing that she needed to vacillate between male and female to perpetuate good in society. Also, in *Minstrels* the Nigerian and African audience will definitely have a different view in deciding which of the minstrels in the play deserves reward given that Omele used his magic boon to help the needy while the other minstrels used their magic boon to assist those who will reward them in return. In the two plays, the notion of morality and goodness is called to question by directly involving the audience to become part of the decision process. Thus, the society, through the audience is continually held accountable in the plays. Audience participation, therefore, is a vital component of Brecht and Osofisan's theatre and a conspicuous symbol of the avant-garde tradition.

Practical Marxism

I have decided to appropriate Marxist theoretical template as a critical interpretive tool in this study given that Brecht and Osofisan consistently gravitate towards class inequalities and the conditions that give rise to these realities in their texts. However, having critically diagnosed Marxism, I propose a new model christened Practical

Marxism. Karl Marx's variant of Marxism appears to lack direct penetration with the audience when applied as a tool to dissect and analyse class conflict and other social issues in theatre. Thus, its basic principles resonate more at an idealistic level with limited demonstrable practical template for social reordering. Although Brecht and Osofisan denounce conventional dramatic heritages in their works, their inevitable Marxist tendencies ensure that they profusely cling on to specialized forms of drama which demands more of the Marxist template in its primordial form. Nelson Obasi and Ikechukwu Orjinta argue that "both Brecht and Osofisan's works have contempt for traditional or liberal humanist drama which sees human nature as fixed and unchanging. Yet, they hardly depart from it completely. Whereas Brecht deploys the epic theatre in contradistinction to the traditional order, Osofisan deploys popular theatre tradition to a similar effect" (38). The apparent inadequacies of Marxism in its nascent character could be responsible for the playwrights' recourse to traditional methods where Practical Marxism equates their ideological and creative impulses. Brecht's epic theatre and Osofisan's African traditional practices, two models that have striking similarities, free the playwrights from the restrictive shackles of Marxist ideas while granting them the freedom to propagate Practical Marxism, a new category of Marxism where their class commitments are inaugurated and established through audience participation.

The critical kernel of Marxism in its aggregate praxis could be described as quixotic given that the capitalist class which it seeks to overthrow through revolution will inevitably be replaced by a new class of capitalists because nature abhors a vacuum. Given the idealistic complexion of Marxism and its seeming unrealizable possibilities, its affirmative prognostication as a future model for social reconfiguration has gradually waned, systematically ossifying into an unpopular change model in the twenty-first century. For example, the polarized socio-economic conditions in Nigeria which continues to regenerate and produce new capitalist masters and underclass in equal measure reveal the limits of Osofisan's Marxist ideological posturing in his works. Babasinmisola Fadirepo observes that "clearly, from a Marxian perspective, Osofisan shows how humans are products of socio-economic conditioning although the pervasive corruption that has eaten deep into the fabric of Nigerian nation renders his dialectical approach clumsy. It is not only the rich that are oppressing the poor. Among the poor, they are also oppressing themselves. Class consciousness that Marxist ideology espouses is not so neat within the Nigerian political and socio-economic context that Osofisan dramatizes" (5). While Marxism may be ephemeral, suspended in idealistic patterns and removed from direct, immediate social penetration where the people are affected, Practical

Marxism typically and directly demonstrates to the audience the inherent socio-economic inequalities among members of society and how these class contradictions can be abrogated and corrected. For instance, when the audience is called to decide the fate of armed robbers in Osofisan's *Once Upon Four Robbers,* while some members of the audience will vote for the armed robbers to be spared, other members of the audience will vote for them to be executed. However, traditional Marxism will continually preach against capitalist tendencies that give rise to the menace of armed robbery without providing a platform to engage the people and seek their opinion on the issue. But through Practical Marxism, it is revealed that some members of the audience, considering the conditions that give rise to armed robbery in society, will vote for the robbers to be spared. Without this kind of open-ended technique which gives members of the audience the opportunity to participate in determining social outcomes, Marxism will preach against conditions that enable armed robbery while ignoring social temperament on the issue.

In their works, Brecht and Osofisan apparently convey Marxist ideas in an all-inclusive continuum which opposes the classical notion of theatre challenged by avant-garde consciousness. Therefore, since avant-garde promotes a new era in theatre and art, Brecht and Osofisan's Marxist deployment must be situated to conform with the practicability of the new avant-garde artistic complexion. The audience in Brecht's and Osofisan's theatre is a microcosm of society made up of different classes of people who represent diverse interests and persuasions. It is a theatre which does not draw class demarcations or discriminate who attends to watch a play. Therefore, when the audience is confronted with social issues, various social representatives react and respond in different ways. The exploiter and exploited will react differently to issues of exploitation on stage. Social inequality, corruption, political and economic criminality will elicit different reactions from an audience made up of different classes of people. While the original Marxism does not prescribe a practical way of addressing exploitation and different forms of class contradictions beyond revolution, the Practical Marxism which I propose directly engages the people by involving them in the actions on stage. Practical Marxism is suitable for this study because Brecht's and Osofisan's theatre are tailored towards its tenets which identifies the dilapidating aspects of society and directly extracting the people's reactions either immediately while they watch or subsequently having been provoked enough based on events on stage. While Practical Marxism does not discredit the original Marxism, it posits a type of Marxist renewal, reincarnating a new brand of theatre which advances the avant-garde radical designation.

Practical Marxism as a critical tool, flourishes in theatre by reviving all the

emotional and mental atrocities associated with capitalism before an attentive, involved audience. Through Brecht's alienation effect, the audience is detached from the characters on stage and from entertainment, emotion, and pity which allows them to become part of the dramatic procedure. Brian Crow points out that "the main outlines of Brecht's conception of Epic spectatorship have long been clear: an intellectually (and even emotionally) alert audience, which is enabled through the drama's formal devices or techniques to see anew by a process of "estranging" what has become familiar and taken for granted, thus provoking audience awareness that character and action is always embedded in, and in large measure produced by, causal socioeconomic structures" (191). Divested of all items of personal engrossment and attachment, stripped of every strand of connection with events on stage, the audience is able to establish a corollary between imitation on stage and reality in life. Given Brecht's and Osofisan's audience participation technique where the audience becomes active, functional participants in the drama, collective mass action is no longer postponed, therefore Marxism is retrieved from the original idealistic chamber where it is usually ensconced and preserved. While Practical Marxism directly involves the audience, the original Marxism is delivered in elevated, highfalutin phrases which can only be understood by a coterie of bourgeois, educated class. The original Marxism in its undiluted state argues for class equilibrium where the poor, marginalized will benefit and be vindicated. The theory is meant to arouse, awake and create awareness among the poor about the degrading conditions which they are forced to live in and accept. Unfortunately, the original Marxism in its linguistic communicative strategies, alienate the people, thus there is a disconnect between the problem and the potential solution. In order to accommodate the audience in his theatre, Osofisan creates a theatre of possibility without restrictions. According to Abdullahi Abubakar, "to remove the constraints that create barriers in the interaction between the actor and the audience (resulting from an over formalized stage setting), Osofisan creates a freer stage atmosphere" (178). Practical Marxism finds expression in Osofisan's 'freer stage atmosphere' because it establishes the theatre as imitation but at the same time gives room for the real world to be enacted among the audience. Although Practical Marxism retains the basic principles of original Marxism which includes awareness, rejection and revolution, it advances the concept of direct participation where the audience is called to action.

Audience Participation and Practical Marxism: Critical Voices

Audience participation in arts is not restricted to drama and theatre alone. It

extends to other artistic forms such as music, sculptor and painting, museum collection, traditional religious practices and even orthodox religious indulgence. It describes the level of involvement of the audience in either receiving artistic creations or the extent to which artistic creations affect it. However, in the modern era, theatre seemed to have lost its verve and vitality which is why Brecht's epic theatre ushered in a new attitude through audience participation. Brecht's epic theatre, hugely animated by the avant-garde consciousness, breathed a new life into twentieth century theatrical ideology. Elizabeth Sakellaridou points out that "the twentieth century has been most radical in its search for the revitalization of the dead relationship between the stage and its audience. The rediscovery of ritual in cultures other than the European set the orbit of western theatre to a reverse course and restored the initial role of the spectator as a participant in the action and the theatre event as a shared physical and emotional experience" (14). According to Sakellaridou, the ritual cultures in Africa, Asia, and many parts of South-America, which encouraged audience participation influenced the European theatre tradition which by extension increased the innovative strands of epic theatre. The emergent twentieth century theatre passion opened new vistas for playwrights to create spectatorship awareness where it was jolted into a degree of freedom to be radically involved in the process of artistic creations.

Robinson Joanne underscores the importance of audience in theatrical performance by asserting that "it is axiomatic by any definition of performance that it requires the presence of an audience: theatrical meaning is created in the interaction between performer and audience, between stage and auditorium. Yet the difficulty of addressing the identity and reactions of the audience in theatre history means that all too often in writing about performance the presence of the audience is elided, merely mentioned in passing: the audience is there, imaginatively necessary but critically unconsidered" (3). Joanne reinforces the importance of the audience and the interaction between it and the stage. However, she does not explain any clear-cut pattern of audience participation and to what degree it should enable the theatrical production. Thus, there is a big question concerning the role of the audience and its reaction in a theatrical production. Brecht's and Osofisan's theatres are explicit about the role of the audience which includes but not limited to getting involved and active in the theatrical creation on stage. Beyond the role of the audience in a theatrical performance on stage, the actors require the response of the audience to motivate them and to gauge acceptability. The playwright, director and all the elements of the dramatic crew sit in awe of the audience. James Penner suggests a method by which actors and performers on stage can provoke

reactions from the audience and force them to participate in the process. According to Penner "in many cases, the performer assumes a hostile position vis-à-vis the audience. In some situations, the performer attempts to antagonize the spectators in order to make them aware of their own political and moral delusions" (77). This is another important aspect of the avant-garde movement, a situation of improvisation where actors or performers on stage exercise their liberty to provoke and involve the audience in the dramatic process. Besides the actors and performers on stage, the narrator can directly seek the opinion of the audience in which case they are divested of passivity and become active members of the production. Given that Brecht's and Osofisan's dramas gravitate towards addressing class contradictions through a Marxist lens, Practical Marxism is demonstrated when the ideological imperative of the dramatic content penetrates the audience, eliciting radical responses from them. In both *Setzuan* and *Minstrels,* some of the characters directly address the audience in a bid to provide background information about the play or to scurry their sympathy over the developing circumstances concerning the individual characters. In *Setzuan*, Wong the water seller and Shen Te both address the audience at different times. In *Minstrels*, the Old Man and Omele also directly address the audience at different times. Their reasons are informed by an urgent need to make the audience part of the dramatic unfolding.

Kirsty Sedgman proposes another form of audience participation which goes beyond the confines of the theatre. It focuses more on the enduring effect the theatrical composition on stage has on the audience long after the production ends. According to Sedgman "the methodological challenge is to encourage people to go beyond simple valuations ('It was good'; 'I liked it'; 'It wasn't for me'), by encouraging them to speak about what it did to them in the moment, as well as what they have done with the experience since" (314). Sedgman's observations could lead us to compartmentalize audience participation into two separate categories: primary audience participation and secondary audience participation. The primary audience participation deals with the immediate reactions and contributions of the audience towards the artistic enactment on stage. In this case, the audience becomes part and parcel of the entire dramatic orchestration. The secondary audience participation deals with the reactions and effects of the artistic enactment on the audience long after the spectators have gone home. Sedgman refers to the secondary audience participation which is sometimes extracted and reviewed through interviews and reactions in the media.

Sophie Nield makes the point that the effort to achieve a consensus of reaction from theatre audience is at once futile and irrelevant because according to her,

every theatre production must locate its audience and elicit the kinds of responses it deserves. These responses could be acceptance or rejection, positive or negative. She claims that "theatre, like the street protest, has the capacity to hold space and time for the immediacy of rage; theatre, like street protest, has the capacity to both locate and dislocate the audience" (426). This means that there is no guarantee that a whole theatre audience can agree or align with the dramatic content on stage. This could be described as a major shortfall of the Practical Marxist approach because the diversity of the audience ensures the lack of total acceptability or consensus of all radical echoes on stage. The intrusion and consequent exactitude of Practical Marxism is a product of Brecht's radical idea of producing a new complexion of Marxism. According to Ronnie Bai "Brecht's attempt to create a Marxist aesthetics of theatre, whether partly echoing Marx's theory of alienation or not was predated by his search for and discovery of new forms and representational style" (411). Brecht clearly saw the inadequacy of Marxism but could not arrive at a definite label for his new Marxist approach which aligned with the avant-garde artistic consciousness. Perhaps, Brecht would roll and smile in his grave at the mention of Practical Marxism because it captures his epic theatre potential and breaking the fourth wall technique. His alienation effect is constituted in Practical Marxism since the later presupposes self-awareness and immediate detachment from events and actors on stage.

Sheng-Mei Ma argues that "alienation, by definition, involves a split, and for Brecht, alienation in drama entailed a departure from Aristotelian-Stanislavskian conventions. Such division is constitutive of Marxism, which posits dialectical forces vying for dominance throughout human history. Contestation of opposites within oneself and one's world recurs in Brecht's dramas" (444). The opposites created in Brecht's drama is the tension between the audience and the radical, provoking dramatic contents on stage. Brecht makes no pretence about his intentions in his alienation effect. He, like Osofisan, is committed to provoking the audience into rejecting all forms of capitalist and exploitative, bourgeois tendencies that inhibit their existence. Even when both playwrights replicate different forms of drama like tragedy, comedy and tragicomedy, they find a way to reconcile all the attributes to portray a class-contradictory, capitalist reality on stage and at the same time, communicate these possibilities to the audience with the intention of shocking them into awareness and response.

One can profitably argue that all the ideological and artistic paradigm associated with Brecht inevitably accommodates Osofisan who practically adopts the Brechtian theatrical philosophy. Besides Osofisan's appropriation of African

oral traditional impetus to involve the audience, his drama rehashes the Brechtian model. Brecht and Osofisan in *Setzuan* and *Minstrel*, besides other interpretive kernels in the plays, set out to use their plays as a model to sample public opinion on issues of morality, exploitation and goodness. Robert Cardullo observes that "characteristically, Brecht loved to direct his audience's attention to the suggestive detail, the small, barely noticeable gesture that bears a huge meaning" (639). Brecht's focus is the audience and the degree of their involvement in the dramatic spectacle, the same as Osofisan. David Wilson instinctively points out that Brecht's audience focus is basically attributed to his Marxist proclivity. However, instead of direct politics, he indirectly participates in politics using drama as a convenient instrument. According to Wilson "as a Marxian playwright, Brecht's aim was to ensure a radical paradigm shift of the theatre into a productive critique of society. He wanted his theatre to evoke a critical response from the audience so as to transform the society. He also called for a major revolution in the role and function of the actor" (60). Indeed, Wilson's submissions instinctively captures Osofisan's dramatic commitments as summarized by Muyiwa Awodiya who reminds us that "the major objective of Osofisan as a playwright is seems, is to catalyse the evolution of collective consciousness among all black people in an effort to liberate themselves from economic and socio-political oppression inherited from the colonial experience" (32). Awodiya's remarks exalts Osofisan's drama to the pinnacle of Brechtian artistic and dramatic engagements. It is within these critical, divergent perspectives that Brecht's and Osofisan's theatrical preoccupations will be understood and situated in this study.

The Good Woman of Setzuan and *Esu and the Vagabond Minstrels*: The Audience Decides

Setzuan can prodigiously be regarded as a dramatic encounter between the artist and the audience but subtly orchestrated by the playwright mainly to address issues of morality, capitalism, corruption, gender transposition and many more. Set in the fictional city of Setzuan, Brecht uses different characters to portray the multilayered contradictions of human behaviour constituting a superstructure at the root of social decay. As the play begins, Wong, a poor, unheralded water seller introduces himself to the audience. Wong's first encounter with the audience unveils the dramatic import of the play and the social issues which confront the immediate Setzuan community.

WONG: I sell water here in the city of Setzuan. It isn't easy. When water is scarce, I have long distances to go in search of it, and when it is plentiful, I have

no income. But in our part of the world there is nothing unusual about poverty. Many people think only the gods can save the situation. And I hear from a cattle merchant-who travels a lot-that some of the highest gods are on their way here at this very moment. Informed sources have it that heaven is quite disturbed at all the complaining. I've been coming out here to the city gates for three days now to bid these gods welcome. I want to be the first to greet them. What about those fellows over there? No, no, they work. And that one there has ink on his fingers, he's no god, he must be a clerk from the cement factory. Those two are another story. They look as though they'd like to beat you. But gods don't need to beat you, do they? (Brecht 17)

First, the audience can deduct from Wong's introduction of himself that he is a capitalist who capitalizes on drought to exploit the people by providing them water at exorbitant prices even when it rains. By relating with the audience, Wong reveals his identity instead of waiting for the audience to decipher his character. Also, by addressing the audience, Wong immediately involves them in the play with a sense of belonging as they all wait patiently to see the gods. Wong is at the city gate waiting for gods who are visiting the town in response to cries of anguish and supplication from the people. The three gods arrive and inform Wong that they need a temporary accommodation to sleep until the next morning. He offers to help them but unfortunately, everyone turns the gods away, refusing to give them a place to sleep. However, a character named Shen Te, who by her whore profession is regarded as an immoral person in the community, accepts to help the gods and provide them a place to sleep for the night. Shen Te's character and her kind attitude towards the gods operate at cross-purposes and raise the question about social perception of goodness. Although Shen Te is the social outcast, a prostitute that trades her body for survival, she is kind enough to accommodate the three gods, a gesture which other people considered to be good in the Setzuan community could not do. Thus, Brecht raises the question of public perception of morality and goodness.

The next morning, in appreciation of her kind gesture, the three gods reward Shen Te the prostitute with one thousand silver dollars and continue in their journey. Armed with monetary fortune, Shen Te rents a tobacco shop to engage in a legitimate business, quitting the immoral occupation of prostitution.

