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文化认知研究

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Cultural Literacy Studies

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At an annual series of talks on current books, titled “Books and Coffee” and held at Purdue University in 2012 each Thursday from February 2 to February 23, Carolyn Johnson, the director of the Diversity Resource Office, made the point that what she called “cultural literacy” was required of readers who would make sense of the various viewpoints represented in the book *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, by Rebecca Skloot, a white woman who wrote about the unacknowledged use of a black woman’s DNA for medical research.

Due to a previous publication commitments, we are not able to publish Carolyn Johnson’s talk, but we present here revised versions of three other talks in the series, which also celebrate the theme of cultural diversity. The first article about the book *Caleb’s Crossing*, which was discussed during the 2012 series by Professor Kris Bross. It argues that certain acts of historical imagination are necessary for readers to register what it once meant for non-white person to attend Harvard University. The second article is based on my humorous discussion of world-wide responses to Stieg Larsson’s best-selling book *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (龍紋身的女孩). The audience laughed throughout and enjoyed selections from the music of Elvis Presley that were played on cue with the project of the PowerPoint slides. (Readers of *FWLS* can hum along as they suck the sweets of this article.) The third article we present is by Professor Jennifer Freeman-Marshall, who uses an analysis based on cultural literacy to discuss the book *The Girl Who Fell From the Sky* by Heidi W. Durrow. Readers will find this important concept defined in each context, whether the culture of tattoos or ethnic divisions.

Finding Caleb: Review of Historical Novel *Caleb's Crossing*

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Abstract *Caleb's Crossing* by Geraldine Brooks is a sophisticated example of recent historical fiction that mines the archives of colonial America. Brooks persuasively imagines the experiences of women and Native people, figures who are rarely represented in our special collections and history books.

Keywords Wampanoags; Puritans; archives; historical fiction

If, as I do, you run with the early American studies crowd, you probably know all about *Caleb's Crossing*, the most recent novel by novelist Geraldine Brooks. It seems we are in a (new) golden age of historical fiction rooted in colonial American archives. Scholars of early America have been having regular discussions of the widespread, serious, historical fiction interest in the American colonies and the new republic, a phenomenon that reoccurs periodically and is itself subject to speculation about what such an interest can mean in American culture.

It is, perhaps, too early to make grand meta-claims about what the latest turn to this brand of historical fiction might mean, but I can commend to you the books I've been reading recently: *The Widow's War* by Sally Gunning, *The Heretic's Daughter* by Kathleen Kent, *Island Under the Sea* by Isabel Allende.¹ Young Adult books have long taken an interest in "time travel"—usually for thinly-veiled didactic purposes, but recent books, such as *The Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing, Traitor to the Nation* by M.T. Anderson, the first volume of which won the National Book Award for Young Adult literature in 2006, exemplifies the genre at its best. All of these novels take up issues of power and gender or race in 17th- and 18th-century America in challenging ways, a trend that is perhaps most notable in Toni Morrison's *A Mercy*, an acclaimed work that imagines slavery in colonial New York.² Early American studies listservs and blogs suggest that almost every scholar of early American literature has taught the book.

Despite this recent flowering of well-researched, inventive and ambitious

fiction, the flipside of historical fiction is always with us—the escapist romances set in crumbling castles, the time-travelling romps, countless “you are there” children’s books. Some of this fiction is worth the reading—for pleasure, for plotting, as a spur to learn more about a past time and place. But at best, most such books are a guilty pleasure and, quite often, not worth even that.

On the spectrum of historical fiction writers, of course, Brooks is on the serious end. Her 2006 novel *March* won the Pulitzer Prize in literature. Her other novels engage history and fiction in important ways. At its best, this book also achieves something important—more on that note below. But I’d like to clear the ground for my discussion of what goes so well in this novel by talking about the elements I like the least. In short, the first half of the book flirts—seriously flirts—with the baser instincts of the historical romances.

Don’t get me wrong, I value escapist fiction (“comfort-food” reading, I call it; the macaroni-and-cheese of the world of literature). I have spent my fair share of time reading on the beach, and no (*contra* my survey students’ expectations perhaps), you won’t find copies of Puritan election-day sermons next to the sunscreen in my beach bag. But I think we’re on dangerous ground, fictionally speaking, when—as the opening chapters of *Caleb's Crossing* seem to do—we posit unrequited love, or even requited heavy breathing between imagined historical actors whose representation has for centuries tended toward the stereotypical and whose actual relationships have been pegged as misguided at best, miscegenation (and illegal to boot) at worst.

Consider this passage from early on in *Caleb's Crossing*: our narrator, Bethia Mayfield, a young Puritan growing up on present-day Martha’s Vineyard, describes a group of Wampanoag teens—a group that includes the eponymous Caleb Cheeshahteumauk—playing a ball game:

I had to look away then, for they were clad in Adam’s livery, save that their fig leaf was scrap of hide slung from a tie at their waists. . . . These youths were all of them very tall, lean in muscle, taut at the waist and broad in the chest, their long black hair flying and whipping about their shoulders. . . . you could see the long sinews of their thighs working as they ran.(21)

A voyeuristic description of luscious, exotic, at least to to Bethia, and nearly naked male bodies. It’s no wonder one review of the book described the narrative tone as “breathless”(Kirkus Reviews). If this book were being targeted to a young adult audience—and really, in many ways it could have been, as it tells the story of the youth and education of its main characters—I might be more forgiving on this point: after all, Brooks is telling the tale of 17th-century teenagers. From that point of view,

it should come as no surprise that the fifteen-year-old girl protagonist is taken by the good looking boy next door.

But there are easier ways to tell such a tale than mining 17th-century colonial history. Happily, Brooks retreats from the brink. It's clear that as much as Bethia admires Caleb, in the end she finds in him a brother rather than a lover—a replacement for her beloved twin Zuriel, killed as a child in a farming accident. More kin to her than Makepeace, her older, at-times abusive brother, whom she describes in contrast to the lean and sinewy youths playing ball on the beach as a young man who “cannot forebear from shearing sugarloaf anytime he feels himself unobserved, is of milky complexion, slight at the shoulders, soft at the middle and pitifully tooth shaken” (21). I found the siblings' relationship interesting, and I wonder what this book might have been like if Brooks had made Makepeace the narrator—Makepeace, who sees Caleb as an inferior but also a potent rival, who occupies the place of villain through much of the book, but who is revealed in the end to be a human being capable of making kind as well as selfish gestures.

But I digress. Back to the book we have. That last passage, the “soft at the middle and pitifully tooth shaken” illustrates one of the best qualities of the novel: its judicious use of jarring diction and syntax—at time historically accurate, at times not. Compare this moment to that in a real 17th-century text, John Josselyn's *Two Voyages to New England*, which he published in 1674. Josselyn was an Englishman who provides a minutely detailed account of the colonies through which he travelled: “Men and women keep their complexions, but lose their Teeth: The Women are pittifully Tooth-shaken; whether through the coldness of the climate, or by sweetmeats of which they have store, I am not able to affirm”(Josselyn). In historical fiction, this element of language often goes awry. Short of all-out, invented dialect (Toni Morrison's approach for the character Florens in *A Mercy*, for instance), how does a writer create an effect of the real, a sense that we are immersed in another time, without distracting us with too many “thees” and “thous”?³

Brooks does it through a mix of archaic syntax, selective (even creative) use of historic terms, and by adapting period genres to her own telling. Brooks's cadences ring true, from the opening, cryptic lines, “He is coming on the Lord's Day. Though my father has not seen fit to give me the news, I have the whole of it.” “He” is Caleb Cheeshahteumauk, son of a Sachem—a political leader—on the island known today as Martha's vineyard, nephew of a powerful Powwow—a religious leader—among the Wampanoag people of the island. “He” is also called by Bethia and her Puritan cohort “pagan,” “brutish” and “salvage” (even “wanton young salvage”), all words in common use in the 17th century.

Despite their reputation for (and pride in) unadorned plain style, Puritan

preachers and writers could turn a good metaphor, and Brooks makes good use of such phrasing. Bethia describes Caleb's thirst for knowledge: "he brims like a stream in spate, gathering all the knowledge that floods in upon him" (109). Master Corlett, tutor to Caleb and the holder of Bethia's indenture, warns her from a similar thirst, telling her that she risks poisoning her mind reading of the exploits of the notorious "heretic" Anne Hutchinson: "you would not, I hope, drink from a spring that was befouled by a rotting corpse. Why then foul your mind with the rantings of a heretic?" (235). Such language bespeaks Brooks's immersion in period sources: neither metaphor is lifted directly from any 17th-century text as far as I know, but they easily *might* have been.

As befits a novel narrated by a colonial woman, much of the flavor of the language comes through the vocabulary of household chores and of childbirth. Cows are "beeves", sheep are "tegs". Bethia ascribes the dingy state of the young scholars' linens in the house in which she is put to work to the previous housekeeper's neglect of "blue starch and boiling kettle" (105). Women in labor are given "groaning beer" and they all sleep on straw-stuffed "shakedownns". What makes this work, I think, is that Brooks chooses words that are legible to us as twenty-first century readers even if we haven't seen them: we don't need to know what blue starch is to get the gist of her criticism.⁴ And at times, Brooks even seems to choose words that are more authentic-sounding than authentic—and that's not a criticism on my part, but recognition of good craft. For instance, the Oxford English Dictionary traces "shakedown" only to the 18th century, and "groaning beer" was a strong drink brewed, not to lessen the pains of the woman about to give birth (although it may have been so used!), but to reward the labor of the midwives, ease the wait of anxious male family members, and entertain well-wishers who descended on the house to congratulate the family.⁵

There are many such examples, but I'll just suggest, quickly, one more interesting adaptation of historical sources. Aside from the flavor of word choice or a good turn of phrase, the form of the whole book—a three-part personal journal written on carefully husbanded scraps of paper—merges the authentic with the anachronistic in productive ways. There is no way that a young woman of Bethia's upbringing in the seventeenth century could have (or would have, or should have) written the kind of first-person journal that we want to read. Journals and other personal accounts were meant to record evidence of God's providence or serve as business ledgers. It would have been considered the height of self-indulgent arrogance to make a detailed record of one's emotions and feelings. First-person works from the seventeenth-century contain elaborate explanations and apologies for publication. And so, although this novel gives us the access to Bethia's interior that we demand as contemporary readers, it is presented to us as Bethia's spiritual diary, a genre that is grounded in historical

precedent. Colonists did compose accounts of God's doings with them, published as examples or warnings to others or—more commonly—delivered in church before the community in order to demonstrate readiness for church membership. Bethia's journal partakes of the conventions of such conversion narratives. She writes early on, "Break God's laws and suffer ye his wrath. Well, and so I do. The Lord lays his hand sore upon me, as I bend under the toil I know have—mother's and mine, both[...]. At fifteen, I have taken up the burdens of a woman, and have come to feel I am one. Furthermore, I am glad of it" (6). All this is perfectly in keeping with the expressed sentiments of Puritan women's writings that have come down to us from the 17th century.⁶ If in later pages the fiction of the spiritual journal wears thin and we clearly understand Bethia to be railing against her lot and expressing sentiments more in tune with our own than with any early modern Englishwoman, well, that's what historical fiction is for, after all—to be a window on both the past and reflection of the present.

Such measures of Brooks's technique are impressive, and so too is her use of the historical record both as inspiration for the character of Caleb and for the setting in which she places him. In her Author's Note, Brooks warns that "the character of Caleb as portrayed in this novel is, in every way, a work of fiction" (ix). A necessary caveat, both because the archival traces of Caleb Cheeshahteumauk are few and piecemeal and also because of the dangers inherent in making those traces speak with authority or authenticity for individuals and peoples historically marginalized or silenced. In his meditation on the origin and makeup of the archive, Jacques Derrida notes the coercive nature of historical research—archives are forced to acquiesce to our questions, to our probing, a form of (what he calls) "archival violence" made all the more distressing by the fact that the man we know as Caleb Cheeshahteumauk survives in the archive primarily through the production of a printed text within a colonial system that stripped his kith and kin of traditional lands and customs.⁷ In short, however rich the oral tradition or other sources of information about him, in the print archives of colonial America we have only a brief essay, written by Caleb to prove his worth as a student, preserved because it was sent to financial backers in England as a kind of dividend on their charitable investments. What, if anything, can it really tell us about Caleb?

We can glean something of his experiences with careful attention to the print record. At a minimum, it tells us that at the time of its composition he had some classical education, as he compares the relationship of English supporters with Native converts and students to that of Orpheus and "the forests and the rocks [that] were moved by his song."⁸ He was well schooled in the conventions of correspondence, addressing the letter to his "Most honored benefactors" and signing it "Most devoted to your dignity: Caleb Cheeshateaumauk".

At first glance, these elements of his essay—and indeed the whole discussion within it, seems hopelessly coopted by the colonial mindset. In the book even Bethia shares our contemporary sense of disappointment with the rote/conventional nature of Caleb's scholarship. During the commencement ceremonies, she escapes the press and heat of the University hall and misses his presentation: "Although I was keen to hear Caleb, I knew he would do admirably with the hoary old topics of theses *philosophicae* and *philologicae*. Indeed, nothing was said that afternoon that had not already been said a dozen times previous in the same place" (287). But against our disappointment that his surviving writing doesn't give us more of his lived experiences (and as a consequence that his story needs must be filled in with our imaginations today), I note that few students in any time submit aggressively iconoclastic essays for credit. And few teachers would favorably grade an essay that ignored the assignment and went off the rails to attack, say, the foundations of the university system.

I won't try to launch into a full reading of the essay here—a reading that I think must go both with and against the grain to gain some real purchase on the work, but I will suggest the directions I might take in a couple of broad strokes: first, surely it's meaningful that Caleb chooses the example of Odysseus to examine here. In this test of Caleb's writing and compositional skills, he chooses to laud a singer, a poet of the oral tradition. Thus a fuller reading of his essay would need to consider the animation of trees and rocks that were "moved by his song"—a reflection, perhaps, of the concept of *Manitou*, in which the Western binary of human/nonhuman does not suffice to describe agency in a world in which everything partakes of the spiritual to some degree.⁹ I'm interested as well in the way that Caleb wraps up the letter. Though he signs it dutifully enough, in the last sentence of the body of the letter, he reduces the honored benefactors to instruments with less animation than the rocks and trees of Odysseus's tale, calling the Englishmen who paid for his education "instruments like aqueducts in bestowing all these benefits on us ." While there's nothing in such an image that is challenging—strictly speaking—to the world order of those benefactors, it does hint at a reordering of importance: the English benefactors are purely instrumental, and men like Caleb rather than his financial underwriters are the fully human recipients of their generosity.

Beyond this scrap of Caleb's own writing we glimpse him a very few times in written sources—just a mention of a name here and there, in contexts that suggest that although Brooks restricted the circle of Native friends in Cambridge to three people, there was a small but vibrant community of young men—and at least one woman—from the Nipmuc, Wampanoag, and other peoples living and working together in the mid-seventeenth century.¹⁰ But that's about it; so much for the print archive.

There's a second approach that has been gaining currency among scholars:

searching beyond the print archive, to oral histories, material culture, non-alphabetic signification systems to glimpse more of the lived experience of historical figures, especially those who did not leave behind letters, diaries, poems, or sermons (or whose letters, diaries, poems and sermons weren't valued enough to keep). Take, for instance a textile bag held in the collections of the Peabody museum at Harvard. Although there is nothing intrinsic to the artifact identifying it as Caleb's—its collection title is "small bag"—when the bag was acquired by the museum, it came with a handwritten label identifying it as Caleb, and museum publications explicitly call it "Caleb's bag."¹¹ Whether or not he ever carried this particular bag, its provenance as an object from the right time and place suggests another approach to understanding his life. We can research the plant fibers and dye that make up this 8 by 5 inch bag, and other material objects from the region and time. We can compare it to Algonquian textiles and to English textiles from the same period and note the similarities and differences in its decoration. We can turn to Native Studies scholars who consider what meaning traditional and new patterns carry during the colonial period. We know from such scholars that Algonquian textile patterns encode the spiritual and cultural alongside the practical, and our picture of what life was like for him in 1660s Cambridge might then include the fact that he was not completely cut off from all memories of his childhood and family.¹² We might remember that alphabetic literacy does not erase other forms of cultural literacies, even if some of us are literate in only one language, only one form.

There's a third approach to Caleb, an approach that Brooks shares with historians, though we don't always recognize that historians share many of the narrative techniques of fiction writers. Carolyn Steedman, in her meditation on archival theory argues that partial historical records are not dead ends to understanding. In her words, "an absence is not *nothing*, but is rather the space left by what has gone: how the emptiness indicates how once it was filled and animated"(Steedman 11). Scholars devote their intellectual lives to speculation about what once inhabited such spaces. Likewise, *Caleb's Crossing* re-fills and re-animates the emptiness of the historical record. I'll conclude with a brief sketch of two examples from the book, both of which could be fictional missteps, but which in Brooks's treatment transcend mere sentiment in the way that they work together. In the first, we learn that when Solace, Bethia's beloved younger sister is buried, Caleb, by then a member of her household, slips something into her hand before she is buried. Bethia seeks him out the next day "fearing that whatever he had put into her hand might be an unchristian thing. He told me that it was a scrap of parchment on which he had made a fair copy of the scripture of our Lord, *Suffer the little children* . . . he had tied it up with his own wampum-beaded thong of deer hide, around the peg doll that Makepeace had fashioned for her and that

had been her chief plaything.” Bethia questions him: “A medicine bundle, such as the pawaaws use?” (115) Such a bundle would have been anathema to a good Puritan, as it should have been to Caleb by this time in his Christian education. But he finds a way through the spiritual impasse, arguing that this object is “not quite” a medicine bundle, but an acceptable amalgamation of his traditional and new belief systems. We have no way of knowing, of course, whether Caleb’s belief and practices were this syncretic (consider the orthodox sentiments of his essay), but it seems worth imagining that he was, given his background, given that we know of real funeral objects, such as the one Brooks imagines, that combine traditional Native and Christian elements. In a collection of New England Native primary texts that I have edited, for example, Kevin McBride analyzes an object, excavated from a Pequot burial ground at the behest of the Pequot nation and subsequently reburied. Interred with a 12-year-old Pequot girl, the object was a cloth bag that included the left paw of a bear and a page from a King James Bible referencing the right hand of God.¹³ It seems plausible Caleb would have been attracted to this kind of mixed media, that Solace’s fictional bundle fills the space in the archive that once was filled and animated by Caleb’s consideration of the beliefs to which he was born.

The second example is that of Caleb’s deathbed, in which scene Brooks again brings in material culture. The flyleaf of the hardcover book has an image of Caleb’s Latin essay. But the title page is illustrated with a black-and-white drawing of a wampum belt, that is, a belt of beads made from shell. Although “wampum” has been misunderstood as “Indian money” because English colonists adapted it as a medium of exchange, wampum also had a spiritual meaning, and it functioned as a mnemonic or symbolic technology for commemorating agreements and treaties.¹⁴

As Caleb lies dying from consumption, Bethia seeks out his powwow uncle, receives instruction from him about how to ease him into the next life and is given a wampum belt to bring to him. Much like the stifled romance between Caleb and Bethia at the beginning of the book, Caleb’s deathbed scene risks cliché, but I think it is both powerful and effective because it is hard won—we’ve followed Caleb and Bethia through the halls of the prep school and the Indian college, for me the most effective scenes, possibly because Bethia no less than Caleb was on alien territory. We’ve witnessed miscarriages, suffering, death. In this scene as in her book as a whole, Brooks brings together the archival traces of Caleb’s life, which is the evidence that in the academy we are trained to privilege, with the evidence of his life that is implicit in the material culture of 17th-century Native peoples and the oral histories of their descendents. The afterword makes clear that Brooks has sought out the stories of the Wampanaog community as well as scouring colonial print and archival materials. And so Bethia, who has been our narrator and guide into this time and place, acts

as another sort of go-between for Caleb, who lies dying in an English town, and his powwow uncle, who lives apart from the English on his natal island. Bethia receives ritual acts and words from the uncle, which she brings to Caleb, and she brings him the wampum belt, with “the whole history of the Nobnocket band . . . encoded in its pattern, for any wise enough to read it” (297).

This description of the wampum belt and its significance exemplifies what I like best about the book. Brooks has managed, by carefully searching out, husbanding, and then distilling her historical and personal sources, to give us a tragedy that doesn’t feel like “the end”. The last line of the narrative proper calls the story a “dissonant and tragical lament” (300). But if we have a lament, we must have a lamenter, a fact that at least carries with it the idea of a future beyond immediate grief. The afterward suggests one thread of the future initiated by Caleb Cheeshteumauk, and it’s a future carried forward not by well-meaning and sentimental white friends, but by contemporary Wampanoag people: “Tiffany Smalley, the first Martha’s Vineyard Wopannak since Caleb Cheeshahteumauk to complete an undergraduate degree at Harvard College” received her diploma last spring(Rohr) .

Notes

1. For a book-length treatment of an earlier moment of fictional interest in the English colonies in America, see Philip Gould, *Covenant and Republic: Historical Romance and the Politics of Republicanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). For examples of and short discussions of poetry inspired by early American archives, see the ongoing feature, “Poetic Research” in *Common-Place* <www.common-place.org>.
2. See the forthcoming roundtable on teaching *A Mercy*, which will appear in the journal *Early American Literature* with an introduction by Lisa Logan.
3. In her review of the book, Jane Smiley also praises Brooks’ imagined 17th-century language, making the point that such linguistic representation serves not only to immerse us in another, distant time but also to remind us how much our identities depend on the words and phrases we use: “A serious historical novel like *Caleb’s Crossing* always proposes that consciousness is at least in part a function of language, and that as language changes, so does thought, understanding, identity.” See “Geraldine Brooks’ Pilgrims and Indians” *New York Times, Sunday Book Review*. 13 May, 2011. Nytimes, 12 July, 2012 <<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/15/books/review/book-review-calebs-crossing-by-geraldine-brooks.html?pagewanted=all>>.
4. For the record, blue starch was made by combining cobalt or indigo with starch and that after linens had been washed, they were boiled an additional period with the mixture in order to whiten and stiffen them. And you had to stir the pot the whole time to avoid scorching the clothes.
5. The expectant mother prepared the beer (and groaning cakes, groaning pies, etc.) for the midwives

and others who would come to help her, though Judge Samuel Sewall, notes in his diary that he brewed his wife's groaning beer some two months before she delivered. See M. Halsey Thomas, ed, *The Diary of Samuel Sewall 1674-1729*, Vol. I (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1973) 36.

6. The textual antecedent most early Americanists know is Mary Rowlandson's 1682 published account of her captivity and ransom during King Philip's War, and Brooks writes that she relied on Rowlandson's account to help her construct Bethia's voice (305). Rowlandson concludes her account of loss, suffering and redemption with this reflection: "I hope I can say in some measure, As *David* did, it is good for me that I have been afflicted." See Neal Salisbury, ed, *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* (Boston: Bedford Books, 1996) 112.

7. See Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*. Trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995) 7.

8. For a translation and transcription of this essay as well as a consideration of its context and meaning, see Wolfgang Hochbruck and Beatrix Dudensing-Reichel, "Honoratissimi Benefactores: Native American Students and Two Seventeenth-Century Texts in the University Tradition." *Early Native American Writings: New Critical Essays*, ed. Helen Jaskoski (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 5.

9. See Neal Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence: Indians, Europeans and the Making of New England, 1500-1643* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984).

10. For a fuller analysis of Caleb's essay and a discussion of his New England surroundings, see Chapter 2, "Praing Indians, Printing Devils" in Drew Lopenzina, *Red Ink: Native Americans Picking Up the Pen in Colonial America* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012).

11. Christina J. Hodge, Senior Curatorial Assistant, Peabody Museum, Personal communication. February 14, 2012. See "Native Student Biographies" 10 July, 2012. <<http://www.peabody.harvard.edu/node/495>>.

12. On the analysis of colonial Native textiles, see Stephanie Fitzgerald, "The Cultural Work of a Mohegan Painted Basket." *Early Native Literacies in New England*, eds. Kristina Bross and Hilary Wyss (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008): 52-56; and Ann McMullen, ed. *A Key Into the Language of Woodsplint Baskets* (Institute for American Indian Studies, 1987).

13. See Kevin McBride, "Bundles, Bears, and Bibles: Interpreting Seventeenth-Century Native 'Texts' ." *Early Native Literacies in New England*, eds. Kristina Bross and Hilary Wyss (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008): 132-141.

14. For discussions of the significance of wampum among Algonquians and in New England more generally, see Lisa Brooks, *The Common Pot: The Recovery of Native Space in the Northeast* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008); Matt Cohen, *The Networked Wilderness: Communicating in Early New England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010); and Germaine Warkentin, "In Search of 'The Word of the Other': Aboriginal Sign Systems and the History of the Book in Canada." *Book History*, Vol. 2 (1999): 1-27.

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责任编辑：邹 晶

Deconstructing Epidermal Art and the Female Goth in Nordic Millennial Fiction: The Joys of Vulgarity in Stieg Larsson's *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*¹

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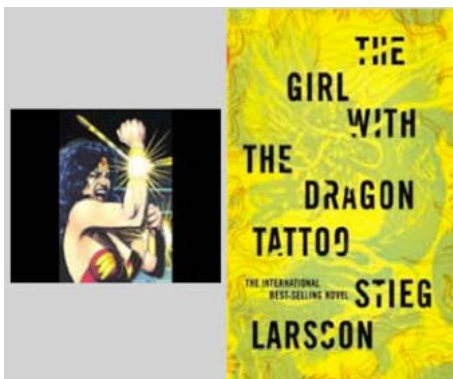
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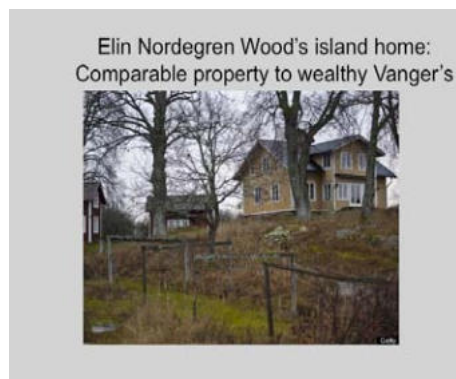
Abstract Stieg Larsson's best seller is purportedly about the violence men inflict on women, but it also can be read, at least humorously, as an essay on the recent cultural phenomenon of tattoos. It turns out *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* is more about Elvis Presley than ink.

Key words Best seller; crime; rape; tattoos; Elvis Presley; cultural literacy

(slide 1) Let's start with what we really want to know about Sweden. (slide 2) In Sweden "a small, secluded island reachable from Stockholm only by ferryboat" costs a couple of million dollars.² You can find in the accompanying illustrations a picture of the island house of Elin Nordegren, Tiger Wood's ex. (slide 3) You can also see a picture of her tattoo, at least according to one website.³

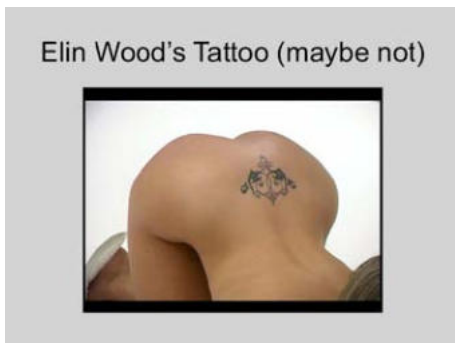


slide 1



slide 2

I am sure, dear listeners, that you will be as disappointed as I was to learn that *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* has almost nothing to do with tattoos. The book is part mystery, uncovering the identity of a serial killer of women; part what is coming to be called the workplace novel, with a journalist hero; and part super female action hero story. There are only three references to Lisbeth Salander's body art, one of which comes when she applies make-up to cover her neck, where she has the tattoo of a wasp; the dragon is on her back. **(slide 4)** In Swedish the title of the book is *Men Who Hate Women: Män som hatar kvinnor*, **(slide 5)** as it is in Spanish, Italian (*Uomini che odiano le donne*), and **(slide 6)** French, which does have a word for hate, but instead reads men who don't "love" women (*Les hommes qui n'aiment pas les femmes*), which is very different. I can't say exactly why the British editors changed the title, but I suspect sex had something to do with it. The American publisher followed suit, as did the Chinese. **(slide 7)** In Chinese the title is the girl (nǚ hai) with the dragon character (long wen) on her body (shen). The de is the all purpose possessive marker: 龙纹身的女孩 (*Long Wen Shen De Nǚ Hai*) .



slide 3



slide 4



slide 5



slide 6



slide 7



slide 8

Lisbeth Salander does not add any tattoos during the course of the three volumes of the Millennial trilogy, but she does hack into many computers. **(slide 8)** One of the characters compares her to Pippi Longstocking, the adventurous heroine of a series of Swedish stories. But where Pippi wants to ride her horse, Lisbeth, also a natural red-head, fights injustice. The evils she fights are men who use macho instead of emotion to get her into bed first, and second, the workplace and the world at large, except for motorcycles small enough for her to ride.

“It’s hard not to like Lisbeth Salander,” wrote Louise Roug in *Newsweek*, when the new movie version starring Rooney Mara and Daniel Craig came out in December. “For one thing, her sense of purpose is admirable.” Roug then quotes director David Fincher:

“Horrible things happen to her. And she wanders home. And she sits there. She lights a cigarette, and she fumes. And you don’t know what’s going on in her head. The next time you see her, she’s got a Taser and a 30-pound chrome dildo, and she’s got a plan. You don’t need her to say ‘This is not right what’s happened to me, and I have to make it right.’ You see her at the hardware store, buying tape and zip ties and black ink.” (Roug)

Actually—this is me talking—you *do* need to hear her say “This is not right”, which is why the book is much better than the film, which my wife and I walked out of halfway through. We got bored with the violent sex scenes. She said, “Can we go?” And I said: “This is not a make-out movie. Let’s leave.”

The book is as vulgar as the movie, but in all the *right* ways. By vulgar I mean common, of the people, with a nice tang of indecency, from indecorous, not right, unsuitable. It goes with another word I will be using, *louche*. The word means seedy, unrefined. It comes from Latin “luscus” or one-eyed. When something is *louche*, we

squint at it, or turn our eyes away. Lisbeth is wonderfully *louche*. For example, where in the movie after Lisbeth decides to get revenge on her guardian who sexually forces himself on her, we can only watch her smoke; in the book, we read her thoughts, which seem logical but are really not what a nice person thinks:

“She rejected the option of using a gun. Acquiring a gun would be no great problem, but the police were awfully good at tracking down firearms. ... She considered a knife, which could be purchased at any hardware store, but decided against that too. ... She thought about using a bomb of some sort. Building a bomb itself would not be a problem.” (Larsson, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* 242)

Lisbeth’s Salander’s ability to think gives her agency. She knows about right and wrong, but she’s not so sure it applies to her. She is like a vengeful goddess out of Homer or Euripedes’ *Medea*, or one of those wicked medieval French fairies, whose excessive anger and revenge are often out of proportion to the offenses they perceive against them. Her name conjures up the old snake women of the house of Lusignan, who held Cyprus against the infidels during the Crusades: Salandar sounds like Salamander.

For snakey-skinned, *louche* Lisbeth, tattoos are some kind of homeopathic defense against violence. She is also a self-fashioning voodoo doll. She sticks needles into herself to harm others.⁴ Her charms work because the book’s audiences believe in action at a distance, a form of popular science, like warp speed. Lisbeth not only hacks computers, she hacks people—and if you think I’m kidding, wait till you get to the end of the third volume. All forms of violence are mystically connected in this book.

Because of some horrific experiences as an adolescent Lisbeth is a ward of the state, and a nasty man named Advokat Bjurman has charge of her bank account. Nonetheless that bomb she considers building would have been the revenge not of innocent girl of fourteen, which is how old Lisbeth looks, but of a twenty-four-year-old woman who engages in oral sex because she decides she needs the money. She is as ready to blow up Bjurman as she was willing, admittedly under duress, to—and here I will follow Humbert Humbert in *Lolita* and not repeat the disgusting phrase Lisbeth uses. In the event, Lisbeth manages to make a video of their second sexual encounter, which is much more violent than she bargained for. When she returns for their third meeting, she tases Bjurman, sodomizes him in return for what he did to her, tells him her video makes him her slave, and then takes two hours to tattoo his chest and belly with the words “I am a sadistic pig, a pervert, and a rapist.”

Naturally the movie messes things up. The voyeuristic movie leads us to think that Lizbeth has that certain sexual device, which so intrigued the director, as the result of a lesbian affair, a one-night pick-up in the book which the movie starts with and lingers over. In the book the device belongs to Lizbeth's tormenter, not to her. She finds it in his roomful of sex toys, right along with a whip, which she gets to flick over his, shall we say, sensitive area—way too much for our macho movie makers to include, but the reason, I take it, why reviewers agree that the ladies love this book. (slide 9) "I think," says Edward Kastenmeier, Larsson's American editor, "many or most of those readers are women worldwide and so I do think it speaks to them." "You know," he says, "we would love to have her strength. We would love to have her independence. This is a woman who no one really tells her what to do and I think we admire that and I think that it appeals to us. And I think also the role she's put in by society and particularly men in society fills us with righteous outrage. We're outraged on her behalf" (Kastenmeier).

I love the subtle shift from "women worldwide" to "us". Edward knows well enough that men like to read about vulgar women, and not all women admire the book. Diane Rehm, on National Public Radio, reads an email from Delaney, who says: "I'm disappointed that you highlighted this book on your show. It's not great literature. It's just popular, in part, because of the titillating nature of sexual sadism directed at women. Yuck. Bad taste." At which point Diane, who loves the book, turns to Deirdre Donahue, another guest, for support: "I have to say," says Ms. Donahue, the book critic for USA Today, "I really enjoyed the first two books and I found them fascinating page-turners. I have to say I am slightly astonished that people seem to think that this has—I found them, frankly, better written, more interesting, but I think they're in the same genre, frankly, as *Silence of the Lamb* and *The Da Vinci Code*. It's all about secret conspiracies."

Now I have to confess that I read this book because my son recommended it to my wife, who wanted me to read it so that I would have read something that normal people read, and not be so English professorish. For the record Clare says that *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* "is exciting. It is a good book you can get lost in, and it is not so badly written that you can't bare to read it." This is true enough. I finished all three volumes of the Millennial Trilogy two summers ago and therefore I think I surprised Venetria when she called to ask if I would review this trashy little book. I hope I surprised her. For the fact is that when I finished all three volumes, I felt somehow unclean after wading through so much vulgarity. To purify myself, I read through all of Faulker, which I had been meaning to do. Faulkner offers a superior version of what is still arguably a trashy approach to fiction, which is to weave a misty attack on what everyone in his right mind would never deny is an ultimate evil.

