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Ethical Dilemma and Ethical Choice in D. H. Lawrence's *The Trespasser*

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Abstract   *The Trespasser* focuses on the story of the main character Sigmund's extramarital affairs, addressing ethical dilemmas, ethical choices, and ethical tragicality. Sigmund's ethical dilemmas reflected in two aspects: One is the imbalance between Sigmund's emotion and social morality, namely, the disequilibrium between physical pleasure and social moral norms, aesthetical freedom and social moral responsibility, individual experience and social moral cognition. The other is the conflicts between his multiple ethical identities, including the conflicts between the identities of husband and lover, and between the identities of father and lover. Additionally, it reveals his ethical choice of emotional freedom over social morality in the former ethical dilemma, as well as its constant escape via space transfer in the latter ethical dilemma. The former choice reflects the preference of physical pleasure, aesthetical freedom and physical experience over social moral norms, social moral responsibilities and social moral cognition. While the latter choice displays the ethical path of "lover-family-suicide" through the spatial framework of "leaving home-returning home-abandoning home," which is intended to present the tragic outcome of individual's ethical dilemmas. The ethical tragedy has two causes. On the one hand, man is incapable of truly knowing his own body and of incorporating social morality into the experience of self. On the other hand, man disregards what the society demands of him. Meanwhile, these ethical dilemmas and choices reveal not only Lawrence's critique of the industrial capitalist society's suppression of humanity, but also his compassionate values of life.
Keywords   D. H. Lawrence; *The Trespasser*; Ethical Dilemma; Ethical Choice

interests include English and American literature.

Introduction

Through the depiction of Sigmund's extramarital affairs, D. H. Lawrence's early novel *The Trespasser* (1912) explores the ethical dilemmas and ethical choices of the protagonist, Sigmund. Its ethical writing has attracted literary critics from around the world. For instance, Louise Wright believes that the novel's plot is largely autobiographical (230-248); Evelyn J. Hinz notes that it presents the tragicomic mode of authenticity and falsity (122-141); Wang Zhengwen and Cheng Aimin believe that the novel focuses on social reality and presents the irreconcilable contradiction between individual pursuit and social morality through psychological description (53-54); and so forth.

Ethical choice is the selection of two or more moral alternatives. "Different decisions will yield various outcomes. Consequently, different options have distinct moral values" (Nie Zhenzhao 266-67). While ethical dilemmas result from the conflict between two moral propositions: "If the chooser makes moral judgments about each of them separately, each choice is correct and consistent with universal moral principles. However, once the chooser makes a decision between the two options, it will result in an ethical violation of the other option, namely the violation of universal moral principles" (Nie Zhenzhao 262). Lawrence describes in *The Trespasser* how Sigmund makes ethical decisions when faced with ethical dilemmas, namely the conflict between one's emotions and social morality and the conflict between one's multiple ethical identities. Using literary ethical theory and embodied ethical theory, the thesis will address the following questions. What moral challenges did Sigmund face? What moral decisions did he make? What were the tragic consequences of his ethical choices?

Ethical Dilemma: Contradiction between the Individual and the Society

Ethical dilemma refers to the contradictory situation in which an individual must choose between his or her own preferences and the demands of society. According to Giddens, "our bodies are not only physical but also social. Our bodies are influenced by the social norms and values to which we belong, as well as by our social experiences" (182). The multiple connotations of ethical dilemmas in *The Trespasser* can be clarified through the contradiction between an individual's emotion and social morality, as well as the conflicts between an individual's multiple identities.

Firstly, Sigmund's ethical dilemma is the conflict between an individual's emotions and social morality. Emotion includes "rough emotions and subtle emotions" (Matthew, P. Spackman, and David Willer 370). "Rough emotions include happiness, anger, sadness, and fear, which are physical responses to the stimulus. Subtle emotions, such as the sense of morality, beauty, and reason, are the higher emotions" (James 201). Physical emotions are required to conform to social moral norms to achieve harmony between body and mind, so, when one's physical pleasure, aesthetical freedom and self-experience are in conflict with social moral norms, social responsibilities and social moral cognition respectively, ethical dilemmas will arise.

The imbalance between an individual's physical pleasure and social moral norms causes Sigmund's ethical dilemma. During the Victorian era, the traditional British cultural concept is characterized by strong moral principles and social norms. Therefore, Sigmund was subject to the concept of social morality, as he feared that others would discover his immorality. Sigmund was humiliated when his relationship with Helena was revealed to the landlady. He believed that it "remains tightly wrapped around something within me, constantly reminding me of what others think of me" (Lawrence 73). But Sigmund values his own physical pleasure and emotional satisfaction which could be obtained from Helena. "He quivered at the caress. She put her arms round him, reached up her face yearningly for a kiss. He forgot they were standing in the public footpath, in daylight" (Lawrence 21). Although it is reasonable to satisfy one's physical desires, infidelity which is against the law of marriage is condemned by social ethic. Sigmund's ethical dilemma is caused by his inability to balance the conflict between physical desire and ethical norms.

Lawrence is more concerned with a person's physical pleasure than with social moral standards. Lawrence does not shy away from describing the naked body and the pursuit of physical pleasure in his novels. His detailed account of Sigmund and Helena's sexual behavior on the island vividly illustrates Sigmund's preoccupation with physical pleasure. In addition, Lawrence himself had an affair with Professor Weakley's wife, Frida. He violated social morality by pursuing his love despite the constraints of social morality. He demonstrates in both the novel and his life that he prioritizes individual needs over social obligations.

Sigmund falls into the ethical dilemma of the incompatible contradiction between his aesthetical freedom and social moral responsibilities. Sigmund plays the violin for a living and tries to make money to relieve the multiple pressures imposed on him by the society. In a personification, Lawrence wrote in the novel that "the

violin had sickened for rest" (9). Because in a capitalist society, man is considered as "a technical means to achieve a project......" (Schilling 34). Therefore, Sigmund struggles in overburdening responsibilities and obligations for his family. Under the pressure, he desperately needs to enjoy the aesthetic freedom in nature, where "the moon was wading deliciously through shallows of white cloud. Beyond the trees and the few houses was the great concave of darkness, the sea, and the moonlight" (Lawrence 29). When living in nature, "people's sense of vision, touching, hearing, smelling and tasting are all active" (Berleant 27), and "the objects being appreciated strikingly affects all senses" (Carlson 5). While in the industrialized society, man's body becomes exhausted in the heavy work, it is impossible for man to find beauty under the pressure. Lawrence was similar to Sigmund when he fell into the dilemma of how to balance one's aesthetic freedom and the social moral responsibility. Lawrence was always trapped in the conflicts between his filial piety to his mother and his love for his girlfriend when he was young. Lawrence integrated his soul into the character Sigmund, since they both pursued esthetical freedom while bearing great social moral pressure.

Sigmund also faces the ethical dilemma posed by the disparity between a person's physical experience and social moral awareness. As William James proposed in his body philosophy, people recognize and perceive the world based on their knowledge and experience, respectively. Sigmund's life is filled with contradictions due to the discord between his physical experience and moral understanding. Is it moral for him to take a vocation with his girlfriend Helena? Should he send a telegraph to his wife informing her of his impending return? Should he spend the night with his young daughter if she requests it? Sigmund lacks the courage to make sense of the world in terms of moral knowledge because he is aware of his violation of moral norms and is afraid of condemnation and indifference from others. It appeared that his soul was susceptible to insanity. "He felt that he could not, come what might, get up and meet them all" (Lawrence 133). However, Sigmund cannot honestly face the world with his own physical experience. "He thought imaginatively, and his imagination destroyed him" (Lawrence 118). "People's subjective feelings and physical experience are the basic content of thought" (Dong Jingjing, Yao Benxian 202), while physical movement is the premise of psychological phenomena, which in turn cause physical movement. Sigmund failed to follow the balance of physical experience and physical movement, and constantly falls into the dilemma of "yes or no," and "do or not."

Lawrence hopes that his emphasis on physical experience will enable him to resist ethical constraints. James' theory of embodied ethics, which focuses on the

relationship between cognition and experience, has similarities with Lawrence's ideas. Lawrence believed that the human experience of the world was crucial in determining the state of man's life. For instance, he describes Sigmund's condition upon his return from vacation: "all his unnatural excitement, all the poetic stimulation of the past few days, had vanished. He sat flaccid, while his life struggled slowly through him. After an intoxication of passion and love, and beauty, and of sunshine, he was prostrate. Like a plant that blossoms gorgeously and madly, he had wasted the tissue of his strength, so that now his life struggled in a clogged and broken channel" (Lawrence 136). Then, the rise and fall of Sigmund's body and mind are blended and integrated.

Secondly, Sigmund's ethical dilemma is compounded by the conflict between his multiple ethical identities. One type of man's ethical identity is innate, such as parent-child and sibling relationships determined by blood; the other is acquired, such as spouse-spouse relationships, etc. "Social ethics requires that each identity correspond to its moral actions. If the ethical identity is incompatible with ethical standards, then ethical conflicts occur" (Nie Zhenzhao 263-64). This is why Sigmund falls into the dilemma of having so many identities.

Sigmund is confused about his marital and romantic identities. As a husband, he must adhere to the ethical standards of marriage and be faithful to his wife, whereas his identity as a lover entails less responsibility and obligation and provides him with greater emotional satisfaction and independence. If he chooses the former, he cannot achieve emotional fulfillment and independence, while if he chooses the latter, his family and society will condemn him for betraying his marriage. The plight of workers in a capitalist society causes Sigmund's husband-lover conflict. Sigmund lives under extreme social pressure at the bottom of society, and has already lost the spiritual resonance of appreciating music and art with his wife as they were in love. Sigmund's survival dilemma is presented numerous times in the novel. The dialogue between the landlady and Helena, for instance, reflects Sigmund's work pressure. Helena said, "he had been working hard" in response to the landlady's remark to Sigmund that "you appeared so exhausted when you arrived" (Lawrence 98). In addition, Sigmund's evasive approach to life, in which "he shrank away and beat about to find a means of escape from the next day and its consequences" (Lawrence 90), demonstrates his working pressure. His husband-lover identity conflict is also rooted in the struggle between "animal factor and human factor" (Nie Zhenzhao, *Literary Ethics Criticism: Ethical Choice and Sphinx Factor* 6). His extramarital affair with Helena was caused by animal factors prevailing over human factors. He followed his instinctual desire and escaped social

constraints. However, once the human factors took over, he became self-condemned. He believed it was cruel to "abandon her to such a burden of care while he took his pleasure elsewhere" (Lawrence 119).

The conflict between his identities as father and lover prevents Sigmund from escaping an ethical dilemma. As a father, Sigmund must establish an emotionally healthy parent-child relationship with his children and assume the associated responsibilities and obligations. As a lover, he is encouraged to flirt with his partner for the purpose of physical satisfaction. Unfortunately, he was unable to effectively communicate with his children when he was working to provide for his family. Then, after he became involved in an extramarital affair, he abandoned his children to date his lover, causing them to feel even more resentment. Therefore, he desperately realized, "if I have the one, I shall be damned by the thought of the other. This bruise on my mind will never get better" (Lawrence 118). In this dilemma, Helena is the key figure who is like a cocoon egoistically wrapped around Sigmund to control him, which eventually led to his suicide.

Lawrence had similarly experienced multiple identity conflicts. Even though *The Trespasser* is based on the story of Helen Cork, Lawrence's own life is evident in the novel (Louise Wright 230). Helen Cork also stated that it was a Lawrentian tale, and that Sigmund resembled Lawrence greatly (235). Obviously, fiction and reality are not identical. "In literary works, paradoxes can be resolved to promote positive thought and moral enlightenment. Therefore, paradoxes in literary works have ethical significance" (Nie Zhenzhao 255-56). The ethical choices in the novel reveal Lawrence's ethical orientation, which is to be discussed in the following paragraphs.

Ethical Choice: The Preference for an Individual's Freedom over Social Morality

In choosing his ethical identities, Sigmund opted for an individual's emotional autonomy over social morality and adopted the way of spatial transfer. His ethical choice reveals the working conditions of the capitalist working class and demonstrates Lawrence's concern for life.

Sigmund's selection of emotional freedom can be depicted as follows. He chose physical pleasure over moral values. Lawrence's preference for satisfying physical needs over social moral norms is a challenge to moral tradition. Maslow classifies human needs into five categories, namely, physiological needs, security needs, belonging and love needs, respect needs, and self-actualization needs, with physiological needs being the most fundamental. People are only able to pursue higher needs once their fundamental needs are met. So does Sigmund, who has the

freedom to satisfy his physiological needs for sure. Lawrence believes that social morality should not take precedence over a person's physical enjoyment. This is why he attacks Leo Tolstoy in *Anna Karenina* for his moral condemnation of Volynskiy and Anna (Lawrence, *D. H. Lawrence Selected Literary Critiques* 72). In addition, Lawrence created the character of Sigmund, who endured a great deal of pain in his marriage and yearned for physical pleasure that "all his past and future in a passion is worth years of living" (Lawrence 18). However, Sigmund failed to rebel against social morality thoroughly enough, which is attributed to his cowardice.

Sigmund chose the aesthetic freedom over social responsibility. He pursues aesthetic freedom in two ways: one is to enjoy the beauty of nature, the other is to appreciate the beauty of art. For the former, Sigmund comes to an island to enjoy the beautiful scenery and temporarily put aside the financial pressures, since "he had suppressed his soul, in a kind of mechanical despair doing his duty and enduring the rest" for years (Lawrence 21). For the latter, Sigmund, who was good at playing the violin, liked to appreciate music with "his whole self, beating to the rhythm" (Lawrence 203). However, Sigmund cannot truly accomplish his aesthetic freedom, because labor as man's responsibility blocked his appreciation for the beauty. Then the beauty of art has become a means of making a living for him. Sigmund chose aesthetic freedom over social responsibility, which reflects Lawrence's positive attitudes towards aesthetical freedom. As we know, only when man touches the essence of nature, can he truly perceive the beauty of nature and art. For this reason, most of the sexual behaviors in Lawrence's novels take place in nature, for example, Birkin and Ursula have sex on the grass in *Women in Love*, and Connie and Mellors in the woods in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*.

Sigmund, chose physical experience over moral cognition. His choice, however, contradicts contemporary notions of rationality. In contemporary society, rational moral cognition focuses on the influence of external factors on individuals while ignoring their internal emotions. Since Kant, who argued that "moral laws must be expressed as commands and actions that conform to them as duties" (60), the rational moral cognition has evolved. Therefore, individuals should consider rationality when choosing between freedom and responsibility. While the origins of irrational thought can be traced back to Aristotle in ancient Greece, irrational cognition is a more recent phenomenon. He believed that "every man's practice and choice is for the purpose of kindness" (Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics* 3), which means that truth, goodness, and beauty can only be presented when one's actions are guided by irrational cognition of sensibility. Sigmund's irrational choice of physical experience reflects Lawrence's yearning for freedom of body and mind, but

his contradiction and confusion also reflects Lawrence's hesitation and the external resistance he encounters. And then, Lawrence's concept of respecting physical experience is difficult for others in modern rational society to comprehend, and he became a social outcast as a result (John Watson 1).

Sigmund selected his ethical identity via continuous spatial transfer, by leaving home, returning home, and abandoning home. Sigmund fell into two difficult homeless states. One is that he could not solve the dilemmas in the family and needed to leave home to seek relief; the other is that he is unable to establish spiritual community with his family, being in a state of homelessness. Sigmund's two states exactly correspond to the two "homelessness states" mentioned by Heidegger: one is the homelessness state of the existent who wanders because there is no way out; the other is the homelessness state of the existent who are short of sense of belongings (Heidegger 147). The two states are opposite and interchangeable. Sigmund assumed the identity of a lover when he was homeless. He was unable to establish spiritual community with his family members or resolve family conflicts, causing him to wander aimlessly through the social space, which is the "basic place of behaviors" (Lefebvre 190-91). Thus, Sigmund decided to leave his home for a brief poetic existence in nature. However, when there is no escape, leaving home is not a permanent option because the natural world is not universal, whereas the man-made world is. Since "man is not only a political animal, but also a family animal" (Aristotle 141), Sigmund and Helena are unable to find spiritual refuge in the rented island house. The artificial world will eventually dispel the illusion of the natural world. For Sigmund, his sense of responsibility as a father haunts him with anxiety, and the deadline for his return prevents him from appreciating the island's breathtaking scenery. Sigmund tries to forget who he is as a husband and father, but his dreams are continually dashed by the harsh realities of his life.

Then Sigmund chose his marital and paternal identities and returned home. However, his return is too negative for him to fulfill the responsibilities of those identities or mend his relationship with his wife and children. "His sensitiveness had passed off; his nerves had become callous...... He was indifferent to his wife and children. No one spoke to him as he sat to the table. That was as he liked it; he wished for nothing to touch him" (Lawrence 135). The negative attitude of Sigmund's wife and children correlates closely with his unfavorable homecoming. Home is traditionally a heaven of peace and a poetic abode, where the personal experiences of all family members influence their life circumstances. Because of Sigmund's marital infidelity, his wife is extremely cold to him at home, and

she spreads her anger and resentment to their children. Since Sigmund returns home with negative attitudes and behaviors, with his family members treating him indifferently as response, Sigmund's return home foreshadows his eventual abandonment of his residence.

Finally, Sigmund chose to abandon his home, renouncing all his ethical identities. Sigmund was unable to withstand the pressure of "human factor" and "animal factor," so he decided to relinquish his ethical identity and commit suicide. He pondered his predicaments but saw no way out. If he divorced, his children and ex-wife would morally condemn him, leaving him with nothing but humiliation; if he stayed, he cannot find his belongings. Following his instincts, Sigmund chose to abandon his home, as returning there would not have eliminated his guilt. Sigmund abandons his home primarily because he is unable to satisfy the demands of his ethical consciousness. "With the emergence of ethical consciousness, human beings begin to eliminate ethical chaos and move toward ethical order, comprehend the significance of ethical order for human survival and reproduction, and adhere to the most fundamental ethical rules, such as taboos, responsibilities, and obligations" (Nie Zhenzhao 13-14). After returning home, Sigmund faced the ethical pressure and was bound to make ethical choices once more. However, he was unable to choose the physical love with Helena or bearing the condemnation of moral ethics. Due to his disability, Sigmund was ultimately forced to abandon all ethical identities and killed himself.

Lawrence uses Sigmund's death to illustrate the conflict between an individual's freedom and the constraints of modern social morality. Sigmund's preference for physical pleasure, aesthetical freedom and physical experience reflects Lawrence's respect for life. His ethical choice of his identities in space transfer is the projection of sociality on man. On the one hand, Sigmund's ethical choice shows the individual's fate affected by the moral and ethical consciousness. On the other hand, it reveals the social roots hidden in the ethical behaviors. Sigmund's death is Lawrence's panoramic presentation of the conflict between an individual's freedom and the bondage of social morality in modern society, which also expresses his attempt to challenge traditional morality, and his reflection on life consciousness.

The Origins of the Tragedy of Ethical Choice

Although Sigmund ends with death, his choice of respecting for man's instinct reflects his consciousness of respecting for life. The tragic origins of Sigmund's ethical choice are traced to his characters and the society.

Sigmund's tragicality of ethical choice lies in that he is incapable of self-knowledge and the incorporation of social morality into the experience of self. His lack of self-awareness causes him to experience an existential crisis. The basic premise of survival is to have a complete and correct cognition of the self, otherwise, it will lead to survival crisis. James points out that the embodied self consists of "subject I" and "object I" (James, *The Principles of Psychology* 479). Sigmund did not comprehend the "subject I" or "object I." "Subject I" refers to the self that has worldly experiences and knowledge (James, *The Principles of Psychology* 480-81). Sigmund wed at the age of 18, prior to having truly experienced or comprehended the world. The identity conflicts were due to his lack of survival skills. Sigmund has no expectation regarding his ability to assume family responsibility or resolve conflicts. "Object I" refers to one's competence, personality, and character as perceived by others (James, *The Principles of Psychology* 479). Sigmund is belatedly aware of his wife's expectation that he provides for the family, as well as Helena's desire to exert control over him. Sigmund has moral knowledge, but he lacks experience. His physical response to environmental stimuli is blunt as a result of his low cognitive ability. Once the conflict escalates, he tends to overreact when faced with a survival crisis. It is impossible for him to respond appropriately in actual ethical situations and integrate moral concepts into his personal experience, resulting in the tragic outcome. Sigmund is overpowered by his wife's complaints, his children's rejection and alienation, and their estrangement. His moral knowledge indicates that his relationship with them is inharmonious, but he is unable to devise a remedy. His moral knowledge informs him that his affair with Helena is unacceptable: "I know I am a moral coward" (Lawrence 73), yet he continues the affair.

Then, Sigmund's inability to cultivate himself was another cause of the tragedy. Ethics cultivation is mainly embodied in two aspects, namely, skill cultivation and morality cultivation. On the one hand, Sigmund's artistic kill of playing the violin is the embodiment of his skill cultivation, which has given him keen intuition and aesthetic ability, and also brought him love and marriage as a young man. However, with the erosion of human nature by social life, Sigmund is no longer the one, who could be engaging in perceptual art, but becomes a labor machine. When art cultivation is overwhelmed by social pressure, it cannot bring people aesthetic pleasure, but survival crisis. On the other hand, Sigmund's lack of moral cultivation leads to the tragedy of ethical choice. When individuals make ethical decisions in specific ethical situations, they should take morality as the criterion and consider the social impact. However, Sigmund only follows his emotion and his desire for love.

Sigmund violates the principle of moral cultivation and ignores man's sociality, which will naturally lead to tragedy.

Finally, Sigmund disregards the society's demands on man. His transgression of "existential norms" precipitates his tragedy. Merleau-Ponty formulated the theory of existential norms and interpreted it using "existential analysis" (Merleau-Ponty 138). On the one hand, individuals develop their communication skills. This means that when two people are approaching each other, they can effectively avoid a collision by making eye contact. As long as individuals adhere to social norms, they can succeed in society. By having minimal physical contact and communication with his family, Sigmund violates this principle. His lack of presence in his family life had a fundamental impact on his later suicide. On the other hand, certain norms are constructed or realized through the objects. GPS, for instance, constantly reminds drivers of driving regulations while they are driving. Throughout the process of information interaction, drivers confirm their identity and establish "survival norms." So, when individuals make ethical choices in specific ethical situations, they should take morality as the criterion and consider its social impact. However, by failing to communicate with his family members, Sigmund fails to integrate himself into the family. He disregards the principle of social morality by pursuing sexual love solely for his own pleasure.

Conclusion

In *The Trespasser*, Sigmund's ethical dilemma and ethical choice reflect Lawrence's view that, when constrained by ethical morality, man can only achieve a harmonious self-state by focusing on positive life consciousness. Lawrence examines the ethical dilemma and ethical choice by focusing on the following three points: First, as members of industrial society, individuals must consider the relationship among self, other, and the world. Lawrence pointed out that it is a long way for us to construct an ideal society, so man has to find the balance between himself and others, with the target of living a harmonious life in the world, in the way of fighting against the constraints from traditional society. Second, it is necessary to solve individual's dilemmas of the contradiction between their freedom and the social requirements, and their multiple identities conflicts. Man is free to enjoy his physical desire, aesthetical freedom and physical experience, and choose his social roles as he like. However, when dilemmas arise, man should face them and find a way out positively. Ultimately, it is advocated that both man's body and mind be liberated. Body theory has discussed the priority of soul to body since the Greek period, while Lawrence believed that man's liberation begins from both his body and the soul.

Sigmund's ethical dilemmas and ethical choice presented in *The Trespasser*, reveal not only Lawrence's critique of the suppression of humanity by the industrial capitalist society, but also his compassionate life values.

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On the Verge of Moral and Spiritual Collapse: Challenges of a Post-truth World and Hyperreality in Salman Rushdie's *Quichotte*

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Abstract   The concept of post-truth in fictional discourse explicates the ways of constructing a new reality—hyperreality. As a postmodern literary text creates a pluralistic ambience, wherein any interpretations are possible, post-truth is of great significance for producing the narratives of hyperreality in textual space. Salman Rushdie's most recent novel, *Quichotte* (2019), is a postmodern reimagining of *Don Quixote* written by Miguel de Cervantes to satire the culture of that time. In *Quichotte*, Rushdie shows a post-truth world on the verge of moral and spiritual collapse to draw attention to the challenges facing contemporary society. The writer cunningly presents the pandemonium of life and volatile identities under the conditions of blurring a line between fact and fiction. In the Age of Anything-Can-Happen, post-truth appears to be a distinguishing feature of creating meanings and writing vanishing reality. Such structural and conceptual characteristics of the novel as inter/hypertextuality, metafictional narration, and the elements of magic realism have been analysed to illustrate how they transform hyperreality in the book. The article primarily focuses on the literary forms of representing the narratives of post-truth and hyperreal identities in Rushdie's novel through a reinterpretation of the most topical concerns of contemporary issues.

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Introduction

At the present stage of social evolution, the disappearance of objectivity increasingly blurs the lines between fact and fiction, producing post-truth—the most distinctive feature of creating meanings and narratives in the twenty-first century (Hoydis 32). This concept has become prevalent in epistemological ideologies (Kleeberg 27), metascience (Coady 125), and particularly in public discourse (Cosentino 2; Backström 97; Gil 183; Murray 11; Corner 1100; Lewandowsky et al. 353). Its structure is rapidly alternating and *popularity* directly "competes with logic and evidence as an arbiter of truth" (Hannan 220). According to Balstrup, this indicates that "people are not primarily interested in the truth of the matter" (109).

Emerged in public discourse and chosen by the Oxford English Dictionary as "word of the year" in 2016, the term *post-truth* has come to signify specific postmodern phenomena across the spectrum of human understanding, from media and science to culture and religion. Although the concept of post-truth is principally associated with Western society and culture (Maddalena and Gili 2), it is also affecting multiple parts of the world (Cosentino 4); the assimilation processes occur so Western and Eastern cultures affect each other. This means that post-truth should be considered in the multicultural dimension.

Post-truth can be seen as a symptom of the end of postmodernity, a previous period in the social history of truth. If we keep in mind not the critical aspect of postmodernism but entertaining one, then in this period of time, the truth seems discredited, brought to the level of a game. Post-truth is always participatory. Falsehood is individual, and post-truth is always collective; it correlates with the concept of the social mind as "a system of representations of the forms of public communal procedures" (Shaumyan 21). This is information that you want to believe and that becomes true, even if it is doubtful or clearly wrong so that it corresponds to certain worldviews. The desire to believe comes from the depths of the imaginary, so post-truth is usually associated with constructing identity. Since contemporary culture is obsessed with identity (Trueman), the decline in the level of subjectivity and social

ties and the development of fluid identities aggravate the crisis that finds its expression in post-truth.

From a philosophical perspective, this is actually a kind of revision of Foucauldian *will to knowledge* (Foucault) wherein, in a new light, the emotional, technological and political, intellectual and rational, personal and public are intertwined. The issue is not over that rationality is damaged but that it is subjected to redefining. Habermasian enlightenment rationality is disabled—the time of dark rationality has come (Bauman 10). Those who produce and consume post-truth have logical motives in their own way. But this is no longer the rationality of a transcendental subject. The immediate forerunner of post-truth is a Straussian real truth that is inimical to social order.

Post-truth has become a universal justification for any radical or sometimes insane act because it does not require any explanation other than emotional conviction. In post-truth logic, verity becomes a cultural-historical construct or often a simulacrum. According to Baudrillard, simulacra do not correlate with any reality except their own, the images become simulacra, and reality "dies out." It is replaced by hyperreality to be "the inability of consciousness to distinguish reality from fantasy of reality, especially in technologically advanced postmodern cultures" (Baofu 11). A world of post-truth is not just a simulated copy of the real world but rather a hyper-version that seeks to surpass it.

These drifts become more pronounced in contemporary fictional discourse. We explore Baudrillard's hyperreality as an object and medium of the literary consciousness engaged in copying and reconstructing the real. Postmodern fiction creates impressions of reality and takes a challenge of hyperreality, reflecting and overcoming a hyperreal world. Bowell highlights both real and fictional narratives which offer a way of overcoming imaginative resistance but she stresses that "the imaginary is not illusory" (179). Representing postmodern hyperreality as *fictional reality* is what Arva calls "writing the vanishing reality" (72). It is the principal form of artistic vision in postmodernity that appears to be the means of creating and affecting contemporary literary space.

One of the most quintessential works in this respect over the last years is *Quichotte* (2019), shortlisted for the Booker Prize. This new novel by Sir Ahmed Salman Rushdie (1947—), a British Indian writer, whose works primarily concerned with the connections and disruptions between Eastern and Western cultures, shifts the emphasis towards a postmodern reinterpretation of the post-truth condition and hyperreal identity. Beautifully plotted, a story within a story, *Quichotte* has won the attention of critics as well as the affection of the readers all over the world.

Inspired by Miguel de Cervantes' classic novel *Don Quixote*, Rushdie entitles the chapters of his *Quichotte* following Cervantes' style. The writer has chosen the French title for his new novel abandoning the traditional English one. As a metafictional novel, *Quichotte* revolves around the story of an Indian American salesman of pharmaceutical products, Ismail Smile, created by a mediocre writer of spy thrillers Sam Du Champ (mostly referred to as Brother in the book). When travelling across the country, Ismail pursuits a celebrity television host he has become obsessed with. He has taken the name Quichotte and starts writing letters to her. The lives of this character and the writer are intertwined in the novel. In the course of the trip, they experience acute problems of a post-truth society.

Researchers emphasise Rushdie's intentions to expose "the post-truth condition where the moorings of reality have been lost" (Majumder and Khuraijam 5). Post-truth is artistically rethought in *Quichotte*; all the events of the novel are viewed through the prism of hyperreality exposing the painful problems of today. The erosion of objectivity becomes a keynote of the book to stress that, in the *Age of Anything-Can-Happen*, facts are often indiscernible from fiction and the conflict between illusion and reality is inevitable: "…the surreal, or even the absurd, now offer the most accurate descriptors of real life" (Rushdie 222)[1].

The novel is full of the events, images, and topical concerns of contemporary issues. We focus on those of them which Rushdie defines as the main ones: impossible and obsessional love; father-son relationships; Indian immigrants, racism towards them, crooks among them; cyber-spies; science fiction; the intertwining of fictional and 'real' realities, the death of the author; the end of the world; opioid addiction (287). However, *Quichotte* is filled with hidden narratives and tangentially touches on a number of critical issues which need to be solved urgently: political crisis, globalisation, the impact of popular culture, moral principles, climate change, etc.

The almost metaphysical gist of the story is created by a complex intertwining of the intertext, allusions, hints, culture-specific elements, vocabulary, etc., which are analysed in this paper. All these components of the artistic interpretation of reality create the effect of hyperreality and only a knowledgeable reader is able to get to the bottom and understands the author's profound considerations on the troublesome issues of our time. As Bowell argues, fiction and storytelling "have historically provided us with the means both to make sense of our experiences and to countenance possibilities other than the realities of our actual lives" (170).

The study intends to explore the literary forms of representing the narratives of

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1   When referring to Salman Rushdie's *Quichotte* (2019), hereafter only a page number appears.

post-truth and hyperreality through the interpretation of the most topical concerns of contemporary issues in the metafictional *Quichotte* by Salman Rushdie. To appreciate the chosen approaches, the following methodology must be addressed.

Methodology

Problematising the postmodern concept of post-truth and taking it beyond the analysis of mere political discourse contributes to the inclusion of this phenomenon in a critical interdisciplinary context and stimulates the need to clarify the ontological content of post-truth for contemporary culture (Manrique 152). We consider *post-truth* in the literary dimension to bring into correlation its meaning-making characteristics and artistic potential to highlight some key trends in a post-truth culture.

Rendering Cervantes' *Don Quixote* as a source, instead of the original novel, allows Rushdie to subtly ease the reader into a hallucinatory world where the difference between truth and what seems to be true has become ever more blurry. At the same time, fictional narratives are always supposed to be made-up stories, but "fantasy has its own kind of truth" (Levine 125). It has become a new tool for the artistic transformation of reality and an important means of the textual representation of the author's ideas on the post-truth world order marked by a generalised loss of trust in traditional sources of information (Cosentino 5). Post-truth in Rushdie's *Quichotte* appears to be the prism through which the writer examines current issues, creating a communicative space between him and the readers thereby affecting literary space.

Evidence that post-truth today attains the status of a new *truth mode* (Fuller) is the penetration of this phenomenon into contemporary fiction and its explication by literary devices in postmodern text space. It is embodied, in particular, in the narratives of hyperreality. The evolution of postmodern literature is characterised by breaking the traditional canon with its metaphorical reflection of the outer world and forming new aesthetics of a literary work. A pluralistic paradigm of postmodernism (simulacrum aesthetics), based on the poststructuralist concept of *the world as a text*, generates a heterogeneous multiplicity of different culture codes, capable of producing various meanings and narratives (Connor 62). The artistic practice of postmodernism is based on deconstructing cultural intertext and creating hyperreality the basis of which is the syncretism of cultural ambiguity. That is why hyperreality is considered by us to be a specific environment for producing postmodern fictional narratives in Rushdie's *Quichotte*.

Postmodern discourse suggests references, problematises them, and turns them

into simulacra. It must be emphasised that in Baudrillard's postmodern world, what counts as *real* is never more than a simulacral by-product of endless copies and fakes (Greaney 141). In an age where truth is lost to manipulation, a postmodern novel appears to be an artistic space wherein current sociocultural tendencies are manifested and a critical perspective on them is provided.

In such research, it is advisable to use the methodological basis of critical discourse analysis to identify implicit meanings and highlight the linguistic and stylistic features of a postmodern text. As in Rushdie's novel, the literary interpretation of post-truth occurs at the level of narration, generating hyperreal narratives, the methods of deconstruction, intertextual analysis, cultural, semantic, and linguistic-stylistic approaches are also used.

Inter/hypertextuality as a Post-truth Narrative Strategy

Intertextuality and hypertextuality are tightly intertwined in Rushdie's *Quichotte* creating the narratives of hyperreality in the post-truth dimension. In the novel, the world is thought of as unlimited transcoding, allusions, and meanings. The text is understood intertextually as a game of conscious and unconscious borrowings of ideas, quoting, and clichés. On the first pages of the book, the readers get to know the main character—"a traveling man of Indian origin, advancing years, and retreating mental powers, who, on account of his love for mindless television … watching an excess of it, and had suffered a peculiar form of brain damage as a result" (2). From the beginning, it is clear that the author treats the character with a significant degree of sarcasm.

There are two parallels between Cervantes' *Don Quixote* as a hypertext (Riffaterre 780) and Rushdie's *Quichotte* which produces hyperreality as a kind of virtual reality we live in structured by information and technology, sustained on an amalgamation of the elements that were previously separate (Baudrillard). Each era has its own means to create hyperreality. For Rushdie's character, it is a TV. The man thoughtlessly consumed the information he received from the media which led "to that increasingly prevalent psychological disorder in which the boundary between truth and lies became smudged and indistinct" (3). As time went on, he found himself incapable of distinguishing reality from "reality," and "began to think of himself as a natural citizen (and potential inhabitant) of that imaginary world beyond the screen" (3).

For Cervantes' Don Quixote, hyperreality was created through chivalric romances he had read but being confused by "words and phrases the poor gentleman lost his mind" (Cervantes 32). Mr. Ismail Smile even looks like Don Quixote, com-

pare: "He was a tall, one might even say an elongated, man, of the sort one encounters in the gaunt paintings of El Greco and the narrow sculptures of Alberto Giacometti…" (4)—"Our gentleman was approximately fifty years old; his complexion was weathered, his flesh scrawny, his face gaunt…" (Cervantes 32). Rushdie's character fell in love with an Oprah-like talk-show star, "a certain television personality, the beautiful, witty, and adored Miss Salma R" (3), and intended to win her heart, like Don Quixote who "discovered the one he could call his lady! It is believed that in a nearby village there was a very attractive peasant girl with whom he had once been in love, although she, apparently, never knew or noticed" (Cervantes 36).

One of Rushdie's narrative strategies is a repetition of the same precedent names within a novel which is presented at both the linguistic and cognitive levels, accumulating the characteristics of a stereotype, prototype, metaphor, and intertext, jointly forming the concept of priority that defines a degree of cognitive perception. The novel includes the following fairy-tale anthroponyms: *Dorothy*—"a latter-day Dorothy contemplating a permanent move to Oz" (3); *Bilbo*/*Frodo*—"Above all he's Bilbo/Frodo… I see him invisible, slipping the Ring on his finger (88); *Pinocchio*—"I'm thinking Geppetto slash Pinocchio" (91); *a blue fair*—"I don't even need a blue fairy, but if I find one, I'll use her, sure" (91); *Rumpelstiltskin* and *Yosemite Sam*—"a smallish man with long red hair and a Zapata mustache who reminded her at times of Rumpelstiltskin from the Brothers Grimm and at other times of Yosemite Sam from Looney Tunes" (111); *the characters of Narnia*—"I'm thinking of the wardrobe that opens up into Narnia. … and somewhere a benevolent lion waiting to welcome us" (260); *the ugly duckling*—"It stood a little distance away from the statue of Hans Christian Andersen contemplating … a duckling which was present for familiar literary reasons that need not detain us" (310); *Peter Pan and Wendy*—"The shadow of Peter Pan had escaped at one point also, and had had to be caught and reattached to Peter's feet by Wendy's deft and careful needle" (311).

It is also worth mentioning the family ties in the novel play a significant role in both storylines. For the first time, the author writes about family relationships when Mr. Ismail Smile mentions his *artistic father* who influenced his son's tastes in childhood and indirectly influences the choice of Ismail's pseudonym for his love letters: "It was a recording of the opera Don Quichotte by Jules Massenet. … And as for you, it seems you're a little loosely based yourself" (6). As a result, "the newly named Mr. Quichotte" (7) appeared but "he did not feel that he had earned or merited the honorific Don" (7). The man dreams to be "Lancelot to her Guinevere, and carry her away to Joyous Gard… her verray, parfit, gentil knyght" (6). Metaphorical transferences are one of the elements of Rushdie's narrative strategies. They create a

special kind of expressiveness and affect the readers to capture their attention. Using antonomasia, Rushdie not only names the subject but also characterises it, making the character's intentions and behaviour clear. Imagining himself a knight in love with a beautiful lady, Quichotte plans to take her to his castle.

Driving to meet his true love in his *old gunmetal gray Chevy Cruze*, Quichotte dearly wants a special someone to appear in his life: "How sweet it would be to have a son … with whom he could discuss matters of topical worldly import and the eternal truths" (13). The problem is that Quichotte has never had a family, and he hides memories of past love affairs, "placing them in a lead-lined casket of forgetting far beneath the bed of the remembering ocean within him, an unmarked sarcophagus impenetrable even by the X-ray vision of a Superman" (14). An integral feature of multicultural fiction is precedent names that are related to the cultural and historical experience of a metropolis. In the above sentence, *the X-ray vision of a Superman* belongs to comics and graphic novels.

Finally, in a magical way, Quichotte'sson appeared: "The longed-for son, who looked to be about fifteen years old, materialised in the Cruze's passenger seat" (16). Quichotte compares the appearance of his son with "Athena bursting fully formed from the head of Zeus" (17). Strange metamorphosis occurs in Quichotte's imagination: his son, who "manifested himself in black-and-white" (16) as in a black-and-white movie, seems to him a warrior sent to help his father: "O my warrior Sancho sent by Perseus to help me slay my Medusas and win my Salma's heart, here you are at last" (17). Rushdie appeals to works by ancient authors and ancient heroes creating the illusion of time travel.

Quichotte's imagined son is bound to his father but seeks to know about his mother: "Even God had a mother. … Even gods had moms. Holy Mary mother of etc. Also Aditi mother of Indra. Also Rhea mother of Zeus" (83). Rushdie appeals to ancient mythology. The content of the novel correlates to the cultural and linguistic competence of the readers.

There is a certain parallel between Quichotte's relationship with his real/not-real son and Brother: "Quichotte noted his son's untamed, rebellious, outlawlike character" (18). But Brother has a real son who vanishes long ago "like a ghost, and must be a young man by now" (22).

While studying in England, Quichotte was fond of reading books and imagined himself as one of the heroes mentioned in the literary works: "He's an explorer standing on a mountaintop glacier in Iceland… He's in a submarine called Nautilus... He's a warlord on a mountain on Mars… He's a rebel in a forest memorizing Crime and Punishment…" (87). The lines of the books are firmly

entrenched in the character's head, as a line from *Moby-Dick or, the Whale* by Herman Melville: "*From hell's heart I stab at thee*" (132), which drives Quichotte's son to suggest that his father, metaphorically speaking, intends to reunite with his beloved "to hunt her down and harpoon her" (129).

Watching movies and series on TV leads to a reassessment of his preferences: "And by the classics I mean, first of all, the show that broke the ground and pointed the way" (93). But gradually television becomes for him a source of truth, or, in fact, post-truth: "Prolonged viewing of this seminal program … drives home some hard truths to the attentive viewer" (93). The following sentence seems Rushdie's attempt to convey to the readers his own thoughts, putting them on paper: "…all the great texts have to be memorised to survive because all the actual books have been burned; the temperature at which paper catches fire is two hundred and thirty-two point seven eight degrees Celsius, better known as Fahrenheit 451" (87).

Quichotte endeavours to find his love as the characters of the books he read as a child: Jason in the Argo heads to find the Golden Fleece, the knight Sir Galahad seeks the Grail, Rama searches for Sita, Mario rescues Princess Toadstool, and Purgatorio finds Beatrice (89).