SHEN TE: (to the audience): It's three days now since the gods left. When they said they wanted to pay for the room, I looked down at my hand, and

> there was more than a thousand silver dollars! I bought a tobacco shop with the money, and moved in yesterday. I don't own the building, of course, but I can pay the rent, and I hope to do a lot of good here. Beginning with Mrs. Shin, who's just coming across the square with her pot. She had the shop before me, and yesterday she dropped in to ask for rice for her children. (Brecht 26)

Having been rewarded for goodness, She Te decides to continue to be good with the conviction that goodness has a reward. In her tobacco shop, she freely and kindly gives people whatever they ask for without demanding the corresponding financial exchange in return. She immediately notices that her acts of charity and goodness will be counterproductive. In a bid to forestall further loss and possible bankruptcy, she devices a scheme to transmute her character from a female to a male cousin with the new name Shui Ta. Her reason for the character transposition is to instil the resoluteness and firmness required to resist pestering neighbours who always come for one favour or another. Sheng-Mei Ma captures the scenario by remarking that "to survive mounting debts and communal dependency, Shen Te cross-dresses, assuming the guise of a male cousin Shui Ta, a harsh yet pragmatic businessman, who manages with an iron fist to transform a failed venture into a thriving tobacco factory, simultaneously reforming hangers-on as self-respecting, self-reliant workers idealized in socialism" (454). Shen Te, in a new character as a male Shui Ta is resolute and firm in dealing with customers and neighbours. Shen Te successfully straddles two characters and the neighbours believe her but also miss her generosity. The villagers suspect that Shui Ta, Shen Te's cousin murdered her and from Wong's prompting, the matter is reported to the police. The police officer arrests Shui Ta and ask him about the whereabouts of Shen Te. Shui Ta could not give any reasonable answer. Wong, who has been relating with the three gods in his dreams, informs them that Shen Te was missing and if truly she has disappeared then "all is lost". The three gods, irked by the sad news of Shen Te's disappearance promise to return to Setzuan town to help look for her. Shui Ta is scheduled for trial and during his trial, before a crowd of villagers, the three gods appear disguised as judges to officiate in the trial. The audience is divided into two and they both support or oppose Shui Ta based on their relationships and dealings. Wealthy businessmen who have had a robust, profitable relationship with Shui Ta support him while the poor indigent villagers who benefitted from Shen Te's generosity oppose Shui Ta. Shui Ta demands that the crowd should be sent away because he wants to be alone with the judges and make a confession.

> **SHUI TA** (shouting): Because you'd all have tom her to shreds, that's why! My lords, I have a request. Clear the court! When only the judges remain, I will make a confession. (Brecht 135)

Alone with the gods disguised as judges, Shui Ta reveals his true identity, he is actually Shen Te in disguise to the consternation of the judges. She confesses to her frustration of having to be torn into two in a bid to be good and remain relevant in society. According to her, she had to become a bad man if she couldn't be a good woman. The gods are not able to help her reconcile her moral dilemma but instead encourage her to continue to be good. After their encouragement, the gods disappear into the unknown. In an epilogue, an unnamed character speak directly to the audience and urge them to decide a suitable ending for the play in the light of all the moral issues raised by the playwright. The audience thus becomes a critical component of the play since they would decide the play's resolution. Given that the audience is made up of different persons with diverse social background, there is a divergence of opinion as to the best way the play should end. Through the audience participation, Brecht does not hope to achieve a consensus but to provoke the people into thinking and becoming aware of all the prevailing issues arising from capitalism, love, morality, goodness and even gender transposition.

Osofisan's *Minstrels* dramatizes the activities of five indigent minstrels (Omele, Epo Oyinbo, Jigi, Sinsis, and Redio) wandering purposelessly following the government's clampdown on local musicians, dancers, and entertainers in the early 80s in Nigeria. Since the minstrels were no longer engaged in any meaningful occupation, they were inevitably hungry and therefore, wandered from one place to another seeking food to eat. In the cause of their wandering, they arrive at a popular crossroad called Sepeteri famously noted to be Esu's best locale. Esu is the Yoruba trickster god of uncertainty and indecision famous for always playing tricks on humanity while providing them with alternatives in their choice processes. Given its indecisive, hydra headed nature, the crossroad becomes his best hunt where it always lays in wait for people. The cross road in Yoruba metaphysics is symbolic of the warring dualities which inhabit people's consciousness when faced with indecision and uncertainties. When the minstrels arrive at the Sepeteri crossroads, they argue over which of the roads to take. In their indecisive plight, Esu manifest in human form as an old man. He promises to give them a magic boon which would enable them to heel anyone they chose and in return, the healed individual will make them rich. Four out of the five minstrels except Omele deploy their magic boon for selfish, egocentric reasons to help wealthy people who would in return make them

rich. However, Omele demonstrates a selfless, altruistic attitude by using his magic boon to make a woman who had been pregnant for nine years deliver her baby. He also cures a couple of leprous but in the process contract the deadly disease. The old man, Esu in disguise, reveals himself to the minstrels and turns to the audience to ask them which of the minstrels deserves compassion, pity, and wealth.

The play's inconclusive ending and the invitation to the audience to decide the fate of the minstrels is a reflection of Brecht's audience participation technique. In Osofisan's case, he presents the inherent attributes of greed, selfishness, and kindness but also foregrounds these attributes with veiled justification. The first four minstrels demonstrate capitalist, selfish tendences after they were ravaged by poverty. They seek self-gratifying objectives and only care for themselves. Therefore, they only deploy their magic boon to cure those who would in return reward them with wealth. For the four minstrels, wealth and material gain are the motivating factors for their acts of kindness. On the other hand, Omele is the only minstrel motivated by genuine compassion and love for humanity. Thus, there is a juxtaposition of greed and materiality versus kindness and compassion. However, Omele's fate of contracting the deadly disease of leprous is a ploy by Osofisan to heighten the degree of choice by the audience. So, when Esu, disguised as the Old Man turns to the audience to ask their opinion about the fate of the minstrels, he was asking them to make a choice between greed, avarice, and selfishness on one hand and compassion, selflessness and love on another hand. At this point, all the actions on stage together with the actors freeze and remain still.

> **OLD MAN:** (To the audience) You! Don't just sit there and let an injustice be done. Should Omele return the disease or should he keep it? Speak up, we need your answers to decide! Yes, you sir? And you madam? A debate is encouraged among the audience, while the actors freeze on stage. The auditorium lights come half up. The old man finally calls for a vote between the Aye's and the Np's. (Osofisan 90)

The audience, in response to the query by the old man to decide the fate of the two categories of minstrels, begin to argue among themselves. In the end, the audience decide that Omele does not deserve the leprous, that the other four minstrels deserve it more given their lazy, unconscionable, and materialistic disposition. Immediately, Obaluaye, the god of smallpox afflict the four minstrels with leprous and set Omele free to the joy and celebration of the audience. A comparison of the conclusion of the two plays shows that Brecht and Osofisan adopt the same method of making the

audience an important, integral part of the play. However, while Osofisan is more decisive at the end of his play, Brecht is not so decisive but allows the debate among the audience to continue afterwards.

Conclusion

Brecht and Osofisan are two renowned dramatists who deploy their peculiar theatricality to achieve multiple objectives through a redefinition and re-engineering of dramatic patterns on stage. At the apex of their radical innovation in drama is the bestowment of responsibility on the audience who must necessarily participate in the dramatic engagement not as passive observers but as committed, involved artists. The audience ultimately become part of the ideological renewal in the hands of the playwrights as is the case in *Setzuan*. David Wilson notes that "Brecht was of the conviction that theatre must be an agent of social and political change. To effect such a change, he modified the theatre itself and described it as epic theatre. The epic theatre enhances the audience with detached contemplation and judgement as opposed to the dramatic theatre that overwhelms them with passion and emotion with the audience sharing the actor's experience" (62). Brecht's epic theatre is animated by the audience who become agential to the attainment of theatre's objectives which among other factors, includes social re-awakening and a degree of provocation to demand immediate answers which addresse subsisting malaise within humanity. We can thus infer from Brecht's epic theatre that without audience participation, drama lacks immediacy and purpose and this is the defining moment between epic theatre and classical theatre.

Robert J. Cardullo underscores the importance of audience participation in Brecht's theatre by remarking that "audience members proceed imaginatively from their own time and space through a fictional realm of more or less realistically rendered events, until they come to a plane of partially defined sources of insight, a plane beyond common appearance, beyond customary ways of seeing" (639). In a way, audience participation bulks large as the most prominent component of avant-garde tradition in the drama of modern era. It has also continued to sustain the inter-ideological role of the public in social and political participation across various communities in the world. Audience participation does not only respond to artistic needs, but also provides an avenue to gauge the general impulses of the people towards various social developments. Given its global acclaim and adoption by many critics and playwrights, Brecht's ideology of epic theatre and audience participation have become defining parameters for twenty-first century appreciation of theatre and drama. Osofisan has consistently recreated the Brechtian audience

participation technique in most of his plays especially in *Minstrels*. According to Yemi Atanda, "Osofisan's ideology is ideologically rooted in the theatre of Brecht's epic theatre. Reason, rather than purgation is methodical as enunciated within the prism of alienation technique. In the dramatic text, members of the audience are invited to vote on what to do with the guilty minstrels who do not show compassion to human suffering" (3). Indeed, Brecht's ideological alignment with Osofisan will continue to provide options in theatre and drama in many years to come as long as the audience participation technique is sustained and maintained by successive playwrights.

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From Persians to Moors: The Representation of Otherness in the *Persians, Tamburlaine the Great*, and *Abdelazer*

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Abstract Aeschylus in *Persians* (472 BC) employed binary opposition to prime its audience with the concept of 'Otherness,' incarnated by their first threat, the Persians, instigating the seeds of Eurocentrism, which later embedded in the canon of classical world literature—particularly the one that solidified in the early modern period. Persians as 'other' doubly-layered during the Renaissance when the West came to know more tangibly about the East via trades, expeditions, and/or colonization. West-East cultural as well as political confrontation evolved, most sordidly, in the representation of the exotic "Orient" and its association with Islam. In this article, Aeschylus's *Persians* is juxtaposed to two early modern plays, Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great* (1588) and Aphra Behn's *Abdelazer* (1676), in order to illuminate how easterners in classical dramatic literature have been portrayed wicked and dangerously threatening to civilizations and civilians

of the West. *Persians* meticulously shows how drama contains political messaging and mirrored the contemporary historical issues of the *polis*. Along with its purpose to educate and entertaini, *Persians* mapped out a way of understanding easterners that provided its audience with an inaccurate image of Persians. This discourse propagated through the centuries until the present day where we see evidence of it in films such as *300.* This malicious representation has continued to modern and postmodern period, especially in drama, film, and cinema.[1]

Keywords Aeschylus; Aphra Behn; Christopher Marlowe; Eurocentrism; Otherness.

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Introduction

Aeschylus's *The Persians* (Πέρσαι) is not only the first complete surviving Attic tragedy dealing with contemporary historical events, but is also the earliest existent text narrating the encounter between the East [Persia] and the West [Greece] in dramatic literature. Aeschylus (525 BC-456 BC), in this play, dramatized the history of the Persians' defeat at the Battle of Salamis—a naval battle in which Aeschylus himself had fought. How trustworthy Aeschylus's narration is in this tragedy lies beyond the horizon of our research simply due to two simple facts: first, this text (as well as many other attic dramas) was a dramatic work with primarily a goal for didactic entertainment. Besides keeping the audience amused, it was meant for educating the Athenians at the time to overcome any pity or fear towards their long-lasting enemy. This aim of catharsis and the quasi-fictional quality of the work in itself justify any historical manipulation that Aeschylus probably implemented in his work. Second, the history of antiquity has been mostly written by the western scholars. Our very attempt of rectifying the history of this account without having a major history source besides Herodotus—whose chronicle tends to favor the

1 This article has been written during Dr Najar's post-doc research at Alzahra University and it has been funded by Vice Presidency for Science and Technology.

perspective of the Greeks—would be regarded as a provoked confrontation by an Iranian scholar whose sense of nationality will end in perturbation. As the archive of the Creco-Persian wars is limited to the texts and archaeological evidence in European narratives, by necessity, makes such an endeavor a one-dimensional research done within a Eurocentric scope. Therefore, we only suffice to approach *Persians* analytically and assess the impact it put on the selected literature of the early modern period including *Tamburlaine the Great* and *Abdelazer*.

Persians, as Edward Said has argued in *Orientalism* (1978), is the first 'orientalist' work in the canon. It is in this play that for the first time the image of the eastern people is epitomized from a western perspective.[1] Since the fifth century BCE and through the works of Greek playwrights and historians—including Aeschylus, Herodotus, and Xenophon—a new equivocal discourse established that associated the East [Persia/Asia] with the barbarism, abomination, horror, and excessive corruptive wealth, as well as with aggressive bravery, self-reflexive honesty, and civilization. Indeed, it is through these ambivalent and polarized representations that "the orient is transformed from a very far distant and often threatening 'Otherness' into figures that are relatively familiar [to the Europeans]" (Said, *Orientalism* 21). These familiar people are represented as a nation continuously in decline as in *Persians*. They are introduced as prosperous people who ultimately collapse to the lowest earthly and spiritual levels and finally end up in mundane and pleasure-seeking exertions. This exposure of "Otherness" was not exclusively limited to the Persians, but also to other nations such as the Indians, who were regarded as "a monstrous race" (Childes 6). Elites of the time, namely orators, historians, and playwrights, by such propagations, helped to characterize the easterners as the 'Other' to their own 'Self' and conceptualized their own identity. In the following paragraphs, we evaluate *Persians* to disclose how this seminal tragedy differentiates between the Greeks and the Persians, and how it functions as a womb for the later ideological and territorial annexation of easterners especially during the early modern period that propagated east-phobia via stage-plays like *Tamburlaine the Great* and *Abdelazer*.

Compared to other tragedies of the ancient Greek drama, *Persians* has received less scholarly attention and less theatrical reproductions. *Abdelazer* and *Tamburlaine the Great* have been also overlooked in the modern literary and critical discourses of the early modern period. The reason for their negligence, despite their stylistic and literary competence, is their historical nature as well as their

1 The reason for giving this credit to Aeschylus is that preceding texts of this nature, like Phrynicus' plays, are either lost or fragmented.

performative complicacy, which might does encourage everyone to study them. That being said, handful of research have been conducted on the abovementioned plays separately. Stratos E. Constantinidis' in *The Reception of Aeschylus' Plays through Shifting Models and Frontiers* (2016) maintains that understanding Aeschylus plays are difficult and this is the reason for the contemporary difficulty in re-staging them. Adam R. Beach in "Global Slavery, Old World Bondage, and Aphra Behn's *Abdelazer*" has assessed *Abdelazer* from the perspective of [anti-]colonialism and [anti-]slavery.

Marlowe's *Tamburlaine,* though still understudied, received more scholarship compared to the other two plays understudy in this article. One of the significant essays composed on *Tamburlaine* is "Inferior Readings: The Transmigration of 'Material' in *Tamburlaine the Great*" by Mathew R. Martin in which he focuses on the role and impact of modern editors to shape the new textual bodies of plays. In recent years, with the establishment of post-colonialism as a major critical approach, some research has been done on Marlowe and his plays, yet these studies are beyond our scope for the following study.

The methodology for this research is eclectic. It is a blend of historiography and new historicism as it sheds light on past efforts, which were to manipulate a vision for contemporary audience, to blur out the actual political and ideological aims behind that manipulation. Our historiography is inclined towards post-colonial arguments of Edward Said in that how westerners provided the inaccurate image of the East. We also put our methodology under the umbrella term of hermeneutics. Of course, this approach does not have a single meaning. Going beyond the etymology and the biblical implication of the term that originated its usage in theology, we use it as a science of interpretation in literary criticism to discuss authors' original intents – not simply by marking and remarking rhetorical, allegorical, and/or literary devices, but by digging social, political, and contextual elements of the texts residually. We do not rule out other readings of these plays, yet we merely add up by "filling the gaps"—to use as Wolfgang Iser and Hans-Georg Gadamer's phraseology.

Persians: Democratic Greece versus Autocratic Persia

Cultural archives, Edward Said suggests, should be studied "contrapuntally, with a simultaneous awareness both of the metropolitan history that is narrated and of those other histories against which (and together with which) the dominating discourse acts" (*Culture and Imperialism* 51). Therefore, to distance *Persians* from its Eurocentric discourse, we approach it from a 'contrapuntal' perspective. The

Persian Empire was a tremendous force during the sixth, the fifth, and the fourth centuries BCE. Darius I invaded Greece in 490 BCE in order to subjugate the Athenians (Athens and Sparta were the major city-states of Greece at the time) and to expand the territory under his own rule and in response to the Athenians' aid to the Ionians to in their attempt to fighter against the Persian Empire, where they were literally crushed at the Battle of Lade in 494 BCE. Yet, despite outnumbering Athenians in soldiers and in technology, Darius' military forces were shockingly defeated at the Battle of Marathon, where elements of the local terrain worked against them. Ten years later, Xerxes I, following in his father Darius' footsteps, led a naval campaign against Greece, but also shared his father's fate, as the Athenians and their allies flabbergasted the Persian forces by smartly utilizing the local terrain against them. The Battle of Salamis in 480 BCE played a consequential role in the Greeks' mentality, as they came to believe as result that they would be able to oppose even the most powerful forces of their time. These critical battles in the fifth century BCE coincided with the solidification of the Athenian administrative system that applauded democracy and criticized the monarchical systems such as that of the Achaemenid dynasty. Aeschylus masterfully dramatized this divergence as a primary source of conflict in the play.

Persians delineates what had happened to the Persians at and after the Battle of Salamis. Aeschylus introduced this war as a touchstone in the cultural/political history of Greece and a watershed in the history of Persia. He endeavored to convey to his audience (which would have included men who had actually fought in these wars) that there is no need to be intimidated by enemies like Persians as they can be defeated again.[1] In 472 BCE, when the play was first produced, the Greeks were still at war with the Persians around Dardanelles, Byzantium, and in Cyprus, and there was always a chance that the Persians would invade Ionia again. Thus, Aeschylus intentionally portrayed the Persian state as internally disordered and in despair so his Athenian audience would face them with more confidence if necessary.