In Faulkner's case that is slavery as practiced in America, particularly the Mississippi version before and after the Civil War. In Larsson's case, the surface issue is violence against women. Neither exposé makes much sense at the practical level. Faulkner only tells musty horror stories, with a few biblical echoes to make them seem like, well, *The Da Vinci Code*. Larsson claims there are 4000 wards in Sweden whom the state has found unfit to control their own bank accounts, a couple of whom *might* be female and vulnerable to nasty men like Advocat Bjurman, who in the book by the way is fifty and fit, not fat and horrible as in the movie.



slide 9



slide 10

(slide 10)⁵ As Ms. Donahue said on the Diane Rehm show, “You know, the two protagonists have super human abilities to punish the evil. I mean, it’s the – they’re certainly very fun, but this is not great literature. . . . On one hand, [Stieg Larsson is] Mr. Feminism, there’s a very strong feminist tone. On the other hand, though, this is a very sexually graphic disturbing book about really creative ways to torture and kill women.”

“Edward,” intones Diane Rehm, referring to the editor in charge of the books at Alfred Knopf. “Well,” says Edward, “[Larsson] felt very strongly about the issues he worked for. He obviously was supremely dedicated to helping women and the disenfranchised in his society.” Well, hello “disenfranchised”—of whom, I can report, the most disenfranchised in the book are the villainous Russian muscle men who wander about after the break-up of the former Soviet Union, but no one, I can assure you, cares a whit about the rights of Baltic Sea gangsters. No, Mr. Kastenmeier knows it is time to drop the subject of Larsson’s ideas, and move on instantly, without a tell-tale pause, to Larsson’s craft: “He [Larsson] also was steeped in mysteries. He had read a huge number.” The suggestion is that Larsson was a superhero himself, to go with this two protagonists, who according to Deirdre Donahue, “have super human abilities. . . . We want Lisbeth to be our friend,” she says, “to help her because she is really kinda the 21st century computer hacker. She could help you do anything, but

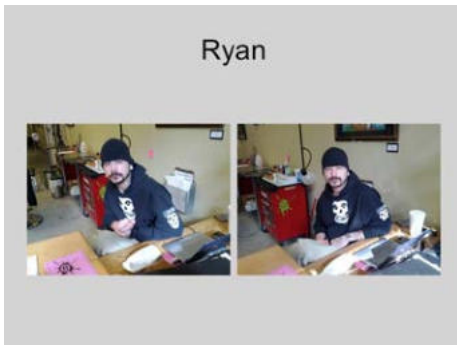
men want to be Mikael Blomkvist. He—you know, James Bond had to at least chase the women. This guy, he is just some sort of healer out there. I mean, to meet him is to take off your clothes and jump on him. I mean, it's astonishing. It's actually charming, but at a certain point, you do begin to roll your eyes, at least we females—I mean, he is like the bumble bee of love."

Well, I'm rolling my eyes, and not only because I prefer "female" to be used adjectively, not nominatively. I have a deliciously horrible book here and so many ways I can go, so many miles of vulgarity. Shall we review all the women with whom Mikael Blomkvist sleeps? We shall not. Instead, we shall talk about meaning. Our theme is vulgarity. We shall talk about tattoos.

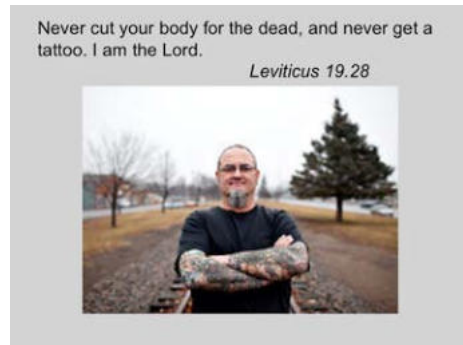
Personally, I can't stand them. Of course, I am sure, very sure, that no one cares what I think. I have not taught English for thirty-four years at Purdue for nothing; sometimes I don't even care what I think myself. But let's try to see both sides of the issue. These days this is called not fairness but cultural literacy, a term that has been well illustrated in the first two Books and Coffee talks this year. Two weeks ago Carolyn Johnson used cultural literacy to explain how we understand a black woman whose mother's genes have been stolen and sold by white doctors. And Kristen Bross used this approach to reconstruct the experience of a Native American at Harvard in 1670. Seems just the thing for a tattooed 4'11" computer genius daughter of a Russian mobster mixed up with Swedish fascists and whose brother is some kind psycho terminator—that's just a hint of what you have to look forward to if you make it to volume three, *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest*.

Looking at tattoos from the viewpoint of the culturally literate, we can say that they are a fashion, and like fashion, beyond reason. Fashions change with the times, all the rage one day, ridiculous the next. Who can stand in judgment of what people wear? There is no right or wrong. You might as well tell the sea waves to stop. Fashions are vulgar, because vulgarity is of the people, by the people and for the people. Whether your view of a particular bit of vulgarity is positive or negative depends on your culture, or, if you are an outsider to the culture, your cultural literacy. **(slide 11)** Being an outsider, I sought out an insider. His name is Ryan, and he works on Main Street in Lafayette, Indiana. I forgot to ask him if these places are still cozily called "parlors." But he was very genial, eating his lunch there. Aunt Polly could have been in the back room, although I don't think that was she pressing the trigger intermittently on the tattoo machine that was buzzing the whole time we talked.

Ryan said he was not the owner of the place but an artist. He said he was from El Paso, Texas, and described himself as Mexican American. He said Latino was a suitable term. He considered tattooing a Latino art form, although others do it too. When asked how he got started, he said everyone where he was from was into art.



slide 11



slide 12

He considers his tattoos a personal expression of himself. He wears them for himself, not for others to look at, which is why he generally keeps them covered and wears fingerless gloves; also the sun is not good for tattoos, as they will fade. He had a kind of Homeric nostos or longing for home about his tattoos; modern inks and designs are improving, he said, but even so he has a deep affection for his earlier, less artistic and less well done designs.

He grinned when I asked about whether people still asked for Chinese symbols; he liked the “still”, was surprised they haven’t faded out completely, like arm- and neck-chains, which he regards as passé.

He agreed that many customers are military, who favor battle crosses: the gun with the helmet. Not really art, in his view.

On whether women should get tattoos, he was contradictory. He says tattoos make women beautiful, but if a woman is already beautiful, he admits she doesn’t need a tattoo, and if she isn’t, a tattoo won’t really help her.

I couldn’t really get him to say whether tattoos were meant to put people off, to establish one as part of a group, to thumb one’s nose at authority. He insisted they were personal expressions. He was very nice, soft spoken, and he let me take his picture. At first he posed rather covered, but was willing to push up his sleeve when I asked him to. I stopped there.

(slide 12)⁶ I think I have given a fair case in favor of tattoos. The other point of view is that they are disgusting. They are not beautiful. They are for gangsters or people who are nuts. What will they look like in forty years? In America the old view was that tattoos are OK for sailors or soldiers who get drunk on leave. The army is a prison without walls. You had to wear a dog tag. The tattoo was the enlisted man’s personal answer to his oppression. The argument for tattoos is the same as for using drugs. Hey, man, it’s cool. But we know it’s not, even if it feels cool. The Bible forbids graven images on the body, although it’s amazing how ingenious people are on

the internet finding ways around that particular prohibition. Still there is something to the warning against worshipping the flesh. If tattoos are art, then they are like graffiti. You can defend graffiti, but everyone knows you need to erase it. And erasing Billy Bob Thornton after you've met Brad Pitt is not so easy.

Despite the attempts of the editors to glamorize tattoos by retitling this book, Stieg Larsson regards Lisbeth's tattoos as the products of her misfortunes as a social ward of the state. In the same way, Lisbeth herself considers tattooing a punishment for her attacker. Young ladies of all ages in the audience will ask themselves whether that batch of ink they want to mark themselves with is really a sign of your own personality, or rather the shadow of your prison bars.

Lisbeth is not immune to the sin of pride, by the way. At the end of the book she disguises herself as a voluptuous woman to steal funds from a particular villain's Swiss bank account. When she is done she throws away her wig, black tights, and expensive clothes but keeps the fake latex breasts she bought in a transvestite shop in Copenhagen. Larsson's own vulgarity about what he regards as proper to a woman peeks through here, for of course Lisbeth is just his fictional puppet.

Larsson does give Lisbeth some saving graces. For the most part Lisbeth is actually much more interested in good prose than vulgar tattoos. At work "Her reports were in a class by themselves . . . thorough and grammatically correct" (*The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* 41). When necessary she can speak "Oxford English" (563). Also "impeccable German" (564), with a Norwegian accent, for good measure. At another point in the book we are told that "Salander could see that Blomkvist was a fine writer" (101-102).

It is no stretch to assume that in having Lisbeth praise Blomkvist's writing, Stieg Larsson is having her praise his own book. Before he wrote his novels he was an ace investigative reporter too, and he knew how to write a paragraph. His style is in the Hemingway mold, and Hemingway was a very good reporter before he turned to fiction. Larsson's prose is easily translated into foreign languages, the mark of world literature today. It is paratactic, with limited lexis; that is, short sentences and paragraphs, easy word choice. A sample from just after the second assault on Lisbeth shows that the Swedish is almost too simple for the English translator, who introduces synonyms, such "remember what" instead of the first use of "kommer."

"Remember what we agreed. You'll come back here next Saturday."

"*Du kommer ihåg vad vi com överens om. Du kommer hit nästa lördag.*"

She nodded again. Cowed. He let her go.

Hon nickade igen. Kuvad. Han släppte henne. (Larsson, *Män som hatar kvinnor*

251)

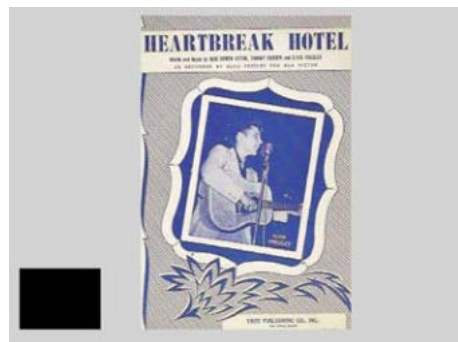
Just as the translator has freedom to work in the target language, so readers write their own code and read what they want into Lizbeth, or as Nora Ephron calls her, the girl who fixed the umlaut:

Lisbeth Salander was entitled to her bad moods on account of her miserable childhood and her tiny breasts, but it was starting to become confusing just how much irritability could be blamed on your slight figure and an abusive father you had once deliberately set on fire and then years later split open the head of with an axe. (Ephron)

(slide 13) Nora Ephron's point is that Larsson's prose is not perfect. People are always sitting down to eat gurkins at breakfast. They smoke too much and they drink coffee every other paragraph, one of the many ways Stieg Larsson handed bits of himself to his characters and the reason he died of a heart attack after trudging up seven flights of stairs the day he delivered his final manuscript to his publisher.



slide 13



slide 14

I have said little about Blomkvist's investigation into the shabby goings on of a wealthy family of industrialists, so I should mention that the true heroine of the book is not Liz but Blomkvist's teenage daughter, who has grown up well despite being abandoned by her absent father. She is a regular church goer and therefore able to recognize that a series of cryptic numbers associated with a serial killer of women actually refers to biblical verses, allowing Lisbeth and Blomkvist to crack the case and make the world safe for sex.

No doubt that if Larsson had lived to write all ten volumes of his projected Balzacian opus, Lisbeth would have turned out to be a superior mother, but in the fragment we have she tends to fall for men who would be described in French as

farouche, a word that means both timid and fierce, like an animal in the wild. We might say “dangerous” in the Michael Jackson, panther-video, sense. The word occurs in Jean Racine’s seventeenth-century tragedy *Phèdre*, where the heroine experiences the thrill of forbidden love when she falls for Hippolytus, the son of her husband Theseus. She is a so very vulgar she could be before Judge Judy. But also passionate, and the French do vulgarity so well I hardly even need to translate this passage, where fired by her mad love, she opens her heart to her step-son, whom she compares to his *farouche* father:

Oui, Prince, je languis, je brûle pour Thésée. / Je l’aime, non point tel que l’ont vu les enfers, / ... Qui va du Dieu des morts déshonorer la couche, / Mais fidèle, mais fier, et même un peu farouche, ... Tel qu’on dépeint nos Dieux, ou tel que je vous voi.” (Racine, *Phedre* 121)

Yes, I languish (*je languis*), I burn (*je brûle*) for Theseus, he who traveled to hell and slept with the wife (*déshonorer la couche*) of the king of the dead, a man faithful (*fidèle*) but also proud (*fier*), even a little wild (*farouche*). . . just as we depict the gods, and just the type of man I see in you (*ou tel que je vous voi*). [my translation]

By the end of this book, Lisbeth, our modern Phaedra action hero, has fallen hard for Mikael Blomkvist. She buys her man a present and heads over to his apartment, but is dashed to find a rival, Mikael’s boss Erika Berger, already in bed with the butterfly of love. A quick word about the workplace novel. According to a recent *New Yorker*, the workplace novel is the bestselling genre of fiction in China today, and spreading around the world.⁷ Its features naturally include how to negotiate the roadblocks to sleeping around inside an organization, but just as important, how to get ahead, how to handle the person who wants your job, when to quit, and how to get revenge. It is the modern version of the old 1930s Soviet worker fiction, where God has been replaced by the Soviet State, and the happy jack hammer operator thinks only of the greater good, such as the dam they are building at the end of *Doctor Zhivago*. But the new workplace novel is even more proletarian, and bows to even falser gods, such as just keeping your job no matter what because you can be so easily displaced. The word proletarian comes from Latin *proles*, or seed. All seeds are the same, so if you are in the proletariat, you don’t matter.

The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo is more moral than that. I’ve mentioned Blomkvist’s daughter, and there are some discussions about the ethics of journalism, the villains are generally brutal enough that in our unthinking moods we accept

that they deserve whatever they get, and Lisbeth herself is certainly unique, not a replaceable proletarian, which is why we love her. But the book is vulgar, and so it needs a god more suitable than strained ideas of right and wrong, or three tattoos on its female action hero. The false god suitable for this book of fiction, it turns out, is that quintessence of *farouche*, that epitome of vulgarity both good and bad, Elvis Presley. **(slide 14)**

At the end of the book Lisbeth buys a present for Michael to cement their love despite twenty years age difference—and remember Mikael is a stand-in for Larsson, and so should be considered ten years older, and she looks fourteen, and so might be thought to be ten years younger, which gives a satisfyingly biblical vulgarity to the forty-year age difference between them. The Latin Bible is not called the Vulgate for nothing. But let us finish:

She needed some excuse to knock on his door. She had not given him any Christmas present, but she knew what she was going to buy. In a junk shop she had seen a number of metal advertising signs from the fifties, with embossed images. One of the signs showed Elvis Presley with a guitar on his hip and a cartoon balloon with the words HEARTBREAK HOTEL. **(click slide button to play 10 seconds of the song *Heartbreak Hotel*)** She has no sense for interior design, but even she could tell that the sign would be perfect for the cabin in Sandhamn. It cost 780 kronor, and on principle she haggled and got the price knocked down to 700. She had it wrapped, put it under her arm, and headed over to his place on Bellmansgatan. (Larsson, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* 589)

You will notice that the words “Heartbreak Hotel” are not in the balloon. And what is translated as a sign in metal is in the original Swedish a “reklamskytar”, or billboard on a placard, or poster, in short, a regular movie poster. Larsson’s problem was that there is no such object because *Heartbreak Hotel* was never an Elvis movie. It was a 1956 record, Elvis’s second big hit. **(slide 15)** There was a poster for the movie *Love Me Tender* **(play music for *Love Me Tender* for 10 seconds, including what Clive Davis calls the money note: “all my dreams come tru-u-u-e”)** but that would be too obvious. Larsson wants us to feel that tough-guy Lisbeth is going soft but not that she is quite yet on the path to middle-class motherhood. He has to save her for two more novels.

To maintain her mystery, and to show his superhero literary technique, Larsson does a switch. **(slide 16)** It turns out there was Elvis movie in 1957 called *King Creole* that fits all the facts of Liz’s case perfectly. In it Elvis plays a singer who does not know much about the world. He is mixed up with mobsters in a seedy southern

town, just like the Arkansas Bill Clinton grew up in at the same time—that's the same former president who played *Heartbreak Hotel* on his saxophone on Arsenio Hall's show in 1992. In a key scene Clinton—I meant Elvis, is such a nice guy that he relents when the woman he has cornered in a flop house sheds tears. And that, it seems, is what Lisbeth wants, R-E-S-P-E-C-T—not another tattoo. She flirts with tender love, but winds up in *Heartbreak Hotel*, and Larsson has to keep her there for now, which is why he gives the name of Elvis's record to the hot-sheet joint in *King Creole*. The truth we find when we tear away the veils of Stieg Larsson's moral posturing is that he does not want Lisbeth to escape from the imaginary world where the *louche*—you can see it in Elvis's woman, looking just like Liz—can hook up with the *farouche*, Mikael Blomkvist, alias Stieg Larsson, alias their idol, the king himself (start music for song *Burning Love* and read over Elvis singing the lyrics “hunk a hunk of burning love”), that hunk a hunk (VOLUME UP) of vulgarity in all its glory, the reason you read (“HUNK A HUNK OF BURNIN' LOVE”) this book!



slide 15



slide 16

Notes

1. I would like to thank Judy Ware for explaining all the hard parts of the book to me. Judy Ware, who will retire in May, 2013, has been the indispensable schedule deputy for the English Department for much of the time that I have taught at Purdue University.
2. For more information, see http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/12/11/tiger-woods-swedish-home_n_388814.html.
3. At least one internet site identifies the woman in slide 3 as Elin Nordegren, but according to Snopes.com, the photograph is not of Elin Nordegren but a nude model pretending to be her.
4. Lisbeth tests her tattoo machine on herself before going after Advokat Bjurman.
5. Clockwise from the right: Samus Aran, Wonder Woman, Sock'er Mom, Storm, and Zelda.
6. The man with tattooed arms in the accompanying slide is Brian Qualley <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/12/us/even-critics-of-safety-net-increasingly-depend-on-it.html?_

r=1&pagewanted=2>.

7. For more information, see Chang, Leslie T. “Working Titles: What do the most industrious people on earth read for fun?” *The New Yorker*, February 6, 2012: 30-32.

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In Search of Heidi Durrow within a Black Woman's Literary Tradition: On Reading *The Girl Who Fell from the Sky*

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Abstract A version of this paper was delivered on February 23, 2012, as part of the Books and Coffee Series at Purdue University. This paper presents Heidi Durrow's *The Girl Who Fell from the Sky*, and it discusses the role of biography in both the writing and receptions of her novel. In addition, it argues that Durrow's novel revises and expands received ideas concerning the black women's literary tradition in the U.S.

Key words black women's literary tradition; Heidi Durrow; *The Girl Who Fell from the Sky*

In the novel *The Girl Who Fell from the Sky* (2011), author Heidi Durrow tells the story of Rachel Morse's search for self following the traumatic death of her mother and siblings: Rachel, her younger siblings, and her mother, Nella, fall from the rooftop of their Chicago apartment, and Rachel is the lone survivor. Much of the novel's tension involves a complex narrative (told in both shifting and alternating character and narrative voices) of the unfolding events that surround this tragedy, including the dramatic question of whether Nella and her family were pushed from their rooftop. Did Nella push her children from the rooftop? If so, how could a mother do such a thing? Where was Doug, Nella's boyfriend, on that fateful evening, and what role did he play in the tragic event? Rachel is the lone survivor of the fall, but she is traumatized physically and emotionally, and so the details of what happened are largely unknowable, although they are hinted at throughout the narrative. Readers learn the circumstances of how the family falls from the rooftop through at least four different narratives: Rachel's sudden memories; Rachel's confession to Brick; Doug's confession to Laronne; and Nella's sobriety journal. These narratives come at the end of the novel and

reveal that Nella's jump from the rooftop is influenced by her desperate desire to protect herself and her children from the violence of her racist and sexist boyfriend. Rachel, under duress, chooses to jump after her brother is pushed and her mother jumps with her infant sister. The story of Rachel's search for self, for her new identity in the wake of this tragedy, however, is framed by the specter of this unspeakable event, and so these questions loom large over the central narrative.

Virtually orphaned, given her father's absence, Rachel is sent to live with her paternal grandmother and aunt in a predominately black community in Portland, Oregon. Since Rachel is the "light-skinned-ed," blue-eyed, biracial daughter of a white Danish mother (who she refers to as Mor) and Roger, her African American father, pressing questions concerning the nature of racial and cultural and gender identity also largely shape her search for self. She is not only recovering from the trauma that brought her to Portland, she's adjusting to living in a community where her relatives, neighbors and peers find her outward appearance remarkably different and potentially vexing. Within this Portland community, Rachel observes many implicit and explicit rules concerning how to perform race (blackness) and gender (femininity). Given Rachel's seeming isolation from black communities prior to moving to Portland, many of these rules are foreign to her. Therefore, Rachel's narrative reveals, through an outsider's perspective, how blackness and femininity are largely constructed and performed via expressions of language, social customs, and beliefs. For example, early in the novel Rachel describes her experiences with her new classmates in Portland, Oregon:

I am light-skinned-ed. That's what the other kids say. And I talk white. I think new things when they say this. There are a lot of important things I didn't know about. I think Mor didn't know either. They tell me it is bad to have ashy knees. They say stay out of the rain so my hair doesn't go back. They say white people don't use washrags, and I realize now, at Grandma's, I do. They have language I don't know but I understand. I learn that black people don't have blue eyes. I learn that I am black. I have blue eyes. I put all these new facts into the new girl. (10)

The "new facts", this fictitious "new girl" are largely gathered from Durrow's own experience of acculturation. Like Rachel, Heidi Durrow has a white Danish mother and an African American father who served in the military, and, like Rachel, Durrow's parents divorced when she was an adolescent. More specifically, Durrow has reported how she hoped to capture in her novel, her confusion, and the confusion of others,

about her racial and cultural identity. Because Durrow was a biracial child with blue eyes, she was often asked about her racial identity:

“What are you?” People kept asking me this, and I thought it was so peculiar, so I would say the truth. I would say, “I’m the very best speller in my whole class.” And they would laugh, and they thought, “No, no, I mean, what are you?” And I would say, “Well, I’m good at math, and I think I’m a good poet, and I like to read, and they’d say, “No, are you black or are you white?”

A central theme of her semi-autographical novel is to provide a story about biracial identity that reveals how race is socially constructed through the eyes of a young girl. Indeed, quite a bit of the popular interest and promotion of this novel (in reviews and interviews) hinge on parallel narratives that describe her own family background and biracial identity.¹ However, in addition to Durrow's own biography, critical readers should, of course, consider the literary works that might have influenced Durrow as she crafted the novel's central themes and literary elements.² Durrow offers her audience a number of direct references and literary allusions to other works of fiction, and I'd like to very briefly note some of them here: The novel's epigraph is taken from Nella Larsen's novel *Passing* (1929), which explored themes of racial passing and racism. Rachel's mother, who is named Nella, is an obvious reference to this significant author. More specifically, the epigraph reads: “If a man calls me a nigger it's his fault the first time, but mine if he has to do it again,” which foreshadows that Nella's final act was influenced by either her profound guilt at not anticipating and protecting her children from her lover's racial hatred or by her possessive love and desperate intent to control her children's fate...or both. Either of these motivations significantly links Durrow's Nella to Sethe, another literary mother as depicted in Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987), who chooses filicide over the horrors of racism for her children. In addition, falls from a rooftop figure in both Larsen's *Passing* and Durrow's *The Girl Who Fell from the Sky*. While Larsen's *Passing* ends with the uncertainty of the circumstances surrounding Clare Kendry's fall, Durrow's *Girl* holds these questions as one of its central critical tensions to be more fully answered at the novel's end. Finally, as mentioned previously, Nella's sobriety journal is one source that reveals the contexts of the family's fall from the sky, and her meditations and confessions give insight into Nella's naïve and insightful perspectives on race, gender and motherhood. Nella's entries remind me, if somewhat tenuously, of the possible connections that might be made here to Alice Walker's provocative crafting of Celie's letters to God in *The Color Purple* (1982).

I underscore here these cursory, and somewhat limited, intertextual connections, because I'd like to consider how Durrow, given her biracial and bicultural identity, might approach the question of whether (and how) her work fits into the literary and cultural production of a black women's literary tradition. In search of an answer, I came across an essay authored by Durrow titled, "Dear Ms. Larsen, There's a Mirror Looking Back," published in a 2008 issue of the literary journal *Poemmemoirstory*. Although her essay is titled "Dear Ms. Larsen, There's a Mirror Looking Back," I imagine that it could have been titled "In Search of Nella Larsen" or "Looking for Nella." The essay clearly signifies on Alice Walker's now classic essay that was variously titled "In Search of Zora Neale Hurston" (1975) and "Looking for Zora" (1983). Walker's essay powerfully expresses her interest in reclaiming the life and literary legacy of author and anthropologist Zora Neale Hurston via a travel narrative that depicts Walker's trip to Hurston's "birthplace" in Eatonville, Florida. Her search for biographical information frames her critique of Hurston's marginal position in American literature and literary histories, and eventually her search leads her to Hurston's gravesite, which is unmarked. Walker, in honor of a cultural and racial and literary kinship that she feels for Hurston, purchases a marker for the grave that reads "Zora Neale Hurston, 'A Genius of the South,' Novelist, Folklorist, Anthropologist, 1901 – 1960" (Walker, "Looking for Zora" 107). In addition to "Looking for Zora," Durrow also references Walker's "In Search of Our Mother's Gardens: The Creativity of Black Women in the South" (1974), which asserts that black women writers might look for literary models in the creative legacies of their mothers and grandmothers who left evidence of their "genius" in the "low" arts of quilting, gardening and storytelling (237-243).

Durrow uses direct references and allusions to Walker's essays in "Dear Ms. Larsen" in order to critique Walker's arguments concerning the cultural and racial genealogies that define a tradition of creativity in black women's literature. While doing so, Durrow writes herself into that tradition. The essay is framed by an epigraph excerpted from Alice Walker's "In Search of Our Mother's Gardens" that reads: "The absence of models, in literature and as in life, is an occupational hazard for the artist, simply because models in art, in behavior, in growth of spirit and intellect—even if rejected—(my emphasis) enrich and enlarge one's view of existence" (Mirror 101). I emphasize the phrase, "even if rejected," because Durrow's subsequent narrative offers a partial rejection, at least, to the idea that a black woman writer must have a black mother as her model. The essay begins:

I am visiting the grave of someone I did not know. [...] This visit is a homecoming. It is the end of my long quest to make peace with an artistic

ancestor and literary role model. It is the end of my struggle as a writer to make my racially-and culturally-divided past whole. [...] I am looking for what only Nella Larsen---a woman writer who is racially and culturally my twin---can give me: a lineage, or as Alice Walker describes it, "continuity," a place in a tradition of black women writers who are also white. (101-102)

Significantly, Durrow alludes to Walker's visit to Zora Neale Hurston's gravesite to underscore the importance of her "homecoming" quest to Larsen's unmarked grave. Like Walker, Durrow ends her essay with a description of a headstone placed on Larsen's grave that reads: "Nella Larsen: A Novelist Remembered" (109). The powerful cultural meanings of kinship and lineage and funeral rights, across both essays, give this real and literary practice its rhetorical power, and Durrow's use of these motifs reveal her very personal search for self, as a bi-racial woman, within this literary tradition.

Durrow suggests that Walker's essays, and the literacy legacy that Walker and Zora Neale Hurston represent, are reserved for black girls with black mothers, whether figurative or real. Durrow's essay includes vignettes of memories and imaginations of her white mother as a successful local writer, but these "imagi-memories" are noted as counterpoints to her daunted desire to be a part of the growing community of black women writers of the 1980s and 90s. She states, "The most important lesson she learns is unspoken: black girls become black women. She will never become what her mother is. She will be a great *black* writer" (103).

In Durrow's quest to be a black woman writer who is also white, I wonder to what extent does her first novel, *The Girl Who Fell from the Sky*, revise representations of black girlhood within the black women's literary tradition? I mentioned the possible intertextual connections with black women's literature previously, and Durrow's novel makes a significant allusion to *The Bluest Eye* (1970) by Toni Morrison. The novel is about a little black girl who tragically believes that blue eyes will make her beautiful and, therefore, more lovable to her family and community. Durrow gives high praise to this novel in her essay:

My favorite book-the book that introduced me to the idea that stories could be written with the lyrical language of poetry, and to the power of a novel to reflect and heal; the deepest grief---was Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*. How I loved Pecola. How I wept for her. "So it was. A little black girl yearns for the blue eyes of a little white girl, and the horror at the heart of her yearning is exceeded only by *the evil of fulfillment*."³ Not once, *not ever* in repeated adolescent or college-age readings of the book did it occur to me that I was Pecola's mirror

opposite. I was the little black girl with blue eyes who yearned for my difference to disappear. (104)

That Durrow strongly identifies with Pecola as her mirror opposite suggests an opportunity to compare Rachel's character (who Durrow has drawn from her own experience) with Pecola's literary foil, Maureen Peal. In *The Bluest Eye*, Maureen Peal is the kind of girl who Pecola wants to be. The first mention of Maureen Peal comes from Claudia who states: "This disrupter of seasons was a new girl in school named Maureen Peal" (62). From the perspective of the novel's protagonist Claudia and her sister Frieda, Maureen is "A high-yellow dream child with long brown hair braided into two lynch ropes that hung down her back. She was rich, at least by our standards" (62). Maureen's beauty and class privilege provide her with an "unearned haughtiness" that informs her social demeanor and her access to social praise, and Maureen never seems to lack for friendship among her peers: "She enchanted the entire school [...] She never had to search for anybody to eat within the cafeteria [...]" (63). Claudia and Frieda are too young to understand "the *Thing* that made her beautiful," but her unearned privilege leaves Claudia and her sister envious at the very thought of Maureen, and they search for "flaws to restore our equilibrium" (63). Even as they argue with Maureen, they know that their envy is misplaced, and they also know that they "can not destroy the honey voices of parents and aunts, the obedience in the eyes of our peers, the slippery light in the eyes of our teachers when they encountered the Maureen Peals of the world" (74).

Claudia, the narrator of *The Bluest Eye*, and her sister Frieda remind me of Durrow's Tamika Washington and her clique of friends who envy Rachel's difference and taunt and torment her through grade school and high-school. There are, of course, a number of differences in their characterizations, but Claudia and Frieda are among the black girls in *The Bluest Eye* who, in response to Maureen, "stepped aside when she wanted to use the sink in the girls' toilet, and their eyes genuflected under sliding lids" (62). Likewise, Durrow's Tamika echoes Morrison's Claudia, when she says to Rachel, "You think you so cute!" (9-10). Despite her conflicts with Claudia and Frieda, Morrison's "new girl" enchants all. However, Durrow's "new girl" and her great difference, her blue eyes and her Danish heritage, isolate her from most of her peers. She states, "There are fifteen black people in the class and seven white people. And there's me. There's another girl who sits in the back. Her name is Carmen LaGuardia, and she has hair like mine, my same skin color, and she counts as black. I don't understand how, but she seems to know" (9).

Durrow revises Morrison's figuration of "the new girl" as represented in *The Bluest Eye*. Her revision expands rather than contracts our view of "the Maureen

Peals of the world.” While Maureen’s light complexion and hazel green eyes only hint at the “evil of fulfillment” that comes with the privilege of racialized beauty, there’s no indication that Maureen (like Durrow) wishes that her hazel green eyes will disappear. Maureen knows she’s cute and, during an argument between the girls, she’s not above proclaiming that she is, as she retorts that Claudia and Frieda are “Black and ugly black e mos” (75). Readers might be left with the feeling that new girls like Maureen Peal simply revel in the “*Thing*” that makes them cute (74). However, Durrow’s Rachel, in contrast, is haunted by her “new girl” status. Rachel states at the very beginning of the novel, as she leaves the hospital with her grandmother, “My girl in a new dress feeling has faded. My new girl feeling has disappeared” (1). She seems relieved that the fleeting feeling of specialness returns “briefly” when the bus driver comments on her “prettiest blue eyes” (1). But there are a number of instances in the text when Rachel becomes the “new girl” to deflect the trauma of her past and present, as when she grieves the loss of her family and adjusts to the “new facts” of race and gender in her new home in a predominately black community. For example, she “pretends” to be the “new girl” to meet her grandmother’s gendered expectations, and she becomes the new girl to cope with her taunting classmates (6, 69). While *The Bluest Eye* allows readers to see the privilege that comes with the unearned status of Maureen’s normative beauty, Durrow’s Rachel allows readers to explore this privilege as impermanent and imaginary as a coping strategy to deflect the envy of her peers. There are far too many allusions to “new girl” to reference here, but their frequency in Durrow’s novel underscores the critical importance of this allusion as a revision of “the new girl” in *The Bluest Eye*.

I began this talk by discussing the similarities in Durrow’s biography and her fictional narrative as a means to consider how Durrow challenges and revises racial discourse in her novel and, in the process, writes both to and against a black woman’s literary tradition. Durrow’s novel and biography not only reveal the challenges of a young biracial girl, they also reveal the challenges of her white mother. In a 1994 interview included in the anthology *Black, White, Other*, edited by Lise Funderberg, Durrow describes how, following her parents divorce, her mother, who had never held a job, returned to college and worked part-time. The family received welfare and “lived in a poor black neighborhood.” Durrow states, “And that’s when we became colored. I think” (351). I wonder if Durrow’s intends her mother to be included in that “we” and, if so, how might we read then, by extension, Nella’s racialized experience in the novel? The term “colored” reminds me of segregated water fountains and bathrooms with black and white signage---the material evidence of racial prejudice during U.S. segregation. There is also, of course, a literary history of black writers documenting when they became colored. Zora Neale Hurston, for example, writes of becoming

colored in her essay "How it Feels to Be Colored Me" published in 1928. The phrase, and Hurston's essay, represents an active making and remaking of race and racial difference. One is not simply "of color," but one is "colored." Rachel's mother, Nella, is neither black nor biracial, but her fate is linked to that of her "colored" children. Durrow's novel, in linking the fates of Nella to her children, makes a literary allusion to Morrison's *Sethe* and extends the permeable boundaries of social constructions of race and racism, since even a "white" mother can intimately and fatefully experience racial prejudice if she has black children.

If we read, then, the plight of Durrow's "colored" Nella and the choice that she makes to commit murder-suicide in light of the epigraph of Durrow's novel, then the question of Nella's racial guilt must also be considered. Nella is surprised to find that her life is so difficult in the U.S., and she struggles to make a living for her biracial children. When she comes to America, she expects to make good on the romance of the American dream. But when it comes to race, the American dream becomes the American tragedy. This tragedy of American racism is not simply that Doug (who is white) calls her children jigaboo and later, while beating them, the "n" word. Nor is it that Nella's whiteness can't protect her children from his racism or the racism and colorism of others. The other tragedy that this novel offers is that Nella's whiteness, her racial privilege and cultural difference, unwittingly implicates her in the American tragedy of racism when she, with remarkable naïveté and great affection, refers to her own children in racist terms.

Durrow links *The Girl Who Fell from the Sky* to a literary tradition of black women writers through the use of direct references and literary allusions to the works of writers such as Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, Zora Neale Hurston and Nella Larsen. As she revises Alice Walker's influential essays on black women's literary tradition, she decenters Hurston as central to that tradition and claims a kinship with Nella Larsen who shares her distinctive biography as a biracial woman of Danish and African-American descent, and she makes a room of her own within that tradition of black women writers. In the case of Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, Durrow challenges representations of light-skinned and light-eyed black girls as the uncomplicated beneficiaries of racial-privilege through her representation of the "new girl" in *The Girl Who Fell from the Sky*. Finally, as Alice Walker largely defined a literary tradition in terms of creative matrilineal genealogies and, perhaps, imagined all the mothers as black, Durrow's novel offers an opportunity for readers to consider the shared fate of white and black mothers of black children and the potential and particular legacies of black writers who are also white.