Quichotte alludes to Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*. Seven circles of hell first appeared in the New Testament. Aristotle increased the number of circles to nine, and then his idea was picked up by Dante. In Rushdie, the main characters have to pass *seven valleys of purification* (251) to get to New York where Quichotte has to meet his beloved. Thus, the author plots the novel, creating inter/hypertextual space.

A Story within a Story: Beyond the Metafictional Mode

Postmodern literary works, including Rushdie's *Quichotte*, often question their own fictional status and become metafiction. The principles of their construction with different methods and forms are expressed in the metanarrative that occurs in fictional stories exploring the elements of fiction itself (Fludernik 1).

One of the protagonists of Rushdie's *Quichotte*, the writer Brother, is named the same as in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* where "BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU" (Orwell 1). Rushdie's character is an omnipresent figure representing oppressive control over the novel's characters' fate. Brother created the secret world in his book but later: "…he was becoming afraid of it. Maybe he had come too close to certain uncomfortable truths" (27).

In Chapter Two the readers get to know Brother, the author of Chapter One. He was "of Indian origin who had previously written eight modestly (un)successful

spy fictions under the pen name of Sam Du Champ" (20) who had decided to put the story of Quichotte on paper. Metafictional Brother, as Rushdie calls him, and Quichotte had a lot in common: they were about the same age, suffered from physical complaints, and met real and fictional friends and acquaintances, but "If Quichotte had been driven mad by his desire for the people behind the TV screen, then he, Brother, had perhaps also been deranged by proximity to another veiled reality…" (21).

Brother tells Quichotte's story that is very similar to his own: "If you wanted to say that the bizarre story he was telling, unlike any story he had ever told, had deep roots in personal necessity and pain, then yes, he would concede the point" (216). This is acknowledged by Quichotte's creator: "Brother, on some days had difficulty remembering which history was his own and which Quichotte's" (216), and his Sister (who has no name in Rushdie's novel): "I'm glad to hear you are capable of sending yourself up" (284). Such a mode of narration implicitly involves the elements of a critique of mendacity in a post-truth world and gets *Quichotte* beyond mere metafictional storytelling.

Collapsed Minds in a Post-truth World

Mass Culture as a Black Hole of Information. Nowadays the overwhelming majority of people have gained access to arrays of information: "We are more and more 'wired' to our interfaces. We react to simulations—to the television news rather than the world, to a computer program rather than social interaction, to email rather than vocal communication" (Murphie and Potts 16). The devil is always in the details; all the information we receive, for example on the Internet, is adapted to consumers. News Feed on Facebook is tailored to the users' tastes, and Google's personalised search results do not go beyond a *filter bubble* that lulls critical thinking, and when a post contradicts established beliefs, it gets ignored. The filters influence search results and lead to the creation of the term *Gravitational Black Holes of Information* to illustrate "how difficult it is to break out of the force of the filters" (Holone 299). GBHI generate post-truth that is "little more than the morbid actuality of the post-modern condition" (Kirkpatrick 315).

Mass media like drugs alter a person's perception of reality, distorting the truth, "the imagined world behind our eyelids can drip its magic into the world we see when we open our eyes" (5). TV influences Quichotte's imagination of the relationship with his son as if they are the movies' characters: "Hutch to my Starsky, Spock to my Kirk, Scully to my Mulder, BJ to my Hawkeye, Robin to my Batman! …" (17). The need to consume information through "Must See TV"

(7) becomes *must have* by means of which it is labelled "what normal is, and at the same time nobody agrees" (130) as "Television is the god that goes on giving" (193). Rushdie uses reality television as a signifier of the problem of truth and lies in American culture. He claims that "television is not reality" (Cole). Creating the chains of precedent names is a feature of Rushdie's narration. The author mentions twenty-four precedent names including the characters' names of the following detective, adventure, science fiction and TV series: *Starsky & Hutch* (2004), *Star Trek* (1965–1969), *The X-Files* (1993–2018), *MASH* (1970–1983), *Batman & Robin* (1997), *Key and Peele* (2012–2015), *Frasier* (1993–2004), *Game of Thrones* (2011–2019), *Mad Men* (2007–2015), *El Camino: A Breaking Bad Movie* (2008–2013), *Miami Vice* (1984–1990). A text that includes so many precedent names leads to a communicative loss due to the decoding of such names.

Rushdie creates his novel for the readers who are immersed in digital media products like his main characters. For an average reader, such a literary work becomes a challenge for understanding and adequate perception because the book contains numerous titles of magazines, websites, publishers, shows, visual search engines: *Maxim, Sports Illustrated, Special Victims Unit* (87-88), *F&SF*, *Astounding*, *Amazing* (93), *The Bachelor* (100), etc. The author highlights the titles in italics to engage the readers' emotional knowledge.

Rushdie recalls Brother's travels as if advancing a film: "He closed his eyes and walked backwards across continents and years, twirling his cane like Raj Kapoor's imitation-Chaplin tramp, only in reverse" (29). The change in the aesthetic consciousness of society is easily influenced by the media: "I know, these days you prefer the warblings you hear on American Idol or The Voice" (5). Mass media are increasingly replacing real-life communication contributing to the realisation of loneliness: "He wanted to talk to his friends about love, and the lover's quest on which he was about to embark. The truth was that he had almost no friends anymore" (8). Even the circle of virtual friends is formed by a filter bubble: "On his Facebook page he had "friended" or "been friended by" a small and dwindling group of commercial travelers like himself, as well as an assortment of lonely hearts, braggarts, exhibitionists, and salacious ladies…" (8).

Hucksterism on TV makes viewers think about the questions Brother raises: "He grew up wanting to know the secret ingredient in Coca-Cola, he remembered the secret identities of all superheroes, and what was Victoria's secret, anyway?" (24). These are not serious issues but rather consumers' interests in a world where "TV had ruined America's thinking processes as it had ruined Quichotte's" (216-217).

Immersion in the virtual world leads to the rise of *new generations*: "The

generation of Netflix-and-chill was less judgmental and looked forward to seeing heron their laptops" (42). Being understood first as "a routinized form of relaxation while binge-viewing Netflix", *Netflix and chill* has changed its semantic image to be transformed into a teenage code word "hooking up" (Pilipets 5). Later it has emerged as a highly (hetero)sexualised and racially coded communicative phenomenon on *Black Twitter* (Sharma 46). Nowadays, this term is exploited as an Internet slang used as a euphemism for sexual activity, either as part of a romantic partnership, as casual sex, or as a groupie invitation. The perception of the real world becomes distorted and is not analysed: "In their opinion her real migration had been from silver screen to computer screen, not from Bombay/Mumbai to L.A., a migration that made her even more fashionable than before in their eyes" (42-43).

Exploration of any culture expects immersion in it, but mass culture does not set the consumer such *a super-mission*: "a loud, fleshy Ukrainian sub-oligarch who claimed to love Shakespeare ("Have you seen Innokenti Smoktunovsky in Russian film Gamlet? No? Disappointing!"), did not understand the play ("But there are not twelve nights in this story! Disappointing!")" (59). The choice of product for consumption increasingly depends on the cover rather than the content: "…I never looked at a book that didn't have a gorgeous lady on the cover, preferably deficient in the wardrobe department" (84).

Political Discourse as the Assault on Truth. There is no direct mention of politicians in Rushdie's *Quichotte* but the growing frustration of voters with governments leads to the flourishing of populism. A winner is a politician who appeals to emotions and personal beliefs from the blue screens ignoring objective facts that are becoming less important for shaping public opinion in a post-truth era: "Men who played presidents on TV could become presidents" (6). The author, known for his scepticism about politics and politicians, uses a transparent allusion to the previous president of the USA: "a willful American president", "who was obsessed by cable news, who pandered to a white supremacist base" (44). Farkas & Schou underline that post-truth worlds may be regarded as "discursive formations or political imaginaries produced, disseminated and adopted throughout the Western world" (2).

As Lewandowsky et al. assert, a post-truth world has developed "as a result of societal mega-trends such as a decline in social capital, growing economic inequality, increased polarization, declining trust in science, and an increasingly fractionated media landscape" (353).

Rushdie touches on the issues of terrorism, 9/11, a period of geopolitical tension between the Soviet Union and the United States, and the Cold War: "Spies were becoming news again. At the end of the Cold War, without the Soviet Union

as an enemy, they felt for a time like old hat, and after 9/11 they looked foolish and unprepared" (44). The writer mentions the new challenges facing society in an era of digital technology when an enemy becomes dangerous not on the battlefield but cyber-terrorists can be "the most significant new foes" (44). According to Korstanje, "technology becomes the touchstone of society, but at the same time its Aquila's heel" (12).

The author makes it clear that World War III has already started, but it is different from all known confrontations. Hackers are warriors who choose and change sides. This idea is supported by Agent Kyle Kagemusha who claims that "this is the third world war, and the future of the free world, of untwisted social media and unfixed elections, of facts and law and democracy and freedom as we understand the word, depends on winning it" (230). The novel shows cyberwar that is the assault on truth, the pollution of the real by the unreal, of fact by fiction (230).

Rushdie is convinced that the true world is no longer exists because TV collapses minds and "Normal is Upside-Down Land" (131) but "Normal doesn't feel so normal…" (131). In a post-truth era, special truth is created, and "every show on every network tells you the same thing: based upon a true story. But that's not true either. The true story is there's no true story anymore. There's no *true* anymore that anyone can agree on" (132).

On the Verge of the Opioid Epidemic. Nowadays, the pharmaceutical industry has gained significant development and promotion has played one of the main roles as makes nearly everyone wholeheartedly believes in medicine's "advertised efficacy" (11). Business owners who are related to medicines production and sales become extremely wealthy people in a short period of time: "Dr. Smile's pharmaceutical business, always prosperous, had recently catapulted him to billionaire status because of his Georgia laboratories' perfection of a sublingual spray application of the pain medication fentanyl" (11). In real life, a significant number of people do not find a gap to do a medical check-up, and medicines that bring temporary relief are in the greatest demand: "Spraying the powerful opioid under the tongue brought faster relief to terminal cancer patient... The new spray made it bearable, at least for an hour" (11). The advertisement of medicines is of great importance as some drugs become more popular than others and find a ready market: "…the sublingual spray offered instant gratification in a way that the other popular products did not" (79). Healthy and attractive models are shot in commercial broadcasts that make consumers subconsciously believe in the effectiveness of such healthcare products. It is an element of post-truth: "A beautiful lady who cares for you is the best thing in such cases" (74). Among the ways of publicity, the most effective one is advertis-

ing medicines by celebrities: "She [Salma R] started recommending it on the show. 'I'm hoping to be the ECT brand ambassador,' she told her studio audience" (115), by friends' advice: "Word of mouth was always recognized as the most effective marketing device" (75), self-treatment: "'I've been doing this for so long,' she said, 'I'm an expert in self-medication'" (113).

The use of opioids is not a problem just in contemporary society. Grandma of Quichotte's beloved, Miss Salma R, had "…a fondness for recreational and mind-soothing painkillers" (35), and died "by suicide (an overdose of sleeping pills)" (36). After a divorce, her father spent "the remainder of his days in a happy opium haze" (38). Her mother died of a drug overdose: "Miss Salma R was the one who found her mother in what had formerly been Dina's bedroom, cold and over-dosed" (39).

Miss Salma R condescended to Quichotte's letters. She suspected that the man was mentally ill, but he was not alienated by the woman as she felt sorry for him because she was herself all "too familiar with the battle against mental illness, being a third-generation sufferer herself" (109). For many years she took pills to handle *manic depression*: "The meds had controlled the monster within, just about, but there were bad moments…" (109). She became addicted and can't do without "those pals, doll" (109).

What causes the opioid crisis? A banal aspiration of one to make money and others to get rid of problems, even for a short time. Dr. R. K. Smile "when he was just starting out in the pharma business" (73), in India in a Bombay street was given a business card with notes: "Are you alcoholic?... We can help. Call this number for liquor homedelivery" (73). He supposed it to be an *Excellent business model* to suc-ceed in business: "SPI had followed the excellent business model with great success, sending its products in impressively large quantities even to very small towns" (73). The author ambivalently hints at doctors who violate the oath of Hippocrates and seek extra profits: "And these were tough doctors, ready to receive these substantial sums in return for prescribing InSmile™ off-label, willing to recommend doing so to other doctors, and able to take any heat that followed" (76) and "…the pharma-cies handed out the painkillers, no problem" (112). Large medical corporations and their owners can easily atone for past crimes in the *Age of Anything-Can-Happen*. They only need fix up with financial aid "museums, concert halls, fish tanks, parks, then you will be too too respected by so so many people and all this noise will go" (77). The author uses repetition of *too* and *so* to add expressiveness to the sentence as the occasional elements become emotionally significant due to their visual em-phasis.

Social and Ethical Issues Facing Contemporary Society. One of the dangers faced by humanity nowadays is *racism*. This political ideology is considered in the dual dimension: the persuasion of some races or ethnic groups, and unwillingness to be assimilated into another social environment caused by subconscious fears to be unwanted or incomprehensible by foreign cultures. When Quichotte and his real/not-real son Sancho went out to New York, they bumped into cruel and racist beliefs: "You got a bad foreign look to you" (125). Sancho watches a world full of hatred on TV channels in cheap hotels. He hears *white Americans' screaming*: *"We are Beavis and Butt-Head on 'roids. We drink Roundup from the can. ... We're America. ... Immigrants raping our women every day. We need Space Force because Space ISIS"* (131).

Stereotyped thinking leads to the distortion of real-life pictures. Quichotte with his son met a woman who showed her prejudice against them: "You look like you come from a country on that no-entry list. You hitch a ride with a Mexican? What you lookin' for in America? What's your purpose?" (125). Quichotte compares racist behaviour to the issue of accusation and punishment for witchcraft in ancient times, which often ended in lynching: "…when a woman was accused of witchcraft, the proofs were that she had a 'familiar,' usually a cat, plus a broomstick and a third nipple for the Devil to suck on. … The proof was in every home and on every woman's body and therefore all women so accused were automatically guilty" (126). *Automatically guilty* implies that appearance for a certain group of people is a sign to accuse without evidence. In Tulsa, skin colour actualises aggressive attacks on the father and son and becomes the cause of racial discrimination: "You look like somebody rubbed shit in your faces so deep you can't wash it off" (126).

The ideology of racism flourishes on prejudices and stereotypes which force people to hide their identity: "…the name on the books veiled his ethnic identity, just as Freddie Mercury veiled the Parsi Indian singer Farrokh Bulsara. This was not because the … man was ashamed of his race but because he did not want to be prejudged" (24).

It is a painful problem for Rushdie, especially those aspects that affect the people of his affiliation: "*In United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind* (1923) the Supreme Court argued that the racial difference between Indians and whites was so great that the "great body of our people" would reject assimilation with Indians" (25). The unjust treatment of the people of different races finds a sarcastic response: "Twenty-three years later the Luce-Celler Act permitted just one hundred Indians a year to come to America and gain citizenship (thanks a lot)" (25).

Rushdie notes that racism has no boundaries: black citizens were regularly

killed by white policemen or arrested in hotel lobbies for no crime, children were murdered in schools because of a constitutional gap, and "a man was lynched by sacred-cow fanatics for the crime of having what they thought was beef in his kitchen, and an eight-year-old girl from a Muslim family was raped and killed in a Hindu temple to teach the Muslim population a lesson" (53).

In America, Sancho "saw three figures dressed all in white including white pointed hoods" (206-207) which is a hint of Ku Klux Klan. The guy could not believe his eyes as "that was impossible. This was New York. The Klan wasn't here at all, let alone wearing couture hoods on Madison" (207). The writer indicates the historical fact that the group originated and mainly existed after the Civil War in South America after its defeat. In modern literature, "the interplay of real (historical) and fictional events is so subtle that they are even difficult to be distinguished from each other" (Bezrukov and Bohovyk, 271).

Racial diversity often makes people who find themselves in a foreign environment support each other even if they do not know each other. Salma has "a special soft spot for the stories of recent immigrants" and sometimes shows them "in a special feature called 'Immigreat!'" (48). Rushdie uses a pun for the name of the column to combine the two words *immigrant* and *great* created by metathesis influencing the sounds and meaning of the name and indicates his sympathy for people who leave their country under different circumstances. Dr. R. K. Smile, Quichotte's cousin, as well becomes "a benefactor of the best Atlanta Indian newspaper and website, named *Rajdhani*, 'Capital'" (67). The author uses the exotic language unit *Rajdhani* in combination with its translation. Dr. R. K. Smile helps those of the same affiliation: "a donor to most of the proliferating community associations in the city, groupings of people by their state of origin back home, but also by language…, caste, subcaste, religion, and preferred house deities…" (67). Dr. Smile helped religious organisations but noted that he "was not a deeply religious man himself" (67).

Rushdie touches on the painful issues of *paedophilia* and *homophobia*. He describes the relationship between Salma and her grandfather Babajan who harassed her as a child: "…he emerged from a shadow grinning like a demon, took hold of both her wrists, pulled her toward him, and kissed her with great force, twice, the second time, as has been said, with his tongue" (163). Little Salma's grandmother and mother knew about the old man's perversion but none of them seriously prevented Grandpa from spoiling the little one: "…neither Salma's mother Anisa nor her grandmother Dina could have been unaware of Babajan's proclivities. If Anisa as a child had been his victim, too, the mother before the daughter, she never explicitly revealed it to anyone" (167). The relationship with her grandfather has become

a painful memory for a woman since "when you are twelve years old and utterly de-void of the psychological equipment you need to handle it is even worse" (168). The little one addresses her mother and grandmother with words of despair: "You both knew," she said to them. "You always knew" (169). But women are embarrassed to talk about domestic violence for fear of condemnation: "*There is grave danger to family member or members, but we hide them. We think of them as our shame, and we conceal*" (167).

The moral challenge in the novel indicates the level of hatred in the aggression of society towards those who are labelled as *others*. Rushdie portrays homophobes who react inadequately even to the fortuitous spectrum: "The drunk woman … was trying to smash the rainbow with her feet and swearing profusely as she did so, un-leashing a torrent, a *drool*, of homophobic abuse" (206). Homophobia is based on hatred of others. Homophobes are ready to humiliate, call them names, beat them, and restrict their rights to make people live by the homophobes' rules.

Background also matters so Rushdie touches on the issues of multiculturalism. Quichotte is a multicultural identity. The importance and rapid expansion of glob-al English-language literature in the second half of the twentieth century is noted by many researchers of modern English. Crystal calls this phenomenon the most significant in the history of language: "The most notable development in the twen-tieth-century use of nonstandard English was the extension and flowering of the global literature ... chiefly in those regions which became part of the British Com-mon-wealth" (502). Along with British and American literature, English-language literature includes *new literatures in English* represented by the works of multi-lingual writers from the former colonies of the British Empire (Boehmer 3). The term *multicultural literature* may also be used in this context (Cai 212). Rushdie is included in the list of such writers. His narrative strategies certainly could not be formed without a cultural component such as the names and traditions of celebrating the festivals of India: "He played Holi with the Bhojpuri-speaking descendants of Indian indentured laborers in Mauritius and celebrated Bakr Eid with shawl weav-ers in the high mountain village of Aru near the Kolahoi glacier in Kashmir" (9). The novel also contains a significant number of names of dishes that are attributed to the vocabulary with a national culture component: kulfi (85)—traditional Indian ice cream; huevos rancheros (139)—a typical breakfast served at Mexican farms; chicken Kiev (295)—a popular Ukrainian dish, etc.

The writer's style traditionally includes exotic language units that denote culture-specific elements and create a non-national language environment. Novels about the life of Indians in both colonial and postcolonial India as well as about the

life of Indian diasporas in Britain and the United States are characterised by using borrowings from the languages of South Asia: Persian: "Come and have a **biryani** with my wife and myself" (12); Hindi: "That culture- and love-blessed **boho** in fancy" (32); Arabic and Sanskrit: "Anisa had "been shown the power of Muslim **kismet** and of Hindu **karma**, both of which exact bitter poetic justice upon traitors and wrongdoers" (38).

Environmental Crisis: Climate Change in the Context of Post-truth. Consumers of information get used to the titles of articles that include obvious nonsense, the details are not checked, and the proof is not needed which leads to creating hyperreality. Scientists are struggling to describe this *brave new world* where spectacular falsehood is better than boring truth. This way post-truth is created. People try to stay away from bad news because living in our times leads to nervous tension.

The real trouble that people face in a post-truth world is climate change. When the not-real son asks Quichotte if the world ends, he replies: "Obviously… One by one, very quietly, the stars will start going out" (88). People are trying to find a way to escape if the inevitability of the planet's disappearance becomes real so they are looking for ways to survive in parallel worlds: "If our universe crumbled into space dust, might we not rescue ourselves by traveling in new kinds of vessels that could jump toward an alternative universe that was still stable?" (203). The celebrated American scientist Evel Cent claims: *"My dream! A new! Home! For Humanity!"* (203). He seeks a way to save humanity from the end of the world and declares: "Once I've built the transfer machines, we can escape to safety" (260). We believe that Rushdie while creating his character was inspired by Elon Musk's idea of travelling to Mars because "we aren't too far from a breakthrough in the science" (261).

In the novel, a lot of times the threat "of the coming disintegration of the universe and the need to survive by escaping into one or more neighbor Earths" (261) is mentioned. Despite the reports of natural disasters, not considering them a real threat: "The growing world environmental crisis, the instability in reality which was finally grabbing the attention of politicians and scientists, even of the (many) politicians and (very few) scientists who had traditionally dismissed environmental issues as fake" (329). This is due to the fact that "people had grown used to the arrival of the incredible in the midst of the everyday" (329).

Magic Realism Writes Hyperreality

Rushdie uses the magic of the story when describing a wild ride across the country

on the verge of moral and spiritual collapse. Although magic realism continuous to occupy "a dangerously unanchored position" (Faris 16) between fact and fiction, history and myth, realism and magic, it appears to be a source of new narratives, in particular in postcolonial writing where "the magical is a reflection of culture" (Luburić-Cvijanović 72).

The key point in creating literary works is imagination: "…the imaginings of creative people could spill over beyond the boundaries of the works themselves, that they possessed the power to enter and transform and even improve the real world" (31). The author uses his own rules which are reproduced in the novel: "There were no rules anymore. And in the Age of Anything-Can-Happen, well, anything could happen" (6). Rushdie seems to lack the principles of realism to reflect reality. The author creates his own literature including fantastic themes and the elements of magic reality—utopianism and quixotism. The novel is a vivid illustration of an era wherein reality is sometimes difficult to distinguish from fiction as magic realism "writes the hyperreal, the constantly vanishing real" (Arva 81).

In his allegorical novel, Rushdie skilfully combines magic realism and Indian culture to explore the history, politics, and religious concerns. We believe that the magic in the writer's works comes from a sincere belief in the magic of real life, and behind this magic, there are some implications to decode for revealing the true meanings. Rushdie describes the transformation of Americans into ignorant racists, comparing them to the mastodons on the streets of Berenger: "The mastodons refuse to believe that they have turned into horrible, surrealistic mutants, and they become hostile and aggressive, they take their children out of school, and have contempt for education" (183).

One of the main features of Rushdie's *Quichotte* is an appeal to magical literature among which we have found the following elements of magic realism:

1) The combination of the real and fantastic, every-day and mythical, real and imaginary, mysterious, wild and calm, sensual and rationale: "At 11:11 P.M. precisely he snapped seven wishbones while fire rained down from the skies from the direction of the constellation Perseus—Perseus the warrior, Zeus and Danaë's son, the Gorgons layer!—and the miracle occurred" (16)—against the background of the American reality, the author places a not-real image of not-real son Sancho.

2) The category of time to identify its subjectivity and relativity: "Time had passed, it was hard to know how much time, because time was strange now, stretching, compressing, unreliable. A week could be a month long. A lifetime could pass in a day" (369)—a personal perception of time.

3) The rejection of the psychological motivation of people's actions: "A wom-

an might fall in love with a piglet, or a man start living with an owl" (6).

4) Depicting a space which does not coincide with the real geographical or historical one: "the clocks gave up arguing and stopped trying to run the hours in the normal fashion, so that when people looked in their direction…, the clocks showed them whatever time they wanted it to be" (47)—time ceases to be a constant value and changes according to the desires and needs in society. The characters travel through *seven valleys* to reach their goal. Only after overcoming the third one do they feel that "the random spatial and temporal dislocations stopped" (151).

Despite the fact that the writer depicts real life, this reality is mythologised. The characters' worldviews are intertwined with various myths and legends that affect their destinies and help the readers predict possible events in hyperreality.

Conclusion

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, in the history of human development and forms of its cultural activities, the postmodern worldview continues to dominate. The evolution of artistic consciousness has formalised a drastic change in worldview paradigm, its break with previous trends in art. Nowadays, there is a long process of searching for new forms of artistic expression which is reflected in postmodern discourse. One of the pivotal elements of this process is the concept of post-truth which penetrates fiction from public discourse in a world of total diversity to become a key means of explicating the author's intentions and creating the narratives of hyperreality. Becoming the principal form of artistic vision, hyperreality appears in postmodern fiction to transform the contemporary literary landscape.

Clear evidence of the abovementioned is Rushdie's *Quichotte* which tackles everything from the impact of mass culture on society and climate change to the rise of white supremacy and the opioid crisis in a post-truth age. Appealing to this category helps the writer build the plot in such a way as to express the most acute problems in the literary text. Inter- and hypertextual connections within the novel immerse the readers in a hyperreal world creating a feeling of complete confusion and inability to distinguish the real from illusory, the erosion of objectivity. Cervantes' *Don Quixote* as the hypertext for *Quichotte* also helps Rushdie fade the line between truth and what seems to be true.

In the novel, the plot intertwines the storylines of two families, fiction with reality which eventually also becomes fiction since *Quichotte* is a fiction by the writer Brother, and Brother is a fiction by Rushdie. The main character's maniacal obsession with the consumption of television products becomes the basis for

depicting altered reality both in his head and in the world around him. Hyperreality in this case appears to be a basis for generating both real and fictional narratives turning the novel into a combination of hidden and obvious facts, events, images, meanings, and reflections.

Rushdie's *Quichotte* is based on the following elements: inter/hypertextuality, the magical nature of the presented situations, and the structure of the novel. They create a sarcastic ambience in the novel and a mixture of magic realism with national identity. Rushdie addresses his novel primarily to connoisseurs of postmodern performance with refined literary associations combining the methods of intellectual metafiction with entertainment. Nevertheless, the writer has managed to draw attention to the most pressing issues for a society of hyperreality in a post-truth world on the verge of moral and spiritual collapse.

Representing the concept of post-truth in fictional discourse contributes to the expansion of the artistic potential of this phenomenon in the cultural dimension. The underexplored novel by Rushdie is scrutinised as a literary basis for highlighting the key strategies of creating the narratives of hyperreality in the context of the challenges in a post-truth society.

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Ethical Dilemma and Redemption in Toni Morrison's *Paradise*

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Abstract   In *Paradise,* Morrison depicts the process of a group of African Americans who go through all the hardships to establish and manage Ruby town. Starting from the ethical perspective, this paper analyzes the ethical dilemmas of race and family faced by African Americans through sorting out the various experiences of African Americans, and explores the ethical redemption thoughts and ethical connotations displayed in Morrison's works.

Keywords   Toni Morrison; *Paradise*; ethical dilemma; ethical Redemption

Introduction

Toni Morrison, the winner of Nobel Prize for Literature, brings African American literature to a new climax. Morrison's works show African Americans' confusion, various ethical dilemmas, and their exploration of ethical salvation. Though Morrison passed away from her beloved readers forever in 2019, her works still show great charm and attract reader's attention. *Paradise* is Morrison's first work after winning the Nobel Prize for literature. It Chronicles the rise and fall of the town of Ruby. This paper attempts to explore the ethical dilemma faced by African group in *Paradise* from the perspective of literary ethics, explore the ethical salvation path indicated by Morrison, and explore the ethical enlightenment in the novel.

As Professor Nie in his "Ethical Literary Criticism: A Basic Theory" holds that Ethical literary criticism is defined as a critical theory for reading, analyzing, and

interpreting the ethical nature and function of literary works from the perspective of ethics (189). Literary ethical criticism emphasizes the educational function of literature, emphasizes the return to the ethical scene of history, analyzes the ethical factors that lead to social events and influence the fate of characters in works, and explains and evaluates the ethical dilemma faced by various characters and their choices from an ethical point of view.

The Ethical Dilemma in *Paradise*

Nicomachean Ethics written by Ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle is an important work of western modern ethics. Aristotle said "when we changed the spelling of ethos, we became ethike" (25). There are good and bad differences between habits and conduct. Only good qualities formed on the basis of habits can meet ethical standards. In Chinese culture, ethics is the product of certain social, historical and cultural conditions, and refers to the relationship and order naturally formed between people or people and things. Ethics should conform to norms and guidelines. It can be seen that both eastern and western cultures emphasize the existence of ethics based on norms and order. Once breaking through some conventional law and order, it will be contrary to common sense, and the ethical subject will be in trouble.

In *Paradise*, a group of African-Americans trek west twice to establish their ideal paradise of order, and finally settle down in Ruby Town. But in the end, there is violence that wipes out the monastery and destroys the paradise. The tragedy of Ruby town makes people think deeply about a series of questions. Why doesn't the social order of the town develop to a standard and harmonious direction after the establishment of the paradise? What are the reasons behind the contrary? What ethical dilemmas do African Americans face in Ruby? In order to find out the answers to these questions, readers first should know the history of Ruby.

The story happened in 1890, when slavery was abolished. However, in fact, African-Americans and whites don't obtain full equality, and unfair events occur from time to time. African-American groups are still excluded from politics, economy, culture and education, and the shadow of discrimination still influences them.

The town of Haven is founded by Zacharias with more than 100 African-Americans. The founding of Haven shows that racial prejudice is still prevalent. African Americans are strictly restricted from living in white areas. Because of their charcoal skin, they are repeatedly rejected by white and light-skinned people. They are told that "come back when you're ready, or don't" (Morrison, *Paradise* 13). Under the influence of the dominant white culture, African Americans have

long suffered various injustices. After the town of Haven declined in 1949, African-Americans move west again. The daughter of the large Morgan family, Ruby, falls ill during the migration and is rushed to the hospital by her family. But "African-Americans were not admitted to the ward, and no regular doctor was willing to care for them" (Morrison, *Paradise* 113). Ruby eventually succumbed and died in a hospital hallway. The stigma of rejection is deeply embedded in the psyche of dark-skinned African-Americans. The physical and mental trauma suffered by African Americans don't disappear with slavery, and the scars left by history still remain, making it difficult for African Americans to find their identity as "people."

In Ruby, dark-skinned African-Americans also enslave light-skinned African-Americans. There is a woman in town, Patricia, who is discriminated against because of her light skin color. She tries everything to regain her identity as a "person" of the town. She walks around town discreetly. She does her best to please the townspeople, such as marrying dark-skinned men, retracing the town's history as an elementary school teacher, keeping her daughter under strict control. But even so, the Christmas night program still excludes families of light-skinned African-Americans like Patricia's. Therefore, Patricia angrily burns the documents of her family in the town that she has worked so hard for years, unwilling to praise the history of African-Americans. Light-skinned African-Americans suffer from discrimination and oppression in the white world, and are not recognized within African-Americans. It can be seen that under the racial concept of "white as beauty," African Americans have confused their ethical consciousness and have no right to make ethical choices independently, making it difficult for them to define their own identity.

In the social environment of discrimination and oppression, it is also very difficult to establish a reasonable and effective family ethical order. When Stuart, the first family of Ruby Town, is young, he has an affair with the convent's mistress, Consolata, which causes his wife Thorne to have an abortion in the midst of all the work. After the death of their son in the Vietnam War, the couple become more indifferent to each other, and the heavy and unloving atmosphere of the family is suffocating. Suen is dissatisfied with her husband's behavior and has many opinions about the affairs of the town he presides over. Despite her husband's status, she befriends the convent woman against his will. Stewart's brother, Deacon, and his wife, Davi, also rarely communicate with each other, and the family's ethical identity is weak. So Davi chooses to confide in a young man who is 20 years her junior, but not to her husband. It is not hard to see that in the first family, there is a lack of family ethical order, and they are deprived of their ethical identity as parents.

There is a lack of care between husband and wife, and neither husband nor wife is responsible for their ethical identity. This tragedy occurred from time to time in Afro-descendant families and is a common ethical dilemma faced by the entire Afro-descendant community. Through the description of the ethical tragedy of African American families, Morrison reveals the difficult ethical demands and construction path of African Americans, and expresses their desire for healthy family relations.

Small-town women Arnett and Sveti have suffered the trauma of childbirth. Arnett gave birth to a child in a convent and left because of emotional difficulties. Arnette finally reunited with K.D. and married him. On their wedding night, Arnette went to the monastery to find the child she gave birth to four years ago, but she could not accept it when she learned that the child had died. Sveti gave birth to four disabled children in a row and was physically and mentally devastated. For six years, she stayed indoors to care for her children. When the youngest child died, she vented her frustration by refusing to use the Morgan land for burial. Both Arnett and Sveti have lost the opportunity to be mothers, as well as the lack of normal social relations and family ethical identity. They are a kind of people whose psychology is distorted under discrimination and oppression.

No matter male managers or female managers in small towns, their lives are depressed and distorted, trapped in the dual ethical dilemma of race and family. Morrison takes African-Americans in Ruby as an example to reflect the reality of the African American community in social interaction and family relations, reflecting the ethical dilemma of African Americans and Morrison's concern for the new ethical relations of African-Americans.

Ethical Choice of the African American Group

Ethical dilemmas are "insoluble contradictions and conflicts brought to characters due to ethical confusion" (Nie, "An Introduction" 258). Literary ethical criticism holds that the subject realizes individual growth and moral perfection through ethical choice. African Americans are faced with two cultures, black and white. When they are enslaved and oppressed by white people, African Americans feel panic and anxiety. But the mainstream white values are powerless to change, and Ruby's African ancestors choose to escape, distance and isolate themselves in order to own their identity as African "people" and reinvigorate the national spirit.

The first people who choose to run from white people are Ruby's ancestors, a group of 158 freed men from Mississippi and Louisiana. To escape discrimination, they move west and settle in the town of Haven, the ideal city. In order to regulate the ethics of the town and express their sense of unity and endeavor, they build large

ovens. By isolating the town from the rest of the world, African Americans share the prosperity and security of the interior, which is also their way of alleviating their inner panic. But the world moves on, and any standing still is abandoned by the world, and Haven Town is doomed to decline.

As descendants of Haven, deacon and Stewart brothers, who return from the front after the end of the Second World War, choose to escape again and lead the Black men westward. Finally, they settle down in Ruby town. However, the administrators of Ruby choose the policy of isolation to maintain the ethical order of the town from beginning to end. Only African-Americans live in Ruby Town and anyone outside aren't welcome. It was a "unique and isolated" utopia where there are "no restaurants, police, gas stations, public telephones, cinemas or hospitals" (Morrison, *Paradise* 12). Ruby's managers hope to insulate themselves from white discrimination and oppression against African-Americans.

African-Americans in Ruby town express dissatisfaction with the exclusion and enslavement of white people, but in fact they envy and tend to the mainstream culture of white people. They copy what white people do to African Americans, to protect the people of the town, but really to hurt them. Men in the town aren't allowed to marry light-skinned women from outside of the town, so Menus is under great pressure to abandon his girlfriend and became unhappy. For the old Roger who has refused to dissuade him from taking a light-skinned wife, his daughters and granddaughters are treated differently. African-Americans in Ruby town neither achieve a harmonious ethical relationship with whites, nor do they have a correct understanding of the social ethical relationship within African-Americans, and don't adopt appropriate social ethical communication principles, which further aggravate their tragic fate.

From the perspective of family ethics, in the face of the imbalance of family ethics relations, they don't choose to improve the relationship with family members, but to choose emotional transfer. In Afro-descendant groups, family ethical order is generally missing, resulting in a variety of chaotic and abnormal family ethical relations. Deacon and Stewart, the first family of Ruby, lack the recognition of the family ethical order and lack of communication and love among family members. Deacon and his wife Davi are strangers and do not support each other. Stewart chooses to cheat and devotes his affections to convent mistress Consolata. As family individuals, their choices are not the right way to return to themselves. African-Americans of Ruby suffer from the lack of family ethical identity. Their family lacks normal ethical attributes and loses the most basic ethical identity as parents and children. Abnormal family ethical relations bring dangers for Ruby Town.

Male rulers gradually feel the pain of women and young people in Ruby, and become more worried about losing absolute control of the town. The town priest, Misner, once points out painfully that "we live in the world. It's the whole world. Separate us, separate us—that's their weapon. Isolation hurts several generations. it has no future" (Morrison, *Paradise* 210). Male rulers don't realize the key of the problem, but are angry with the monastery nearby. They believe that women in the monastery are the source of all evils. Finally, they try to kill these women with gun. The scene at the beginning of the novel appears, "They shot and killed the white girl" (Morrison, *Paradise* 1). Managers try to completely cut off the contact with white people, and it is difficult for Ruby town to have sustainable development. Male rulers choose to use violence to solve practical problems to achieve their control over the collective, which is narrow and extreme. Neither closure nor violence is appropriate for the future development of people of African descent.

Ethical Salvation from Heaven

The African American group is trapped in the double ethical dilemma of family and race, but it is difficult to achieve real relief through ethical choice. The paradise built by Ruby rulers don't ultimately make African people happy. Morrison portrays Consolata, the soul of the monastery, who leads a group of women who suffer from various ethical dilemmas to get rid of pain and realize self-growth. The convent, 17 miles from Ruby, becomes the refuge of the women, and Consolata becomes the spiritual leader of the women's self-salvation.

The women of the convent suffer various difficulties and lose themselves before they come here. The first woman coming to the convent is Mavis, whose family relationship is not harmonious. She accidentally locks the twin baby in the car, so the children suffocate to death. From then on, she is tortured by her husband and the eldest daughter. At home, Mavis can't feel love, and her ethical identity is deprived. In a panic, she steals her husband's car and leaves the house. At the convent she recovers herself, playing with Jia Jia and working with Consolata, all of which makes her excited and satisfied.

Grace comes to the convent after Mavis. She hitchhikes on a trip and stays here. Because she and her boyfriend have witnessed the death of a young African boy in an ethnic conflict on the road, she instinctively wants to hide in the convent where the relations are harmonious and simple.

Seneca is abandoned by her mother at an early age, violated by the son of her adopted mother. Then she begins to make boyfriends and gets more injuries. She suffers relentless and helpless pain and is unable to change. She indulges herself in

free riding and wandering. Finally, Seneca follows Sylvette on foot near Ruby to the convent.

When Pallas was three years old, her parents divorced. At 16, Pallas leaves her father and runs away with her boyfriend to see her mother, but unfortunately, her boyfriend has intimate relationship with her mother. After experiencing the chaotic gender relations, Palas is stimulated and runs on the highway. Falling, being invaded and embarrassed, Pallas is taken to the convent with the help of Delia.

It can be seen that before they come to the monastery, they are in a dilemma, lacking stable and harmonious ethical relations in life, and unable to find the direction of life. As the women arrive at the convent, Consolata decides to bid farewell to her troubled past. She not only provides residence for these confused women, but also guides them out spiritual plight. Under the guidance of Consolata, the monastery women regain their lost self and lead their sisters to win economic independence by growing and selling agricultural products. Then Consolata guides them to obtain spiritual independence. Consolata's ethical redemption of women is essentially a guide to women's pursuit of self-identity.

Consolata lets the woman lie naked in the clean basement, and she describes her heart's paradise with elegant voices: music dazzling, flowers fragrant, children playing, women coming.... Her singing voice comforts them. The whole room is full of pleasant male-free taste, like a protected country with no hunter, but also exciting. As if in one of many rooms in this house, she can meet herself—an unfettered, true self, a self she thinks is "cool" (Morrison, *Paradise* 177). Women can't help but tell their own hidden pain in the way of "dream." They use color pens to draw the outline of their bodies on the floor to replace their bodies, leaving the pain of the past in the paintings on the floor to remove the heavy shackles of mind.

Consolata dedicates her love to all, and the lost women feel safety, freedom and respect. Consolata becomes the leader of these women, "They are no longer troubled by the haunting things" (Morrison, *Paradise* 266). Consolata tells them to love themselves and others, and women try to reconcile with their families. At the end, Mevis meets her daughter, who expresses her love for her mother, and Mevis also kisses her daughter. Grace meets her father who is serving his sentence by the lake. Her father misses her very much. Grace says goodbye to her father. When Seneca meets her "sister," her mother expresses her repentance. Women get redemption of ideas, and they can face the past and start a new life. Having a harmonious and normal family ethical relationship is also Morrison's expectation for women of African descent. The awakening of women's ethical consciousness is the key to integrating African-American groups into the white world and having a

better tomorrow. The return of monastery women's self and sisterhood indicate the possibility of future development of African-Americans.

The essence of ethical salvation is the pursuit of "human" self-identity. The uncertainty or confusion of ethical identity can lead to various ethical dilemmas. For African Americans, it is necessary to make the right ethical choice between true African identity and desired white identity. African Americans need to accept their African identity, love their own history and culture, actively seek equal dialogue with white people, and integrate into the American society with an open attitude. Exclusion and violent confrontation are not the way to the development of the African People. Only acceptance and integration are the future direction of development.

The essence of ethical redemption is the pursuit of human self-identity. Uncertainty or confusion in ethical identity can lead to various ethical dilemmas. For Afro-descendants, there is a need to make the right ethical choice between true Afro-descendants and desirable white identities. Afro-descendant groups need to accept their own Afro-descendant status, love their own history and culture, and actively seek equal dialogue with whites and integrate into American society in an open manner. Exclusion of closure and violent confrontation are not the path of development for Afro-descendants, and integration is the only way forward.