Like almost all other tragedies of the fifth century BCE, *Persians* begins with a [dancing] chorus. The chorus' principal task was to set the mood for the story and to provide a sense of apprehension by recalling the past events and associating them

1 Here, Gayatri Spivaks' notions of the "absolute other" and the "self-consolidating other" come to mind. Although "self-consolidating other" stands in a lower/weaker level than the true "self," it is more recognizable than the "absolute other" for the "self." Albeit Persians were defeated by the Greeks at two consecutive battles (Battles of Marathon and Salamis), they were still a world-dominating power which Greeks could not deny (Read Edith Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy,* Oxford Classical Monographs, 1989).

with what was happening at the time.[1] choral expositions were also to establish the moral world of the play (Storey & Allen 101). The chorus in *Persians* is no exception. It embodies the Persian elders who are left behind with women and children in Susa while younger men are at war with the Ionians. The chorus interacts with the Persian Queen, the Persian messenger, the ghost of King Darius, and King Xerxes in succession. Its interplay with the members of the royal house alludes to the cultural and sociological importance of the elders in Persia as well as to their significance in counseling the kings and the queens (Ley 9). However, the image that Aeschylus provides for these influential elders are doubly negative. *Persians*' chorus not only attributes pomp and corruption to their own people but also actively tries to plot against their semi-god, the king. The chorus associates the Persians and their land three times with gold:

> We here, from the Persians who are gone
> to the land of Greece, are called 'the faithful',
> and guardians of the palace with <u>its great wealth in gold</u>; (2-4)
> …
> and Sardis <u>with all its gold</u>
> sent off riding in many chariots, (45-46)
> …
> and Babylon <u>with all its gold</u>
> sends a multitude all mixed in a long, sweeping column, (52-53) (Aeschylus: Persians and Other Plays, 2008)[2]

Having gold and being wealthy is a complimenting aspect of life and fosters concepts of comfort and luxury, however in the fifth century BCE and in its imperial sense, it connoted a rich territory that could maintain a fresh army. It meant that soldiers and crews were paid on time and generously. Besides treasury deposits, such an affluent power could afford technology and enough purveyance for super-long expeditions from the east to the west and vice versa. It is why the chorus—after associating Persia with gold—describes its mighty allies: to portray that Persia's tremendous militaristic power was provided both by wealth and foreign connections. The chorus recounts the

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1 For more on this please see Suzanne Saïd, "Aeschylean tragedy," in *A companion to Greek tragedy*. Edited by Justina Gregory. Oxford, Blackwell, 2005: 215–232, p.219.

2 All translated excerpts for *Persians* are from *Aeschylus: Persians and Other Plays* translated by Christopher Collard for the Oxford University Press (2008). The numbers inside the parentheses are the line numbers in the translated English text.

image of the Persian army and the soldiers as such:

> they were invincible archers, and mounted,
> fearsome to see and terrible in battle
> through their spirit's brave confidence; (26-28)
> …
> The sword-bearing peoples of all Asia follow with them
> at the king's dread summons. (56-57)
> …
> the war of invincible bows.
> No one has the tested prowess
> to withstand the great tide of men
> and hold it back with sure defenses—
> one cannot fight an ocean-swell;
> there is no resisting the Persian host,
> a people stalwart in their hearts. (86-92)

With the first glance at these excerpts one may infer that Aeschylus is cherishing the Persian army with elaborating on its magnitude and its brave soldiers. Yes, indeed, he is, but by doing so, he is also creating an antagonism/trauma for his Athenian audience to make them potentially ready for a new war. Despite the positive look of these attributions for modern readers, they produced anxieties and a sense of revenge for the contemporary spectators. By representing Persians as great warriors who could cooperate well with their allies, Aeschylus awakened the necessity of unison and monophony among the Greeks (Ionians, Athenians, and Spartans). This consolidating quality was not just specific to this play; every ancient Greek tragedy attempted to unite its audiences [social identity] to boost the community cohesion.[1] In fact, Greek tragedy was "a manifestation of the city turning itself into theatre, presenting itself on stage before its assembled citizens" (Vernant & Vidal-Naquet 185). One of the motives which reveal Aeschylus' intention to portray a traumatic image of the Persians onstage is that he made his play deliberately theological to provoke the Athenian audience who was very religious—in its mythological sense. The state religion of Persia during the Achaemenid Empire was Zoroastrianism, meaning that the Persians were monotheist, worshiping the creator Ahura Mazda, in

1 For more on this please See Oddone Longo, "The theater of the polis," in the *Nothing to Do with Dionysos?: Athenian Drama in Its Social Context*. Ed. John J. Winkler and Froma I. Zeitlin. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1990, p.14.

contrast to the Greeks who were polytheist. Having multiple gods and deities, the Greeks would see a discrete god behind every incident. Aeschylus in his play made the Persian polytheist as well—worshiping like the Greeks multiple gods—to allude that their following downfall is due to their hubris (arrogance), which was mainly referred to as an offense by common people towards mythological Greek gods. Along with this religious perspective, Aeschylus also characterized the Persians as autocratic. This further established a binary opposition and *différence* between the Persians and the Greeks. Throughout a scene between the chorus and the queen Atossa,[1] we observe that the Persian monarchial system contrasts with Athenian's direct democracy, what Aeschylus wrote was just as inaccessible to the Persians as Greece was geographically:

> QUEEN. … Yet I have this I wish to learn from you, my friends: where do men say that Athens lies upon the earth?
> CHORUS. Far away, near where the Sun-lord goes down
> when he fades.
> QUEEN. And yet my son desired to capture this city?
> CHORUS. Yes; for then all Greece would become subject to
> the King.
> QUEEN. Have the Athenians so much the fullest numbers in
> its host, then?
> CHORUS. Yes, and such a host as did the Medes great harm
> in fact.
> QUEEN. And what else besides do they have? Sufficient wealth for their houses?
> CHORUS. They have a source of silver, a lode which is their
> land's treasure.
> QUEEN. Are bows and sharp arrows prominent in their hands?
> CHORUS. Not at all: they use spears to stand and fight, and carry shields in heavy armor.
> QUEEN. And who is set over their people as shepherd and
> master?
> CHORUS. They call themselves no man's slaves or subjects.
> (229-242)

1 She is the only woman in the play. Phrynichus first introduced her in the dramatic literature (see Lloyd-Jones, 1990). Also, although she is originally an eastern woman, her role is checked by all the restrictions of Athenian women (see Foley, 2001).

Interestingly, the extract above indicates that Atossa, the most powerful figure left in Susa, does not know where Athens is. This foresaw that the Persians hardly could reach to this geographically far-reaching land. In contrast, contemporary Ionians/ Athenians knew Persia geographically well. The chorus describes their location with a far-fetching concept of the sun, which also foreshadows Atossa's lament for his son's defeat. She says, "yet my son desired to capture this city?" Another point of significance is that the chorus differentiates the Persians from the Greeks in three aspects: first, the Persians have gold, but the Athenians have silver. Second, Persians fight with swords, bows and arrows; the Greeks fight with spears. Last but not the least, the Athenian democracy is contrasted to the Persian autocracy with this statement: "They call themselves no man's slaves or subjects." These details were appreciated by the Athenians who were *philologos* (fond of words) and *polulogos* (full of words), distinguishing them from their Spartan opponents who, more militaristic in nature, were regarded as *brachulogos* (inclined towards few words) (Heath 182). The audience of such a tragedy was by no means only a simple group of theatergoers, but an assembly of people with civic rights and duties who were comparable to juries in law courts—another feature for bragging the Athenian democracy.[1] By watching and judging such dramatic impersonations, this court-like assembly would solidify a discourse ingrained in the Westerners' mind to see the Easterners (the Persian empire) as their everlasting nemesis. As Edward Said maintains, the dramatic immediacy of representation in Aeschylus' *Persians* obscured the fact that the audience is watching a highly artificial enactment of what a non-Oriental has made into a symbol for the whole Orient (Said, *Orientalism* 21). The ones who read the text or saw a revival of the performance a couple of decades after its original production could not distinguish the historical facts from the historical and cultural manipulations inculcated in the text and accepted this dramatic incarnation as veracity. This dramatic, as well as political, manipulation of the image of the East in the West continued throughout the centuries and reached to its apex during the Early Modern period, when the East became also synonymous with Islam.

Tamburlaine the Great: The Moor and the Turk as the Eastern 'Others'

With the emergence of Islam in Arabian Peninsula in the seventh century AD and with its fast distribution into Asian and African regions, the Eurocentric animosity of the westerners towards the East escalated. This animosity was expressed via

1 For more on this see Nancy S. Rabinowitz. *Greek Tragedy*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2008.

military invasions like the Crusades, in their socio-political historiography, and through their literary and artistic representations. Just to provide one example of biased western historiography, I call your attention to the Golden Age of Islam between the eighth and the fifteenth century AD that coincided with the expansion of this religion into other parts of the world. It was extended to the [southwest] Europe and hugely impacted its economics, culture, and scientific explorations.[1] During this time, Muslims emigrated to Spain and settled in Granada, carrying with themselves their progressive, intellectual, and rich culture, which was novel to the Europeans. Either by interest or by necessity, Muslims embraced science and developed technology.[2] Yet, Catholic monarchs, taking over Granada in 1492, dispersed the ethnic minorities and attempted to eradicated Islamic culture by destroying their books, translations, and the civilizations that they made during their 700-year rule in Spain, and thereupon called them the "Moors." The term Moor was associated with being an uneducated, naked, dark skinned, savage, treacherous, lustful and bloodthirsty creature.

The Moor was not the sole diabolical 'Other' that the West created to tarnish the image of the East during this period. Turks were also misrepresented and demonized. By the end of the fifteenth century, Christians had lost Byzantium to Turkish Muslims under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. Byzantium, as the nexus between Asia and Europe, was the commercial, cultural, and diplomatic center of the world. After the Turks settled in this city, they re-named it to Istanbul[3] and took control of the major international trades around the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Catholic Europe, which had seen itself as the dominant world power for centuries, found it unbearable to lose its privileges to its geographical and religious 'Other'. However, newly Protestant England, which had dissociated itself from the Catholic Church and her Catholic allies, made a bold decision to ally themselves with Muslim kingdoms. Elizabeth I recognized the benefits of collaborating with

1 Yet, a brief survey of European history indicates that majority of this eastern religion is wiped out of the canonical texts and indeed its progressive dimensions are replaced with the concept of the "dark ages" in history books.

2 Arab Muslims were primarily nomads and would read the stars' patterns to find their routes. It was this need that consequently helped them to develop the science of astrology. A simple analysis of what they left in southern Europe best demonstrates their civilized and at the same time modern discoveries. For example, a simple analysis of the Alhambra Castle, fairy-tale palace isolated in history, in Granada indicates the complicity of their architectural aesthetics and arithmetic potentials. Paper-making factories, rediscovery of classical philosophy and translations of classical texts, and development of medicine and medical cares were other souvenirs of Muslims for the West.

3 Indeed, it was first Islam-bol, city of Islam.

the Moroccans and the Ottomans to counter the power of Catholic Spain in the Mediterranean and to gain access to the Levant trade.[1] During the early modern period, "the Ottoman Turks were the dominant imperial power in the Eastern Mediterranean and much of Eastern Europe. By the seventeenth century, they controlled Hungary, the Balkans, Greece, Istanbul and the Anatolian Peninsula, Syria, Mesopotamia, Palestine, the Arabian shore of the Red Sea, Egypt, and the North African littoral from Alexandria to the border of Morocco" (McJannet 1). Surely, in the late 16th Century, as Jonathan Burton puts it, "England's jerry-built military would have been no match for Mughal, Ottoman or Persian forces" (Burton 44). Therefore, it was more reasonable for the English to get along with the Muslims rather than encountering them. It was through militaristic and commercial relationships with the Muslim countries that England revived its lost power in Europe.

But after defeating the Spanish Armada in 1588, England took a dubious attitude towards Muslims for two very simple reasons: first, the war of religion was still ongoing between them and the Muslims. Second, they were frightened to be annexed by the Muslims, who were now closer to the English shores than ever. The strategy they employed was to keep up their good face in trade and in military collaborations, yet they internally propagated that both Turks and Moors were deviant anti-Christian barbarians.

Accordingly, the English began caricaturing and demonizing Muslims in their literature and performative arts. It was mainly through the medium of theatre and in playhouses which the anti-Muslim stereotypes were shaped and solidified.[2] By producing collective derogatory images of Islam and Muslims, Europeans started to project their own new-made easterners, the phenomenon which Said refers to as 'Orientalism'. Jonathan Burton in his book *Traffic and Turning* (2005) identifies 34 plays between 1579 and 1603 and 28 plays between 1603 and 1624 that featured themes, settings, and characters on the English stage that dealt with Arabs, Turks, Moors, and/or Saracens[3]. In some instances, Muslims were referred to as 'Ishmaelites,' "descendants of the biblical Ishmael, or Hagarenes (from Hagar,

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1 For more details on English-Turkish Levant trade see McJannet, Linda, *The sultan speaks: dialogue in English plays and histories about the Ottoman Turks*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

2 For racial, sexual, and moral stereotyping of Muslims in Early modern, see McJannet, Linda. 2006. *The sultan speaks: dialogue in English plays and histories about the Ottoman Turks*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

3 A term used for Arabs and Muslims during the Middle Age.

Ishmael's mother)" (Tolan XV). Irrespective if their titles, these Muslim characters embodied a set of fixed stereotypes.

Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great*, first performed by the Admiral's Men in late 1587, is a fictional adaptation of the life of Turko-Mongol Emperor, Timur (d. 1405). Marlowe, the best-known University Wit[1] of the time, by this play implemented a huge change in the Elizabethan drama and influenced his contemporary playwrights—both linguistically and dramatically. His Tamburlaine, unlike his historical Turk predecessors, is a Scythian shepherd who becomes an emperor. *Tamburlaine The Great*, Part I, opens with a scene in Persepolis, the capital of Persia, in which the Emperor Mycetes sends his soldiers to a battle against Tamburlaine, who had sent a gang of bandits to prey on the rich merchants of Persia and other neighboring countries. To defeat Mycetes, Tamburlaine colludes with Mycetes' brother, Cosroe who plots to overpower his brother and become the emperor. After conquering Mycetes, Tamburlaine himself sits on the throne of Persia. Then, he invades the Turks and enslaves their emperor, Bajazeth and his wife Zabina. Tamburlaine releases Bajazeth only to use him as a footstool. This ignominy leads Bajazeth and his wife to kill themselves horribly onstage by hitting their heads against the bars. Tamburlaine continues his conquests in Africa and then heads to Damascus. At the end of Part I, Tamburlaine marries with Zenocrates, the daughter of the Sultan of Egypt, who was on her way to Arabia to marry there. In Part II, Tamburlaine faces his son Calyphas, who does not want to be a conqueror like his father and so his father kills him in anger. The savage Tamburlaine fully enacts his brutality onstage and kills many men, women, and children. In the final act of the second part, Tamburlaine ends burning the Quran disdainfully and claims himself greater than God. Eventually, he falls ill and dies.

Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* was not the first play in the Elizabethan era that portrayed Orientals as its subjects, but it was probably the most acclaimed one to present the Persians and the Turks onstage. Throughout the play, Marlowe created an extravagant imagery and hyperbolic/bombastic language, which were uncommon for his audience. The English had been already introduced to the exotic and lustrous lives of the Easterners via the myths of their medieval literature; however, with *Tamburlaine*, they imagined travelling to the territories of the Turks and the Persians. As Matthew Dimmock writes, "the Muslim bugbear, embodied in the emblem of

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1 Oxford English Dictionary defines University Wit as "any of a group of university-educated English poets and playwrights who flourished in the 1580s and 1590s.The writers so classified include Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Nashe, George Peele, Thomas Kyd, Robert Greene, John Lyly, and Thomas Lodge."

the ‘terrible Turk’, was a familiar one in Tudor England. The turbaned, mustachioed image appeared in textual illustrations, on archery targets, shop and inn signs, and was supposedly used to frighten naughty children” (Dimmock 55). Taking a deeper look at Marlowe’s play, one notices his ambivalent take on religious matters of the time. His hero has a shifting nature that makes him attack the Christians in one instance and protect them in another. Tamburlaine’s attitude towards Islam is also problematic. In one moment, he curses Prophet Mohammad and burns Quran, but he also changes his mood and advocates Islam. This quirky attitude is more meaningful if you recall the aforementioned history of the Elizabethan England and its curious relationship with Islam and Ottoman Empire. Christian-Muslim relationship in the Elizabethan era was conditional as is in Marlowe’s play. Unlike actual historical Tamburlaine who had seen India as a target for wealth and trade, Marlowe’s Tamburlaine shows Machiavellian ambitions and sees merchants, Muslims, as well as Christians, targets for ultimate wealth and slavery.

There is another tricky dramatic tweak in Marlowe’s play. His Tamburlaine is not a Turk or a Mongol but is a Scythian Emperor who is actually an anti-Turk. He reminds Cosroe of the danger of the Turks at the Persian borders. Instead, the main Turk character of the story is Bejazeth (Bayazid) whom Marlowe first demonized and then degraded to a contemptible man used as a footstool. Unlike Tamburlaine’s complicated Muslim character, Bejazeth is a typical Turkish Sultan who is ascribed with stereotypical eastern myths. Sultans in this period, as Makdisi mentions, had “turbans, harems, genies, seraglios, viziers, eunuchs, slave girls, janissaries, and snake charmers” (Makdisi 602). Bejazeth is no exception. Before his captivity, he introduces himself as the Emperor of Asia, Europe and Africa who seems potentially more perilous for the Christian Europeans and the English. The savage Tamburlaine ironically acts as a savior for these Christians as he fights and destroys Muslims. In fact, Marlowe makes Bejazeth the perfect “Other” for the Christians. He is uncivilized, barbarous and apparently inaccessible:

> As many circumcised Turks we have,
> And warlike bands of Christian renied,
> As hath the Ocean or the Terrence Sea
> Small drops of water, when the moon begins
> To join in one her semicircled horns: (Act 3, Scene 1, p.19)
> (Marlowe, 1876)

Marlowe presents Bejazeth as the kinsman of Prophet Muhammad and portrays

him as a ruthless warrior. Bejazeth threatens Tamburlaine, sworn by the name of the Quran, that he will effeminate Tamburlaine if he dares to combat the Turks:

> By Mahomet my kinsman's sepulcher
> And by the holy Alcoran, I swear
> He shall be made a chaste and lustless eunuch
> And in my sarell tend my concubines
> And all his captains, that thus stoutly stand,
> Shall draw the chariot of my empress
> Whom I have brought to see their overthrow!
> (Act 3, scene 2 22)

However, this illusion of invincibility is soon broken and he is defeated by Tamburlaine. Marlowe, by this narrative, tried to de-traumatize his audience from a potential war, which was ambushed at English shores. Like Aeschylus, Marlowe uses drama to propagate that easterners, irrespective of their barbarity and savagery, are defeatable in wars.