Notes

1. On the day this talk was delivered, Heidi Durrow was the keynote speaker for Intersections-A Student Conference on Diversity at Purdue University. The conference theme was Living at the Crossroads: An Exploration of Multiracial and Multicultural Identities.
2. Werner Sollors suggests that William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* (1929) and *As I Lay Dying* (1930) and Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon* (1977) are likely influences on Durrow's experimental point of view and tragic flying scene, respectively. See Sollors, Werner. "Obligations to Negroes Who would be Kin if they were Not Negro." *Daedalus* 140.1 (2011): 142,153,8-9. *ProQuest Research Library*; *ProQuest Technology Collection*. Web. 22 Oct. 2012.
3. Durrow quotes *The Bluest Eye*. Emphasis mine.

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Poe's Landscape: Dreams, Nightmares, and Enclosed Gardens

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Abstract: The continuation and innovation of Poe's handling of landscape and landscape gardens in Romantic and Gothic traditions can best be found in his construction of both the landscape of Gothic nightmares and the landscape of paradisiacal gardens. This article investigates Poe's poetic visions — dreamscape, Gothic landscape, and the paradisiacal landscape garden, and reveals that these features thread through Poe's poems, Gothic tales, and sketches, weaving Poe's view of man, nature, and the universe into an aesthetic theory of unity.

Key words: Poe; landscape; poetic visions; theory of unity

Throughout his literary career, Poe wrote a half-dozen landscape tales and a significant body of poetry that deals with dream visions.¹ The dreamscapes depicted in Poe's early poems anticipate the nightmare landscapes portrayed in his famous Gothic tales. The epistemological question reflected in the poetic dreamscape is central to the Gothic landscape. Therefore, before embarking on the quest to understand Poe's Gothic landscape and landscape garden images we should examine his early poems, moving from his early poems to Gothic tales, focusing on desolate landscapes, dilapidated mansions, haunted palaces, and the fear, horror, and terror they evoked. By focusing on Poe's famous story "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839) we can develop an allegorical interpretation of outer and inner dark landscapes of Usher himself to show that Poe employs the Gothic landscape as a vehicle to explore the realm of the collective unconscious as well as conscious epistemological and psychological perplexities. In contrast to Poe's vision of terror illustrated by the dark landscape is the vision of beauty and the supernal elaborated by the earthly paradise. Finally, using "The Domain of Arnheim" (1846) as an example, I shall demonstrate that Poe's apparently contradictory visions are two complementary parts of the author's vision of the universe and man's relationship with nature, which projects his

concern, frustration, and hope as a poet of dark Romanticism.

In his early poems, Poe evokes an image of indefinite imaginative landscapes. In "Spirits of the Dead" (1827), wandering in a cemetery and feeling surrounded by the spirits of the dead, the poet grasps a vision in which the landscape is shadowy and mysterious. A similar landscape image is also found in "Fairy-Land" (1829), in which the poetic landscape remains mysterious, shadowy, and formless. Such a perception of landscape is rooted in a Romantic view of nature illustrated in British romantic poetry. In the Romantic view, nature is not only celebrated as the source of life, beauty, and the embodiment of the infinite universe, but also worshipped for nourishing and guiding the individual heart and soul, and consequently it is treated as a site for exploring the human mind as well as the universe. For instance, landscape and nature constitute prominent subjects in the works of William Wordsworth (1770-1850) and Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834). In the Romantic tradition, nature is the source of wondrousness through which Romantic poets experience esthetic ecstasy, and by means of intuition and imagination the poets' spirits are able to transcend to a supreme realm in which nature, humanity, and God form a harmonious unity. In other words, nature offers access to a transcendent vision--a poetic vision Poe strives to perceive and present in depicting his landscape and landscape garden images.

Incorporating Wordsworth's and Coleridge's ideas of nature and one of the most important themes of early Romanticism, imagination, into his poetry, Percy Bysshe Shelley (1803-1882) presents a different kind of landscape scenery. In contrast to the detailed and harmonious landscapes depicted by Wordsworth and Coleridge, the landscapes in Shelley's poems can be mysterious, shadowy, and indefinite. In his poems such as "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty" (1817), Shelley directs the reader's attention to the abstract and shadowy elements of physical beauty and conveys the power of the invisible "Spirit of Beauty" through the similes of *the intangible* emphasizing that although there is no lack of physical beauty, once the mysterious power leaves, humans are no longer able to respond to beauty, and the earth becomes nothing but a dark unworthy planet.

Poe was influenced by a Romantic view of nature; however, unlike his optimistic British predecessors, as well as American contemporaries such as Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman, Poe was an advocate of Dark Romanticism. Comparing Romanticism and Dark Romanticism, Robert Hume comments that both groups' writings "spring from discontent with inherited religion and world view" and man's condition (111). While Romantic writers strive hopefully for solutions, Dark Romantic writers lack the Romantic faith in man's ability to transcend or transform it and often evoke an isolated and mysterious universe, in which the lonely poet struggles to pursue the absolute truth of the universe and a supreme realm in vain. Thompson states, "the word

Romantic usually evokes an ideal world infused with internal energy and dynamically evolving toward a yet higher state, in which the single, separate self seeks unity with Nature, itself symbolic of the aesthetic harmony of the cosmos” (“Introduction,” 1). In contrast, Dark Romantics evoke an isolated and mysterious universe, in which the lonely poet struggles to pursue the absolute truth of the universe and a supreme realm in vain. In Poe’s poetry, the ideal beauty and harmony of nature is either beyond grasp or manifests and disappears suddenly like a shooting star, and the poet is left forever tormented by the agony. Consequently, the harmonious unity between man and nature are lost, and the pessimistic poet views himself as surrounded by cold stars and dark trees of a mysterious landscape, suspended between faith and skepticism, horror and beatitude. Such vision is best illustrated in “The Lake__ To_____” from his first volume *Tamerlane and Other Poems* (1827) and “Al Aaraaf” from his second volume *Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane, and Minor Poems* (1829).

“The Lake__ To_____” evokes a dark, isolated, and even threatening landscape image occupied by a wild lake, black rocks, and tall pines. His devoted love of the lonely wild lake reveals the poetic figure’s unusual character. The description of the dark landscape conveys a mood of melancholy, loneliness, and isolation, characteristics of a cursed romantic poet. Blessed and at the same time blighted by his youthful passion, powerful imagination, and poetic talent, the lonely speaker possesses a different, often pessimistic and skeptical view of the world. On the one hand, the world appears weary and dark in Poe’s view, as indicated by the images of “dark unfathom’d tide” in “Imitation” (1827) and the “bright, cold moon” in “Evening Star” (1827). On the other hand, the poet strives to grasp a vision of ideal beauty and the supernal, although such a vision often fades before it can be transcribed in earth-bound words. As seen in the last stanza of “The Lake__ To_____,” the poet’s powerful imagination transforms the dim and poisonous lake into an ideal garden.

Death was in that poisonous wave,
 And in its gulf a fitting grave
 For him who thence could solace bring
 To his lone imagining —
 Whose solitary soul could make
 An Eden of that dim lake. (86)

To the persona of the lyric poet, isolation, melancholy, terror, and death do not necessarily mean destruction. The transformation of the two apparently dramatically different images -- the dim lake and Eden -- illustrates Poe’s desire and ability to transcend the constraints of rationality, reason, logic, time and space, as well as his

pursuit of the ideal realm. Such desire and pursuit are further elaborated in poems from Poe's second volume.

"Al Aaraaf," one of Poe's most complicated poems, is an important example for examining his poetic vision and theory from his early period. In the poem, Poe--the poetic dreamer--sets his "half closing eyes" and mind on a wondering star--a realm from which he strives to obtain a vision of supernal beauty and ideality (108). The supernal beauty and ideality might be reached by means of imagination and yet disappear before the poet could transcribe it into earthbound words leaving mankind in a dark universe.

Opening with an image of the harmonious ethereal dream garden, the poem nevertheless ends with dark annihilation. The dark image of "the night that waned and waned and brought no day" powerfully reinforces Poe's dark romantic vision (115). It also conveys the tense anxiety of a romantic dreamer who is empowered by free imagination and yet is earth-bound. On the one hand, viewing the physical world as a prison, Poe struggles to transcend reality in pursuit of the ideality. On the other hand, although the supernal beauty (embodied in the image of the dream garden) reveals its brilliance to a romantic poet like Poe, it disintegrates after a sudden and brief appearance, like the mysterious star in the sixteenth-century. Like paradise, humanity is denied entrance to the dream garden. Later we shall see that the themes of self-annihilation and the horror of facing self-destruction emphasized in the end of the poem become the essential consideration of Poe's Gothic tales.

The poetic concept of the supernal beauty and ideal realm (often visualized in dream vision), as well as the images of the dream garden and indefinite mysterious landscape illustrated in "Al Aaraaf," can be found in many of Poe's other poems. Similarly definite, shadowy, and mysterious landscape and landscape garden images are also found in "Fairy-Land" (1829), "Alone" (1829), "The Sleeper" (1839), and "Ulalume" (1847), just to name a few. Among them is one of Poe's most famous poems, "Dream-Land" (1844). Compared to Poe's early dreamscape and landscape gardens discussed earlier, the tone and the poetic vision in "Dream-Land" are much darker. It is a chilling, nightmare vision of the threatening and sinister. In this poem Poe cries out for a dream land "out of Space – out of Time" (344). In his quest for transcending reality and obtaining ideality, Poe is constantly tormented by the pessimistic view of nature, the universe, and man's existential condition. Eventually, the pleasant dream garden image gives way to a Gothic nightmare landscape; and yet at the same time, one of the most beautiful imaginative landscape gardens in nineteenth-century American literature is also composed in his sketch.

Poe, in his most famous Gothic tale, "The Fall of the House of Usher" (hereafter "Usher"), depicts a memorable withered Gothic landscape. The mysterious desolate

landscape, the isolated and decaying mansion, and the imaginary and symbolic landscape garden evoke senses of mystery, fear, terror, and horror. Poe uses the nightmare landscape as a vehicle to explore the unconscious realm and psychic crisis, project epistemological perplexity, and dramatize the fears of the soul. For the tale addresses itself to the central concerns of Dark Romantics, ranging from the questionable mind, to existential anxiety, the uncertain universe, and the ambiguous relationship between man and nature. The nightmare landscape depicted in “Usher” can be seen, therefore, as the epitome of the ruined Eden—the world in the skeptical view of the Dark Romantics. By such extension, the following discussion deals with Usher’s dark domain as an allegorical landscape garden.

“Usher” offers a paradigm of Gothic themes, conventions, motifs, and the sensations evoked in Gothic writings. Its isolated and desolate landscape, and the exterior and interior of the house, sustain divergent interpretations and have drawn considerable scholarly attention. In the view of critics such as Darrel Abel, Edward Davison, Richard Wilbur, and G. R. Thompson, the tale is also read as an allegory. In one of the important articles written on “Usher,” Darrel Abel discusses the symbolic meanings of the setting and suggests that “the tale is a consummate psychological allegory” (185), in which “all the symbols express the opposition of Life-Reason to Death-Madness” (179). Davison asserts: “the tale is a study of the total disintegration of a complex human being, not in any one of the three aspects of body, mind, and soul, but in all three together” (197). Drawing several examples from Poe’s tales, poems, and aesthetic theory, Richard Wilbur provides a provocative analysis and argues that Usher is “a triumphant report by the narrator that it is possible for the poetic soul to shake off this temporal, rational, physical world and escape, if only for a moment, to a realm of unfettered vision” (267). Thompson examines Usher in the context of Romantic irony and suggests that the tale dramatizes “a weird universe as perceived by a subjective mind” (“Preface”, 34); and moreover, “the ultimate irony of this universe, however, is the ‘perversity’ of man’s own mind” (“Preface”, 37). Previous scholarship has cast light on our reading of Usher’s withered landscape—the nightmare vision of the Dark Romantic poet’s view of the blighted earth and an imagined picture of ruined Eden.

To discuss Usher’s dark and mysterious landscape as an allegorical garden we need to consider the tone and the mood of the tale in conjunction with the main themes and concerns of the story and the description of the landscape. Beginning with the first line, readers are seized by an oppressive and gloomy feeling. In a surrealistic portrayal, nature takes on an unnatural appearance in the opening paragraph. The words “dull” and “soundless,” the scene of the oppressively low clouds, the image of a lonely traveler in the dreary tract of country, and the sense of an oppressive and

insufferable gloom suggest that the narrator's journey on horseback is a also trip to the dreamland of horrors.

The bizarre landscape, indeed, reflects the view of the Dark Romantics, in which nature is inscrutable, mysterious, and deformed. As Poe states, "the fair face of Nature was deformed as with the ravages of some loathsome disease" (610). A typical Gothic hero is often suspended alone within such an incomprehensible and deformed world, struggling in vain to understand the universe and his existential condition.

The mysterious landscape and bizarre world is further mingled with the problematic realms of the mind and spirit. Searching for reasons to substantiate his irrational fear, the narrator rearranges his perspective by looking down upon the reflection of the mansion in the black and lurid tarn. Yet, instead of reaching a rational explanation as to why Usher's house has "so unnerved" him, his effort only increases his fear. While puzzling to the narrator, the landscape provides some clues to solving the mystery. The "vacant eyelike" windows, the "rank sedges," and the "white trunks of decayed trees" suggest an image of a head, more specifically, a symbolic representation of a disintegrated mind, which is further elaborated by Usher's poem, "The Haunted Palace". Reflecting the dilapidated mansion—the symbolic image of the withered mind, the lifeless tarn thus brings together the inside and outside. The withered landscape also hints at the theme of "doubles". Gazing down into the lifeless tarn, the narrator sees nothing but "the remodeled and inverted image of the gray sedge, the ghastly tree-stems, and the vacant and eye-like windows" (398). We may surmise that the narrator's face is reflected with the distorted landscape image in the tangent water. Therefore, the narrator's confrontation of Usher's house and its inverted reflection can be read as a symbolic procedure of plunging not only into Usher's disintegrated mind, but quite possibly into his own as well. Thus, the isolated and withered landscape not only mirrors the mysterious universe and incomprehensible existential condition of mankind, but also projects an isolated and disintegrating mind, and reflects the narrator's distorted perspective.

The allegorical reading of the withered landscape as a withered mind and dark soul is further supported by the appearance of the house and the ruined Eden motif is internalized into the symbolic decaying house, starting with the pond's reflection and moving toward the fungi covered exterior of the house and then into the house itself. The famous description of Usher's house establishes the relationship between physical reality and the state of Usher's spirit, specifically the correspondent relationship between the withered landscape, the dilapidated mansion, and his withered mind, which together convey an image of a ruined Eden.² Like Usher's domain, the mansion evokes desolation and isolation. The condition of the mansion mirrors its inhabitant's deeply troubled mental status. Like the mansion which is on the edge of collapse,

Usher's mind is at the very brink of insanity. We noticed that the zig-zag split in front of the building is emphasized. Poe reminds his reader that a "scrutinizing observer" may discover a "barely perceptible fissure" (400) which suggests a fatal flaw of the Usher clan: Usher's incipient madness, as well as the psychic crisis embodied in the three characters of the story. Although the exact meaning of the "fissure" remains ambiguous, we eventually discover that the house, Usher, and Madeline are three in one — the embodiment of madness and destruction. Thus, the dark landscape image illustrates Usher's, perhaps the narrator's as well, psychic condition: instable, isolated, and disintegrated. The principal feature of the landscape, Usher's mansion, visualizes and heightens the central tensions of the story — integrity and disintegration, order and disorder, and rationality and madness.³

The themes of madness and destruction, and the central tensions of order and disorder, rationality and insanity are further elaborated by the imagined landscape garden — the haunted palace. Usher's poem, "The Haunted Palace," opens with an image of a beautiful landscape garden: "In the greenest of our valleys, / By good angels tenanted, / Once a fair and stately palace – / Radiant Palace – reared its head" (406). In the rest of the poem, each stanza develops and reinforces the parallels between facial and landscape images, the condition of the valley and the palace reflecting the mental condition of the composer of the poem, Usher. In the second part of the poem, however, the greenest valley and the fairest palace are haunted, as the two "luminous windows" were replaced by the "red-litten" ones. At the end of the poem, hysteric laughter overwhelms the palace. As a result of developing and reinforcing the parallel relationships between the landscape-body and landscape garden-mind, the character/s, structure, and environment of the tale form a unity. Through the unified image of the disintegrating mind, decaying mansion and mysterious and lifeless landscape, Poe brilliantly weaves together the psychological, existential, and epistemological anxieties which characterized the eighteenth century in the wake of its rapid development in science and its increasing emphasis on materialism. Additionally, Poe's portrayals of nature and his understanding of mankind's existential condition are also closely related with his concept of poetry and the poet, and his aesthetic theory. Wilbur insightfully points out the reasons that Poe views the earth as a ruined Eden.

It [the Earth] has fallen away from God by exalting the scientific reason above poetic intuition, and by putting its trust in material fact rather than in visionary knowledge. The Earth's inhabitants are thus corrupted by rationalism and materialism; their souls are diseased; and Poe sees this disease of the human spirit as having contaminated physical nature. The woods and fields and waters

of Earth have thereby lost their first beauty, and no longer clearly express God's imagination; the landscape has lost its original perfection of composition, in proportion as men have lost their power to perceive the beautiful. (258)

Because Earth is a fallen planet, Wilbur suggests that escaping the physical confinement of the world and the body and gaining a glimpse of heavenly beauty become the ultimate goal of Poe, the poet.

Poe's allegorical landscape is significant, not only because it interweaves layered meanings together into a unity, but also because it is the manifestation of the main features of American Gothic fiction—the uncertain relationship between man and nature, and the ambiguous duality between consciousness and unconsciousness. Traditionally, on the gloomy, desolated, and alienated Gothic landscape, the lonely hero despairingly battles with various anxieties ranging from fear of the supernatural to religious oppression, feudal tyranny, political revolution, industrialization, urbanization, scientific development, and sexual transgression. Adapting the European Gothic tradition to American history and culture, Poe and his American contemporaries such as Charles Brockden Brown and Nathaniel Hawthorne replaced the windswept castle with the dark frontier landscape, allegorical garden, and the antiquated house, which refers to both building and family line, and add new dimensions of epistemological and psychological perplexities to the conventional anxieties of the Gothic hero. As mentioned before, the epistemological and psychological concerns revealed in American Gothic writings mainly deal with the nature of existence, the nature of the cosmos, the relationship between humanity and the world, between humanity and God, as well as the struggle between one's consciousness and unconsciousness. According to G. R. Thompson, Romantic fascination with the unconsciousness and epistemological problems of existence is inextricably linked with its obsession with their understanding of nature:

Central to the Romantic mind-set is the sense that some further "nature" mystery will always open out from a newly comprehended mystery, the whole series having a total unity that is almost, but not quite revealed. One is always *about* to comprehend some never-to-be imparted ultimate secret. This sense of being on the very edge of vast physical, psychological, and metaphysical discoveries permeated the age. (*Romantic Gothic Tales 1790-1840*, 28)

Poe's explorations of the "ultimate secret," the nature of existence, and the issue of unconsciousness can be found in "Usher," particularly his portrayal of the allegorical landscape. In "Usher," the nature of cosmos and nature are mysterious, and the

relationship between humanity and the universe in which the protagonist lived is ambiguous. Usher's domain suggests some supernatural influence upon the landscape and its tenants, and at the same time, it hints that the source of the mansion's excessive decay, the narrator's insoluble fear, and the ultimate reasons behind Usher's mental disorder are mysterious. It could be supernatural power, or the "the long-continued illness," the imagination of Usher's disordered mind, or the uncertain combination of all. Like many of Poe's protagonists, such as the characters in "MS. Found in a Bottle" (1833), "Berenice" (1835) "Ligeia" (1838) "William Wilson" (1839), "The Pit and the Pendulum" (1842), "The Masque of the Red Death" (1842), and "the Black Cat" (1843), Usher is a victim of an external and internal power beyond human intelligence. In other words, through the exploration of Usher's mental condition and the world in which he lived, Poe illustrates that the nature of the universe and our existence are beyond our understanding and control.

Acting in the center of the dark psychological landscape, the three protagonists of the story are allegorical figures. Represented as the conscious part of the mind, the narrator is anxious to rationalize the mysterious domain and the increasing fear it evoked, as well as Usher's inconsistent behavior and mental instability. Needless to say, his struggle for penetrating the dark secrets of the universe and mind are fruitless. While at the beginning of the story the narrator appears as a character of intellectual rationalism, as the story continues his friend's irrational mind casts considerable influence on him, and his narrative becomes more and more unsteady. At one point, he is accused by Usher of being a "madman". Consequently, the narrative authority is brought under question. While the narrator/consciousness can be viewed as a victim of the irrationality, Usher and his twin sister Madeline can be understood as the symbolic representation of the unconscious and irrational part of the mind. We are told that Usher and Madeline live in a mansion "with no disturbance from the breath of the external air" (400), and for many years they had never ventured forth beyond the impenetrable walls surrounding them. Although the narrator and Usher had been intimate companions in boyhood, he knows little about him and he has no knowledge of Usher's twin sister. The strange bond between the three protagonists highlights the relationship between consciousness and unconsciousness—the former is initially unaware of the existence of and subsequently unable to reach a rational understanding of the latter. Madeline is prematurely buried in a vault. In order to understand Poe's exploration of the unconscious realm the vault scene requires a close reading:

The vault in which we placed it (and which had been so long unopened that our torches, half smothered in its oppressive atmosphere, gave us little opportunity for investigation) was small, damp, and entirely without means of admission for

light; lying, at great depth, immediately beneath that portion of the building in which was my own sleeping apartment. (409-401)

The details of the underground vault illustrate the symbolic meaning of the vault. First we notice that there is no light—the symbol signifies a lack of reason, rationality, and knowledge; second, it is a realm of the unfamiliar; and third, it is located at a great depth, immediately beneath the bedroom of the narrator. These details illustrate that the vault is the symbolic representation of the realm of the unconscious. It is not surprising to find that the dark vault eventually becomes the destination of Madeline, who stands as a symbolic figure of the unconscious. The premature-burial and Madeline's ghostly return vividly signify the nature of unconsciousness. Despite being buried in the deepest part of the mind, the unconsciousness always creeps out and threatens the rationality of the mind whenever there is a fissure in the guarding wall of the consciousness. "Usher" affects the reader at the unconscious level because it sets up unconsciousness on the central stage for investigation. Thus, the Gothic landscape of "Usher" becomes the site of investigating the uncertain, incomprehensible, and uncontrollable part of the mind. Upon Usher's Gothic external withered landscape—the symbol of the ruined Eden, the inner uncertainty of the mind is blended with the outward ambiguity of the universe, and together they intensify the epistemological and psychological perplexities.

The dark allegorical landscape depicted in "Usher"—the combination of the incomprehensible mind and world—evokes the sensation of fear, terror, and horror. Analyzing the Gothic tradition and the complicated emotions it evokes, Thompson asserts: "terror suggests the frenzy of physical and mental fear or pain, dismemberment, and death ("Introduction" 3). Horror suggests the perception of something incredibly evil or morally repellent; in addition to terror and horror, mystery is another important feature of American Gothic, which "suggests something beyond this, the perception of a world that stretches away beyond the range of human intelligence" ("Introduction" 3). These discussions of terror and horror should help us to see how Poe produced and manipulated the reader's sensation on the level of body and mind. In "Preface" for *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* (1839), Poe tells us that "terror is not of Germany, but of the soul" (473). Poe was a master at evoking fear, terror, horror, and mystery, which were employed by him to explore the depths of the soul. The Gothic waste land best illustrates Poe's purpose of conveying the terror of the soul.

The mysterious landscape functions as an epitome of the distorted physical universe; consequently, the narrator's attempted scrutiny only increases his fear. Gazing down the hellish water of the black and lurid tarn, "with a shudder even

more thrilling than before,” the narrator sees “upon the remodelled and inverted image of the gray sedge, and the ghastly tree-stems, and the vacant and eye-like windows” (398). Here, “gazing down” is a meaningful gesture, is not a simple action of curiosity. The gaze signifies a Romantic hero’s journey of inquiring Truth—the truth of the universe and nature — even at the risk of doom and death, for what he saw foreshadows the destructive fate of the narrator’s journey. The inverted image of the landscape conveys the message that regardless of perspective (reason, order, and knowledge), the true nature of the universe is inscrutable, and what we see is no more than an inverted image of the world. The words “black and lurid” suggest a hellish quality of the tarn, and consequently the reflection of the house appears as if it has been swallowed by the bottomless dark abyss—an image of annihilation. Here nature appears to conspire against the mansion and its’ inhabitants. In addition, the remodeled reflection also hints at the unfathomable depth of the unconsciousness and the dark strata of the mind, which threatens to overwhelm its conscious and rational counterpart. It is upon the multiple levels that Poe’s Gothic landscape combines the outer darkness of withered landscape with the inner darkness of the withered mind and evokes “insufferable gloom” and increasing fear.

Not only nature, but the mansion as well appears sinister. Moving ever closer from a distance, the narrator finds himself standing in front of Usher’s mansion with a better view of the house. As mentioned earlier, the detailed description of the house establishes the relationship between the physical body and spirit and the correspondent connection between the landscape, mansion, and mind. The moment he enters the mansion, the narrator plunges deeper and deeper into the realms of the unstable mind and the subconscious. From this point, the narrator’s thinking grows more and more unsteady, and he soon realizes that he has become a victim of his friend’s insanity.

The climax of the tale—Madeline’s ghostly return and the final destruction of the mansion intensifies the sense of terror evoked by the image of nightmare landscape. In the second part of the story, Poe relies on the misgivings produced by insanity and the actions of a diseased mind to build up the climax and to terrify and horrify his reader. Incest between the twins is hinted. If we view the decaying mansion as representative of a deteriorating mind, and Usher and Madeline as its unconscious occupants, then the narrator’s awareness of the incestuous relationship suggests the reorganization of some morally repellent thoughts buried deep in our subconsciousness. Therefore, the twins are indeed the embodiment of terror (a frenzy of physical and mental fear) and horror (evil or morally repellent thoughts). The imagined picture of Madeline struggling to get out of the coffin and dungeon intensifies the terror and horror to a higher and higher degree. Madeline’s ghostly return illustrates the dangerous results of the repression of consciousness and the unleashing of the unconscious. The terror

and horror of body and mind eventually lead to a psychical breakdown, which is visualized in the final scene. The powerful images of the rapidly widened fissure of the house and “the deep and dark tarn closing sullenly and silently over the fragments of the ‘House of Usher’” voice the final destruction of the mind and the annihilation of the clan of Usher. The mysterious dark and silent landscape is center stage, once again highlighting the Romanticist’s dark view of the nature of mind and universe, and the ultimate miserable existential condition of humankind.

“Usher” constitutes a paradigm of the Gothic and Dark Romanticism’s visionary terror. The withered Gothic landscape of the story stands as an allegorical picture of the ruined Eden. Within a maligned universe and with deceptive perception, humankind is suspended in a despairing state of watching its mind breaking down and waiting for the moment of final destruction and annihilation. As a poet of mankind, Poe’s lament over the ruined Eden—the earth — produces a drive to regain it. Profoundly dissatisfied with man’s miserable condition in the world, through the power of imagination, particularly through his aesthetic sense as a poet, Poe strives to transcend man’s despairing condition and transform the ruined Eden by creating an imaginative earthly paradise.

In his sketches and tales, Poe creates several paradisiacal landscape garden images. Among them “The Landscape-Garden” (1842), “The Domain of Arnheim” (1847), and “Landon’s Cottage” (1849) particularly illustrate Poe’s visionary beauty—a belief in artistic perfectibility.³ By analyzing his principle paradisiacal landscape garden image we shall be able to see how Poe, discontented with the limitations of the physical world and man’s condition, endeavors to seek supernal beauty with the assistance of poetic taste. Poe’s literary criticism and aesthetic theory shall help us to understand his concept of supernal beauty, as well as his belief in the artist’s role in saving man from the blighted earth. Our final discussion shall focus on “The Domain of Arnheim”, for it is Poe’s most explicit statement concerning aesthetic principles, and his search for happiness on the blighted earth.

“The Domain of Arnheim”, a revised and greatly elaborated version of Poe’s “Landscape-Garden”, provides a splendid visionary image of the paradisiacal landscape garden. Before discussing Poe’s aesthetic principles, upon which the landscape garden is created, we must first look at the earthly paradise Poe created. Like the isolated domain of Usher and many landscapes depicted in Poe’s poems and tales, the location of the domain of Arnheim places an emphasis on solitude and enclosure, which entrusts the landscape with a dream-like and imaginary quality. Water, particularly the images of the narrow stream, gorge, and pond play a key role in accessing Poe’s paradise. The usual approach to Arnheim is by the river which grows narrow and takes thousands of turns. After some distance, the river becomes a gorge

between the walls of a high ravine. Finally, a sharp turn leads the water into a wide circular basin. Scholars have pointed out the sources and aesthetics of Poe's landscape fiction have been neglected.⁴ In addition to serving as a necessary step in separating the paradisiacal landscape from the rest of the mundane world, the hours wandering in the narrow watery maze also implies a spiritual journey of purification and rebirth. The reader is told the whole chasm effuses "an air of funereal gloom". Emotionally, the "funereal gloom" sets off by sharp contrast the ecstasy and happiness one is going to experience. More importantly and symbolically, the hours' long journey along the wandering, enclosed, dark and gloomy ravine indeed suggests the importance of purification before entering paradise.

Poe's thoughts on the concept of rebirth can be found in his earlier writings. The dialogues between the blessed spirits in Heaven, "The Colloquy of Monos and Una" (1841), for example, illustrates that in Poe's view "the dark Valley and Shadow" are the boundaries that divide life from death and death from spiritual rebirth. In the voice of Monos (one of the blessed spirits), Poe claims: "that man, as a race, should not become extinct, I saw that he must be '*born again*'" (611):

And now it was, fairest and dearest, that we wrapped our spirits, daily, in dreams. Now it was that, in twilight, we discoursed of the days to come, when the Art-scarred surface of the Earth, having undergone that purification which alone could efface its rectangular obscenities, should clothe itself anew in the verdure and the mountain-slopes and the smiling waters of Paradise, and be rendered at length a fit dwelling-place for man: — for man the Death-purged — for man to whose now exalted intellect there should be poison in knowledge no more — for the redeemed, regenerated, blissful, and now immortal, but still for the *material*, man. (611-612)

The imaginative excursion described here is very similar to the one in "Arnheim", and indeed the latter is a more elaborated version of the former. Viewed in such light, we see that the domain of Arnheim is divided into two parts. Permeated with "an air of funereal gloom" the enclosed and dark landscape in the first part of the journey is a crucial stage of Poe's construction of Paradise, since the only approach to the paradisiacal garden is the river. The journey indicates a process of purification and transformation. Not only man but also the "scarred" Earth has to undergo this process before reaching immortality. After the ordeal of purification, the earth is redeemed and men are exalted.

In contrast to the first part of journey, the landscape in the second part of journey is effused with an air of ecstasy and bliss. In Poe's most elaborate description of

earthly paradise, the beauty of earthly paradise is conveyed by the image of a serene water basin and its surroundings:

This basin was of great depth, but so transparent was the water that the bottom, which seemed to consist of a thick mass of small round alabaster pebbles, was distinctly visible by glimpses – that is to say, whenever the eye could permit itself *not* to see, far down in the inverted heaven, the duplicate blooming of the hills. On these latter there were no trees, nor even shrubs of any size. The impressions wrought on the observer were those of richness, warmth, color, quietude, uniformity, softness, delicacy, daintiness, voluptuousness, and a miraculous extremeness of culture that suggested dreams of a new race of fairies, laborious, tasteful, magnificent, and fastidious; but as the eye traced upward the myriad-tinted slope, from its sharp junction with the water to its vague termination amid the folds of overhanging cloud, it became, indeed, difficult not to fancy a panoramic cataract of rubies, sapphires, opals, and golden onyxes, rolling silently out of the sky. (1280)

The quality of the water is essential. Unlike the dark and impenetrable water of the tarn in front of Usher's house, the water here is transparent and reflects "a miraculous extremeness of culture". Poe implies that although slightly different, the earthly paradise is a copy of heavenly beauty and therefore shares the brilliant radiation of heaven. The reader is reminded that earthly paradise is the creation of mankind, for there are no fish, birds, trees, or shrubs.

The identity of the creator of the earthly paradise reveals Poe's understanding of the role of the poet. It is not by accident that the blessed spirits in "The Colloquy of Monos and Una" and the designer and the few visitors of the domain of Arnheim are poets. In Poe's view, poets are the only hope for the fallen earth and mankind. He believes that poets would lead us back to Beauty, to Nature, and to Life, if man would submit to their guidance. In "Colloquy of Monos and Una", Poe stresses the importance of poetic aesthetic sense — "for, in truth, it was at this crisis that taste alone – that faculty which, holding a middle position between the pure intellect and the moral sense, could never safely have been disregarded – it was now that taste alone could have led us gently back to Beauty, to Nature, and to Life" (610). In "The Poetic Principle," Poe's most elaborated statement on his aesthetic theory, he discusses the crucial role of aesthetic sense (taste) and the relationship between "Pure intellect, Taste, and the Moral sense":

Dividing the world of mind into its three most immediately obvious distinctions,

we have the Pure intellect, Taste, and the Moral Sense....Just as the Intellect concerns itself with Truth, so Taste informs us of the Beautiful, while the Moral Sense is regardful of Duty. Of this latter, while Conscience teaches the obligation, and Reason the expedience, Taste contents herself with displaying the charms: – waging war upon Vice solely on the ground of her deformity – her disproportion –her animosity to the fitting, to the appropriate, to the harmonious – in a word, to Beauty. (*The Complete Poems and Stories of Edgar Allan Poe*, 1025-1026)

Here we see, while relating moral sense with obligation, Poe sets Beauty as the ultimate goal of the poetic mind. Inspired by poetic sentiment, guided by pure intellect and taste, the poet strives to reach the Supernal Beauty. “The Poetic Sentiment”, Poe tells, “may develop itself in various modes—in Painting, in Sculpture, in Architecture, in Dance ... in the composition of the Landscape Garden” (1026).

Viewed in such light, we see that Ellison, the designer and the owner of the earthly paradise, is Poe’s poet of the landscape. Under the assistances of enormous fortune he inherited and his refined aesthetic taste, Ellison creates a paradisiacal landscape of beauty and lives in bliss. The paradisiacal landscape garden is the embodiment of Poe’s visionary beauty, the realization of his aesthetic theory, and the testimony of the power of the poet.