Conclusion

In Paradise, Toni Morrison describes the relationships between whites and Afro-descendants. She presents the plight of Afro-descendant groups in the face of ethnic and family ethical relations after the abolition of slavery. Morrison finally presents the process of monastery women's mutual love and growth in the novel, and they reconstruct the normal ethical relationship. But Ruby's rulers end their yearning paradise life by shooting the women in the convent. Morrison expects to explore the ways to achieve moral sublimation and ethical identity reconstruction for African Americans. She advocates sisterhood and mutual cooperation. She also points out that individuals should love themselves and others, combine personal development with national development, and seek integration and common development with white people, which will be the future roads for African Americans.

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Sameul Beckett's Vladimir and Estragon in *Waiting For Godot* as the Representation of Humanity in the Time of the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract   The current study attempts to show how Vladimir and Estragon, who are two of Samuel Beckett's main characters in his play, *Waiting for Godot* (1952) are meant to represent humanity during the time after World War II. That is, Vladimir and Estragon's waiting for Godot is much like all of humanity's waiting for the pandemic to fade away or disappear. The similarity between the two characters and humanity is studied and analyzed through the lens of postmodernism, and more specifically, existential theories. The study posits how the main aim of the two characters in the play is simply to wait for Godot. Their wait is justified by the relief, safety, and the hope that the best is yet to come displayed by both characters. Thus, the two characters resemble all of humanity waiting for the end of the pandemic, or even for the perfect vaccine to come along that helps prevent people from dying from such a pandemic. The common absurdity in the way these two characters behave while waiting is very much like the absurdity that can also be seen in the everyday life of people who are uncertain of what will happen or what this horrifying pandemic will lead them to. However, this study is different as it highlights how Samuel Beckett's two characters, Vladimir and Estragon, represent humanity during the pandemic and could be seen the same as the people today waiting for a miracle to happen and the hopes of finding a solution for COVID-19.

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Introduction

The outbreak of COVID-19 has had a great effect on the lives of human beings all over the planet. Countries have been forced into lockdown and people have been prevented from going about their daily routines. Families have been separated and some even isolated. Sick family members were taken away from their loved ones and placed in quarantine. Many people have died. So many, in fact, countries had to cremate those who fell victims to the disease because there was simply no place to bury them.

In that sense, a pandemic does not really differ from war. Indeed, the post-war and post-pandemic issues have become the same. People suffer from disillusionment, alienation, and mental illness. Both also cause a tremendous decrease in population. In his study *Waiting for Godot in the Time of COVID-19*, Chandi Prasad Nandi states that the virus has become a chaotic threat to the whole globe (1). Because the virus spread so quickly, it reduced the number of world's population (2). As a result, it can be said that the effect of the virus is the same as the effect of war. Nandi adds that this led to a vulnerable and absurd world (3). He continues saying that "these human conditions remain acutely swayed by an element of "*ad absurdum*" following the perpetual tension between a sense of order, meaning and finality and in contrast a refusal for such commitment by a recalcitrant and indifferent universe" (4).

Abhijit Seal states in his study, "War Trauma and Absurdity of Existence in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*", that the Second World War was the reason for the devastation of the psychology of human beings (1). He continues by saying that the losses from war lead people to feel hopeless, which also leads people to question life and its purpose (1). From what Nandi and Seal mention, the trauma of war can easily be related to what is happening these days as a result of the spread of COVID-19. The virus is a threat to human lives and is, therefore, reducing their population. As a result, people have become devastated and hopeless, leading them to question their lives and the purpose of their existence.

Such a pandemic could lead to urgent and serious catastrophe, much like the consequences of war and the devastation caused by wars. May declares that crisis interrupts and stops a human being's routine. This is exactly what happened to prevent the spread of the virus. Yalom adds that such a crisis causes people to reflect on their previous and current lives that would lead them to question them and what they gain from their experiences and behaviors (Yalom 31). According

to DeRobertis, it gives human beings the chance to learn as "something about a person's life circumstances [is] changed such that [one] cannot go on as before" (43). Crises also cause anxiety and stress (Baum-Baicker). Andrew M. Bland applies four "dialectical existential givens" as the main framework of the study in his article, *Existential Givens in the COVID-19 Crisis*. These four binary oppositions, which have been applied in the United States in the time of COVID-19, are "life/death, community/isolation, freedom/determinism, and meaning/ absurdity" (710). All the previous symptoms could be applied to the time of COVID-19 and how human beings really feel during these days, all of which also resemble life after war.

Anthony Ufearoh states that COVID-19 had a great impact on all human beings, such as, "nose-diving economies, trauma and deaths" (97). He adds that data compiled by Worldometer up until of May12, 2020, showed that the world had recorded 4,274,647 cases of COVID-19 with 287,670 resulting deaths (98). Ufearoh continues that the pandemic has come as a "leveler" because it does not differentiate between people in terms of class, race, country, or even any other social constructs (97). All of them start questioning life and the meaning of life. Beneath all these corrupted feelings, there would always be both a yearning for life before COVID-19 and a glimmer of hope for a better future and the fading and disappearance of the virus. No matter where they live, all of humanity has been waiting for such a miracle to happen.

These postwar issues and trauma have been presented and reflected by many postmodern writers like Samuel Beckett. According to James J. James, the issues that have been reflected in the Theatre of the Absurd are very similar to the breakout of COVID-19 and its effects on people and their responses to it (297). Andrew M. Bland states that COVID-19 is thought of as an event that hit all of humanity and caused "an undeniable, unprecedented crisis". This is proven by the confirmed cases, 30%, and deaths, 40, in the world by June 2020 (711).

The word "absurd" is related to the postmodern era, an era which started after World War II. Esslin in The Theatre of the Absurd (xviii) defines the term "absurd" as "out of harmony" (Esslin xviii). Camus has also tackled the term and defines absurd plays as those which reflect people's alienation, and "of people having lost their bearings in an illogical, unjust, and ridiculous world" (Fita Chyntia, Multhahada Ramadhani Siregar and Roni Hikmah Ramadhan 3).

One of the plays related to the Theatre of the Absurd is *Waiting for Godot,* a play written by Samuel Beckett, a playwright mainly known for his dark humor and absurd writing. He is thought of as both a modern and a postmodern writer and influencer. His literary works have continuously been contentious, especially

his, *Waiting for Godot* (Mcdonald 118). James J. James (2020) states that Samuel Beckett's play, *Waiting for Godot*, which is related to the Theatre of the Absurd, is related to both existentialism, and postmodernism. He adds that the play reflects "obscure themes, illusory hopes, awaiting an event that never occurs and lacking a conclusion in the dramatic sense" (279). Hooti and Torkamaneh declare that Beckett's play portrays people's desire to live and make sense of life (43).

Analysis

Waiting for Godot is a play that truly reflects postwar issues—life after World War II through the lens of Postmodernism. According to what Noorbakhsh Hooti and Pouria Torkamaneh state, the play is one of the most extraordinary plays that tackles the era after World War II (42). Esslin adds that it is a play that could be truly put in the context of postwar (3).

The circumstances that accompany the pandemic, the chaos it caused, and its threat to our loved ones can be compared to the atmosphere into which Samuel Beckett placed Vladimir and Estragon, the two main characters of the six that Beckett has written as waiting for another character, Godot, who never shows up. The audience is only introduced to him through the characters. The play ends with the characters waiting for Godot, leaving the audience with many interpretations of whom Godot may actually be. If we compare the process of waiting as characterized by Vladimir and Estragon, we can see similarities to modern times and people waiting for COVID-19 to end and be done with. All of humanity is suffering from this pandemic and its effects, which makes them similar to Vladimir and Estragon in Samuel Beckett's play *Waiting for Godot*.

Many studies have been conducted on the current play discussing who Godot actually is and the reasons why the two main characters are waiting for him. Fita Chyntia, Multhahada Ramadhani Siregar, and Roni Hikmah Ramadhan present the many interpretations which have been put forward regarding who Godot actually is. These multiple interpretations were caused by the absence of Godot in the play (2). Some of the studies posit that Godot represents God, such as the study of Alain Robbe-Grillet who states that Godot may represent "a spiritual form" or not "an actual person" (quoted in Conti 279). McDonald declares that Godot represents God in the play. However, he goes on to say that even if Beckett meant God, he could have introduced this in the play, but he did not (McDonald 30).

An example of how Godot may represent God (and whom the two characters are really waiting for) is when Estragon starts to eat a carrot. He then asks Vladimir

if they are really tied up to Godot (Beckett 21-22). The word "tied up" may indicate a spiritual tie or relationship, as if they are committed to this person who they are waiting for. McDonald comments on the same line saying that it may show the spiritual bond between them and Godot, perhaps thereby giving an indication that Godot represents God. Norma Kroll agrees with the fact that Godot may represent God, but is considered powerless (532). In other words, God does not respond to what Vladimir and Estragon wish or ask for.

Other studies, on the other hand, show that Godot represents something else other than God or something spiritual such as hope for a better life and change. As an example, Svalkvist declares that Beckett intended to show that Godot does not appear to give an impression that Godot does not really exist. As a result, he claims that Godot does not represent God (9). James J. James compares Godot to the availability of an effective vaccine which is not going to appear, but is presented only as a sign of hope (297). This may be because there is a continuous debate on whether the COVID-19 vaccines that have been created and administered to people are effective and if they have any negative side effects. Alain Robbe-Grillet suggests some answers for who may Godot be, he suggests that Godot may be God, or death or even silence. Then he continues that Godot may be that "inaccessible self Beckett pursues through his entire *oeuvre*" (cited in Bennett, 27).

The play ends without the appearance of Godot. The characters Vladimir and Estragon do not know who Godot is nor do they really say why they are waiting for him and what they want from him if he ever does show up. In fact, they are not even sure if Godot will show up. However, by the end of the play, Godot never comes. This is foreshadowed in the beginning of the play when Vladimir says "He didn't say for sure he'd come" (Beckett 16). This shows how Vladimir is uncertain about whether Godot will come or not. Even when they are told by the boy that he is not coming that day, they decide they "have to come back tomorrow" to wait for Godot (Beckett 86). The idea of people either waiting for someone that they know or waiting for someone that they do not know, or even waiting for a person that they are not sure even exists seems a waste of time to us, but not to the characters. This is related to the term "absurd" along with other postwar issues such as disillusionment where people question the meaning and purpose of life, often even mourning the days before war. Regarding those people who are waiting for the vaccine or for the whole virus to fade, one notices they have no problem waiting for the end of the virus or a vaccine leading to end the deaths. Like Vladimir and Estragon, they, too, do not know what they are waiting for exactly. They are also mourning their lives before the pandemic. So Vladimir and Estragon could represent the people who are

waiting for a change, which may come by the end of the pandemic.

Absurdity is linked to the theories of existentialism that Beckett explores in his works. This is seen in the two main protagonists who are waiting for someone they do not know and are uncertain as to whether he is coming or not (Svalkvist 9). Abhijit Seal states that *Waiting for Godot* is told by Samuel Beckett from an existential point of view which leads people to think of their life and their existence in a place with no meaning and order (2). Thus, the play reminds the audience members who are living in the same circumstances to reflect on their lives and how they spend their days. Chyntia, Ramadhani , and Ramadhan show how Beckett reflects the sufferings of the society as a whole through these two characters who are waiting for something uncertain. They state that waiting is not an option for everyone who is living in the same era. Thus, Beckett's Vladimir and Estragon are a reflection of the society during the World War II. The conditions are such that the two "are accustomed to waiting, though they do not know what they are waiting for" (4).

Seal also adds that, after war, people try to find their way in a life filled with disillusionment. These people are represented by the two main characters, Vladimir and Estragon. This can be noticed in the repetitions that occur in the play and in the shallow subjects that are discussed by these two characters (2). Hutchings declares that "the epistemological principle of uncertainty and the inability in the modern age to find a coherent system of meaning, order, or purpose by which to understand our existence and by which to live" (28).

Hooti and Torkamaneh have both tackled "*ad absurdum*" in *Waiting for Godot* through a postmodern study. They start their introduction by asking about the time that people have to spend being hopeful. Then they continue by saying that, "Maybe we fall in the trap of waiting; a waiting that has no solution except keeping on waiting" (40). Hooti and Torkamaneh declare that everything that was happening during Postmodernism was based on illogical reasoning. After World War II, people became faithless being surrounded by an unordered, irrational universe. They questioned their lives in a world where things happened randomly. Death and other destinies happen by chance. No justice can be found in destiny (41). Human plans are interrupted by unexpected interruptions. Thus, people living in these chaotic conditions plan anything.

Postmodernism is an era that has often been described and discussed. It has been given many definitions but no single definition. This is perhaps both linked to and reflected by the chaotic surroundings and conditions of the era. This is clear in Hooti's (330) description of Postmodernism in which he argues that it is a term that

has continuously been discussed in relation to many disciplines and fields. Hooti continues by saying that the term is the era that it reflects, an era cannot be seen "stable and fixed" (330). Postmodernism, according to Hooti and Torkamaneh can be given the features of "insecurity, uncertainty and skepticism" (28).

Vladimir and Estragon represent everyone who witnessed World War II. Vladimir and Estragon perform many absurd and meaningless activities and this can be understood through their conversations and dialogues while they are waiting for Godot. This is related to the postwar issues of fragmentation and disillusionment which people then suffered from. Beckett wanted to reflect how people questioned life and its coherence and meaning through these characters. He also portrays the characters as waiting for something/someone to change their situation, condition and surroundings. They are waiting for a glimpse of hope for a better life, which is similar to their life before war.

Chyntia, Siregar and Ramadhan discuss the fact that the characters presented by Beckett are described as "absurd". They also represent the people who were suffering from post – World War II social conditions (1). They were seen as waiting for hope. Chyntia, Siregar and Ramadhan describe how these characters are painted as waiting for this hope (1). They continue saying that these absurd characters represent both the absurdity of people who lived in those days as well as the society they lived in. In fact, their language itself is part of that absurdity (2).

An example of disillusionment and fragmentation in the play is when both characters start questioning things, such as the tree they are waiting next to, and if they are in the right place or not:

> **Estragon:** [despairingly]. Ah! [Pause.] You're sure it was here?
> **Vladimir:** What?
> **Estragon:** That we were to wait.
> **Vladimir:** He said by the tree. [They look at the tree.] Do you see any others?
>
> (Beckett 15)

They are unaware of their surroundings, the events happening around them, and why they are even waiting. Frida Svalkvist states that Vladimir and Estragon are always questioning their reality, and always fail to reach to any kind of truth (2). This is related to postmodernism which is an era whose people act in meaningless, unclear, and misunderstood ways. Its people can be described as the era itself, as skeptical, uncertain and insecure (Hooti and Torkamaneh 41). They add that human beings viewed life as tragic and meaningless. Their life of fragmentation led to their

disillusionment (Hooti and Torkamaneh 42).

In the same way, Lyotard defines the postmodern individual as one that "would be that which in the modern invokes the unpresentable in presentation itself, that which refuses the consolation of correct forms, refuses the consensus of taste permitting a common experience of nostalgia for the impossible, and inquiries into new presentations—not to take pleasure in them, but to better produce the feeling that is something unpresentable" (cited in Malpas 49).

Absurdity can be also seen throughout the whole play from the actions and attitudes of both characters, as in the following dialogue:

> **Estragon:** Why don't we hang ourselves?
> **Vladimir:** With what?
> **Estragon:** You haven't got a bit of rope?
> **Vladimir:** No.
> **Estragon:** Then we can't.
> **Vladimir:** Let's go
> **Estragon:** Oh, wait, there is my belt.
> **Vladimir:** It's too short
> **Estragon:** You could hang on to my legs.
> **Vladimir:** And who would hang onto mine?
> **Estragon:** *True.* (Beckett 42)

Another example is when Estragon does not notice that his pants fell down, until Vladimir tells him about that (Becket 2). From the previous examples, one can notice signs of mental illness. They offer themselves two choices over waiting: either hang themselves or leave. This shows how their life is meaningless. They would rather hang themselves than leave and go on with their lives. Hanging themselves would be better than staying alive without anything to wait for.

If this is compared to the life of people living during the COVID-19 pandemic, it can be said that they, too, detached themselves from their lives while waiting for a miracle to happen. People being detached led to their alienation from the surrounding society which, in a way, will only cause them some sort of mental illness.

Abhijit Seal continues by saying that the losses from war had led people to be hopeless which also led people to question life and its purpose (91). Seal adds that the absurdity of Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* itself can be seen from the "absurdity of humanity" that is presented through Vladimir and Estragon, the two

main characters that are waiting for Godot. Here, Seal declares that the two main characters represent all of the people who suffered from the impact of World War II, which lasted from 1939 to 1945. In comparison, the conditions and behavior of these two tramps represent the conditions and behavior of all human beings from the impact of COVID-19 (1). He adds that the chaotic surroundings led people to lose their faith in everything around them, such as the government, religion and law (1). The postwar individual who survived World War II is "the subject of the absurdist playwrights" who are represented by the main characters in Beckett's play (2). Although people lost their faith in life and its meaning, they still had hope. This is also seen in Beckett's play. This hope can be presented by Vladimir and Estragon's waiting for Godot (2).

D. Robert Siemens states that Samuel Beckett wrote the play as a reflection of the conditions and surroundings found after World War II. Siemens also adds that the play can be related to the pandemic of the current time. Siemens adds that the engagement of Vladimir and Estragon in ridiculously absurd conversations shows their disillusionment while waiting for Godot. This resembles the current critical moments in the spread of the pandemic where people are waiting for something to happen to stop the pandemic.

Based on what Svalkvist declares about existentialism and how it can be seen in Vladimir and Estragon's wait for the unknown Godot, it is similar to the wait of humanity for relief from COVID-19. Svalkvist adds that they keep trying to figure out what they can do to pass time. According to Svalkvist, this could also be applied to the people in the current time. They are trying to figure out what to do with their time until restrictions are lifted or a vaccine is found for COVID-19 (3-4). After reading what Svalkvist states, it can be noticed how the scholar links postwar issues and the issues of the pandemic. The scholar also shows how Vladimir and Estragon are representations of humanity in the time of COVID-19.

Conti discusses Lukács's opinion saying that Beckett's play reflects the catastrophic conditions of postwar and their effects on humanity (quoted in Conti 280). Svalkvist posits that Beckett is trying to present the disillusionment of the people and the questioning of their lives. He also adds how Beckett reflects this in Vladimir and Estragon and how this is related to the modern situation of suffering from the pandemic (9). So this may resemble all of humanity waiting for hope in the time of COVID-19.

James J. James makes a comparison between the play and the pandemic, stating that people are waiting for Godot in the time of COVID-19 (297). This could show how Vladimir and Estragon represent all of humanity since they are all waiting for

their "Godot". According to Chyntia, Siregar and Ramadhan, the characters in the play, although just four characters, represent many personalities and types of people in the society. James has used the title of Beckett's play as a metaphor to describe the time of COVID-19 and its impact on the world.

Greening states that "we are alive but we will die, and we live in a world that both supports and negates life" (111). Bland describes human beings/people all around the world as being imprisoned to such a paradox (712). This paradox has been shown by Cancryn and Stengel mentioned and reflected in the speeches of Trump during the COVID-19 pandemic, which showed how optimistic he is as a sign of disillusionment. On the other hand, in the context of COVID-19, the opinion of Yalom is also seen in some of the people which is to live until you die. Although people lost their faith in life and its meaning, they still had hope. This is also seen in Beckett's play. This hope is presented by Vladimir and Estragon's waiting for Godot (2), which in itself is the hope of people in the time of the pandemic.

People in the current situations and conditions have no choice other than waiting for something to happen or surrender to their own destinies which is to die from the virus. This can be linked to the quote "nothing to be done" from Beckett's play. This quote shows how people are desperate, whether talking about the time of postwar or the current time of the pandemic. Hooti and Torkamaneh comment on the quotation, "nothing to be done" (Becket 2) in that this absurdity is represented in the play by the two characters who try "to impose the notion of absurdity in people's life" (42). This can be seen in their conversations.

This meaningless and absurdity of life can be also seen in the following words produced by Pozzo and can be also linked to the words used by the people in the time of COVID-19:

> Pozzo: (suddenly furious.) Have you not done tormenting me with your accursed time! It's abominable! When! When! One day, is that not enough for you, one day he went dumb, one day I went blind, one day we'll go deaf, one day we were born, one day we shall die, the same day, the same second, is that not enough for you? (Calmer.) They give birth astride of a grave, the light gleams an instant, then it is night once more. (He jerks the rope.) On! (Beckett 37)

These words show how Beckett wants to reflect the status of people in those days and how they are keen to look for something new rather than the life that they are living. In the way they are living, nothing matters to them, whether being deaf, blind or dead, until something happens. It is a life based on waiting for something

new to happen, for a change. Hooti and Torkamaneh comment on these words by saying "that everything like becoming deaf and dumb affected them easily, but also it is trying to mention the absurdity of everyone's life when mundane matters are put at the central part of their lives. He is saying these strange expressions so downheartedly due to the fact that, he has realized the true nature of life and the eternal life" (43).

The same absurdity and disillusionment that the characters suffer from could also be seen and understood in the language used in the play. The repetition of words, phrases and dialogues. The use of unrelated words, phrases and sentences, and the superficial and meaningful topics used in the play are all postmodern features which reflect and present the chaotic circumstances and atmosphere of the postwar period. Hooti and Torkamaneh state that Beckett's view of postmodern life can be perceived as "bleak, helplessly hopeless and ironic where language does not have a certain meaning" (43). According to Chyntia, Siregar and Ramadhan, *Waiting for Godot* is a play where you could see the absurdity of the conversation between the characters, their acts, the repetition of words, and their personalities. The superficial conversations, repetition of words, phrases and sentences and the meaningless language is the result of their hopelessness and disillusionment.

Added to that, Chyntia, Siregar and Ramadhan state that the play contains verbal nonsense where "sentences do not follow a sequence and words do not mean what we expect them to mean" (2). They comment on the use of language in the following quote, "Shall we go?" and the other says "Let's go". The two characters are intending to leave, yet they do not leave. This is what they call "absurd dialogue" which is not just the language of the individuals, but reflects the language used by society as a whole back then (2). These words show Vladimir and Estragon's hesitation to leave or stay, which means that they are not able to choose between living their lives in the chaotic situations or continue their wait for the resource of change. The same hesitation can be seen among the people living in the time of COVID-19, who are unable to move on in their lives and in the same time are not able to continue waiting for something that may and may not happen and change their lives.

In the following dialogue, the leaves that grew on the tree in the second act are a sign and a glimmer of hope for change. These new leaves could be compared to the vaccines that have been found against the virus in light of their side effects.

Vladimir: Wait … we embraced … we were happy … happy … what do we do now that we're happy … go on waiting … waiting … let me think … it's

coming … go on waiting … now that we're happy … let me see … ah! The tree!

Estragon: The tree?

Vladimir: Do you not remember?

Estragon: I'm tired.

Vladimir: Look at it.

(They look at the tree.)

Estragon: I see nothing.

Vladimir: But yesterday evening it was all black and bare. And now it's covered with leaves.

Estragon: Leaves?

Vladimir: In a single night.

Estragon: It must be the Spring. (Becket 10)

Another dialogue from the play is:

"Let's go."

"We can't."

"Why not?"

"We are waiting for Godot."

"Ah!" (Becket 16)

The quotes above are taken from the conversations of the same main characters. They do not really know what to do. They are lost in waiting, without knowing who they are waiting for. This makes them hesitant of leaving, which is as if they are waiting for a mystery to happen. Hooti and Torkamaneh (2011) comment on this saying that they are both waiting for "a mystery that is wrapped in enigma" (42).

Going back to what Abhijit Seal says about how people after war were trying to find their way in a life of disillusionment. These people are represented by the two main characters, Vladimir and Estragon. This can be noticed in the repetitions that occur in the play and in the shallow subjects that are discussed by these two characters (2). If we think of how Vladimir and Estragon represent all of humanity after war, we can also think of them as representatives of all of humanity during COVID-19 where people have been suffering from disillusionment and questioning their lives and their reason for living. People started thinking of their routines and habits and shallow ideas with optimistic views, which shaped their conversations. The only hope Vladimir and Estragon had, is the appearance of Godot. The only

hope that humanity had during COVID was for a vaccine so that the whole disease would just disappear. This can be assumed in the following words:

> **Estragon:** Let's hang ourselves immediately!
> **Vladimir:** From a bough?
> (They go towards the tree.)
> **Vladimir:** I wouldn't trust it.
> **Estragon:** We can always try.
> **Vladimir:** Go ahead.
> **Estragon:** After you.
> **Vladimir:** No. No. You first.
> **Estragon:** Why me?
> **Vladimir:** You're lighter than I am. (Beckett 10)

The dialogue on hanging themselves is repeated throughout the play. It is also repeated in the following conversation:

> **Vladimir:** We will hang ourselves tomorrow. Unless Godot comes.
> **Estragon:** And if he comes?
> **Vladimir:** We will be saved. (Beckett 60)

In the previous words, it can be noticed that "Godot" is the savior. They are desperate in a way that they are not afraid to lose their lives and commit suicide unless they see Godot. Likewise, even when they decide to go, they do not take any action.

People in the time of COVID-19 are bound together by their own fear of the future and from their destinies like the characters in the play that use a certain kind of communication and dialogue only to pass time. Like the people who are waiting for something to happen, a miracle to save them from the virus, the characters in the play are also waiting for the unknown and undefined. As Chyntia, Siregar and Ramadhan call it, Godot, "the unclear, never-defined being that will bring them something, nobody knows what actually it is, something like hope, way of life, homeland or maybe identity" (3).

Chyntia, Siregar and Ramadhan discuss the people these days and how they are exposed to a threatening virus that most of these people are unable to reach to the right path, are unable to define their own targets and have no ambitions. They are just passively standing and waiting for the unknown to happen. They also state

that the complicated relationships between the characters in the play resemble the complicated relationships among the people in real life (5). This shows the similarities between the characters in the play and the people living in the current time of COVID-19.

Conclusion

To sum up, after analyzing the play from the lens of Postmodernism and Existentialism, it can be noticed how the characters in the play, *Waiting for Godot* also represent the people living in the time of COVID-19. Vladimir and Estragon exemplify all human kind in the time of COVID-19. They all are waiting for the unknown and the undefined to happen, which is their hope for change and for a miracle to happen.

Acknowledgement

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Contesting Gender Aesthetics: A Feminocentric Approach to Crime Writing in Select Novels of Kishwar Desai

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Abstract   Kathleen Klein's notion of a feminocentric mode of crime writing asserts the need to reformulate the genre's problematic traditions that are aligned with stereotypical representation of women characters. Kishwar Desai's novels appropriate Klein's vision of a feminocentric model in the context of Indian crime fiction and highlight the suffering of women through her female protagonist, Simran Singh. Taking a constructive detour from the usual macho detective themes, she traverses into the domains of crime that have a gendered impact and deals with the theme of female infanticide, commercial surrogacy, sexual harassment and rape from a female point of view. In this light, the present article examines the ways in which Desai's works disrupt the genre's long-established tropes and propose an alternate form of discourse through a feminist literary analysis of her crime series, *Witness the Night* (2010), *Origins of Love* (2012), and *The Sea of Innocence* (2013).
Keywords   Crime fiction; detective fiction; gender; social commentary

Introduction

The history of crime fiction exposes how the genre has always remained a male-dominated space. The conventional image of a detective is of someone who is the ultimate figure of masculinity, a defender of patriarchy, and an enforcer and guardian of order (Devereux 19). Crime fiction until the twentieth century included only male protagonists and antagonists, with marginalised female characters depicted as being in danger, in need of assistance, or as seductresses, but never as the ones wielding any form of genuine agency. Though women writers and detectives have long been prevalent in crime fiction, the detective—regardless of gender and sexuality—is constantly in negotiation with certain masculine codes, and discerning the change in the role of the detective requires understanding the extent to which she or he abides by or confronts these long-established conventions (Plain 11). Roth reiterates this view in his *Foul and Fair Play: Reading Genre in Classic Detective Fiction* (1995) as he studies 138 novels and short stories from the 1840s to the 1960s and asserts that during this period, the genre was highly conservative and excessively masculine (xiii). He further states: "My controlling assumption is that in detective fiction gender is genre and genre is male; Jane Marple and Modesty Blaise are feminine notations that perform a masculine function" (xiv) and also attributes the characterization of female characters to "flesh out male desire and shadow male sexual fear" (xiv).

While literature in itself adapts to social changes regularly, popular genres such as crime fiction can be even more responsive to the growing number of female readers and authors who want to see themselves and their experiences highlighted, mirrored, recuperated, made visible and vocal (Molinaro 100). Contrary to the early stages of the form in which women were mainly addenda or were featured in antagonistic roles, crime fiction embodies sufficient potential to include a feminist message by analysing sexism and misogyny, and by depicting settings in which women gain agency and power (Molinaro 100). Furthermore, a feminist engagement may benefit the types of violations investigated by crime fiction by increasing the possibility of investigating crimes that disproportionally affect women.

In her book *The Woman Detective: Gender and Genre*, Kathleen Gregory Klein

posits that "the predictable formula of detective fiction is based on a world whose sex/gender valuations reinforce male hegemony" (226). While Klein observes only a few changes in the contemporary renditions of the genre, she proposes numerous ways of reformulating it. She calls for a 'feminocentric' model of crime writing that incorporates "questions of gender—intertwined with those of class, race, sexual preference, and social attitudes—if it is to succeed" (227). She also suggests the replacement of murder with crimes of social importance: "Social injustice, industrial corruption, rape and battery are serious crimes which also ask the readers to rethink their expectations of fiction and life" (228). Some of the other measures proposed by Klein include the replacement of female stereotypes with actual women, a thorough rethinking of the genre's essential structure, and rejection of closure that more or less reaffirms the status quo. The present paper studies how Kishwar Desai's novels fulfil Klein's vision of a 'feminocentric' form of crime writing by refusing to conform to the conventional mode of crime writing and instead use the genre as a vehicle to highlight feminist concerns.

Kishwar Desai is a writer, columnist, and playwright who began her career as a journalist and later as a political reporter. She has also worked extensively in television and broadcast media before pursuing a career as a writer. Desai grew up in India but currently balances her time between London, Goa, and Delhi. This sense of dual national identity complicates Desai's representation of the Indian society; instead of portraying a romanticised version of the country, her status enables her to depict the nation in a neutral, unprejudiced manner. *Witness the Night*, her debut crime novel received the Costa Book Award in 2010 and has been translated into more than 25 languages. The work was also shortlisted for the Author's Club First Novel Award and was on the Man Asian Literary Prize longlist. Desai introduces her protagonist, Simran Singh, through this text, who later appears in the subsequent works as well. The second novel from her Simran Singh series, *Origins of Love*, was published in 2012 and was followed by *The Sea of Innocence*, published in 2013.

Desai belongs to the category of 'social crime authors', as all of the novels described above deal with issues of social significance. She refers to her novels as social thrillers as they expose the inequalities, injustices, and cultural practices of the country. In this way, she belongs to the group of contemporary crime fiction writers who use the genre as a medium to raise social awareness. While talking about the Simran Singh series in an interview with PTI (Press Trust of India), Desai says:

I base the plot on research—because even though the genre is fiction—

> I don't want people to ever forget that all this is actually happening around us. So while my characters and narrative are all part of my imagination, I do constantly refer to real-life events, with names and places so that people can give the story a context. (qtd. in "Kishwar's New Novel")

The issues she raises are crucial in present-day society, and her use of the genre as a medium of social commentary is admirable. While *Witness the Night* deals with the theme of female infanticide, *Origins of Love* addresses issues such as surrogacy, international adoptions, and HIV/AIDS. Similarly, *The Sea of Innocence* focuses on the concerns surrounding sexual harassment and rape. The contemporary reality of gender-based violence in the country is a prevalent theme in all of Desai's novels.

A Feminocentric Approach to Crime Writing in Select Novels of Kishwar Desai

Stephen Knight expresses his concern when he opines that the crime genre presents "an inherent difficulty for writers speaking as women, and usually as feminists, in a form which is deeply implicated with masculinism" (163). This is owing to the fact that propagating a feminist sexual politics through the genre is not as easy as replacing the male protagonist with a female counterpart. Munt argues that despite the genre's apparent "unsuitability for women, crime fiction clearly can manifest feminine novelistic forms and feminist political agendas" (207). The primary apprehension that arises when analysing women writers' use of a male-dominated genre is whether their writings are truly subversive or merely parodic of established male literary traditions. Similar arguments can be found when investigating the criticism levelled at American crime writers Sara Paretsky and Sue Grafton. Both of these writers challenge the masculine hard-boiled[1] fiction through the representation of their female protagonists. But the mere replacement of a male protagonist with a female one does not necessarily warrant the subversion of gender stereotypes. For instance, Johanna M. Smith elaborates upon Paretsky's failure to gender the canon through her writings by citing an example from *Burn Marks* where Paretsky's protagonist, V.I.Warshawski deliberates on whether caring for her aunt should take priority over her work and in doing so, coyly positions that "it just felt good to have some man […] think […] that I should be working" (qtd. in Smith 80-81). According to Smith, such instances demonstrate how Paretsky's works remain

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1   Hard-boiled crime fiction is a rough, unsentimental subgenre of American crime fiction distinguished by depictions of explicit sex and violence, metropolitan environments, and fast-paced, colloquial conversations. Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler, George Harmon Coxe, and William Riley Burnett are among the genre's most prominent practitioners.

"male-defined, sometimes to the point of unintentional parody" (81).

Sue Grafton's protagonist, Kinsey Millhone has also faced similar criticism for adopting the detective fiction formula without properly altering the genre's sensibilities. However, even though Grafton does not radically subvert the detective fiction formula, her works nonetheless reflect a feminist subjectivity throughout them and provide women with an opportunity to assume the subject position (Jones and Walton 143). Although these works have been criticised for presenting a masculine model of femininity, viewing the world through the eyes of a female or minority detective broadened the perspective of the private-eye novel to include issues related to gender and race (Geherin 163). Such critical debates on writings from other nations make us question whether in the genre of Indian crime fiction, women are truly subversive or if their works merely come off as poor imitations of their male counterparts. The present study reveals that while Desai's protagonist Simran Singh does abide by some of the masculinist conventions, she also creates a unique identity of her own in these novels that categorically differentiates her from the former crop of detectives and disregards various existing social constructs.

Simran describes herself as a "middle-aged, meddlesome social worker or NGO-wali" (Desai, *Witness* 6) and amateur therapist. She acts in ways that are considered unconventional in India; she smokes, drinks, has several relationships with men, and is not afraid to confront the rules or those in authority. Through the character of Simran, Desai subverts the conventions of the crime genre and exposes the plight of women in the country. It is interesting to note that Desai weaves her plot around themes that are relevant in present-day Indian society, with most of them revolving around gender-based issues.

Witness the Night and Female Infanticide in India

Desai's *Witness the Night* deliberates on the theme of female infanticide in the country. In a nutshell, female infanticide refers to an act of killing newborn female children within a year of their birth. The novel's plot revolves around a 14-year-old girl who is discovered, barely alive, raped, and chained to a bed in her house, where her whole family of 13 members is found dead. Because she was the only one at the crime scene, she is presumed guilty and imprisoned. The plot then advances to Simran Singh, a social worker who is summoned by her old acquaintance Amarjit, the Punjab Inspector General, to examine her mental state and determine if she can be further probed. Simran, on the other hand, finds it difficult to believe in Durga's culpability and sets out to examine the circumstances leading up to the killings. As the plot progresses, she uncovers that the dead family used to practice sex

selection themselves and through this, Desai highlights the social reality of female infanticide and foeticide in Northern India. *Witness the Night* is, without a doubt, a political novel. It sheds light on a society that, according to Desai, is engulfed in an incredible paradox: one of the world's most dynamic and fast-growing economies, but also one in which women are frequently viewed as both second-class citizens and catastrophic economic liabilities (East). Desai offers her perspective on male inclination in a patriarchal environment throughout the narrative: "It doesn't matter where you live, or how old you are. You can be educated, middle class, British but your longing for a son will never leave you" (55–56).

Female infanticide in India is a long-standing phenomenon induced by societal ills such as poverty, illiteracy, child marriage, the dowry system, unmarried women giving birth, female genital mutilation, starvation, maternal sickness, and so on. It is a brutal reality that female infanticide and sex-selective abortions are still practised in present-day India despite it being criminalised, partially due to the patriarchal nature of Indian society. Although the nation prohibited selective abortion of female foetuses in 1994, the practice is still widespread. A recent study titled "Female Infanticide Worldwide: The Case for Action by the UN Human Rights Council" by the Asian Centre for Human Rights[1] revealed that India witnessed one of the highest female infanticide cases in the world in the year 2018 ("India Witnesses One"). This is leading the country's sex ratio to fall considerably, which is likely to have catastrophic ramifications for the population's gender balance. According to another 2011 report published in the British medical magazine *The Lancet*, up to 12 million female foetuses were terminated in India during the preceding three decades (Saikia et al. 813). Saikia et al. also state that, due to sex-selective abortion, India is home to half of the world's missing newborns (813). Similarly, in a study conducted in 2020, the United Nations reports 142 million 'missing women' worldwide during the last 50 years, out of which India and China accounted for 45.8 and 72.3 million cases respectively ("India Accounts For"). The two countries account for around 90–95% of the estimated 1.5 million missing female births globally each year ("India Accounts For"). This highlights the severity of the themes that Desai discusses in her novel.

Origins of Love and Commercial Surrogacy

Desai's second novel *Origins of Love* combats India's surrogacy industry and is a difficult but imperative read. Against a fictitious framework, the novel expertly

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1   Asian Centre for Human Rights (ACHR) is a Delhi-based NGO committed to the advance-ment and preservation of human rights and basic freedom in Asia.

examines several contentious reproductive topics such as IVF, surrogacy, sperm/egg donation, and adoption. Desai brilliantly depicts the clinics into which impoverished young Indian women are compelled to go due to economic or familial obligations. Consequently, they assume the role of battery farms for hopeful western parents who send embryos to Mumbai for the surrogates to bear for nine months. Once this is done and the baby is born, the parents fly to the clinic to collect the child. Desai not only succeeds in portraying the inner workings of both sides but also weaves a captivating narrative out of the situation.

The plot of the novel opens with an HIV positive English infant in an incubator, with no idea how she became infected, other than the knowledge that she was born out of an Indian womb. Simran is motivated to learn how newborn Amelia got infected, given the kid was conceived and carried at a fertility clinic owned and operated by her friend Anita and her husband. The setting of the novel then changes to London, where she introduces Kate and Ben, a couple longing for a child. As Kate experiences yet another miscarriage, she realises that something must be done. She becomes desperate and turns to surrogacy as an option to conceive a child and is even willing to spend the duration of nine months in India. Desai cleverly avoids incorporating too many connections from *Witness the Night* so that her second novel can be read on its own. Each chapter introduces a fresh situation, broadening Desai's depiction of a world in which women and children may be readily abused and unethical physicians can amass billions.

Commercial surrogacy is any form of surrogacy in which the surrogate mother is paid for her services in addition to covering medical expenses. The alternate variant of surrogacy is called altruistic surrogacy, where a woman offers to carry a pregnancy without the element of monetary compensation. Nobody could have guessed that commercial surrogacy, which was created, born, and flourished in the United States, would go to India and Thailand by the early 2000s (Rudrappa 286). Though official figures are notoriously difficult to obtain, a Delhi-based organisation called Sama Research Group for Women and Health conducted a United Nations-supported study in 2012, and the results were astounding. The surrogacy market in India was estimated to be more than $400 million a year, with over 3000 fertility clinics spread across the country (Bagri). According to certain estimates, India's current surrogacy industry is worth more than a billion dollars (Tripathi). The government of India imposed a ban on transnational commercial surrogacy in August 2015, limiting it to heterosexual married Indian couples without any children and are able to convince a relative to become an altruistic gestational mother for them (Najar).

Desai explains her motivation for choosing surrogacy as the theme for her work in an interview with Arunima Mazumdar; she wants to create awareness about the process so that people have greater clarity about it. She is of the view that, if the 'business' continues unabated, without the passage of ART (Assisted Reproductive Technology) Bill[1], the consequences can be catastrophic. This process interferes with the emotional and physical health, as well as the fertility cycles, of women who, due to poverty, do not have access to insurance or psychiatric counselling (Mazumdar). She discusses a slew of disturbing aspects that come with the country's surrogacy growth. In the novel, women are pressured to have more children than would be healthy in a natural cycle; an inordinate amount of fertility drugs are pumped into their bodies to a point that their ovaries are severely swollen. More often than not, these women are lured and persuaded into being surrogates by the prospect of monetary rewards. However, even this financial remuneration ends up being taken from them by the male members of their family. Desai describes clinics that maintain records of caste and creed, religion, and physical attributes as people come in search of custom-made babies. What's worse, because these facilities rarely take any safety precautions, a disease might pass unnoticed from the donor to the mother and from the mother to the baby.

The Sea of Innocence and Rape, Sexual Harassment

Desai's third novel of the Simran Singh series, *The Sea of Innocence*, describes the darker side of Goa: "There was a looming darkness around the edges. Like a hungry nocturnal sea animal, it padded through the sand, seeking victims […]" (10). The novel starts with Simran going on a vacation to Goa with her daughter, Durga. While being there, she receives a disturbing video of a foreign citizen being raped by three males on her phone. She is perplexed as to who might have sent her the video and later identifies the girl in the video to be a British national named Liza Kay, who had mysteriously disappeared. Simran investigates Liza's abrupt disappearance and interviews various people. While they claim to have known her, none of them was willing to provide any additional information about her. Other recordings depicting similar instances emerge as the plot proceeds, leaving Simran to uncover what is going on.