Abdelazer: The Eastern Barbarity and Lustfulness

The other noteworthy play that dramatized the notions of war and eastern barbarity is Aphra Behn's only tragedy, *Abdelazer; The Moor's Revenge* (1676), which was first produced at The Duke's Theatre in Dorest Garden in late 1677. This play is an adaptation of an earlier tragedy, *Lust Dominion*[1] (c. 1600), which was based on an actual historical figure, Abd el-Ouahed ben Massood, the ambassador of the King of Morocco. Unlike *Lust Dominion* whose main plot is centered on the lustrous moor Eleazar, *Abdelazer* is more about revenge. Behn's main character is a black man, evil in nature, who seduces the royal Spanish court with his opportunistic plans. Abdelazer, whose ancestors were once the rulers of Spain[2], introduces his motive of vengeance as such:

> Abd_. Now all that's brave and villain seize my Soul,
> Reform each Faculty that is not ill,
> And make it fit for Vengeance, noble Vengeance.
> Oh glorious Word! fit only for the Gods,
> For which they form'd their Thunder,

1 Probably written by Thomas Decker.

2 Indeed, it refers to the Muslims' kingship in southern Spain—Andalusia.

Till Man usurp'd their Power, and by Revenge
Sway'd Destiny as well as they, and took their trade of killing.
And thou, almighty Love,
Dance in a thousand forms about my Person,
That this same Queen, this easy Spanish Dame,
May be bewitch'd, and dote upon me still;
Whilst I make use of the insatiate Flame
To set all _Spain_ on fire.--
Mischief, erect thy Throne,
And sit on high; here, here upon my Head.
Let Fools fear Fate, thus I my Stars defy:
The influence of this--must raise my Glory high.
(Act I, Scene I 13)

Abdelazer's reason for revenge may seem justified as he had lost his kingdom and had been enslaved by the Spanish people; yet Behn characterized him as an uncivilized moor that instead of rationalizing his causes tries to embrace villainy and betrayal. Behn equipped Abdelazer with all the stereotypical characteristics of an invented barbarous Muslim. He is not ashamed and does not refrain from any kind of crime. He whores the queen and betrays her, commits murder, and attempts rape. By having an affair with a lascivious queen, Abdelazer paves his way to the court as an army general and then with mischief plots to overthrow the king. With the help of the queen, Abdelazar poisons the king and starts his revengeful expeditions. Interestingly, Behn villainized Abdelazer by putting demeaning words in his own mouth:

Abd. The Queen with me! with me! a Moor! a Devil!
A Slave of _Barbary_! for so
Your gay young Courtiers christen me--But, Don,
Altho my Skin be black, within my Veins
Runs Blood as red, and royal as the best. (Act I, Scene I, p. 12)
Or:
Abd. I care not--I am a Dog, and can bear wrongs.
(Act I, Scene I, p. 18)
…
Abd. Who spurns the _Moor_
Were better set his foot upon the Devil--

Do, spurn me, and this Hand thus justly arm'd,
Shall like a Thunder-bolt, breaking the Clouds,
Divide his Body from his Soul—stand back—
(Act II, Scene I, p. 21)

By giving these lines to Abdelazer, Behn made a stronger claim that this black Moor accepts his own vicious 'being'. Along with all devilish behaviors, Abdelazer is associated with another forbidden practice, witchery. By linking him to supernatural powers, Behn made him doubly Satanic onstage—aspiring a will to wipe him and people similar to him out of the social context. This yearning to murder Abdelazer is best represented in the final scene when he is stabbed by the Spanish prince Phillip; his corpse is extradited to Morocco to have the Christian land clean almost similar to the finale of the *Lust Dominion* in which all the Moors are expelled from Spain.

Lechery is a characteristic that both Marlowe and Behn attributed to their Muslim characters. Both Tamburlaine and Abdelazer strive to possess a white woman. Tamburlaine robes Zenocrates and forces her to marry him. Abdelazer continues to seduce women despite the fact that he is married. This misrepresentation of Muslims as being voluptuous or lustful may have its root in the Islamic jurisprudence about polygamy, which totally differs from licentious practices. Such man-made sensual and sexual myths about the east and easterners are particularly presented in the portraits of Eastern Harems in the West. The harems[1] in the West incarnate the image of women nakedness, belly dancing, gluttony, and lascivious exoticism. Some of such myths are made due to the inaccessibility of these places to the western strangers that made them fantasize about the interior lives of kings and concubines. In fact, eastern 'harem' could be used as a metonymy for eastern empires, which are tyrannical, absolute, mysterious, glorious, and full of horror. Part of this mythology was made after Christians had lost Constantinople to Turks. By engendering the city to a beautiful Greek female captive, Irene, the image of Mehmet II, the Turk conqueror of Constantinople was carved as a seducer. This mythology fascinated many European playwrights to fantasize the life of these sultans and pursue the Irene narrative in their works.

Conclusion

Persians is a key text in the canon of oriental studies, which has unfortunately been

1 The part of a Muslim dwelling-house appropriated to the women, constructed so as to secure the utmost seclusion and privacy; called also *seraglio*, and in Persia (now Iran) and India *zenana*. See "harem | haram, n.". OED Online. March 2015. Oxford University Press.

understudied in Iran. This play meticulously shows how drama contains political messaging and mirrored the contemporary historical issues of the *polis*. Along with its purpose to educate and entertaini, *Persians* mapped out a way of understanding easterners that provided its audience with an inaccurate image of Persians. This discourse propagated through the centuries until the present day where we see evidence of it in films such as *300* (Zack Snyder, 2007). It is interesting to see that the first surviving Greek tragedy deals with the Orient. Indeed, 'Orientalism' is dramatic in nature and this is why it was developed in tandem with drama. In *Persians*, Aeschylus initiated the discourse of oriental eroticism that in later Western literature would manifest itself as an interest in the exploration of eastern harems and in so-called lavish sexual desires, such as those embedded in *Tamburlaine the Great* and *Abdelazer*. Both of these works evidence how Aeschylus' eastophobic tendencies evolved throughout the time and combined a new elements of Islamophobia, which still promoted appears the western literature today. These religious and socio-political differences continue to add to the fire of this continuing virulent plague.

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Fishery as Socio-Cultural Symbol: Conceptualising Marine Pollution and the Dynamics of Displacement in Selected Nigerian Novels

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Abstract Among the three principal domains of the environment: air, land and water, land is most prized by terrestrial people while water is of utmost importance to coastal dwellers. A major consequence of oil pollution is that it deteriorises the marine capital of a fishery community which is vital for its fish economy. Using Isidore Okpewho's *Tides* and Helon Habila's *Oil On Water* as its analytical touchstones, this paper contextualises the consequences of marine oil pollution on occupational fishery activities among Niger-Deltans within the framework of the people's shared aspiration for economic survival and group identity. With ecocriticism as theoretical canvass and interpretive content analysis as methodology, the paper contends that the castration of the fishery livelihood of the delta underpins its environmental degradation with sundry collateral consequences.

Keywords fishery; marine oil pollution; displacement; environment; Culture

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Introduction

One of the telling consequences of oil pollution is that it deteriorises the marine capital of an area, which is vital for the fish economy of fishery communities (Food and Agricultural Organization [(FAO) 11]. Some of the oil-driven environmental factors which injuriously affect fishing activities (such as take place in Nigeria's Niger-Delta)[1] include gas flaring, oil well blowouts, improper disposal of drilling mud, oil spills and pipeline leakages, among others (Sam et al 1323-13244). Oil-induced destruction of the aquatic habitat devalues the productive capacity of most riverine communities traditionally engaged in peasant fish production (Osuagwu and Olaifa 11). This is because it leads to environmental pollution, destruction of the ecosystem, and socio-economic impoverishment of oil producing communities due to the collapse of fish economy (Dawodu 3). Among other ramifications, "the collapsed fish stock may also have great symbolic importance in the community's traditions, mythology, religion, and cultural identity, with its collapse leaving those components severely impoverished …" (FAO 4).

The Niger-Delta region commands global attention being among the ten most important wetlands and marine ecosystems in the world (Kadafa 38). Located in the Atlantic Coast of Southern Nigeria, the Niger-Delta is the second largest delta with a coastline of about 450km which ends at Imo river entrance (Awosika 2). Owing to unsustainable oil exploration activities, the region is classified as one of the five petroleum most severely damaged ecosystems in the world (Kadafa 38). Equally famous for the abundance of fish resources, the Niger-Delta is reputed to have more freshwater fish species than any other coastal system in West Africa (Okonta and Douglas 63).

Like most commentaries on literary works inspired by the problems of the Niger-Delta, the preponderance of critical opinions on Isidore Okpewho's *Tides* (1993) and Helon Habila's *Oil on Water* (2012) have centered on the climate of violence occasioned by oil-induced environmental degradation. They include,

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1 Niger Delta is a coastal region in Nigeria which has large oil resources. Oil exploration and related activiries have negatively impacted the environment resulting in the loss of means of livelihood.

Nwanyanwu (2019), Omoko (2018), Iheka (2015), Feghabo (2013) on *Tides,* and Feldner (2018), Edebor (2017), Medovoi (2014) and Auerbach (2014) on *Oil on Water*. Using *Tides* and *Oil on Water* as its analytical touchstones, this paper contextualises the consequences of marine oil pollution on occupational fishery activities among Niger-Deltans within the framework of the people's shared aspiration for economic survival and group identity. With ecocriticism as theoretical canvass and interpretive content analysis as methodology, we argue that the castration of the fishery livelihood of the delta underpins its environmental degradation with sundry collateral consequences. This article is structured into five parts. The first is the introduction which lays out the background, objective and scope of the paper. The second part situates fishery economics within the trajectory of marine oil pollution while the third part locates fishery occupation as an index of cultural expression. The fourth part contextualises marine oil pollution and the people's loss of fishery livelihood as a modality of internal displacement while the final part embodies the conclusion.

Of the three principal domains of the environment: air, land and water, land is most prized by terrestrial people while water is of utmost importance to coastal dwellers (Cordell 301). Ruddle and Akimichi note that "fishermen habitually define, delimit, and defend their rights to fishing grounds or 'sea tenure'"(11) . According to Saro-Wiwa, the importance of water in the economy of Niger-Delta people stems from the fact that "rivers and streams are sources of food and spiritual sustenance of the community" (12-13). Agbogun notes that "it is believed that the waters of this area are cities populated not only by fishes but also a community of deities and water spirits"(3). Historically, prior to the discovery and consequent exploitation of oil in the area, "the Niger-Delta region had been a peaceful place with fishing and farming as the main means of livelihood of its denizens" (Oboreh 18). The despoliation of the delta environment by oil exploration activities has crucial ramifications for fishing activities as the mainstay of riverine communities (Obi and Rustad 3-4). The FAO underlines the multidimensional status of fishery among coastal communities as follows:

> The entire fabric of the community's life [is] shaped by fisheries activities including: social organization, economic organization, political organization, religious organization, community's cultural identity, and cultural self-identity of the community's individual members. (FAO 7)

In *Tides* and *Oil on Water,* Isidore Okpewho and Helon Habila respectively,

thematise the disruption of the fishery economy as a consequence of marine oil pollution and the overall despoliation of the environment. By deploying journalists as "roving reporters," both novelists enable the reader to take a vicarious tour of the Niger-Delta region and to witness the destruction of the fishing livelihood of the people in the wake of environmental devastation. Isidore Okpewho's *Tides* is an epistolary novel set between 25 August 1976 and 28 February 1978. It records the correspondence between two journalists and friends, Piriye Dukumo and Tonwe Brisibe[1] both of Beniotu clan of the Niger-Delta and their encounters with other actors in the novel. Both Piriye and Tonwe were prematurely retired from the state-owned Chronicle Newspaper in what they perceive as an ethnic-oriented retrenchment. Upon his ouster, Tonwe retires to his village in the Delta as a fish farmer while Piriye remains in Lagos as a freelance journalist. Piriye writes a letter to Tonwe exhorting the necessity for a detailed investigation of oil pollution of the delta environment. After his initial reluctance, Tonwe agrees to participate in the project.

Meanwhile, in Lagos, Piriye links up with a radical activist of Niger-Delta extraction, Ebika Harrison (Bickerbug) who launches sustained tirades against the government and the oil companies for the devastation of the Delta Communities. He is arrested by the National Security apprachik and later released after Piriye who was also arrested for associating with him, regains his freedom. At the end of the novel, Bickerbug is rearrested following his bombing of the Kwarafa Dam and several oil installations in the Delta. Tonwe is also arrested for not reporting Bickerbug to the police after Bickerbug and his gang visited him while Piriye's fate hangs in the balance. His pregnant wife Lati is unaccounted for following her journalistic trip to the Delta to cover the destruction of the Kwarafa Dam while Piriye awaits the interrogation of Bickerbug and Tonwe to know whether he will be implicated. The central conflict in the novel is the destruction of the fishery livelihood of the people as an index of the devastation of the environment (Iheka 119).

Similarly, Helon Habila's *Oil on Water* details the journeys of two journalists, Rufus and Zaq, through the Niger-Delta region. Cast in the quest tradition, the assignment of the journalists is to investigate the kidnapping of Isabel Floode, a British woman and wife of a Petroleum engineer working for an oil company in Nigeria. While Rufus is a young journalist eager to make his mark in the profession, Zaq is a veteran journalist in the evening of his career. Both of them plung into the

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1 Piriye and Tonwe are both participant-narrators in the novel. The plot of the novel is structured through the exchange of letters by the two narrators.

natural and social maze of the Niger-Delta region. The storyline of the novel is set in a two-week time frame as the journalists navigate the complex and narrow water channels witnessing the violent battles between the militants and the military force, the serial devastation of the environment by the oil companies, the disruption of the people's fishery livelihood and their attendant displacement from their homesteads. At the end of the novel, Zaq is unable to survive the expedition while Rufus succeeds in finding the kidnapped woman and bearing the ransome demand for her release.

All told, the novel is "a haunting depiction of Niger-Delta's environmental destruction, which is heightened by rhetorical devices such as personification of the landscape as a sick and dying person" (Feldner 2). As the following sections demonstrate, the destruction of the fishery livelihood of Niger-Delta people is both an act of economic deprivation and cultural erosion. This averment is supported by the fact that "fish is a major indicator of environmental contamination, providing evidence of transmission of pollutants in marine ecosystems" (Plessel *et al* 6).

Fishery, Petro-economics and Marine Pollution

In spite of what William Slymaker has characterized as "ecohesitation" to describe what he considers the initial slow response by African literature to ecocritical concerns (133) , the weaponization of literature for the cause of environmental protection has gathered momentum in recent African and Nigerian literary expression (Nwanyanwu 8). Conceptually, the term "ecocriticism" is an intersection between literature and the environment and traceable to William Ruckert who is believed to have first coined it in his 1978 essay: "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism" (Johnson 7). Over the years, ecocriticism has remained an important component of western ecological thought and the appreciation of the "literature of the environment" (Barry 249). The enunciation of the concept of ecocriticism is motivated by the need to apply "ecological and ideological concepts to the study of literature" because of the importance of ecology to the world (Ruckert 107).

Notwithstanding the diversity of perspectives on it, Glotfelty and Fromm's definition of ecocriticism as "the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment" (xviii) has gained global currency. However, Lawrence Buell's conception of ecocriticism "as [the] study of the relationship between literature and the apocalyptic rhetoric" (86) constitute a call to humankind to come to terms with the "sense of urgency about the demise of the world" (Garrard 85). This averment finds resonance in Edebor's contention that the purpose of

ecocriticism is to raise the level of consciousness of humankind on the sustainability of the environment" (44) .

In *Tides* and *Oil on Water,* Okpewho and Habila respectively, interrogate the oil-induced degradation of the Niger-Delta environment and its impact on the people's fishing livelihood. In *Tides,* Piriye introduces the documentation project to Tonwe and makes the point that the oil companies have wrecked the people's source of livelihood because "our people are nothing if not fishermen" (*Tides* 2). Tonwe is swayed to participate in the project by the visit of "a group of fishermen from Ebrima" (11) who seek his assistance to save them from the menace of the oil company (Atlantic Fuels) whose activities "were drawing the fish away" (p. 11) and threatening the people's survival because "their lives depended on fishing, and they faced certain disaster if the schools of fish were forced permanently out of their areas of activity" (11). In spite of "the meager reward which [the] fishermen derive from the craft" (6) on account of oil exploration activities, the oil companies are righteously indignant that the natives have the temerity to complain about "their operations just because a bunch of ignorant fishermen now caught fewer fishes than they were accustomed to" (12). Expectedly, the insensitivity of the oil companies heighten the frustration of the coastal dwellers. According to an illiterate fisherman, Opene: "we fishermen in the creeks have no other source of survival than the fishes. Now, the activities of the oil companies around us are posing a threat to our survival" (29).