Notes

1. For an extensive discussion of this topic, see G. R. Thompson, *Circumscribed Eden of Dreams: Dreamvision and Nightmare in Poe’s Early Poetry* (Baltimore: The Enoch Pratt Free Library, the Edgar Allan Poe Society, and the Library of the University of Baltimore, 1984).
2. The central tension of “The Fall of the House of Usher” has been discussed by critics such as E. Arthur Robinson and Kent Ljungquist. See E. Arthur Robinson, “Order and Sentience in ‘The Fall of the House of Usher’”, *PMLA* 76 (1961): 68-81; and Kent Ljungquist, *The Grand and the Fair: Poe’s Landscape Aesthetics and Pictorial Techniques* (Potomac: Scripta Humanistica, 1984).
3. The central tension of “The Fall of the House of Usher” has been discussed by critics such as E. Arthur Robinson and Kent Ljungquist. See E. Arthur Robinson, “Order and Sentience in ‘The Fall of the House of Usher’”, *PMLA* 76 (1961): 68-81; and Kent Ljungquist, *The Grand and the Fair: Poe’s Landscape Aesthetics and Pictorial Techniques* (Potomac: Scripta Humanistica, 1984).
4. For discussions on Poe’s earthly paradise and landscape fiction, see Robert D. Jacobs, “Poe’s Earthly Paradise”, *American Quarterly* 12.3 (Autumn 1960): 404-413; Jeffrey A. Hess, “Sources and Aesthetics of Poe’s Landscape Fiction”, *American Quarterly* 22, no. 2.I (Summer 1970): 177-189; Joel R. Kehler, “New Light on the Genesis and Progress of Poe’s Landscape Fiction”,

American Literature 47.2 (May 1975): 173-183; and Kent Ljungquist, *The Grand and the Fair: Poe's Landscape Aesthetics and Pictorial Techniques* (Potomac: Scripta Humanistica, 1984)

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Valle-Inclán: Comparative and Thematic Approaches

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In issue 4/1 (April 2012) of *Forum for World Literature Studies*, we presented a collection of five essays focused on a comparative reading of some of the main European and Latin American referents of the vast literary output of Ramón del Valle-Inclán (1866-1936), one of the most important Spanish writers and playwrights of his time. The essays by Darío Villanueva, Robert Lima, Margarita Santos, Antonio Pedrós-Gascón and Rosario Mascato-Rey allowed us to delve into the prose, the stage works, the thought, the poetry and the interartistic links that characterize Valle-Inclán's work and make it so current. At the same time, we were able to show the unique way Valle-Inclán's aesthetic integrated the key points of the historical reality that the author experienced personally and intensely. It is an aesthetic that continued to be reformulated over the years. The author did this to gain the public favour, but he also felt a need to interpret with the most effective tools the historical and cultural changes he was living, as well as their direct consequences in the public and political spheres and the private and local ones.

In this second series of essays, four in total, we do not completely abandon these perspectives, but the analysis and the problems we deal with are generally less broad and focus on somewhat more tightly framed questions. Various of the perspectives to which I am referring appeared, in a way, in the previous series. One case is the attention paid to war. To war as a historic constant and also to some of the concrete examples in which Valle-Inclán was interested as a writer and somewhat as a chronicler: the First World War, the Carlist Wars in 19th-century Spain, and the great European and Latin American revolutions at the beginning of the 20th century. Another case is the re-interpretation of some classical and modern myths and the exploration of the dramatic and narrative results of interartistic relations. However, as I have indicated, this time either the scope of the studies has been reduced or we have introduced additional points of view in order to extend the critical debate about

the author to very current issues. Among these issues, for example, are film-literature relations or the consideration of Valle-Inclán in light of the concept of world literature.

The article by Dru Dougherty, one of the best-known international Valle-Inclán experts, opens this issue and presents an analysis of the devices used by the author in his prose and dramatic work—among others, *situational irony*—to reveal the backdrop of interests, beliefs and political corruption that fed the last Spanish civil war of the 19th century (1872-1876). Valle-Inclán managed to uncover like no one else the simulation of grand public discourses and the management of oft-manipulated values, such as patriotism, heroism or progress.

Carmen Becerra contributes to this issue with an essay on the modern emergence of the Don Juan myth and its noteworthy persistence in Valle-Inclán's work, with quite different treatments in the turn-of-the-century tales of *Feminines* and the *Barbaric Comedies*, completed in 1922. She draws a thematic-comparative analysis not only of the diverse critical orientations of the study of the myth in literature and the arts, but especially of the various representations of Don Juan that have been produced from the Baroque to modernism, by way, naturally, of Mozart, Hoffmann and Mérimée, among others.

The third article is by José A. Pérez Bowie and focuses on the seven television and film adaptations of Valle-Inclán's dramatic and prose works, which are generally approached with reticence by specialists in the author's work and even by film studies scholars, despite the undoubted technical and artistic relevance of the directors who took up the challenge. In particular, the essay notes the complexities inherent to the transposition of literature to film, which scholars have been analyzing since Russian formalism, and which are accentuated in Valle's case by his discursive and aesthetic uniqueness and by the aesthetic specificity of the fictional worlds in question.

Lastly, César Domínguez looks at the theoretical notion of *world literature* from a point of view in which translation becomes an axis, in practice to a measure, of the concept and of its very empirical applicability. He takes as a case study *Tirano Banderas* (1926), the novel that Valle-Inclán published in 1926 and that was translated to English three years later, and uses it to argue for a stronger dialogue between Comparative Literature and Translation Studies. In any case, it is a dialogue nuanced by an unavoidable contextualization that incorporates historical, cultural, institutional and even commercial references in order to understand the inter-systemic switch implied by any incorporation of a literary work into a different cultural system by means of translation.

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Carlist Carnage: War in Valle-Inclán's Carlist Novels and in *Voces de gesta*

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Abstract This study investigates Ramón del Valle-Inclán's view of war in the Carlist series (three novels and a tragedy) that appeared between 1908 and 1911. The subject of the series was the Spanish civil war of 1872-1876 known as the last Carlist War, a conflict in which insurgent troops and peasant guerrilla bands revolted to defend their traditional forms of life against modernizing trends: secularization, republicanism, and bourgeois economies. Central to the argument is the focus on situational irony, a device that structures all four works and calls into question readings that discover an heroic exaltation of war in the series. This essay proposes that Valle-Inclán "disenchants" such a view by presenting war as rooted in fratricidal murder, political corruption and the passion for revenge, a vision that influenced the shift in his art toward a poetics of the grotesque.

Key words history and literature; irony; Valle-Inclán's Carlist series; war in literature

In 1916 Valle-Inclán visited the Western Front of World War I and shortly thereafter published *La media noche. Visión estelar de un momento de guerra* (Night on the Western Front, 1917). That book has been credited with playing a major role in the shift in his poetics from symbolist harmony—"the harmony of opposites"—to grotesque dissonance inaugurated in *La pipa de Kif* (The Marihuana Pipe, 1919). As John Lyon notes, *La media noche* "has generally been considered by critics as a key work for the understanding of the author's transition from a heroic to an anti-heroic vision of life... It has been inferred... that the shock of first-hand experience of trench warfare must have been instrumental in producing the grotesque anti-academic humour of *La pipa de Kif*" (Lyon, "Crossroads" 135). My intention is not to discuss whether *La media noche* marked the crossroads in the writer's poetics, although this essay casts doubt on that hypothesis. Rather, it is to amplify the inference mentioned by Lyon and investigate its force in an earlier series of works whose subject was Spain's nineteenth-century civil war known as the Carlist Wars.¹

The linkage made by Lyon between war and a “anti-heroic” vision of life is a key to uncovering the fundamental questions that the Spanish author asked in the works just mentioned: is war the crucible of heroism in Spanish history or its grave? Is it the arena in which tradition and national character are voiced and defended to the death, or the site of meaningless slaughter occasioned by humanity’s hubris, venality and base cruelty? Valle did not have to visit the Western Front in order to seek answers to those questions. Before his trip to France in 1916, he immersed himself in the history of the Carlist Wars, which raged from 1833 to 1840 and again from 1872 to 1876. The war fought in the 1870s was the one he chose to novelize. To prepare the trilogy he visited its terrain and interviewed veterans when possible (Fernández Almagro 127-37). Still within living memory, the Carlist Wars provided early access to both written and oral testimony of war’s glories and horror.

Valle’s sustained interest in war derived, to some degree, from his circumstances: born two years before the Revolution of 1868, he was six years of age when the second Carlist War broke out in 1872, thirty-two when Spain surrendered its last overseas imperial colonies in the War of 1898, and fifty when he toured the Western Front. For Valle-Inclán’s generation, warfare was part of the fabric of life, worthy of a serious writer’s attention. This was especially so for a novelist who considered Tolstoy a model (Dougherty, *Guía* 131-38) and cast himself as “the historian of a world that ended with me” (Rivas Cherif 8) — a world that disappeared in the wake of modernity’s expansion in Spain during the nineteenth century.

To address fully the question of Valle-Inclán’s vision of war inscribed in his *oeuvre* would require much more space than is available for this essay. I have therefore chosen to focus on the novelistic trilogy devoted to the second Carlist War published in 1908 and 1909, *La Guerra Carlista*, as well as the tragedy on the same theme, *Voces de gesta*, staged and published in 1911.²

The Carlist series is a key to clarifying Valle-Inclán’s vision of war during the years prior to World War I.³ Among the representational devices he employed in the series, situational irony stands out most saliently. It is worth recalling that the common effect of irony is to evoke the opposite of what is stated. By “situational” irony I mean the production of opposite meanings by agents who are situated in different locales, which may be spatial, ideological, affective, etc. Because irony generates contrary meanings, it lends itself to the creation of dialectical polarities and thematic binaries, a practice found throughout the works examined here. Perhaps the principal conclusion I draw from the series is that Valle placed the origins of war in fraternal strife, as the story of Cain and Abel reminds us, making all wars civil wars in which there are no heroes and no glory, only death and devastation.

Unholy Holy War

The Carlist wars were sparked by a dynastic dispute among the Spanish Bourbons. A schism arose in 1832 when King Ferdinand VII restored the ancient Spanish law that allowed females to succeed to the Crown (it had been rescinded by Philip V in 1713). When Ferdinand died the following year, his brother, to be known as Carlos V, refused to recognize Ferdinand's daughter, who went on to reign as Isabel II, and claimed his right to the throne. Declaring himself the legitimate successor, Carlos immediately found support in Navarre and the Basque provinces from the ultra-absolutists and the apostolic Catholics who opposed Liberalism. As Edgar Holt writes, the ideals that motivated Carlos's supporters to take up arms "were those of religion and absolutism, combined with an agrarian population's deep-rooted suspicion of all innovations and economic developments coming from towns and cities" (44).

It would be too simple to think of the Carlist wars as only a dynastic dispute. They may be best understood as a popular, fundamentalist rebellion against the forces of modernization that were altering Spain's political and economic structures in the nineteenth century. Margarita Santos Zas states that the civil wars represented the "collective defense" of Spanish traditions still grounded in a semi-feudal rural hierarchy composed of impoverished nobles, reactionary priests, peasant farmers and herders. Stirred by the threats perceived in Liberalism, these inhabitants of Navarre, the Basque provinces and sections of Catalonia "were united by feelings of solidarity to reject everything that the bourgeois revolution represented and brought about" (Santos Zas, *Tradicionalismo* 363).⁴

It was within that specific socio-historical context that Valle-Inclán set the initial novel in the Carlist trilogy, *Los cruzados de la causa* (The Crusaders of the Cause, 1908). The action begins, however, with a chorus of voices that characterize war as timeless, when considered by the mothers and wives left to keep the home fires burning:

"No one will be left to work the fields. The young men who don't volunteer to defend their faith [in the Carlist cause] will be forced to serve in the battalions of the other King."

"No one has seen what we're seeing today! Two Kings at war in the kingdoms of Spain!"

"Not since the days of the Moors!" (*Cruzados* 671)⁵

Immediately war is given a double frame for Valle-Inclán's twentieth-century readers. It is foremost a sacred cause, a crusade to save the Christian faith from being

corrupted by the doctrines of a foreign culture. "Two Kings who follow different laws. One is a good Christian, who rides with his troops and breaks bread with them. The other has more than a hundred wives, like a Moor, and never sets foot outside his grand palace in Castile" (*Cruzados* 672). The medieval allusions cast the conflict as pre-modern. The temporal removal from modern warfare could not be more obvious. Indeed, the anachronism is so pronounced that one suspects that modernity itself is being cast as the enemy.

The "good Christian" King mentioned by the women was Charles VII, Carlist pretender to the Bourbon throne and rival of Isabel II who had been driven into exile by the Revolution of 1868. The "other" King alluded to was Amadeo de Saboya (Extramiana 220), an Italian prince who was invited to replace Queen Isabel and reigned briefly from January 1871 to February 1873.⁶ However a symbolic reading of that "other" sovereign points in another direction, toward modern, political warfare waged by a standing army for a powerful, competing faith sweeping across the Americas and Europe since the late eighteenth century: liberal nationalism. The modern nation—ever more secular, constitutionally grounded and devoid of royalty—and bourgeois capitalism were the new creeds threatening the traditional way of life embodied in the Carlist cause. They had shown their colors in the American and French Revolutions, in the debates over the Spanish Constitution of 1812 and in the draft of the stillborn Constitution of the First Spanish Republic. Indeed, in the second and third volumes of the Carlist trilogy, the Carlist forces are fighting against Republican troops while the Third French Republic is taking shape only a few days march across the Pyrenees. Against such stirrings of modernization in Spain, what chance did the "feudal soul" of Carlism have?⁷

Numerous critics have held that the first Carlist novel expresses Valle-Inclán's nostalgia for the Carlists' "heroic" defense of their traditional way of life.⁸ They argue that, doomed to fail, the Carlist cause was presented as a heroic resistance to the forces of modernization. However, as Gogorza Fletcher suggests, the cause and its "crusaders" had to seem oddly archaic to most early twentieth-century readers (85-86). A living anachronism, Carlism had sought to place on the Spanish throne a king who would rule according to Christ's teachings, after purging the country of Jacobin politicians and their corrupt clients—such was the "legitimist" view conveyed by the gentry and clergy we meet in *Cruzados*. Their purpose in the novel is to raise money in order to purchase and ship arms from Galicia to guerrilla bands in Navarre. These members of the ancien régime, whose interests were in the balance, believe "the legitimate King [Carlos VII] defends God's cause"—reason enough to extend civil warfare "like a great conflagration" across Spain (*Cruzados* 673-74). Christian faith suffices to fan the flames of holy war.

Yet all we see take place in the opening novel of the trilogy is a botched attempt to transfer rifles from a convent, where they have been cached, to a sailing ship that founders while the insurgents watch from the beach. The irony conveyed by this action—a storm extinguishes the crusaders’ holy flame—runs through the Carlist series in whose pages grandiose visions of Spain’s spiritual deliverance are undercut by mundane scenes of discord, disarray and futile sacrifice. For Valle-Inclán, as Miguel Gil observes, “The Carlist War is not a glorious episode in the history of Spain but a locus of misery and sorrow whose outcome is mourning and emptiness, not a celebrated victory” (124).⁹

On what grounds, then, do scholars (see note 8) base their claims that Valle-Inclán was a nostalgic apologist of Carlism? The main evidence is found in the writer’s public associations with Carlist leaders (Fernández Almagro 128-36), his “traditionalist” speeches given in Spain and Buenos Aires (Alonso Seoane xxx-xxxix), and the epic allusions that appear frequently in the Carlist series. While such details frame Carlism as a “living force” that animated a collective tradition in the nineteenth century (Lyon, *Theater* 58-66), they take on a different hue when one considers that by 1908-1911 that “living force” was long spent. The title of the second novel in the series—*El resplandor de la hoguera* (The Bonfire’s Afterglow)—suggests as much, namely that only the “afterglow” of Carlism persisted in the first decade of the twentieth century (Nora 79).¹⁰ The movement’s glorification in literature could not help but collide with the facts of history. Valle-Inclán’s feat was to focus on the collision itself. Hence the ironic structure that opened a gap between the resurrection of Carlism’s “heroic” cause and the post-war horizon of Valle’s reading and viewing public.

Situational Irony

The situational irony deployed in the trilogy issues from the fractured structure devised by Valle for his novels. By shifting the narrator’s gaze from one camp to the other and from one locale to another, the conventional forward moving plot is replaced by an episodic narrative in which events are often simultaneous and discontinuous (Juan Bolufer 215). Fernández Almagro observed early on that this mosaic structure captured the raw reality of war: “War, for those who experience it directly, is like life itself: fragmentary, bewildering, haphazard” (132-33).¹¹ The observation is significant, for it suggests that Valle-Inclán’s understanding of war was the opposite of ordered. It embraced a mix of actions and perspectives that the writer refused to meld into an artificially coherent vision. In this respect, he diverged markedly from Unamuno’s *Paz en la guerra* (Peace in War, 1897) whose narrator describes how the protagonist and his friends go about making an intelligible story out of their diverse experiences

in different guerrilla bands once they are reunited in Bilbao:

In the city, transformed into the home of Carlist forces, the impressions of each of them were congealing as they talked to each other... In those gatherings Ignacio became aware of the diverse characters of his comrades in arms and began to make his selection of their stories. (158)

Although the war was experienced differently by each combatant, Ignacio joins different episodes he hears to make a composite narrative in his head. In fact, in his novel about the Carlist siege of Bilbao Unamuno sought to reconcile the dialectical poles of warfare —peace *in* war. Valle-Inclán's answer to his predecessor's model was to leave the reconciling, if it were possible, to his readers.

Thus, in the Carlist trilogy the narrator eschews a composite picture of the war, a refusal that implies its impossibility. The numerous shifts from Republican officers to Carlist volunteers, civilian onlookers to peasant spies, etc., create a rhythm of contradictory positions on war (both intellectual and affective) that readers are asked to process. No single position is allowed to dominate; what is advanced as true about the campaign in one instance is challenged shortly thereafter by another. "In almost every reference to the 'heroic,' one glimpses an ironic nuance" (Ciplijauskaitė 191).¹² López de Martínez argues that the apparent irony is resolved "in the narrator's perspective" (72), but I find just the opposite is true, that the narrator's oscillating gaze denies us a comforting resolution.¹³

A significant case of "zigzagging perspectives" (Mainer 331) is found in the second volume of the series, *El resplandor de la hoguera* (The Bonfire's Afterglow, 1909), whose main point of affective focalization is the Abbess of the convent in which the firearms were hidden in *Cruzados*. Guilt-ridden by the lives lost because of her conspiring with the insurgents, Isabel pledges to sacrifice herself by joining the conflagration whose glow she has seen in the eastern sky from her native Galicia. Anxious to reach the war's purifying flame, she longs to feel the spiritual ardor of the Carlist volunteers fighting for the cause. Once in Navarre, however, the sacred aura she seeks eludes her and is replaced by the grotesque reality of war:

The war began to seem like a sad, drawn-out death throes, a painful epileptic grimace. [...] She had imagined a glorious and luminous war filled with the thunder of drums and the bright song of bugles. [...] She yearned to reach the bonfire and be consumed in it. But she didn't know where to find it. (*Resplandor* 784, 785)¹⁴

This disillusion is soon countered by an unlikely example found in Julepa la de Arguiña, a beggar who roams the roads as a spy for the Carlists. In Julepa the nun contemplates the longed-for sacred experience she lacks: the beggar is “entirely inflamed with the religious fervor of the common people, in whom the thirst for justice was paired with resplendent hope to find at war’s end a merciful father in her King” (*Resplendor* 787).

Both the nun’s spiritual expectations and Julepa’s “inflamed” ardor correspond to what Sarah Cole has aptly termed the poetics of “enchantment” that celebrates violence as a route to spiritual illumination:

Enchantment refers to the tendency to see in [war’s] violence some kind of transformative power. On the one hand, there is a strong impulse in literary accounts of violence to insist on resonant, elemental, often painful bodily experience: disenchantment. On the other hand, when the desire for spiritual plenitude meets the facts of historical violence, there is an equal and opposite tendency to see violence as the germinating core of rich, symbolic structures. (1633)¹⁵

One such symbolic structure is the sacred flame that would work the transformation in the nun’s soul — an expectation that never materializes. Instead, her direct experience gives the lie to the belief that war is an agent of “spiritual plenitude.”¹⁶ Which of the nun’s visions are we to accept as war’s truth: death’s grotesque grimace that she finds in Navarre, or the sublime spiritual experience witnessed in Julepa la de Arguiña? It is useless to look to Valle-Inclán’s narrator for a definite answer.

A noticeably “disenchanted” character in *Resplendor* is the Duke of Ordax, a cavalry officer in the Republic’s army, whose “smiling cynicism” (760) strips his profession, and the civil war, of any transformative value. “We will attack the Carlists,” he asserts, “not to defeat them but to merit a promotion in rank and salary” (760). The Duke’s crass cynicism provokes a principled retort from a seasoned Captain of the Republic: “Like any soldier, I fight for the honor of my flag.” And for “the ideas of freedom and progress” he later adds. The Captain’s idealistic statement prompts in turn a down-to-earth observation from a second Lieutenant in the Republic’s army: “if they could, our troops would throw down their rifles and go home” (763-64). Both officers ironically undermine the Captain’s appeal to military honor. The Duke’s perspective in particular, as the narrative continues, recalls Clausewitz’s theory that although combat arouses intense feelings — “Even the most civilized of peoples, in short, can be fired with passionate hatred of each other” (76)—, war is but the continuation of political machinations by other means: “war is

not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means" (87). Valle-Inclán's narrator thus continues to counterposition views on war in the second novel of the series. Pragmatic and self-serving attitudes challenge visionary and idealist motivations expressed by the belligerents.

The final novel in the trilogy, *Gerifaltes de antaño* (Gerfalcons of Yore, 1909), shows what happens when war's enchantment fuses with religious fanaticism. The novel's title alludes to falcons (*gerifaltes*) that in medieval times were trained to kill other birds. The suggestion of predation on one's own kind is in keeping with the novel's protagonist, Manuel Santa Cruz, a warrior priest who organized and led a guerrilla band, engorging its files with volunteers from bands whose leaders he attracted and then murdered. The famous *cabecilla* (guerrilla-leader) embodies the messianic spirit that roused the common people to serve the Christian cause of Carlism, a cause he betrays by becoming a Cain figure to his fellow insurgents. Valle-Inclán's readers were familiar with the priest's fame for being mutinous and for the pitiless atrocities he committed against civilians who sympathized with the Republic. In *Resplandor* even the Carlist partisans criticize him for defying the Carlist High Command: "Just today a courier told us that Santa Cruz disobeyed orders from King Don Carlos"; "Santa Cruz wants to be in command, all alone, by himself"; "Envy is a bad trait; and because of it, the men are calling him a traitor" (*Gerifaltes* 773-74).¹⁷

In the third novel we hear what the Republicans think of the Priest. Once again, the Duke of Ordax supplies a sardonic but acute view: "The Republic needs another atrocity by Santa Cruz. The Carlists are lobbying the European courts to give them belligerent rights." A fellow officer explains that if recognized by foreign powers, the Carlists would be able to purchase arms from them. The Duke of Ordax concludes: "At present, the [Republic's] most urgent diplomacy is to do all we can to help the Priest [persist in his savagery]" (*Gerifaltes* 831). Santa Cruz thus becomes a wedge between the Carlist High Command and the guerrilla bands operating in Navarre, playing into the hands of Republican politicians and generals (Holt 237-39). Verity Smith notes that his cruelty "became so notorious that after a time there arose a paradoxical and ironic situation. This involved both Liberals and Carlists pursuing Santa Cruz so as to put an end to his atrocities and anarchical behavior" (125). In short, the priest's ambition and bloodlust allow others to turn him into a political pawn — yet another ironic device that distances the reader's sympathies from the Carlist cause. War is not a holy cause after all; it is a game of political chess.¹⁸

In Santa Cruz's mind, messianism becomes mania as illustrated when he orders the murder of Miquelo Egoscué in order to swell his own band with the popular guerrilla leader's volunteers.¹⁹ This internecine assassination sets the stage

for Roquito, a blind, seer-like beggar, to issue a biblical warning to Santa Cruz that underscores his violation of scripture: “The soldiers of the King must not battle among themselves! Do not fight like Cain and give a bad example to Christianity!” (*Gerifaltes* 898). The warning prepares the reader for the novel’s climax while it poses the ethical question at the heart of the trilogy: do any ideals, however holy, justify the dreadful violence of war?

As predicted by the Duke of Ordax, the action depicted in *Gerifaltes* ends with a cynical reversal when the Republic’s High Command purposefully calls back its troops that have encircled Santa Cruz’s band, in order to allow the priest to escape and continue his butchery. When news of the retreat reaches Santa Cruz, he falls to his knees and thanks God for saving him, a gesture immediately undercut by the blind beggar who cries, “It’s Satan who is saving you!” (900). To the very end the narrative voice withholds a definitive point of view, foregrounding war’s enchantment only to close with the warrior priest’s betrayal of its promise. Like Cain, Santa Cruz kills his own kind to further his ambition, weakening thereby the heroic narrative of the Carlist cause. Readers are left to ponder the biblical story that places the origin of war in fratricide. If one takes the Carlist war as a metonymy for all wars, Valle-Inclán’s literary message would seem to be that only nationalism, and modern nation building, occlude the truth that all wars are civil wars.²⁰

The ever shifting perspectives on war posed by the Carlist novels forestall a single, reassuring point of view. In search of an interpretive standpoint readers are forced to attend to other signifying means deployed by the novelist: for example, the archaic frames given to war —medieval, epic, a holy crusade— in *Cruzados*; the sacred fire imagery that appears throughout *Resplandor*; and the symbolic pairing of Santa Cruz with Cain and the Devil in *Gerifaltes*. Situational irony thus allows the highly poetic and allusive language in the novels to work its magic and alert readers to the horror of war, especially the kind fueled by fanatical beliefs. Bermejo Marcos was perceptive in drawing attention to the “antimilitarist and pacifist denunciation that exposes the senselessness of all wars” in the Carlist novels (158). However, absurdity may not be war’s worst evil. As we shall see in the next section, deluding oneself and one’s people about the heroics of futile combat opens the way to casting war as a tragedy in Valle-Inclán’s Carlist tragedy.

Farewell Pastoral Dream!

When the curtain rose on Valle-Inclán’s *Voces de gesta* (Epic Voices, 1911) in Barcelona,²¹ the audience learned that once again two sovereigns were disputing the kingdom of Spain, “[a king] from another land is warring against King Carlino” (*Voces* 217). Avelle-Arce explains that Carlino is a diminutive form of both

Charlemagne and Carlos, our first indication that the Carlist sovereign has suffered a degrading diminishment (363). Indeed, Carlino has been reduced to a fugitive who “pursued by his dire destiny / lives in the mountains like a goatherd” (*Voces* 212). In Act I of this “pastoral tragedy” we quickly see that King Carlino's kingdom, once as bucolic as Virgil's *Georgicas*, has been overrun by an invading army of vague origins and that his people are unable to save themselves. Indeed, as González del Valle reasons, the inhabitants of this peaceful country —shepherds and farmers— would betray their *pastoral* nature, “defeat themselves,” if they fully imitated their aggressive enemy (290).

The scene is thus set for an advanced army to conquer a peace-loving community and obliterate its way of life as in the Carlist novels. Against this legendary, pre-modern backdrop (allusions are made to the Moorish invasion of Iberia in the year 711), Valle-Inclán wrote a tragedy of ethnographic trauma wrought by a ruthless, militarized empire. As J. L. Brooks put it, “a modern military action is superimposed on an idealized, pastoral setting” (193).

The protagonist of the tragedy, Ginebra, is introduced as the “naïve shepherdess of legend” (*Voces* 224), a sign that, in Valle-Inclán's hands, Carlism was losing its political specificity and acquiring a timeless, legendary semblance.²² Cabañas Vacas discerns in the play a movement toward myth in this depiction of the Carlist wars, a shift from the historical frame of the earlier novels to “an allegorical level designed to emphasize the glory of the defeated, an heroic defense of their unconditional loyalty to King Carlino” (181). Rubio Jiménez adds that Valle-Inclán's essentialist poetics were at work in the play, which is best read, he thinks, as a “symbolist tragedy” akin to Wagner's operas (468). Like Cabañas Vacas, he claims that the rout of Carlino's band of defenders is really a “triumph in defeat” (472). However, instead of attributing it to the peasants' heroic stand, he discerns the triumph in the King's sacrifice to free his people from war. As with Moses and Jesus, “death brings salvation to him and to his people” (472), a classic statement of war's enchantment, that glorifies and renders it symbolic (Cole 1639).

It is true that in *Voces* legend and myth diffuse the mimetic referentiality of the earlier novels, but it is hard to believe that the play's audience, and later readers, could erase from their consciousness the historical reality of Carlism's political and military defeat, a fact graphically mirrored by Valle-Inclán's tragedy. In the context of this essay, what stands out in *Voces* is the depiction of war as protracted, merciless violence, a return to the state of nature described by Hobbes in his *Leviathan*: the “continual fear and danger of violent death” (95-97). Over a twenty-year period, the populous is subjected to the invaders' brutalities —kidnapping, rape, mutilation, murder of the defenseless civilian population. War's spiritual enchantment disappears

and is replaced by the desire for revenge, which transforms Ginebra from a simple shepherdess who would marry and raise a family into a victim bent on avenging the savage atrocities done to her and to her bastard son. Where, one must ask, can victory and glory be found in the tragic heroine's doctrine of an eye for an eye?

Situational irony is introduced in the play by the author's pairing of tragedy with pastoral in its subtitle, "a pastoral tragedy." Whereas in tragedy a good man's actions occasion an *hamartia* that destroys him, in pastoral what little change allowed is synonymous with renewal, symbolized by the cycle of nature, often embodied in a sacred oak. Tragedy is a genre of rupture and discontinuity, the opposite of pastoral's reiterative harmony. Defying tradition, Valle-Inclán injected war into the domain of pastoral while simultaneously withdrawing heroism from the space of tragedy. The result is an anti-heroic tragedy in which brute force desecrates a vulnerable, consecrated realm. Most chilling is the fact that war's violence continues unabated at the play's close instead of leading to cathartic closure. Myth and history, the pastoral and the tragic are thus paired in irreconcilable tension reminiscent of the ironic structure found in the earlier novels.

In Act III of *Voces* a singer of tales (Versolari) states that "Life is mortal, its hinge is change; / as the walls crumble, the trash heap grows" (*Voces* 253). One way of understanding these words is as a reminder that our lives belong to the realm of history's flux, a condition overcome only in art. To the possible question "What forces move history's hinge?" Valle-Inclán's tragedy supplies a dismaying answer: all-out war. The character who most embodies history's flux is the naïve shepherdess whose destiny is altered forever when King Carlino arrives at her door begging for food. His pitiful condition touches Ginebra's heart so profoundly that when enemy soldiers arrive at her hut, pursuing the King, she refuses to tell them which path he has taken in flight. This brave decision has dreadful consequences that determine the play's action, which is centered on torture and fruitless vengeance.

For her loyalty Ginebra is held captive, raped and blinded at the end of Act I.²³ Ten years later, in Act II, the shepherdess is accosted by the same warrior, now a Captain, who fathered her bastard child. When Ginebra's son (Garín) attempts to defend her, he is murdered by his father. The barbarous warrior kills his own kind, squeezing the breath out of Garín in a grotesque parody of a patriarchal embrace: the stage note reads "With his prey in his claws, he hugs the youth like a bear bellowing in his face." The child falls to the ground "like a broken lily" (*Voces* 244). To avenge her son's murder, and her own adversity, Ginebra reenacts the myth of Judith and Holofernes: after submitting to the Captain's drunken advances, she severs his head, determined to present it to King Carlino as a sign of her fealty.

Between Acts II and III another decade passes, and history's downward spiral

continues unabated for Carlino's kingdom. After twenty years of devastating occupation it has become a wasteland. A choral intervention by the Versolari laments the desolate conditions of the pastoral community:

Ay, atrocious war, ignorant of pity,
blood and pestilence are your ways!
The vines are withered, the fences are down,
twenty years without sowing
wheat in my inheritance.
Ay, atrocious war, ignorant of pity! (*Voces* 250)

While the evocation of war's devastation still echoes in the theater, King Carlino is carried on stage on his shield, wounded like the legendary Fisher King in Eliot's *Wasteland*. The peasant women begin their mourning chants while the wound is cauterized with a heated lance. Nearby a gravedigger opens the earth beside the kingdom's sacred oak. The end is near. How will it be met?

The King is taken off stage only to return transformed into a "beggar" who laments the annihilation of his people. Ginebra appears and presents her baleful offering. The severed head is now a naked skull whose gaping eyes open onto the open grave, prophetically figured as "the tomb of races and religions" (*Voces* 265). Evoking the cemetery scene in *Hamlet*, the King contemplates the skull, recognizing in it an emblem of defeat, his own and that of his people.²⁴ However, Ginebra urges the King to continue the fight, saying that the enemy's skull "should give voice to vengeance." His response is to renounce the hatred that feeds her plea: "Let hatred's offering be buried in that grave / next to the ancient oak of tradition" (*Voces* 266-67). To end the war, the King must guide his people, embodied by the blind shepherdess, away from vengeance, but he cannot do so as long as he remains King. Hence his decision to renounce that station and continue on as a simple man (the refugee and beggar we have seen throughout the play), serving as Ginebra's guide: "Let my name be forgotten, / and if I die a King, may I be reborn a man. / I will give you my hand as we make our way, / wandering side by side /... It was my destiny to guide, / and by taking your hand I fulfill my role" (*Voces* 266).

The final scene has ambiguities —the King vacillates about continuing to recruit partisans— but, as Olstad observes, "Act III traces the decline and ultimate destruction of myth as the weight of history becomes unbearable" (161). The simple pilgrim who will lead the blind away from vengeance, one of war's most insidious enchantments, emerges clearly at the end. The alternative is to remain in the circle of war's promise of glory in the service of a lost cause. To drive home history's response

to such dreams, the final stage direction calls for an arrow to pierce the shoulder of one of the King's faithful followers, who is left of stage, alone, howling in pain like a wounded animal.

Disenchantment

Voces de gesta thus registers an intensification of Valle-Inclán's skepticism regarding the heroic values attributed to war. In his tragedy he questioned the tradition of glorifying combat, laying bare its savagery and dramatizing the pitiful defeat of a people still enraptured by war's promise of vengeful deliverance. Common to the Carlist trilogy and *Voces* is an ethical principle —Thou shalt not kill— that supplies a reason for the author's growing disenchantment with traditional exaltations of combat. In *Gerifaltes* and in *Voces* that reason takes the shape of an injunction to not wage war against one's brother. War as fratricide, as *cainismo*, as it is also known, is denounced in both works. In *Voces* the murder of his own son foregrounds the paradigm, prompting Ginebra to compare the Captain's crime to Cain's legendary murder: "Garín!... My son!... Ay, you killed him! / Your cursed hands drip with innocent blood! / May you never wash away the stain of your sword, Cain!" (*Voces* 245). In *Gerifaltes* (898) it is Roquito who implores Santa Cruz not to kill Miquelo Egoscué, his fellow *cabecilla* in Carlism's Christian cause, by evoking the story of Cain and Abel: "Do not fight like Cain and give a bad example to Christianity!"