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1   The ART (Assisted Reproductive Technology) Bill was recently passed by the Lok Sabha towards the end of 2021. In vitro fertilisation, embryo transfers, and sperm banks—yet another infertility related service and business that is rapidly rising in the nation—will be regulated under the aforementioned bill. Sex selection and sex determination are likewise prohibited under the ART Bill.

The Sea of Innocence is an undeniably relevant novel in the present age or any age for that matter. Desai repeatedly alludes to real-life crimes and uses the form as a medium to express her thoughts and mark her protest against the happenings in the country. The novel is dedicated to Jyoti Singh, a physiotherapy student who was raped and assaulted by six men in New Delhi in 2012; to Scarlett Keeling, a 15-year-old British girl who was also sexually assaulted and killed in Anjuna beach in Goa in 2008; and to "the thousands of women who have been raped and murdered in India - in hope that one day they will get justice" (ii). Talking about the novel, Desai says:

> […] I think readers will find a very strong and eerie resonance between my narrative and recent incidents of rape and gang rape in India. After all, there is a common background narrative that connects the story of all women in India - and I think that is reflected in all my Simran Singh novels - whether they deal with foeticide or renting out wombs or rape. ("Kishwar's New Novel")

A Non-Conformist Writer at Work

In his popular book *The Necessary Angel: Essays on Reality and the Imagination*, modernist poet Wallace Stevens writes, "[r]eality is a cliché from which we escape by metaphor" (179). Crime fiction has an extensive history of functioning as a form of escapist literature by rejecting realism and favouring the imaginary. Take the example of twentieth-century British crime writing for example. The twentieth century was a momentous period in the history of Britain, with both the World Wars and the economic depression ravaging the stability of the nation. However, even when violence was at its full swing, crime fiction remained the most widely read genre during the period because, amidst all the violence, these novels provided its readers with the much-needed escape from what was happening around them. In other words, crime fiction became a form of escapism; the genre became a medium of containment, a narrative that "makes safe" (Plain 3) and provided the readers with the reassurance of justice. They believed that similar to how crimes are solved towards the end of these novels, the adverse happenings around them will also come to an end someday and that justice will ultimately prevail. Contrary to Wallace Stevens' assertion and the history of crime fiction as a medium of escapism, Desai builds her plots on real crimes, and as a result, rather than employing the genre merely as a means of escapism, her works confront problems that are widespread in the community. This technique of constantly referring to real-life crimes make

her narratives realistic and represents the blurring of boundaries between reality and fiction. Frank Moorhouse analyses this type of crime fiction that combines reality and fiction and asserts, "where boundaries between the real and the fictive dissolve, a space is opened up for the exploration of social and cultural anxieties, disturbances and crises that resist simple resolutions" (qtd. in Shaw 51). Desai steers clear from the standard conceptions of justice usually associated with crime fiction, which ask for a happy conclusion at the end of the novel. All three of her works under consideration reflect distorted notions of justice and this is discussed in detail later in the article.

Simran's investigation provides a chance for the authorial voice to expose the many facets of Goa's quick spiral into notoriety as a consequence of rising crime, drug trades and rave events that frequently end in absolute mayhem. The region is no longer the safe haven that it once used to be, owing to these issues. As much as it is a murder mystery, this novel is also an assessment of contemporary society, since Desai paints a sordid picture of how women tourists—or women in general for that matter—are mistreated in the country. Even though sexual assault and abuse is not an easy topic to discuss, Desai doesn't hold back from presenting the horrors of the same. Her approach when it comes to narration is direct and with new incidents of abuse against women emerging practically on a daily basis, she does an excellent job of articulating concerns about the unfair treatment of women in Indian society and the sense of insecurity that accompanies it. These examples demonstrate how Desai's writings successfully align with Klein's concept of incorporating gender issues into the core of crime narratives.

Wayne Templeton posits that ethnic detective fiction commonly deals with two variations of offences: the immediate, obvious ones that are usually resolved in the text's resolution section, and larger, more pervasive injustices that are beyond rapid remedy (38). The fundamental goal of the investigators in these books is not merely to investigate the former, minor crimes, but to keep pointing out the larger ones and explaining how they continue to victimise people (Templeton 39). Any crime fiction that aims to function as a source of social critique, including the ones described in this paper, makes a similar case. Even though the perpetrator is identified and convicted, the larger underlying offences remain unaddressed at the conclusion of these books. While the immediate crimes in Desai's novels are individual crimes that are solved towards the end of the novel, the wider, more pervasive crime that she intends to emphasise through these works is the country's present-day reality of gender-based crimes. Her works reflect a lack of societal indignation since sexism and misogyny are so pervasive and embedded in our culture that they are not even

considered wrong. As a result, it is not shocking that the crimes stay unresolved at the end of these novels. Writers of feminist crime fiction adopt it as a means of social commentary, revealing how these societal constraints and entanglements make it difficult for a crime to be investigated, or even regarded as a crime at all (Meyer 113). As a result, both investigators and novelists can only do as much to raise awareness about these issues. These writers often experiment with the resolution part of the genre; lack of standard resolution is a way of shifting the focus of the text to larger societal flaws rather than individual crimes. In a chapter devoted to Liza Cody's work, Mary Hadley associates a lack of conclusion to gender:

> In the traditional British detective novel, the idea was that the world was a just place, and the detective, police force or the judicial system would remove the criminal and re-establish the status quo, but in the female hard-boiled novels, […] this restoration does not happen since the detectives all question the worthiness of the justice system and the establishment in general. (66)

This is evident in all of Desai's works under consideration. Her works constantly deal with systemic flaws such as corruption and shortcomings of the society, while maintaining a core focus on gender-related issues in India. In *Witness the Night*, even though the patriarchal oppressive structures prevalent in present-day India is blamed for Durga's conduct, and it is argued that her family and society compelled her to behave the way she did, the resolution is unsettling as the real culprits escape any form of punishment (Morgan 6). The police officer is paid with Durga's family home at a reduced rate in exchange for letting Durga and Sharda move out of the city with Simran, the tutor is exonerated, and the women are depicted as victims of their situations (Morgan 6). Similarly, the ending of *The Sea of Innocence*, in which the British woman's case is resolved whereas the Indian woman's case remains open, depicts the disparity in justice based on nationality and the reduced status of local women in Indian society. This lack of closure and conventional endings is precisely what Klein outlines in her feminocentric mode of crime writing, and Desai's novels adhere to them, thereby challenging rather than reaffirming the status quo.

Neele Meyer argues that, in crime fiction, female protagonists frequently have an upper hand over their male equivalents when it comes to gathering information. Oftentimes, they are successful in obtaining information that their male counterparts were unable to collect and consequently, these women "challenge gendered spatial practices that confine women to the private sphere to protect them

from the apparently dangerous public sphere" (Meyer 112). Desai's protagonist, who functions in public without much difficulty, defies the notion of women being restrained and having limited access to the public sphere. While the media and public discourses frequently stress the threats of the public domain for women (Phadke et al. 51), texts such as Desai's raised concerns about the largely quiet abuse prevalent within families. Such depictions stand in stark contrast to the normative patterns of crime writing, in which the public sphere is frequently used as a site of transgression.

Conclusion

To conclude, all three novels in Desai's crime series employ the genre of crime fiction to highlight feminist issues through the narrative. Her works categorically disregard the centrality of masculinity and demonstrate how women can equally renegotiate the space usually occupied by men in the genre. Elizabeth Fletcher stresses that even the simple gesture of choosing a woman as the lead character of crime fiction may be construed as a feminist act (197). Kishwar Desai's nuanced curation of the character of Simran Singh in the series effectively blends with Klein's feminocentric model of crime fiction. Contrary to stereotypical representations of female protagonists, Desai creates a genuine investigator with flaws that make her more relatable. She never cleanly or swiftly solves the cases she is given, and she frequently ends up discovering broader issues that are well beyond her capacity to resolve. When it comes to her role as a social worker, she is continually beaten by the community in which she lives, leaving the reader with a negative sense of her experienced India and little guidance on how to tackle the issues that appear to afflict the current Indian milieu in which she is placed (Morgan 13). Her enthusiasm and dedication, on the other hand, make her a compelling figure to a modern reading public, and the quick-paced storylines make Desai's works engaging. Desai deviates from the normative tropes of crime fiction, thereby producing an alternate form of the genre told from a feminist standpoint. Such depictions question the genre's established rules and illustrate how generic traditions are bound to change over time. While the trope of murder is still a part of Desai's novels, they nevertheless focus on larger societal themes such as female foeticide and infanticide, commercial surrogacy, rape, and sexual abuse which intergrates the conventional construct to make it real and relevant. This demonstrates crime fiction's potential to address key social concerns and sheds light on the genre's deep analytical possibilities, which have previously gone unnoticed.

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Through the Lens of Cosmic Satire: Attacking the Human Condition in Selected Poems by Dorothy Parker

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Abstract   The present paper aims at exploring cosmic satire in the poetry of Dorothy Parker. The focus will be on selected poems in which Parker sarcastically attacks the human condition, making man who sees himself as the center of the cosmos or the universe the main target of her satiric arrows. To establish a theoretical framework for the paper, the researcher presents a brief overview of satire in general: its origin, definition, kinds, and techniques, with special reference to cosmic satire and its main focus. In her satirical poems, Parker vividly exposes human faults, mocking man's failings in a humorous and witty manner.

Keywords   Dorothy Parker; satire; cosmic satire; the human condition.

Introduction

Satire is defined as a genre of literature in which human vices and follies are ridiculed. In *the Oxford Dictionary of English*, the term refers to "the use of humour, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticize people's stupidity or vices" (1581). In this sense, According to Rebecca Yearling, satire might be "genial or

harsh, tolerant or punitive, aimed at general social abuses or at the vices of specific individuals. It might aim to expose, to reform, to enlighten, or merely to amuse" (43-44). The origin of the word satire can be traced back to the Latin word "*satura*" which means primarily full, and then comes to mean "a mixture full of different things" (Highet 231). In his article "Satura and Satire," Ullman points out that it was the Roman satirist Horace who first used the word "satura" as a literary term in his collection of satirical poems entitled *The Satires* (172).

Cosmic satire focuses on the human condition, attacking man—the master of this world. Here, the human being "is made to seem insignificant in the universe, in the grand scheme of things," to quote Thomas Tierney who indicates that the satirical attack here is generally directed at man's arrogance, "his pride, his self-assurance, his feelings of overwhelming importance…[T]he focus is on the woes that beset man rather than those he creates or is directly responsible for" (149). Attacking man's belief that the cosmos or the universe is centered around him, Peter Charron writes (in archaic English):

> Besides all this, man beleeveth that the heaven, the starres, all this great celestiall motion of the world, is only made for him…And the poore miserable wretch is in the meane time ridiculous: he is heere beneath lodged in the last and worst stage of the world, most distant from the celestiall vaut, in the sincke of the world, amongst the filth and lees thereof, with creatures of baser condition, made to receive all those excrements and ordures, which raine downe and fall from above upon his head; nay he lives not but by them, and to endure all those accidents that on all sides happen unto him; and yet he makes himselfe beleeve that he is the master and commander of all…. (qtd. in Tierney 149)

There are three main kinds of satire, varying in their levels of harshness and having certain characteristics that distinguish each kind. Satire can be Horatian, Juvenalian, or Menippean. Named after Horace, Horation satire is gentle, mild, and light-hearted, mainly aiming to amuse and evoke laughter, and rarely contains personal attacks. Sympathetic in tone, Horation satire attempts to promote morals and heal the situation through resorting to humour rather than to anger. Horatian satirists do not seek to change the world but merely highlight human stupidity. They usually comment on human nature and "address issues that they view more as follies, rather than evil" (Barron). Jonathan Swift*s Gulliver's Travels* and Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* are two examples of Horatian satire.

Originating in the writings of the Roman satirist Juvenal, Juvenalian satire is vicious, dark, angry, and contemptuous. Serious rather than comic, this kind of satire is the harshest, using more condensed doses of sarcasm and irony. Juvenalian satirists see that their mission is to attack their target, whether a person or an organization, to reveal hypocrisy and moral wrongdoings. Of the best example of Juvenalian satire are *Animal Farm* by George Orwell and *A Clockwork Orange* by Anthony Burgess.

Finally, Menippean satire, which takes its name from the Greek philosopher Menippus, creates a balance between the two former types of satire. Its satirical arrows are often directed to mental attitudes or beliefs rather than persons or entities. In other words, Menippean satirists are more aggressive than Juvenalian satirists but more critical than those who write Horation satire. William Blake's book entitled *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* and Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* are two expressive examples of Menippean satire.

Satirists usually employ certain technical devices through which they can add an extra layer of meaning and achieve the effect sought by the satirical work. Of these techniques are irony, sarcasm, parody, burlesque, lampoon, and invective. Irony generally refers to the use of words to express a meaning that is the opposite of their literal meaning. Irony has three types. It can be verbal, dramatic, or situational. Verbal irony takes place when a person says something but intends the opposite. Dramatic irony occurs when a writer lets the readers know more information about an event than a character in the literary work does. Situational irony takes place when the actual result of a certain situation is completely different from what has previously been expected. A form of irony, sarcasm is usually employed "to communicate implicit criticism about the listener or the situation" creating a negative effect of contempt, scorn, and disapproval (Shamay-Tsoory et al 288).

A common technique of satire, parody refers to the imitation of another writer's style for the purpose of creating a humorous or satiric effect. A similar satirical technical device is burlesque which imitates "the manner (the form and style) or else the subject matter of a serious literary work or a literary genre, in verse or in prose, but makes the imitation amusing by a ridiculous disparity between the manner and the matter" (Abrams 26). Burlesque and parody are sometimes used interchangeably. Lampoon is a harsh attack on a particular person, ridiculing the appearance and character of that person. Finally, invective is a tool of satire that is used in both prose and poetry to attack a person, a topic, or an institution through employing a highly abusive and insulting language. An example of invective can

be noted in *King Lear*, Act 2, Scene II, when Kent attacks Oswald very abusively, describing him as

> a knave; a rascal; an eater of broken meats; a base, proud, shallow, beggarly, three-suited, hundred-pound, filthy, worsted-stocking knave; a lily-livered, action-taking knave, a whoreson, glass-gazing, super-serviceable finical rogue; one-trunk-inheriting slave; one that wouldst be a bawd, in way of good service, and art nothing but the composition of a knave, beggar, coward, pandar, and the son and heir of a mongrel bitch: one whom I will beat into clamorous whining, if thou deniest the least syllable of thy addition. (Shakespeare 83)

Dorothy Parker

Called by friends as Dottie and by others as Mrs. Parker, Dorothy Parker was an American poet, satirist, critic, and short-story writer whose name was closely associated with modern urbane humour. She attracted the attention and admiration of her readers by her remarkable wit, wisecracks, and ridiculous treatment of human faults and shortcomings. Despite her unhappy childhood and unsettled marriage life, Parker never gave up her comic spirit and witty remarks. Her originality and sense of humour were "so wonderful that neither age nor illness ever dried up the spring from which it came fresh each day'" (Hellman 187).

Parker's literary production is various, covering a wide range of fields such as poetry, short stories, drama, criticism, and book reviews. She published three collections of poetry: *Enough Rope* (1926), *Sunset Gun* (1928), and *Death and Taxes* (1931). A book of her poems entitled *Not So Deep As a Well*: *Collected Poems* appeared in 1936. A distinctive short story writer, Parker produced two short story collections: *After Such Pleasures* (1932) and *Here Lies* (1939). "Such a Pretty Little Picture" came into view in 1922 as her first short story and "Big Blonde" was her autobiographical short story for which she won the O. Henry Award in 1929. Other famous short stories written by her were the soliloquies "A Telephone Call" and "The Waltz". *Close Harmony* and *Ladies of the Corrido*r are two plays on which Parker collaborated with Elmer Rice and Arnaud d'Usseau successively.

It was in *Vanity Fair* in 1914 that Parker published her first poem. She also published many of her work in *Vogue* and *The New Yorker*. However, Parker is always remembered for her famous couplet "**Men seldom make passes / At girls who wear glasses**" (85), a two-line poem published in her collection *Enough Rope* in 1926. The journey of Dorothy Parker reached its end in 1967 when

the clever satirist died at the age of 73. In the words of Frank Jackson, Dorothy Parker really had   "a pretty good run, considering her excessive consumption of alcohol, an occupational hazard for more than a few successful writers...." The epitaph on her memorial plaque in Baltimore reads, "Please excuse my dust" (36).

Cosmic Satire in Parker' Poetry

Cosmic satire is evident in the poems written by Dorothy Parker, a leading satirist whose body of satire was part of the popular American culture in the early twentieth century. In the introduction to *The Portable Dorothy Parker*, Edmund Wilson describes Parker's poetry as "popular irony," stating:

> [W]e should admire Mrs. Parker…She writes well: her wit is the wit of her particular time and place, but it is often as cleanly economic at the same time that it is flatly brutal as the wit of the age of Pope; and, within its small scope, it is a criticism of life. (xiv)

To explore the theme of cosmic satire in Parker's poetry, the present paper focuses on some selected poems. These are "Rhyme Against Living," "Resume," "One Perfect Rose," "Swan Song," "Thought for a Sunshiny Morning," and "The Very Rich Man." These poems, the researcher sees, reveal cosmic satire in an obvious way as Parker's satiric target here is the entire loop of life and death where man sees himself as the center of the universe while he is really "insignificant" when seen within "the grand scheme of things," as stated above by Thomas Tierney (149).

As if dissatisfied with life, Parker had a sad touch that marked her life and was accordingly reflected in her poetry. As Brendan Gill puts it, "She was one of the wittiest people in the world and one of the saddest" (xxvi). There were almost two occasions in which Parker attempted suicide. In his biography of Parker titled *You Might as Well Live*: *The Life and Times of Dorothy Parker*, John Keats tells us that "in 1922, when all the world seemed full of laughter, her laughter was sardonic. She seemed determined to pursue unhappiness" (90). In one of her highly meaningful poems entitled "Rhyme Against Living," Parker seems to reject life and think of death. For the speaker of the lines, there is no difference between the good times in her life and the bad ones. Desperate and hopeless, the persona is overcome by a dominant feeling that urges her to commit suicide:

> If wild my breast and sore my pride,
> I bask in dreams of suicide.

If cool my heart and high my head,
I think, "How lucky are the dead!" (*Sunset Guns* 73)

Even when matters are going well for her, as the last two lines suggest, the speaker still thinks of death and sees it as something attractive for her. Described by Vincent Sheean as "a terrified soul" (Keats 127), she mistrusted life but at the same time mocked it very cleverly. The first time Parker attempted suicide was when she had an abortion towards the end of the year 1922. However, she came later to joke about the attempt and began to drink heavily.

"Résumé" is Parker's most expressive poem revealing cosmic satire. In this poem, satire is mixed with unpredictable humour. Mocking the different ways through which the person contemplates suicide, Parker sarcastically writes:

Razors pain you;
Rivers are damp;
Acids stain you;
And drugs cause cramp.
Guns aren't lawful;
Nooses give;
Gas smells awful;
You might as well live. (*Enough Rope* 61)

Addressing the person who thinks of putting an end to his life, the poet explains that there are various methods of committing suicide that one can resort to. Of these are "razors," "rivers," "acids," "drugs," "guns," "nooses," and "gas." However, the poet clarifies, these ways of death all hurt the person in a way or another and are accordingly silly and unnecessary. Then comes the last line revealing wry irony that makes the poem humorous and amusing. Life seems worth living, only because the other alternatives are worse. So, Parker gives her desperate addressee the reasonable conclusion: "You might as well live," as if she is saying suicide is both painful and hurting, so just live.

Expertly, Parker uses technique to reveal theme in "Résumé." To start with the title of the poem that can be interpreted in two ways both of which convey the poet's ideas and views. Firstly, "Résumé" may mean to go ahead or continue after a long pause. This goes in harmony with the excessive use of semicolons throughout the poem that cause pauses in the sentences but at the same time allow the reader to 'resume' reading again. By employing a semicolon in a nonstop list, the poet

skillfully shows how the person can use several ways to commit suicide, and how the semicolon suggests that life, nevertheless, should resume. Secondly, the title of the poem can be conceived of as "resumé" as in a long list of achievements or skill set. The lines present a list of ways or methods to which people may resort when they think of committing suicide, exactly like a resumé.

Parker also uses structure, meter, and rhythm to convey her theme. The poem structure reveals that it consists of eight short lines each of which contains a few words as if the poet tries to say to us that life is too short to end suddenly and inappropriately. Furthermore, meter and rhythm combine in a beautiful way that enables Parker to express her point of view about life and death in a highly expressive way. Examining meter and rhythm in the poem, one notes that the majority of lines are written in dimeter. This means that the line consists of two feet. Each foot consists of two syllables. The first syllable is stressed while the second is unstressed (/ x). This pattern of rhythm is called trochaic. So, most of the lines of the poem are written in trochaic dimeter as for example we see in the following lines:

      / x   / x
     Razors / pain you;

      / x   / x
     Rivers / are damp;

     / x   / x
     Acids / stain you;

These poetic techniques do not only reflect the shortness of life which we should not foolishly interrupt, but they also make the poem simple enough for the audience to read and understand. The delicate rhythm and the easy meter Parker employs in the poem brilliantly lessen the roughness that comes along with the ideas surrounding the act of suicide and its horrible consequences.

The sarcastic tone of the human condition continues in "One Perfect Rose," a poem in which Parker humorously ridicules the old-fashioned romantic way of expressing love by giving a rose to the beloved. The poet writes:

     A single flow'r he sent me, since we met.
     All tenderly his messenger he chose;

Deep-hearted, pure, with scented dew still wet--
One perfect rose.

I knew the language of the floweret;
"My fragile leaves," it said, "his heart enclose."
Love long has taken for his amulet
One perfect rose.
Why is it no one ever sent me yet
One perfect limousine, do you suppose?
Ah no, it's always just my luck to get
One perfect rose. (*Enough Rope* 73)

In the first stanza, the female speaker tells us that her lover has given her a flower which he has carefully selected in order to please her. The charming beauty, the pure tenderness, and the fresh scent of the rose make it really "flawless" or "perfect" in shape and meaning.

In the second stanza, the speaker makes it clear that she understands the hidden message of love that the tender flower conveys to her and that she appreciates this gentle act of her lover. Nevertheless, she cannot stop mocking these romantic clichés of communicating romance among lovers as if she is suggesting that such romantic traditions no longer suit modern love and the different context it exists in.

The poem's satirical arrows seem to be severely directed to the outdated male assumption that sentimental gestures are the best and shortest way to a woman's heart. Parker ridicules those men who still think that a flower may sweep a woman off her feet. This hidden satire is cleverly conveyed in the last stanza of the poem where the speaker sarcastically makes it clear that it would be better for her to receive "one perfect limousine" than to be given "one perfect rose" which reflects nothing but an old-fashion outlook about love and women.

The structure of the poem expressively reflects the idea posed in the lines. The poem consists of three stanzas, four lines each. This neat traditional organization of the poem helps the speaker mock the conventional forms of expressing sentimental love poetry. Diction also is a technical device that the poet employs to convey her theme. While words such as "rose," "tenderly," "deep-hearted," "pure," "scented," "dew," "leaves," "heart," and "love" convey a romantic atmosphere, the word "flow'r" is written in old-fashioned spelling to show how traditionally affection is articulated. It is important for the readers of "One Perfect Rose" to realize that the poem was published in the 1920s,

a period when women enjoyed newfound and unprecedented independence and power. Wishing for "one perfect limousine" instead of a mere rose, the speaker imagines being offered, not romance, but *options*: limousines suggest both wealth and the ability to get around on your own. In other words, the speaker doesn't want her lover to see her as a swooning damsel, but as a modern woman—a person with her own interests, and with places to be! (Taylor)

After ridiculing the old-fashioned manners of expressing romantic love in "One Perfect Rose," Parker moves to another literary piece of her cosmic satire, namely, "Swan Song," an amusing poem in which she sarcastically comments on life and death. The title is indeed significant, reflecting the idea of the poem. Swan song is a phrase that is usually used to refer to the final gesture or performance given before death, closure, or retirement. The expression was first used in ancient Greece to indicate that "swans sing a beautiful song just before their death since they have been silent (or alternatively not so musical) for most of their lifetime" ("Swan song"). Later, the expression became popular in the English language and literature, and it was used by famous English writers such as Chaucer, Shakespeare, Spenser, Coleridge, Tennyson, and others. Parker's "Swan Song" cynically speaks about the inevitabilities of life and death. The poet writes:

> First you are hot.
> Then you are cold;
> And the best you have got
> Is the fact you're old.
> Labor and hoard.
> Worry and wed;
> And the biggest reward
> Is to die in bed.
> A long time to sweat,
> A little while to shiver
> Is all that you will get—
> Where's the nearest river? (*Sunset Guns* 44)

In the above lines, Parker satirizes the human condition in general. For here, life and death are the same. Whatever you have in your life, you'll finally leave this world, no matter you have been happy or sad, enthusiastic or apathetic, young or old, rich

or poor. After your "long time" of hard work and the good or bad feelings you have undergone, "the biggest reward" you'll finally have, the poet points out, is "to die in bed." Oscillation between opposing feelings such as happiness and sorrow, optimism and frustration, satisfaction and disappointment, is the main characteristic of life. Sometimes you are "hot" and full of energy, and therefore find yourself drenched in sweat. Other times, you are "cold," shivering in the chill air. After presenting her long list of the inevitabilities of life and death to her readers, Parker ends her poem in a sardonic way, concluding, in the last line but one, that what she has mentioned is all one "will get" at the end of life, a frustrating close that makes her ironically ask at the final line of the poem, about the place of "the nearest river," apparently in order to throw herself in it and put an end to this life which she sees as shocking, dreadful, and contradictory. Though the tone of the speaker seems light and easy, her sense of depression is easily felt by the readers even if this desperate sense is hidden under the cover of humour. After Parker's second attempt of suicide and the ideas she had had in mind due to the incident, Parker reached the conclusion that nothing really matters in this life. This is what Keats elucidates:

> This living was no project of hers. For all that it might consist of the companionship of witty, talented, wealthy, and charming people, life was not clearly preferable to death. In the end, everyone died anyway, so there was no point to anything. It did not matter if people wrote plays or started magazines or had Long Island estates or said funny things at Jack and Charlie's, for the plays would close and no one would remember them and the magazines would run their moment in the sun and then fold someday, and the Long Island estates would eventually become ruins, and wit was just doing calisthenics with words. Love was supposed to be wonderful, but love could hurt, and in the end love died, too. Love was a permanent flop. Nothing really mattered. (Keats 105)

Ironically, Parker—whose writings are dominated by the ideas of death and suicide— lived till she became seventy-three years old, thus outliving the majority of her relatives and friends.

As usual, Parker capably employs her poetic techniques to express her ideas and feelings. Throughout the poem, contrast is used to reveal the theme of the lines. Contrast can easily be noted in "hot" and "cold," worry and wed, "a long time" and "a little while" and "sweat" and "shiver." All these contrasting words reflect the conflicting and contradictory feelings we experience throughout our journey in life.

Perhaps more sarcastic than "Swan Song," "Thought for a Sunshiny Morning" is a poem that sardonically tells us about the death of a worm. Parker states:

> It costs me never a stab nor squirm
> To tread by chance upon a worm.
> "Aha, my little dear," I say,
> "Your clan will pay me back one day." (*Collected Poems* 117)

The speaker sarcastically addresses a little worm saying that it will cost her nothing if she accidentally walks on it one day and destroys it completely. She may even be thanked and paid back for this action by the tribe of the worm itself. The little worm here stands for man himself who thinks he is the most important creature on earth while he is actually so powerless that his life can come to an end at any time. Thus, the satiric target of Parker in the poem is mainly this human being who sees himself as the master of the universe. Though proud and arrogant, man will face his horrible destiny and will ultimately be eaten by worms, those little weak creatures.

It is clear that the title of the poem is ironic as we as readers cannot find any thought for a "sunshiny morning" related to the issue posed in the poem as it is mainly about the death of a little worm which brings into mind the horrible fate of man who always shows himself as strong and domineering while he is, in reality, weak and helpless. The ending parker uses for the poem is indeed surprising, as the reader may expect that the 'clan' of the worm, its family and companions, will be sorry for its death. Unexpectedly, the poet closes her poem with the affirmation that no one will be sad for the awful end of the little worm, even its own tribe.

The poem consists of one stanza only, a quatrain containing four lines. The lines are short, written in iambic tetrameter, with the rhyme scheme aabb. The main figure of speech in the poem is apostrophe. The speaker ironically addresses the worm, telling it that it will die and no one will get regretful for its death. The sarcastic tone is remarkably noted throughout the poem.

Satirizing the human condition continues in "The Very Rich Man," a section of a long poem entitled "Tombstones in the Starlight." Like an epitaph, "The Very Rich Man" reads as follows:

> He'd have the best, and that was none too good;
> No barrier could hold, before his terms.
> He lies below, correct in cypress wood,
> And entertains the most exclusive worms. (*Collected Poems* 168)

In the above lines, Parker satirically shows how the rich man obtains all he wishes and how he always gets "the best." Nevertheless, the poet surprises us, this wealthy person cannot escape the human condition, as he will sooner or later have to yield to death whose "barrier" never holds before the terms and conditions of this haughty rich man. Accordingly, the wealthy person who stands for man in general will ultimately lie "below" in his costly coffin that is made of "cypress wood" which is known for its expensive price. This is the tragic end of the rich man and his worldly wealth insignificance that can only end in a pricey casket. Parker concludes that the arrogant rich man, the representative of all human beings, will—after he dies—be a delicious meal for worms. What an end! This is man and this is the human condition as cleverly ridiculed by Parker's witty lines of cosmic satire.

Like most of Parker's poems, "The Very Rich Man" is a short poem consisting of four lines only with an alternative rhyme (abab). Parker here uses both diction and metaphor to reflect the notion she poses in her poem. The choice of words such as "best," "good," "terms," and "cypress" fit in the poem context which describes the very rich man and his luxurious life. In addition, the metaphor at the final line in which the dead man is compared to a meal on which worms feed indicates how unimportant and weak this conceited creature is, and how trivial his end seems to be.

Conclusion

To conclude, the satirical poems written by Dorothy Parker reveal their writer as a clever satirist who could look deep into the human condition and recognize the hypocrisy, haughtiness, and short-sightedness of man who regards himself as the master of the universe and the most important creature in it while he is, in fact, weak and helpless. Parker could put her hand on the shortcomings of the human self and did not fail to highlight man's faults, weaknesses, and failings in her satire which she expertly enfolds in a sense of humour and sarcasm. The delicate rhythm that harmonizes with the simple meter, the unexpected endings that surprise readers, the ridiculous manner in which reality is handled, and the way in which technique reflects theme are among the features that characterize Parker's poetry in general and her cosmic satire poems in particular.

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The Importance of the Iconic Poetics: Based on the Works of N.V. Gogol and F.M. Dostoyevsky

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Abstract   The article is devoted to the aesthetically valuable picture of the world in the poetics of N.V. Gogol and F.M. Dostoevsky. As well as icon of the world with iconic images belonging to her which serves as a way of demonstrating and expressing the tune full of divine grace. The discovering of the Russian icon began and the interest to this phenomenon arose at the beginning of the twentieth century. Various researches concerning painting and icon painting, as well as literature and philology, philosophy and theology appeared. Many literature researches were dedicated to the "iconology," the study about the icon, combining problems connected with an image, icon painting and icon worship. The comparison of an icon and a picture, icon painting and religious painting, icon canon and the creative freedom took an important place. When considering icons from the aesthetic point of view, unusual opportunities for studying both the Orthodox culture and elegant literature appear. The "icon" proceeds to the literary context and as a general idea embraces a level of mind, defines the type of the mindset. The "iconicity" becomes not just a religious art or architecture term, but also a term about a piece of art. Therefore, the iconicity of the verbal types of art is difficult and complex, but very relevant and topical.

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Introduction

The artistic iconicity, according to Dunayev, Yesaulov, Kazantseva, Sergeyeva, Shkuropat, is connected to the iconic poetics and iconic aesthetics. *The principle of the world perception* (Lepakhin 164) is represented by the iconicity in Lepakhin's works. The learning of the world and the outlook can be various—subjective, natural or centered on the icon, essential.

One can see, study and describe the world as a picture or as an icon of God, as a work of a perfect Artist: "…the iconic attitude towards the world is a primary intuition to the world which finds the complete outlook and mindset particularly in the iconicity—in Jesus Christ as the materialized Logos and Image" (164).

The essence and the substance of an icon is not the picture of a Divine, but a denotation of a person's participation in the spiritual life. Fundamentally, the icon is ontological, and its ontologicity means that the icon is an "existential revelation of the Prototype"; it "is an uplifted image showing the way to the Kingdom of God" (Kazantseva 166). As a result of the icon attitude towards the world, the forefront of the artwork research is taken not by the aesthetically valuable picture of the world but the icon of the world and the iconic images belonging to it. What is the core of the iconic image? The iconic image is as close to the Prototype as possible, aspires to the unity with the Prototype, and that "assumes the personal iconicity of the creator" (Lepakhin 164).

In the wide sense, the iconicity has a fundamental-ontological character; it is identical to the order in which "all the sense bearing completeness of the physical presence" of the grace "is in the evidence" (Domashchenko 125). Thus, the order is not available for a subjectified mind, it is not empirical, undividable, but complete and "is embraced by the fulfillment of the whole world's self-demonstration" (129). Belonging to the ontological event makes a person whole, completely learning himself/herself and the world, and the piece of verbal art becomes truly poetic, complete only then, "when in beauty of the images there is at least a reflection of that Beauty, which fills the order" (114).

In the strict sense, the iconicity serves as one of the ways of demonstration and expression of the grace-filled order, which acquires its difference in the aesthetic form. It is worth noting that the iconic pictures affect the human, "dedicating" his/her sight (according to John Damascene), and as a piece of art they provoke the aesthetical feelings, attracting the person with its beauty to the contemplation of the picture. Icons, "like a meadow," please the sight and insensibly disclose "the glory of God to the soul" (Rev. John of Damascus 69).

Icons differ from pictures by a special spiritual beauty, that is, not all the aesthetically beautiful pictures or pieces of art are iconic. Besides, as Lepakhin notes, "by the inside contents the image can be demonical," the piece of art can be imaginative, but not iconic.

That is to say, the concept of an icon, having an impressive pluridimensionality (icon (greek εἰκών) means "a picture and 'an image in thoughts' ," according to venerable John Damascene, "an icon is at the same time a semblance (ομοιωμα), an image (παραδειγμα) and a print (εκτυπωμα) of what is painted, turned into an icon (εικονιζομενον)" (Sadovnikova) and an "icon image" (Lepakhin), which "embraces and unites various levels of existence; the material world and the spiritual world" (Sadovnikova), because "a true icon or an iconic image is always a duality of the visual (icon) and the invisible (image), the divine and the humanlike, the earthly and the heavenly"(Lepakhin 133). The iconicity serves as "a principle… of interrelation between the image and the prototype, when the prototype is spiritually present in the image and connected with it synergically" (163).

In an iconic image two concepts, mentioned above, combine—"the icon" (visible) and "the image" (invisible). In this case, the iconic poetics is meant to overcome the division of our mind by uniting with the ontological vector the earthly (eventful) and the spiritual (timeless and everlasting).

Focusing at the iconicity of an image, we acquire a living spiritual fusion, present in the piece of art, and the iconic poetics here serves as Vergil leading lost Dante out of the condition of blindness by the picturesqueness to seeing the true.

A piece of art, conceived as a "verbal icon," by the artful word materializes the image of the Prototype and requires a special treatment, which is examining the images in an inverted perspective, as the icon assumes it. It is obvious that "…the straight perspective reproduce the aiming of art to fully correspond in the imitation to the visible forms of objects… the inverted perspective leads us from the objects to the world of prototypes" (Shkuropat 279). Pavel Florensky, having studied the visual symbols in detail, notes that the straight perspective appears as the opposite of the inverted perspective when one's sight is opposed to the "Eye of Omniscience" of the Lord. The straight perspective is egocentric; it makes the human a measure of all things and puts it in the center of the world. The inverted perspective supposes a principally different understanding of life and art, in which "the visible pictured secrets" are outside the borders of human sight and mind.

Therefore, the picture of the world is on the top (the straight perspective), "is embodied in the work by the graphic and the expressive means of this type of art. The more artistic there means are and the higher the degree of similarity of the cre-

ated images is, the brighter picture conceptions they rise in a person" (283).

The icon differs from the picture by being "a spiritual core" of the work, "the inverted perspective" world, which shows itself, becomes seen from the visible images of the art world. "The inverted side" of the work is meant to create a completely different impression from the seen picture of the world—"the outside form" of the work, which just "extensionally illustrates the vents of the outside world, pictures the reality with big and small touches, observing it… from the straight perspective"(286).

The icon, identical to the order, is silently present in the work. The ability to hear the voice of the icon and be impressed by what you hear can be acquired if the spiritual eyes open for seeing and hearing. It is possible inside a questioning mind, which is, as opposed to the imaginative, not methodological. It begins outside the subjective orientation and objectifying approach to a poetry work. The questioning mind opens "a perspective for a thought trying to answer to the nature of the tongue" (Aksakov 36).

Therefore, the picture of the world can be analyzed inside the "eidos" theory of literature, which means that an inside form of the work, filled with symbolic sense aesthetic, the image (the eidos) becomes the object of interpretation. The eidos discussion "is concentrated on the life entity, embodied in the word and clearly seen for an imaginative mind" (Domashchenko 15).

Cleary imagining the living image of the living reality, the disunion of the seen and the essence is overcome in the borders of the eidos literature theory; and the poetry is understood as presence of the idea in the sensual thinking.

According to G.W.F. Hegel's words, "…the power of the poetic art is in the fact that poetry forms itself an internal content, not entering the area of real external forms and the developing of a melody, and by this it turns external objectivity of other arts into internal—the spirit discloses it for presenting in the same look it is given and has to remain in the spirit" (Hegel 194). The main thing for the eidos discussion is the artistic image, the most sensual thought, considered and analyzed as the internal form of the work. And the icon of the world cannot be analyzed, although we can conditionally speak about iconic poetics as a way of analyzed an artwork, but it has to be more precise—we can touch the icon because it keeps the possibility of spiritual revelation, refreshing the memory about the Prototype.

The thing is, the difficult questions of poetical ontology and iconic poetics are a part of protodiscursive theory (acc. to Domashchenko), which consider an image not from the aesthetic, but the ontological, iconic point of view. The aesthetical is matched with the sensual field, at the same time when the poetic word has secret

meanings, "which precede the birth of aesthetic consciousness" (Domashchenko 142). This provides the possibility to speak about the iconicity of the image in a work of art.

It has to be specified when a word can be called an icon. First of all, this hypostatic Word (Logos)—God the Son. "… the eyelids are made by the Word of God,— writes the Apostle Paul,—so out of the invisible the visible originated" (Heb, 11:3). However, as Liepakhin writes, God the Son is not only Logos, but also "an image of the invisible God" (Col, 1:15; sr. 2 Cor, 4:4). "… the world created by God is not only logosian, but also iconic; in their internal ontological structure logos and image, word and icon are identical. That is why the word can be considered as an icon" (Lepakhin). So, the word is able to connect the two existences—the visible and the invisible, two worlds—the sensual and the noumenal (Sergeeva 249).

As for the icon in a piece of art, it serves not just as a household item, an insignificant detail, but has a symbolic meaning which is an important part for complete philological analysis of a literary text. An icon with all its artistic features, "certain elements of the art language, composition, aesthetic, paint, principles of drawing the human body and face, finally, certain technique are used in a) the storyline; b) the developing of the plot; c) structuring the composition of the work; d) creating the image and the personality of a character, a certain hero (in poetry—a persona); e) the characteristic of the heroes' and characters' mindset; f) picturing and interpreting the relations between certain heroes and characters; g) author stating some aesthetic problems; h) illustrating the distinctive features of Russian culture, Russian mentality, 'the Russian soul' " (Lepakhin).

It is obvious that the interrelations between an icon and a word are deep; there is the exceptional breadth and the formal richness of the mutual influence of the icon (the image) and the word (the image).

The Iconic Motives of the Work of N.V. Gogol

The iconic motives and their discovering in N.V. Gogol's works have been described in our monograph, *The Literary-Artistic Style and the verbal tune in N.V. Gogol's creation* (Liubetska). In this study, we will describe the type of the interrelation of the iconicity and picturesqueness in the writer's literary works, and what can be discovered in N.V. Gogol's works thanks to the iconic poetics.

N.V. Gogol's works are often considered as "picturesque artworks," like bright pictures, in which the writer intensifies the visual influence on his reader many times, and there is the appeal to both the external look and the internal contents of a person. As for N.V. Gogol, a piece of art is connected with another "invisible" piece

of art, which can only be disclosed to an inner, "spiritual eye."

In N.V. Gogol's works, the picturesqueness seamlessly harmonize with the author's religiousness, and that shows the "personal iconicity of the creator." N.V. Gogol, as no one else, can be called with M. Tsvetaeva's words "a poet with history," the poet of the theme, who knows what to write about and where to go, such a poet always has an aim ("a poet-arrow"). N.V. Gogol knew about his destiny and wrote about it in his article *Four letters to different people about "Dead Souls"* with such words: "God created me and did not keep my destiny in secret. I was not born to be a sensation in the literature field at all. My duty is simpler and closer; my duty is something every person should think of first of all, not only me alone. My duty is a soul and other matters of life. Therefore, the character of my actions should be tenable, and I have to create tenably" (Gogol 133). Art, according to N.V. Gogol, is necessary for correlation of one's own life with Christ's commandments, transfiguration of the soul and the spiritual action in the interest of Russia's resurrection.