Similarly, in *Oil on Water*, we are confronted with the same issues of marine oil pollution and its consequential impact on fishery activities and the survival of the coastal people. The narrator, Rufus, offers an evocative description of the decadent landscape and the impact of oil on the aquatic ecology:

> We followed a bend in the river and in front of us we saw dead birds draped over tree branches, their outstretched wings black and slick with oil; dead fish bobbed white-bellied between tree tops… [and] in the next village […] something organic, perhaps human, lay dead and decomposing down there, its stench mixed with that unmistakable smell of oil. (8)

To underscore the linkage between fishery occupation and the survival of the people, the narrator reveals the people's anxiety over "the dwindling stocks of fish in the river, the rising toxicity of the water and how they might have to move to a place where the fishing was still fairly good" (16). The destructive impact of oil pollution on the fishery livelihood of the people accounts for the refusal of a nearby village

head, Chief Malabo, to welcome the oil companies to his domain because in the places where the oil companies were already operating, "their rivers were already polluted and useless for fishing, and the land grew only gas flares and pipelines" (40). The foregoing illustrations from *Tides* and *Oil on Water* provide veritable windows to appreciate the adversarial relationship between the oil companies and the coastal dwellers whose survival is threatened by oil pollution. Iheka (lends credence to this averment when he notes that:

> the people's grouse as represented in *Tides* […] is the destruction of their environment and the means of livelihood caused by oil exploration activities […] the decimation of the fish from oil activities coupled with the fishing by the local populations exact a harmful toll on the population and undermine their sustainability. (119)

It is noteworthy that oil-induced decadence of the environment is not only the cause of death of fishes and other aquatic life forms but also the death of human beings. In *Tides,* we are alerted to the health hazards of oil exploration activities when Tonwe reveals that "the noise from the exploration machines reduces my desired peace"… (5) while the environmental activist, Bickerbug, gives expression to the variegated hazards of oil pollution:

> [t]he dangers of all this oil pollution to the environment are sufficiently well known to you. The fishes die because the floating oil blocks the oxygen from the water or because their respiratory membrances are clogged by the oil […] the crops won't grow because the oil floating on the irrigation chokes the soil. Even the drinking water is affected […] drinking water so contaminated causes various forms of enteritis, some more severe than others… (146)

In *Oil on Water,* the hopelessness of human existence in the oil-polluted delta region is given expression by a local fisherman, Tamuno who, upon encountering the two journalists, Zaq and Rufus, beg them to take his son, Michael, away from the creeks to the city to give him a fighting chance of survival because: "He no get good future here…Wetin he go do here? Nothing…" (36). If any doubt remains as to the bleakness of life in the oil polluted creeks, the itinerant medical doctor, Dagogo Mark, removes such doubt when, from a cumulation of experience he declares: "I've been in these waters five years now and I tell you this place is a dead place, a place for dying" (142-143). To cap up the portrait of the oil-polluted creeks as a place

of death, the narrator imagistically describes the scene of devastation following a final act of bombing of a major oil installation by the militants on account of which "thousands of gallons of oil floating on the water, the weight of the oil tight like a hangman's noose around the neck of whatever life-from lay underneath" (227). As though to consolidate the image of the delta as "a place for dying," (225) we find that one of the journalists, Zaq, is demised in the course of the trip becoming a symbolic epitaph for oil as death merchant. From the foregoing, we find in *Tides* and *Oil on Water*, an unvarnished declamation of the decimation of the marine ecosystem which not only destroys the people's fishing livelihood but also activates their death. Feldner lends credence to this averment when he notes that "*Oil on Water* vividly displays the destruction of the social structure, and ecosystem of the Niger-Delta through neocolonial actors who show no concern for humans and nature" (10).

It goes without saying that the attritional conflict in the Niger-Delta is inspired by the confrontation between high voltage petro-economics and the subsistent fishery economy of the coastal dwellers. In *Oil on Water,* for instance, we find that fish is not only a major food staple in the Niger-Delta but also a major source of income for the people. This explains the unwritten division of labour in the fish-based economy in which "the men [go] out fishing" while women have the responsibility of "smoking the fish" which is preserved until it is sold to buyers (24, 25, 167, 179, 222). In *Tides,* we also find that the people's existence revolves around their fishery economy. In this regard, the oil exploration and exploitation activities of the oil companies just like the construction of the Kwarafa Dam threaten their survival by "upsetting the ecological balance" of the area (149) which work hardship on the people by depressing "the fishing economy" (149). The mercantile impulse that drives oil exploration is not lost on the people. According to the local fisherman, Opene:

> Oil is money […]. Money for the government. Money for many people. But not our people. And they do not mind what they do to us so long as they protect this money from troublesome people like us. (26)

The clear implication, therefore, is that the government and the oil companies place higher premium on petrodollars than on environmental sanctity. Nwanyanwu recognizes the conflicting economic impulses in play in Okpewho's *Tides* when he avers that: "what is central to the vision in this novel is not just how the individual is being subjected to dominant culture, but also how the economic axis dominates

environmental practices" (11). The effect is that environmental devastation is driven by a petro-economic agenda. Terminski makes the same point when he submits that "the purpose of the oil industry is not to support local development but to maximize the incomes of petrochemical corporations from developed countries" (3). The corollary of the foregoing is that the economics of marine oil pollution constitutes a threat to the fishing livelihood and cultural heritage of the people who consequentially view the oil companies and their facilitators as enemies.

Fishery, Cultural Symbolisation and Spirituality

In the ideology of self preservation, the survival of the physical environment is tied to the survival of an ethnic society (10). The explanation is that the physical environment is at once a marker of a society's cultural identity and a source of provision for their material existence. In appreciation of the material connectivity between the fisheries livelihood of coastal communities and their cultural and spiritual worldview, the Food and Agricultural Organization notes that:

> In most small-scale fishing communities where fisheries activities support a significant portion of the local populace, the various fishing occupations that community members pursue will be interwoven through the whole fabric of the community's local culture, pervading practically all of the main components of its cultural system. (FAO 7)

The contention that the devastation of a people's physical environment evinces the erosion of their cultural and spiritual mooring finds support in the fact that fishing culture includes the modes of fish production such as catching and processing (Sheng and Huili 131-132) and the people's unique life style, customs, and religious faith (Zhu and Dongyao 1). This is because, the nature of the marine ecosystem on which the people's livelihood depends constitutes "an important determinant of many of the cultural characteristics of small-scale fishing communities" (FAO 5). This holds true for the riverine people of Nigeria's Niger-Delta region because as Nwanyanwu has noted, among the Ijaws for instance, "the physical represents an important trope in [their] cultural memory…" (10). In *Tides* and *Oil on Water,* Isidore Okpewho and Helon Habila respectively, thematize the oil-driven degradation of the Niger-Delta environment as a modality of economic oppression and the collateral erosion of the people's cultural and spiritual anchors.

In *Tides,* for instance, the significance of fishery as a cultural endeavour is amplified by Piriye's lamentation that oil-exploration activities "are gradually

destroying the resources that have traditionally nurtured our people since time immemorial" (7). Piriye also adds that "nothing matters to me now more than the salvation of our homeland and the preservation of our heritage" (8). We find a further dramatization of the cultural affinity between the fishermen and their physical environment when Tonwe states that they are fighting for "the land and the people" (82-83). To consolidate the linkage between environmental degradation and cultural erosion, the radical environmentalist, Bickerbug, laments that oil exploration activities have occasioned the "desecration of traditional shrines…" (18). The foregoing underscores the people's affinity to their ecology and portrays the Niger-Delta region as an environmental and cultural wasteland inspired by oil exploration activities. Nwanyanwu conceptualizes the twin portrait of environmental devastation and the destruction of the community's cultural artifacts as "a metaphoric representation of the land as a cultural symbol" (10). The clear implication is that the destruction of the environment is coterminous with the destabilization of the people in its various ramifications.

Correspondingly, in *Oil on Water,* we find that the undercurrent for the violent rebellion by the militants is the realization that the despoliation of the environment undergirds the dislocation of the people from their homeland. For instance, when probed as to their identity, one of the militant groups simply replies: "we are the people, we are the Delta, we represent the very earth on which we stand" (154). This indicates that their group identity cannot be constructed outside the environment in which their cultural roots are entwined. Similarly, the leader of one of another militant group who goes by the name, Professor, stresses that the devastation of the environment is the cause of their violent rebellion against the government and the oil companies (221). It is to be noted that for coastal people such as the Niger-Deltans, "land" is not merely the surface of the earth but the totality of the geographical space which is, in their case, dominated by water. It bears due stress that the destruction of the environment of riverine people is a subtext for their economic oppression, physical dislocation, and cultural uprootment. The FAO2 eloquently makes this point by stressing that many fishing people hold "the belief that they and the marine creatures they exploit have parallel lives and mixed destinies …." (9) .

Furthermore, in *Tides,* the cultural scaffold upon which the declamation of the environmental degradation of the Niger-Delta is constructed is the fact that each of the three sections or movements of the novel entitled "ripple," "billow," and "flood" respectively is preceded by of an Ijaw folk song. The first song depicts the struggle of the fisherman with the elements while the second depicts the anguish of riverine

people confronted with the impact of flood and other natural disasters (46). The third and last is a song of lamentation of the ruination of the fishery livelihood of the delta dwellers:

> … Alas, poor me
> Woe, I'm done for!
> Father fenced the fishes into/a lake
> But the rain-god has burst/its banks
> And all the fishes have disappeared! (p. 123)

The rather emblematic title of the above section as "flood" is a metaphor for the despoliation of the environment by the oil companies while the disappearance of "all the fishes" parabolically underline the destruction of the people's fishery livelihood by oil pollution. In the context of this paper, the significance of the folk songs as emblems of group identity and cultural expression should not be glossed over. This is because as Austin has stressed, "culture consists of systems of symbols […], and culture as a system of symbols is the veil of interpretation between man and his environment" (45). It seems plausible, therefore, to assert that the folk songs in *Tides* constitute part of the systems of symbols and that the specific reference to the disappearance of fishes is a parabolic commentary on the devastation of the environment and the fishery livelihood of the people. It is instructive that in the African *mythological schema,* folk songs and folk tales constitute a point of intersection and concourse between human and non-human actors. From an ecocritical point of view, folk songs and folk tales are modalities of mediation between human beings and the ecosystem. Iheka lends credence to this averment when he notes that "[folk] tales [much like folk songs] are aprpos for the unique embodiment of their characters – straddling the human and non-human realm in ways that undercut human exceptionalism" (64). This means, simplicita, that folk characters such as fishes occupy an interstitial space in which human beings are not accorded autonomous existence but a relational one with non-humans.

As we have noted, the transactional relationship between fisher people and their environment is not only cultural but also spiritual. In *Oil on Water,* for instance, we find that the animist sect whose shrine is located at the banks of Irikefe was founded as a project of environmental restoration. On the origin of the animist sect, one of the Priests, Naman says:

> The shrine started a long time ago after a terrible war […] when the blood of

> the dead ran in the rivers, and the water was so saturated with blood that the fishes died, and the dead bodies of warriors floated for miles on the river […]. It was a terrible time. The land was so polluted that even the water in the wells turned red. That was when the priests from different shrines got together and decided to build this shrine by the river. The land needed to be cleansed of blood, and pollution. (121)

The pollution of the rivers saturated with blood occasioning the death of human beings and fishes mirrors the pollution of the marine ecosystem by oil exploration activities causing the destruction of the fishery livelihood of the people. The act of environmental restoration and the move to stem the tide of oil pollution by building the shrine amount to a cultural initiative to restore the spiritual equilibrium of the community (122, 130).

Similarly, in *Tides,* we also notice the nexus between environmental restoration and the preservation of the material, cultural and spiritual existence of the people. In this regard, we find that following his bombing of oil installations and the devastation of the Kwarafa Dam, the environmental activist, Bickerbug, triumphantly declares:

> Well, well, well, Piriye
> We have won, haven't we?...
> Our people have won, the water is flowing again full stream. The tides are here again. Soon there'll be plenty of fishes swimming again, eh? (198)

It is instructive that in Bickerbug's calculation, the essential barometer for measuring the success of the operation and the victory of the people is the prospect of having "plenty fishes swimming again" in the rivers. However, beyond the restoration of the environment and the fishery livelihood of the people, Bickerbug does not lose sight of the spiritual significance of the environmental project. In this regard, following his bombing of oil installations, Bickerbug disguises himself "as a Roman Catholic Priest from Cross River State under the name of Reverend Father Pascal Obongha…" (197) as he tries to escape. In this way, the novelist casts the environmental activist as a salvationary personage thereby underscoring the connectivity between environmentalism and spirituality. This is because in catholic theology, Jesus Christ is regarded as the Pascal lamb (an object of sacrifice) whose earthly mission is for the salvation of humankind.

In the face of our schematization of the environment as the repository of

the material and spiritual essence of the people, the issue arises as to the place of militancy and violence in that complex matrix. In *Tides* and *Oil on Water,* Okpewho and Habila respectively portray violent rebellion as a reaction to the menace of environmental degradation by the oil companies. In *Tides,* for instance, while Piriye and Tonwe disclaim violence as a strategy of environmental activism because "physical confrontation was bound to worsen the problem" (163) they, however, rationalize violence as a consequence of the "corrupt disregard for the welfare of the people" (163). Similarly, in *Oil on Water,* Professor blames the devastation of the environment by the oil companies and the brutality of security agencies as the cause of the militants' violent escapades. Urging the journalist, Rufus, to bear witness to the plight of the Niger-Delta people, Professor exhorts him as follows: "Write only the truth. Tell them about the flares you see at night, and the oil on water. And the soldiers forcing us to escalate the violence every day. Tell them we are hounded daily in our own land…" (221).

From both *Tides* and *Oil on Water,* the picture that comes across is a celebratory portrayal of militancy and violence as resistance. Feghabo's approval of the violent methods of Bickerbug in *Tides* and by extension Professor in *Oil on Water* stems from his persuasion that "through this act [of blowing up oil installations] Okpewho's vision of the triumph of the oppressed people of the Niger-Delta through revolution becomes glaring" (60). However, it needs be noted that in the recourse to violence as a modality of environmental activism, the snag is that both the environment itself and the people themselves are as much the victims of oil exploration activities as they are of the militants. This represents what Hamilton describes as a "double process of deterritorialization and reterritorialization" (95). Bickerbug's destruction of the Kwarafa Dam in *Tides* constitutes an act of deterritorialisation resulting in "the water flowing again" and the return of "plenty of fishes" (198) evincing reterritorialisation or restoration. Ironically, however, the blowing up of the dam is attended with the devastation of the environment: "the dam has been blown up! Everything has been swept away by the river, and it is now swallowing up this road with incredible speed […] and the submersion of villages for miles around…" (194).

The effect is that violence as a modality of environmental advocacy begets a corresponding environmental devastation often comparable to or even more injurious than the condition that inspired it. It is in this context that Sumner and Wiedman (2013:870), for instance, have contested the appropriateness of ecoterrorism as a framework of environmental activism. The corollary of the foregoing is that marine oil pollution constitutes a threat to the fisheries economy of

the people with dire consequences to their cultural heritage and spiritual well-being, a situation that often inspires violence and displacement.

Fishery and the Contours of Displacement

Displacement may be operationally construed as a form of migration in which individuals are forced to move against their will (Shamsuddoha *et al* 19). When such forced movement takes place within a country's territorial jurisdiction, it is regarded as internal displacement. The literature of internal displacement foregrounds four overlapping categories: conflict-induced displacement, disaster-induced displacement, development-induced displacement and environmentally induced displacement (Zetter 8). It is estimated that as of the end of 2019, about 50.8 million people globally were living in internal displacement on account of conflict, violence and disaster (IDMC 1). The UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (1988) defines internally displaced persons as:

> persons or groups who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border. (IDMC, 2020)

From the above definition, the key elements are the involuntary character of movement and the fact that such movement takes place within nationally defined boundaries. However, the above definition is patently inadequate because it fails to capture a number of critical factors implicated in displacement. For one, some movements (or migrations) may be voluntary and for another, people may be displaced by extreme poverty. Also, there could be displacement without movement or relocation (Ibeanu 82-83). In Nigeria's Niger-Delta region, displacement has been closely linked to oil exploration and production (Oluyemi 2).

It is difficult to pigeonhole the problems associated with oil exploitation activities in Nigeria into one specific category (Terminski 15-16) because although oil related displacement may be chiefly environmental, other categories of internal displacement are also implicated in petroleum related activities. The three main patterns of oil-related displacement that have been identified in the Niger-Delta are clashes between the Nigerian army and militant groups, fighting among the different militant groups; and sundry environmental problems occasioned by oil exploration and exploitation (Oluyemi 28). In Okpewho's *Tides* and Habila's *Oil on Water,*

discernible problems associated with crude-oil activities include contamination of drinking water, loss of fish, low agricultural productivity, chemical contamination and risk of disease, which often force people to leave their habitual places of residence (Terminski 6).

In *Oil on Water,* for instance, we find that prior to the commencement of oil exploration activities in the delta, the people lived contentedly in paradisal harmony with the environment. For instance, about chief Ibiram's village, we are told that: "Once upon a time they lived in paradise. It was a small village close to Yellow Island. They lacked for nothing, fishing and hunting and farming and watching their children growing up before them, happy" (38). But the coming of the oil companies inaugurated the devastation of the environment and the enthronement of violence which forced the people out of their places of habitual residence. For example, when Rufus enquires why the village is deserted, the old man's reply is that "Dem left because of too much fighting" (7) thereby foregrounding the fact of displacement owing to oil-inspired violence. Tellingly, the ecological devastation of chief Ibiram's Yellow Island is not isolated as the narrator informs us that "the next village was almost a replica of the last: the same empty squat dwellings, the same ripe and fragrant stench, the barrenness, the oil slick and the same indefinable sadness in the air…" (8).

The displacement of the people and their forced migration is a combination of the devastation of their homeland by oil exploration activities and their search for economic survival following the destruction of their fishery livelihood. We learn that the traumatized coastal dwellers "were speaking of the dwindling stocks of fish in the river, the rising toxicity of the water and how soon they might have to move to a place where fishing was still fairly good" (16). The community leader, chief Ibiram captures the plight of the people who are forced to a state of constant migration:

> … we headed northwards, we've lived in five different places now, but always we've had to move. We are looking for a place where we can live in peace. But it is hard […] I say how can we be happy when we are mere wanderers without a home? (41)

Throughout the novel, we are treated to gory details of the despoliation of the environment by oil exploration activities, the deprivation of the people following the decimation of their fishery economy leading to their homelessness and forced migration. The common features of the delta landscape are "deserted villages" (148) "with the whole clan on the move" (183) leaving behind "flood plains where

village[s] had once stood" (184) as the displaced villagers "camped in a forest not far from the river, where their boats, laden with their meager belongings, waited near the trees and rocks on the banks…" (185).