The two allusions to the biblical parable convey an ethical indictment of war grounded in the Christian values that Carlism defended but that were betrayed in the works studied here. In that regard, if there is a sin to be atoned for in *Voces*, as Rubio Jiménez suggests (472), it isn't the King's weakness but Ginebra's thirst for vengeance, which symbolically prolongs the slaughter of war for twenty long years. Similarly, the priest's order that Miquelo be murdered discredits the bucolic order dreamed by Santa Cruz in his pastoral mountain parish. What Santa Cruz embodies in *Gerifaltes* and Ginebra succumbs to in *Voces* is found in the old adage attributed to Plautus, that man's worst predator in man. In Valle-Inclán's Carlist series, war exposes the terrible truth that *Homo homini lupus*.

That truth opened the way for Valle-Inclán to imagine Spain and its bellicose history devoid of heroism and glory. What, he began to ask, was left of his nation after the false heroes of history were retired from its stage? We know one of his answers from reading *Luces de bohemia* (Bohemian Lights, 1920), in which the blind poet Máximo Estrella states that "The classic heroes have taken a stroll down Gato Alley," a street in Madrid where his contemporaries could view their true reflections —grotesque and deformed— in a set of concave and convex mirrors (*Luces* 933). The "classic heroes" alluded to in that play have generally been identified as those

of antiquity.²⁵ But in the light of the Carlist series other “heroes” closer to home and more recent in history may now be included in the crowd of fallen icons: the kings, generals, politicians, priests and guerrilla leaders whose grandiose visions of restoring Spain’s heroic tradition led thousands to their death in two nineteenth-century civil wars.

Notes

1. Warfare is central to many of Valle’s major works, including the fourth *Sonata* (Winter Sonata, 1905), the three Carlist War novels (1908-1909), *Voces de gesta* (Epic Voices, 1911), *La media noche* (Night on the Western Front), *Tirano Banderas* (The Tyrant, 1926) and the three Iberian Ring novels (1927-1932). In addition, the protagonist of *Las galas del difunto* (The Dead Man’s Duds, 1926), one of Valle-Inclán’s *esperpentos*, is a soldier just returned from the 1898 war in Cuba.
2. For reasons of space I omit *Sonata de invierno* (Winter Sonata, 1905) and “La Corte de Estella” (The Carlist Court, 1910) from this essay. However, the studies of Madeleine de Gogorza Fletcher and Jacques Fressard shed light on the links between those works and the Carlist series analyzed here.
3. For Valle’s impressions of the Great War, see Dougherty, “Corresponsal” and Rueda, “La ‘visión suprema’.”
4. For a discussion of the socio-political background of the Carlist trilogy, see Gogorza Fletcher 85-93. Emblematic of the modern advances that disrupted rural traditions were the telegraph and the locomotive, which Leopoldo Alas figured as “symbols of an enemy world” when viewed by peasants in his short story “¡Goodbye, ‘Cordera’!” (1892). In the story that “enemy world” carries one of the characters off to the Carlist war “to die in the fratricidal battles of the vast country, in the service of a king whose ideas he did not understand.” The lad is “cannon fodder for the distant world’s madness, for the ambitions of others” (Alas 18-19). My thanks to Michael Iarocci for recommending Alas’s story.
5. Translations in this essay are my own with the exception of a few titles of Valle-Inclán’s works that appear in Verity Smith’s and Madeleine de Gogorza Fletcher’s studies. Citations of the Carlist novels are from Vol. 1 of Valle’s *Obra Completa*. Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 2002. *Voces de gesta* and *Luces de bohemia* are found in Vol. II.
6. These dates place the action of *Cruzados* between May 1872, when the second Carlist war began, and the declaration of the First Spanish Republic in Feb 1873. The second and third volumes of the series continue the action during the shortlived Republic, which lasted only until January 1874. The war ended in 1876. Santos Zas places the action of *Cruzados* during the winter of 1872-1873 (*Los cruzados* 21).
7. Early in *Cruzados*, the Marquis of Bradomín, a representative of the decadent nobility, “felt his feudal soul awaken” and proceeded to advance his traditionalist view of Spain’s imperial “military

morality”: “We have lost the military tradition that defines Spain. [...] In war, today’s cruelty is tomorrow’s clemency. Spain was mighty when we imposed our military morality on society’s compassion for women and children. Centuries ago we had Captains and Saints and Executioners — all a race needs to dominate the world” (*Cruzados* 679-80).

8. See Díaz Plaja 65, Hernández Serna 19, Durán Valdés 43, Elizalde 80, Alonso Seoane LX, and Avelle-Arce.

9. Cf. Lado: “the Carlist War was neither heroic nor grandiose; it was a sad civil war that bled the nation for half a century and whose results (almost always indefinite) were owed more to political intrigue than military encounters” (33). López de Martínez agrees, arguing that the Carlist trilogy “forges an image of war as a force that dehumanizes men, impelling them to hate one another anonymously and to consider killing their primordial objective” (75).

10. Santos Zas reminds us that Valle-Inclán was well aware that Carlist ideals had no practical future: “it would have meant nothing less than reversing the course of history” (*Tradicionalismo* 366). Verity Smith agrees: “despite all his protestations of loyalty, his Carlism was tempered by the knowledge that there was no place for such an ideology in the modern world” (126). One may conclude that Valle’s use of Carlist ideals was instrumental: to draw attention to the disproportion between claims by politicians and intellectuals that Spain remained a bellicose and heroic nation, on one hand, and the historical reality of its decline on the other. One should keep in mind that the immediate backdrop of war, when the Carlist series appeared, was the humiliating defeat of Spain by the United States in Cuba (1898), the final chapter in the loss of the Spanish empire.

11. Cf. Gómez de Baquero: “Guerrilla warfare doesn’t have a plot either” (237).

12. This critic is especially insightful when observing how Valle-Inclán compares war to a card game in which one can win only by cheating. “With this all possibility of heroism is proscribed” (Ciplijauskaitė 195). The comparison also occurs in Carl von Clausewitz’s treatise *On War*: “In the whole range of human activities, war most closely resembles a game of cards” (86).

13. Following Lukács, José Carlos Mainer positions Valle-Inclán in the wake of Balzac, Stendhal and Tolstoy whose novels chart the resolution of social forces guided by “historical necessity” (312). Mainer recognizes, however, that the Spanish writer “looked with less optimism [than his predecessors] on the compliance of the historical law of harmonization,” because he shared Friedrich Schlegel’s vision of the novel as “the domain of ironic dialectics” (311).

14. In this respect the Abbess is a sister to characters like Fabrice in Stendhal’s *Charterhouse of Parma* and Pierre Bezukhov in Tolstoy’s *War and Peace*, who naively expect to discover the essence of war by visiting an active battlefield. In Unamuno’s *Paz en la guerra* Ignacio also seeks a transformative experience in battle that eludes him: “Was that war? Marches and counter-marches, more marches and counter-marches without ever getting to the big battle” (156). For a discussion of the gap between experiencing war and narrating it, see Jan Mieszkowski, “Watching War.”

15. “Historically, it has been war that most powerfully calls forth these dichotomized understandings of death: violent death as a sign and precipitator of sublimity (in a person, community, or nation) or,

conversely, violent death as a sign and precipitator of total degeneration and waste" (Cole 1632). For an "enchanted" reading of the Carlist trilogy, see Alonso Seoane who argues that in the novels "war is rendered beautiful in its cruelty" (CI). The classic denial of war's enchantment is Goya's depiction of the Spanish War of Independence, *Los desastres de la guerra*.

16. The sacred flame is finally subverted in *Resplendor* when the Abbess figures it as a forge that drives all reason out of the soul, a memorable image of religious fanaticism: "Was war really like this? Life and its purpose forgotten, all thought incinerated in its resplendent conflagration! A panting and pounding of the forge that brings the soul to red-hot and beats it like iron on an anvil!" (799).

17. "He wanted to gather all the Basque guerrilla bands under his command and realize the dream he had one winter's morning [...]. He was going to be in command, alone, and would wage a war of blood and fire with the beautiful sentiment of his vision and hatred of the enemy. His was the war fought by common folk, when peasants leave their fields and shepherds their flocks. His was holy war, superior to the ambition of kings, military arts, and famed captains. The Priest felt this truth stir his soul, the truth he had been granted in the quiet of his church while reading Greek and Roman historians [...]. Now their truth—sacred and bloody—was his truth, filled with arcane prophecy, like the entrails of a beast sacrificed by a Druid seer" (*Gerifaltes* 843-44). Gómez de Baquero's comment was: "hallucinations of a mystical bandit" (240). For a more probing view, see Lado, 20-26.

18. In Unamuno's *Paz en la guerra*, Ignacio dreams of charging against the enemy in a "grand battle" that will turn the tide in the Carlists' favor. When the chance arises but is promptly cut short by the Generals, he reflects: "That wasn't his dream; they weren't being allowed to wage war; their officers moved them in battle, playing chess with their soldiers" (163).

19. Santa Cruz's war ethic is summarized by the narrator in the following: "His cruelty was like that of the keeper of the vineyard who burns the withered fruit on the vines. He watched the smoke rise as in a sacrifice, with the serene hope of a bountiful harvest in the day of the Lord, beneath a golden sun with the voices of the ancient copper bells ringing overhead" (*Gerifaltes* 841-42).

20. Pérez Galdós suggested as much in *Trafalgar* (1873), when the first-person narrator perceives how the English and Spanish sailors help each other in a lifeboat: "My God, what are wars for? Why aren't these men always friends as they are here, in the midst of danger? Doesn't what I'm seeing prove that all men are brothers? But then the notion of nationality suddenly cut my train of thought..." (187).

21. The premier was held in Barcelona on June 18, 1911 to high acclaim by critics.

22. Ginebra's ingenuousness as well as the "visionary glow" in her eyes (*Voces* 218) render her kin to the Abbess Isabel in *Cruzados*. The fact that she is blinded because of her loyalty to King Carlino is also reminiscent of Roquito's fate in *Resplendor*. Blindness to the hopeless Carlist cause is accentuated in the passage from the Carlist novels to *Voces de gesta*, reflecting Valle-Inclán's increasingly critical view of the "heroic" mystification of war. On this subject see Charles Olstad's

fine essay, "History and Myth in *Voces de gesta*."

23. The act ends with the following stage direction that underscores the ironic disparity between the pastoral topos and war's violence: "As the echo of [Ginebra's] pain dies out, / beneath the ancient shadow of the beech grove / the happy flight of honey bees / and the notes of a youthful shepherd's panpipe could be heard" (*Voces* 227).

24. "Cold skull, shadow of death, / you laugh in my hands as I tremble! / Ark of miseries, hollow nothing, / your unlit eyes have in their depths / the somber mystery of human life, / the funereal fright of the grave. /... In my defeat you'll be my companion, / in my misfortune you'll comfort me, / and belonging to an enemy, mute skull, / you'll speak the language of terror to my soul" (*Voces* 265).

25. In 1930 Valle explained his jaded view of contemporary Spain as follows: "Life —its deeds, sorrows, great loves— is fated to be always the same. What changes are its actors, the characters in the drama. In past ages, leading roles were played by gods and heroes.... Destiny rode on the shoulders of Oedipus and Medea —all pride and pain! In our time, Destiny is the same... but the shoulders of those who bear it have changed.... Today's men are minute for such a heavy burden. From that contrast and disproportion comes a special sense of the ridiculous... Blindness is beautiful and noble in Homer. But in *Lucas de bohemia* the same blindness is sad and lamentable, because it's borne by a bohemian poet, Máximo Estrella" (Dougherty, *Un Valle-Inclán olvidado...* 192). Antonio Risco commented in 1966 that Valle's turn toward the grotesque sprang "from the impossibility of creating true heroes and, therefore, authentic tragedies" (77). See also Gil 102, Ciplijauskaitė 196-97, and Avalue-Arce 364.

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Renderings of Don Juan in Valle-Inclán

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Abstract The aim of this paper is to develop a comparative thematic reading regarding the two Don Juan versions created by Valle-Inclán. In order to do so, three factors will be taken into account: those related to intertextuality, the different interpretations of the myth at the end of the 19th century, and the modernization Valle-Inclán subjects the myth to at different stages of his writing.

Key words myths; Valle-Inclán; myth of Don Juan; comparative literature

The aim behind this work is to analyse the multiple renderings the myth of Don Juan has received from the hands of Ramón María del Valle-Inclán. We will use comparative literature's theoretical frame, and, particularly, a thematological approach; that is, we will review the metamorphosis of a literary myth—Don Juan—throughout time, from the standpoint of “a strategic intersection of literary dynamics and connections with the imaginary, the history of ideas, of ideologies, of mentality, of sensibility”¹ a standpoint that, following Raymond Trousson (1965), represents the *raison d'être* of thematological studies. In other words, we aim to carry out a comparative thematological reading of the different masks Don Juan has worn in the fictional texts of the great Galician writer, taking into account intertextual concerns and the modernization of the myth in the cultural and temporal coordinates that gave birth to the texts.

However, we will also take into account other methodological approaches present in the rich cartography of comparative literature nowadays, new approaches that provide tools of great value in the pursuit of a deeper knowledge and a correct interpretation of myths. Thus, we will include some of the aspects favored by the structuralist approach to myth, namely the analysis of the text's structure²—mythic schema—, and the isolation and definition of its components and versatility, derived, among other things, from continuous intersections between myth and culture.

From the last decades of the 19th century, and especially since C. Lévi-Strauss and Structuralism, myth studies have experienced an extraordinary growth.

Mythologists, anthropologists, philosophers, historians of religion, and literary theorists, among others, have endeavored to pinpoint the concept of myth. Modern research, such as Malinowski's Functionalism, Mircea Eliade's or Paul Ricoeur's Hermeneutics, Lévi-Strauss' Structuralism, the British Anthropological School, Myth Criticism, etc., regardless of tendencies, approaches or schools, coincide— even when they disagree about almost anything else— in insisting on the semantic polyvalence of the concept of myth, its plural content, and, consequently, the inherent difficulties when trying to define it.³

Let us bring to mind, for example, the plurality of meanings associated to Don Juan's myth: even when maintaining its essential features of transcendence, and the indissoluble connection between *eros* and *thanatos*, between the sacred and the secular, Don Juan has been read as a sinner and a criminal, as satanic, rebel, idealistic, as a romantic hero, constantly unfulfilled, as a homosexual, a jester, a seducer, etc.; moreover, we cannot forget that, in each historical moment, these judgments have carried either a positive or a negative connotation, depending on the ideological positioning, the cultural space or the aesthetic movement of the time or who was judging. That is, Rafael Lapesa hits the mark when he states (1976: 7):

Secular themes, common places, previously coined expressive formulae, ideas steeped in a specific cultural heritage, may change their meaning when they are put at the service of a new conception of the world or a different vital attitude ... In fact, every study in Comparative Literature, or in the influence one author may have on another, has in itself the need to signal contrasts.⁴

On the other hand, if we take into account Claudio Guillén's assumption that a theme is not only the result of a choice by an author, but also a construction by a reader,

Forms and themes, more than discreet entities, are partial elements whose construction is performed, at the end of the day, by the intervention of the reader. Regarding thematology, this intervention will be the greater ... the more relevant are the features of intertextuality identifying the theme through memories of previous representations (1985: 249).⁵

Following from this, when the theme is a myth, its sense will be related also to the presuppositions ("figurations") that its mere name will activate in the receiver's memory; the receiver, on her part, will realize some of those presuppositions, turning her virtual richness into a unique vision, current and historical at the same time.

In his introduction to the *Dictionnaire des mythes littéraires* (1988), Pierre

Brunel suggests three functions in the process of identifying a myth:

1. Narrative function: the function that creates the model, or “mythic setting”; it carries a system of symbols and archetypes that become the narrative.
2. Explicative function: myths are etiologic narratives, hence their significance as cultural referents for the explanation of certain aspects of human life—or death.
3. Revelatory function: this function places myths in the sacred milieu; that is, following Eliade (1957: 17), myths are responsible for the appearance of the supernatural in the world.

These models, or “mythic settings” generated by the narrative function, are, without a doubt, the milestones of myths’ transmission and endurance in time, or, following Anna Trocchi’s phrasing (2002: 164), the model “secures the transmission of the myth’s identity and its resistance throughout the historical succession of its different versions.”

In an interesting and well-documented article on literary myths, Philippe Séliier (1984: 112-126) argues that both the myths that shape Western mythologies, even the oldest ones (Ancient Greek, Roman, Hebrew) and the new myths (Faust, Don Juan) share the following set of common features: firstly, they rest on symbolic constructs that elicit emotions in human beings; that is, they move the receiver, and this symbolic foundation provides myths with a very rich indeterminacy in meaning, an exceptional polyvalence. Secondly, myths possess a closed layout inside a complex structure. And, thirdly, they contain a metaphysical ‘warning,’ that is, man’s encounter with the hereafter. As a consequence of this, it becomes necessary to differentiate between common and specific traits. The former ones all myths share and they identify what a myth is. The latter ones are invariants belonging to each particular myth, shared by each version of it, differentiating it from other myths, and fixing its structure. Regarding Don Juan’s myth, Jean Rousset, in his classic study *Le mythe de Don Juan* (1973),⁶ isolates the invariant features that build the ‘permanent Don Juan setting,’ namely, hero, feminine group and death.⁷ Rousset points out that inside each invariant and the possible relations between them the numerous potential combinations will secure the myth’s mobility and, hence, its vitality.

As it is the case with every myth, Don Juan’s fantastical, magical or supernatural elements guarantee its status as such. A thorough review of every study devoted to Don Juan’s myth⁸ proves the presence of Death—element that symbolizes the connection of the myth with the sacred—is the feature that lends the character its status of myth. Therefore, the mythical nature of Don Juan is essentially founded in his encounter with death, his confrontation with the hereafter. The intense link between

love and death established by the narrative implies that its dissociation, or, at most, its whole disappearance, would inevitably lead to distorting the nature of the myth, for it would mean stripping it of its transcendence.

From its birth circa 1630 until its maturity, provided by Mozart's version with Da Ponte's libretto (*Don Giovanni*, 1788), Don Juan's 'mythic setting' has crossed borders, has been expressed in several languages, has been fitted to suit different generic models and has met considerable transformations, but none as important in the history of the myth as the one it suffered upon its encounter with Romanticism and, more specifically, the transformation carried out by E.T.A. Hoffmann (*Don Juan, eine fabelhafte Begebenheit*, 1813). This stage in the evolution of the myth, inaugurated by Mozart-Da Ponte, consists of demythologizing the hero by killing off its inconsistency, making him choose time over the fleeting moment, permanence over the ephemeral. After this changing process, in which the Baroque myth dies, a new myth rises from the former's ashes: the Romantic myth. Hence, from the hero of freedom arises the hero that searches for an ideal, for the eternal feminine.

Hoffmann's unusual interpretation of Mozart-Da Ponte's opera,⁹ an interpretation that signals the starting point for the inclusion of the romantic character in the 'mythic setting', is responsible for the newfound imbalance in the narrative, namely, placing Ana in Don Juan's path, an Ana that is unique, predestined, meant to save the male character through the miracle of love, an Ana that the hero has been incessantly searching for, but inevitably finds too late.

Now I have already averred that Donna Anna is the Don's foil. How, then, given that Donna Anna had been destined by heaven for such a role, could the Don be apprised of his fundamentally divine nature— and thereby wrested free of the despair of his empty striving— through love, which, thanks to Satan's artifices, was bespoken as the agent of his destruction? He encountered her too late, during the epoch of his most outrageous excesses, when he was pervaded by such diabolical lusts as could only corrupt her. She was not rescued!¹⁰

Moreover, with Hoffmann, the myth makes its first appearance in narrative form and, from that moment onwards, Don Juan's feelings and thoughts will be of more interest than the action in itself. The Romantic authors conceive Don Juan in their own image and likeness, they turn him into their accomplice and, understandably, they glorify and absolve him.

Every Don Juan narrative from the turn of the century and most of the 20th-century, because of something or other, erase from the setting the figure of the Commander, that is, they demythologize Don Juan by depriving him of this encounter

with the hereafter. The character, thus stripped of its mythic nature, after the narrative imbalance the Romantic writers have introduced in its structure, and reeling from the new scientific approaches that have apparently accomplished its complete demystification, arrives at the 20th century transformed into a man in love, repented; a sick man suffering from identity crises or confusing pathologies; an old man that is ridiculed and laughed at; a character subject to every type of humiliation or parody and grotesque or degrading situations.¹¹ On the one hand, all the versions whose inspiring source is Merimée (*Les Âmes du Purgatoire*, 1834), that is, those versions that melt together the legends of Don Juan and the Sevillian knight Miguel de Maraña, show a converted and sanctified Don Juan, completely alter the ending and, consequently, remove the character from the mythological milieu—Alexandre Dumas (*Don Juan de Marana ou le chute d'un ange*, 1836), Manuel and Antonio Machado (*Juan de Maraña*, 1927), Miguel de Unamuno (*El hermano Juan o el mundo es teatro*, 1934). On the other hand, the versions that ensue from the scientific interpretation or the anti-romantic reaction present an old Don Juan—Azorín (*Don Juan*, 1922), Jacinto Grau (*El burlador que no se burla*, 1930)—or a sexually ambiguous one—H.R. Lenormand (*L'Homme et ses fantômes*, 1921), Ramón Pérez de Ayala (*Tigre Juan o el curandero de su honra*, 1926)—and produce exactly the same result as the former ones. There is no room for the Commander's vengeance. Don Juan will die in his own bed or, in any event, his death will have nothing to do with the supernatural.

At the end of the 19th century medicine, psychology and psychiatry began to display a newfound interest in Don Juan and, following from this, began to study the myth and offer their particular interpretation. Psychoanalysts have had him stretched on their divan, trying to discover hidden traumas, complex pathologies... so much so that his path is explored, an absent mother¹² is discovered, and in this maternal lack a sense that has been missing is thought to have been discovered. The psychoanalytic version of the myth, although it has proven enriching, especially regarding the discovery of the deep motivations behind human behaviour, has a considerable inconvenient: it reduces the theme to an inner conflict, ignoring any other factor, following from the assumption that everything related to human behaviour is psychic and unconscious.

It could be stated that Don Juan's scientific interpretation has had little impact in literature, if we take into account the amount of works it has led to. However, it is also true that this interpretation contributed, along with the fin-de-siècle disillusionment, to create a realist and objective approach to the myth. Consequently, it must be underlined that, although the Romantic Movement had already placed the 'mythic setting' in a precarious balance, it was mostly the anti-romantic and scientific reactions that, either via a physical or psychic degradation, or via a psychological

analysis, dissociated Don Juan from his structural context, inciting a rapid process of demystification. The final result of this process is the apparent disappearance of the myth and the birth of a new type: the ‘donjuán’.¹³ From this moment on, the name of Don Juan will be used to designate innumerable love heroes whose fragile connection with the myth rests mostly on their ability for seduction, on the number of love affairs the hero is involved in. That said, this was the state of affairs when Valle-Inclán started to show an interest in the theme of Don Juan.

Just by reviewing a simple inventory of titles it is easy to see that Don Juan’s myth was a favorite theme of the fin-de-siècle generation. The myth, adapting to each author’s philosophical approach and channeling each author’s thought, provided a path to reach an understanding of reality, understanding that, having been proven to be unattainable by positivist reason, was now being approached by metaphysical, transcendental and symbolic perspectives. It is neither surprising nor random, then, that Valle-Inclán uses the legendary Spanish hero in his creations. However, although it is commonly thought to be so, his first donjuanesque scenario is not in *Sonatas*, nor is Bradomín his first donjuanesque hero; some years previously, in the beginnings of his career, we already find a few masks that hide the mythical seducer.

In 1895, Valle-Inclán publishes his first book: *Femeninas (Seis historias amorosas)*. It contains six short novellas, all of them a partial or wholly reworking of his own materials, most of them already published.¹⁴ These materials will show up again in later works, whose leads are played, as the titles anticipate or suggest, by a woman: “La Generala,” “Octavia Sandino,” “Rosarito,” “La Condesa de Cela,” “Tula Varona” and “La Niña Chole”. Two years afterwards, in 1897, he publishes a new short novella, *Epitalamio*.¹⁵

Regardless of the Spanish literary influence signaled by the critics,¹⁶ influence that is undoubtedly there, since Valle was well-read, what we find essential is that *Femeninas* and *Epitalamio* reflect a foreign cultural environment, and also a conscious aesthetic creation supported by outside models or ideas. *Rosarito* aside—which we will look into later on—, in these brief stories the Galician writer creates a mirror image of the myth. The male characters, puppets whose strings are pulled by the women in the stories, are built upon a donjuanesque type very common in the gallant literature of the time. The sarcasm the narrator uses against the former increase the ridicule stemming from their failed attempt to act as a Don Juan. The female characters, on their part, embody a female version of Don Juan, a kind of Don Juana. In fact, these women respond to an image that is overly present in artistic manifestations at the end of the 19th century: the *femme fatale*.¹⁷ According to Mario Praz (1965: 165), this lustful, ruthless and cynical woman, a woman that punishes the male heart, is the mythic model that in the second half of the 19th century substitutes

the diabolical and perverse Don Juan predominant in the first half. Lourdes Ramos-Kuethe (1983: 51), who agrees with this assessment, analyzing these women's skills and conduct in *Femeninas* (and *Corte de Amor*), states that "donjuanism in these narrations manifests itself as feminine libertinism." In *Femeninas*, the most representative example of this model is Niña Chole, a lewd and cruel woman, amalgam of eroticism and exotism, a very frequent combination in Modernism.

Only in *Rosarito*'s pages can we find a genuine Don Juan. Don Juan Manuel de Montenegro, whose personality contains the basic traits of Don Juan's myth, causes the others to feel, according to the narrator's 'authorized' voice, "el poder sugestivo de lo tenebroso."¹⁸

Tenía don Juan Manuel los gestos trágicos y las frases siniestras y dolientes de los seductores románticos (...) El viejo libertino la miraba intensamente cual si sólo buscara el turbarla más. La expresión de aquellos ojos verdes era a un tiempo sombría y fascinadora, inquietante y audaz; dijérase que infiltraban el amor como un veneno, que violaban las almas y que robaban los besos a las bocas más puras. (p.185)¹⁹

The signs that forebode the presence of Montenegro in the "pazo"²⁰—signs that only the victim can feel—, his mysterious appearance, the fascination he exerts over Rosarito (and also over the old Countess of Cela), the narrator's descriptions ("sombria figura", "gallardía donjuanesca", "mirada y sonrisa siniestras", "frente altanera que parecía encerrar todas las exageraciones, lo mismo...las celestes que las diabólicas"), Montenegro's own words ("si no creo en Dios, amo a los ángeles"),²¹ and all of this tied up to the tragic ending of the tale, identify the character with the Prince of Darkness. This identification of the character with the devil is not something new in the myth's history: let us not forget most critics believe the demonic nature of Don Juan is an essential trait in the original drama that founded the myth.²²

Rosarito, Montenegro's young and naive victim, undoubtedly represents the second feminine model created at the end of the 19th century: the fragile, weak, spiritualized woman exalted by Pre-Raphaelism:

Vista a la tenue claridad de la lámpara, con la rubia cabeza en divino escorzo, la sombra de las pestañas temblando en el marfil de la mejilla, y el busto delicado y gentil destacándose en la penumbra incierta sobre la dorada talla y el damasco azul celeste del canapé, Rosarito recordaba esas ingenuas madonas pintadas sobre fondo de estrellas y luceros. (p.168)²³

The story's tragic ending, Rosarito's unexplained death and the suggested identity of her killer, allow for a wide range of interpretations but, above all, these elements put forward one of Valle-Inclán's thematic constants: sin, which, apart from being one of the myth's keys, stems from Modernist sensuality, and it will also become later on proof of his concern about evil, and, ultimately, the verification of a constant in human reality.

Between 1902 and 1905 Valle-Inclán writes *Sonatas*, after having introduced in different times and places some of its plots, characters, landscapes and discursive strategies.²⁴ *Sonata de Otoño* (*Autumn Sonata*) (1902), the first one in the series to be published, includes a Preface ('Nota')²⁵ that categorizes the protagonist as a Don Juan. This preface—whose authorship the reader is left to wonder about—, gives guidance and drives the reading of the text by means of situating the diegesis inside a specific literary and cultural framework, a framework that is well-known by the reader. In other words, the implied reader, even before starting the narrative proper, will know that she is about to discover a new version of the most universal myth of Spanish origin: Brandomín is, from the very start, a Don Juan.

Not only is the author aware that he is re-writing a mythic theme ("En ellas intenté tratar un tema eterno. El tema, si es eterno, por mucho que esté tratado no está agotado nunca. El tema eterno es donde se mide el esfuerzo y el mérito de cada autor, y por ello todos debemos intentarlo"²⁶), but also is the character, who, in numerous passages, shows that he is aware of his mythic origins, and tries to follow the myth's guidelines; that is, Brandomín is a self-aware creation, and he is also aware of the effect his presence and his reputation cause on everyone around him, especially women:

Yo tuve un momento de vanidad ante aquella acogida que mostraba cuánta era mi nombradía en la Corte de Estella. Me miraban con amor, y también con una sombra de enojo. Eran todos gentes de cogulla, y acaso recordaban algunas de mis aventuras (*Sonata de Invierno* (*Winter Sonata*), 108-109).²⁷

Most studies, when examining this aspect of Valle's work, identify Brandomín unequivocally as a Don Juan.²⁸ However, in our opinion, this character, described by critics with concepts such as inversion, reinvention, renovation or demystification of the legendary figure of Don Juan, ends up being only a literary type: a 'donjuán'. Valle-Inclán's rendering of the myth does not respond to its traditional notion, but to thematic lines that derive from the metamorphosis the myth suffers during its Romantic phase. One of these thematic lines, the irresistible lover, the fascinating man, is used by Valle-Inclán to create his Marquis of Brandomín; however, the Galician author avoids the well-trodden path and adds new ingredients to his literary game: the

Romantic spirit, turn-of-the-century decadentism, and Modernist aesthetics, among others.

However, a traditional theme and a popular character—Don Juan—, together with the conceptual syncretism of the myth—a product of the confluence of several sources— and a certain aesthetic— of the Modernist kind— are not enough to explain the result obtained by Valle in *Sonatas*; other factors were involved, and one of them was certainly the chosen generic pattern. Brandomín's Memoirs allow the author the chance to introduce a chain of inter-textual games with other very meaningful Memoirs quoted in the text:²⁹

María Rosario, un poco confusa, murmuró:
 -¡Vuestro padre espiritual! ¿Quién es vuestro padre espiritual!
 -El caballero Casanova.
 -¿Un noble español?
 -No, un aventurero veneciano.
 -¿Y un aventurero...?
 Yo la interrumpí:
 -Se arrepintió al final de su vida.
 -¿Se hizo fraile?
 -No tuvo tiempo, aun cuando dejó escritas sus confesiones.
 -¿Cómo San Agustín?
 -¡Lo mismo! Pero humilde y cristiano, no quiso igualarse con aquel doctor de la iglesia, y las llamó Memorias.
 -¿Vos las habéis leído?
 -Es mi lectura favorita.³⁰

The Memoir style, above all, allows for a specific structure, the manipulation of the diegetic time, and a deliberate fragmentarism. It also imposes certain features on the character-narrator, and permits the construction, re-construction and even the invention of a life. Darío Villanueva states that autobiography, as a literary genre, is endowed with a poesis virtuality, rather than a mimetic one, and, consequently, is the perfect tool to obtain “a truthful construction of the identity of self” (1991: 108).³¹ Now, a shrewd reader will easily note the frequency with which Brandomín plays a role: what he wants to seem like in front of others. As a consequence of all these factors, it is possible to assume the essential artificiality/fictionality of the character, specifically a Don Juan type of artificiality, and this assumption would lead us to the logical conclusion of Brandomín's nature being typical, not mythical.

The character has been built following some of the basic traits defining the

legend of Don Juan (an outstanding ability to seduce, the absence of a moral compass, pride of class), but some other features he displays distance him from the myth, namely: neither is he an impersonal seducer, nor does he hide his identity by pretending to be somebody else; he is not capable of love, he merely loves the idea of love, he follows the seduction ritual, but he still awakes his victims' love; he does not seek the ending of his affairs, rather, each ending is the product of a variety of circumstances, but never his doing; he is not a rushed lover, without memories of the past, on the contrary, he invests as much time as it is necessary in each affair and he remembers them with pleasure.

Another aspect of the character that refers back to the original *Burlador* is the satanic qualities attributed to him;³² however, at this point, it is important to remember the consciously deceptive nature of the character: Bradomín feels very much at home when he is playing this specific part, he is pleased by the mixture of fear and admiration his mere presence evokes, a presence that he displays for his audience like a painstakingly designed staging:

—Me das miedo cuando dices esas impiedades... Sí, miedo, porque no eres tú quien habla: Es Satanás... Hasta tu voz parece otra... ¡Es Satanás!...

(*Sonata de Otoño*, p. 97)³³

—¡Lo sabía usted! ¡Lo sabía usted!

Y de pronto clavándome los ojos ardientes y fanáticos, hizo la señal de la cruz y estalló en maldiciones. Yo, como si fuera el diablo, salí de la estancia.

(*Sonata de Otoño*, p.174)³⁴

Valle-Inclán is using, as José Luis Varela points out, a “literary convention that has proven quite fruitful in the theatre (...), the numerous Romantic-satanic connotations of Bradomín’s character (...) also explain the scenographic slant in this conduct” (1997: 269); he continues, “the four novels are bursting at the seams with annotations, gestures, exclamations, all of which have a staging purpose” (1997: 273). This scenographic feature feels at home in the author’s chosen genre: Bradomín-as-narrator constructs a Bradomín-as-character that is self-reflective, a character that is consciously aware of performing a role.

The modifications Valle performed on the myth affect not only the character but also the generic pattern; thus, despite the chronological continuum needed by the genre in order to present a whole life, Bradomín’s Memoirs are full of isolated episodes, arbitrarily placed in the narrative discourse. The Preface (‘Nota’) that precedes *Sonatas* justifies the Memoirs’ fragmentarism: the preface’s author acts as an intermediary that selects, among all the anecdotes, four specific moments—

of amorous content— in Bradomín’s life, but is silent as to the rest. The narrated time in each ‘sonata’ is extremely reduced, its scope nothing more than a couple of days, really. The ellipsis among novels is uncommonly wide, but the implied reader, already aware of the donjuanesque nature of the character, is able— and expected— to fill in the textual gaps with romantic affairs similar to the ones old Bradomín describes in the novel; as a result, we can state that it is not the author, but the receiver of the narrative who, being in possession of the catalogue or list of women seduced by Don Juan— through her cultural imaginary—, decides to attribute these anecdotes to Bradomín himself.³⁵

The presence of Death or any of its signs (funeral rites, mourning clothes, tolling of bells) is a constant element in *Sonatas*. Valle-Inclán explores the relationship between love and death—a relationship that is essential in Don Juan’s mythic scene— by keeping it in his narrative, but with a clear twist: whereas in the mythic versions Death represents punishment for the transgressor, in Valle-Inclán’s text, ironically, this punishment seems to be directed only at Bradomín’s victims.