In *Selected places from correspondence with friends*, N.V. Gogol formed clearly his opinion on the true art, destined to use Christian objects as art objects. It is important that the true piece of art causes people to feel adoration, winged sentiments, prayer, that is why N.V. Gogol starts writing not for a sitting room, but for the temple of human's soul.

N.V. Gogol, as a "poet with history," "too large in scope and verve," feels too tight in his "I" and he expands this "I" so that it "merges with the edge of the horizon." To overcome your human "I" means to realize your boundaries. The subjective consciousness, iconically cognizing the world, opens its ontological dependence on the transcendental beginning. *Dead Souls*, as N. V. Gogol writes in a letter to A.S. Danilevsky in May 1842, "is the a little pale antrum of that great poem that is built in me and will finally solve the mystery of my existence." The human "I" of the "poet with history" "becomes the 'I' of the country—the nation—the given continent—the century—the millennium—the concave ... The theme for such a poet is the reason for the birth of a new self, which is not always human. Their whole earthly journey is a series of reincarnations ... They seemed to have absorbed all the days of creation" (Tsvetaeva).

The theme (reformation of malice, the resurrection of souls "in a purified and bright form" (Gogol 131) and the occasion for the birth of "the new yourself" ("desire to be the best" (127) for N.V. Gogol is realized in the poem *Dead Souls* in which the sensual (picture of the world) is connected with the spiritual (the icon of the world).

N.V. Gogol called his work just a poem; he wanted to emphasize its importance and significance, understanding it as "the extreme top, the crown and the limit to the

highest works of the human mind" (Trediakovsky). *Dead souls* are often compared with Homer's *Iliad*. And the similarity is emphasized by N.V. Gogol—the same scale, intention—to embrace everything in the spiritual expanse.

In the poem the writer did "an analysis of the human soul," and through the human life seen more closely, N.V. Gogol came to Christ and was amazed "by Him first of all human wisdom and the knowledge of the soul, unheard of before" (Priest N. Bulgakov 12).

The iconicity of *Dead Souls* can be observed even in the title of the poem. Before N.V. Gogol, the phrase "dead souls" was not used, it was generally accepted in Orthodoxy that the soul was immortal, and how to determine what the "dead soul" was, was not clear. The most obvious meaning of the title of the poem *Dead Souls* is associated with the "adventures of Chichikov," with his speculation—buying the dead, but existing in the paper "disguise" of the peasants. These "souls" have not only their names inscribed in the "census list," but also characters, fate, history of life. It is even reported how death happened to them. At the same time, the dead appear more alive than the characters in the poem, spiritually dead landowners and officials. The list of men resembles the Book of Life, in which actions of each person are written.

Thus, it bares the meaning of the idea of the Last Judgment, where people will be judged by how they fulfilled their earthly purpose. The peasants who died (the Cartwright Mikheyev, the carpenter Stepan Probka, the brick-maker Milushkin, the shoemaker Maxim Telyatnikov, the seller Yeremey Sorokoplekhin) were masters of their work and deserved the Kingdom of Heaven by fulfilling their purpose. However, N.V. Gogol's task was to indicate the true path to the lost souls, as Christ "came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Mat., 9:13), to awaken them to eternal life. At the same time, the author, referring to the "reader of high society," argued that the person him/herself must take the first step towards spiritual rebirth, which begins with a discerning attitude to himself and a respectful attitude to the "Russian word": "... they want the Russian language to suddenly descend itself from the clouds... and would sit them right on their tongues, and they would have nothing more than to just open their mouths and expose him" (Gogol 171).

It is obvious that the concept of "dead souls" in Gogol's poem constantly changes its meaning, moving from one semantic plan to another. The artistic space of the first part of the poem consists of two worlds: the real world, visible, where the main character is Chichikov, and the ideal world, intelligible (lyrical digressions), where the narrator is the main character. Lyrical digressions allow to reveal the spiritual meaning of the work, seeing the icon of the world based on the prototype

of the "future century." Lyrical digressions are insignificant in the initial chapters of the poem, but by its end, the lyrical element completely captures the work. At the end of the fifth chapter, a significant author's argument about the nature of the Russian language is given: "Like a myriad of churches, monasteries with domes, chapters, and crosses are scattered on holy, pious Russia, so myriad tribes, generations, peoples crowd, mottled and torn across the face of the earth. And every nation... full of the creative abilities of the soul... distinguished itself... with its own word... but there is no word that would be so presumptuous, smartly, would have escaped from the very heart, that would boil and beat like an aptly spoken Russian word" (113). Glorifying the felicitous Russian word, N.V. Gogol also glorifies the word of God, Logos, in which spiritual instruction is concentrated.

Further, the writer looked at "all the hugely rushing life... through the laughter visible to the world and the invisible, unknown tears" (139) and relates the life of a person to the image of the road. Along with the picture display of reality, symbolic inserts about the path and the meaning of human life appear: "And a person could descend to such insignificance, pettiness, nastiness... everything can happen to a person... Take it with you, going from harsh youthful years to harsh courage, take with you all the human movements, do not leave them on the road..." (132). Obviously, this fragment on the preservation of spiritual purity contains a reference to the Gospel instruction: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Mat, 5:8).

A further search for a way to save the soul continues in chapter ten, where the direct question appears: "... where is the exit, where is the road? Now the current generation sees everything clearly, marvels at delusions, laughs at the foolishness of their ancestors, it's not for nothing that this chronicle is scribbled with heavenly fire, that every letter screams in it, that the piercing finger is everywhere looking at it, at the current generation; but the current generation laughs and arrogantly, proudly begins a series of new delusions, over which descendants will also laugh later" (200).

In search of "eternal truth," humanity chose "twisted" roads. Although they were "narrow," they turned out to be "impassable" and led away from the road straight, "lit up by the sun and lit up all night with lights" (219). Let us compare it with the verses from the Matthew's Evangels: "Enter by the narrow gate; because the gate is wide and the path is wide, leading to destruction, and many go by it; because the gate is narrow and the way is narrow, leading to life, and few find it" (Mat. 7, 13:14). Trying to show the humankind a way to God, N.V. Gogol appears as a prophet, speaking through a parable (the adventures of Chichikov) preaching: "For what the word must be harbored? Who, if not the author, should tell the holy truth? You are afraid of a deep-eyed gaze ... which of you, full of Christian humility,

is not public, but in silence, alone, in moments of solitary conversations with your-self, will deepen this difficult question inside your own soul: "Is there any part of Chichikov in me?" (Gogol 256-257). The last chapter created an image of the road to light and to a miracle, to rebirth (from portrait to iconic), to the second book rise ("be not dead, but living souls").

The Iconic Art of F.M. Dostoevsky' Works

F.M. Dostoevsky, feeling the presence of the sacred, becomes a prescient writer in Russian literature. The works of F.M. Dostoevsky are imbued with a concord that contains the fullness of truth. Joining the concord causes the iconic art of F.M. Dostoevsky, combining a high ideal and authentic realism. "The connection of F.M. Dostoevsky with the icon is subconscious, he does not write about the icon, but the sermons carried by the icon and the broadcasts of F.M. Dostoevsky are so close in spirit that it cannot be explained simply by chance" (Riabushinsky).

The flat visible objective world of reality is only one of the components of the world that F.M. Dostoevsky recreates. The world is perceived by the writer as multifaceted, there is an invisible mediation between the worlds—the real and the unreal. The visible (picture of the world) is very significant and important not only in itself, as it concludes other higher meanings (the icon of the world), a connection is made between the person and the High World. Actually iconic—appears as one of the means of spiritual knowledge of the world, not depicting anything, but showing the invisible in a work of art.

In F.M. Dostoevsky's, as well as in N.V. Gogol's works there is an iconic con-sciousness. However, N.V. Gogol is more Logos, his life and work itself is "verbal-ized," the Word is intended to literally transform the world. F.M. Dostoevsky de-marcates the artistic word and the Word of the Bible. The word for F.M. Dostoevsky is an intermediary, a substance testifying to the symbolic (canonical) sense of direct existence. The word forms modern life, testifying to its sacral meaning (Virolainen). Consequently, in describing the world, the writer does not simply show it in the form of objective reality, narration of events, but tries to create an intermediary space between the world of the sensual (earthly) and the invisible world beyond the limits of the sensual, visual-figurative (celestial). Such a spatial icon is filled with the presence of the fertile harmony.

Icons are an indispensable attribute of the nineteenth century Russian interior, that is why they appear so often in the works of various writers and, of course, in F.M. Dostoevsky. The emergence of the icon in the work and the meaning of the mention of it should be sought on a symbolic level, because "on the one hand, we

have evidence of the presence of this object in a certain situation, on the other—systematic references to it" (Guido Carpi 229). Thus, the role of the icon in the work should be taken into account, recognizing the symbolic meaning of its image. Let us try to understand some of the "scenes with icons" in the artistic world of F.M. Dostoevsky.

In the story *Krotkaya* (the original name is *Girl with the Image*) the heroine hock her icon in the dolly shop. Only the framing is accepted on pawn, but the icon itself appears next to other images in the red corner of the narrator, "enters the circle of the keepers of the home" of the person (229) which Krotkaya marries.

But just before the tragic outcome, the housemaid Lukerya noticed in the Krotkaya's room that "the image... was taken out, it stood on the table in front of her, and it looked as if the mistress was only now praying to it" (229). Being freed from the influence of her husband, the Krotkaya (girl with the image) "goes out of the window" with her icon in her hands.

In *The Writer's Diary* (October 1876, the chapter *Two suicides*), F.M. Dostoevsky told about a real fact—about the suicide of the dressmaker M. Borisova, which apparently became the plot basis of the story *Krotkaya*: "… she fell to the ground, holding the image in her hands. This image in the hands is a strange and unheard of feature in suicide! This is some kind of meek, humble suicide. Here apparently, even was no complaint or reproach: simply—it became impossible to live, 'God did not want' and—she died, having prayed" (Dostoevsky 332). The writer points to the symbolic significance of this episode: "About other things, no matter how simple they may seem, you cannot stop thinking for a long time, seem to be imagining something, and it even is your fault. This meek, self-exterminating soul unwittingly torments the thought" (332). M. Borisova's suicide is compared and contrasted to the suicide of A.I. Herzen's seventeen-year-old daughter: "This is the death that reminded me of the suicide of the emigrant's daughter that I was told about in the summer. But what, however, are two different creatures, just both from two different planets! And what two different deaths! And which of these souls suffered more on the earth, if only such an idle question is appropriate and permissive?" (332). The second suicide occurs "as a result of,—according to Dostoevsky,—one's perverted theory of upbringing in the parental home, upbringing with an erroneous concept of the higher meaning and goals of life, with the intentional extermination in the soul of her every belief in her immortality" (Guido Carpi 230). As Guido Carpi points out, the attitude towards death and the afterlife is different for the "Europeanized elite" and the representative of the "popular masses": "For the daughter of the people, suicide is an act of obedience to God's liberty, while for

the daughter of the baseless intellectual class it remains a simple self-destructive act" (230).

The icon for F.M. Dostoevsky is the accelerator of fate. Duplicity and mask are opposed to the image and face in the work of F.M. Dostoevsky.

Thus, the image of Krotkaya is contrasted by F.M. Dostoevsky with the image of her husband—he was rejected by society and therefore became a cruel person. As N.A. Dobrolyubov rightly notes: "... People who are offended by human dignity, are showed by Dostoevsky in two main types: meek and violent... Meek people do not make any protest anymore, vail under the strain of their position and seriously begin to assure themselves that they are nothing, nothing, and that if His Excellency speaks to them, then they must consider themselves happy and blessed. Others, on the contrary, seeing that their right, their legitimate demands, that what is sacred to them, with which they entered the world, is trampled upon and not recognized, they want to break with everyone around them, to become alien to everything, to be sufficient for themselves and from anyone in the world to ask and accept neither services, nor fraternal feelings, nor a kind look. It goes without saying that they do not manage to endure character, and therefore they are always dissatisfied with themselves, curse themselves and others, conceive suicide, etc." (Dobrolyubov).

It seems that the meek person is not the man, who does not oppose the pressure and preserve the dignity, but is Krotkaya such a person according to F.M. Dostoevsky? Preserving the dignity, the character and finding your own place in this world are her main task.

The retired officer, banished from regiment because of cowardice, then—homeless beggar, and now—successful moneylender, pawnbroker asserts himself, humiliating and trying to capture Krotkaya completely.

In Krotkaya, the main character felt the capability of understanding all his mysterious suffering and of perceiving his image, given that he met the same poor and suffering creature as he was. After the shameful banishment from regiment, the narrator, having a proud ego, separates himself from other people, cruelly despising them and despising all human sufferings and troubles. The character is going to "increase" his conditions with tears and suffering of other wretched people, showing his pride and coldness like a demon, not like a human.

It is no coincidence that the character quotes to Krotkaya the Mephistofel's words from *Faust* by I.V. Goethe: "I am the part of the whole, which wants to do evil, but does good», and strikes her imagination with the poem *Demon* by A.S. Pushkin" (Dostoevsky). He has survived such a dramatic discordance with the world and experienced a lot, so in such a way he contrasts himself with her, who has

lived for little, who has a kind and fair soul. Krotkaya correlates to the main character of the poem *Demon* by A.S. Pushkin, who lives in the complete unconscious harmony with surrounding world before the meeting with "spiteful genius," when "all impressions" of existence are new for him (Dostoevsky).

The character had calculated all details and understood that "kind and gentle people oppose for a short while" (Dostoevsky), so he married with Krotkaya, who was a poor foster-daughter, the mysterious purpose was taking from her the complete respect and submission, because he wanted her 'to stand in front of me with adjuration for my suffering...' " (Dostoevsky). He dreams to become a false image for his wife, an object for adoration, which can replace her the whole world. The wife has to understand that he is stern and proud, that he is silently suffering, and she "will see later, that there is a generosity; someday she will find out about this, and she will appraise it a lot and fall into the dust, laying the hands in the adjuration" (Dostoevsky).

The main character of this novel could not expect that the wife did not submit to him completely, that she could rebel and do something against his volition. After all, the character supposes that the woman cannot fail to submit to a man's volition, and what's more, the woman "will adore even all man's evil and crime" (Dostoevsky), if she loves him.

The first meeting of the character and Krotkaya assures him of the fact that she is submissive naturally, but her soul is already fractured, when the main character points at her poorness. "Oh how she has blushed! I understood that I had caught her out" (Dostoevsky). The character celebrates, he is confident in his force, Krotkaya has a lower status than he does, she is materially bounded, her life is difficult and then the character "has some ideas as for her" (Dostoevsky). He dreams to become a "high-world" creature for her, a liberator, and then she will appreciate him and absolutely submit to him.

Krotkaya agrees with the moneylender's marriage proposition with gratitude, but at this moment, the duel between the character and Krotkaya begins. This duel is for the right of complete possession of another person, a try to fight with one's own fear of the world and to realize oneself by the other's freedom suppression.

Besides everything else, it is a conflict of values. When the moneylender denies the self-sacrifice and generosity, which is "not worth a rush," as he supposes, "the suspicious, silent and a not good" smile appears at Krotkaya's face and from this moment she begins keeping silence more than having conversation with the character, who does not appreciate her feelings at all and only suppresses her, waiting for love.

The character cannot educate Krotkaya according to his vision of life, because she sees everything in another way and wants to live conscientiously. She associates the family with harmony, because she keeps all her parent's things with a gentle hand, as jewels. The pawned image of the Blessed Virgin, from which she does not remove the icon plating, is the most valuable one for her. It shows her striving to wholeness, when the world is understood as the unity of the earthy and the heavenly, external and internal things.

There are no icons in the pawnbroker's room, and it is a clear evidence of the fact that he does not pray before sleep and he just does not need them, because they have no value. However, in the room the customers enter there is an icon-case: "My icon-case with an icon lamp is in the hall, where the cash desk stands. In my room, however, there are just my bookshelf and a few books inside and a chest with my keys, and, well, a bed, tables, chairs" (Dostoevsky). The icon case (kiot) is an evidence and a sign of the pawnbroker is a supposedly religious man, depended on other people's opinion. He, as opposed to Krotkaya, has lost his wholesomeness by neglecting the image in himself, although he dreams of being loved as an internal person.

The mismatch of the apparent and the occurring is still increasing, the disharmony in the relationships with husband is growing stronger, and Krotkaya, in spite of herself, in spite of her personality, starts doubting the fact that her husband is "the most generous of all," as he called himself. In the end, he exhausts her, having humiliated her, marching her by the hand from the last rendezvous with Yefimovich, holding "the scary" minute at gunpoint, held by Krotkaya to his head. And Krotkaya's "win" echoes with a real trouble for her.

Krotkaya does not get forgiveness from her husband, who likes their inequality, her subdued position and his final win: "This feeling of inequality, it is very delightful… I sympathized her painfully sometimes, although at the same time I definitely liked the idea of her humiliation from time to time. I really liked the idea of our inequality…" (Dostoevsky).

The character has so to speak divorced with his wife, bought her a bed, and she isolates herself more and silence becomes her protection: "… she seemed to be glad to not say an extra word. I thought it was absolutely natural for her. I thought, 'She is too shaken and too defeated, and, surely, she needs to forget some things and accustom'" (Dostoevsky).

The constant and accustomed silence has suddenly been changed by Krotkaya singing silently. This change amazed the character: "… the news made an awesome impression, and I still do not understand it. Before then, I had never heard her sing-

ing, if only on the first days when I brought her to the house and we still could have fun shooting at targets from a revolver. Back then, her voice was strong enough, clear, albeit nervous, but eerily pleasant and healthy. Now the song was so weak, not really mournful (it was some romance), but sounded as if there was something cracked, broken in her voice, as if it could not make it, as if the song itself was ill. She was singing in a low voice, and suddenly, after raising, her voice broke,— such a pitiful voice, such pitifully broke; she coughed and started singing quietly again… Firstly, at least, in the first minutes, a puzzlement and horrible surprise appeared, horrible and strange, painful and almost revengeful: "She is singing, and that is when I am here! Has she forgotten about me or something?'" (Dostoevsky). Thanks to the singing, the character's soul shrugged, he scales fell from his eyes, he decided to talk to his wife, to come to terms with her: "… I was murmuring that I loved her, that I will not stay up, 'let me kiss your dress… pray for you for all my life like this…'" (Dostoevsky). Of course, this confession frightens Krotkaya, as she happens to be at the God's place, the role her husband puts on her, and he was ready to pray for her as for an icon: "… and suddenly she started crying and shaking; an awful hysteria started. I scared her" (Dostoevsky). A try to overcome the estrangement this way anticipates the tragic ending. Krotkaya does not want anything, she is horribly tired from life, and death becomes the only escape for the heroine trying to protect her world; and she asks the Virgin Mary to be her protector.

Lukerya retells the character the last events like this: "… she stood onto the window and was standing to her full height, in the open window, with her back to me, and the icon in her hands. My heart was in my mouth at once, I yelled, 'Mistress, mistress!' She heard it, moved as if to turn to me, but she did not turn, she just stepped forward, pressed the icon to her breast and—and jumped out of the window!" (Dostoevsky)

The jump out of the window with an icon is symbolic, the heroine rejects the imperfect world to enter the other world. There is a strange smile on Krotkaya's face, which promised the joy of death, ending the tyranny of her husband and the waiting for forgiveness.

Krotkaya's death changes the narrator. We can read in the author's foreword for the novel about the character: "A variety of memories recalled by him unstoppably leads him to the truth in the end; the truth unstoppably elevates his mind and heart. At the end, the mood of the novel changes in comparison with its messy beginning. The truth discloses to the poor pretty clearly and certainly, at least for himself" (Dostoevsky). The silence presses upon the character; it becomes for him a symbol of non-existence: "They say the sun gives life to the universe. The sun rises – and

look at it, is it not dead? Everything is dead, and the dead are everywhere. There are only people and silence around them—this is the earth!" (Dostoevsky). The character recalls the First Epistle of John, which has such words: "One who does not love does not know God, because God is Love" (John 1, 4:8) and a warning: "Children! Save yourselves from idols" (John 1, 5:21).

The character starts talking with his deceased wife, he understands his fault for her more and more, realizing that separating and creating of a false image has killed love and distanced him from God: "… I am not crazy and I am not raving at all, on the contrary, my mind has never been clearer… I exhausted her—that is it!" (Dostoevsky). We see that the character is suffering and is deeply sorry; his soul purifies, and he himself appears on the way to transfiguration. The true feeling were hidden under the mask of pride, although the character wanted harmony and love. He was suffering from loneliness but rejected the only creature he loved himself. The character only managed to see Krotkaya's image when it was too late, he lost her and was alone forever.

For F.M. Dostoyevsky, visual images are important in their spiritual, expressional mode of existence. The significance of the icons in the novel *Krotkaya* is great, because in Dostoyevsky's works, the axis of the world is an icon and the people are icons. Some figures of F.M. Dostoyevsky can be compared to "smoky, dirty and even painted on, and the author himself seems to be a great icon painter, who was given such an icon for restoration" (Riabushinsky).

The main character of the novel *Krotkaya* is the same smoky icon, which clears through suffering. F.M. Dostoyevsky consider suffering an ingrained spiritual need of the Russian people. "… He seemed to be infected with the hunger for suffering since the beginning of the times. The line of suffering goes through its whole history, it is not only caused by external tragedies and disasters, but goes from the very heart of the people. For Russian people even happiness certainly has some suffering, otherwise, the happiness seems not whole for them. They never have a proud and celebrating look, even in the moments of triumph, but they only have a touched to suffering look. They sigh and give their glory to God. The Russian people somehow enjoys the suffering. It applies both for the whole people and for certain types, speaking in general terms. For example, look at the various types of the Russian roughnecks. There you see not only everlasting mayhem, sometimes surprising by its impudence and the ugliness of the fallen soul. The roughneck is first of all a sufferer" (Dostoevsky 36).

F.M. Dostoyevsky knows that not only Krotkaya but even his main character is a "sufferer," and there is a pure and beautiful spirit hidden under the dirt. "Here

he is carefully removing the soot and the layer of ash from the human look, and—it is a miracle—we can see the image and the resemblance of God" (Riabushinsky). The second type of people-icons is the original icon—a saint. "He had tried to clear his mind and his body when he was alive, he submitted them to the spirit, and the God's Spirit made them holy and spiritualized them. The icon painter does not need to clear anything; he just needs to write down what his eyes see, the spiritualized body" (Riabushinsky).

The faces and images create a strong impression in F.M. Dostoyevsky's works, like icons, when the reader finds in them the revelation and the relief; "when his spiritual eyes open and Saul becomes Paul" (Riabushinsky). Anyway, we should note, as did V. Riabushinsky, in F.M. Dostoyevsky's works the spiritual can only be seen through the soot, while in an icon it shines with bright light.

Icons serve as one of the types of the spiritual on earth; "the latter only results from the aspiration to the heavenly, but it also works vice versa; the spiritual in its turn leads to the heavenly, makes the ache for it the supreme value of life" (Riabushinsky). The ache for the heavenly, the aspiration for it became the main sense, the basis of the Russian culture.

F. M. Dostoyevsky puts the world in the most spiritually ill-timed place. It suddenly is pictured not in a church, but for example in a tavern (as in the scene of Marmeladov's revelation from *Crime and Punishment*, when he suddenly starts speaking the Old Church Slavonic language and pronounce sermons in the poor basement with awful alcohol abuse around him). This spiritual environment finds its trueness, although it is not implemented in the traditional church. In F.M. Dostoyevsky's works it is the spiritually-artistic field, that is, the field of spiritual, implemented with the artistic images.

Conclusion

The icon or iconicity becomes the main point in the creation and understanding of the Russian Orthodox concept of the world. In the literature of the nineteenth century, the theme of the icon and, accordingly, the entry into the field of artistic iconicity, is present both in the works of N.V. Gogol and in the works of A.S. Pushkin. The iconic cause becomes penetrating and leading in N.S. Leskov, popularized in the works of L.N. Tolstoy, I.S. Turgenev, M.E. Saltykov-Shchedrin, A.P. Chekhov. All these appeals to the icon are vivid evidence that the icon is of great importance for understanding Russian culture and literature. According to K.S. Aksakov: "For a Russian, you need an icon painting, not a pictorial letter" (Aksakov 186). The icon serves as a reminder of the real presence of the sacred on earth, accessible to the in-

side senses.

The iconic poetics is unique, it allows to deepen the literary analysis of a literary text and "provides an opportunity to imagine the vision of the essential sense of the work" (Shkuropat 303). The presence of an icon itself in a work is significant, because it is not just an element of the material world, but a symbol, accompanying the character. Thanks to the iconicity, created, according to Shkuropat's notes, by the literary word, the imaginative sense transforms into a prototype, hidden, but always present in N.V. Gogol's and F.M. Dostoyevsky's works.

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Tracing the Development of Capitalism across South Asian Writings

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Abstract   Literary works from the peripheries of South Asian countries as Pakistan and India have been functional in diverting the overriding western operative logic of pure aesthetics. At the same time, these writings highlight the inequities perpetuated by capitalism and its corollaries which globally persists as neocolonialism and neo-liberal imperialism. With an overview of the literary works from pre-partition and post-partition India and Pakistan, the paper illustrates how these crucial writings weigh against the homogenizing, ahistorical and essentializing readings of capitalism spread across European and American literary works. Despite the diverse framings, the arc of all these literary writings forge connections between capitalism's detrimental legacy through tropes that represent the ruinous shared histories of European colonization, and catastrophic effects of American imperialism. In addition, the paper argues that the writings from peripheries which critically disclose the genesis of capitalism, and its subsequent forms have the potential to transform the history of English literature. The study gives an overview of how these literary voices resonate strong resentment against the oppressive systems and most authentically reflect the struggle for freedom and equality across different cultures and classes. Significantly, these writings persistently exhibit distinct cultural expressions that reveal capitalism in sites where race, power, language, and empire intersect. In summary, the paper cannot emphasize enough that English literary canon will gain immensely by including translations

of these literary works from South Asia that defiantly expose the inter-sectional consequences of capitalism.

Keywords peripheries; regional literature ; capitalism; South Asian Literature; cultural writings

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Introduction

Literary writings from the peripheries of the third World bring forth the varied experiences of capitalism and consequently, have the potential to fill in the obliterations and absences in western theorizations on the history of capitalism. The paper presents an overview of the Literary works and theatrical performances that underwrite the concerns regarding contemporary global crises of fascism and persisting capitalism from across the third world countries. Drawing from Marxist literary theorists, the paper argues that attention to these literary contributions will redress the Western theoretical scarcities. More importantly, this study cannot stress more on the significance of merging new writings in the English canon under the rubric of "World literature" (Williams 116).

The glaring obscurities in theorizations on the genesis of capitalism in western discourses cannot be overlooked. According to Blaut, most Social Science treatises on the birth of capitalism exhibit glaring obscurities which are perpetuated by "obliterated accounts of the history of slavery, colonialism and imperialism" (Blaut 374). The renowned Argentinian political theorist and philosopher Ernest Laclau asserts that the European accounts of capitalism have been both "vacant and homogenous" by mainly comprising of theories shaped by "eliminating differences" (45-46). Anievas & Nişancioğlu attribute these "highly abstract" versions on the history of capitalism to a glaring "absence of non-European agency in writing" (14). In a similar vein, in 1986, the American literary critic and theorist Fredric Jameson

published an essay in the journal *Social Text* titled "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism," that radically questions the categorization of all western literary works as "great texts" from "great minds" consisting of "great ideas" (67).

Alexander Anievas and Kerem Nişancioğlu in the book titled *How the West Came to Rule* contend that unarguably no one is closer to have founded the trajectory of capitalist world-system in western literature than Karl Marx himself. Karl Marx's earliest works provide the basic guidelines to the genesis of capitalism. Marx traces the birth of capitalism from "the conquest and plunder of India", to "the conversion of Africa into a preserve for the commercial hunting of black skins" and continues systemically to anticipate "the combination that embraces the colonies, the national debt, the modern tax system" (915). Understanding the birth of capitalism necessitates an expansive interpretation, one that is not temporally and spatially concentrated to one nation or one locale. This elucidates the contemporary form of capitalism and its "extensive re-embedding" across the world called as "neo-liberal globalization" or "neo-liberal imperialism[1]" (Radice 97-98). To navigate the terrain, later theorists offered similar views on how this subsumption of the "non-colonized spaces" could be traced through the study of the process of colonization and conquest that led to economic and political domination (Avineas & Nişancioğlu 21).

In Frederic Jameson's view, the third world literature categorized as "allegories[2]" features specific "political resonances". The terminology "Third world literature" broadly describes literature from "developing and underdeveloped" countries. These forms of writing allow heterogeneities and discontinuities to explicitly appear in literature. As the essay dealt with the situation of the writer and the text in the contemporary world system, Jameson built up a case for the acceptance of third world literature in the English canon. Jameson proposes the Western critics and theorists grappling with the unusual "cognitive-aesthetics of the third-world literature" to acquaint themselves to this "unfamiliar" kind of "allegorical vision" (88). Jameson's upfront challenge not only derails the Eurocentric notions of Western critics as the "trained readers or the informed critics", more importantly, it highlights the innate potential of these literary works as distinctive productive forces of cultural transformation (Williams 118). Herbert

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1   For more discussions on neo-liberal globalization see, Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Fractured Times: Culture and Society in the Twentieth Century.*

2   Frederic Jameson studied the Great Chinese work *Diary of a Madman* (1918) as one of examples of third-world literature.

Marcuse made a similar plea in his essay Art as form of Reality published in the Left Review in 1972. According to Marcuse, an insightful understanding of the subversive and revolutionary character of art necessitates a total radicalization of consciousness. This in turn requires "an end of the segregation of the aesthetic from the real" (Marcuse 1972). These advanced notions on the universality of aesthetics are sporadically found in the German philosopher and critic Immanuel Kant's work. Kant described the presence of "pure forms of sensibility" as universal and thus almost reflexively claimed it to be "common to all human beings[1]". Stefan Morawski's acute analysis on the aesthetic views of Marx and Engels establish more relevant insights. Morawski holds that for Marx "Tendentiousness, a latent tendency in art" remains as the most crucial character of all creative works. He identifies aesthetic experience as tendentious through its synthetic character brought about by "a commingling of emotional, sensual, and intellectual elements" (307).

However, chained in the infrastructure of advanced capitalist societies, the tendentiousness in new literary works in the West disappeared. Eric J. Hobsbawm in the book *Fractured Times: Culture and Society in the Twentieth Century* remarked that the "western literary art failed to find new bearings in the new age of technology" (103). Hobsbawm views western writers and artists had started submitting to the dictates and demands of the capitalist market which resulted in overall deterioration. In a similar way, Raymond Williams had voiced capitalism's pervasiveness as the reason for bringing about an almost inevitable deterioration in Western literary writings. In his view, the reigning ethos of "trivialism" in contemporary western writings validated the writer's anxiety in a capitalist world (119). Through successive productions of specific genres, literature "masqueraded as an intellectual activity" produced a culture that lacked aesthetic merit (120). A recent example of the decline can be seen through the surge in "Dystopian fiction[1]": a successful genre that unfortunately enjoys broad popular appeal. The post humanist contemporary critic and philosopher Rosi Braidotti censures the dystopian fiction calling it as "the literature and cinema of extinction of our and other species". Braidotti displays frustrations with writings built on "the narrow and negative social imaginary as techno-teratological" (63-64). For Braidotti, the popularity of dystopian fiction as an object of cultural admiration is no less than an aberration. Overall, it appears, that the recent western literary productions fail to grasp the material conditions that have produced the present social and political systems and

1   Examples of Dystopian popular film productions include films titled as: Divergent, The Hunger Games, Contagion. Also, see an interesting write-up by Stevens, Dana. "Why Teens Love Dystopias." Slate (2014).

consequently, remain evasive both in form and content.

Interestingly though literature from the African American writers have summoned new themes in novel art forms. To rearticulate the painful history of "Black Oppression" that continues to this day, the African American poets, writers and playwrights have produced radically new "Black aesthetic forms" that have familiarized the American literary tradition with extensive features from African folk lore, music, social history, personal experiences. African American writers as Langston Hughes, Toni Morrison, Zora Neale Hurston, Alice Munro have made astonishing literary contributions that reflect on the various inequitable social formations in the ostensibly liberal democratic State of America. Moreover, Black literature in its varied and diverse representational forms evokes history of capitalism. Experiences of slavery, historically essential to the understanding of the capitalist infrastructure of America, are recollected in the form of biographies, and personal memoirs, both in fiction and non-fiction. An inextricable part of the recent African American writings are writings etched on "personal experiences of capitalist relations, practices, and institutions that continue to perpetuate oppression for black individuals in everyday circumstances" (Einhorn 492). More recently, in the aftermath of the horrendous murder of George Floyd[1], writings as part of the 'Black arts movement' interrogate the political climate in contemporary America and have started to show more penetrating influence on the overall cultural milieu.

Attentive readings of African writers help in identifying social relations of power and exploitation in complicated and variegated forms. Set in neocolonialized Africa, several literary works represent "a new crisis of representation" (Avineas & Nişancioğlu 16). From a historical context, the colonial hasty departures from the continents of Africa and Asia, as expressed by Franz Fanon in the form of freedoms "given" as opposed to "taken" , were superseded by constant forms of backwardness. Social, and economic deprivations were exacerbated by the reestablishment of new hierarchies. The messy and contradictory realities of the developing world were soon laid bare in their confrontation with imposed structures of capitalist modernity. Writings as *Things fall Apart, Devil on the Cross*, *The Famished Road*[2] dissect moments of this rupture with the past.

The term "Neocolonialism" refers to sites where the "hierarchies consigned by the colonial masters are replaced by the native rulers" (Jameson 81). in the

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1 George Perry Floyd Jr. (October 14, 1973 – May 25, 2020) was an African-American man who was murdered by a police officer in Minneapolis, Minnesota, during an arrest after a store clerk suspected Floyd may have used a counterfeit twenty-dollar bill, on May 25, 2020.

2 Three seminal novels by the African authors: Chinua Achebe, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Ben Okri.

words of the Indian Historian Romila Thapar, neocolonialism is the "dressing up of the colonial view" (Thapar 47). For Thapar, after India's partition, a similar "modern backwardness" shaped the society (Thapar 49). Indian Diaspora[1] writers have sketched homelands from new perspectives. It is fascinating how these forms of writings represent reality through novel artistic frameworks. These writers from non- native English backgrounds appropriated the western realist and modernist literary traditions bringing new shifts in West's reception of contemporary fiction. Herbert Marcuse's analysis provides the jargon to understand this phenomenon; he calls it as emergence of "new Optic that replaces the Newtonian Optic" (40). If read closely, these writings report conscious and unconscious commitments of the authors to archive social, economic, and political discontents in the background of the devastating effects of neo-liberal capitalism[2]. In leading diaspora writers from South Asia as Kamila Shamsie, Mohsin Hamid (UK-based Pakistani writers), Salman Rushdie, V.S. Naipaul, Jhumpa Lahiri, Haneef Kureishi, common thematic concerns allow us to conceive them as "imagined communities" (Anderson 1983).

The remarkable contributions by writers of diaspora expose structures of oppression and exploitation in postcolonial societies owing to the penetration of capitalism and its corollary. Characters living on borders, and in- between spaces navigate through the constricting social and economic realities of existence to bring back a history of capitalism. By highlighting issues of identity, confrontations with racism, experiences of migration, life as a refugee or an exile in the Western metropolitans, these writings bring to the global audiences "the multiple subjectivities that arise in conditions of Diaspora" (Olney 248). Under the umbrella of postcolonial and cultural studies, these writers have circumnavigated exclusion and alienation as direct exilic experiences in the advanced capitalist centers in the Western hemisphere across a global geography that seemingly promises accommodation.

However, as the number of diaspora community of writers expanded an impasse was palpable in the narrowing range and focus of their writings. For instance, the idea of 'Home' as a native place seemed to have receded into an imagined one, particularly, for the writers from second and third generation of Diasporic community (Chandrima 88). On a closer inspection, it can hardly be

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1   Diaspora is a contested term. or a thorough discussion, see: Redmond, Shana L. "Diaspora." *Keywords for African American Studies*, edited by Erica R. Edwards et al., vol. 8, NYU Press, New York, 2018, pp. 63–68. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvwrm5v9.16. Accessed 14 June 2020.

2   The terms "neo-liberalism" or "neo-liberal capitalism" refer to the contemporary advanced stage of capitalism.

disputed that these representations of 'home' had started to take an ambiguous meaning. This "sense of disjunction" is revealed foremost in the works by Jhumpa Lahiri and V. S. Naipaul where home is conceived as a notion far from material realities (Chandrima 89). Literary depictions deficient in "tendentiousness" are referred to in Morawski's analysis by way of exhibiting "specific characters in only specific material circumstances" (Morawski 304). In a recent review by the contemporary literary critic and writer, Jahan Ramazani, literary texts profoundly shaped by influences from modern Western literature run into the danger of transcribing capitalism's history in a monolithic discourse (Ramazani 336). When non -European writers make an attempt to narrate and reconstitute themselves in the larger cultural, intellectual, and institutional communities in which they participate, the differences and inequities are neutralized and thus are often these works have faulted for "eliding peripheral agency.[1]"

It is important to emphasize that the paper does not offer any single totalizing outlook on apprehending the history of capitalism in literature. In response to Fredric Jameson's essay, Aijaz Ahmad's incisive critique[2] on Jameson's use of the terminology "Third-World Literature" draws attention to the problems inherent in strict categorizations. Capitalism produced differentiated expressions and experiences across peripheries one finds that there is neither a homogenized theory nor a single body of text that can grasp the complexity of capitalism. In addition, the complexity is amplified when discussing specific literary works since each writing requires an alignment with its context—the specific geo-spatial history in relation to capitalism. In Ahmad's view Frederic Jameson's oversimplifying use of the term "third world literature" implied a "positivist reductionism,"[2] and drawing further on this argument, one finds that this generalization for defining writings is detrimental to literature from the margins. In this seminal essay Ahmad argues that the significant issues of "social and linguistic formations," "political and ideological struggles" that shape the peripheries and semi-peripheries cannot be contained within any unified, internally coherent system of knowledge (Ahmad 4).

This necessitates thorough attention to the use of academic jargons as "postcolonial literature" or "Diasporic studies" that do not necessarily comprise of explicit "political" writings (Marx 116). One of the benefits of aforementioned essay by Aijaz Ahmad is its revelation that the fecundity of the real narratives is

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1 On Wallerstein's writings on the history of Capitalism, Anievas &Nişancioğlu find "a problematic Eurocentrism that elides 'peripheral agency'." See, Anievas &Nişancioğlu, p.16, 2015.

2 Aijaz Ahmad's a strong counter argument on Frederic Jameson's essay appeared as "Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness and the 'National Allegory'." see, description in works cited.

revealed through works that resist falling back to "general liberal and humanistic universalism" (Ahmad 6). The proliferation of the devastating effects of capitalism rather makes us revisit writings that have historically and concomitantly, in the most authentic sense resisted Anglocentric forms of imperialism. Here the focus on literature from the peripheries of India and Pakistan, particularly the marginal writers and literary writings, show remarkable instances of dissent against capitalist hegemony. These works from the margins of the society attempt towards "the poetics of the oppressed[1]" more keenly than the mainstream literature in English. "Multiple, hybrid and heterogeneous [3]" perspectives in literary works fetch the sedimented history of capitalism is fetched (Brennan 240). Anchored in peripheries of a vast and complex geography, historically known as the Indian Subcontinent, this literature is a product of local regional writers in regional languages. These literary writings bring out parts of social and political lives that could not be subsumed by the homogenizing tendency of the capital. A scattershot description of writings across the two countries, now known as Pakistan and India, highlight moments of resistance against capitalism in varied forms and genres.

It is of key significance to note that class struggles specific to feudalism emerge in folk literature from South-Asia. Rereading folk classics as *Heer[2]* by Waris Shah and Shah *Jo Risalo[3]* by Shah Latif Bittai now available in English translations exhibit subversive trends ; these texts tackle the contested spaces between nationality and ethnicity, vernacular and metropolitan. Pivotal moments in these texts range from descriptions of conflicts between peasants and the feudal landlords to their habitual squeezing of agricultural productivity and imposition of heavy fines on peasant class. "Peasantry" described under "the rubric of premodern and pre-capitalism", or otherwise misrepresented or silenced in mainstream literature becomes politically significant here (Anievas &Nişancioğlu 34). As forms of collective life are seized from the peasant communalities, these moments in the tales evoke the "primordial crime of capitalism" i.e. land grabbing for privatization. In the theatrical drama performance based on the rendition of the classical folk 'Heer', various parts exhibiting dialogue exchange between characters display the

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1 The term has been taken from the review published as OAL, A., 1997. The Theatre of the Oppressed. *UNESCO Courier*, 50(11), pp.32-38.

2 The quintessential Classic Punjabi poem *Heer* is named after the central female character called Heer. The Punjabi poet Waris Shah in the eighteenth century built the poem on a Punjabi folk lore, the love story of Heer and her lover, Ranjha.