While the displacement of the Niger-Deltans fits the definition of internal displacement as offered by the UN Guiding Principles cited earlier, it does not, however, represent the full picture. This is because as Opukri and Ibaba (175) have argued, voluntary migration in search of means of livelihood or economic survival occasioned by occupational loss is also a form of internal displacement. The rationale for this averment is that internally displaced persons may also be victims of structural causes such as poverty (Toure 11). This is exactly the situation in the Niger-Delta where oil pollution has induced the internal displacement of the people by aggravating their level of poverty and diminishing their capacity for self sustenance (Opukri and Ibaba 190). It is plausible, therefore, to contend that the exclusion of the victims of extreme poverty in the definition of internally displaced persons by the UN, makes it rather narrow and inadequate (Zard 2002). The point being made is that occupational displacement of the type referred to in *Oil on Water,* for instance, where "dwindling fish stocks in the river and rising toxicity of the water" (16) force the people to move in search of "a place where fishing if fairly good" (16) must be seen as a vista of internal displacement arising from their occupational disorientation making them "live in their own country as if they are aliens" (Opukri and Ibaba 189).

Correspondingly, in *Tides,* we also find that oil exploration activities have led to the devastation of the environment, the destruction of their fishery livelihood and their displacement resulting in their forced migration in search of economic survival, peace, and security. The retired journalist and village-dweller, Tonwe, tellingly captures the vicissitudes of the people from the oil exploration activities as follows:

> The village has been completely wiped out by the floating oil, and most of the people have resettled in Burutu. There is another one near Birebe. There is practically no fishing life there anymore, because the fishes die and float on the black surface of the water in large numbers. Many of the people have moved out to resettle in places like Emevor and Igbide. (27)

The forced movement of people out of their habitual locations underlines their internal displacement rooted in environmental insecurity because to be environmentally secure, "the ecosystem within which they live must have the

capacity to support the healthy pursuit of their livelihoods" (Hens, 2005:4). This is not the case for the fisher folks of the Niger-Delta region where oil pollution has devastated the environment.

It is noteworthy that in *Tides* and *Oil on Water,* the narrative structure of both works revolve around journalists who double as narrators and witnesses of the action of the novels. From their journalistic lenses, the reader becomes a vicarious participant and witness to the pollution of the aquatic environment, the disruption of the people's fishery economy and their physical and cultural displacement. In *Tides,* for instance, the narrator and initiator of the book project for environmental conservation, Piriye, outlines the manifesto of the journalistic enterprise as a mission to "produce a book that will long remain an authoritative testimony to the plight of our people, the Beniotu people, in these times" (3). By deploying their professional skills in that manner, the journalists attempt to bring the environmental degradation of the Niger-Delta to the forecourt of public consciousness and to invest their accounts with credibility and verisimilitude.

In the works under focus, the media and media practitioners not only assume their traditional roles as the vanguards of the oppressed but also the agents and symbols of environmental sensitization. Through the correspondents, Piriye and Tonwe, and the other journalists in the *Chronicle* newspaper such as Lati, for instance, the reader comes to the awareness of "classified information and some very incriminating photographs of the damages suffered by the Niger-Delta communities…" (17). The media also serve to trumpet the ecological devastation of the delta region and the attendant frustration of the people by constantly advertising "the woes of the Niger-Delta" (17). This is in tandem with Edward Said's schematization of the role of the writer and intellectual in crisis situations as the internationalization of such conflict. According to Said , the task of the intellectual is "to universalize the crisis, to give greater human scope to what a particular race or nation suffered" (43-44). In *Tides*, the journalists actively universalize the ecological devastation of the delta drawing the attention of the international community to their plight.

Similarly, in *Oil on Water,* the commissioning of the journalists to journey through the creeks of the Niger-Delta to confirm whether the kidnapped wife of the expatriate oil worker, Isabel Floode, is alive or not (29) becomes the "roving license" to tour the delta region and to witness first hand, the environmental degradation of the area. We also learn that the kidnappers, eager for publicity, use the media to publicize their grievances against the authorities for which "they would make long speeches about the environment and their reason for taking up

arms against the oil companies and the government" (50). By journeying through different parts of the coastal landscape, the journalists come face to face with diverse snippets of the despoliation of the environment and the dispossession of the people economically and culturally. Among the telling representations of the journalists as witnesses to ecological devastation, the daily ritual of drenching the captured freedom fighters with petrol starkly stand out. Though horrified by the sight, Rufus continued to observe the exercise as a matter of professional obligation because "I was a journalist: my job was to observe, and to write about it later. To be a witness for posterity…" (55). From the accounts of the journalists, the reader is inexorably and vicariously drawn into the fray as a witness to the degradation of the environment.

In *Tides* and *Oil on Water,* therefore, Okpewho and Habila, respectively, employ the newspaper and newspaper men as vehicles for drawing public attention to the environmental crises in the delta, the disruption of the people's fishery livelihood and their cultural, occupational and physical displacement. As a result, "the newspaper becomes a public sphere for sensitizing people to the problems surrounding them, the newspaper also becomes a technology for ecological thought" (Iheka 158). In both works under reference, journalists act as participant observers and social witnesses to the vicissitudes of the people and the environment. The effect is that as Feldner has noted concerning *Oil on Water,* "the act of journalistic writing is ultimately also represented as an important form of activism, witnessing and chronicling" (5). By projecting journalists as conservationists and witnesses for posterity, *Tides* and *Oil On Water* underline the role of writers as stakeholders and chroniclers of the pulsations of environmental relations.

Conclusion

Nigeria's Niger-Delta region is one of the most important wetlands and marine ecosystems in the world. It commands global attention on account of the quantum of hydrocarbon deposits in the area, the exploitation of which is implicated in the ecological devastation of the region. The diminishment of the marine capital of the delta by oil pollution injuriously affects the people, their cultural heritage, and psychological wellbeing. In *Tides* and *Oil on Water,* Isidore Okpewho and Helon Habila respectively, thematize the disruption of the people's fishery livelihood in the wake marine oil pollution leading to their occupational and physical displacement. By deftly deploying journalists as "roving reporters" who journey through the creeks of the delta region, the novelists enable the reader to vicariously witness the sights and sounds of ecological devastation of the delta and by so doing, invest their

accounts with credibility and realism necessary to nudge the conscience of the world to the plight of the people. From an ecocritical perspective, *Tides* and *Oil On Water* constitute a rallying cry against mindless anthropogenic activities which not only destroy the environment but also set humankind against itself. We envisage that the implementation of the recommendations set out above would deepen the cause of environmental conservation and stem the tide of oil-induced ecological devastation of the Niger-Delta with its diverse collateral consequences.

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Change as Impossible Necessity: Change for the Worse as Depicted in Wajdi Alahdal's *A Crime at Restaurant Street*

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Abstract This study explores the psychological effects of social and political stress on the common man and the role of corruption in committing crimes as depicted in *A Crime at Restaurant Street*. It traces the playwright's prediction of social change to worse, suggesting that socio-political corruption creates pressure and deep trauma, which lead to psychological disorder and change the hero to worse. This study is a qualitative study that uses the psychoanalytical theory as well as trauma critical theory. Findings indicate that the play is a reminder that corruption and injustice are still major problems in Yemen during the reign of Saleh and after, and that the struggle for justice is far-fetched. The destructive nature of corruption leads to psychological consequences and the trauma experienced by the protagonist leads to post-traumatic stress disorder that makes him end up in terrorism. The study concludes that the playwright thus portrays both the necessity of a complete social transformation, and an utter lack of belief that such a transformation would take place.

Keywords social change; corruption; psychological consequences; terrorist; conflict

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Introduction

Change is usually for the better, whether on a personal or social level. Nevertheless,

Wajdi Alahdal, a Yemeni playwright, challenges this postulation. Alahdal's play, *A Crime at Restaurant Street*, depicts the change that happened to the hero for the worse, and it, in itself, expresses the change that Yemeni society aspires to in light of the difficult and compelling circumstances. The play premiered in Sana'a in 2009. It is an example of contemporary Yemeni drama and the first play translated into English by Katherine Hennessey in 2016. The playwright predicts a radical change in Yemen before it occurs due to many factors, primarily financial and administrative corruption, the confiscation of rights and freedoms, the corruption of the judicial system, and the absence of state agencies and laws that protect citizens from the many violations committed by the masses of corruption. However, the writer predicts that this change would be reversed, which happened some years after the play was released. Many events and conflicts worsened the change, leading to what the country is like today regarding the civil war with militias everywhere in the country.

In studying Alahdal's play, *A Crime at Restaurant Street*, two important terminologies need clarification. First, the term social change is defined by Akujobi as a result of the expediency needed in providing solutions to specific social problems faced in a society (Akujobi 491-526). While Form in Britannica notes that social change, in sociology, is the alteration of mechanisms within the social structure, characterized by changes in cultural symbols, rules of behavior, social organizations, or value systems (Form). Second, corruption is defined by Ting Gong and Sunny Yang (2019), in Oxford Research Encyclopedia, as a complex social phenomenon. It refers to the abuse of entrusted power for private gain. While Encyclopedia in *Political Corruption* by Montinola gives Aristotle's definition of political corruption. It is the practice of leaders who rule with a view to their private advantage rather than the pursuit of the public interest (Montinola).

The main objective of this study is to explore the psychological effects of social and political stress on ordinary individuals in Alahdal's play, *A Crime at Restaurant Street*. It investigates the role of corruption in committing crimes and traces the playwright's prediction of social change for the worse. This study is mainly devoted to the issues of change in Yemen as portrayed by this play under study. The study set out to answer some questions. Does socio-political corruption lead to social crimes? Does corruption lead to change for the worse on personal and social levels? Do the press and disappointment lead to the fragmentation of the hero's character in the play? In search of his rights and self-formation, does the hero end up becoming a killer?

This qualitative study uses a dual theoretical analysis; one of which is Freud's

Psychoanalytical Theory and the other is Trauma Critical Theory. Encyclopedia, in *Psychoanalytic Theory* by Hanley, defines Psychoanalytic Theory as a framework for understanding the impact of the unconscious on thoughts, feelings, and behavior. Freud posited that most of what motivates individuals lies outside of their immediate awareness (Hanley). The suitable psychoanalytical approach is to analyze the thematic content of the play especially the motives of the playwright and the main hero of the play.

The playwright, Alahdal, is renowned for his harsh criticism of the Yemeni government and he was forced to leave the country. He could only return to Yemen without fear of prosecution because of Gunter Grass, a German literary figure and a Noble Prize winner, and other human Associations intervention. The case of analyzing the hero's change and his violent behavior at the end as a killer is often referred to the violent and abusive ways he has been treated in Yemen. He turns out to be a tragic figure of an innocent killer. The psychoanalytic approach aims to understand how the unconscious mind controls conscious behavior in ways that affect psychological well-being (Nash). Tragic events are offensive; they cause disunity and reveal discontent. Tragic events bring the unconscious into public view. It makes us unsure about our identities, feelings, and what happened to us (Bennett, et al 106). Thus, the psychoanalytical critical theory is much more suitable for this study.

The trauma critical theory can also be used effectively in analysing the play. Trauma is defined by Irene Visser as a condition in which unconscious processes impact a person's health and well-being (Visser 115). Herman also defines trauma as an individual's response to events so intense that they impair emotional or cognitive functioning and may bring lasting psychological disruption. Traumatic events that shape the hero's past affect areas of functioning, including social interaction and behavior (Herman 42-47). People who experience trauma are at increased risk for hostility, anger, and other emotional problems, which are portrayed in the character of Abdullatif, the hero.

Historical and Theoretical Background

There are few studies on the works of Alahdal, especially his play *A Crime at Restaurant Street*. However, there are several reports by many national and international organizations about the general overview of Yemen taking in consideration serious social, political, and economic issues. These reports give a historical overview that reflects the sufferings of the fragmented Yemeni nation. Literary writers are effective members in society, so they take the duty of portraying

those sufferings in their writings as a matter of social responsibility; one of them is Alahdal. Therefore, the researcher prefers to trace studies of some literary productions in Yemen, including Alahdal's play in focus.

The context here is divided into two approaches. One of which is the national and international organizations' reports and the other goes for the Yemeni literary writers. Regarding the national and international stand, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) issued a report by Robinson E. in 2006 about the grand corruption in the country. It states that over the past few decades, a system of grand corruption has grown, thriving on the combination of weakened state institutions and a fragmented elite structure. The report predicts that in the case of failing to make a reform for economic growth for basic needs and services to be met and for the state to be sustainable in the near term, significant political instability may be on the horizon. However, effective reform would threaten elite corruption (Robinson 9).

A report by Hill and others from Chatham House (2013) reflects the situation in Yemen two years after youth revolution in 2011 Spring. The report focuses on elite's corruption. It declares that Yemen faces significant dangers of political unrest and a projected resource shortage because of the quick depletion of the reserves of oil that support the government's budget (Hill et al).

The Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies (2018) states that the political economy of Yemen is heavily ingrained with corruption, which is the abuse of power for personal benefit. In Yemen, low-level bribery and favoritism have also become ubiquitous; they are now a part of daily life. Likewise, European Commission (2022), UN in Yemen (2023), UNICEF (2023), and World Bank (2023) reports state that after over 8 years of war, Yemen remains one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. The national socioeconomic systems of Yemen remain on the edge of total collapse. Millions of children lack access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene services.

International Rescue Committee (2020) declares that a long-running conflict has resulted in 3.65 million internally displaced persons since 2015. The UN in Yemen report (2023) also shortlists remarks about Yemen situation. Yemen was already the most impoverished country in the Arab world before the most recent conflict, with low levels of human development, rapid population growth, frequent local conflicts, ongoing food shortages, and a fragile governmental transition.

Hennessey wrote of the drama of Yemen's Arab Spring, discussing real reflections of Yemeni drama before, during and after Arab Spring in Yemen. Hennessey declares that modern Yemeni plays depict the idea of revolution in a

multifaceted and complex way, not just as the movement from one governmental system to another but also as a fundamental transformation in the relationships between the young and the elderly, between women and men, and the individual and society. The four plays analyzed by Hennessey feature Yemenis' own voices expressing why they want extensive sociopolitical and economic transformation as well as to what extent they think such reform is attainable (Hennessey 6). Yemeni society was depicted as being horribly corrupt in the 2009 play *A Crime at Restaurant Street*.

In terms of local literary writers, some are worthwhile citing here. Alareqi, in a study entitled *Yemeni Narrative in Postcolonial World*, demonstrates Yemenis looking for better change. He discusses Dammaj's *The Hostage*. The study concludes that the hostages' lives are miserable inside the palace, and they have no chance to improve because the men and women running the place deliberately change hostage's identity to make them submissive to their illegitimate demands (Alareqi 102). Numerous aspects of the hostage's personality have been changed negatively and indefinitely. He escapes this life for an unknown future. This uncertain future would not be worse than the corrupt and absurd life of the palace.

Likewise, Al-Rubaidi, in his article *Liberation and Enlightenment Narratives: Reading into the Literary Thought of Wajdi Alahdal*, clarifies the philosophical principles of Alahdal as a contemporary Yemeni writer. In an interview with Alahdal, he summarizes his principles of writing literature in four points; literature as an understanding of existence, literature to awaken the reader, literature for speaker of the language and not for translation and fame, and literature as an interpretation of life (Al-Rubaidi, Liberation 6).

Similarly, Al-Rubaidi, in his overview of Alahdal's novels, conveys that the most important social background of his work is modern Yemen, in the geographical, political and cultural sense of the word. He also states that during the last two decades, the Arab region has witnessed political and social traumas that have affected the consciousness of the region's inhabitants. In the aftermath of these traumas, they have come to question the reality of their perceptions of religion, politics, history, and their relationship to the other. Al-Rubaidi highlights that Alahdal has published novels and short story collections that tackle social hypocrisy, false religiosity, the situation of women, and the disastrous political failure of successive governments in Yemen since unification in 1990. He concludes that Alahdal's last novel, *Breaking Dualities*, offers different views on the right to live. It also reveals miserable awareness of Yemen's existential crisis to which everyone has contributed. The most important contributors to the crisis are the intellectuals

and the opinion shapers who betrayed their people and despised them instead of defending them and their right to decent lives. In Yemen, a country plagued by war, hunger, disease and illiteracy, Alahdal and his fellow novelists, journalists and poets, write for salvation.

In a related paper, Abdulqawi Alyasery wrote the *Yemeni Theatre Performance and its Socio-political Impact on Yemeni People*. In the paper, Al-Janad Theatrical Company addressed several socio-political issues, such as a repressive political system, government corruption, and issues from the social side, such as poverty, retaliation, early marriage, expensive marriage, women's education, and price increases. In truth, the theater has significantly contributed to Yemeni society's culturalization and elevation of consciousness and knowledge (Alyasery 3).

Also, Altwaiji, in *Yemeni Narrative and Society: Socio-political Issues in Dammaj's The Hostage*, asserts the need for political change. He finds that the novel *The Hostage* by Zayd Dammaj serves as both a national agent for political change and a personal tool for achieving equality, a new identity, and a satisfying social standing. It is a chronicle of clashes between societal consciousness and the long-living power agents. *The Hostage* is a thoughtful examination of social absurdity and individual emptiness in addition to being an album about the abuses committed by the tyrant. It makes the claim that sociopolitical realities exist and provides an alternate, fantastical image of peace and togetherness. Altwaiji also declares that the new generation of both male and female novelists has contributed enormously to the development of novel. These writers and their growing readership have a strong tendency to regard political narratives more highly than narratives of entertainment. Examples of these novels are Mohammed Amran's *The Revolutionist* (2014), Nadia Alkawkabani's *Just Love* (2006), Bushra Almaqtari's *Behind the Sun* (2012), Safa'a Alhabal's *My Destiny is a Butterfly* (2014), Marwan Ghafory's *Sa'ada's Braids* (2014) and Samir Abdulfattah's *Adjacency: Another Life (2013)* (Altwaiji 317-324).