The *Sonatas* female characters are María Rosario [*Sonata de Primavera* (*Spring Sonata*)], la Niña Chole [*Sonata de Estío* (*Summer Sonata*)], Concha [*Sonata de Otoño* (*Autumn Sonata*)] and María Antonieta y Maximina [*Sonata de Invierno* (*Winter Sonata*)]. The latter, when juxtaposed to the common female types included in Don Juan’s tradition (such as young virgins, married women, novices or women destined to a convent, aristocrats or commoners,...), becomes a novelty that is not connected to her virginity, or her being destined to be a nun, or even her extreme youth, but in the fact that she is Bradomín’s daughter. None of the previous versions displayed this type of victim, but, after her inclusion in Valle-Inclán’s narrative, she will reappear in some of the later interpretations of the myth.³⁶ For this twist to take place— Don Juan, seducer of his own daughter—, the character needs to age,³⁷ and so Valle-Inclán’s chosen genre, the memoir, once again serves its purpose.

Concha, as a character, also represents a clear deviation from previous female types. Concha embodies the fragile type: the sick woman, the voluptuousness and eroticism of Death, so in vogue at the end of the 19th century. She takes the lead, for a change, and begs Bradomín to come to her (“me llamaba a su lado con súplicas dolorosas y ardientes”³⁸). This role inversion explains why she has been branded as “la peor de las mujeres” (‘the worst kind of woman’),³⁹ formula frequently used to brand Don Juan himself, but only in those versions written after the combination, encounter or fusion of the myth with the legend of Miguel de Mañara, penned by Prosper Mérimée, whom Valle-Inclán makes sure to acknowledge, directly or indirectly, as the source for some of the donjuanesque features of his character.

In the wake of Modernism, Valle-Inclán creates in *Sonatas* a decadent Don Juan

that has little to do with the mythic character. Using as a starting point the features the character inherits from the turn of the century— old age, repentance, melancholy— Valle-Inclán creates Bradomín: a Don Juan facing, as the archetype does, the devil, the world and the flesh, but also a fourth and new element, following from an interview with the author: “Previous Don Juans react to love and to death; they lack Nature. Bradomín, more modern, also reacts to the landscape” (Dougherty, 1983: 161).

Although its presence is less explicit, the theme of Don Juan⁴⁰ is also a discernible trait in *Comedias bárbaras* (Barbaric Comedies). In a notation from *Águila de Blasón* (Heraldic Eagle) (1907)⁴¹ second scene, Valle-Inclán describes the imposing figure of Don Juan Manuel, head of the Montenegro family: “Es uno de esos hidalgos mujeriegos y despóticos, hospitalarios y violentos, que se conservan como retratos antiguos en las villas silenciosas y muertas”⁴². As we shall soon see, both in the composition and the evolution of this character the original donjuanesque traits have been interlaced with other foreign elements.

Don Juan Manuel— old, but full of life and desire; ungodly, and yet God-fearing; proud and defiant, but later contrite; a father who curses his own lineage; a womanizer, but a loving husband— displays (just like Bradomín) some of Don Juan’s myth basic features— arrogance, seduction ability, ungodliness, rule-breaking—, but these features are combined with other traits that have their origins in other socio-historical and literary sources. To give but one example, we should remember that Valle-Inclán’s *Comedias* display an evident thematic connection to literary works by Galician authors, in which the ‘pazo’, as a social and economic unit, supports some plot lines and also justifies certain features of the characters that inhabit it.⁴³ Regarding this aspect, however, we are more interested in the literary sources Valle-Inclán draws on, for they supply the necessary keys to unlock certain characteristics. Thus, Valle’s treatment of Montenegro’s death certainly connects his work with the supernatural events present during the death of the mythic Don Juan:

La blanca procesión pasa como una niebla sobre los maizales [...] la procesión se detiene a la orilla de un río donde las brujas departen sentadas en rueda [...] Por la otra orilla va un entierro [...] los fantasmas han desaparecido en una niebla, las brujas comienzan a levantar un puente [...] En la orilla opuesta está detenido el entierro [...] las brujas huyen convertidas en murciélagos. El entierro se vuelve hacia la aldea y desaparece en la niebla.”⁴⁴ (*Romance de Lobos* (*A Romance of Wolves*); fragments from Scene I annotations)

These fragments prove the author used and mixed several traditions: ‘la Santa Compañía,’ or the Procession of the Souls from Purgatory— a deeply-rooted popular

belief in Galician culture—, the coven of witches he stumbles upon— very common in a lot of Celtic regions—, and the vision of one's own burial, whose origin can be traced to *Leyenda del estudiante Lisardo*, compiled by Antonio de Torquemada in *Jardín de flores curiosas* (1570). The latter motif can also be found, narrated as if it were a real event, in *Breve relación de la muerte, vida y virtudes de Miguel de Mañara*, published by Jesuit priest Juan de Cárdenas, in 1680, one potential source for Mérimée work,⁴⁵ and also possible origin for a notable amount of versions, amongst which we can find Espronceda's, admired by Valle-Inclán himself. We may conclude that Valle resumes the motif, adding a Galician flair to it: the funeral Montenegro witness at the beginning of *Romance de Lobos* (Day I, Scene I) is preceded by the vision of 'la Santa Compañía' that heralds, tradition holds, his approaching death.

Most 19th-century Don Juan versions are geared towards the hero's salvation, which in turn originates two paths: a path of approximation to the original drama (presence of the religious dimension, which had been getting weaker and weaker since Tirso; massive influx of the sacred factor), and a path of detachment from the mythic source (feminization of the myth). Both paths converge in Zorrilla's play. The fusion of Miguel de Marañón's Spanish legend with the mythical Don Juan gives way to a new demystifying process: the converted Don Juan makes his entrance. So, the sinner's transformation, his repentance, the partition of goods (although in this case it is not due to charity, but to pride, for it is an attempt to clean his lineage), come about in the last '*comedia*':

¡Yo he sido siempre el peor hombre del mundo! Ahora siento que voy a dejarlo y quiero arrepentirme. La luz que ellos apagaron se enciende en las tinieblas donde el alma vivía, y para que mi linaje, donde hubo santos y grandes capitanes, no lo cubran mis hijos de oprobio, acabando en la horca por ladrones, les repartiré mis bienes y quedará pobre...⁴⁶ (*Romance de Lobos*. Day II, Scene IV)

These motifs— the vision of one's own funeral and the sinner's repentance— are part of Miguel de Marañón's legend; even Montenegro's line, "he sido siempre el peor hombre del mundo" ["I have always been the worst man in the world"], is a reminder of the one Marañón arranged to be his epitaph: "Aquí yace el peor hombre que en el mundo ha habido" ["Here lies the worst man the world has ever known"]. Valle-Inclán reworks both and creates a character that, as stated by Lasaga Medina, "even maintaining his peers' identity, is radically new" (2004:158).

Comedias bárbaras is not the last dwelling for Don Juan in Valle's work; in his *Esperpentos* a new and demystifying mask of the myth makes its appearance. Ortega y Gasset⁴⁷ established, for the first time, the connection between *Las galas del difunto*

(The Dead Man's Duds) and *Don Juan Tenorio*, character that Valle's 'esperpento' refers to explicitly. This play constitutes an exemplary illustration of Valle's grotesque inversion on the fundamental traits present in the Romantic drama: the conquest, the novice's kidnapping, the scenes at the cemetery... Following Gonzalo Sobejano, the variations inflicted on Don Juan in the theatrical scene during the 20th century are not of importance,

The only exception being the parodic inversion of Tenorio conceived by Valle-Inclán in the 'esperpento' *Las galas del difunto* (1926), a theatrical piece much more original and funnier than those [he is referring to plays by Dicenta, Marquina, Álvarez Quintero, Machado, Unamuno, Martínez Sierra, Grau, Ramón Sender, among others], and, in my opinion, far superior to other attempts by Spanish playwrights, and even to foreign versions as worthy as the ones penned by George Bernard Shaw, Edmond Rostand, Jean Anouilh or Henri de Montherland (Sobejano, 1995: 300).⁴⁸

Comparative and evaluative studies such as these are common, and we would not add anything new.⁴⁹ However, we should underline that Valle-Inclán is not interested in producing another of the numerous 20th-century demystifications of Don Juan. Valle's scope is wider, his ambitions deeper than mere parody or grotesque imitation. He uses the myth as a means for his critique. In *Las galas*, the character carries an ideological and cultural message: the demystification of heroism in modern society, reduced now to mere junk ("este calvario" ["this ordeal"], "tinglado" ["mess"], are the words Juanito Ventolera uses to refer to his war decorations), and the degradation present in Spanish Restoration public life.

Valle-Inclán mixes up, following his time's poetics, different styles, incorporating to his works a large number of elements from outside sources. From his literary beginnings, and later on, linked to the three great cycles of this production—*Sonatas*, *Comedias bárbaras* and *Esperpentos*— he repeatedly uses the traditional literary theme of Don Juan, stamping it with an original and innovative slant. The achieved results cause the mythic model to blur, as it acts as a background landscape, more or less evident, more or less obscured, on which he projects his creation.

Notes

1. Cf. Trocchi (2002: 161). All quotes from outside research have been translated from their original language.
2. We use the concept in singular because we will not take into account other structural levels—such

as the archetypal or symbolic ones, promoted by the founder of Myth Criticism, Gilbert Durand (*The anthropological structures of the imaginary*, 1960). We will use the concept of ‘structure’ as proposed by French ethnologist, founder of Structural Anthropology, Claude Lévi-Strauss, that is, we will concentrate on its synchronic and diachronic aspects alone.

3. The most cited of them all may be Mircea Eliade’s definition (1968: 12-13): “myths tell a sacred story; it narrates an event that has happened in primordial times, the legendary times of the ‘beginnings’. (...) Thus, myths are always the story of a ‘creation.’”

4. “Temas seculares, lugares comunes, fórmulas expresivas previamente acuñadas, ideas procedentes de un legado cultural, pueden cambiar de sentido cuando se ponen al servicio de una nueva concepción del mundo o de una actitud vital distinta (...) En realidad, todo estudio de literatura comparada, o de influencias de un autor sobre otro, lleva en sí la necesidad de señalar contrastes.”

5. “las formas y los temas, más que entidades discretas, son elementos parciales cuyo montaje se debe en definitiva a la intervención del lector. Tratándose de tematología, esta intervención será tanto más importante... cuanto más relevantes los fenómenos de intertextualidad que identifiquen el tema mediante la memoria de figuraciones anteriores.”

6. This is an indispensable study for the structural analysis of the myth’s evolution. Rousset’s theory of invariants (1973) stems from Lévi-Strauss’ methodology (*Anthropologie structural*, 1958), especially in determining the concept of “mythème”—minimal unit with mythic meaning.

7. With the presence of death, or the tool of divine justice—represented in the archetypal model by the Stone Guest—, the supernatural factor bursts into the play. Many years before, Micheline Sauvage, in his essay *Le cas Don Juan* (1953), had already proposed a list of invariants very similar to Rousset’s: “The Hero, the Dead man’s Daughter, Death-carrier of the Hero’s eternal punishment. Or, in other words, seduction, rebellion, choosing time versus eternity.”

8. Apart from Jean Rousset’s study, already quoted, we can add, among others, the works of Leo Weinstein, *The Metamorphoses of Don Juan* (California, Stanford University, 1959) and Jean Massin, *Don Juan: Mythe littéraire et musical* (Paris, Stock Musique, 1979).

9. Hoffmann’s brief short story has little to do with the text found in Da Ponte’s libretto. However, Hoffmann’s contemporaries, even when well versed on Mozart’s work—musicians, poets—, accepted his version of the myth; such was the case of both Weber and Beethoven. Leo Weinstein (1959: 69) believes that Hoffmann’s interpretation of Ana’s significance in the opera, which is openly at odds with the material category of the character—scene time, number of arias, Don Juan’s interest, etc.—, stems from what Mozart’s music suggests.

10. Hoffmann’s quote refers to the Spanish translation: *Don Juan. Aventura fabulosa ocurrida a un viajero entusiasta*, included in *Cuentos de Hoffmann* (Madrid, Espasa Calpe, Colección Austral, 1998): 254.

11. For the evolution of the myth, from the Romantic period onwards, and the different thematic lines that have conveyed the myth throughout the 20th century, refer to my work *Mito y Literatura. Estudio comparado de don Juan* (1997).

12. Out of the well stocked Don Juan narratives written until the first decades of the 20th century, only in two is his mother present: Lord Byron's *Don Juan* (1818/24) and *L'Homme et ses fantômes*, by H.R. Lenormand (1921), even though her presence and function in both texts is quite different. In Byron's version, Don Juan is fatherless and his education is trusted exclusively to women. Byron brings to his work something unknown until that moment: Don Juan's past; and he offers the reader a rather naïve perspective on the hero's sentimental education and, with it, an explanation for his womanizing behaviour that bears no relation to the traditional meaning of the term 'donjuanism'. Furthermore, the character of the mother only appears in the first canto. Lenormand also includes the absent father, and a mother who, although only present at the end of the plot, has become the protective figure. This hero is a skilled and accomplished womaniser, but, at the same time, he feels a hidden and unacknowledged attraction towards his own sex.

13. Roughly translated as 'womaniser' or 'ladies' man'.

14. To give but an example, "La Niña Chole", "Octavia Santino" or "La Generala" had been previously published in the press, in the form of more or less elaborate sketches, or closer to their definitive version. (cf. Lavaud, 1991: 91).

15. In later editions, this novel will be titled *Augusta*.

16. The list of authors that, according to the critics, Valle-Inclán owes literary debts to, is numerous and diverse: Barbey d'Aurevilly, D'Annunzio, Gautier, Verlaine, Zorrilla, Eça de Queiroz ... are part of it.

17. See, as an illustration, Lily Litvak's work (1979), Daniella Gambini's (1992) or Teresa Trueba's (2002). According to Eliane Lavaud, "in his short novellas, Valle-Inclán reflects the feminist grievance that takes hold of Spain at the end of the 19th century" (1991: 127).

18. "The suggestive power of the sinister".

19. "Don Juan had a tragic countenance, his speech was the faithful and grieving speech of a romantic seducer. (...) The old libertine gazed at her intensely as if to upset her even more. Those green eyes were both somber and fascinating, disturbing and bold; it could be said they injected love as if it were a poison, they ravished souls and stole kisses from the purest mouths." [Fragments from Valle-Inclán's works are translated from their original in Spanish]. The quote refers to the following edition: *Femeninas. Epitalamio* by Joaquín del Valle-Inclán (Cátedra, Madrid, 1992, 185).

20. A 'pazo' is a Galician manor house whose origin is always related to nobility or the Church.

21. ("somber figure", "seducing gracefulness", "sinister gaze and smile", "brow that seems to behold every exaggeration, heavenly as well as diabolical" ... "I may not believe in God, but I love angels")

22. According to Aurora Egido, "the devilish aspects of the *Burlador* stand [...] for more than just mere characterizations of the protagonist's wickedness, for they are in keeping with the story's central thesis and they articulate its structure" (Cf. "Sobre la demonología de los burladores (de Tirso a Zorrilla)", in *Cuadernos de Teatro Clásico*, 2, Madrid (1988): 37).

23. "Glimpsed through the soft light of the lamp, blond head divinely bent, the shadow of her eyelashes trembling against her ivory cheek, delicate and graceful chest surrounded by uncertain

shadows, golden sculpture against the sky-blue of the settee, Rosarito reminded me of those candid Madonnas painted on a starry sky background.”

24. For example, the main characters from *Autumn Sonata*, the essential parts of the Pazo’s gardens description and the romantic relationship between Bradomín and Concha can already be found in “¿Cuento de amor?”, published in *La correspondencia de España* (Madrid, 28/VII/1901) with the following subheading: “Fragmento de las memorias íntimas del Marqués de Bradomín”. Cf. Éliane Lavaud (1991: 245-75).

25. “Estas páginas son un fragmento de las “Memorias Amables” que ya muy viejo empezó a escribir en la emigración el Marqués de Bradomín. Un Don Juan admirable. ¡El más admirable tal vez! Era feo, católico y sentimental” (“These pages are a fragment from the “Elegant Memoirs” that the Marquis of Bradomín started to write as an old man, already an emigrant. An admirable Don Juan. Maybe the most admirable! He was ugly, Catholic and emotional.”)

26. “In these [pages] I attempted to deal with an eternal theme. A theme, if it is eternal, no matter how often dealt with, is never exhausted. Only an eternal theme can weigh each author’s effort and merit, and that is why all of us authors should try it.” Cf. Dougherty (1983: 160).

27. “I had a moment of vanity when facing in Estella Court a welcome that clearly showed my renown. I was regarded with love, and also with a hint of anger. They were all pious people, and perhaps they remembered some of my adventures.”

28. We also find examples of the opposite attitude: “we absolutely reject Bradomín as a Don Juan, or, at least, as a typical Don Juan. He may have ‘donjuanesque’ attitudes, but he is not an unquestionable Don Juan”. This sweeping denial comes from Fernando de Toro Garland, “La última derrota de Bradomín”, in *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos*, 199-200 (July-August 1966): 537-544. That said, what is widely felt is actually the opposite, as we can see in Luciano García Lorenzo’s forceful reply to the previous thesis; cf. “Don Juan... Y siempre al final la muerte (De Valle-Inclán a Martínez Sierra),” *Segismundo*, 17-18 (1973): 49-74.

29. Sometimes these inter-textual games are hidden—by avoiding explicit acknowledgement—, but are soon discovered by either the author or the reviewers (see, for example, the reference to Chateaubriand’s *Mémoires d’Outre-Tombe*).

30. “María Rosario, slightly confused, muttered,

‘Your spiritual father! Who is your spiritual father?’

‘A gentleman called Casanova.’

‘A Spanish nobleman?’

‘No, a Venetian adventurer.’

‘But how can an adventurer...?’

I interrupted her,

‘He repented at the end of his days.’

‘Did he become a monk?’

‘He run out of time, although he left his written confessions behind.’

‘Just like St. Augustine?’

‘Exactly the same! But, being a humble Christian, he didn’t want to presume any connection to that doctor of the Church, so he called them Memoirs.’

‘Have you read them?’

‘It’s my favourite reading material.’”

(*Summer Sonata*. Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1965: 62).

31. Later on, regarding *Sonatas*, Villanueva will insist on the same idea: “[Xabier de Bradomín] wants to make abundantly clear the uniqueness of his person, and thus pays more attention to building it with deliberate artifice than to reflecting his own personality” (Villanueva, 1995: 251). Following this line of thought, Eliane Lavaud also highlights the narcissism present in *Sonatas*, which consists of “the construction of the story of self” (1990: 547).

32. This specific feature gives credence to his incredible ability for seduction. William Little explains it so: “don Juan is the human myth that reflects the supernatural myth of Lucifer and inverts the mythic structure of Jesus. Thus, the same way Lucifer—the Archangel expelled from Heaven—is an evil deceiver and the sterile seducer per se, don Juan is the noble rebel par excellence, expelled from society because of his arrogant independence, and he becomes the martyred lover because he tries to love many women without ever being able to love any absolutely” (“Varios aspectos de don Juan y el donjuanismo”. *Hispanófila. Literatura-Ensayos*, 80 / Year XXVII, 2, January 1984: 14). According to Aurora Egido, “the devilish aspects of the *Burlador* stand [...] for more than just mere characterizations of the protagonist’s wickedness, for they are in keeping with the story’s central thesis and they articulate its structure” (Cf. “Sobre la demonología de los burladores (de Tirso a Zorrilla)”, in *Cuadernos de Teatro Clásico*, 2, Madrid (1988): 37).

33. “You scare me when you say such shocking impieties... Yes, you scare me, because it’s not you talking: It’s the Devil... Even your voice sounds different... It’s the Devil!”

34. ““You knew! You knew!” And, suddenly, fastening her burning and fanatic eyes on me, she made the sign of the cross and burst into damnations. I, like the Devil himself, left the room.”

35. In the mythical versions, Don Juan’s servant acts as the depository of the hero’s memory; in this version, however, the depository is the receiver, who is unaware of her role.

36. One of the few examples would be Jacinto Grau’s *Don Juan de Carillana* (1943). In this play a mature Don Juan will court a lady, who, unbeknownst to him, is his daughter. Her husband will reveal her identity to him.

37. We should remember that the first older versions of Don Juan do not begin to emerge until the second half of the 19th century. Two examples of this are Gustave LeVasseur’s *Don Juan Barbón* (1848), a play written in verse, and Jules Virad’s *La Viellese de Don Juan* (1853).

38. “She beckoned me with doleful and burning pleas.”

39. Soledad, Bradomín’s mother, sends a letter to Concha, in which she calls her “la peor de las mujeres” (*Sonata de Otoño*, ed. Leda Schiavo, Madrid, Espasa Calpe, 1990: 84).

40. In a lecture read at the Círculo Mercantil de Málaga (18 October 1926), Valle-Inclán states: “And

after the Marquis of Bradomín, ugly, catholic and sentimental, I wrote another version of Don Juan: *Comedias bárbaras*, representation of a rural Don Juan". Cf. Javier Serrano Alonso (2006).

41. This is the first volume of *Comedias bárbaras*, according to the year of publication.

42. "He is one of those womanizing and despotic, welcoming and violent noblemen that are kept around as if they were old portraits in dead and quiet mansions."

43. We are referring to *Los Pazos de Ulloa* (1886) and *La Madre Naturaleza* (1887), by Pardo Bazán, but also *Os camiños de vida* (1920), by Otero Pedrayo, *La sangre* (1952), by Elena Quiroga or the trilogy *Los Gozos y las sombras* (1957-1960, 1962), by Torrente Ballester. Valle-Inclán also shows in *Comedias* one of the historical stages in the development of the 'pazo' culture: the decadence of Galician feudal nobility, the isolation of civilization, primitivism in behaviour and beliefs, etc.

44. "The White Procession [the Procession of the Souls from Purgatory] floats like mist over the cornfields [...] the procession stops at the bank of a river where a coven of witches sit in a circle and commune [...] Along the other bank a funeral advances [...] The ghosts have disappeared into the mist, the witches start to build up a bridge [...] On the opposite bank, the funeral has stopped [...] the witches, shape-shifting to bats, fly away. The funeral turns back to the village and disappears into the mist."

45. The extraordinary events connected to Don Juan's death are replaced in some versions of the myth with the vision of his own funeral, which is said to have happened in real life to Miguel de Maraña and have caused his conversion. This motif is used for the first time in the history of the myth by Prosper Mérimée in *Les âmes du Purgatoire* (1834), which tells the story of Mañara, and also introduces elements belonging to the mythic tradition, thus inaugurating the versions that fuse both legends. Regarding Spanish literature, dramatic poem *El estudiante de Salamanca* by José de Espronceda is the first story to introduce this motif.

46. "I have always been the worst man in the world! Now I dread I am leaving this world and want to repent. The light they have snuffed out is now burning bright amidst the shadows where my soul dwells, and, so that my lineage, which includes saints and great captains, avoids shame through my sons, ending up in the gallows for thievery, I will distribute my property and wind up destitute..."

47. "La estrangulación de Don Juan", *El Sol*, 17th November 1935.

48. "la única excepción me parece la inversión paródica del Tenorio concebida por Valle-Inclán en el esperpento *Las galas del difunto* (1926) pieza mucho más original y graciosa que aquellas [se refiere a las de Dicenta, Marquina, Álvarez Quintero, Machado, Unamuno, Martínez Sierra, Grau, Ramón Sender, entre otros] y, en mi opinión, superior a cuanto en España se ha intentado, e incluso a versiones foráneas tan apreciables como las de George Bernard Shaw, Edmond Rostand, Jean Anouilh o Henri de Montherland" (Sobejano, 300).

49. Cf. Avalue-Arce (1959), Manuel Aznar (1992), Eliane Lavaud (1988), among others.

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The Literature of Valle-Inclán Transposed to the Screen: A Problematic Rewriting

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Abstract In this paper I propose a reflection about the relationships between cinema and literary texts in which I emphasize the difficulties that texts with a clear predominance of discourse over story present in the process of translation to the screen. I also explain how Valle-Inclán's narrative work is characterized by an appreciable degree of creativity which almost entirely disappears in its transfer to the cinematographic format. After this, I proceed with an analysis of the seven adaptations that have been made of his works up until now, explaining the different solutions adopted by the respective directors and investigating the cold reception they had.

Key words cinematographic adaptation; film and literature; Spanish cinema; Valle-Inclán

Film has undoubtedly played a significant role in the divulgation of literary texts, and literature has provided an endless source of movie plots. As early as 1926, Boris Eikhenbaum referred to this relationship in these words:

Little by little all of literature files before the camera. Those who thought this relationship would have no future, that cinema would abandon its honorable concubine as soon as it grew up, seem to be in the wrong: despite certain infidelities, their relationship is growing more and more like a long-lasting marriage (...) For film, literature is an immensely rich source, and from this stems the natural temptation to revise it from the cinematographic point of view, to take it as cinematographic material, as a libretto for screenplays. ("Literatura y cine", in Albèra 199-200)

But Eikhenbaum, who wrote these words when cinema had not yet acquired sound, was referring to "the curious fact that the literary genres adapted to the screen are precisely those that in literature have been demoted to the condition of "primary" and

whose reading is only addressed to children.” The reason for this—he explained—is that “literature is put into film for the aspects it has that satisfy the demands of style and genre posed by its evolution.” Thus, what is of most interest to film is “the plot outline” or “the construction procedure,” although there is also the possibility that the goal could be “to find the stylistic principles equivalent to literary works in cinematographic language” (Albèra 200-202).

This affirmation is again taken up by André Bazin when, referring to adaptations, he states that creativity should not be understood as a synonym for infidelity, since “those who are least concerned with faithfulness in the name of so-called screen requirements are the ones who simultaneously betray both literature and film.” Thus the affirmation he makes a few lines above this about the speciousness of presenting faithfulness as “a necessarily negative servitude to strange aesthetic laws,” given that these very differences in aesthetic structure “make the search for equivalencies even more delicate and therefore require much more imagination and capacity for intervention on the part of the filmmaker who wishes to achieve a resemblance,” which leads him to conclude that “in its command of language and style, cinematographic creation is directly proportional to faithfulness” (Bazin 116-118).

This means that great literary works can only be satisfactorily adapted to the screen when behind the camera there is a genius, equivalent to the author of the text, who can successfully carry out this operation of language transfer. This is something that rarely takes place, and it has led some theoreticians, despite their love of films, to have doubts about the adaptability of great works of literature to the screen, as when Pere Gimferrer maintains that “none of the great classic novels has become a great film classic, and a phenomenon of this type cannot be considered a matter of chance, but rather an indicator of the limits of adaptation.” He finds the explanation for the fact that “great novels can give rise to good films, but hardly great ones” in the problematical move from literary language to film language, to which he devotes a good part of his book: after citing several “worthy” and “estimable” adaptations such as *The Grapes of Wrath* (Steinbeck/John Ford, 1940), *The Trial* (Kafka/Orson Welles, 1962), *Lolita* (Nabokov/Kubrick, 1962) and *Young Törless* (Robert Musil/Scholöndorf, 1966), among others, he concludes that “they do not possess that disturbing wealth of implications present in the originals they seek to illustrate,” whereas minor or secondary works of great (and not so great) authors have given rise to authentic film classics (Gimferrer 77-78).

Much more frequent, however, are the cases in which the adaptation only seeks to disseminate a literary text and these are usually motivated by economic imperatives. This project involves a series of operations addressed to making the work more “digestible” for the target population of the new product: among these operations

are synthesis, universalization (to guarantee success in international markets), simplification of the message or the diverse modifications the plot is subjected to. In this respect, Cristina Manzano wonders whether adaptations actually favor literary works, and she decides that “they only favor their publicity”; and for this reason, she adds, “the reader/spectator should be educated in (...) thinking of the adaptation as an independent product, that is, however, indebted to the original” and be made aware of “the definite difference and different lives that the literary work and the audiovisual work take on beginning at that moment” (Manzano Espinosa 16-17)².

The reason for this long preamble can be found in the need to explain the systematic failure of all the attempts made until now of taking the literary texts of Valle-Inclán to the screen. The creative sumptuousness of his language, the musicality attained in his works at the time of his fascination with Modernist aesthetics, or his brazenness and ability to deform reality in his *esperpentos* have not found their equivalent in any of the film versions made of either his narrative or dramatic texts. This linguistic potency in his writing is undoubtedly this author’s most defining characteristic, and is recognized by all scholars. One of them, Darío Villanueva, compares him to another genius of language, the Irishman James Joyce, a strict contemporary of Don Ramón, affirming that both of them “were mainly two great philologists, two geniuses in their command of language, from which they extracted everything they needed for their aesthetic recreation of a new and complex world” (Villanueva 360).

Creativity at the level of language is not a purely intransitive element but rather a vehicle upholding the creation of Valle-Inclán’s imaginary universes; although superficial, in approaching these universes it is advisable to distinguish between the aestheticism and idealist vision of his early texts and the degraded and ferocious caricature of his last *esperpentos*; they appear superimposed and mixed up in many of his works as an expression of a complex, polymorphous reality that cannot be reduced to any attempt of rational understanding.

This complexity of a world in which such divergent elements coexist is doubtlessly what makes it so difficult to transpose his works to the screen. And not only because all the verbal richness of his prose is lost (at the phonic, syntactic and lexical levels), but also because the universe resulting from that carefully worked writing, with its unreal, magical and oneiric dimension, is very difficult to translate into visual signs.

In the pages that follow I shall review the seven film adaptations that until now have been made of Valle-Inclán’s texts, ranging from *Sonatas*, directed by Juan Antonio Bardem in 1959, to *Martes de Carnaval*, the miniseries of three episodes produced by Spanish Television in 2008 and directed by José Luis García Sánchez.

Starting with a superficial analysis I then attempt to clarify the objectives pursued in adapting the texts to the screen and the reasons behind the generally limited success of these adaptations, attending along the way to certain comments by the critics, whose reception of them was lukewarm if not chilly.

***Sonatas* (Juan Antonio Bardem, 1959)**

This film, the first attempt by Spanish filmmaking to approach the work of Valle-Inclán, is a crystal clear example of the distortion of the text's contents and manipulation of characters to vehicle an ideological message very different from that of the original, commendable though that intention may have been (to denounce the situation of Spain under Franco). The film is based on two of the four stories (*Sonata de otoño* and *Sonata de estío*) that make up the tetralogy whose main character is the Marqués de Bradomín, the decadent seducer who narrates his sexual conquests in first person in four different scenarios: Italy (Spring), rural Galicia (Fall), the Carlist court in Estella³ (Winter) and revolutionary Mexico (Summer). The contents of the two stories chosen was considerably reworked for the film, altering the character's condition (representative of the decadent and reactionary aristocracy) to place it at the service of a message with a progressive ideology. Bardem, a militant in the Communist Party at the time, had in mind a model of historical movie that, breaking with the sweetened and evasive view that Francoist filmmakers had been offering of the past, would be capable of providing a critical interpretation of it that in turn would be susceptible to being read as a reflection of the Spanish situation at the time the movie was made. He was directly inspired by Luchino Visconti's film *Senso* (1954), a movie that fully responded to his purposes of a socially committed film that at the same time was aesthetically attractive and had the possibility of commercial success: the exaltation of the Garibaldi revolution, from which a unified Italy emerged, is located in the sumptuous surroundings of an aristocracy doomed to disappear; if to this we add the romantic melodrama on which the plot development rests, Visconti's film brought together the three objectives—political, aesthetic and economic—pursued by Bardem and his producers and with a message diluted enough to be tolerated by government censorship.

The two texts chosen pertain to the first stage of Valle-Inclán's works and follow a Modernist narrative model: static, prodigious in voluptuous descriptions, and short on action. The main character is an archetypal decadent aristocrat, but one who is refined, highly aware of his privileges, and smug about them. In short, a literary model and a plot that are hardly ideal to serve as a vehicle for the intended progressive message, which obliged Bardem to renounce any criterion of faithfulness and place the text at the service of his own ideology. We can say that he confines himself to

taking from Valle-Inclán's text the scenarios where the action takes place and the main character, the latter subjected to a profound mutation.⁴ According to Cerón Gómez, Bardem wasn't very enthusiastic about the *Sonatas* and his intention had been to adapt *Tirano Banderas*. However, since that option wasn't possible (the whole film would have had to be shot in Mexico) he accepted with the condition of making his own mark and introducing social and critical elements that would mitigate the erotic-decadent tone of Valle-Inclán's stories. The distance in time in which the narrative was set would thus allow him to use the past to propose a critical look at the Spanish situation at the time of filming. The first part of the film, which corresponds to *Sonata de otoño*, is set in 1824 in full absolutist repression against the liberals who were still resisting the reign of Ferdinand the Seventh, thus establishing a parallel with the Francoist repression of the *maquis*, the last Republican holdouts against the Franco regime after the Spanish Civil War (1936-39). Bradomín finds himself unwillingly involved in the struggle and ends up exiled in Mexico where he will join other exiled liberals who are helping the Mexicans in their revolutionary struggle (Cerón Gómez 161-162).

Bardem carried out a profound transformation of Valle-Inclán's narrative material, much more drastic in the first part than in the second, since *Sonata de otoño* is noted for its extremely slow action, abundance of description and reflexive digressions. In *Sonata de estío* more narrative elements are used, although the alterations made to the original text are also considerable. In any case, when approaching this adaptation, as with any other, the issue is not about choosing between a faithfulness that consecrates the text or the director's right to intervene and impose his or her own reading, but about understanding the reasons for such a reading and verifying its effectiveness. As Cerón Gómez notes in relation to the *Sonatas*, it is a matter of considering the context that determined the manipulations Bardem made for what were obviously political ends, and not judging his intervention of Valle-Inclán's text as the result of mere whim. The director's reasons are explicit enough: faced with a commission regarding a text he did not identify with, he chose to adapt it to his own aesthetics and ideology, to his idea of what audiences expected from his films; his leftist leanings and his idea of film as an instrument of political consciousness-raising determined that option (Cerón Gómez 161-162).