3 Shah jo Risalo Shah Jo Risalo (Sindhi: هاش وج رسالو) is a poetic compendium of famous Sindhi Sufi poet Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai.

antagonism between the rebels resisting feudal oppression and the agents of social and economic control. Frederic Jameson quotes Georg Lukacs succinct remark that often the raw material from "pre-industrialized, agricultural or tribal society the artists" takes up an "immediate meaning" (Jameson 167). On one hand, feudalism has been misconceived as "self-enclosed, self-perpetuating system" not entirely linked to capitalism, thus analyses of these works can be illuminative in sketching connections between feudalism and capitalism (Brennan 165) . The commingling of the intellectual, emotional, and social aspects in these texts strongly resonate a sense of rootedness to land and brings to the forefront sentiments of cross -communal bonding.

Enormous heterogeneities are revealed elsewhere through the literatures in various forms and languages that seek freedom from the normative patterns of society. Jasbir Jain notes that the descriptions of the landscape of Sindh, it's flora and fauna, conjure a strong sense of belonging to the land, culture and history in Shah Latif Bhitai's Sindhi classical poem titled *Shah Jo Risalo* (Jain 199). Recent studies have brought out feminist and ecological appraisals of these hundred years old tales spread over in various genres of South Asian regional languages. The literary poetic forms as the *kafis*[lyric songs], *the qissas* [ballads]*,* and folk theatrical renditions called *the rass* [Theatre] were diffused in the rural households of the pre partition India. In contrast to the center seized by the imperial structure of the British, Sufi literature emerged in the peripheries. David Gilmartin validates that these writings from the peripheries posed threat to the British colonial authority. In his words, "Sufi lives in earlier eras" exemplified the 'permanent ache between center and periphery" (Gilmartin 162). This is illuminated by the ways in which Sufi poetry is structured. Created on "semantic elements of revolution[4]" the Sufis essentially imagined the poet as a non-conformist or heretic. Anjum Tanvir's charts how Sufi literature was "more political than spiritual or academic" and as a result was branded as "heterodox" by the British authorities in various localities of the Sub-continent. Various poetic performances expressed strong disparagement of political abuses that include the high-handedness of the rulers (Tanvir 237).

Another significant dimension of Sufi literature's revolutionary nature is revealed through a body of works titled as Chakkinama [the Grindstone song] and Chakkarnama [the Spinning wheel song]. The Sufi song in Dakkani[1] language in contradiction to the use of Highbrow Persian asserted direct influence on the local rural population. The locals reportedly followed the Sufi tradition of singing in local

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1   Daccani/Dakkani (used in both spellings) language has its rootedness in the Indian plateau of Deccan.

vernacular called Dakkani, thus conveying defiance against the British prescription of using Persian as the official literary language in Indian central provinces. It is fascinating that while the dominant theme underlying vernacular oral poetry is devotion to God, the metaphors employed in the mystical-Sufi discourse center around specific material realities i.e., the activities of women and their roles in everyday life (Eaton 89). In this way, folk poetry of Sufi origin penetrated the local households of India where the bulk of this poetry was sung by non-elite women. The forms of the songs include lorri- nama [lullaby], shaadi- nama [wedding songs], Suhag-nama[married woman's song] and it is still sung in remote regions of rural India ((Eaton 145).   More significantly, these works stand as unique examples of feminist resistance. The contemporary South Asian studies scholar from the Cambridge University, Sara Kazmi, contends that "the incipient feminist voices in these texts do not mimic any western ideology" (Kazmi 2019). Tracing these literatures is much more rewarding, but nonetheless much more challenging.

In a similar vein, the Progressive Writers Union, a cultural front of the Communist party of India (1930's) produced "multi-faceted critique of class structures, familial ideologies, management of bodies and sexualities, idealisms, silences" (Ahmad 21). Before the partition of the Indian Subcontinent into India and Pakistan, Urdu writers as Sajjad Zaheer and Rashid Jahan, published a collection of their writings-nine stories and a play-under the title Angäre [Embers] (Weir 132). Other renowned Marxist Indian writers as Yashpal, and Munshi Premchand contributed to the aspirations for a society free from communalism, caste and colonialism in alliance with the former Muslim writers. These literary works of prose addressed the meshed complications introduced by capitalism obliquely termed as "modernization[1]". These writings paved way for fledgling artists, belonging to proletarian working class, and certainly not in restricted terms. Anne Lowry Weir comments on how the legacy of progressive writers, "socialist - realist writers" continue to make its mark on contemporary literature in India and Pakistan inspiring writers to experiment with new forms as surrealism, psychological realism (142).

After colonial departures in many countries, the prevalence of gender, racial and sexual hierarchies got exacerbated by capitalist non-market forms of exploitation and oppression (Anievas& Nişancioğlu,2015). Marxist writers from both newly formed countries, India and Pakistan, were moved to unveil these coercions in literary works. Later writers continued to experiment with realism

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1   Frederic Jameson's work brought to light the significant problems in modernization of the third world, where in their penetration by various stages of capital, cultural struggles reflect the economic problems of such areas, see, Jameson, p.68.

particularly in the shape of short story as the preferred genre. Short stories by writers as Rajinder Singh Bedi deal with routine lives of lower middle-class men and women. For instance the short story "Kalyani" highlights sexual conflicts perpetuated by severe pressure on men as bread earners and women as entirely dependent souls. Most of these stories, the Collection titled as *Our hands have been Chopped Off*, published in1974, express strong critique of material basis of all human relationships that eventually reduces all human beings to selfishness and apathy. Within the meticulous descriptions of the interiors of a poor middle-class household, the impinging callous ethos of the capitalist system in the newly independent Indian state is implied. Similarly, in another story, "Mythun" [city life] emanates a corrupting influence on the urban dwellers. From 1940-1965, other writers as Saadat Hassan Manto and Krishan Chandar continued to represent art's commitment to telling the truth. In the same era, Ismat Chugtai, a female iconoclast writer from India, with matchless sarcasm, and devastating irony of the upper class contributed to Urdu literature. Her "controversial" short story "Begum Jan[1]"[the madame] exposes the sexual exploitation of the lower class by the feudal Indian gentry in a remarkable style. Intizar Hussein's short stories though heavily influenced by James Joyce's *Dubliner's* echoes strong resistance towards the bludgeoning industrialization shaping the new Nehruvian India. As a modern realist writer, he blended the Indian and religious myths to depict the social and political changing realities of his times. For instance, "The Yellow Dog" (1962) , the very title of his short story is a metaphor for lust and vicious competition in modern society. Mehdi Baqar commends Hussein's writing for having 'resurrected' the short story in the 'form of fables and folk tales with new multiple meanings' (Baqar 28). The publication of the English translations of Urdu short stories by Balraj Manra by Penguin publishers in 1974 was another groundbreaking moment. Entitled as 'The Box of Matches' exposes the crises of identity and alienation suffered by an individual in a hugely complex capitalist world. As Jussawala notes, in this collection of seven stories "Manra embraces the entire human creed with its diverse complex material, psychological and social issues" (Jussawala 85). More importantly, these works inform on how forms of oppression mobilized by the capitalist mode of production had been intersectional. These are key moments in the history of Indian and Pakistani writings where confrontations and struggles with the birth pangs of capitalism are exposed. However, one cannot lament enough for the obscure status relegated to these works in the history of Urdu literature.

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1   After publication of this story, Ismat Chugtai was accused of writing 'obscene literature' and had to undergo a legal trial.

Later as Pakistan struggled for the loss of freedom under the ruthless military regime of General Zia ul Haq, leftist intellectuals as Faiz Ahmad Faiz and Habib Jalib were able to draw activists from a wide range of classes, from the working class to the upper-middle factions of society, through revolutionary poetry. Habib Jalib is remembered as "The people's poet" and remains to this day the quintessential proletarian writer. In Hassan's view "Habib Jalib's work signifies struggle for socialism, secularism, and struggle against all forms of oppression" (Hassan 2003). Broadcast of his literary work owing to radical views on military-dictatorship remained banned in Pakistan on National radio or TV until 1988.

In the words of Paul Kumar, Kishwar Naheed and Fehmida Riaz emerged as "highly politicized and self-aware women poets." Underlying the provocatively titled works as The *body Lacerated*, and *We sinful Women* are themes of resistance against the onslaught of patriarchal domination in Pakistani society (Kumar 88). Fortunately, these writings through translations in English have reached the global audiences and have garnered critical acclaim.

Unlike works in writings, theatrical performances continued only in remnants. Parallel theatre both in post partition India and Pakistan has expressed defiance against capitalist neo-liberal structures. Asis Sengupta and the other contributors in the book titled 'Mapping *South Asia Through Contemporary Theatre: Essays on the Theatre of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka'*, 2014 publication, provide a summary of the interplay of politics and theatre in five countries in South-Asia[1]. Asma Mitra acknowledges the crucial importance of the relatively visible and politically confrontational "parallel theatre[5]" of theatre groups like Ajoka theatre, and Tehrik-e-Niswan [The Women's movement]. The theatre activity in Pakistan, a country in which theatre as an idea is almost non-existent, delivers "non- hierarchical, and anti-colonialist" messages (Khan 45). In Pakistan, theatre produced "at the margins" is "more popular than theatre produced at the center" (Asis 95). It is important to mention Bertolt Brecht and Augusto Boal as the primary Marxist dramatists who have shaped the Pakistani Ajoka theatre's performances. By creating "raw immediacy" theatrical performances deliver familiarity of experience to the audience and concomitantly through subversive messages contribute to being a "liberating force" in societies. The "non-realist, folk-inflected, musical, gestural traditions" incorporated in these performances form another unique feature that has

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1   Sengupta explains the use of "South-Asia" as a loosely categorized term for the countries: Pakistan, India, Nepal, Afghanistan and Sri lanka clarifies Sengupta.

kept the theatre vigor alive in South Asian vernaculars[1] (Asis 104). Indian theatre evolved through "the decentralized, de-Sanskritized, non-Hindi, non-national theatre project" vernacular street theatre. "Radical Dalit performances" brought new understandings of the working of neocolonial policies adopted by the state (Mitra 94). Habib Tahvir's Naya Theatre Group, and The Bengali Badal Sirkar revived revolutionary theatre and recruited actors in unison activists from all range of classes (Khan 42).

Roughly, around the end of twentieth century, poets as Tara Singh, Nirmal Arpan, Jasbir Singh, Mushtaq Singh and few others, situated theme of love in the context of Punjabi's oppressed cultural and political position in modern capitalist Indian state. In Herbert Marcuse's analyses this phenomenon of "De-sublimating art" or "anti-art" produces new aesthetic forms of art and writing (Marcuse 22). Marcuse argues that in these settings, human sensibility rebels against the repressive reason, and is able to invoke "the freeing power of imagination" (Marcuse 30). Drawing from Herbert Marcuse, the study reads how political action inscribed within texts activates aesthetic sensibility in new dimensions. A case in study is the Punjabi Indian poetry that presents a confluence of love poetry and Marxist ideology. Jasbir Singh's work as *Geet Mera Naheen Kardae* [My songs do not make Any Difference] articulates the poet's lament for the loss of freedom in his region. Here, symbols from love poetry fuse with the hope for revolution. These "subcultural groups" have been more open to subversive forms of discourse and frequently employ bawdy expressions, local idioms and subversive expressions in poetic works[2]. The Indian Punjabi poet residing in the UK, Mushtaq Singh, brings in reflections on the political and economic turmoil both in the West and their motherland Punjab. Refreshingly new literary styles emerge in Raghbir Singh's short story collection entitled "Kursi" [The chair]. These short stories[3] address subjects as individual alienation from a Marxist point of view. There are unique examples of political novels as *Hanara Hon Taq* [Until the darkness] by Niranjan Tasneem, and Mohinder Singh Sarna's *Suha Rang Majeeth Da* [The red colour] that foreground Marxist philosophy. These narratives revive history of the development of capitalism across themes of economic frustrations, and the effects

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1   Fawzia Afzal Khan validates the use of local Punjabi and Urdu language in Ajoka Theatre's productions. p.47

2   In a similar vein, Herbert Marcuse refers to the use of obscenities in Black and Hippie art and literary traditions.

3   Particularly, two short stories Cheerian [Sparrows] and Darakht [Tree] explicitly address working class alienation as the primary theme.

of urban migration leading to loss of revolutionary ideals of life in shared living spaces. The younger generation of Punjabi academic scholars have taken to such writings, and have produced works titled as *Poetics of Punjabi poetry,* a scholarly dissertation by Pawan Sameer; another similar feat is the publication of Harbajahn Singh's scholarly work titled as *Pyar te Parivar* [Love and Family] (Singh 165). If provided a global reach, these works will have transformative effect on a large faction of Punjabi speaking and reading audiences across continents.

In Aijaz Ahmad's assessment, as a consequence to "an unbroken parliamentary rule of bourgeoise since 1947" India has suffered the most miserable form of capitalism (Ahmad 5). The Indian State oppression in the Indian state of occupied Kashmir[1] connotes "necro politics of advanced capitalism". Despite restrictions on all forms of freedom, the discontents and the travails of local Kashmiris have found expressions in the literary writings from Kashmiri authors. Kashmiris have registered strong protest Indian military oppression. Kashmiri folk genres offer ways of expression to the oppressed peasants, and the socialist revolutionary impetus drives these local writers. It is remarkable that the strong socialistic outlook of these writings was not the result of direct indoctrination from Western literature but a natural outcome of a congenial intellectual response (Farooq 721).

One of the key incidents, that started with peasant collective protest of military's persecution of local farmers found its way into literary writing spilling over into daily conversations. The protests, recorded sporadically in Kashmiri literature[2], found their way into language of ordinary people. Local proverb as 'Bata Bata Te Pyade Pate', meaning the armed soldiery was strictly watching every handful of grain, is commonly used in local folk plays. While the fascist Indian state tried appropriating the local Kashmiri resistant literature under a strong nationalist Indian banner, the people of Kashmir have shown strong resistance. Indigenous scholarship as F. Fayaz's M. Phil. Dissertation titled Kashmiri Society and Culture archives how Kashmiri Folk Literature challenged the project of "National literary Conference" altogether.

In regions that have been locus of ethnic, cultural, political conflicts, literary writings evolve out of conflicts and confrontations with the State. Predominantly, literature from war devastated regions alert us to the violence inhered in practices as

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1   Although the state of Kashmir was not directly colonized by the British, the indirect intervention of British colonists created a fascist bureaucratic structure. For more read, Khan, Yasmin. *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan,* Yale University Press: London, 2007.

2   It includes writings from Kashmir's national poet Mehjoor and younger contemporary poets as Abdul Ahad Azad, Arif, Fani and certainly many yet, undiscovered unknown voices.

"just wars"—a phenomenon constitutive in the very ontology of capitalism (Anievas & Nişancioğlu 39) The disenfranchised status of Gilgit-Baltistan in Islamic Republic of Pakistan bears similarity to the political conditions in Indian Kashmir. Similar to Kashmiri poetry, feelings of anger and rebelliousness towards the State of Pakistan resounds in the poetry from Gilgit-Baltistan. Local poets as Shams Zaman, Rehman Josh and other young emerging writers mock at the hypocrisies of the nation state of Pakistan particularly for inciting hatred against the minorities as the Shia Ismailia community in Pakistan. With political convictions that are strongly socialist, these works accentuate revolutionary ideals in the vernacular languages. More importantly, these executions practically reshape the political consciousness of the local people of Gilgit Baltistan. These movements ricochet Herbert Marcuse's views on art as political movement; he states while "art itself cannot change reality" it can draw "its inspiration and its very form from the prevailing revolutionary movement" (Marcuse 116) . Against the state ideas and practices, the Halqa group comprises of poets who critique on the realities of repression in the state by bringing in examples of revolutionary struggles and wars fought in the region as the one called Gilgit war of Independence, Nov 1st, 1947. An indigenous scholar from the region observes that the communal gatherings under the title 'Halqa' took impetus from the lives of other socialist poets and writers as Faiz Ahmad Faiz, and Habib Jalib (Nosheen 227). Against the national high culture of Urdu, English, and Hindi in South Asia, regional literature faces a double bind. Unfortunately, this literature remains inaccessible to wider audiences.

Designated as 'vulgar languages', literature in regional dialects is rendered unsuitable for cultural dissemination (Kazmi 32). To bring in the varied depictions of capitalism's widespread implications, it is imperative to include South Asian regional literatures that have desisted capitalism's widespread ethos of homogenization.

Conclusion

We live in an age of an advancing capitalist world constructed where invasions, environmental ruin, suppression, state violence, patriarchy and abuse continue unabated. It is but most unfortunate that most of the political, economic, and historical discourses fail to account for social and material inequities, and the global disorder perpetuated through the advancement of capitalism. The paper attempted an overview of non-western forms of active resistance to capitalism through the manifold literary representations in pre partition and post partition Indian and Pakistani literature. In these distinct literary pieces, a new paradigm that

captures the nuanced, complex, and the most horrendous implications of capitalism are represented through the unpredictable patterns of convergences and forms of resistance. Given the limited scope of the study it is not possible to explicate the entirety of peripheral or semi-peripheral literary writings that portray capitalistic undertakings, thus the study only focused on an outline of some key literary forms and movements. However, the argument subsists that this bulk of writings, if translated for a global wider audience, could shape the "world literature" and in consequence, fill the present fissures in western literature .

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Classics of World Literature: The Cultural Capital for Animated Adaptations

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Abstract   The classics of world literature are not only passed down from generation to generation in the form of paper texts including translated works but also transmitted in a cross-media way and acquired a new life form in this way. Especially in animation adaptations, the classics of world literature are important cultural capital and an inexhaustible source of creation. The aim of this paper, which is divided into three parts, is to explore the function of cultural capital played by world literary classics in animation adaptation. Firstly, it is argued that literary classics are the source of animation creation and the common assets of all the social classes. Secondly, it is believed that animation adaptation provides a new way for the cultural transmission of literary classics, and there are successful adaptation practices of literary classics in various periods. Thirdly, it is believed that literary classics, as cultural capital, can play a historical role in the animated adaptation, which can also be evidenced by the development of Disney, the representative of animation companies. The author concludes that the literary classics passed down through time are the common wealth of human beings and the cultural capital that can be utilized, and moreover, it is the artistic guarantee for animation adaptations to obtain cultural values.

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Introduction

The concept of "cultural capital" was proposed by Pierre Bourdieu, who believed that capital is expressed as economic capital, cultural capital, social capital, symbolic capital, and other fundamental types of capital (Bourdieu 241-58). In his opinion, it is obviously not comprehensive to look at capital only from the perspective of economy, and the capital should also include the elements of culture. And the cultural capital and economic capital have their own functions. "The difference between cultural capital and economic capital is that economic capital can be immediately transformed into money, it is institutionalized in the form of property rights, while cultural capital can be transformed into economic capital only under certain conditions" (Wang 437). However, we neither expect nor intend to explore the academic content of this doctrine here. It is only to borrow the idea of cultural capital to emphasize the capital property of literary classics, and the importance and value of our facing up to this capital property for the development of animation and cultural industry.

The animated films based on the literary classics are easier to be accepted by the audience, and can give full play to the function of cultivating sentiment and ethical education that literary works can develop. Moreover, in a certain sense, the acceptance process of animation is also the cognitive process of the original work. Take the animation feature films in the history of world animation as an example. The vast majority of them are successful due to the adaptation of literary classics, which are cultural capital. Moreover, the original literary classics on which these animated films are based are not only the domestic literary classics, but also literary classics from all over the world, which fully reflect the characteristics of literary classics as the common cultural heritage of humankind.

Literary Classics: The Source of Creation of Animation

According to John Guillory, "Canonical texts are the repositories of cultural values" (Guillory 22). "Cultural capital" is the common wealth of human beings, and this rich wealth cannot be exclusive to a few classes, but should become the common asset of all classes of humankind. Only with this rich common cultural heritage of humankind can the concept of structuring the community of human destiny be put into practice.

In terms of the development of animated films, narrative works such as novels and fairy tales are important sources of animated adaptations, but of course,

other genres of literature have not been neglected by the animators. In the case of drama, Shakespeare's comedies and tragedies are of interest to many animators and have been adapted into a variety of animated works. Even poetical works are no exception to the attention of animation and have undergone successful animated adaptations. For example, Dante's epical poem *The Divine Comedy* has been adapted for animation in a wide variety of ways. Pushkin's poem, *Ruslan and Lyudmyla*, was also adapted to *The Stolen Princess*, a Ukrainian animation released in 2018. Even lyrical poems have been animated by some animators, such as Hannes Rall's adaptation of Edgar Allan Poe's famous poem "The Raven" into an animated short film in 1999, followed by Goethe's famous poem "The Erl-King."

As cultural capital, the works of classical writers are often more favored in the process of conversion from written text to the screen. In 2011, Forrest Wickman conducted a survey and made a detailed analysis of IMDB data, thereby identifying the writers whose works had been adapted most frequently for the screen. The result of the survey is that the most respected writers in the literature circle are often also the most adapted writers, and the higher the reputation of the original works, the more frequently they are adapted. At the top of the statistical list are some of the world's most famous writers: Shakespeare, the representative writer of the English Renaissance, ranked the first place with 831 adapted works, followed by Chekhov, the world's giant of short stories, who ranked second with 320 adapted works, then followed by Dickens, the outstanding representative of British realist literature, who ranked third with 300 adapted works, and Allan Poe, a famous American writer in the 19th century, ranked fourth with 240 adaptations (Rall 190).

Shakespeare ranks at the top of the list of screen adaptations, mainly because of the unique value of his works that lend to the construction of a community of human destiny. In this regard, critic Roberta Pearson put it very pertinently when she argued that "The humanist Shakespeare, set free from the stifling historicism of a particular English heritage, is a transcendent genius who wrote of universal themes and emotions and created emblematic characters recognized by all" (Pearson 91-2). Fiona Shaw also makes the point: she believes that Shakespeare's plays "can be reset at any time and any place because what we recognize in them isn't the dates and towns, it's the emotions and experiences and the personalities familiar to everyone everywhere" (Qtd Voigts-Virchow 92).

The same is true for Chekhov's works. He was both a story writer and a playwright, and his works have entered the literary world as a humorist, and are mainly characterized by their brevity and humorous satire. However, his works, despite the fact that they are generally short and concise in form, are voluminous

and profoundly thoughtful. He often started with ordinary events to reflect the important issues in social life. Therefore, the ordinary themes have profound philosophical connotations, and ordinary subjects reflect significant social issues.

Chekhov's works are suitable for the screen because of their wide range of subjects, their profound meanings, and their relevance to real life. His works were first adapted for screen in 1910. From then to the present day, hundreds of his works have been adapted into films, including *The Sea Gull* directed by Sidney Lumet, *Mirror*, directed by Andrei Tarkovsky, and *Winter Sleep,* adapted from the novella "The Wife" and directed by Nuri Bilge Ceylan.

The famous British writer Charles Dickens has been widely adapted, again due to the depth of thought and artistic impact of his works. Therefore, Dickens' writings are also a valuable cultural asset in the field of film and television adaptations. His works have not only been adapted into live-action versions or TV series such as *David Copperfield, Great Expectations,* and *Oliver Twist,* but have also been quite successful in animated adaptations, from the animated shorts to 3D masterpieces, Dickens' works have provided rich cultural resources for animated adaptations. The animated short film of the same name, based on Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, was a great success and won the Academy Award for Best Animated Short Film in 1972. Based on Dickens' novel *Oliver Twist*, Disney's animated film *The Adventures of Oliver Twist* was also very successful. Moreover, The animated *Bleak House*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Great Expectations*, and *The Pickwick Papers* also won a large audience.

Animation Adaptation: A New Way of Cultural Inheritance

In the history of World literature, the adaptation practice of literary classics as cultural capital in various countries has laid a solid foundation for the development of animation and provides a rich guarantee for the source of animation creation. In particular, many animation adaptations of literary classics, such as Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Arabian *One Thousand and One Nights*, Shakespeare's plays and other literary classics of animation adaptation, as well as the successful adaptation examples of "Chinese School of Animation," are the outstanding achievements of "cultural heritage" of humankind.

Taking Dante's masterpiece *The Divine Comedy* as an example, American animator Boris Acosta has been engaged in film and television adaptations of Dante's *The Divine Comedy*, and he has completed more than ten films or animated films adapted from *The Divine Comedy*. His 3D animated films based on *The Divine Comedy* have been quite successful, and he has largely followed the

structural features of Dante's *The Divine Comedy* to build his own 3D animated films, including *Dante's Hell 3D Animation*, *Dante's Purgatory 3D Animation*, and *Dante's Paradise 3D Animation*. Of course, the animation adaptation of Dante's *The Divine Comedy* is not limited to a single artist or a single country, the animated film *Dante's Inferno: An Animated Epic* is the collective work of many animators on an international scale. This so-called animated epic is 100 minutes long, and the animated film also follows the main plot of Dante's original story, and is divided into seven parts according to the specific stages of development of the plot, and was respectively directed by seven animation experts from the United States, Japan, Korea and other anime experts, including the well-known American director Victor Cook. Compared with the original, there are certain variations in the plot and spiritual content, which highlights the prominent visibility and narrativity. Moreover, "the variation in the animated adaptation of *The Divine Comedy* is also reflected in the tendency to highlight the storyline at the expense of religious connotations. In Dante's *The Divine Comedy*, the 'Purgatory' is about 'sins', which may have some ethical and moral obstacles, while the "Paradise" not only involves the ideal realm, but also the topics discussed involve theology, philosophy and many other aspects, and the content seems to be ponderous, so, compared with the 'Purgatory' and the 'Paradise.' Therefore, compared with 'Purgatory' and 'Paradise,' 'Hell' is more likely to be chosen and loved by film and TV writers and directors" (Wu 90).

Looking back at the history of world literature, we can see that there are successful adaptation practices of literary classics in all the developing periods.

For example, the animated film of the same name, *Oedipus the King*, is based on the tragedy in ancient Greek literature, as well as the animated short film based on Greek mythology, and the animated film *The Prince of Egypt*, based on "Exodus" of the ancient Hebrew Bible. Even the epic work of ancient Babylon, *Gilgamesh*, was adapted into an animated film by the Quay brothers, Stephen and Timothy Quay in 1985. In China, based on a story in *Aesop's Fables*, China's first animated short with sound, *Camel Dance*, emerged in 1935. Since then, "Chinese animation has entered the era of sound" (Lin 12). The international adaptation of Chinese literature also developed in this way. For example, the first Japanese animated feature film, *The Legend of the White Snake* (1958), was based on classical Chinese folk literature and was the first color animated film produced by Toei Animation Co. Ltd.

In medieval literature, in addition to the above-mentioned *The Divine Comedy*, one of the successful examples is the animated film *Beowulf* (2007), based on the

British medieval heroic epic of the same title. The film was directed by Robert Zemeckis, and although it is not a live-action film, it can be said that, from the perspective of animation effects, it is more live than the live-action film. Whether it is the scenes or the characters, the producers are characterized by "realism," using animation film technology to reproduce the real world of human beings. The advantages of animation in this film are evident. It can not only avoid the high pay of a few actors but also easily solve any difficult movements that cannot be completed by real actors. If it were not for the animation film technology, it would be unimaginable to see the main character Beowulf with amazing power and the presentation of the bloody battle between him and Glendale.

The eminent plays of Renaissance literature, represented by the English playwright Shakespeare, have been the sources of inspiration and materials for many animation creators. There are not only the series of The Animated Shakespeare but also various animations based on his single works. Among them, The *Lion King*, based on *Hamlet*, has been a great success. Besides, *Romeo and Juliet* is particularly favored by adapters. As Robert Hamilton Ball notes, "Romeo and Juliet was the most popular subject for Shakespeare film" (Ball 235). American animator John Randolph Bray (1879-1978) had already begun his attempts to adapt the Shakespearean play *Romeo and Juliet* into animation as early as 1915 with the short animated film *Romiet and Julio*, which expressed his attitude towards the adaptation by reconstructing the names of the play's protagonists. Later, *Romeo and Juliet* was adapted into dozens of animated feature films and shorts in Britain, the United States, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Romania, Spain, Yugoslavia, Canada, Japan, Bulgaria, and other countries. Among them are three animated films that received a certain amount of attention, which are the American animation *The Lion King 2: Simba's Pride* (1998), the Japanese animation *Romeo×Juliet* (2007), and the British animation *Gnomeo & Juliet* (2011).

In the 17th- and 18th-century literature, *Robinson Crusoe* (2016), which was based on Defoe's novel *The Adventure of Robinson Crusoe*, was directed by Vincent Kesteloot. In the animated film, the same theme of survival on a desert island is embodied. Compared with Defoe's original work, the animation film is more prominent in the communication between Robinson and the parrot Mike and other animals on the island.

From the 19th century to the 20th century, important works in the history of world literature have been adapted into animation. Some of them have been very successful, such as *Frozen*, adapted from Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale "The Snow Queen", and *Cinderella*, adapted from the fairy tale of the same title.

It can be seen that whether it is the plays of ancient Greco-Roman or Shakespeare, or the epic poems of Dante in the Middle Ages, or the novels of the 18th century, or the folk literature such as "Cinderella," all can be disseminated through animation and gain a new life in this way.

Disney's Journey: The Value of Cultural Capital

The historical role that literary classics can play as cultural capital in animated film adaptations can also be evidenced by the development of the Walt Disney Company, the representative of animation companies. The Disney Company, which has a history of 100 years, is usually divided into six developing periods by the academic circles, namely: 1. Groundbreaking period (1937-1942), 2. Adjustment period (1943-1949), 3. Golden period (1950-1967), 4. Depression period (1968-1988), 5. Re-boom period (1989-2000), and 6. Transition period (2001-present) (Yang 2-13). With a closer examination of the development process of animation in the six periods mentioned above, we will find that whenever the animations get prosperous, they are always inseparable from the animation adaptation of literary classics and from the reference of animated films to the classics of world literature.

During the groundbreaking period of its development, the Disney Company was able to open a new page in the world of animation, thanks mainly to the animated adaptations of literary classics. The year "1937" was a groundbreaking year because the Disney Company released its first animated feature film, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. This film was the first animated film to be shot with multiplane camera and got an "enormous success" (Lucia 324). *The New Republic* wrote that it was "among the genuine artistic achievements of this country" (Madej 61). The film received an Academy Honorary Award in 1938, becoming a pioneering work in the history of world animation. During this period, not only *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* but also *Pinocchio* and *Bambi*, which were also adapted from famous literary works, achieved great success.

In the third stage, the "Golden Age (1950-1967)", the most crucial contribution that represents the glory of Disney animation is the nine brilliant animated films. They are *Cinderella* (1950), *Alice in Wonderland* (1951), *Peter Pan* (1953), *Lady and the Tramp* (1955), *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), *The Hundred and One Dalmatians* (1961), *The Sword in the Stone* (1963), *Mary Poppins* (1964), and *The Jungle Book* (1967).

Most animated films come from adaptations of literary classics from various countries. *Cinderella* was adapted from the Grimm brother's fairy tale *Cinderella*. Cinderella's kind character, her positive outlook on life, and her romantic

relationship with the prince meet the emotional needs of the post-war generation. It is this literary classic that has acclimated to the spirit of the times and opened the prelude to the golden age of animated films.

Disney's animated film *Alice in Wonderland* is based on the world-famous British writer Lewis Carroll's fairy tale *Alice's adventure in Wonderland*. The original work has been translated into dozens of languages worldwide and is loved by readers, especially young readers. Its narrative and structural patterns, as well as its characters and imagery, have profoundly influenced popular culture and literature, especially fantasy works. As early as the end of the 19th century, Sir Walter Besant argued that *Alice's Adventure in Wonderland* was "a book of that scarce kind which will belong to all the generations to come until the language becomes obsolete" (Carpenter 68). Sir Walter Besant's viewpoint aptly illustrates the tenacious vitality and enduring charm of the fairy tale.

Moreover, Carroll's fairy tale is not only popular in paper form but also in the form of film and television and has been adapted into dozens of film and television productions since it was adapted into a silent movie in 1903, which has been widely distributed. Disney's 1951 version of *Alice's in Wonderland* adopted a surreal approach and received a certain amount of attention. Later, Disney readapted the fairy tale for several times, such as the 2010 animated film *Alice in Wonderland*, directed by Tim Burton, and the 2016 animated film *Alice Through the Looking-Glass*, directed by James Bobin, which attracted even more attention.

Disney Animation *Peter Pan* (1953) is an adaptation of the representative work *Peter Pan* by British novelist-playwright James Matthew Barrie. The work focuses on the adventures of a young girl, Wendy, and pulls back the curtain on a gorgeous and metaphysical Neverland for readers. *Peter Pan* has been adapted several times into musicals, television programs, films and animations. Disney produced the animated film *Peter Pan* in 1953, becoming one of Disney's classic animations.

The 1959 version of *Sleeping Beauty* is based on the famous French fairy tale writer Charles Perrault's classic *Sleeping Beauty*, which belongs to the well-known "prince + princess + witch" model of fairy tales. Furthermore, *The Sword in the Stone* is an adaptation of the famous British medieval series *The Legend of King Arthur*.

The animated film *Mary Poppins*, released in 1964, is based on the children's classic by British writer P. L. Travers. The original work tells the story of Mary, the magical governess who can fly with an umbrella. Disney's combination of live-action and animation in this film was a great success, and the film "received 13 Academy Awards nominations, including Best Picture—a record for films released

by Walt Disney Studios" (Madej 80).

It can be seen that making full use of the cultural capital of literary classics is highly critical to the success of animation works. From the development history of Disney animation, it will be successful whenever the cultural capital has adhered. This was revealed in the Disney animation development of the fifth period, "Re-boom period (1989-2000)." In this period, not only the old French mythology such as *Beauty and the Beast* (1991) was adapted, but also *Aladdin* (1993), which was adapted from the famous Arabic literature *Tales from the thousand and one nights*, *Hercules*(1997) which adapted from Greek mythology, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996), which adapted from the great French writer Victor Hugo's novel, *The Lion King* (1994), which is based on Shakespeare's masterpiece *Hamlet*, and *Mulan* (1998), which is based on the famous folk poem in the Northern and Southern Dynasties of China. This period of success for Disney animation was so remarkable that some scholars have called it "the Disney Renaissance" (Pallant 89). The reason for Disney's renewed success was the adaptation of literary classics.

The animated film *Beauty and the Beast*, co-directed by Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise, has a prominent feature in showing the dialectical relationship between appearance and heart. The Beaston, with horrible appearance, slowly showed to the audience and the heroine his kind heart, while Caston, with the lively and lovely appearance, gradually revealed his sinister side. Thus, the film "deeply depicted the psychology of the characters and openly challenged the equation 'ugly=bad'" (Bendazzi 12).

Adapted from the famous book *Notre Dame de Paris*, the animated film *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* got an exceptional success because of the reputation of the original. The film still draws attention to the story of the good-natured Quasimodo and the beautiful Gypsy girl Esmerelda. The film, also co-directed by Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise, won the 69th Academy Awards and various awards, including the Best Animated Film Annie Awards.

Moreover, *The Lion King*, an adaptation of Shakespeare's well-known tragedy *Hamlet*, was a huge commercial success, "Propelled to new box-office heights with the release of *The Lion King*, the Disney Renaissance reached peak profitability in 1994" (Pallant 94). *The Lion King* set the story of the Danish prince into the animal world, bringing to life the classic tragic story of the prince who killed his uncle after the uncle killed his father and usurped the throne.

Again, John Guillory argues, "The selection of texts is the selection of values" (Guillory 23). The text selection process is about discovering value. However, as important as the discovery of value is, it requires the embodiment of value. Disney's

animation adaptation based on the literary classics fully shows that the animated adaptation of literary classics is an essential aspect of the value of cultural capital possessed by literary classics.

Conclusion

To sum up, for the animation art, which has only been developed for more than a century, the literary classics, which have a history of thousands of years and passed down through the baptism of a long time, are the cultural capital that can be utilized and inexhaustible art treasures with rich cultural values. The practical experience of advanced animation countries has fully explained the significance of the use of cultural capital in animation practice. Because animated works based on literary classics are not only easier to be accepted by audiences in terms of theme, but also, and more importantly, in terms of ideological acceptance. Some ideological meanings in literary classics, such as collectivism, patriotism, heroism, optimism and the harmonious relationship between human beings and nature, have been deeply rooted in the hearts of the people and are generally accepted. Therefore, animated films adapted from literary classics are more easily converted from pure entertainment to life education and are more capable of giving full play to the function of appreciations and the ethical education of guiding audiences to learn to be human.

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Terry Pratchett in Russia

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Abstract   This paper provides an overview of the key aspects of Terry Pratchett's reception in Russia, the stages of his entry into Russian culture as well as an analysis of the responses to his work of the mass reader and professional reader. Although Russian researchers have examined different aspects of Terry Pratchett's work, to the best of knowledge, this is the first study to explore the writer's reception in the Russian-speaking cultural field. Pratchett's reception started later in comparison with other authors of fantasy but developed rapidly and went through three main stages in its development. The mid-90s of the last century – when Russian editions of Pratchett's novels commenced to be published. 2004 – 2017 when critical responses and reviews started to appear, Pratchett's fan communities and fanfiction based on his writings emerged, and first studies in academic journals. 2018 – until today when Pratchett's biographies were released, publication of his major novels in Russian was completed, reprints and new translations of previously published books began. The result of the research allows the authors of the article to say with confidence that Pratchett's popularity in Russia has not reached its peak yet.

Key words   Discworld; fantasy; Pratchett; reception; Russia

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Introduction

Sir Terry Pratchett (1948-2015), an English comic fantasy writer, Britain's best-selling living author has become a cult figure all over the world nowadays. Although in recent years literary critics have increasingly turned to Pratchett's work, his reception in Russia has not been investigated before. However, this reception is perfectly large and intensive. That is why the history of the writer's entry into the Russian culture is of particular interest as it sheds light on the idiosyncrasies of fantasy reception in Russia as a whole.

The limitations imposed by the scope of this article allow us to overview only the key aspects of the reception of the writer's work. The study focuses on the reasons for Pratchett's late entry into Russian culture, the main stages of this entry and the specifics of the responses of the mass reader and the professional reader (literary scholars and critics).

Pratchett owes his wide popularity, which began to rapidly gain momentum in the 80s of the last century in Europe and the USA, to a fantasy book series *Discworld*, conceived as a parody of Tolkien and his epigones, but eventually developed into a satire on reality itself. While Europeans and Americans were enjoying Pratchett's novels, the writer remained unknown in Russia until the mid-90s of the last century. This was primarily due to the fact that the Soviet reader, who lived behind the "Iron Curtain", was not familiar with either the reality that the author ridiculed or the parodied novels.

Today, it is impossible to imagine literature without fantasy. More than 60,000 works of this genre are offered only on an online marketplace Amazon.com. This new genre trend developed in the middle of the twentieth century and nowadays has long gone beyond literature. It is widely represented in painting (Boris Vallejo, Alan Lee, Randy Vargas, Paul Kidby, etc.), music (Blind Guardian, Battlelore, Bal-Sagoth, etc.), cinema (adaptations of *Harry Potter, The Wheel of Time, The Fowl Adventures,* etc.) as well as video game industry (*The Elder Scrolls, Final Fantasy, Warcraft,* etc.).

It is generally assumed, that the founding father of fantasy in literature is John Ronald Reuel Tolkien, whose books later have become prototypical for this genre (though chronologically the novels of Edward Dunsany, Robert Howard and Clive Lewis preceded Tolkien's works). The birth of fantasy is usually associated with the

publication of *The Hobbit* in 1937. The book was a huge success, but was treated as a children's fairy tale. The publisher, pleased with the result of the publication of *The Hobbit*, asked to write a sequel, and the writer began to create a work that would later become a kind of "Bible" for fans of fantasy. *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy was published in 1954-1955, and readers in Britain and the United States fell in love with the universe of Middle-Earth. Later it found a broad response among readers of other countries.

The most significant milestones in the development of fantasy are such book series as: *The Wizard of Earthsea* by Ursula Le Guin (first publication in 1968), *The Chronicles of Amber* by Roger Zelazny (first publication in 1970), *The Saga of Elric* by Michael Moorcock (first publication in 1972), *Discworld* by Terry Pratchett (first publication in 1983), *The Wheel of Time* by Robert Jordan (first publication in 1990), *A Song of Ice and Fire* by George Martin (first published in 1996), *Harry Potter* by Joanne Rowling (first publication in 1997).

In Russia, the rapid development of fantasy coincided with the beginning of "perestroika" (the late 80s - early 90s of the twentieth century). In the Soviet period, this genre did not correspond to the ideologized socialist world view, based on the dogmas of materialism and scientific atheism. Belief in science, scientific and technological progress contributed to the spread and development of science fiction (mainly domestic) in the USSR. The works, which were inherent in mysticism and irrationality, were censored. As Sergey Alekseev and Dmitry Volodikhin note: "fantasy remained an unwanted guest in the country of October, sputnik, hammer and sickle" ("Soviet pre-fantasy") (*here in after the authors' translation into English).*

However, it was impossible to ignore the genre that was gaining popularity in the world completely. Soviet publishers found a way to publish stories about "wizards and dragons" as not a serious literature meant for children. The first official translation of *The Hobbit* (translated by Natalia Rakhmanova with illustrations by Mikhail Belomlinsky) was published as a fairy tale by the publishing house Detskaya Literatura in 1976. The novel was printed with an impressive circulation of 100,000 copies, which was comparable to the circulation of other children's books.

Only with the advent of perestroika, the rejection of communist ideology and censorship, fantasy novels began to be widely published in Russia. During this period, a real boom in translations of fantasy started: both books, which in the West were already beginning to be classified as "classics", and one-day novels were published in the country. Since the 90s, translations of book series by Terry Brooks, Roger Zelazny, Robert Howard, Ursula Le Guin, Fritz Leiber, Clive Lewis, Anne McCaffrey, Michael Moorcock, Andrzej Sapkowski appeared in bookstores. In

2000, the publication of J.K. Rowling's novels about Harry Potter and a number of other works of the masters of fantasy commenced. Against the background of the formation of fashion for Western fantasy in Russia, the domestic fantasy began to develop (Nick Perumov, Maria Semenova, Mikhail Uspensky, Yuri Nikitin, Sergei Lukyanenko, Vadim Panov, etc.), which later would be named Slavic fantasy.