Other recent studies include Thabit (2020), Al-Rubaidi (2021), and Sheikh et al (2023). Thabit builds a panoramic review of Yemeni novel. He traces many novels and finds that in an effort to address the political, social, and cultural changes in Yemen, a Yemeni novel portrays the events, turning moments, and transitions by blending reality with fiction. The narrative explores political and social violence that is only symbolic (Thabit). Al-Rubaidi, in *Reading between the Lines: Political Solutions in Yemeni Fiction Writing*, states that from the decades that followed the 1930s through the union of the North and South in 1990 to the country's 2011 revolt, intellectuals, poets, and creative thinkers have formed the core of Yemen's major political and social movements. Yemeni writers consider how ideology influences

the powerful to commit crimes against humanity in an effort to comprehend the leaders of the nation. To summarize Al-Rubaidi's views about political solutions portrayed by literary figures, he declares that since the start of the armed struggle in 2015 and the failed attempt to implement democratic elections, Yemen's production of novels and short tales has grown significantly (Al-Rubaidi Reading 5).

Fiction writing was proven to be a valuable medium for Yemeni authors to discuss politics. The well-known Yemeni author Wajdi Alahdal's *Saghira's Laws* is an example of this literary genre. In this short fiction, a different course for Yemen after the political unrest of 2011 is described. It investigates that Yemen adopted a democratic political structure based on human rights. In the end, Saghira, the woman who becomes president, improves Yemen's reputation internationally via wise leadership. Sheikh finds that Fekriah Shahrah's novel *The Smile Owner* portrayed the horrible effects of the civil war as well as destroying the love of the lovers; Wahid and Afra, Ammar and Samah, and Wahid and his family. The relationships among Yemeni people were destroyed and people killed each other on the basis of their identity, political, and geographical affiliation (Sheikh).

In summary, although the works of Yemeni playwright Wajdi Alahdal, a working example, have been analyzed by local and international writers and agencies, there is still more to explore with reference to one of his plays translated into English. Alahdal is considered one of the pioneers of Yemeni literature and has many literary works translated into multiple languages, hence, analytical studies of his literary works must be done. The current study dives into one of his plays that has attained international attention but has yet to be analyzed thoroughly in search of how he treats socio-political change issues in Yemen. The fact that Alahdal's literary works have been affected by the problems of society and how he perceives social issues, the importance of the current study comes from the importance of the subject that it deals with; it identifies social change issues in light of a wave of corruption, oppression, and deteriorating social, political, and economic conditions.

Analysis

A Crime at Restaurant Street was originally written as a short story, then adapted for the stage, and translated into English by Katherine Hennessey. It was performed in April 2009 as a dark comedy that explores the themes of corruption, hypocrisy, and the struggle for justice in Yemen. One notable aspect of the play is Alahdal's ability to capture the essence of everyday life in Yemen. Through the setting of Restaurant Street, he creates a microcosm of society, allowing the audience to witness the challenges different characters face. Wiswas says, "On Restaurant Street, you find all

kinds, sir" (Alahdal 6). This setting serves as a backdrop to explore themes such as poverty and corruption. It means that the once vibrant and bustling Restaurant Street symbolises society's decay and decline.

The play opens at a café on Restaurant Street, near Tahrir Square in Sana'a. It is so named for its restaurants and teahouses. The café brings together various characters representing all facets of Yemeni society. Murshid, the cultured one, Yasir, the journalist, Ḥurayb, the waiter, Jamīla, the penniless orphan girl of nineteen who begs from the customers in order to support her young brothers and sisters, Wiswas, the Bank Officer, and the Bank Manager, a shadowy, disembodied character known to the audience only through his voice. Later on, Abdullatif, the protagonist, appears as a distinguished poor man who is mainly an artistic decorator and a symbolic character.

The analysis in this section concentrates on different dimensions. The role of corruption in raising social crimes in societies, the psychological effects of social and political stress on the common man, and the playwright's predictions of change for the worst in Yemen are all analysed in details.

Endemic Corruption

A Crime at Restaurant Street is a compelling play that offers a glimpse into the complexities of Yemeni society. Through its well-crafted characters and engaging narrative, it raises important questions about social justice, power dynamics, and the impact of corruption on individuals. The characters who suffer corruption become corrupt in one way or another. Sociopolitical corruption is clearly shown through the portrayal of the characters and their roles in the play despite the differences in their level of education, professions, and sex. The play explores how the characters and their lives have been negatively impacted by various factors. It highlights the struggles of individuals who find themselves trapped in a cycle of poverty, corruption, and exploitation.

The endemic corruption in the country leads to disastrous impacts, one of which is poverty that is portrayed by all the characters in the play except the peak of the corrupt elite, the Bank Manager. Jamila, a symbol of poverty, begs from people who sit in restaurants and teahouses. She asks Yasir, the journalist, to give her some money but he seems penniless as well: "Forgive him, dear child, he is a journalist and belongs to the Jinn" (Alahdal 5). Murshed makes comments on Yasir as a journalist who has nothing to give. Then she continues disclosing other characters' economic situation. She asks Murshed, the cultured man, to give her some money to support her family but in an ironic representation, he says, "A man of culture does

not give alms, [….] I can give [….] Science and knowledge" (Alahdal 5). He tells her that he gives knowledge and science instead of money.

The Bank Manager who represents Saleh, the president of the country at the time, was recognized for his shrewd patronage tactics and his capacity to turn different elite factions in Yemen against one another through a complex network of threats and bribes. To collect data about Abdullatif, he starts with Murshed to give his statement about the artist, then Jameela, and then Abdulatif himself through an interview conducted by the journalist, Yasir. The Bank Manager gives bribe to Murshed and Yasir but not to Jameela for their testimonies about his victim, the artist. He tells Wiswas about Murshed, "To kick-start his tongue, offer him twenty thousand riyals in advance, and an equal sum when he departs from us" (Alahdal 7).

Murshed gives a mistaken statement about Abdullatif except his economic situation, "He eats lunch late. […..] slinking off to a restaurant owned by one of his acquaintances […..] and eats whatever's left" (Alahdal 9). Corruption leads to the current case of Abdullatif who comes from abroad with a huge amount of money because he is an internal designer but the Bank Manager freezes his bank account to oblige him to do what they want and to change for the worse instead. A serious characterization gives to Abdullatif by Murshed:

> I personally think he's like a giant octopus who's crept into our world unnoticed, out of a drain whose pipes run to the sea. He seems to have studied abroad—[……], impressed by the freedom they feel it offers. Then when they return to Yemen, they can't re-acclimatize to their own society and its customs and traditions. It's like they're [….], unable to integrate, as though a delicate veil separates them from everything around them. They have an exaggerated sense of their own importance. (Alahdal 9)

Here, Murshed portrays the character of Abdullatif according to what the Manager wants him to be even though it is not true. He declares that people who come back home from abroad are not able to integrate to their society. These claims are launched by the elites of the regime against everyone who calls for rights, freedom and equality and calls for the development of the country in the field of education, health and various services, as the rest of the regimes in the world do towards their people, out of a sense of responsibility.

Murshed also describes Abdullatif as "not deigning to speak with those of lower stature [….] He accords himself an inflated importance, based on his subconscious delusions." But this is in contradiction to what Jameela gives in her state-

ment. She states that Abdullatif "he's the only man who has ever paid attention to me. [….]. He's very modest, though he's wise and cultured as a philosopher" (Alahdal 12). Murshid's testimony, like Jamila's that comes after it, presents a distorted image of Abdullatif; each character's representation of him is influenced by his or her own concerns, needs, and desires. Instead of acting as an objective observer, Murshid, overtly or theatrically, acts out his statement for the advantage of the Bank Manager. He is also highly committed, emotionally and psychologically, in persuading his audience to accept the picture he is painting.

Jameela, through her overall situation, is an example of the real corrupt society. Her case can be analysed on the basis of the difficult economic circumstances from one side and the exploitation of children and women in Yemen as mentioned in many national and international reports from the other side. Jameela is a victim of social corruption as she is obliged to consider begging as a profession. She declares that:

> My older brother always drives me home at least an hour before sunset—that's because one time I was late, and in the dark a gang of street kids attacked me and stole everything I'd earned that day. And when I got home, I was beaten black and blue for not bringing any money back. (Alahdal 11)

This means that she is obliged by her family to beg as a kind of financial income for the family.

The Bank Manager then asks Wiswas to organize an interview with Abdullatif to talk about himself. The journalist Yasir who will be given bribe will conduct this interview. This is the triangular method of collecting data about a man completely deprived from his human rights and now becomes subjected to high authority inspection.

Alahdal's writing style is vivid and engaging. He effectively uses dialogue to convey the complex emotions and motivations of his characters. Abdullatif, in the interview, describes his crisis and expresses his sorrow for other people's crises in confiscating their financial rights under flimsy pretexts and requests to implement corruption orders. He states clearly the rotten situation of corrupted elites in the country:

> They're trying to destroy me, to turn me into a criminal who'll do their dirty work. […] I defy you to find one of them who has earned his money by the sweat of his brow. I defy you to find one of them who has lived honorably.

> Certainly, I'm not the only one in this country who has had his financial rights taken away—[….] they've all been robbed of their financial rights. [….] Filthy rotten criminals have turned this country into a bottomless garbage can, a market where everything has a price. (Alahdal 13)

The play, hence, touches upon the loss of hope and optimism in the face of these critical conditions. Characters are disillusioned and resigned to their fate, feeling powerless to bring about any meaningful change. This sense of hopelessness is a recurring motif, emphasizing the bleakness and despair that permeate the play.

The Bank Manager chooses Abdullatif to apply his scientific theory on; a theory, which is clarified later on by Wiswas as to be a good citizen, commit violent crimes; be a terrorist. He sends Wiswas to Abdullatif to make a deal with him that he will receive his money but after fulfilling one condition. Wiswas says, "We require that you commit a crime. A single crime. Become a terrorist, and then you can come to the bank and take your eight hundred thousand dollars" (Alahdal 15). He could not believe what he hears until Wiswas hands him a blue paper with a list of crimes to choose one of them. In a traumatic response, he refuses the deal shouting in intense fury and says, "You want to turn me into a terrorist. May God curse you and all the banks in the world!" (Alahdal 15). Then Wiswas creates a quarrel with Abdullatif claiming that he will kill him. Immediately, policemen come to the spot as the matter is prepared with them earlier. Abdullatif is taken to jail. Wiswas visits him to jail and informs him that his file is burned but the Bank Manager can release him in a single phone call. Wiswas also declares that they have money and they can buy the truth they want. Abdullatif mistake is that he does not commit a crime and kill innocent people.

These scenes portray the spread of the endemic and depict the sociopolitical corruption on a wide range including elites, legal and judicial systems, police, and the common man. Furthermore, the play's exploration of power dynamics and corruption is particularly noteworthy. The playwright delves into how those in positions of authority exploit their power, while also highlighting the resilience and resourcefulness of individuals who navigate these challenges.

According to the Manager's Theory of Ethics, "people will engage in criminal behavior if this is the only way to attain what they deserve, materially and spiritually, within society—like predators in the jungle. And the axiomatic reward for committing such crimes is being considered an upstanding citizen" (Alahdal 17). Abdullatif becomes unable to resist and asks for the blue paper to choose one of the listed crimes. Alahdal effectively portrays the erosion of moral values and the rise of

corruption within the play. Characters who were once honest and decent are forced to compromise their principles to survive or achieve their goals. This theme of moral degradation is exemplified through the actions and motivations of the protagonist Abdullatif, illustrating the devastating effects of the worsening conditions.

By the end, Abdullatif accepts to commit a crime and be a terrorist to survive and get his rights. The theme of sociopolitical corruption leading to social crimes is explored in a compelling and thought-provoking manner. The play highlights how the pervasive corruption within society creates an environment where individuals are driven to commit crimes as a means of survival or personal gain.

Psychological Effects of Social and Political Stress

The above corruption scenario analysis intense the social and political stress which resulted in a series of psychological effects on the protagonist, the representation of the Yemeni common man. The Freudian psychoanalytic approach is to understand how the unconscious mind controls conscious thoughts, feelings, and behavior in ways that affect psychological well-being of either the writer or the characters he draws (Kamil 160). Here are some psychological impacts of the social and political stress on the protagonist and its connection to his wellbeing.

Living in a society plagued by social and political stress can lead to feelings of depression and hopelessness. Jameela hears Abdullatif speaking with some children saying, “When the Earth ceases to spin madly around her axis, then people will relax, and stop racing after their daily bread” (Alahdal 12). These psychological aments of deep depression and hopelessness also are shown through inquiries he poses about what crime he has committed against the Manager and why the Manager wants to turn him into a terrorist. This indicates the lack of control over his own life and the bleak outlook for the future can contribute to the development of depression and a sense of hopelessness.

Social and political stress can create a sense of uncertainty and instability, leading to increased anxiety and fear. Abdullatif says, “My psychological state worsened when the civil war exploded in 1994” (Alahdal 13). He develops an unknown disease and has unconscious responses to the events happened like the Lebanon and Israel war and Yemen civil war in 1994. The constant threat of violence, oppression, or loss of basic rights can leave individuals feeling constantly on edge and anxious about their safety and future. Abdullatif fears all around him. He declares, “They’re trying to destroy me, to turn me into a criminal […] They just want to be rid of me, and they don’t care how” (Alahdal 13).

Cynicism and loss of trust are also impacts of social and political stress that

can erode trust in institutions and fellow citizens. Abdullatif defies if any one of the governmental elites has earned his money through his own hard work or lived honorably. The common man may become cynical and skeptical, viewing others with suspicion and assuming the worst intentions. He says also, "Certainly I'm not the only one in this country who has had his financial rights taken away" (Alahdal 14). Wiswas meets Abdullatif and tells him that the Manager will solve his problem and will give him his money back but Abdullatif looks Wiswas up and down with contempt and starts to leave the coffee shop unbelieving and paying no attention to him. This loss of trust can further contribute to feelings of isolation and psychological distress.

Trauma and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) are critical and serious impacts of sociopolitical stress and corruption. Abdullatif gives a frightening traumatic representation of the injustice and social crimes he witnessed. He says,

> Oppression and injustice and crime used to be things I heard about but didn't really know. To me they were just words that existed in dictionaries, or that you heard in Hollywood films, but since I've returned to this street, I've found them in flesh and blood reality. (Alahdal 14)

Wiswas hands Abdullatif a blue paper containing a list of seventeen crimes to choose one of them in order to be a good citizen. Abdullatif tears the paper and shouts, "You want to turn me into a terrorist. May God curse you and all the banks in the world!" (Alahdal 15). The last bloody scene of the play is when Abdullatif accepts to be a terrorist. Experiencing or witnessing traumatic events, such as violence or human rights abuses, can lead to the development of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The common man may be exposed to such events in a society characterized by social and political stress, which can result in intrusive memories, nightmares, and heightened arousal. As the play progresses, the audience witnesses the protagonist's gradual descent into desperation and despair. The pressures of poverty, corruption, and the loss of hope push him to the breaking point.

Fear, anxiety, loss of trust, depression, hopelessness, alienation, frustration, and trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are all at the core of the character's wellbeing which is the subject matter of the psychoanalytical criticism theory.

The Playwright's Predictions of Change for the Worse in Yemen

In the play "*A Crime at Restaurant Street*," there are several predictions of change

for the worse in Yemen. The play serves as a reflection of the social, political, and economic difficulties Yemeni society is now facing and provides insights into the possible consequences of these problems. The civil war in Yemen comes to its ninth year leading to a horrible humanitarian crisis.

One prediction of change for the worse is that social corruption will increase. Alahdal depicts a system in which persons in positions of power exploit their authority for personal gain, causing a breakdown in trust and a decline in values in society. Wiswas visits Abdullatif in his prison and declares that his Manager can release Abdulatif in one call in addition to his ability to buy the truth as a product; he says, "What you need to understand is that truth is directly connected to our wallets" (Alahdal 17). This corruption is shown to be widespread and deeply rooted, implying that it will only become worse in the future. The recent national and international reports by human organizations and associations prove this fact showing the deep roots of corruption even in the international aids for refugees that lead to people's suffering, torture, and even bad shelters' conditions.

The continuation of inequality and poverty is a further prediction. The play examines the hardships of those who are caught in a cycle of poverty and are unable to break free because of the lack of opportunity and structural inequalities. The Manager gives a bribe to Murshed and Yasir but not to Jameela as she is a girl and belongs to beggars. The unseen Manager gives himself a label of the only scientist in Restaurant Street area. Furthermore, Houthi Militia strongly maintains their ideological system of inequality based on race and gender. According to this description and what actually happens in Yemen, the gap between the wealthy and the poor will continue to grow, leading to further social unrest and despair.

The play also makes reference to the ongoing nature of violence and conflict. The depiction of the effects of oppression on people and community hints that the cycle of violence will continue, causing more misery and devastation. The Manager's theory that he wants to apply on Abdullatif is based on bloodshed to get one's financial rights that a lot of people lost so they will look for their rights through such conflict and killing. Wiswas says*,*

> According to this theory, people will engage in criminal behavior if this is the only way to attain what they deserve, materially and spiritually, within society—like predators in the jungle. And the axiomatic reward for committing such crimes is being considered an upstanding citizen. (Alahdal 17)

When Abdullatif kills innocent people, Wiswas applauds feverishly as if he is now

a good citizen. This prognosis is in line with the actual situation in Yemen, where protracted conflict has terrible effects on people everywhere.

The play implies a loss of hope and a decay in moral standards as well. Characters are depicted as having to abandon their morals and do desperate deeds in order to survive or accomplish their goals. This moral decay prognosis means that the social fabric of Yemeni society will continue to deteriorate, resulting in a sense of disappointment and hopelessness.

Thus, the play assures the need for complete social change. Still, at the same time, it gives indications like the increase of socio-political corruption, continuation of inequality and poverty, ongoing violence and conflict, and loss of hope and moral values. These indications make it clear that if change is bound to occur, it is going to be for the worse, which contradicts the consequences of change in prior research studies (Akujobi et al 491; Debuire 10). With the play in question, Alahdal contributes to shaping the concepts of the present in light of past reflections, and his contributions are considered an expression of his personal and general experiences in an attempt to form a comprehensive picture of the prevailing social and political conditions in Yemen. He is exposed to many social, political, cultural and economic issues that may exist within society, and tries to crystallize them in his theatrical texts.