Thus, what we must try to explain are the reasons for which this film was almost unanimously rejected, beginning with international criticism after its showing at the Venice Film Festival.⁵ Bardem attributed this negative response at the Mostra to the fact that the "deeply Hispanic nature of the story" made it difficult for audiences unfamiliar with the vicissitudes and political confrontations characterizing 19th century Spain to understand it. To this must be added, again according to Bardem, that

the critics had in mind a cliché of his work based on his previous films and “*Sonatas* had nothing to do with this pre-established cliché and threw all of their previous judgments into disarray.”⁶

Among the reproving arguments with which the film was received there are some that do not hold up, either for being exclusively ideological (those writing for the pro-Franco press) or already obsolete for continuing to defend the criterion of faithfulness to the original text. Nevertheless, aside from these there were other critical responses that raised questions of considerable interest that will help us to explain the negative response to the adaptation of the *Sonatas*; among them is Bardem’s inexperience in a genre he had not dealt with previously and the impossibility of competing aesthetically with Visconti’s model or with Hollywood period drama super-productions. Underlying this rejection there could also have been the memory of previous historical films, with their falseness and attempts at indoctrination, and Bardem’s film would have been seen in the same light. On the other hand, the scarce suitability of the base text (in which everything presented is unreal, the product of a honing down and stylizing of literary and pictorial motifs) to the social-revolutionary message that the director wished to send must be pointed out; this did not occur in the case of the Visconti film that served as his model, since it was based on a story (by Camillo Boito) with a broad historical basis and strongly individual characters, with a solid dramatic intrigue for which the Garibaldi revolution served as a frame and both aspects worked together to perfection. Thus, in Bardem’s film there is a gap between the dramatic level and the ideological level, and furthermore, because of censorship, the message, presented through certain events in the past that are used as a metaphor for the Spanish situation at the time the film debuted, was not made explicit enough for most spectators (or for the foreign critics in Venice). Finally we should mention the film’s own indeterminate genre; in this respect Cerón Gómez says that the failure of the film derived from “putting such different registers into play, such as adventure films, romantic melodrama, ‘cinéma de qualité’ and political parable” such that the ideological density of the film and its political functionality ended up being far from satisfactory (Cerón Gómez 166-167).⁷

***Flor de santidad* (Adolfo Marsillach, 1973)**

In this other film based on a text by Valle-Inclán, filmed by Adolfo Marsillach some years later, rather than a distortion of the original story we find its amplification. But this amplification also involves, as we shall see, a certain intervention in the author’s message since the story loses its timelessness⁸ to become located in a specific historical context: rural Galicia in 1853, where confrontations were still taking place among absolutists after the Second Carlist War. It thus offers a critical reflection on this moment in our past. This amplification may also be due to the fact that the

parsimony of the plot would not admit a long narrative (in contrast to the *Sonatas*). One may recall that it focuses on the adventure of Adega the shepherdess who, having given shelter to a pilgrim in the stable she slept in, undergoes a kind of mystic crisis and confuses the pilgrim with Jesus Christ, a crisis that only gets worse when the pilgrim is killed by the locals because they believe he has brought an epidemic that is killing their sheep). Adega abandons the village to walk the roads proclaiming that she is expecting a son from the dead man, thus acquiring an aureole of sanctity. The story has a somewhat open ending since it concludes with Adega going to the pilgrimage of Santa Baya, where the countess of Brandeso (in whose house she had found work as a servant) has sent her to undergo an exorcism.

The film opens with a sequence in which the camera follows the pilgrim along a country trail and his subsequent arrival in a lonely city while a voiceover informs us of the modifications made to the original story: “A long and intermittent civil war has desolated Spain during the reign of Isabel II...”; there follows an explanation of the skirmishes between the Carlists, who defend an absolutist monarchy, and the liberals in favor of Queen Isabel, with the voiceover reminding us that “it is always the common people who suffer from the wars among the powerful.” Then we are warned: “Although it is an age-old story that could have taken place at any time and in any place, we wished to set it in this time and place, on a dark date with tragic consequences: Galicia 1853.” Later, testimony by Rosalía de Castro referring to that year is added: “Hunger led hordes of savage men and women to come down to our cities, men who had never walked the streets of a town, women who knew no horizons other than that seen in front of their huts, built in the loneliest isolation.” And it concludes with these words: “This is the background of the poetical world of Valle-Inclán: magic, violence, love, hope, everything can take place at this moment; miracles, faith, heresy..., everything. It is the year of hunger.”

The references to the historical context described in this introduction are reiterated throughout the film, and they can be said to constitute the leitmotif in that they interfere decisively in the development of the story in its original form. The first sequence after the credits places us directly in an atmosphere very different from that of the archaic rural world of the original: a squad of soldiers parades into an urban square, the officer reads a proclamation declaring martial law to fight the Carlist uprising. They nail the edict on the door of the church and a large number of people, hovering under their umbrellas, groups around to read it. A man comes forward, tears off the proclamation and shouts “Long live Don Carlos!” inciting everyone to rebel against the liberal government of Isabel II. At this moment an archpriest appears and calls for calm, although he recognizes that the liberals are subjecting the Church to persecution. He then has a dialogue alone with Electus the blind man about the

preparations for the uprising and he hands him a bag of coins. Throughout the film there are many other sequences that include the civil conflict that is taking place in the country: a squad of Carlist soldiers stops and mistreats the pilgrim (after the latter has met with Adegas who thought he was an enemy agent). A group of Carlist soldiers is having a good time in a brothel; when Adegas's mistress arrives with a sick sheep one of them tells her what spell she should use to cure the sheep and discover the cause of the epidemic. The Carlist soldiers participate in the ritual held to cast the spell (throwing a live sheep into the fire) and it is also they who harass and kill the pilgrim who appears while the ritual is being carried out, and they identify him as the author of the curse that provoked the epidemic. In another vein, the clergy has taken advantage of the saintly fame that Adegas has acquired among the peasants to incite them to rise up against the liberal government; they take her out in procession for the pilgrimage of Santa Baya proclaiming her "the little saint." A detachment of the liberal army watches over the pilgrimage and decides to intervene when Electus the blind man begins to sing verses against the Queen and a masked performance is organized to ridicule her. The attack comes during the nighttime procession when the archpriest is haranguing the peasants from a balcony to get them to rise up against the liberal government. After that there is a significant sequence in which the heads of the liberal army demand that the bishop put an end to the cult to Adegas that the archpriest has been encouraging, suspend the archpriest from his duties, and hand him over to be judged; then a heated argument takes place about whether he is to be judged by the civil or religious authorities. However, at that moment news arrives that the Queen has decreed a general amnesty to celebrate that Pope Pius IX has granted her the Golden Rose for her efforts in defending the Catholic faith.⁹ What in the book is a meeting of hunters at Brandeso's country estate when Adegas is in service to the countess, in the film is turned into a meeting of Carlists who are preparing an attack against the liberals, since the Count of Brandeso is the ringleader of the uprising.¹⁰ During the supper, Adegas recognizes one of the soldiers who killed the pilgrim. Overwhelmed by her curse, they are defeated in the confrontation with the liberal army and the count himself is killed. The supernatural character of this battle is underscored by a ghostly sequence in which the Carlist band goes into a wood with charred trees shrouded in fog; while the wind whistles and the figure of the pilgrim stands up in a threatening way, the soldiers advance overawed, disperse and fall to the ground even though the enemy army is nowhere to be found.

As can be observed, considerable work in amplification has been carried out on the material of the original text in an attempt to locate the story in a specific historical context and connect the vicissitudes of the shepherdess with a time in Spain's past in which the Catholic Church, allied with the defenders of absolutism and opposed

to the liberal government, had no qualms about fostering superstitions deriving from popular culture in order to further their objectives. As in Bardem's film, this cinematographic version of *Flor de santidad* differs considerably from the original contents. Nonetheless, the changes made here do not have such a strong ideological or Manichean bias as in Bardem's film: the critique of the absolutists and their alliance with the ecclesiastical authorities to win the will of the people does not entail an idealization of the liberal bands whose representatives and objectives actually appear very blurry. Furthermore, it must also be said that the director did not limit himself to just amplifying the original plot but rather tried to connect it to Valle-Inclán's modernist aesthetic premises, endowing the atmosphere with the poetic dimension that Valle transmits through his stylized view of rural Galicia but in which the counterpoint to the misery and brutality of its inhabitants' lives is not lacking. Nevertheless, in this case as in that of other films to which I will refer further on, the naturalizing power of film prevails over the stylization of reality that, cruel as it is, Valle-Inclán achieves with the musicality of his prose, the richness of his adjectivization, and his wise choice of a vocabulary that sounds archaic and timeless at the same time. The film does not manage to offer the idealized picture that the author achieves with his verbal preciousness but rather a document about a miserable society that is impactful for its veracity and primitiveness. The disappearance of the narrator, "immersed in the subjectivity of the protagonist" who "almost always expresses himself with devoted unctuousness (an aesthetic unctuousness that avails itself of religious language)" (Fernández Roca 100) leaves us with the crude reality of the document, although at certain times the film tries to replace the expressive discoveries of the author with other audiovisual procedures that are as excessive in their shocking nature and theatricality as they are unfortunate: I refer specifically to the second to last sequence where the ritual exorcism of the possessed takes place by submerging them into the sea during the pilgrimage of Santa Baya de Cristamilde. In contrast, the closing sequence with its sobriety does manage to transmit an emotion very much in tune with the ambiguous ending of Valle-Inclán's narrative:¹¹ Electus the blind man walks along the beach at dawn next to his guide, singing along with his vihuela (an early guitar) a ballad about the story of Adega and her mysterious disappearance; at the same time, the old housekeeper of the Brandeso estate and Rosalva the maid anxiously run about the beach calling out the name of the shepherdess.

The critics' response to the film, with the exception of Antonio Colón writing for the *ABC* newspaper, was not very enthusiastic. Among their objections we can cite the "narrative insufficiency" of the director and his lack of "minimal knowledge of cinematographic language"¹² (Álvaro Feito, *Cinestudio*, 119, April 1973); or his use of "grandiloquent" and "shocking" language, which gave rise to a "disproportionate

adaptation, more sensationalist than effective” (Pedro Crespo, en *Arriba*, March 28, 1973). Miguel Rubio in *Nuevo Diario* called the film a “hodgepodge of scenes” that loses sight of the “possible poetical, religious, and spiritual contents;” furthermore, “the figure of the little shepherdess is overshadowed by the many interests that come into play: political, religious, social, atavistic ... In the end we don’t even know what her place in the story is.” The yearbook *Cine para leer* (Cinema for Reading) also referred to the theatrical component that weighs down the film as a consequence of the director’s experience in the theater, since he doesn’t seem to know that “in films, rather than make persons and things speak, you have to let them be so that they can express themselves from their very inner selves and their routine.” And it adds the following considerations regarding the transposing of literature into film:

Let us admit that a literary basis does not have to be copied word for word in a film adaptation. We are more in favor of a re-creation based on a first inspiration, a re-creation that is usually characteristic of the greatest film directors in the history of film. However, it is clear that this re-creation either has to improve the literary work or at least be of the same quality based on the new inspiration in images. (*Cine para leer*, 1973, pp. 127-131)

***Beatriz* (Gonzalo Suárez, 1976)**

If in the adaptations of the two preceding narratives Valle-Inclán’s texts were used to propose critical readings of the political and social situation in 19th century Spain (with a more ideologically biased message in *Sonatas*), in the film by Gonzalo Suárez the changes made to the original texts responds to very different aims. We must recall that the permissiveness that abounded after the death of Franco and the lifting of censorship was used by Spanish filmmakers to increase explicit sexual content in films, a practice that often went too far. The idea of this film moves along these lines begun in the final years of the Franco dictatorship,¹³ although dressing it up with a certain dignity. For this reason a literary source was resorted to, and the film can be categorized within a genre that was very popular in Hollywood but scarcely cultivated at all in Spanish film: a gothic narrative which brings together sex and horror linked to supernatural experiences.

Suárez’ screenplay (in collaboration with playwright Santiago Moncada) fuses two stories by Valle-Inclán included in his book *Jardín umbrío: Beatriz and Mi hermana Antonia*. The first is the story of the young daughter of an aristocratic family who seems to be the victim of diabolical possession. When the mother discovers that her daughter’s hysterical depression is the result of her having been raped by a friar

who attended the estate's chapel, she commends the witch whom she had asked for help in exorcising her daughter to make the culprit disappear by means of a spell. The friar appears dead in the countryside the next day. In the second story, the first person narrator looks back to his childhood to tell the story of his sister, courted by a student their mother rejected. After making a pact with the devil, the student takes his revenge on the mother, who begins to suffer from a kind of obsessive dementia in which she is tormented by a cat, while the daughter lives in a permanent sleepwalking state. When her mother dies, Antonia wakes up mysteriously on the roof of the house while the narrator sees the student with a bandage covering his ears, as if he had received the punishment that the old servant had inflicted upon the family cat.

With a very free combination of elements from both tales, and the addition of others that contribute to the violence and eroticism, a plot was drawn up that closely fits the mold of the chosen genre, in which a voice in off of the narrator, remembering his distressing childhood experiences, acts as the leitmotif: his initial encounter with bandits in the forest, the appearance of the friar-pilgrim that the bandits try to attack, and the friar's putting them on the run after killing some of them; the servant of the house (the attractive Basilisa, quite different from the old lady of the same name appearing in the second tale), who in order to save a dying baby transfers the spell to Beatriz, the narrator's sister, by placing on her pillow an ear given to her by the "wise woman"; the arrival of the friar at the house, where the mother (doña Carlota) offers him hospitality, and his attraction to Beatriz, whom he tries to seduce by resorting to the "wise woman" while the young girl suffers from pain and nightmares because of the transfer of the spell; the terror felt by the narrator-child who is overwhelmed by the unexplainable events that he sees all around him, and who finds solace in his talks with Máximo Bretal (very different from the diabolical character of the same name in *Mi hermana Antonia*), the young student who gives him Latin classes and who is also in charge of inventorying the library. There is no lack of more or less veiled sexual contents (between the friar and Beatriz, between Basilisa and the boy) and some completely explicit sexual contents in the sequence of the bandits' nocturnal attack on the mansion with the aim of gang-raping Basilisa. Unlike the two original stories, the film has a happy ending: the wise-woman's cave is set on fire by the bandits, who were looking for the friar, the friar gets over his passion for Beatriz and moves away from the house, Beatriz is cured of the spell, the mother survives and the young narrator sets out on a journey to Santiago to carry on with his studies.

This happy end was to a certain extent a requirement of the film's genre, at the same time that the many elements that were not part of the original literary text help to attain the "gothic" atmosphere sought and the dynamic nature of the action (especially the three episodes with the bandits: the initial attack on the friar, the nighttime raid on

the mansion and the fire in the “wise woman’s” cave) counteracts the slow rhythm of Valle-Inclán’s narrative.

But once again we see the problems involved in translating this writing to the screen: all the suggestive capability that the author achieves in these tales which engulf the reader by sowing the seeds of doubt as to a logical explanation for the events presented is lost to some extent in the cinematographic images, which are much more explicit but incapable of attaining the nuances of verbal language when handled by a master like Valle-Inclán. It must be said as well that several of the added characters are noticeable as just that (particularly the bandits), because they are drawn more like caricatures. They would be more apt to use in representing some of the author’s *esperpentos* rather than a narrative sustained by psychological horror like these tales.

As I have pointed out in the cases of other adaptations, the problem is a lack of fit between the literary language of the texts and the cinematographic language used by the adapter. And here, the commercial interest in making a film able to satisfy the great majority of spectators has evidently predominated. That is what determined the choice of a genre in which diverse elements could be brought together to attain the broadest following possible: horror, the mix of erotic and religious elements, violence, the contrast between a stately and aristocratic world and the misery of the peasants, and of course a certain concern with aesthetic aspects to give the resulting product an attractive wrapping.

As regards the critical reception of the film, the media were once again unanimous in underscoring the impossibility of adapting Valle-Inclán to the screen and in pointing out the enormous distance between the film and the original texts. However, when making an overall assessment the critics can be said to be divided between the “apocalyptic” ones and the “integrated” ones: among the former, Hermes in *ABC* calls the film a “pastiche that only vaguely brings to mind the themes that served as its inspiration” (*ABC*, December 12, 1976) and Pascual Cebollada commented in *Ya* that Suárez “imposes himself on the author, whose work ends up distorted, fragmented, and incomplete” (*Ya*, December 10, 1976). Among the latter, Arroita-Jáuregui in *Arriba*, admitted that “as long as you don’t look for Ramón María (Valle-Inclán) and accept the conditions of a horror film, *Beatriz* is not a negligible film” (*Arriba*, December 8, 1976), and Fernández Santos in *El País* was of the opinion that “apart from allowing greater freedom, perhaps the fact that he didn’t choose one of the author’s fundamental works turned out to be a good idea, (...) [and] the style, as regards dialogue, atmosphere and scenery, is on target” (*El País*, December 12, 1977).

***Luces de bohemia* (Miguel Ángel Díez, 1985)**

This adaptation and that of *Divinas palabras*, to which I shall refer in the next section, were the first to bring the plays of Valle-Inclán to the screen. His dramatic works, breaking with the naturalist models still prevailing in the Spanish theater of his day, brought to the stage a tremendously distorted view of reality, based above all on the creation of a personal language with extraordinary powers of invention, transformation, and deformation. That language drank from highly diverse sources, but was subjected to a systematic process of re-creation that turned it into a vehicle of an astonishing literary universe peopled by characters reduced to the condition of masks. The result is a cruel satire about the human condition whose harshness is exacerbated by the absolute nihilism that presides over it, by the absence of any ethical postulate to support it. This universe of Valle-Inclán seems to demand the stage as its only possible context; Anthony Zahareas has pointed out in this respect how “formally the central characteristic of the *esperpento* is theatricality, but in the broad sense of the word” given that “the development of the action on the stage entails the unmasking of appearances” (Zahareas, 1979:319). Thus, they are fables that can work perfectly on the stage because of the familiarity with which the spectator admits hyperbole and implausibility and the absolute normality with which he or she can take in atmospheres and characters constructed from schematic suggestions. When seen on the screen, however, they are difficult to assimilate because the naturalist tradition of film has determined that the pact of suspension of disbelief with spectators is much more tenuous.

The transposing of this powerful stage language to the screen would only be possible if the film director had the same creative capacity and identical groundbreaking intentions with which Valle-Inclán radically confronted the theatrical conventions of his time. As I noted at the beginning, a film adaptation of a great literary text can only be satisfactory if behind the camera there is another genius capable of translating that text into a new language with the same innovative and revolutionary dimension as the original. This would mean forgetting about the literality of the text but taking its capacity for subversion to make it work in a new medium and a new context.

This was not the case with Miguel Ángel Díez, who confined himself to offering a strictly literal version of Valle-Inclán’s text, faithfully respecting the letter of the text when taking to the big screen the nocturnal wanderings of the blind poet, Max Estrella, and his guide, Don Latino, through the Madrid underworld. The characters’ speech is transmitted word for word through excellent actors (Francisco Rabal and Agustín González in the two main roles, as well as the entire cast of secondary

roles); the locations of the action were extended and filmed in exterior locations that faithfully reflect the Madrid of that time, and the indoor sets and costuming also transmit the impression of truthfulness. Even the screenplay, the work of Mario Camus, attempts to break through the spatial and temporal limitations of a play for the theatre and adapt the action more to film narrative. To do so, he structures the film narrative through a flashback by placing at the beginning of the film the lamentations of the mother and daughter standing before the corpse of Max Estrella. It can be said to be a “commendable” adaptation, but, as Lázaro Carreter noted in an article written when the film version of *Divinas palabras* debuted, “when compared with genius, ‘commendable’ is not worth much.” The spectator leaves the movie theater knowing the plot but ignorant of the revolutionary and aesthetic dimension of a play that, starting from Strindberg’s *stationendrama* model, not only makes a total break with all of the premises of naturalist drama but also goes beyond it by taking full advantage of the resources of expressionist aesthetics to give a devastating view of the social misery and intellectual coarseness of Spain in the 1920s, at the same time that its scenography was the precursor of many expressive discoveries in film.

Miguel Ángel Díez was undoubtedly not the ideal person to undertake this adaptation since, besides several short subjects his career as a film director was limited to two purely commercial and inconsequential films: *Pecado mortal* (1977) and *Fresa, limón y menta* (1978). For this reason his decision when facing *Luces de bohemia* was to approach it with exclusively artisanal criteria, which provided this final product, correct from the academic point of view, but which, limited to reproducing the stage action and dialogue, sidestepped all the emotion and suggestive capacity of a stage representation. This procedure has worked in many adaptations of plays when the essential element is intrigue, but this is not the case with *Luces de bohemia*, where the intrigue is closely linked to the language.

The film left many people indifferent and earned scarce attention from the critics in the media; the few who addressed it were unanimous in their rejection. In this respect it would not be amiss to ask ourselves why this text by Valle-Inclán (and *Divinas palabras*, to which I refer below) and other literary texts were chosen to adapt to the screen during the 1980s, all filmed correctly but all equally characterized by identical flatness and an incapability of transcending the literality of the text. This necessarily brings to mind the project of Pilar Miró, General Director of Cinematography during the government of Felipe González, which was consolidated in the so-called “Miró Law” (December 1982), an attempt to raise Spanish film production to a “dignified” level where it could compete internationally. This quest for “dignity” led filmmakers to seek out prestigious literary texts and produce a set of similar films that adapted texts in a literal and routine way. The existence of certain

common traits in most of them—based on a work of literature, with formal correctness and insignificant style—allows us to speak of a perfectly definable genre fostered by the government policy mentioned above. This ended up by “imposing a refinement in the writing” and producing a “standard linguistic model with no room for dissension,” concerned only with stylistic correction (Losilla 124). Special attention was paid to adapting contemporary authors already almost a part of the canon, most of which appeared, significantly, in the literature textbooks of upper-secondary school. We may therefore surmise that the choice of texts may also have been made in part with this potential young audience in mind.

The film, financed by Spain’s Ministry of Culture and Spanish Public Television, debuted in what could be called an almost clandestine way (at the end of August and in a very small number of theaters) and the scarce critical reviews¹⁴ coincided in their negative assessment. Antonio Gutti commented in *Cinco Días* that “the substantive, unrepeatable dialogue of an uncomfortable, ferocious, and loquacious genius” made it unadvisable to attempt to take the work to the screen; he adds that the director had worked “with the literal criterion of an artisan who fails to obtain inspiration because he is crushed by theatrical rules which are not compatible with film in pursuit of dignity” (*Cinco Días*, September 4, 1985). The comments by Mary Santa Eulalia in the newspaper *Ya* were in the same vein, saying that Miguel Ángel Sánchez, limited by his devotion to the author, had not used “as much daring and formal subversion as needed to translate this excruciating story to the screen with a more cinematographic language” (*Ya*, 24.8.85). To end, I quote the opinion given by Gil de Muro in the yearbook *Cine para leer*:

The greatest failure of the version of *Luces de bohemia* by Miguel Ángel Díez lies precisely there: in having remained obsequiously respectful to a determined conception of Valle-Inclán that the work does not ask for, that Valle-Inclán detested, and that, to boot, is most responsible for the production of a cold, distant film that seems afraid of the material being handled in it (...). The film (...) appears unbalanced and sketchy. Comfort with the narration and a sense of what the director wanted to do are perceived in the story only at the odd moment. This imbalance impedes us from entering the world of Valle-Inclán, which obviously demands something more than faithfulness to the texts. It demands inspiration, brazenness, and feeling. Things that are easy enough to say, difficult to define but obviously scarcely attainable by someone who confessed that he had “been constantly measuring and comparing.” Valle-Inclán is an immeasurable and incomparable genius, and that is where the difference lies (*Cine para leer*, 1985, 187-189.)

***Divinas palabras* (José Luis García Sánchez, 1987).**

This second adaptation of a Valle-Inclán play shows the same inadequacies that we saw in *Luces de bohemia*, although its broader plot development lends itself better to the big screen. The vicissitudes of Mari Gaila, the wife of the sacristan, her rivalry with her sister-in-law, Marica del Reino, for the usufruct of exhibiting a hydrocephalic dwarf at fairs and pilgrimages, her seduction by the gypsy Miao, the peasants' discovery of her adultery, after which they drive her naked to the church door to stone her in front of her husband, her husband's intervention citing the "divine words" of the Gospel, and so on, provide a plot line with sufficient drama that is furthermore complemented by the presence of secondary actions that gradually shape the frame of primitivism, superstition, misery, avarice and cruelty that provides the background to the story. But just as in the case of *Luces de bohemia*, that story is inseparable from the great discursive construction that vehicles it. And in his work as adaptor, García Sánchez has limited himself to transposing the skeleton of the plot, thus depriving the story of certain elements essential for its understanding, such that we cannot even speak of a work of illustration.

One advantage of the film is its careful and evocative photography of rural Galicia, which faithfully takes the spectator to Valle-Inclán's universe; but this universe is just that, only a starting point for Valle to carry out his distortioning operation. And the results of this operation are very difficult to take to the screen if the director is only trying to merely narrate the story. Putting this play into images necessarily involves a process of "naturalization" which in contrast to the author's cruel and sarcastic vision presents a universe and certain characters that are much more "human:" with the loss of most of the original dialogue it is difficult to replace the power of Valle-Inclán's language with mere photography, just as it is problematic to place the cruel caricatures of characters such as Pedro Gailo, Marica del Reino, Compadre Miao or Miguelín el Padronés in human actors such as Francisco Rabal, Aurora Bautista, Imanol Arias or Juan Echanove, who moreover were very familiar to audiences at the time the film was made. Apart from the fact that the filmmaker eliminated many of the intentionally degrading traits of the original text (Miguelín's homosexuality, Miao's cold cruelty, the sacristan's puppet-like condition), the medium of film tends to emphasize their humanity further by not admitting the outrageous and histrionic acting that these traits would require. Likewise, the verbal power of the stage directions, their sarcasm and sense of pain, end up enormously weakened in the film. The lens of the camera does not usually go beyond recording the reality in front of it, and the richness of Valle-Inclán's secondary text is lost as the stage directions

are used only to mark the development of the action.

Thus the astounding universe of Valle-Inclán is reduced to a realistic and enormously flat dimension: the photography of the beautiful landscape filtered through the fog, the crowded pilgrimages and the somber interiors undoubtedly respond to the author's view, but in no way do they transcend it or subject it to the deforming violence they acquire in the text. Aware of this impossibility, García Sánchez opted for a realistic reading, not so decidedly documentary as the adaptation of García Lorca's *Yerma* carried out some years later by Pilar Távora, but definitely one that underscored the "normality" of the world it presents, with sequences such as the opening with Mari Gaila buying milk and responding with friendliness to the greetings of her neighbors while she makes her way home., or the domestic scenes in the family kitchen. Likewise, the many sequences of processions, pilgrimages, and dances, although necessary to situate the action, have a certain *costumbrista*¹⁵ air.

Following the logic imposed by the reading the director chose to make of the play, he has to do without the eighth scene of the third day since its hallucinatory nature makes it impossible to fit in with the universe presented in the film: as many will recall, it is about Mari-Gaila's encounter with the *Trasgo* Cabrío while she is dragging the cart with the now dead dwarf, and how he transports her "in a long cavalcade through lunar rainbows" ("en una larga cabalgada por arcos de luna") to the threshold of her house.

Jorge Urrutia has shown how in the dramatic works of Valle-Inclán's second stage his distribution of stage space "offers a means of access to a fictitious universe that does not correspond to that of the essence of classical theatrical communication" (Urrutia 18). This has led many scholars to emphasize the cinematographic nature of his plays. However, as Urrutia points out in relation to *Divinas palabras*, this cinematographism does not lie in the themes, in the greater or lesser mobility of the characters or in the breadth of the stage set, but "in the actual internal structure of the plays, in the conception of the dramatic that emerges from the parceling out of space and time" (Urrutia 18). In the case of *Divinas palabras*, although the director does not limit himself to following the text word for word, he has demonstrated that he did not understand it: the liberties taken and the dignity of the resulting film are but the "product of an insufficient reading and understanding of the play." Likewise, a need is created to complete certain aspects that, once the consistency is suppressed, the spectator may be missing (for example, to introduce the character of the priest and justify his absence). And the rhythm that the spacialization of the drama builds is replaced with another plot-driven rhythm (for example, by giving more importance to the woman's outing to go begging and the preparation of her love affair).

The "miracle" worked by the sacristan's words in Latin and with which he avoids

his wife's stoning turns out to be unfeasible in the naturalistic context chosen for the film by García Sánchez; that is why in the film it is not the husband's words that move the angry townspeople and make them go away but rather their contemplation of the naked Mari Gaila, who strips off her clothes in the door of the church.¹⁶ In this respect, Asunción Gómez notes that it is not the linguistic otherness that moves the consciences of the townspeople, disturbed by this act of collective voyeurism, but rather the otherness of gender, represented through the nakedness of the adulteress (Gómez 178-179). This same author comments on how the polysemous opulence that Valle-Inclán's work offers with its moral ambiguity (attained through ironic winks to the reader) and the superposition of apparently contradictory aesthetic (theatricality / naturalism) and cultural (Christianity / Paganism) elements comes undone in this naturalist reading chosen by García Sánchez, where all types of theatrical stylization are eliminated and the human dimensions of the tragedy are emphasized (Gómez 180).

The critics paid more attention to this film than to *Luces de bohemia* and even though they pointed out the distance existing between the universe of the original play and the naturalizing version that García Sánchez put on film, they recognized the validity of the enterprise in its attempt to bring the text closer to readers. For example, José Luis Guarner in *La Vanguardia* celebrated the fact that the adaptation had known how to "dodge the fastidious and sterile academicism of the typical ministerial literary productions of prestige today," although he wouldn't have "dared to attempt the extreme path and the deranged stylization typical of the author" (October 17, 1987). Octavi Martí in *El País* felt that the only way the play could work on the screen was by naturalizing it, and that "this realist option may not be shared by all but is legitimate." He ends by valuing the film "for its meaning as a cultural product and the investment effort made," the latter with a view to the need for "filmmaking that needs to increase its capacity for export" (*El País*, September 22, 1987).

But the most critical and lucid review was the one written by Fernando Lázaro Carreter in *ABC*. He considered that García Sánchez' version confined itself to offering "the bare bones of the plot" of which only remains "the showing of elemental passions" (lust, avarice) although considerably mitigated by the sketchy way in which the characters are presented; therefore

The film tones down the frenzy, lightens the plot, slows down the rhythm, and makes the drama opaque, rainy and shy. This could well be acceptable and even noteworthy if it were original, if we didn't have to watch it through the interposed light of the play, which watches over it almost shot by shot.

He goes on to argue that the director, instead of responding to the incitement of the stage directions in the text (often described as cinematographic) by attempting to do on the screen what is unfeasible on stage, “retreats from them” and “by eliminating so much that it seems to leave the stage, the film becomes more ‘theatrical’ than the text.” And he concludes with a reflection about the illicitness of this kind of operation, “an alarming example of our cultural pauperization, which permits, moreover applauds, and even exhibits at international festivals the savage reduction of its heritage.” He argues that no country would tolerate such a devaluation of one of its great classics, “because, if anyone is heir to works still alive, the greater the right of the people (as co-owners of its value) to demand respect for their legacy” (“Divinas palabras,” *ABC*, October 25, 1987).

***Tirano Banderas* (José Luis García Sánchez, 1994)**

In the case of the fourth adaptation of a narrative text by Valle-Inclán we again come across the same difficulties noted for the previous films, but amplified by the characteristics of the novel, which is a polished exercise in verbal creation in which the author deploys his enormous idiomatic ability. In 1923 in a letter to Alfonso Reyes he says that in this novel he had tried to incorporate “idioms from all the countries in America... from the uncouth mode to the gaucho mode,” but in the pages of *Tirano Banderas* we also find, as Darío Villanueva has pointed out, “many lexical and syntactic *galleguismos*, archaic words—his verbal frenzy not only projected into space but also in time— as well as jargon” (Villanueva 1991, 361-362). If language is a primordial factor in all of Valle-Inclán’s works, in this novel it becomes the protagonist on which is built the hallucinatory universe of the dictator and the life forms—victims and spokesmen— that swarm around him. To this is added the multiplicity of language registers put into play, which help to make evident the complexity of that universe: from the political harangues to the conversations in taverns, or from bureaucratic prose to colloquial dialogues, all integrated to perfection in the narrator’s discourse, who, from his omniscience, maintains at all times a position that is distant and above his creatures. This complexity is furthermore underscored by the kaleidoscopic structure of the novel, made up of short narrative units usually no longer than a page; although the apparent chaos that could derive from this fragmentary composition is mitigated through the studied symmetrical arrangement in a prologue and seven parts (constituting the same number of thematic units), each of which is divided into three books with the exception of the central part (or fourth part, focusing on the narration of the revenge that Zacarías takes on the usurer Pereda for the death of his little son), which has seven books.¹⁷

Director José Luis García Sánchez, who also adapted *Divinas palabras*, tackled

his version of the novel with a considerably large budget and the collaboration of Rafael Azcona, a screenwriter of unquestionable prestige. But despite this budget, which meant that filming could be approached without money worries, and the intervention of Azcona, whose screenplays have been considered a faithful expression of *esperpento* aesthetics,¹⁸ once again the film was not up to the quality of the original literary text. It constituted a new example of Spanish film policy (under the auspices of Socialist governments) aimed at raising the level of film production, which consisted of endowing filmmaking with a quality label by resorting to the adaptation of prestigious literary works. The result in this case is a film that is correctly made, with a reputable cast and a large deployment of money, in which the episodes taken from the original novel provide enough elements to construct an interesting plot that would capture the interest of (and even take in) the spectator. It includes the most significant episodes from the original novel, subjecting them to a linear narration that gives an account of the last days of the dictator, from the preparations for the uprising to the final assault on the palace and his death. The careful spatial setting that faithfully recreates the imaginary tropical republic (the scenes were filmed in Cuba and Mexico) and the setting in time (the 1920s) contributed to giving it the look of a quality product, which is what was intended. But adaptation to the norms of film narration already meant an impoverishing reduction that was quite the opposite of the revolution against traditional narrative molds that Valle-Inclán carried out in *Tirano Banderas*, apart from the fact that the transfer of the story to an audiovisual medium annulled almost all of the linguistic potential on which the story was based. Nonetheless, the language was preserved to a small extent with the use of actors from many different nationalities and accents; this permitted a kind of Hispanic *koiné* achieved by the author in his prose through idioms and expressions from all over Latin America.

As regards the acting, we must highlight the unquestionably excellent decision to cast Gian Maria Volonté in the role of Santos Bandera; his expressionistic interpretation (the critics pointed to *Nosferatu* as his model) allowed him to construct a suggestive image of the sinister character described by Valle as “a death’s head with black eyeglasses and a clerical bow tie” (“una calavera con antiparras negras y corbatín de clérigo.” His acting contrasts with that of the rest of the cast (with the exception of Javier Gurruchaga in the role of the homosexual Barón de Benicarlés, Spanish ambassador), who with their excessive naturalism do not attain the *esperpento* tone that permeates the characters in the book.

Once again, we see the difficulties involved in transposing to the screen a text in which the quality of the story is inseparable from the discourse which upholds it, characterized by its high level of linguistic creativity. The solution, if the director

will not run the risk of seeking the film equivalent of the literary discourse (or does not possess the means to do so) is to confine the film to the plane of the story and attempt only to illustrate the plot, which always results in an impoverishment of the original work. This solution is used especially when the text being approached has such magnitude and prestige that it automatically induces a reverential attitude and annuls any intervention that would modify it. This can be seen clearly if we compare the manipulation of the different texts serving as the basis of the first three films addressed here with the paralysis felt by the directors of the last three films, which were based on works with an undeniable aura of being classics.