At present, fantasy is confidently holding a leading position among translated and domestic literature in Russia. The reasons for this popularity are multiple: interest in adventure literature; constant film adaptations of books (it is often a successful film adaptation that makes the viewer turn to the book); the development of video games based on fantasy universes (for example, after the release of the video game *The Witcher*, Andrzej Sapkowski's novels have received a new life, crossed the borders of Eastern Europe, and found new readers around the world).

History of Terry Pratchett's Works Translation into Russian

The work of Terry Pratchett was able to enter Russian culture genuinely only after the Russian reader was ready to understand the object of the author's parody as well as the numerous allusions to literature, cinema and Western culture scattered throughout his texts. It happened no earlier than in 1997 – fifteen years after the first publication of the novel from the Discworld series in the United Kingdom.

Introduction of Terry Pratchett to Russian-speaking readers went through several stages. The first attempt to present the writer to the domestic book market was made by the publishing house Vagrius in 1994. It printed a humorous book *The Unadulterated Cat* (1989), which was translated by Victor Lanchikov under the title *Kot bez durakov* (literally "Cat, all kidding aside").

Two years later, the publishing house Tsentrpoligraf printed a cycle for children *The Nome Trilogy* in a small circulation of 10000 copies. The translation of each book was accomplished by a separate translator, quite possible in order to publish all three books at a time.

Only in 1997, Azbuka, a large publishing house, initiated the translation of novels about the Discworld and released the first five books: *The Colour of Magic,* (*Tsvet volshebstva*[1]) (1997), *Equal Rites (Tvortsy zaklinaniy*[2]*)* (1997), *The*

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1   Direct equivalent of the original title

2   Literally the Russian title means "Spell makers". The novel is about a young witch who decides to be a wizard. Pratchett makes a witty pun about that in the original title. It is difficult to find a congenial equivalent to it in translation, while «spell makers» in Russian is a gender-neutral word combination and can be attributed to both men and women (Zhikarentsev).

Light Fantastic (Bezumnaya zvezda[1]*)* (1997), *Mort* (*Mor, uchenik Smerti*[2]*)* (1998), *Sourcery (Posokh i shlyapa*[3]*)* (1999). The translations were done by Irina Kravtsova and Svetlana Zhuzhunava. Aleksandr Zhikarentsev, who also acted as a co-author of several translations, was responsible for editing the entire book series. A huge number of witty equivalents of Pratchett jokes, as well as Russian versions of proper and precedent names based on punning, were devised by him. For example, Nanny Ogg – Nyanyushka Yagg (Nanny Yagg – Yagg reminds Russian readers a folk tale old witch called Yaga); Garlick – Chesnogk (an equivalent to garlic, but like in the original supplemented with an additional consonant in the end); corporal Nobbs – kapral Shnobbs (Shnobbs may have associations with "poke around", "trickster" that is close to traits of Nobbs), captain Carrot – kapitan Morkou (in the original the captain's name is modeled on true English surnames like Castle, Church, Clark, Crane, and sounds simultaneously plausible and funny, while in Zhikarentsev's translation the surname Morcou is foreign-sounding but the word morkov" (carrot in Russian) is easily recognizable. Due to Zhikarentzev also appeared some funny translations of the witty Pratchett's titles: *Hogfather – Santa-Khryakus (*Khryak – means a male pig, the comic effect is based on combining a Russian stem with the Latin ending us as well as making a pun: Santa Claus –Santa Khryakus*)*; *Soul Music – Rokovaya muzyka* (stressed on both syllables: "rókovaya", meaning "rock music", and "rokováya" meaning "fatal") (Zhikarentsev).

In parallel with professional translations, the first amateur Russian versions of the Discworld novels appeared on the Internet: *V dospekhah i s oruzhiem* (*Men at Arms*) (1997), *Strazha! Strazha*! (*Guards! Guards!)* (1998) translated by Sergei Ben-Lev. Despite the translator's excessive literalism and liberty in the adaptation of the characters' names (captain Vimes – Bodryak (a cheerful person), captain Carrot – Morkovka (carrot), corporal Nobbs – Valet (knave)), until 2001 these translations were the only way for connoisseurs of Pratchett's work, who did not speak English, to get acquainted with the adventures of The Ankh-Morpork City Watch. However,

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1 Literally "Mad star". There was no way to save the original meaning, but "star" has a reference to the scene (like in the original title) and the plot of the novel. The word "mad" refers to the coming doomsday and the madness that accompanies its arrival (Zhikarentsev).

2 Literally "Pestilence, Death's apprentice". Name Mort has no associations with "death" for Russian people, so it was substituted by "Mor" which means "plague". That is why the title was supplemented with the clarification "Death's apprentice" to transfer the original title meaning in a more precise way (Zhikarentsev).

3 Literally "Staff and hat". It was difficult to adapt the pun on "source" and "sorcery" of the original title, therefore, two items which usually associated with wizards, namely Gandalf, and witchery were used to coin the new one (Zhikarentsev).

sophisticated readers found these translations "monstrous", and one of them wittily remarked that "early translations forever discouraged many readers from Pratchett, but also forged his true connoisseurs" ("Readers' comments on Sergei Ben-Lev's translations").

At the end of 2000, the rights to translate Pratchett's books transferred to Eksmo, the largest publishing house in Russia, which is still publishing his works. In 2000-2001, it printed twelve writer's novels as part of the Discworld series, entitled "Ploskiy mir" (Flat World). Five of them were reprints of the novels published in *Azbuka*, and seven books were new ones. The covers they had were designed by Josh Kirby for British editions. Aleksandr Zhikarantsev continued to edit the book translations, but the board of the translators was not constant.

From 2002 to 2006, Eksmo continued to promote Pratchett actively on the domestic book market, releasing 2-3 new translations a year, most of which were made by Nikolay Berdennikov (5 novels) and Svetlana Uvbarkh (4 novels), as well as Irina Kravtsova, and Marat Gubaidullin who respectively translated one work each.

The period of 2006–2012 can be considered the next stage in the publication of Pratchett's works in Russia. Eksmo closed the series "Ploskiy mir" and launched a new one instead: "Terri Pratchett", which differed from the previous one in its design of the covers. Now the books were published in a black hardcover and illustrated by Anatoliy Dubovik. The restart of the series slowed down the release of new translations. During this period, only four novels were newly published (2007 – *Pyatyy elefant*[1] *(The Fifth Elephant)*, 2008 – *Pravda (The Truth)*, 2010 – *Vor vremeni (Thief of Time)*, 2011 – *Nochnaya strazha (Night Watch)*[2], all translated by N. Berdennikov). Mostly reprints of previously published books were released. This pause provoked the emergence of a whole series of amateur translations into Russian. The desire of Pratchett's fans to read his new works was intense. Users shared their own translations, posting them both in full and in fragments on the Internet as well as on the specialised forum pratchett.org.

In June 2007, Eksmo organised with the British Council assistance a presentation of the novel *The Fifth Elephant* with the participation of the writer. This was the only Pratchett's visit to Russia. He signed autographs, gave interviews and performed in public in Moscow and St. Petersburg. The writer's popularity among Russian readers by that time can be illustrated by the facts that visitors could hardly fit in the room provided by the organisers for meetings and autograph sessions ended

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1   The Russian equivalent of "elephant" is "slon", but in this case "elephant" was transliterated to make an allusion to the film *Pyatyy element (the Fifth Element)*.

2   Pravda, Vor Vremeni and Nochnaya strazha are literate translations.

later than the scheduled time. In a few days, Pratchett signed more than 2,000 copies of novels, promising not to leave anyone without an autograph. On the last day of his stay in Russia, he held meetings with a compress on his hand, continuing to sign books, and at the conference remarked jokingly: "Russia defeated Hitler, Russia broke Napoleon ... and Russia finished my wrist" ("Feedback of the visitors…"). As part of his visit, the writer gave an extended and witty interview to the magazine "Mir Fantastiki", which undoubtedly increased the number of his fans in Russia.

In 2012, the board of editors and translators who worked on Pratchett's books at Eksmo changed. It led to a change of the concept of his books publishing. If earlier the Russian versions were published in the chronology of the originals, now the policy was to bring previously started subseries to completion or to publish independent novels. In 2013–2014, the novels *Monstrous Regiment (Gusarskaya ballada[1]), Thud! (Shmyak[2]), Unseen Academicals (Nezrimyye akademiki[3])* and *Snuff (Delo tabak[4])* were published in the translation of Valentina Sergeeva. Having finished the subseries about City Watch and Rincewind, in 2014–2016, the publishing house turned to the book series *The Long Earth*, written by Pratchett in collaboration with Stephen Baxter. New Discworld subseries about Moist von Lipwig and Tiffany Aching were also started. The former was translated by Elizaveta Shulga, the latter – by Natalia Allunan and Svetlana Likhacheva. In that period, the publication of supplementary literature of the Discworld also commenced: *The Compleat Ankh-Morpork: City Guide* and four volumes of *The Science of Discworld*.

In 2018, *The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents* - the last novel about the Discworld previously unreleased in Russia appeared. It was translated by Svetlana Likhacheva and entitled *Udivitel'nyy Morris i ego uchenyye gryzuny* (literal translation of the original title). Having completed the book series "Terri Pratchett",

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1   Literally "Infantry Ballad", "The Hussar Ballad". This change was done as for Russians *Monstrous Regiment* is not a precedent text, while "Infantry Ballad" is an allusion to the Soviet film "The Hussar Ballad" about a young girl dressed as a man who decided to join a hussar squadron. In Pratchett's novel, the main character Polly Perks, dresses up as a male soldier in order to find her brother.

2   A literal translation of the original title.

3   Literally "Unseen academics", in Russian version Pratchett's allusion to "Hamilton Academical" and "Edinburgh Academicals" is lost as these sports teams and educational institutions are unfamiliar to a Russian reader.

4   The translator attempted to transfer Pratchett's pun into Russian. "Delo tabak" is a Russian proverb which means "things go in a bad way", at the same time this title refers to conducting a criminal investigation ("delo" itself means "case", while "tabak" is "tobacco"). The meaning of the original title is also double: "snuff" means "powdered tobacco" and "to die" refers to captain Vimes's investigation about tobacco plantations and some mysterious deaths connected with them.

Eksmo started to reprint hardcovers as paperback editions with the covers of the English originals, and published additional copies of the previous editions. In 2020, the publishing house launched another series, "Universum. Terri Pratchett. Vedmy, Strazha i Mrachnyy Zhnets" (Universe. Terry Pratchett. Witches, Guards, and Grim Reaper) with new covers. As the book market highly depends on consumer demand, these facts are the best evidence of the unquenchable interest of the Russian readers in Pratchett's work.

Today, the interest in the writer's novels is so strong that at the beginning of 2020 Eksmo decided to publish alternative translations of Pratchett's books. The first attempt was the novel *Good Omens*, written in collaboration with Neil Gaiman. In the translation of Vadim Filippov, the book was titled *Dobryye predznameno-vaniya* (the 2012 edition in Margarita Yurkan's translation was entitled *Blagiye znameniya[1]*). The choice of this particular novel was probably due to the recent release of a BBC TV series based on the book. The idea was a success, and alternative translations of the Discworld novels started to appear on store shelves, albeit the publisher decided not to change the Russian titles of the initial publications: *Vesh-chiye sestrichki* (literally "Prophetic Sisters") for *Wyrd Sisters*, translated by Elena Muzykantova (2020); *K oruzhiyu! K oruzhiyu!* (literally "To Arms! To Arms!") for *Men at Arms*, translated by Maksim Sorochenko (2021).

The steady growth of Pratchett's popularity in Russia is evidenced by the fact that in recent years his work has been appearing in Russian translations constantly. They include Pratchett's own writings or books related to them: a collection of writer's articles and essays *A Slip of the Keyboard: Collected Non-Fiction* (2019), a collection of short stories *A Blink of the Screen: Collected Shorter Fiction* (2021), atlas of the Discworld *The Compleat Discworld Atlas* (2020), a biography *Terry Pratchett. The Spirit of Fantasy* by K. Cabell (2018). In August 2021, the first full author's biography *The Magic of Terry Pratchett* by M. Burrows was released.

Nevertheless, there are still "blank spots" in the Russian translations of Pratchett's works. For instance, his first novel *The Carpet People* (1971), surprisingly, still does not have an official Russian translation, although the amateur version of Oleg Kolesnikov appeared in 1998 on the wave of the release of Pratchett's first novels in Russia. Also, the encyclopedia *The Discworld Companion,* maps *The Discworld Mappe, A Tourist Guide to Lancre, Death's Domain* and some individual stories written by Pratchett at the beginning of his career have not been published in Russian yet.

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1   "Predznamenovaniya" as well as *"znameniya"* mean omens or signs in Russian, and "dobryye" as well as "blagiye" are two equivalents for the word "good".

The Role of the Magazine "Mir Fantastiki" in Promoting Terry Pratchett

A significant role in the popularization of Terry Pratchett in Russia has played the magazine "Mir Fantastiki" ("World of Fantasy"), founded in 2003. It positions itself as the first Russian magazine about "fantasy and science fiction in all their manifestations" (as its slogan states) and publishes reviews of books, comic books, films, games and articles about famous science fiction and fantasy writers, their fictional universes, the forerunners of the fantasy genre, as well as mythology, fairy tales and folklore. Through this magazine, those readers who did not have access to the Internet discovered the world of fantasy and its novelties, including Pratchett's books.

The Discworld was introduced to the readers in issue 1 (5) 2004 by a regular columnist, Boris Nevsky, who briefly observed the world system of the Discworld, the book subseries and their main characters. The reviewer fairly accurately formulated the key features of the universe beloved by the readers of the whole world: "The true essence of Pratchett's work is that it mirrors all other worlds. The Discworld universe, its characters and the events happening to them can be absolutely fantastic. But familiar lines are visible through them, and behind the author's sly smile, real problems of our world arise in front of the reader" (Nevsky, "Samyy ploskiy iz mirov…" 52).

In the same year, Aleksey Rybakov interviewed Pratchett for the new issue of the magazine. Unlike most typical conversations with a writer that focus on what has already been written and creative plans, in this interview a big range of questions revealing the personality of the writer was discussed: whether he was fond of video games, what his attitude to sports was, what he liked least of all, and what he saw as the main difficulty of translating his novels. Such an interview brought readers even closer to their favourite author and strengthened their interest in him.

At the end of 2004, after the publication of the novel *Maskerade* (in Russian *Maskarad* which is a literate translation) by Eksmo, the first review of Pratchett's book appeared in issue 12 (16) of the magazine. The reviewer, Vasiliy Puziy, pinpointed the specifics of the writer's style: a mixture of sad and funny, an ability to talk about serious things in a humorous way. Subsequently, reviews of writer's books printed in Russia started to appear on a regular basis. To date, about thirty of them have been published. The reviewers call Pratchett "modern Jonathan Swift" (Nevsky, "Demiurg Ploskogo mira…" 51), praise the writer for his ability to talk about eternal topics in an easy, fun and immersive way (Readers, authors and editors…"), "deep penetration into the secrets of the human soul, the ability to empathize" (Nevsky, "Demiurg Ploskogo mira…" 51), subtle humour and irony,

In addition to novels reviews, the magazine publishes thematic articles that help to systematize knowledge about the author, his work and introduce his fictional world to the readers. In the article "Demiurge of the Discworld", Boris Nevsky gives major episodes of Pratchett's biography, lists his prizes and awards, provides a complete bibliography of his works at the time of publication and the recommended reading order of books. With the abundance of what the author wrote, it greatly facilitates the task of those who are just getting acquainted with Pratchett's novels.

The magazine uses a 10-point scale for evaluating books. Russian editions of Pratchett's novels have never received less than 7 points, which indicates the persistent popularity of the writer in Russia.

The death of Pratchett on March 12, 2015, served as an impetus for a new surge of interest in him and his work. "Mir Fantastiki" immediately responded with an obituary (Vladimirskiy). In the next issue the entire section "classics" was devoted to the works of Pratchett with the addition of a detailed "travel guide" to the Discworld, made with true Pratchett humour (Lugovskaya). The guide opened with a small quiz to help the reader determine the destination. This was followed by a story about different parts of the Discworld (Agatean Empire, Fourecks, Überwald, Ankh-Morpork, etc.), the history of countries, their way of life, sights, dangers when meeting with local residents (for example, vampires of Überwald).

In April 2020, "Mir Fantastiki" to celebrate the writer's birthday organized a collection of detailed readers' comments about their favourite works of the author, the most interesting of which were published on the website ("Readers, authors and editors…").

The Role of Fan Websites, Social Media Forums and Film Adaptations in Promoting Pratchett's Work

The rapid process of Pratchett's books publishing in Russia and the educational activities of the magazine "Mir Fantastiki" made the author renowned among Russian fantasy fans. As a result, the need for additional information about the Discworld and its author increased. This led to the emergence in 2002 of diskworldinfo.narod.ru - the first domestic website, dedicated to Pratchett. On this website, users collected all sort of information available to them: from the author's biography and his novels translations (both amateur and official) to illustrations and fanfiction based on the Discworld.

However, readers wanted not only to receive information about their favourite author, but also to discuss his books. It resulted in 2005 in the creation of another

website pratchett.org. In addition to the functions of the first website, this one has had its own forum for communication between community members. On this website, users can find news about Pratchett's books printed, solve intertextual "riddles", discuss the intricacies of translation, share impressions of the book they have read and chat about the world of the Disc, characters and their evolution, etc.

This forum is still active, but not as much as before probably due to the transition of users to the communities of the popular Russian social network "Vkontakte", such as "Terry Pratchett - quotes, books, discussions" (32120 members), "Sir Terry Pratchett Book Lovers Club" (8800 members), "Terry Pratchett & Discworld. Quotes, aphorisms" (12540 members), as well as a few other communities with a much smaller number of members.

In addition to specialized websites, Pratchett's readers actively share their opinions on the largest information site "Laboratory of SciFi & Fantasy" (www.fantlab.ru), launched in 2005. Readers, acting as "reviewers", write their responses and rate books on a scale from 1 to 10 points (the assessments are not regulated by specific criteria and subjective, which is typical for the Internet ratings in general). Reviews of Pratchett's books with a score below 5 points found on the portal constitute only 2.48% of all responses. Negative reviews are usually short and united by rejection of the author's style based on parody and derisive play with the reader: "The author and I clearly have too different concepts of humour. I was promised a funny parody of fantasy clichés, an excellent plot, interesting characters and a lot of positive things. Alas, nothing similar is found in the book" (ADIA, February 12, 2008), "I could not understand where there are funny episodes, I was not interested in any of the characters presented" (Harlekin667, 4 January 2021), "There is no plot and sense. The number of "jokes" per unit of text is off the scale" (K_Serg, February 5, 2008).

Most of the negative comments concerned early Discworld novels, in which parody is a key narrative technique, so the rejection of Pratchett's works by part of the audience could be caused by its ignorance of the parody objects. It is worth saying the writer himself did not value these novels highly. The lowest average score (7.83) got the first novel of the series *The Colour of Magic*, while the novel *Night Watch* gained the highest score (8.94).

The positive reviews for Pratchett's novels are the vast majority. Their analysis also allows identifying some common features. They are more detailed, and praise the author for his wit, the ability to deceive the expectations of readers, easily and naturally integrate philosophical reflections and political issues into the plot, etc.: "How can one talk with humour about such complex issues as nationalism, toler-

ance, weapon trades? It turns out, as much as possible, and *Men at Arms* is a vivid example" (primorec, May 19, 2012), "This is the kingdom of distorting mirrors that show everything in its true light. It's hard to see the truth <...> Discworld is much closer than many people may imagine" (Miss Marple, January 3, 2008), "Pratchett is good English humour for everyone. Pratchett is not about the Dark Lord, elves and other secondary things. This is a brilliant satire on our world, professional and smart" (Verner, August 22, 2013), "With the help of a subtle, truly British sense of humour, he was able to transfer our world in all its diversity to the pages of his books. And then he gave us the opportunity to look in it, as in a distorting mirror, and see all the absurdity of the reality around us" (Vitpur, September 11, 2011). It should be noted that the reader's feedback on FantLab.ru largely coincides with the reviews of the columnists of the magazine "Mir Fantastiki."

The appearance of admirers of Pratchett's work could not but cause the emergence of fanfiction – free continuation of the novels, written by the readers who develop the plots of the Discworld stories. Users have started to share their own works first on the site pratchett.org, forum, and later on ficbook.net, and other specialized websites. The authors try to imitate Pratchett's style, filling their texts with comic episodes, puns and intertextual inclusions. The genres of fanfiction are diverse: poems, mini-plays, anecdotes, diaries, stories of different sizes. As a rule, the authors take their favourite characters of the Discworld and show episodes from their lives that fill the gaps between novels (Vimes and Vetinari meetings, romantic relationships between Carrot and Angua, etc.). However, there are many fanfiction pieces, the events of which contradict the storylines of the original novels (for example, the pairing of Vimes and Vetinari) or are crossovers (Rincewind gets into the Strugatsky's NIICHAVO).

The emergence of fanfiction indicates that the author and his works not only have found their reader in Russia but have deeply entered their consciousness: the readers live by the stories written by Pratchett, they long for their endless continuation.

In the modern globalized world, one cannot discount such a powerful factor as the influence of film adaptations of the author's works on his popularity. A number of Pratchett's novels have been adapted for the screen. On-screen versions of the writer's works came to Russia almost simultaneously with the opening of his books by the Russian reader. The animated series based on *Soul Music* and *Wyrd Sisters* and filmed in 1997 came to Russia in 2007–2008. In the same years, the voiceover of the miniseries *Hogfather* (based on the novel with the same title) was made. In April 2008, through the efforts of the Kravets studio, *The Colour of Magic* almost

simultaneously was voiced in Russian. In May 2010, a two-part film based on the novel *Going Postal* appeared, which Russian-speaking Internet users could watch in Russian a week later. All these actively fueled interest in the writer and his work.

The success of the BBC series *Good Omens*, released in 2019, has reignited interest in Pratchett and his co-writer Neil Gaiman. It was after the release of the series that Eksmo not only reissued the old translation of the novel with covers depicting the main characters of the series, but also began publishing an alternative version of the translation of this work. The fact that interest has grown not only in the novel *Good Omens*, but in the work of Pratchett in general, is evidenced by the campaign launched after that by the publishing house to reprint and publish alternative translations of the writer's other novels.

Pratchett as a Research Subject in the Russian Academic Science

If the novels of Terry Pratchett were introduced to the Russian readers in the mid-90s, then in the academic community the writer's works became the material of research much later. This is likely due to the low interest of Russian researchers in fantasy before the early 2000s. At that period, the first articles and dissertations on certain aspects of fantasy and its classical representatives, such as C. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien, were beginning to emerge (Gogoleva, Misnik, Plotnikova, Pomogalova, Tret'yakova, Prikhod'ko, Shteynman).

The studies of Terry Pratchett's work started to appear in 2009. In the English-speaking world, Pratchett's scholars usually raise issues related to gender, feminism, the influence of folklore and myth, a parody element of the Discworld novels (Held and South, Pyykkonen and Washington, Smith). In Russia researchers address mainly the matters concerning difficulties of translating Pratchett's works: intertextual inclusions (Ignatovich), methods of translating the comic (Stolyarova), wordplay (Kryukova), precedent names (Voskresenskaya). The increased interest of researchers in translations of Pratchett's novels is logical, since his artistic world is entirely based on parody, a game with the readers' expectations, built on the recognition and understanding of various forms of intertextual inclusions and a language game, characteristic of the British humour. All these become a real challenge for translators, who are required not only to recode a text from one language to another, but also to be able to preserve the original author's intention, the functions of certain elements of the text.

Another group of scholars addresses the issues of the text-forming potential of intertextual inclusions in the Discworld novels, which are complex, diverse, often plot-forming and constitute the very essence of Pratchett's artistic world (Tananykh-

ina and Afanas'yeva, D'yakonova, Chekletsova).

The third group of studies focuses on the identification of the British comic linguocultural code (Verzhinskaya) and the examination of the representation of the key concepts of the writer's novels (life, death, afterlife; construction of the image of evil) (Bakiyev, Yudina). These questions often, for their part, return researchers to the issues of translating Pratchett's writings, imbued with the spirit of "Englishness", with its increased concentration of humour and language game, into Russian.

Conclusion

Thus, we can say with certainty that Pratchett's popularity in Russia is still growing and, apparently, has not reached its peak yet.

In comparison with other writers of fantasy, the reception of Terry Pratchett in Russia started later because the emergence of mass interest in the author's work based on parody was possible only after the Russian reader had become familiar with a certain number of fantasy pieces of writing parodied by him. However, after Pratchett's introduction to the Russian literary scene, his reception developed rapidly and went through three main stages in its development.

At the early stage of acquaintance with the author's books already well-known to the English-speaking world (started in the mid-90s of the last century), the reception consisted almost exclusively in the translation of his works into Russian (both by professional translators and amateur enthusiasts who posted their versions of his books on the Internet).

At the next stage (began in 2004), the publication of new translations was supplemented with critical responses and reviews by the columnists of the popular science magazine "Mir Fantastiki", which performed an introductory function as well as the function of forming readers' opinions. Along with professional critics, the mass readers spontaneously were forming their own attitude to Pratchett on the Internet. During this period, Pratchett gradually became a cult figure, as evidenced by the reader's excitement associated with his arrival in Russia, and the emergence of fan communities and fanfiction (indicating that the writer's works became well known to a wide range of readers). At this stage, the screen versions of his works voiced in Russian became a powerful fuel of interest in Pratchett and his work. In addition, it was during this period that the research field associated with the name of Pratchett began to form in the professional literary environment. Interest of scholars to the author means that he has started to turn into a classic.

The third stage (began in 2018) was marked by the fact that, after the death of the writer and the completion of Russian publications of his major books, a new

era has started. The era of Pratchett's biographies and previously unpublished minor works publishing, as well as reprints and editions of newly translated versions, aimed at satisfying the current readers' hunger for "communication" with the works of their favourite author.

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Ukrainian Modernist Drama in the European Context

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Abstract   The article aims at comparing the main characteristics of Ukrainian modernist drama to European dramatic models from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The methodology of the research is based on comparative-typological, genealogical, and cultural-historical methods, which enabled us to define the foundations for the development of modernist theatre in Ukraine, as well as identify its general and unique characteristics. In the research, we show that despite the unfavorable conditions for the development of national culture in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the main stages of Ukrainian modernist drama resonate with European dramatic evolution, from variations of the "new drama" (late nineteenth century) to avant-garde experiments in the 1910s and 1920s. The typological connection of the plays of Ukrainian early modernist writers (Lesia Ukrainka, O. Oles, S. Cherkasenko) with the genre paradigm of the "new drama," as constituted in the works of H. Ibsen, A. Strindberg, M. Maeterlinck, W. Yeats, and others, is established. In the first decades of the twentieth century, a younger generation of Ukrainian playwrights got involved in literary life and exhibited a stronger interest in formal experimentation. In their search for a way to depict the socio-political difficulties of the moment, V.Vynnychenko, M. Irchan, Ja. Mamontov, I. Dniprovsky, and M. Kulish turned to German Expressionist "drama of the cry" approaches. The works of L. Kurbas and M. Kulish, whose efforts are regarded as the pinnacle of the Ukrainian avant-garde activity of the interwar period, get special attention.

Keywords   new drama; comparison; similarity; transformation; avant-garde; expressionism; technique

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Introduction

Since Ukraine's independence in 1991, there has been a major change in the study of modernistic trends in Ukrainian art and literature. Since then, researchers have made significant progress in the revival of national culture including theatre and drama as its core elements. On the one hand, they attempted to give a comprehensive analysis of Ukrainian theatre at the time (M. Kudriavtsev, N. Maliutina, A. Matiushchenko, R. Parkhomyk, T. Sverbilova), while on the other hand, certain efforts were made to investigate national dramatic art in the context of the European "new drama" (I. Baranova, O. Blashkiv, M. Korenevych, S. Khorob). However, the majority of studies on the issue characterize Ukrainian modernist drama fragmentary, concentrating on the creative activity of single playwrights. There is a current need for a careful investigation of the evolution of Ukrainian modernist drama in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as well as its interactions with European theatre in the period. In this regard, the play provides a framework for a dynamic view of society that extends well beyond standard literary concepts.

The analysis of specific and common aspects of Ukrainian modernist theatre demands the clarification of the research methodology. We employed comparative-typological, genealogical, and cultural-historical approaches to outline the historical and cultural foundation for the formation of modernist theatre in Ukraine, as well as to establish its general and unique traits in comparison to the dramatic models of European playwrights. In the essay, we rely on the theory of commonalities, which is based on comparable cultural and historical circumstances rather than direct or indirect relationships. In his work "On the Theory of Comparative Studies" (2006), Kaspersky outlines three planes of comparison, each of which uses its own logic. The first specializes in comparing literary phenomena that are distant in time, the second deals with pieces of literature that are distant in space, and the third one deals with semiotically different discourses and forms of culture. According to this theory, our study belongs to the second category of comparisons, the essential feature of which is the overcoming of spatial distances, as well as the alienation of individual cultures and literatures and "the search for their structural

correspondences" (533–534). We also follow D. Diuryshyn's conception of synchronistic typology (1979), by which an important condition for the validity of comparative studies is the systematic coverage of all typological relations at the level of ideological and thematic proximity, socio-cultural and philosophical views, psychologically conditioned analogies, etc.

The abovementioned approaches encouraged us to search for a certain basis, an invariant, as a cross-cutting model of a dramatic work. V. Budnyi and M. Ilnytskyi (2008) characterize the concept of genre as a moving category, which is aimed at "set, repetitive, recognizable types of literary structures" (193). At the same time, R. Heibullaieva (2012) introduces the concept of genre genotype—a set of distinguishing features that are common to works of a particular genre. The study of general models will help to reveal the way of producing new artistic texts, and hence, will allow tracing "how certain cultural and historical features are reflected in works of art" (342).

The important components of the methodological basis of this article are the works by M. Kudriavtsev (1997), S. Khorob (2002), T. Sverbilova (2009), and A. Billa(2004) which illuminates some aspects of the theoretical and historical-comparative development of the drama at the turn of the twentieth century.

To successfully reveal the topic of the article, the following objectives are outlined: to prove the one-stage development of Ukrainian and Western European drama at the turn of the twentieth century; to show the common and unique characteristics of the Ukrainian modernist drama of the time;. to trace the transformation of the "new drama" into avant-garde dramatic forms in the first decades of the twentieth century.

Tendencies of Early Modernism in Ukrainian Drama at the Turn of the Twentieth Century

The shift towards the renewal of traditional forms of dramatic art, observed at the turn of the twentieth century, took place in the Ukrainian drama due to the modernist trends, including the "new dramatic" revolution of the West European theatre. Despite the political oppression of Ukraine by tsarist Russia, the new literary tendencies, spread in the 1890s, were marked by intensity and versatility. The survey of the dramatic heritage of Ivan Franko, Lesia Ukrainka, Oleksandr Oles, Spyrydon Cherkasenko, and others, proved the typological similarity of the artistic structure of their works with the modern drama of H. Ibsen, A. Strindberg, M. Maeterlinck, W. B. Yeats, H. Hauptmann. Among the most important common characteristics

of Ukrainian and European dramas are, for example, the conflict between man and society, analytic plot structure, open ending, allegorical imagery, deep symbolism, wide use of silence (laughing), psycho- and self-analysis, and so on.

To begin with, we should trace the precondition of the formation of the modernist drama in Ukrainian literature. Some traits of the genre "new drama" can be observed in Ivan Franko's (1856–1916) plays. Actually, he was the first who dared to deny the purely entertaining function of the dramatic art, insisting on the need to modernize the drama following European criteria. While studying at the University of Vienna, the Ukrainian writer had good opportunities to learn about modern literary tendencies, and that fact stimulated his own search. It is worth mentioning here Franko's play *Ukradene shchastia* (1893) [*The Stolen Happiness*] which is suggested to be a national version of Ibsen's *Doll's House* (1879). First of all, Franko used Ibsen's approach to the dramatic construction. We find in his work the traits typical for the Norwegian playwright's model of drama, in particular, a retrospective-analytical composition, a tense plotline, a tragic open ending as the fate of the main character, etc. Like Ibsen, the Ukrainian author tried to represent social problems from the perspective of the tragedy of human's existence. Enriching his works with psychological and philosophical issues, Franko offered a new fresh look at ordinary situations of everyday life, and it resonated with the visions of European masters of dramatic art.

However, most literary critics associate the development of a new drama in Ukraine with the works of Lesia Ukrainka (1871–1913), who is considered to be "the only Ukrainian playwright of the world level" (Sverbilova 152). Highly appreciating the innovations of Ibsen, Maeterlinck, Hauptmann, and other "new playwrights," Lesia Ukrainka managed to create her personal writing style. In her own way, she reflected the motifs borrowed from world literature, at the same time significantly changed "the forms of presentation of these motifs" (Khorob 89). The key elements of the writer's work include a clear concept of individuality, philosophical and psychological principles of the presentation of characters' evolution, and modernist methods of ideological and aesthetic expression. The genre model of Lesia Ukrainka's plays, as well as of the works of new playwrights, is based on a tense, internally concentrated plot line, which illuminates the struggle of ideas, and ends with catharsis (*Oderzhyma* (1901) [*Obsessed*], *Vavylonskyi polon* (1903) [*Captivity of Babylon*], or an open ending as it is traced in the dramas of the late period, for example in *Rufin i Priscylla* (1905) [*Rufin and Priscilla*], *Boiarynia* (1912) [*The Boyar woman*]. At the same time, the author gave priority to the intellectual game, which became the subject of explication of a certain idea. It should be also

underlined that Lesia Ukrainka's dramas, like those of European masters, did not provide ready-made solution, but, on the contrary, they were thought-provoking and debatable.

Lesia Ukrainka's innovations became a powerful source for the emergence of a young generation of playwrights. In this respect, Oleksandr Oles (1878–1944) is considered to be the most significant figure. He was one of the first Ukrainian dramatists who appealed to the principles of the poetics of symbolism. It is not surprising that he is often compared with Maeterlinck. Critics (S. Khorob, T. Sverbilova) emphasize the conflict between soul and body or the spiritual and material worlds as common to the works of both authors. In Oles' works, it became a form of protest against naturalism and ethnography inherent in the traditional realistic drama.

Like Maeterlinck, Oles achieves dramatic tension due to the internal collisions, which are transmitted through the use of colourful dance scenes, dialogues, and singing. Music, especially in the plays of the late period, becomes a full-fledged compositional element, a "formative factor at the compositional level" (Sverbilova 137). The dichotomy of the spiritual and psychological state of the hero is often expressed by employing the poetics of nightdream. Hence, the reader becomes both an observer and a judge at the same time. It is up to him to decide what sphere to choose—fantastic or real.

At the same time, in his later plays, Oles goes beyond symbolic poetics. In some texts, mainly *Po dorozi v kazku* (1908) [*On the Way to a Fairy Tale*] and *Dramatychni etiudy* (1914) [*Dramatic Etudes*], we find the elements of the grotesque combination of high and low, order and chaos, peace and movement. In fact, the author provided a new approach to the dramatic representation of reality which will be inherent in the avant-garde drama of the first decades of the twentieth century. From this point of view, he may be regarded as one of the predecessors of the avant-garde drama in Ukraine.

Avant-garde Experiments of the Ukrainian Playwrights of the Interwar Period

The significant impetus for qualitative changes and modernization of theatrical art in Ukraine were the events of the first decades of the twentieth century, in particular the Great War, the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Ukrainian Revolution, and its consequences. They contributed to the revival of national culture. With regard to the theatrical life of the time, two complementary trends are observed: on the one hand, we can see the intensification of activity of amateur and professional theatres, which tried to convey the average spectators' attention to the

traditional plays; on the other hand, the younger generation of dramatists showed great interest in the avant-garde trends (surrealism, expressionism, futurism, etc.), that spread throughout Europe at that time.

Most critics (Maliutina, Sverbilova, Khorob) suggest expressionism to have the greatest influence on the formation of the interwar Ukrainian drama. One cannot but agree with Khorob that it is the expressionists who became full-fledged creators of the dramatic and literary context of the twentieth century in Ukraine (271). In their works, the playwrights tried to show the contradictions between the new reality of the industrial world and the traditional Ukrainian peasant way of life. To realize their artistic intentions, the authors resorted to combining a detailed description of the characters and the dynamics of the plot with a psychological analysis of the nature of the personages' mood swings. This feature distinguished the plays of Ukrainian playwrights from the works of European authors. The national peculiarity of Ukrainian expressionism was that the peak of its development was in the 1920s, while in Europe it was gradually dying out then. This fact gave grounds to the Ukrainian playwrights to "organically infuriate in their work realism with naturalism, symbolism with expressionism" (Khorob 288). It is not about a direct imitation, but the creative rethinking of expressionist poetics, supplemented by the achievements of traditional Ukrainian drama.

The key representatives of the Ukrainian avant-garde theatre are V. Vynnychenko, Ja. Mamontov, I. Dniprovsky, L. Kurbas, and M. Kulish. The leader in this list is Vynnychenko (1880–1951), whose early creative pursuits were marked by an appeal to the genre of melodrama. This dramatic form allowed the author to combine 'forms of mass culture with current issues of modern history and culture" (Sverbilova 81). Vynnychenko transformed the artistic experience of Hamsun, Zola, Ibsen, Strindberg, and Andreiev. There are some links between Vynnychenko's drama *Pryhvozhdzheni* (1914) [*Nailed*] and H. Ibsen's *Ghosts* (1881): both plays are characterized by internal conflicts with an emphasis on psychological mysteries and confusing moral issues. In general, the creative method of Vynnychenko is a mixture of different approaches and techniques, which testifies to his deep comprehension of modern philosophical and aesthetic ideas.

We cannot but mention here a significant impact of F. Nietzsche's philosophy on Vynnychenko's worldview as a writer. It is under the influence of the German thinker that a new type of literary heroes was formed, the so-called "new man"—a creative young intellectual who despises the crowd and tries to rise above a gloomy reality. The most valuable thing to him is the moral principle of honesty. But in the process of moral self-improvement, he realizes the irreconcilable "contradictions of

one's own nature and human nature in general" (Matiushchenko 120) which often leads to tragedy. After all, such a hero ruins not only his life but also the lives of others, as we can observe in the plays of B. Shaw and H. Hauptmann.

In the course of comparative analysis, we also drew parallels between Vynnychenko's and Strindberg's plays concerning their interpretation of time and space spheres. In the works of both authors, the events take place in real time, mostly in a family-friendly circle. This leads to narrowing or limitation of a living space. Common for the playwrights is the use of double reality (when the characters act on the stage of their own lives), as well as the cultivation of the motifs of suicide and of psychological experiments (*Shchabli zhyttia* (1907) [*Steps of Life*]), *Velykyi Molokh* (1920) [*Big Moloch*], *Zakon* (1924) [*Law*]). At the same time, as opposed to Strindberg, the personal happiness of Vynnychenko's protagonist very often depends on his political views, which are associated with the turbulent socio-political events in Ukraine of that time (Vynnychenko himself was directly involved in them). For example, the play *Mizh Dvokh Syl* (1918) [*Between Two Forces*] depicts the situation when the family is divided into representatives of enemy forces. Thus, a separate family serves as a model to illustrate the struggle of supporters and opponents of the national independence of Ukraine. The retrospective-analytical composition, inherited from Ibsen, allows to reveal the hidden motifs of behavior of the characters as a consequence of their past. The deep psychological insight, applied by the author, makes for the portrayal of moral confusion in the heroes' souls. The plot of the play is sharply dynamic, the characters are active and effective, but, according to the avant-garde poetics, they are presented as the mere spokesmen of political slogans. Expressing their own views, they often use in their speeches rally phrases, short sentences with imperative components and rhetorical questions.

In the early 1920s, Vynnychenko's manner of writing drama was successfully followed by his younger colleagues, namely Yakiv Mamontov (1888–1940), Ivan Dniprovsky (1895–1934), Myroslav Irchan (1897–1937). However, in their plays, they showed a growing interest in formal experimentation. In particular, Mamontov combined conventionality and symbolism with expressionistic imagery based on visual realities. Notable in this regard is the play *Velykyi Ham* (1921) [*The Great Ham*], referred by Sverbilova to the drama of "living symbols," where each of the characters "presents a certain civic position" (203). Unfortunately, Mamontov's modernistic search, as well as of other playwrights, namely Dniprovsky, was interrupted in the mid-1920s, when both of them embarked on a path of compromise with the ideological prerogatives of the time. For example, in the expressionistic

play *Joho Vlasnist* (1929) [*His Property*] Mamontov touched the problem of the formation of a new man, depicting the characters against the background of socialist reality. A new person in the author's interpretation is the proletarian—a quarry engineer who is committed to communist ideals and dedicates his life to building a "bright future."

As for Irchan, his dramatic work is a vivid example of the transformation of Expressionist play on a national basis. In his efforts to represent sharp contradictions of the day, he shows the struggle of a "little man" with the machine called "industrial progress." In the play *Rodyna Shchitkariv* (1924) [*The Brushes Family*], which has been translated into twenty languages and was often staged abroad, the author raised the issue of social inequality. It is conveyed through the struggle between capitalists, who chase after profits, and workers as victims of their employers. Despite the grotesqueness of the characters, they are alive and full-blooded. Significant is the scene, when the only sighted son in the family of the blind, while taking part in the war, loses his ability to see because of poisonous gases. One can recognize here the typological similarity with analogous topics in *Gas I* and *Gas II* by G. Kaiser, which enjoyed great popularity in our country.