Conclusion

The play emphasizes the extent to which corruption in society creates an environment in which individuals are driven to commit crimes for survival or personal gain. In the play, Abdullatif, the protagonist, has agreed to commit a crime and become a terrorist in order to survive and obtain his rights. The play is ultimately a story about the struggle for justice. It shows how difficult it is to get justice in Yemen, and how the legal system is used to silence dissent and to protect the guilty. So, it is a reminder that corruption and injustice are still major problems in Yemen, and that the struggle for justice is far from over.

On the whole, fear, anxiety, betrayal, loss of trust, sadness, hopelessness, alienation, frustration, trauma, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are some psychological impacts of the social and political stress on the protagonist and all are crucial to his well-being. Anyone can be traumatized through living in an unstable or unsafe environment. By highlighting the connection between sociopolitical corruption and social crimes, Alahdal raises important questions about the responsibility of those in power and the impact their actions have on the lives of ordinary people. The play serves as a commentary on the destructive nature of

corruption and its far-reaching consequences.

The play affirms the necessity for social reforms and indicates the rise of socio-political corruption, the persistence of inequality and poverty, the continual nature of conflict and violence, and the loss of hope and moral values. These predictions indicate that if there is a change, it will be for the worse as the plot of the play explores the character's transition from an apparently unremarkable person to someone who commits a horrible crime while yet claiming a sense of good citizenship. This is a complex and intriguing aspect of the narrative, as it challenges our understanding of what it means to be a good citizen. The severe trauma experienced by Abdullatif leads to post-traumatic stress disorder that makes him end up a terrorist.

Therefore, the current study explicates how corruption (personal, social, and political) leads to change (personal and social) for the worse. It suggests that socio-political corruption creates pressure and deep trauma, which lead to psychological disorders. The Yemeni common man suffers a lot by losing human rights in a severe wave of corruption in all governmental sectors. To illustrate this message, Alahdal portrays the protagonist as a victim of his circumstances, forced to make difficult choices in order to survive or seek justice. The play prompts the Yemenis to question the boundaries of right and wrong, and the extent to which social conditions can affect an individual's choices. The playwright thus portrays both the absolute necessity of a complete social transformation, and an utter lack of belief that such a transformation will ever take place. The study illustrates a pessimistic conviction that no change, except for the worse, is possible. It has a critical social relevance because the results of the study may lead to a reconsideration of directing playwrights to pay attention to issues of personal and social change and the issues of Yemeni society in light of the wars and dispersion that afflicted society. Unfolding the current situation of change in Yemen as dramatized in Alahdal's play may inspire other researchers to conduct some other studies on Alahdal's works to explore the failed transition and its aftermath effects on people.

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A Study of Ian McEwen's Novels and Their Ethical Values: A Chinese Perspective

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Abstract Biwu Shang's monograph of *A Study of Ian McEwen's Novels and Their Ethical Values* (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2023), the first book-length study dealing with the ethical and moral issues in McEwan's works in China, is a highly valuable and much-needed contribution to world McEwan scholarship. Shang's book starts from the unsettled question of McEwan's status as one of the finest and most controversial writers of his generation: How could a writer have achieved popularity and critical success with his works about paedophilia, murder, incest and violence? Shang finds the very answer in McEwan's claim of the moral role of the novel. In his monograph, Shang provides a comprehensive and systematic survey of ethical issues, as explored in McEwan's oeuvre. More ambitiously, as the author claimed, "the goal is to discover the ethical implications in McEwan's works, reflecting Chinese scholars' critical perspectives of Western literary works through dialectical analysis, thereby offering an alternative interpretation other than following Western scholars' critical approaches and viewpoints." [1]
Key Words Ian McEwen; Ethical Literary Criticism; ethical chaos; ethical dilemma; ethical redemption
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In 1992, Ian McEwan's short story "In the Dying Moments" was first translated and published in *Foreign Literature* 外国文学 . This British literary genius had hardly imagined that his works would soon be widely circulated and highly celebrated in

1 This work was supported by The Ministry of Education of Humanities and Social Science Project (grant number: 20YJC752027, 2020)

contemporary China. In 2018, he visited China for the first time upon invitation to attend the award ceremony titled "The 21st Century International Literature Festival for College Students" at Renmin University of China, Beijing. During his stay, he met with Chinese readers in Beijing and Shanghai and was engaging in discussions on fictional writing with contemporary Chinese writers such as Li Er 李洱 , Ge Fei 格非 , Xiaobai 小白 , and Sun Ganlu 孙甘露 . This was one of the highlights in the Chinese literary scene of 2018, additional evidence of McEwan's popularity among Chinese readers and his influence on modern Chinese literature. Biwu Shang's monograph of *A Study of Ian McEwen's Novels and Their Ethical Values* (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2023), the first book-length study dealing with the ethical and moral issues in McEwan's works in China, is therefore a highly valuable and much-needed contribution.

Shang's book starts from the unsettled question of McEwan's status as one of the finest and most controversial writers of his generation: How could a writer have achieved popularity and critical success with his works about paedophilia, murder, incest and violence? Shang finds the very answer in McEwan's claim of the moral role of the novel. He believes that "we are innately moral beings, at the most basic, wired-in Neurological level."[1] This morality, he further describes, stems from the fact that "our imagination permits us to understand what it is like to be someone else." In this sense, the novel is "a deeply moral form, in that it is the perfect medium for entering the mind of another." Shang argues that underneath the disquieting material in his early writing and his varied concerns with marginalized individuals in society, environmental degradation, and human civilization in subsequent writings lies McEwan's persistent vision of the fiction as "deeply moral form" and force for social good. This is the premise upon which the book rests.

In his monograph, Shang aims principally to provide a comprehensive and systematic survey of ethical issues, as explored in McEwan's oeuvre. More ambitiously, as the author claimed, "the goal is to discover the ethical implications in McEwan's works, reflecting Chinese scholars' critical perspectives of Western literary works through dialectical analysis, thereby offering an alternative interpretation other than following Western scholars' critical approaches and viewpoints." To justify his approach, Shang first introduced the theory of ethical literary criticism initiated by Nie Zhenzhao 聂珍钊 and then explained how he was able to provide a textual analysis by examining ethical identities, ethical consciousness, and ethical choices of characters in McEwan's works. Shang's book

1 All the quotations are referred to Shang Biwu's monograph *A Study of Ian McEwen's Novels and Their Ethical Values* (Beijing: Peking University, 2003).

covers a wide range of materials on the introduction and criticism of McEwan's works. Particular admirable is the author's extensive knowledge of both world McEwan scholarship and Western literary and cultural history, which has enabled him to engage with world McEwan scholarship from a Chinese perspective "rooted in the local while looking at the world" (to borrow remarks from the Chinese scholar Lu Jiande 陆建德) and to evaluate the ethical elements of McEwan's workings that shaped McEwan's reception among critics and readers.

Selecting the most representative works of McEwan, the book is divided into twelve chapters, the first four of which examine McEwan's early works of "Homemade" (1973), "Butterflies" (1973), "Solid Geometry" (1973), and *The Cement Garden* (1978); the next two of which focus on McEwan's mid-career work of *Atonement* (2001) and *Saturday* (2005); and the last six of which are devoted to recent works, including *Sweet Tooth* (2012), *The Children Act* (2014), *Nutshell* (2016), *My Purple Scented Novel* (2016), *Machines Like Me* (2019) and The *Cockroach* (2019). Despite the book's many strengths, one major and noticeable merit is worth special note. The book, though seemingly following the chorological order of McEwan's literary career, is structured on the evolution of McEwan's ethical themes across his novels, which metaphorically make up the three stages of life, namely, youth, middle age and old age. Shang carefully and accurately examined this hidden ethical narrative running throughout his oeuvre from "ethical chaos" of young characters to "ethical dilemma" of middle-aged characters and "ethical redemption" of elderly characters.

In the first chapter, Shang notes that McEwan's early pieces are particularly concerned about the extreme subject matter of the youth, "a period between childhood and adulthood." Notorious for their dark themes such as incest and murder, his early writings about the experience of youth are usually framed within a troubling narrative of a first-person narrator, a young boy/girl with an unusually indifferent tone, narrating their involvement in the crimes they committed. Shang argues that by depicting these perpetrator-narrators' attempts to draw readers into complicity with their ethically questionable behaviors, McEwan mocked and ridiculed their tendency to "skirt around the crimes" when narrating these events. Shang then examines the narrator "I" in "Homemade", recounting an episode of child sexual abuse through the perspective of ethical literary criticism. The narrator, an adolescent boy in the transitional period from "innocence" to "experience," tempted by the "fleshly grail," endeavors to lose their "virginity" as an attempt to enter the adult world and finally rapes his younger sister. After exploring the characters' ethical identity and ethical structure, Shang concludes that the narrator's

attempt to lose "virginity" and "innocence" in a broad sense points to a social issue of morality in which conventional moral principles and rules are disrupted or overturned. Similarly, in the next chapter, Shang claims that "Butterflies" is "a fable about moral failure." The short story expresses a pervasive craving for "good" in argument by portraying "evil" in the raw material of fiction, thereby demonstrating McEwan's critical attitude toward moral issues and his commitment to fulfilling the moral function of literature. In the fourth chapter, Shang convincingly provides a reading of the ethical issues encountered by the siblings of Jack, Julie, Tom and Sue in *The Cement Garden,* McEwan's first novel. With the death of their parents, the family structure collapses, and the siblings fall into a dystopia of ethical chaos with the suspension of standard moral and ethical expectations. Shang discusses the difficulty of characters such as Jack in forming ethical identity and cultivating rationality as a consequence of the suppression of "animal factor" over "human factor." This unbridled control of animal factor leads to a series of disastrous results, such as confusion about ethical identity and incestuous instincts. Reading the novel against the theory of ethical literary criticism, Shang argues that McEwan reveals the obstacles that adolescents face in forming ethical identity in the transitional period from childhood to adulthood, metaphorically evoking a sense of necessity for "ethical choice" after completing biological selection in the development of humanity.

According to Shang's analysis, nearly all middle-aged characters are inevitably confronted with ethical dilemmas. Other than assuming the role model of morality, they are consumed by animal instincts when faced with a moral issue. For example, in the third chapter on "Solid Geometry," the narrator "I" vividly describes his fetishism and the crime of killing his wife, exhibiting no sense of guilt but rather a sense of self-satisfaction for his "unscrupulous behavior." As Shang points out, in contrast to young narrators, McEwan's middle-age narrators feature a similar moral tendency to rationalize their crimes while unabashedly expounding their immoral views. Based on his reading of the ethical deficiencies of middle-aged characters, Shang explains how McEwan projects his concerns about the moral decline of humanity through exposing the moral contradiction within the characters' narratives.

Considering McEwan's emphasis on the moral function of writing and his shifting moral concerns within the larger context of the stages of humanity, it is important that Shang also focuses his attention on the narrative of elderly characters. As he argues, after experiencing ethical chaos in youth and ethical dilemmas in middle age, the elderly narrator "I" in McEwan's works seems to have gained a renewed understanding of ethics and morality, attempting to achieve life's

redemption through this regained awareness. In his analysis of *Atonement*, to which he turns in the fifth chapter, Shang examines McEwan's shift of emphasis in moral instruction of fiction. Brinoy, nearing the age of eighty, in her fiction goes to great lengths to clear Robbie's name, who she wrongly identified as a rapist of her older sister Cecilia. In her attempts to both restore the truth and atone for ruing their love, Briony rewrote the story at the expense of distorting the historical facts of Robbie and Cecilia's death. By portraying the conflicting moral positions of the narrator "I" (the elderly Brinoy) and the character "I" (the precocious thirteen-year-old Briony), as Shang observes, McEwan aims to emphasize the importance of ethical consciousness in individual growth and character development. While promoting *Atonement*, McEwan explained fiction as the "penetration into other consciousness lies at the heart of its moral quest." Indeed, in contrast to the first two stages of life, the moral transformation of the narrator "I" is largely ascribed to the awakening of ethical consciousness.

Much of the discussion on the complexity of moral responsibility will be illuminating for readers and critics who are interested in McEwan's work. However, Shang moves beyond his research scope and attempts to bring the book to a higher level of richness of critical perspectives by commenting on McEwan's craft of narrative. In the third chapter on "Solid Geometry," Shang revisits the much debated issue of the conflict between female emotionalism and male rationality by combining the theory of ethical literary criticism and the conceptual system of unnatural narratology. Focusing on the mystery of character M's disappearance, Shang examines the story's three impossible events hidden within the multiple narrative layers of the text centering around the mathematician Hunter's geometrical discovery of the "plane without a surface." It is believed that, though generally considered impossible, Hunter makes oneself disappear by applying this discovery. Another series of impossible actions involves the narrator's great-grandfather reconstructing Hunter's geometrical findings in the manuscript and making his friend M vanish by applying this geometrical principle. The narrator happens to learn of this geometrical discovery and make his wife disappear. This is the third impossible event. The merit of Shang's reading is that he goes beyond the current model of naturalizing reading vs. unnaturalizing readings and shows how the concepts of ethical identity and ethical choice could provide new insights into the dynamic relationship between reality and fiction in work. Similarly, in the twelfth chapter on *The Cockroach*, Shang focuses on McEwan's narrative of the unnatural events of the human-cockroach transformation and the Reversalism. Creatively contextualizing his reading of McEwan's *Cockroach* within the literary

tradition of human-insect transformations tracing back to Kafka and Bruno Schulz, Shang suggested that the unnatural acts of characters (including the cabinet's metamorphosis, Jane Fish's mastery of politics and people's frenetic support) together with the unnatural mind of the protagonist (a transgression of humanity) point to McEwan's political satire of turmoil and division as the consequences of Brexit. Nevertheless, Shang also emphasizes that McEwan does not intend to participate in the ongoing debate on Brexit in Britain. His satire and criticism are more directed toward British politicians whose political commitment is nothing more than a farce.

In the tenth chapter on *My Purple Scented Novel*, Shang couples event theory with ethical literary criticism with the aim of reconstructing and evaluating a storyworld of ethical chaos. In the text, if viewed from the perspectives of Slavoj Žižek, Badiou, and Alain Badiou, the scandal of plagiarism involving Parker and Jocelyn is the most important event that drastically change the lives of the two characters. A close examination of Parker's narrative judgments of this event shows that he only makes interpretive and aesthetic judgments while deliberately avoiding making ethical judgments. Shang raises the following question: What factors account for his avoidance? Shang then examines this storyworld of ethical chaos: the plagiarized is seemingly found guilty, while the plagiarizer is seen as a hero. His argument is that Parker's avoidance of ethical issues can be attributed to his fear of breaking up the ethical order and his guilt of betraying his friend. In this sense, Parker's confession reveals the discontinuity of his ethical consciousness.

Throughout, Shang has never missed the chance to reinforce a key point: McEwan believes that the moral power of literature could be displayed in the real world. Shang reminds the readers that the writer's ethical role in political and social discourse corresponds to McEwan's repeatedly declared moral manifesto for the novel: "Ian McEwan desires to witness history, record the present, and closely follow significant events worldwide." Since the 21st century, McEwan has consistently responded to current political and social issues covering the "9/11" event in *Saturday* (2005), global warming in *Solar* (2010), the "Surveillance Gate" in *Sweet Tooth* (2012), the "Ashya King" case in *The Children Act* (2014), and artificial intelligence in *Machines Like Me* (2019). In his book, Shang's transdisciplinary approach allows him to best address McEwan's moral imagination of historical and social issues. Take *Atonement,* for example. As Shang points out, by juxtaposing the contradictory narratives of the novelist Briony and a historian, the novel reveals a morality and shows it to be the one which literature can access. Although both the novelist and the historian strive to "get close to the truth," the

primary responsibility of a novelist, as McEwan emphasizes, is to reveal an ethics of history rather than to recreate the details of historical accuracy. In the seventh chapter on *Sweet Tooth*, Shang discusses the association between *Sweet Tooth* and *Atonement* on the shared ethics of history. In *Atonement,* the novelist Briony informs readers that the act of writing fiction is her personal effort at atonement. Similarly, in *Sweet Tooth,* Tom Haley's letter to the readers indicates that the novel is both a recollection and a record of his shared life with Serena. As Shang points out, hovering over the historical narrative of spies and the Cold War is McEwan's vision for his fiction as a vehicle of the ethics of forgiveness—the word of forgiveness appears more than twenty times in the novel.

Shang turns to the issue of the child's welfare in McEwan's *The Children Act* in the eighth chapter. Shang examines the various legal cases processed by the British High Court judge Fiona Maye and the blood transfusion case of Adam Henry in particular. He argues that Maye adopts ethical criteria throughout the cases she deals with. More significantly, Adam's blood transfusion case and his consequential death lead Maye to her ethical epiphany related to the child's welfare: life is the fundamental welfare of the child, and protecting the child's welfare is, first and foremost, to protect and sustain his life, and a judge's duty should not end in the courtroom walls but be extended to the entire society.

In the eleventh chapter on his recent work *Machines Like Me* (2019), Shang attempts to account for the conflicts and contradictions in the wake of a machine's engagement with the life of humans raised in McEwan's text. Within the conceptual framework of ethical literary criticism, he especially examines two episodes of the story, namely, the tasting of the "forbidden fruit" by Adam, the robot, and Miranda, the heroine, and the destruction of Adam. Shang contends that human beings are products of natural selection and ethical selection, while machines are products of scientific selection. As a machine, Adam has no biological brain text like humans do; rather, it contains only electronic text used for storing and processing information and commands. Therefore, he has no ethical consciousness of telling the good from the evil. To a large degree, artificial intelligence is a type of electronic text in nature and cannot replace brain text armed with ethical consciousness, which accounts for Adam's failure to address ethical issues in the world of humans. In a way, the conflicts between robots such as Adam and humans such as Charlie and Miranda can be seen as the conflict between scientific selection and ethical selection, and the death of Adam signals the failure of machines to engage with the ethical issues of humans.

Shang's *A Study of Ian McEwen's Novels and Their Ethical Values* is a well-

researched study with interesting and insightful textual analysis. Those with an interest in McEwan and his literary creation will find much in this book to engage them. Shang's book—which includes a comprehensive list of primary and secondary sources on McEwan—is an indispensable reference resource for academics working in the fields of McEwan studies and ethical literary criticism.

Work Cited

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