In this respect, the activity of the Kharkiv Theatre "Berezil" (1922−1933), headed by Les Kurbas (1887−1937), is noteworthy. According to Anna Bila, the methodology of the young director was the formula "from psychologism through transformed psychologism to civic expediency and a new person" (286). Kurbas was educated at the University of Vienna, hence, he was well acquainted with the preferences of European playgoers, in particular, the experiments of the Austrian director M. Reinhardt. Thus, in the article *Nova Nimetska Drama* (1919) [*New German Drama*], expressing a deep admiration for German creative youth ("strong with muscles, with high culture, with high intelligence" (34)), Kurbas insisted on the affinity of the Ukrainian and German literary intellectuals, hoping for an imminent cultural explosion in Ukraine. Highly appreciating the German "drama of the cry," the Ukrainian artist emphasized its ideological and aesthetic potential.

Kurbas saw the main purpose of theatres in the protest against the "bloodlessness of old traditions, without courage and temperament." He insisted on the need to create a theatre of influence. Declaring his visions, in the letter to the troupe of the "Young Theatre," Kurbas wrote: "I see the theatre of the future as the theatre of stage images, where the director will be a playwright who will give the script of the play" (Kurbas 144). The artist paid special attention to the director's independence from a playwright's creative idea. According to his beliefs, drama should become "the material for the theatre, for its entertainment effects, for

wielding the masses, for light and colour effects" (Kurbas 538). However, Kurbas gave the main place to the actor, who must "constantly develop his means," so that his individuality "could freely expresses himself" on the stage without the help of others (539).

The director managed to create a theatre of accentuated influence, which was based on the active position of the audience. During the first season, the theatre successfully staged the plays *Bila Pantera i Chornyi Vedmid* [*Black Panther and White Bear*] by Vynnychenko and *Dramatychni Etiudy* [*Dramatic Etudes*] by Oles. Reforming the theatre on the European model, he adapted mimetic realistic drama to the needs of modern directing and tried to convey the action on stage to the audience as accurately as possible. Therefore, the actors usually played on the average stage. There were even cases when the performances were staged on a truck in the middle of a residential area, and this practice was quite common among German expressionists.

In contrast to academicism illiteracy and narrow individualism, Kurbas proclaimed movement, variability, and instability. In the performances, he very often used the principle of contrast between light and shadows. Thanks to his musical education, Kurbas was able to experiment with the musical-spatial dimensions of the play. This helped him to achieve the rhythmic unity of musical and dramatic components. The musical sphere of the play, according to the director, usually illustrated the complex psychological subtext of the drama. While preparing for the performance, he paid great attention to articulation and speech technique. For this reason, special classes were organized for actors. These principles were not completely new, they worked successfully on the European stage, but for the Ukrainian theatre, their introduction can be considered as really revolutionary.

The performance of the play *Gas* by the German expressionist Kaiser (in April 1923) was an undoubted success. Its main purpose, according to Kurbas, was "to show the moment in its pure form without any stylization" (571). For this reason, complex techniques were used on the stage. In order to convey the process of man's transformation into an automatic performer of social functions, Kurbas created a complex rhythmic plastic composition of actors, and the final gas explosion was transmitted through a pyramid-like composition of human bodies. The director himself characterized his method as "expressive realism, based on active worldview" (Kurbas 45).

In the work "Les Kurbas: Rehearsal of the Future" (1998), N. Korniienko underlines the typological affinity of the Ukrainian director's approach and the techniques of the German playwright B. Brecht. According to the scholar, it is the

Ukrainian who was the first to use the technique of "alienation," though the German playwright is considered to be its author. Regarding this concept in a broader semantic field, the Ukrainian director managed to create "not only a new actor, but also a new person" (241). It is generally agreed today that Kurbas' "Berezil," preserving its individual features, developed in parallel with leading European theatres of the time. By abandoning provincial stamps and updating the repertoire and principles of staging, the Ukrainian theatre director raised the performing arts to a qualitatively new level.

Kurbas' activity became an impulse for the spread of modern approaches to dramatic art. A lot of new writers, actors, playwrights entered the literary life, contributing to the renewal of national drama. Among them, a special significance is given to the activity of Mykola Kulish (1892–1937). The acquaintance with Kurbas in 1925 in the intellectual and artistic atmosphere of Kharkiv (the city that was the capital of Ukraine at that time) had the most tangible influence on the formation of aesthetic views of Kulish as a playwright, and above all, contributed to his orientation to a West European drama. Ja. Holoborodko points out some contradictions of these two creative personalities, in particular their different origins and upbringing (Kurbas came from a family of Galician intellectuals, was educated at the University of Vienna; Kulish, on the contrary, was from a peasant family, studied at a provincial town school, was mobilized and took part in the war). At the same time, the researcher admits that it was "a meeting of two talents who cared about the problems of the scene" (Holoborodko 35). The aura of the picturesque Ukrainian village, where the writer spent his childhood, did not contradict his innovative ambitions, but, on the contrary, added uniqueness and originality to his plays. Analyzing the creative tandem of Kulish-Kurbas, N. Miroshnychenko denies the dominant role of one of them. We agree with the researcher's statement about initial openness of Kurbas and Kulish to dialogue, as well as their mutual desire to find new forms, and create a new type of art focused on national culture.

It's worth noting that Kulish's creative method is based on an organic blending of old and modern means and devices, rather than a complete rejection of classic forms. That approach laid the foundation for the creation of new models of artistic reality. The writer's work contains the deep psychology and intellectualism of Lesia Ukrainka's tragedies, V. Vynnychenko's European worldview, and the symbolic imagery of Oles' plays. In this regard, A. Matiushchenko claims that the tragedy of Malakhii from *Narodnyi Malakhii* (1927) [*People's Malakhii*] is a kind of modification of previous versions, but in the new social conditions. It is thanks to this approach that the writer achieved high skill in the dramatic art, and it can be

compared with the best examples of European plays. This is notably true of the play "97," (ed. in 1924), which was recognized as the first professional drama not only in Ukraine but also across the Soviet Union. On the one hand, it deepens the traditions of psychological theatre, on the other—shows a new type of hero who dies for a dubious idea. The author himself characterized his play as "drawings of rural life in times of unbearable famine and revolutionary everyday life" (Kulish 440), however, we see that it lacks the revolutionary pathos and opposite slogans inherent in the previous models. The way of life of the village, once sung and dreamed of by romantics, acquires a tragicomic character and is demonstrated at the stage of slow extinction. The internal structure of the play is kept "on the nerves," which is an indisputable feature of the avant-garde writing of the twentieth century. The first drama clearly outlined the author's tendency to destroy the "dogmatic concept of historical and socialist optimism of a new man's worldview" (Sverbilova 199). It should be noted that with each subsequent work, this feature became more noticeable.

Actually, the social conflict is the core point of Kulish's dramas. However, with the development of the action, it grows into an eternal philosophical confrontation of the individual "I" with the outside world. The main goal of the writer is not the record of reality, but the process of its experience. Hence, depicting character's mood swings which depend on the environment, he primarily focuses on his mental fluctuations and intellectual pursuits. We agree with Khorob's viewpoint that Kulish associatively paved the way from "the mental state of the hero to social phenomena and facts" (348). That is, through the collision of the "little man" the author reveals the crisis of the human personality in general.

In order to expand the semantic capacity of the text, the playwright resorts to complex techniques and means, including the poetics of daydreaming, grotesque generalizations, Christian-religious symbolism, fragmentary dialogues, and dialogues-confessions. It is through dialogues that the effect of a communicative gap is achieved when the characters speak but do not hear each other. Thus, the impression of illogicality, and even the unnecessity of "talking" is formed: no one hears you anyway.

The characters of the plays are marked by bifurcation or even disruption of consciousness due to the choice they have to make in complex external conflicts, finding themselves at the epicenter of the socio-historical storm. The protagonist loses not only personal but also national self-identification under the pressure of the established social-totalitarian system. His protest goes beyond the internal framework, growing into the cry of the soul against human depersonalization,

violence against the uniqueness of man. The state of confusion, experienced by characters, conveys a complex range of the author's feelings as well. No wonder, most of plays have several versions of the ending, which, according to Matiushchenko, testifies to the "tragic spiritual rupture of the artist" (90). It is noteworthy that many of the author's sharply critical thoughts are verbalized primarily by negative characters, which made it possible to circumvent censorship and thus convey their opinion to the reader. Relevant in this context was the introduction of elements of the mask and the technique of alienation, embodied, in particular, in the image of Malakhii. The madness of the character creates a situation of alienation; hence the reality appears before the audience in its imperfection. Thus, the author managed to create a semi-fantastic world, recreated by Malakhii's consciousness.

The performance of this play was far too innovative. Thanks to Kurbas' ideas, it was staged in the expressionist manner. It was the director who came up with the idea to dress the mad Malakhii in a robe, which together with the bulky furniture of the apartment symbolized the dominance of routine over man. In addition, on the initiative of Kurbas, a reformist machine was brought to the stage. It consisted of various tools, including a plow, and tractor wheels, where Malakhii threw the people he wanted to reform. When the machine started working, smoke billowed from it, and then angels flew out with pink wings and hearts on their backs. In the play, the metaphysical combination of everyday authenticity coexists with romance and farce, creating a situation of grotesqueness.

Despite the obvious success of the play *Narodnyi Malakhii* [*People's Malakhii*], the reviews were mostly negative. Kurbas was very persistent in his defense of the play. He argued that "the audience has forgotten to treat the performance actively, and gradually begins to forget that one must use the brain in the theatre" (721). In this regard, the director insisted on a special role of the theatre that should excite the audience, ask unpleasant questions, rather than perform obvious facts. Kurbas' visions differed from the concept of Soviet art of the late 1920s, aimed at forming a new type of literature. The latter was to be grounded and understood by millions of workers and peasants. In order to strengthen power control in the field of literature, a number of organizations (Holovlit, Holovrepertkom, All-Ukrainian Theatre Committee) were created, which had an exclusive right to ban the play before the show if it could somehow harm public morals. That is how the play *People's Malakhii* caught the eye of censors. In fact, its performance started the persecution of the Berezil Theatre, in particular of Kurbas and Kulish as its key figures. In the future, the forced imposition of the method of so-called socialist realism led to a

significant aggravation of relations between Ukrainian modernist artists and the Bolshevik government, and hence, to the decline of the national idea till its renewal at the end of the twentieth century.

Conclusion

The development of Ukrainian modernist theatre in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century has gone through several stages, beginning with Ivan Franko's plays and ending with interwar avant-garde theatre. Franko's efforts to modernize traditional drama laid the ground for the activities of the playwrights, who resorted to a widespread cultivation of the "new drama" techniques and devices. The study proved the typological affinity of the works by Lesia Ukrainka, S. Cherkasenko, and O. Oles with the genre model of the "new drama," represented by H. Ibsen, A. Strindberg, M. Maeterlinck, H. Hauptmann, and others. Among the common characteristics, we have distinguished the conflict between man and society, analytical plot structure, open ending, allegorical imagery, deep symbolism, psycho-, and self-analysis, etc. The next stage of the modernist drama's development is connected with the creativity of the younger generation of dramatists (V. Vynnychenko, M. Irchan, Ja. Mamontov, I. Dniprovskyi, M. Kulish), who entered the literary life of Ukraine in the first decades of the twentieth century. In their plays, we traced parallels with German Expressionist drama marked by abrupt plot development, artistic conventionality, emphasized-schematic imagery, poetics of contrast, grotesqueness, etc. The activity of L. Kurbas and M. Kulish is regarded as the culmination of the Ukrainian avant-garde drama. By blending the latest approaches to the artistic portrayal of reality with components of classical theatre, they brought the national dramatic art to the European level.

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Text-Image Theory: A New Approach to Literary Semiotics

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Abstract   Chinese scholar Zhao Xianzhang's monograph *Text–Image Theory: Comparative Semiotic Studies on Chinese Traditional Literature and Arts* is one of the new achievements in literary semiotics in the 21st century. The book develops text–image theory from the perspective of literature and it is an innovative research on the basic issues in literary semiotics. The image theory of literature means that literature is a kind of "image-thinking" language logically connected with the world via image. Interculturality and Interdisciplinarity are important features of Zhao's comparative semiotics. His contributions to discussions of Chinese traditional literature and arts and the relationship between text and image are sure to be longstanding.[1]

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Literary theory is one of the grounds of the modern semiotic movement. The study of literary semiotics has a development history of nearly 100 years. A group of outstanding semioticians had laid a solid foundation for this discipline, such as Jan Mukarovsky, Roman Jakobson, Roland Barthes, Julia kristeva, Yuri Lotman, Algirdas Greimas, Umberto Eco, Michael Riffaterre, and the others. Since the 1970s, literary semiotics has become an important topic in semiotics and literary

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theory; its development has been presented a splendid sight. After entering the 21st century, with the advent of the era of globalization and media society, a number of new achievements have emerged in the study of literary semiotics. Chinese scholar Zhao Xianzhang's monograph *Text–Image Theory: Comparative Semiotic Studies on Chinese Traditional Literature and Arts* is just one of the new achievements in literary semiotics in the 21st century.

What is text–image theory in literature? How is it produced? What is the value of its theory and application? What is the main content of it? What is the innovation of it? And, how does it relate to the tradition of literary theory? Here I want to summarize some ideas around these issues according to Professor Zhao's book *Text–Image Theory*.

Why Image Theory of Literature?

The study of the relationship between literature and image has a long history in the West. As early as the ancient Greek period, the poet Simonides of Ceos put forward that "Painting is mute poetry, poetry a speaking picture." This can be regarded as the oldest argument concerning intertextual relationship between literature (poetry) and image (painting). Since then, discussions on the relationship between literature and image can be seen in the canonical writings of Aristotle, Horace's "Ut Pictura Poesis," hermeneutics and iconography in the Middle Ages, classicist Johann Joachim Winckelmann's "picturesque poetry," to Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's *Laocoon: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry*, through to Irving Babbitt's *New Laocoon: An Essay on the Confusion of the Arts* and a whole swathe of the-20th-century thought.

After the 1960s, language and image research has become a major intellectual topic in the field of humanities and social sciences. The International Association of Word and Image Studies (IAWIS) was established in the Netherlands in July 1987. IAWIS/AIERTI International Triennial Conferences have successfully held 12 sessions.

The term "text–image theory" is not the original creation of Zhao. There have been several monographs on it in English academic circles. John Bateman's monograph *Text and Image* (2014) focused on theoretical analysis and conducted interdisciplinary research on the relationship between text and image from the perspective of multimodal semiotics. *Art, Word and Image: 2000 Years of Visual / Textual Interaction* (edited by Michael Corris, John Dixon Hunt, et al., 2010) summarized four relationship models of historical evolution through the investigation of the relationship between language and image in different periods.

Zhao's *Text–Image Theory* develops text–image theory from the perspective of literature and it is an innovative research on the basic issues in literary semiotics. He believes that "the 21st century may be the century of 'literature and image', or, 'literature and image' may become the fundamental motif of literary theory in the 21st century" (Zhao 12-13). Before the 20th century, the study of the relationship between literature and image in China and the West was mainly reflected in the research on the relationship between poetry and painting. In the 21st century, with the progress of new media and new technology, the popularization of consumer culture, information society, especially the rise of visual culture, literature has also undergone profound changes. The image theory of literature is put forward at the right time, which is a keen theoretical response to "the correlation between mediums and their changes' possible impact on literature" (Zhao 268).

Zhao clarifies his approach by defining the original concept "image theory of literature." His "image theory of literature" is derived from Ludwig Wittgenstein's "picture theory of language" and it means that "literature, as the art of language, is a kind of 'image-thinking' language logically connected with the world via image" (Zhao 14).

Aristotle argued that "literature is the art of language." Accordingly, the relationship between language and image in the field of literature is actually the relationship between literature and image. As the two most important signs of human beings, language and image differ greatly in their functions of signification: the former is a real reference and the latter is a virtual reference. In a sense, literature is achieved by the interactive variation of language's real reference and image's virtual reference. "[W]hat the 'image theory of literature' intends to explore is the relationship between the two signs that have undergone fission and restructuring, as well as their 'new relationship' generated with the world after they coagulate as 'new style'" (Zhao 16).

Zhao's argument concerning the difference between language and image appropriates the ideas of Xu(虚) and Shi(实) in Chinese traditional culture. Xu refers to a wide range of conceptions involving the empty, intangible, elusive, illusory, and indirect. Shi refers to all those opposite or counterpointing to whatever falls under the category of Xu as listed above. According to Zhao, the relation between the signifier and the signified of linguistic sign is "arbitrary" and conventional, while the image sign follows the principle of "similarity." The "arbitrary" relation gives language freedom, allowing for the realization of actual (Shi) signification; the principle of "similarity" means that image is a virtual (Xu) referential sign.

Literature, as the art of language, is the visualization of language, which is in turn the main representation of aestheticization of language. Zhao states, "it means that literature is associated with the world necessarily via 'verbal icon' rather than 'concept' " (Zhao 19). Accordingly, "verbal icon" is the key node connecting literature and the world and it is an important starting point for the image theory of literature. The modeling of texts, poetic paintings, literary illustrations, comic strips and image adaptation of literary texts can be regarded as the externalization of "verbal icon." The exploring of literary "verbal icon" not only depends on the relevant achievements of literary theory, but also needs the support of interdisciplinary research achievements such as linguistics and cognitive psychology.

The image theory of literature revises Abrams's "coordinates of literary theory," which has unquestionably produced a tremendous impact on China's literary theory in the new period. Abrams's "coordinates of literary theory" composed of "literary works" and the three elements ("author," "reader" and "world"). Zhao puts forward the "spherical view of literature" and forms a theoretical basis for his image theory of literature. In this new "spherical view of literature," Abrams's "coordinates of literary theory" is in the middle; the plane composed of "linguistic works" and the three elements ("author," "reader" and "world") is in the front of it, while the plane composed of "artistic works" and the three elements are located at its rear. A new spherical relational structure diagram comes up by stitching together the three planes (Zhao 18).

Interculturality and Interdisciplinarity

A former vice president of International Association for Semiotic Studies, Li Youzheng once argued: "The global movement of semiotics is mainly characterized by its three emerging consequences: the global expansion of the horizon of geographic-historic-cultural territory, the comprehensive widening of scholarly-theoretical perspective from different semiotic traditions, and the deeper reexamination of the all-round relationship among society, culture, and knowledge in the real world"(Li, "General Semiotics" 37). It is not difficult to conclude that interculturality and interdisciplinarity are the remarkable features of the global semiotics.

There is no doubt that semiotics is a West-center science; the theoretical resources of relation between language and image are mainly from the West. The Western semiotics has opened up new possibilities for Chinese literature, bringing into focus issues that were excluded by the earlier approaches. It also brings into

light neglected issues in the earlier Chinese literary studies that now acquire a new theoretical and analytical interest.

Zhao's *Text–Image Theory* is just one of the intercultural achievements in the global semiotics; the image theory of literature is the original contribution of Chinese scholar to literary semiotics. As its subtitle "Comparative Semiotic Studies on Chinese Traditional Literature and Arts" shows, *Text–Image Theory* fully absorbed the Western theory on language and image and traditional Chinese practice in literature and arts, so as to put forward the image theory of literature. Zhao profoundly examines the particularity of Chinese literature and culture and presents the traditions and problems of Chinese literary semiotics.

According to Zhao, this book is mainly "[b]ased on the aesthetic experience of ancient Chinese literature and art, it draws lessons from modern and western theories and methods, intending to use the latter to activate the former and construct an intellectual 'Esperanto' for Sino-Western exchanges" (Zhao, back cover). For example, "The Image Theory of Poetry" (Chapter VII) and "The Illustration Theory of Fiction" (Chapter VIII) are theoretical sublimation of the practice of Chinese traditional literature and arts. "Poetic paintings" are one of the traditional forms of images generated from Chinese poetry. "The expression strategy of poetic paintings is an ingenious combination of 'making visible' and 'shielding', well-organized rhythms impel text-image symbols to play intertextual games and poetry in paintings, partly hidden and partly visible, teases audiences' eyes"(Zhao 229). The illustrations of Chinese fiction can be seen as the resistant expression of narration as well as the deconstruction of fictional narration.

Zhao believes that "if we place the semiotics study into literature–image relationship, or study semiotic issues within the sphere of literature–image relationship, a new 'comparative semiotics' may arise" (Zhao 23). The new "comparative semiotics" will debut in the presence of global scholars. Zhao's "comparative semiotics" naturally includes interculturality and interdisciplinarity.

"As a result of the intimate interaction between the scientific domains of literature and language, the field of literary semiotics comes into existence which represents one of the inter/trans/multidisciplinary branches of modern semiotics today" (Murat 4) . Interdisciplinarity is another important feature of Zhao's comparative semiotics. He presents many enlightening views on interdisciplinarity in *Text–Image Theory*. In his view, interdisciplinarity today is different from the traditional saying that "literature and history are all in one," and its pivotal point is that whether new questions can be discovered between different disciplines, or to say, these "new questions" can only be discovered between different disciplines.

Zhao explains the difference between the image theory of literature and the traditional study of poetry–painting relationship:

> The image theory of literature is exactly derived from the new questions discovered between literature and image, thereby determining that it distinguishes itself from the traditional study of poetry–painting relationship. Their differences are reflected not only in the extension of research scope but more in the fact that it is a new learning that confronts reality, which exactly indicates the "literature crisis" and "sign crisis" we are confronting today. For that matter, the image theory of literature, in the first place, faces the question in reality rather than the so–called new question drawn from books. This question can only be discovered between different disciplines such as linguistics, literature, iconography and sociology, and after that, we would stand to reason it in terms of academic study history and academic logic. (Zhao 26)

"'Interdisciplinarity' provides a democratic, dynamic and co-operative alternative to the old-fashioned, inward-looking and cliquish nature of disciplines" (Joe 3). The introduction of interdisciplinary methods has brought vitality to literary semiotics. The image theory of literature challenges traditional, outmoded systems of literary theory which are kept in place by institutional power structures; It produces a new, innovative theory and methodology which open up literary studies to new perspectives; It helps people to think more creatively about the relationship between language and image.

How to Conduct Literary Semiotic Study?

How to conduct literary semiotic study in post-theory time? This may be a question that every literary semiotician is deeply troubled by. Zhao's book *Text–Image Theory* and related discussions provide us with an excellent answer to this question.

In the closing address at National Conference on Language and Image held at Longdong University, Qingyang Gansu in October 2020, Zhao pointed out:

> 1. Literary study must face reality and refrain from empty talk; In particular, literary theory should be based on providing "theoretical tools" for the whole literary academy to face the reality. 2. Literary research should be deeply rooted in the native land, consciously learn from modern theories and activate the tradition, and naturally generate a discursive channel for communication

with the world in this process. 3. Research methods should be well grounded. While paying attention to logical reasoning, we should pay more attention to "speaking with facts" and displaying with phenomena. Literary theories cannot be made into metaphysics. 4. We should reflect on the significance of our research and weigh the pros and cons of different research methods. (Zhao, "Literature and Image Research" 27)

Zhao's above four points hit the nail right on the head and his book *Text–Image Theory* sets a good example to us. The book gives us a thoughtful investigation of the relationship between language and image, and explores the theoretical problems such as the nature, generation, type and function of the image theory of literature, so as to provide a new understanding and exploration of literature.

The book is divided into two parts. The first part, which consists of five chapters, respectively examines the mutual imitation, reference, communication and presence of language and image. This part presents the background, naming, concepts, categories and methods of the image theory of literature. Following the basic principle of the unity of history and logic, Zhao divides the language-image relationship into three sessions: "language-image unity," "language-image split" and "language-image intertextuality." The second part, which includes three chapters, examines generation of images in literature, the image theory of poetry and the illustration theory of fiction. Chapter VI "The Imagery Theory of Literature" draws forth the following two chapters, in which the specific and most representative literature-image genres are expounded.

Zhao's scholarship is good at the detailed analysis of individual cases. To a considerable extent, it has the nature of "meta case," which has enlightening significance for later studies. We have arrived at the last two chapters of Zhao's argument, his study-examples: poetic paintings and the illustrations of Chinese fiction.

In Chapter VII, Zhao gives an adequate and very fine exposition of the history of poetic paintings and summarizes it into five modes: straightforward depiction, indirect portrayal, discourse reconstruction, vehicle Imaging and apperception–based classification. He suggests "the filling of the spaces of poems and the materialization of poetic images are the primary theoretical basis for poetic paintings as image rhetoric" (Zhao 211). At last, Zhao conducts a case study of *Illustration to the Second Prose Poem on the Red Cliff* by Qiao Zhongchang. He concludes that the connotative meanings coded by Qiao Zhongchang can be summarized in five modes: apparent movement, conveying one's emotion and views, replacing the

angle of view, inventing things out of thin air and putting falsehood on a par with truth.

Chapter VIII traces the origins and developments of the illustrations of Chinese fiction. The illustrations of fiction in China are derived from "Li Pu Jiang Chang" (立铺讲唱) in the Tang Dynasty and Bianwen (变文), Bianxiang (变相) and the illustrations of Huaben (话本) are the earliest textualized remnant. Particularly noteworthy is the part in which Zhao compares and discusses the relative strengths and weaknesses of "image narrative" and "language narrative." "[I]f these empirical descriptions are studied on the basis of the combination of history and logic, their theoretical nature and stringency will be highly enhanced and more meaningful issues will be brought up, especially the relationship between language narrative and image narrative and the difference between narrative illustrations and other literary images such as poetic paintings" (Zhao 231).

Zhao's *Text–Image Theory* is an important book, exemplary in its integration of case studies, complex historical analysis, and broad theoretical speculation. Its contributions to discussions of Chinese traditional literature and arts and the relationship between text and image are sure to be longstanding.

The image theory of literature is a cross-cultural achievement in the global semiotics, which bridges Chinese and the West literary theory and has done a good job of updating literary semiotic scholarship. "The cross-cultural semiotics as the new type of interdisciplinary practice with respect to both western and nonwestern academic worlds becomes also a new academic ground for promoting scholarly dialogues between all kinds of disciplines" (Li, "Nonwestern Semiotics" 233).

In order to put forward Chinese scholar's theory, it is very necessary to seriously study and learn from all the achievements of human civilization, which is also the basis of our original research. Chinese scholars urgently need to use modern theory to activate the rich theoretical resources contained in Chinese traditional literature and arts. On this basis, Chinese scholars could make a notable contribution to the global semiotics. This is Zhao's Enlightenment to us.

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Modern and Contemporary British Diasporic Literature's Part in the Construction of the British National Identity: A Review of *From Rudyard Kipling to Zadie Smith: A Study of Modern and Contemporary British Diasporic Literature*

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Abstract   *From Rudyard Kipling to Zadie Smith: A Study of Modern and Contemporary British Diasporic Literature*, authored by Xu Bin, breaks with previous classifications and researches modern and contemporary British diasporic literature as an independent academic field. As the first of its kind in China, this monograph includes both the imperial diasporic writers and ethnic writers from different continents and reveals their respective parts in the construction, dissemination and continuation of the cultural hegemony of the British Empire. It concludes, on the one hand that imperial diasporic writers who are filled with colonial libido have successfully transformed the "Oriental imagination" created by former British literati into "imperial imagination," and on the other hand that ethnic writers have completely changed the racial nature of the British literary landscape into a more inclusive, "color"ful, though controversial multicultural theme park of British literature. Presenting the diversities and complexities of the British diasporic writings, this monograph sheds brilliant lights on methodology of diasporic literature research and is undoubtedly a valuable reference and a source of inspiration for the future research.

Keywords   modern and contemporary British diasporic literature; Xu Bin; British Empire; British National Identity

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Introduction

The past decades have witnessed the wide recognition of diasporic literature, however, systematic studies regarding of British diasporic literature are still underrepresented, especially of interactions between British diasporic literature and the cultural hegemony of the British Empire. *From Rudyard Kipling to Zadie Smith: A Study of Modern and Contemporary British Diasporic Literature*, written by Professor Xu Bin from Northeastern Normal University, starts with the classic Rudyard Kipling and proceeds through to the present Zadie Smith, attempting to depict a robust panorama of modern and contemporary British diasporic literature and how it gets involved in the construction, dissemination and continuation of the cultural hegemony of the British Empire, thereby revealing, in the context of British colonial and post-colonial politics, the formation and maintenance mechanism of literature and cultural soft power. With exquisite depth and breadth, Professor Xu's latest book comes as quite a response to the research gap.

Modern and contemporary British diasporic writers in Professor Xu's monograph, specifically, refer to those who are identified as British and have travelled to and fro between the (former) British colonies and the mainland Britain. Following the researching logic of "writing the other and the other's writing (back)," modern and contemporary British diasporic writers researched by Professor Xu, ten writers in total, fall into three categories. The first is imperial diasporic writers who have emigrated from the mainland Britain to the (former) British colonies, represented by Rudyard Kipling, Maud Diver and Doris Lessing. The second is writers who (or whose elder generations) have immigrated from the (former) British colonies to the mainland Britain, represented by Hanif Kureishi, Caryl Phillips, Salman Rushdie, Sam Selvon, Zadie Smith. The third is writers who have kept travelling between the (former) colonies and the mainland Britain, represented by Lawrence Durrell, Doris Lessing, Caryl Phillips, Salman Rushdie.

Correspondingly, this monograph is divided into three parts, that are Preface, four main chapters and Conclusion. In the Preface, Professor Xu comes straight to the point that British literature has a tradition of "imagining the Other" so as to accomplish "self-achievement" in history (Xu, *Rudyard Kipling* 1). However, starting from the latter half of the nineteenth century to the twentieth century, the whole picture has completely changed and the Other has begun writing back. Just as Professor Xu pointed out, "British writers' personal writings are inseparable from the construction

of the British national identity. The construction of the British national identity is at once an internal and external process, in which the 'Other' is both the subject and object of imagining" (Xu, *Imagining* 114). That is to say, the second category of diasporic writers mentioned above are, to some extent, the "Other" who once being represented, but now have made their own contribution to the construction of the British national identity, from an "external" perspective.

Focusing on imperial diasporic writers, Chapter One, approaching from the "internal" perspective, explores their colonial complex and imagination of trans-racial community with a shared future. Nevertheless, Professor Xu also pointed out that imperial diasporic writers, compared with the writers in the mainland Britain, are also somewhat of an external perspective. Whereas, Chapter Two, Chapter Three and Chapter Four, approaching from the "external side," explore how the writings of colored immigrants from the British colonies and their descendants have completely changed the "whiteness" of British literature into a more inclusive, namely "color"ful, theme park of multiculturalism. In other words, "the colonial history and the post-colonial history of the (former) British colonies are counted in the construction of the British national identity" (Xu, *Rudyard Kipling* 17). In the Conclusion part, Professor Xu adopts Professor Nie Zhenzhao's concept of "brain text" and comes to the conclusion that British diasporic literature, through its reflecting, writing back and rewriting of British colonialism, has shouldered the function for questioning the post-colonial ethics and resisting imperialist cultural hegemony.

Representing one of the most comprehensive studies regarding of British diasporic literature, *From Rudyard Kipling to Zadie Smith* is the first published monograph on British diasporic literature in China. Beyond any doubt, the publication of Professor Xu's book would begin to attract more attention to this field. It is not a book intended for common readers or for popular science, so there is no detailed analysis of specific concepts, genres or approaches. Rather, it is a book for professional academics, especially for new beginners.

British Diasporic Literature as an Independent Academic Field

To sum up, *From Rudyard Kipling to Zadie Smith* makes outstanding contributions in the following three aspects:

Firstly, modern and contemporary British diasporic literature has been systematically studied as a relatively independent academic field in this monograph, which means it could possibly break through the limitations of previous classifications. Before this, related research findings are included in the fields of either ethnic literature or travel literature.

Taking Professor Shi Haijun's *Literature Between India and Britain: A Postcolonial Perspective* (2008) as an example, V. S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie are researched as diasporic writers. As a matter of fact, the phrase "literature between India and Britain," to some extent, illustrates the word "diaspora" perfectly. Professor Shi discussed Indian diasporic literature in the category of the ethnic (Indian) identity and explored modern (especially postcolonial) Indian literature comprehensively. However, such kind of classification is unable to demonstrate British empire's effects on other continents besides India. Likewise, *Identity Construction in Diaspora: On Anglophone Caribbean Literature* (2007), written by Professor Zhang Deming, studied how Caribbean people with diasporic experience construct their own identity. This monograph sheds light upon the early methodology of diasporic literature research, however, it focuses on identity crisis and literary narrations mainly. "Diaspora" is treated as an approaching element or research perspective, rather than an independent research field. Besides, *From Island To Empire: A Study of Travel Literature in Modern and Contemporary Britain*, another monograph written by Professor Zhang Deming, focuses on the travel narrations, geographical discoveries and the early imperial thoughts of the British literati before the formation and the early period of the British Empire, and thus does not cover researches on cultural hegemony at the height of British empire.

In *From Rudyard Kipling to Zadie Smith*, not only does Professor Xu research the imperial diasporic writers like Rudyard Kipling, Lawrence Durrell and Doris Lessing, but also brings together writers from other continents (such as India, Caribbean, Africa) and ethnic groups affected by the British empire. In Chapter Two, Professor Xu researched V. S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie, and pointed out their writings, including *A Bend in the River* (1979), *Midnight's Children* (1981), *Half A Life* (2001) and *Magic Seeds* (2004), are ethical criticism of colonial heritage, not only revealing the problems left over from colonial history that India, as well as other newly independent countries, was facing after decolonization, also illustrating a dialogue "between yesterday's colonial history and today's post-colonial status across time and space" (Xu, *Rudyard Kipling* 72). In Chapter Three, Professor Xu researched Caryl Phillips and pointed out that Phillips presented a literary panorama of the black diaspora across time and space. Not only did he trace the transatlantic racial diaspora of black Africans, but also the diaspora (from the mainland Europe to the colonies) of white Europeans.

In addition, *The Nature of Blood* (1997) Professor Xu focuses on in Chapter Three, is one of Phillips' few novels on the theme of Jewish diaspora and suffering. Professor Xu indicated that Phillips, a Caribbean diasporic writer, adopted Jewish

experiences to reflect the situation of black people being exploited, discriminated and oppressed in European and American society. In Chapter Four, Professor Xu explored ethnic writers like Sam Selvon (a Trinidad-born writer), Hanif Kureishi (half-Indian and half-English) and Zadie Smith (half-Jamaican and half-English), attempting to uncover the social realities of racial integration between coloured immigrants from the Caribbean and the South Asian subcontinent and the white British.

Approaching from writers' diasporic experiences, instead of the ethnic identities, both the white diaspora from the empire to the colonies and the ethnic diaspora from the (former) colonies to the mainland Britain, or those who kept travelling between the (former) colonies and the mainland Britain, can all be included in the discussion and thus the mechanism of British colonial cultural hegemony can be fully explored. On the basis of the distinctions between travel literature and diasporic literature, ethnic literature and diasporic literature, Professor Xu aims to reveal the internal logical interactions between modern and contemporary British diasporic literature and British colonial cultural hegemony, which is the first of its kind in China.

British Diasporic Literature and Intersectionality

Secondly, another notable feature of *From Rudyard Kipling to Zadie Smith* is interdisciplinary research methods Professor Xu adopted. Based on the historical, political and cultural studies of literature, Professor Xu also adopted the research methods of sociolinguistics, political economy and ethical literary criticism in his new monograph. His insightful use of interdisciplinary research methods will definitely become beneficial to future researches of foreign literature in China.

In Chapter One, Professor Xu researched Doris Lessing's *The Grass Is Singing* (1950) in the context of the intersectionality between economics and literature. For years, *The Grass Is Singing*, one of the most widely studied works of Doris Lessing, is mainly researched from the perspective of either (eco)-feminism or colonialism in China, and both the depth and breadth of study need to be further improved. Specifically, Professor Xu explained the racial tensions on South Rhodesian farms, along with the economic tensions, through a thorough analysis of imperial trust. That is to say, Mary's death or racial problems in South Rhodesia would be better understood through the changes of economic orders on farms.

According to Professor Xu, the imperial trust from 1920s to 1940s, represented by the British South Africa Company, has brought the South Rhodesian white settlers' farms into the chain of global economy and industry and

thus initiated a series of changes in the economic and racial orders on the farms. Professor Xu held that "[t]he change of economic order is reflected in the shift in planting choices, from grain crops, such as mealie, to economic crops, such as tobacco, whereas the change of racial order is embodied by the contentious racial relationship between white farmers and native blacks" (Xu, *New Orders* 101). Therefore, Dick's bankruptcy and Mary's death seem to have resulted from the symbiotic change of "new orders" in economy and racial relationship on the South Rhodesian farms. For me personally, Professor Xu's analysis of ecomomics-in-literature, especially how an inconspicuous planting choice would shape racial conflicts in South Rhodesia and thus looking at Mary's death in a brand-new perspective, is truly enlightening.

Besides *The Grass Is Singing*, the text analysis of *The Atlantic Sound* (2001) is also carried out through interdisciplinary research method. With the guidance of post-colonial psychoanalytic theory, Professor Xu explored the almost irreversible psychological and spiritual damage done by colonialism or imperialism to the (descendants) of the colonized, as well as to the (descendants) of the colonizers who were liable to be neglected. The mental disorder of the colonized caused by the colonizer does not disappear along with the end of colonialism. In contrast, the incidence of mental disorder in the post-colonial period has expanded, and both descendants of the former colonizers and the former colonized are (potential) cases.

Furthermore, Professor Xu also adopted psychoanalytic criticism to illustrate the abandonmentneurosis of Othello in *The Nature of Blood* (1997). As a prequel to Shakespeare's *Othello*, the first-person narrative of Othello in *The Nature of Blood* reveals the racist causes of the tragedy in which Othello kills his wife and then kills himself. Professor Xu pointed out that the feeling of "being abandoned" was the trigger for Othello's violent act of killing his wife and then committing suicide. Othello did not realize that it was not his wife who abandoned him, but the white Venetian society.

Except for those mentioned above, Professor Xu also analyzed the discussion of biology and biotechnology in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* (2000) in Chapter Four. In Professor Xu's opinion, with the help of cross-pollination and genetic control in biotechnology, Smith tried to reveal the racial and cultural problems in British society. For the coloured immigrants, London is a laboratory for cross-pollination and genetic control of alien cultures. For white Londoners, alien cultures are the cultural tumors that need to be excised. Eliminating the cultural tumors in fact means to use the technology of genetic control to cleanse ethnic cultures, that is, the western cleansing of Eastern and Arab cultures. Although Professor Xu's

monograph has not yet developed a relatively complete theoretical framework that can be used to solve the specific problems of diasporic literature, his attempt to do text analysis in the context of interdisciplinary research methods is quite inspiring.

Re-digging and Re-evaluation

Last but not least, the third notable feature of *From Rudyard Kipling to Zadie Smith* is Professor Xu's re-evaluation of marginalized diasporic writings and his empathy with the underprivileged or marginalized groups, but not in a cheap, emotional way. Diasporic groups are quite diversified and Professor Xu sets a brilliant example in how to present a restrained and rational analysis of the damages or effects British Empire has done to the diasporic communities, including both the white and the coloured, the male and the female, the mainstream and the non-mainstream.

Professor Xu re-evaluated and confirmed the value of adventure novels written by Anglo-Indian female writers in Chapter One. In the very beginning, Professor Xu revealed that adventure novels written by male writers like Rudyard Kipling, were filled with colonial heroism and well-received by scholars. However, adventure novels written by female writers like Maud Diver were undervalued and being categorized as inferior romances. Anglo-Indian women are depicted as the cause of the British Empire's ruin in adventure novels represented by Kipling, whereas Maud Diver tried to provide a positive image of female imperialist in India. In *Captain Desmond, V. C.*, Diver created Honor Meredith, a nearly perfect British female image with a robust personality and great determination in garrison and emphasizes female presence in British Empire's colonial business. One thing needs to point out is that Professor Xu presented the progressiveness in Diver's writings, but also revealed her restrictions. Diver's writings still work for the imperial ideology. Both Kipling and Diver are resisting against and holding a hostile attitude toward trans-racial marriages, hybridity and Eurasians in Anglo-Indian colonies.

In Chapter Three, Professor Xu researched Caryl Phillips' *The Lost Child* (2015) which is a bold challenge against the Heathcliff narrative in *Wuthering Heights* and reveals Phillips' attempts to present the postponed influences that the colonial history from the eighteenth century has worked on the British society in the twentieth century. Through the analysis of Phillips' re-digging into Heathcliff's identity mystery, Professor Xu clearly showed how the once being colonized wrote back and took part in constructing the British national identity. Phillips' rewriting of classic British literature, from a marginalized perspective, is effective in deconstructing the cultural hegemony of the British Empire.

Conclusion

The ability of close reading can test the quality of a critic, which requires the critic to have rich imagination, sharp insight and extraordinary knowledge. Centered around the keywords of "diasporic literature," "British empire" and "British national identity," Professor Xu fully demonstrates the depth of foreign literature studies one can achieve and the humanistic concern that a scholar should have. Through scientific classification and thorough analysis, this monograph shows the diversity and complexity of the British diasporic writings and reveals the fact that modern and contemporary British diasporic literature has completely changed the racial nature of the British literary landscape, thus formed a multicultural theme park of British literature.

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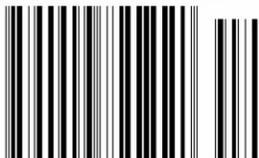
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