The reaction of the critics after the film debuted at the Valladolid film festival was generally negative, emphasizing once again the gap between the original text and the film and in some cases wondering if it was really worth the effort to try to take Valle-Inclán's universe to the screen. Gil de Muro expressed himself on the matter with these words in the yearbook *Cine para leer*:

García Sánchez's film, made with evident seriousness, poses the following problem right from the start: what can be done with literature as elusive and stunning as the works of Valle-Inclán? And the response may once again be to give in to the temptation to abduct it and restructure it, but it could also be that of "leave well enough alone" what you know can never be reconverted. Do the inventing yourselves—if you can—of other stories not yet written. (*Cine para leer*, 1994, p. 431)

Other reviews stressed with more or less vehemence the failure of García Sánchez's venture, justifying it in light of the difficulties involved in transposing Valle-Inclán's novel to the screen. Alberto Bermejo wrote in *El Mundo* that given the two options, "translating the richness of the original text to the screen or using its plot," the director had chosen the latter of the two, and as a consequence "the result does not sound like Valle-Inclán. He is there but you cannot see him; you listen for him but you cannot hear him" (*El Mundo*, October 30, 1993). In *ABC*, Martínez Cascante (in a chronicle meaningfully entitled "Tirano banderas, when a word is worth a thousand images"), after referring to the plot of the novel "developed in fragments that make up a complete mosaic [and] in a way similar to cinematographic expression" maintains that "giving cohesion and unity to these fragments on the screen is the main problem of the film, and in this case García Sánchez's 'glue' hasn't worked" (*ABC*, October 30, 1993). More condescending was Augusto M. Torres in *El País* with his comment that those responsible for the film "did not let themselves be influenced by the literary brilliance of the original and its false cinematographic tone" but rather,

they “have taken the novel as a starting point for making a free version, but as much in accordance as possible with the spirit of the original, and they have attained their goals effectively.” In short, he considers that it is a “good adaptation” which “can only be reproached for its excessively cold narrative style” (*El País*, January 17, 1994).

***Martes de Carnaval* (José Luis García Sánchez, 2008)**

To end I would like to spend some time on this most recent adaptation, conceived in the form of a television miniseries and once again with José Luis García Sánchez as the director of an adaptation of a work of Valle-Inclán. Unlike the previous adaptations, in this case the operation can be said to have been a success to the extent that the resulting product comes very close to the aesthetic and ideological purposes of Valle-Inclán in these texts. They are from his last period in which the technique of the *esperpento* and its systematic puppet-like distortion of reality is placed at the service of a cruel satire of the military caste raised to power after the military coup of General Primo de Rivera (1923). It can be said that García Sánchez had finally found texts by Valle-Inclán that synchronized fully with his own aesthetic and ideological premises; this allowed him to personally rewrite them by transferring to the screen a message and expressive forms that, give or take some obvious differences, come quite close to those of the author. Starting with his very first film, *Las truchas* (1978), this director’s career was characterized by a satirical view of reality that puts into play distorting comic mechanisms to make a cruel caricature of contemporary Spain. In many of his films he collaborated with Rafael Azcona, a screenwriter who has also often come close to the aesthetics of the *esperpento* through the grotesque and relentless humor with which he approaches his description of Spanish reality; we need only cite films such as *La corte de Faraón* (1985), *Pasodoble* (1988), *El vuelo de la Paloma* (1989), *Suspiros de España (y Portugal)*, (1995), *Siempre hay un camino a la derecha* (1997), *La niña de tus ojos* (1998) or *La marcha verde* (2001). Furthermore, the three plays that make up *Martes de Carnaval* are the most polished expression of the aesthetics of the *esperpento*, and by taking caricature-like deformation to its maximum degree of expression, unlike *Lucas de Bohemia*, they do not offer the slightest relief in the form of tenderness and therefore lack the tragic dimension that provided the latter with an undeniable degree of humanity. Finally, it must be taken into account that, since the adaptation was conceived for the medium of television, the director had much greater freedom to develop the three stories without excessive time limitations¹⁹ to use the metafictional approach from which he conceived the narrative, and to put into play the strategies that foster the necessary distancing.

The three plays, although published separately on different dates (*Los cuernos de don Friolera* in 1921; *Las galas del difunto* in 1926, with the title *El terno del difunto*;

La hija del capitán in 1927) and having different subject matter (all have in common that the main characters are from the military) were brought together into one volume and received some finishing touches by the author to give them uniformity.²⁰ In this adaptation for Spanish public television, García Sánchez preserves part of the individual character of each play by devoting an episode to each one, but at the same time he is concerned with underscoring the thematic and stylistic unity that Valle-Inclán gave them in their joint and definitive edition of 1930. And it is in this attempt to make them uniform where García Sánchez shows his aesthetic and ideological affinity with the author by evidently treating the stories and characters as caricatures, which helps him develop a critique of the contemporary history of Spain that transcends the strict frame of the Primo de Rivera dictatorship. The success of this operation is based above all on having replaced the procedures through which Valle upheld his deforming view of reality (many of which would be difficult to take to the screen) with certain metafictional strategies that enable the necessary distancing with respect to the reality represented; these strategies are not limited to the insertion of a second level of fiction (stories framed within a first level of fiction) but also introduce the critical commentaries of the characters who are watching them from the first level. I shall now describe them with the brevity imposed by the scarce space available, but I encourage readers who are interested to consult the recent and exhaustive analysis that Professor Simone Trecca has made of this adaptation (Trecca 95-120).

Each of the three episodes opens and closes with some brief documentary references (photographs and films from the 1920s, reproduction of the author's declarations) that contextualize the stories in their historical frame, add references to the theater of the time, and comment on Valle-Inclán's poetics of the *esperpento*. After this level, which could be described as parafilmic, the level of the fictional frame opens in which Don Manolito and Don Estrafalarío, the two characters of the prologue and epilogue of *Los cuernos de Don Friolera*, appear as presenters and spectators of the framed fiction and situate it in a specific historical context.

After the parafilmic documentary references, *Las galas del difunto* opens with a superimposed text: "Madrid, 1928. Spain suffers under the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera." We are then taken to the Círculo de Bellas Artes (Fine Arts Theater), where a very small audience made up of Don Estrafalarío, Don Manolito and a representative of the State Office for Security are going to hear a reading of *Las galas del difunto* done by a group of actors, since no theater has been allowed to put it on as a play. After some words by the director of the theater company, the reading begins while on the screen the figures of the actors disappear and we see (in color, as opposed to the black and white of the preceding images) Don Sócrates and his wife coming out of the pharmacy. This marks the beginning of the framed action, to which elements

have been added that were not in the original texts, but which help to achieve Valle's degraded view of reality with scenes relating to gluttony, lust, and avarice as the motors that unleash the behavior of the characters.

Los cuernos de Don Friolera also opens after the parafilmic documentary references with the stage direction "Madrid, 1928. Spain watches as Primo de Rivera's dictatorship starts to wobble" and then introduces us to the frame story in which Don Manolito and Don Estrafalarío are getting ready to attend the representation of the *esperpento* of the same name at a carnival theater in Madrid. The transition from the framing action to the framed action is marked by changing from the initial sepia tones to the strong and saturated colors of the play, which takes place on a set that is scarcely naturalistic. This set and the overplayed acting constantly accentuate its theatricality,²¹ which is furthermore reinforced by the incursions of the camera on the level of the framing fiction to show the reactions of the spectators and pick up the comments of Don Manolito and Don Estrafalarío. The return to the framing fiction takes place when the police burst in and arrest the actors in the theater company.

La hija del capitán also begins with brief superimposed stage directions that refer to the spatial and temporal context, which in this case is: "Madrid, 1930. Spain breathes in the winds of change." The framed action, in this case filmed in scratchy black and white like an old film, presents the two characters attending a party at the beginning of the filming of a movie based on the *esperpento* of the same name. The questions that Don Manolito asks the actor playing the general to ascertain what relation his character has to Primo de Rivera, and those the journalists ask the actor playing the Captain inquiring whether the incestuous relationship that this character had with his daughter will be eliminated from the film provide information about the actual facts that served as inspiration for the *esperpento*. In a subsequent sequence, Don Manolito and Don Estrafalarío attend the debut of the film as spectators. The beginning of the film is marked by the transition from black and white to color, the transition from the framing fiction to the framed fiction. The latter ends with the arrival in the movie theater of the news that the Republic has just been proclaimed. Don Manolito's first comment upon learning the news ("Let's see how long it lasts!") is confirmed by the extradiagetic documentary voice that informs of a period of turbulence that will open with the new regime and will lead to a civil war and a much longer and crueler dictatorship than that of Primo de Rivera.

The interaction among these different fictional levels and the hybrid set up between them and the documentary format are meant, according to Simone Trecca, "to broaden, condense or multiply the aspect of metatheatricality and metadiscursiveness of Valle-Inclán's trilogy" by playing with the resources of the medium of television (Trecca 117). That is why this adaptation can be considered the closest to the author's

own intentions. The richness and creativity of his language are very difficult to transfer to the screen, as our analysis of the previous adaptations shows; however, in this case film and television media are used to advantage to reproduce the distancing mechanisms of the author and the degrading view that, through them, he offered of the situation of Spain in his time in particular and of the human condition in general. Nonetheless, the audiovisual re-creation of the three works that comprise the framed fiction in each of the three television episodes still suffers from the naturalism inherent to film treatment of theatrical works; it can therefore be said that the degrading view of reality that the miniseries achieved through relentlessly sarcastic language and the systematic dehumanization of the characters is still a far cry from that presented in the original texts.

Notes

1. This work forms part of research project FFI2011-26511 financed by the Spanish State Office for Research of the Ministry of the Economy and Competitiveness.
2. In these pages, to explain the vicissitudes of the transformation that a literary text may go through in its adaptation to the screen, she resorts to the example of the oral tradition of transmitting stories; a traditional story “works as a starting point to create universal types, situations, and teachings, has an oral tradition, has been adapted to different eras, readers have taken it over and furthermore it has itself been the object of audiovisual interpretation and changes, according to the different times, audiences, and ideologies” (Manzano Espinosa 17).
3. Don Carlos lived in this city in Navarre and held his court there. He was the candidate for the throne of Spain supported by the absolutists who refused to recognize the legitimacy of Queen Isabel II, who was supported by the liberals.
4. When the film debuted, Bardem justified these manipulative operations by virtue of a film director’s freedom to propose a personal reading of literary texts, but he also alleged in his defense the ideological evolution that the author of the Sonatas went through to affirm that the film was completely in tune with the critical stance Valle-Inclán developed in relation to Spanish society in the second stage of his literary career and that he would even approve of the film: “What I wanted to do was change the sign of this anti-hero, this maximum prototype of the egotist that is the ‘ugly, Catholic and sentimental Marquis of Bradomín.’ I wanted to transform him into a human being who confronts other human beings, make him confront his situation, let his conscience go into crisis” (Interview *Film Ideal*, nº. 36, Oct. 1957).
5. An example of this negative response was the article published by François Truffaut in *Cahiers du Cinéma* with the title “Mort d’un Bardem.”
6. Interview in *Film Ideal*, no. 36, Oct. 1959.
7. A broader analysis of this film and its critical reception can be found in Pérez Bowie-González

García 329-352.)

8. Recall that Valle-Inclán subtitles this work as “An Age-old Story,” conferring on it a timeless dimension.

9. This episode of Vatican honors being bestowed is recreated by Valle-Inclán ironically in book II of *La corte de los milagros* (with the title “La Rosa de Oro”) where he narrates the intrigues that took place to convince the Pope, who was not very happy with Queen Isabel’s support of the liberals. However, the honor was bestowed in 1868, 15 years after the date on which the action takes place in the film.

10. Bardem, in the political reading he proposes of *Sonata de otoño*, also turns this character, whose wife Concha is Bradomín’s lover, into the person who orders the persecution of the survivors of the liberal army (who are fighting as guerillas in the Galician forests) decreed by Ferdinand VII.

11. Critics have pointed to ambiguity as one of the defining characteristics of this story. Fernández Roca points out in this respect how the calculated distance that the narrator maintains does not allow us to guess at his own position regarding the story being told (true holiness or miracle farce?) and readers find themselves involved in a systematic ambivalence: “the ambivalence of the story itself (flower of holiness or source of scandal?), underscored in the discourse (charged with sensuality and mysticism), of the spatial setting (somewhere between toponymic specificity and an idealizing vagueness), of the time (...), of the protagonists (demon-possessed saint and wolf-angel), and finally, of the author (love-hate relationship with Galicia, fascination with mystery and repudiation of fraud and tricks). (Fernández Roca 2011, 100-101).

12. This film marked the cinematographic debut of director Adolfo Marsillach, already well-known as a prestigious theater director.

13. An undeniable antecedent is *Vera, un cuento cruel* (Josefina Molina, 1972), based on the story of the same name by Villiers de L’Isle Adam).

14. For example, *Diario 16* did not address it until two years later, when it was programmed on Spanish television (*Diario 16*, September 4, 1987).

15. A style providing quaint descriptions of local manners and customs.

16. Recall that in the written play the townspeople bring her in the cart already naked.

17. A detailed description of the structural symmetry of this novel can be found in Bêlic 1968.

18. Santos Zunzunegui has underscored this parallelism of Azcona’s screenplays with the deforming aesthetics of Valle-Inclán’s *esperpentos*: “deep down, we can affirm that the creative proposal of Azcona comes from his twisting of the world of *costumbrista* populism (that universe we have called ‘non-symbolist’) in order to displace it towards a satirical realism” (Zunzunegui 163).

19. The television miniseries was presented in three episodes of similar duration: 1 hour and 18 minutes.

20. In his introduction to the Clásicos Castellanos edition, Ricardo Senabre points out these noteworthy differences and the operations carried out by Valle to make them more uniform when grouping them under the common title *Martes de Carnaval*. Although all three involve the military,

their subject matter, stage treatment, and themes had notable differences in their first editions. The maximum level of deformation occurs in *Los cuernos de Don Friolera*, which was conceived by the author as a farce for puppet theater; for its part, *El terno del difunto* was first published as a novel in dialogue and the main character's military connection (an ex-combatant in the war of Cuba) is irrelevant. The most authentically anti-militaristic one is *La hija del capitán*, conceived as a satire on the Primo de Rivera dictatorship: the main character, who is a general and the lover of the daughter of a subordinate, is obliged to carry out a coup d'état in order to avoid a scandal from the affair. For detailed information of the gestation and transformation of the three texts, see Senabre 7-28.

21. Simone Trecca comments on how the film turns out to be consistent with Valle-Inclán's aesthetics, highlighting the anti-naturalness of the amorous dialogues among the trio formed by Friolera, Loreta and Pachequín (a clear parody of the plays of Echegaray) by means of the frames and the montage effects (Trecca 109-110).

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Damaged in Transit? Valle-Inclán's *Tirano Banderas* between Two World-Literatures

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Abstract In current debates on world literature the low degree of attention paid to the issue of translation is in sharp contrast to the advocacy of its centrality by scholars in translation studies. David Damrosch is one of the few scholars who has resorted to translation for one of his definitions of world literature. The aim of this paper is to test his definition of world literature as “writing that gains in translation.” Whereas it is clear that one of the ways in which works circulate is interlingually, one should not overlook the fact that the power of languages is unevenly distributed. For a work to reach the wider world, two conditions need to concur: a) a large number of speakers and b) a widespread distribution of the language community. In the Western world, two languages meet these conditions as a result of imperial expansionism—Spanish and English. Both of them are the media for two world-literatures. In this landscape, I will approach a very specific case study, the 1929 English translation of Ramón del Valle-Inclán's novel *Tirano Banderas*, originally published in Spanish in 1926. One lesson that this case study provides to world literature from a translation perspective is that going global is not simply a matter of interlingual switch.

Key words circulation; dictator novel; Ramón del Valle-Inclán; translation; world-language; world-literature; world literature

In memory of don Benito Varela Jácome

In current debates on world literature the low degree of attention paid to the issue of translation is in sharp contrast to the advocacy of its centrality by scholars in translation studies. This centrality may be summarized with Lawrence Venuti's words: “World literature cannot be conceptualized apart from translation” (180). In Franco

Moretti's evolutionary model of worldwide genre diffusionism, translation is only mentioned in relation to specific rewriting patterns of Western novels during late-nineteenth century Japan, as if translation were a non-functional item of the whole world literary system (63n24). Interestingly, neither does Moretti mention translation with regards to the problem posed by scholars' "canonical fractions"—i.e. the small number of works one single scholar might be able to study in their original languages. This could be due to, on the one hand, the traditional skepticism about working with translations in comparative literature, and on the other, a result of the main tenet of his approach to world literature: "[W]orld literature is not an object, it's a *problem*, and a problem that asks for a new critical method" (55). In Pascale Casanova's model of *world republic*, translation does play a more important role, although restricted to "minor" literatures as a way of acquiring an "international existence" (256), which implies both thinking of translation as one-way process ("major" literatures as the target of "minor" literatures) and neglecting what Dionýz Ďurišin has called "interliterary communities," wherein the multifarious nature of translations is conspicuous. Furthermore, David Damrosch has resorted to translation for one of his definitions of world literature: "World literature is writing that gains in translation" (281). What the gains are is a matter for speculation, not to mention the fact that such a conception seems to be merely an inversion of an outdated paradigm, namely, translation as a second-degree, subservient version of the "original text," provided that the translated text succeeds this time in being "better" than the former.

In his recent book on world literature, Theo D'haen has somehow changed this vision of translation by pinpointing, on the one hand, the pedagogical dimension of world literature in the US—wherein "translation is inevitable, even if perhaps regrettable" (118)—and on the other hand, the systemic and relational constitution of world literature, for "one and the same 'world literature author' may fulfill completely different functions in different literary systems" (126). Yet neither argument entirely supports Venuti's above-mentioned statement, with which I agree, by precisely applying the perspective Damrosch advocates: "To understand the workings of world literature, we need more a phenomenology than an ontology of the work of art" (6).

In fact, world literature represents a phenomenology of reading and it is therefore much closer to what I have elsewhere called "literary life," whereas other categories, such as national literature, are ontologically reified. In systemic terms, a national literature is a secondary code subsystem, which aims at exhaustively describing the field of literary production in a specific language. An unmistakable sign of the failure of such an exhaustive system is that works in translation typically do not find their place in the description. An average reader does not read *nationally*, meaning s/he does not choose a work because it belongs to a certain national literature—whatever

“belong” might mean. The prerequisites for a reader to choose a work are twofold: a) a certain degree of knowledge of the language in which the work is written, and b) a thematic interest, for, as George Steiner (299) puts it, “[l]iterature is by essence thematic. It can only operate in an echo chamber of motifs.” In contrast to Damrosch’s view of world literature as a “mode of reading,” meaning a “detached engagement with a world beyond our own” (297), which results in an ontologized phenomenology, it is my contention that world literature is the experience of the “common reader,” to use Virginia Woolf’s felicitous phrase.¹ To the “creation of wholes” listed by Woolf, I would dare to add “world literature,” for readings are the reader’s literary world. A good example of both the relevance of thematics and the impossibility of a “*detached engagement*” may be found in the Colombian community, who stole a copy of the *Iliad* (in translation!) from the biblio-donkey for, in their words, Homer *retells their* (hi)story (Menéndez Salmon). As phenomenology, world literature scans a poly-genetic horizon wherein relationships go beyond the borders of language, culture, space and time.

A common reader reads literary works written in the language s/he feels more comfortable with. Typically, such a language would be her/his native language, or second languages in certain circumstances, for instance, the “outer circle” in Braj B. Kachru’s model. This is another clear example of the restrictive character of national literatures, for a reader’s native language may be used by several national literatures, not to mention the key issue of translation. According to the data provided by the Index Translationum, the top ten writers in Spanish who have been most extensively translated are Gabriel García Márquez, Isabel Allende, Mario Vargas Llosa, Cervantes, Jorge Luis Borges, José María Parramón Vilasaló, Federico García Lorca, Pablo Neruda, Julio Cortázar, and Carlos Fuentes. Linguistic and translation canons are therefore rather different from national literary canons. And as far as translation canons are concerned, one has to assume that the works by the foremost writer in Spanish (García Márquez) are enjoyed by many common readers in several languages.

Discussing linguistic canons and translation canons simultaneously is not unwarranted, for both canons are intertwined. One of the ways in which works circulate is interlingually; and the power of languages is unevenly distributed. For a work to reach the wider world, two conditions need to concur: a) a large number of speakers and b) a widespread distribution of the language community. In the Western world, two languages meet these conditions as a result of imperial expansionism: Spanish and English. That is why I use the concept “world-literature”—not “world literature”—in my title. Although semantically related to the French concept of *littérature-monde* within discussions around *Francophonie*, my use of the concept world-literature is indeed indebted to French academia, but to a different genealogy,

namely, the School of the Annals and Fernand Braudel's concept of world-economy (*économie-monde*). "The world economy is an expression applied to the whole world," says Braudel, whereas "[a] world-economy [...] only concerns a fragment of the world, an economically autonomous section of the planet able to provide for most of its own needs, a section to which its internal links and exchanges give a certain organic unity" (21 & 22). To my knowledge, Alexander Beecroft is the scholar who has best translated Braudel's terminology into a typology of literary systems, although he rejects the term *world-literature* proper in favor of "global literature." For my part, I will stick to world-literature, for its economic overtones are useful when contemplating translation issues.

As the two most important global languages of the Western world, English and Spanish are the media for two world-literatures. In this landscape, I will approach a very specific case study, the 1929 English translation of Ramón del Valle-Inclán's novel *Tirano Banderas*, originally published in Spanish in 1926. I have chosen this text for three key reasons. Firstly, Valle-Inclán's novel embodies at its best the idea of a "world-language," for *Tirano Banderas* is written in what the writer himself called *sermo hispanoamericano* (i.e. a Latin American Spanish koiné) within the framework of Transatlantic flows. Secondly, Valle-Inclán's novel has been read as a foundational text for a Latin American genre—the dictator novel—which is not unrelated to a style which has gone global—magical realism. Thirdly, *Tirano Banderas* was published as a "single" book in 1926—precisely the year for which we have an experimental world history, namely, Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht's *In 1926. Living at the Edge of Time*.³

I Don't Approve of the Translator That Was Offered

In the presentation of a 2004 special issue devoted to Valle-Inclán, the editor (Juan Antonio Hormigón) introduces the Spanish translation of an article published by Helen Bullitt Lowry in *The New York Times* on January 1, 1922, in the following terms: "It is a picturesque article plenty of completely absurd appreciations. All kinds of nonsense about Valle-Inclán—both usual and outrageous—are here presented as facts" (Anon. [Hormigón] 54; my translation).⁴ Though Hormigón may be absolutely right from a historical and biographical perspective, he is missing an important point. The information provided by Lowry was read by many of the American common readers targeted by *The New York Times* and therefore deserves closer attention. Furthermore, the article was published a couple of weeks after Valle-Inclán's visit to New York and was instrumental in presenting an image of the writer to many readers.

For Lowry, Valle-Inclán is one of the writers who "represent Spain's literary renaissance"—the Generation of 1898—and yet "he is not known to the English-speaking public—for the very good reason that his books have never been translated

into English—, and the English speaking peoples do not go in for languages." In contrast to the above-mentioned view of Hormigón, I do not consider Lowry's data at all irrelevant. She speaks of a readership who lives in a self-sufficient world—literature—the English one—inasmuch as books in foreign languages are not read unless they are translated. And as for translations into English of Valle-Inclán's works, Lowry is also right, despite the fact that she was not a literary journalist (she was called "the exponent of the cocktailized young lady of today."), but a contributor to *The New York Times* on topics as diverse as jazz, fashion and Houdini. At the time of writing her article, only one of Valle-Inclán's works—the children's play *La cabeza del dragón*—had been translated into English, which might very well have passed unnoticed to Lowry, for it was included in the 1918 issue of the literary magazine *Poet Lore* (Valle-Inclán, *Dragon*).

Established in 1889, *Poet Lore* found a growing audience interested in European writers. The translator of *La cabeza* was May Heywood Broun, who translated together with Thomas Walsh Valle-Inclán's *Sonatas* in 1924 for the publishing house Harcourt, Brace & Company within the series "European Library," and under the direction of one of the co-founders of the firm, Joel Spingarn. Interestingly, Federico de Onís, in a letter dated November 20, 1919, informed Valle-Inclán about this new series of the publishing house and how he himself had advised the inclusion of the Spanish writer (Cardona, "Texto 1" 145). Onís also informed Valle-Inclán about his intention of translating *La cabeza* (therefore the fact that Lowry, like Onís, did not know about the 1918 translation is not exceptional) and recommended he cede his translation copyright to the firm. In his reply, dated March 18, 1920, Valle-Inclán (Cardona, "Texto 3") conceded the translation permission to Harriet V. Wishnieff, Onís's fiancée. During his stay in New York, Valle-Inclán sent another letter to Onís, revealing how excited he was about the prospect of an "ideal translation" of the *Sonatas* by Miss Wishnieff, whom he invited to stay in La Merced, the writer's country house in A Pobra do Caramiñal, so that she could be pervaded by the words and the landscape; besides which Valle-Inclán's wife might help her with the translation, for she spoke English (Cardona, "Texto 3").

Around two years later Onís informed Valle-Inclán in a letter dated June 14, 1922, that Harcourt, Brace & Company refused a translation made by Wishnieff because they preferred to use their own translators. Despite Wishnieff's willingness to make the translation, Onís suggested Valle-Inclán accept the firm's conditions, for the contract he was to be offered was as good as Jakob Wasserman's (Cardona, "Texto 5"). In a letter dated June 8, 1923, Onís insisted that Valle-Inclán accept the firm's conditions, for, on the one hand, this entry into the English-speaking world via the translation of the *Sonatas* may have for him similar results to those experienced

by Miguel de Unamuno—a “translation package” after the 1912 translation of *Del sentimiento trágico de la vida*—and, on the other hand, Harcourt, Brace & Company had started to become dubious about Valle-Inclán's success as compared to that of Vicente Blasco Ibáñez (Cardona, “Texto 8”).

The apprehension of the firm about the benefits a translation of Valle-Inclán may provide shows once again that Lowry's presentation of the Spanish writer to the American audience was not on the wrong track. For Lowry, Blasco Ibáñez was the obvious Spanish writer to whom Valle-Inclán should be compared, albeit negatively. (The Valencian writer had also visited New York in 1921.) In contrast to Blasco Ibáñez's “modern style,” Valle-Inclán's was “mystic.” Whereas the former “dresses and talks and thinks like a modern, one who naturally should have his books ‘filmed,’” the latter is a “Spaniard of the old order.” And if Blasco Ibáñez had “such a practical faculty for collecting the international dollars,” what about Valle-Inclán? It is natural that Harcourt, Brace & Company wondered whether they would succeed as E.P. Dutton & Company had succeeded with the 1919 translation by Charlotte Brewster Jordan of Blasco Ibáñez's *Los cuatro jinetes del Apocalipsis*. One should not forget that the suggestion to translate Valle-Inclán's *Sonatas* was not due to a “common reader,” but due to Onís, a professor of Spanish literature at Columbia University.

Before seeing whether Onís's suggestion was profitable for Harcourt, Brace & Company, it may prove useful to survey some data related to translations of Valle-Inclán's works during the period 1918-1935. 1918 is the year of Valle-Inclán's first translation into English (*The Dragon's Head*) and in 1935 the English translation of *Tirano Banderas* was reprinted. For the target-languages and number of works translated, I draw on the data provided by Robert Lima, Robert S. Rudder, Juan Antonio Hormigón, and Javier Serrano Alonso and Amparo de Juan Bolufer.

Target Language	Number of Works Translated 1918-1935
English	9
French	9
Romanian	3
Galician	3
Portuguese	2
Russian	2
Italian	2
Dutch	1
Lithuanian	1
Czech	1
Hungarian	1
Polish	1
Swedish	1

One may consider that these figures are in direct contradiction to my statement in the introduction regarding the two major world-languages in the Western world during the 1920s, for the number of translations into French and English are identical. But French, though distributed in several countries, did not have a number of speakers comparable to English and Spanish, or even Portuguese. Why, then, is the number of translations into French and English identical? The reason is that French was a language with high cultural capital, a "cultural language" in the sense that it played a key intermediary role (both in the number of translations and translation models) for translation flows between Eastern and Western Europe and Northern and Southern Europe, including the Transatlantic rim. What needs to be stressed in my opinion, is the relevance of English as target-language. Consequently, it is only natural that Valle-Inclán was grateful to Onís, to whom he gave formal authorization for his publications and translations in the US, a market which at that time was interested in Spanish literature thanks to Blasco Ibáñez's success.

According to Lowry, the reason that Valle-Inclán's works had not been translated into English lay in the writer himself.

Twice has Don Ramón been approached by publishers—but true to the tradition that is rather good form for a Spanish intellectual to be rather poverty-stricken, Don Ramón replied that he didn't approve of the translator that was offered.

Though I have not been able to trace any offer by an American publisher prior to Onís's intervention, Lowry may very well be right if one takes into consideration that five years later, in 1927, Valle-Inclán wrote to Heath and Company (Cardona, "Texto 10") to ask them not to publish a translation of *La cabeza del dragón*. One may think that this is due to the fact that Valle-Inclán had granted all his rights to Onís in 1921. However, Onís himself informed Valle-Inclán in 1919 that he planned to translate for the "best publishing house" in the school market—Heath and Company—*La cabeza del dragón* (Cardona, "Texto 2"). In any case, this play had already been translated in 1918 by May Heywood Broun for *Poet Lore*, and research on how the latter translation was carried out and whether or not it was authorized—or even known about—by Valle-Inclán, is still pending.

The Pleasant Memoirs of the Marquis de Bradomin: Four-Sonatas was published by Harcourt, Brace & Company in 1924, and one year later by Constable for the British market. In contrast to the case of Blasco Ibáñez, the English translation of the *Sonatas* was neither a commercial success for the company, nor an opportunity for a massive translation. The only works by Valle-Inclán translated after the *Sonatas* were his tale "A medianoche" (Valle-Inclán, "At Midnight") and the first scene of *Divinas*

palabras. No further translations were made until the late 1950s and 1960s.

A Difficult Reading for the Academically Trained Foreigner

Where should we place the translation of *Tirano Banderas* within this picture of Valle-Inclán's entry into English world-literature? Except for Dru Dougherty's recollection of some reviews of this translation (*Iconos*), this is not an issue in which scholars have shown much interest. Dougherty has gathered three reviews (*New York Herald Tribune Books*, *Boston Evening Transcript*, *The New York Times Book Review*) whose tone is rather similar to Lowry's article. Ángel Flores—the reviewer of the *New York Herald Tribune Books*—mentions the translation of the *Sonatas* by Broun (and Walsh), which represents Valle-Inclán's "debut" in English world-literature. But none of the reviewers provide any information about the translator, Margarita Pavitt, whose translation of *Tirano Banderas* had been published in 1929 by Henry Holt and Company.

According to the data provided by Cardona, letters between Onís and Valle-Inclán date between June 24, 1918, and February 23, 1928. In the final letter, Onís informed Valle-Inclán again about the translation of *La cabeza del dragón*, but nothing is said in relation to *Tirano Banderas*. One might conclude that after the *Sonatas*' commercial failure (at least in comparison to translations of Blasco Ibáñez), Harcourt, Brace & Company had decided not to publish further translations of Valle-Inclán. Henry Holt and Company was a rival firm in the market of translations from Spanish, especially in the case of texts targeted for learners of the language and scholars in Hispanic culture. During the 1920s, some examples of these publications are Elijah Clarence Hills' *Spanish Tales for Beginners*, Lawrence A. Wilkins' *Second Spanish Book*, E.C. Hills and S. Griswold Morley's *Modern Spanish Lyrics*, to name but a few. Whether Onís had his say on the translation of *Tirano*, or it was a recommendation by another university professor linked to the firm is not known. In 1928, Henry Herschel Brickell, literary critic and student of Spanish, became manager of the publishing house and translating Valle-Inclán could also have been his own initiative. (Brickell was responsible for bringing Federico García Lorca's genius to American attention.) Another possibility is that publishing a translation of Valle-Inclán was the translator's initiative.

In contrast to other translators: May Heywood Broun (*The Dragon's Head*, 1918; *Four-Sonatas*, 1924), Harriet V. Wishnieff ("My Sister Antonia," 1922), Princess Alexandre Gagarine ("The Captain's Honor," 1923), A. Irwin Shone ("At Midnight," 1929), Samuel Putnam (the first scene of *Divine Words*, 1931), and Warre B. Wells ("The Golden Rose," 1932), Margarita Pavitt was neither a "professional" translator, nor a literary critic. Except for *Tirano Banderas*, no other translation by

her is registered. As for her profession, nothing is known, although one scholar has claimed she was an anthropologist (Madrid). The only piece of evidence regarding her involvement with Spanish issues that I have been able to trace is two articles Pavitt published in the anarchist magazine *Revista nueva*, which was first issued on March 29, 1924 in Barcelona, five months after Miguel Primo de Rivera's coup. One may conclude that Pavitt became interested in *Tirano Banderas* because the novel's critique was in line with her arguments in her August 16, 1924 and July 25, 1925 articles. Whether Pavitt first read the novel in the issues of *El estudiante* or in the book-format is not known. Her translation in any case is based upon the 1927 second edition.

In 1928 Henry Holt and Company published a new English translation of Valle-Inclán—*Tirano Banderas*. It was advertised as an “[a]uthorized translation from the Spanish.” And yet no contact between the firm, the translator and the writer has been registered so far. When approaching the English version of *Tirano Banderas*, the fact that Pavitt was neither a professional translator, nor a literary critic should be kept in mind, inasmuch as American reviewers who read the novel in Spanish stressed the difficulty of one if its key elements—the Latin American Spanish koiné. “In *Tirano Banderas*,” said Arthur L. Owen, “americanisms abound to an extent which makes the novel difficult reading for the academically trained foreigner” (134). But what about a common reader?

A “Common Reader” as Translator

Should we have a translation of *Tirano Banderas* by a professional translator and connoisseur of Valle-Inclán's writings, it would be most interesting to analyze how the problem of the Latin American Spanish koiné were to be faced. Wishnieff—Valle-Inclán's translator *in pectore* in the US—seemed to have been well aware of this issue when she underlined in her review of the Spanish original that the writer had made of this novel “a mosaic of the language [...] of Spanish America” (139). The linguistic code was as difficult for a Latin American reader as for a Peninsular reader, even if academically trained. A few weeks after its publication in 1926, Pío Baroja, for instance, commented that the novel should have included a lexicon (Dougherty, *Guía* 65). The terms Wishnieff used to characterize the linguistic texture of the novel—synthesis, mosaic—are indeed very close to the way in which Valle-Inclán theorized on the *sermo hispanoamericano*. “It is necessary,” argued Valle-Inclán in an article published on June 30, 1925, “to create a Latin American *sermo* by incorporating, without limits and hesitations, American terms [...] Latin America has very beautiful, expressive words. [...] In a novel I am going to publish now—*Tirano Banderas*—I use more than one hundred americanisms” (qtd. in Dougherty, *Un Valle-Inclán*

157n192; my translation).

The relevance of this pan-Hispanic code goes well beyond the limits of a stylistic experiment *per se*, for at least three connected reasons. Firstly, this hybrid, linguistic commonality is a reflection on a political situation shared by many Latin American republics, which Valle-Inclán merged into the imaginary Santa Fe de Tierra Firme. Secondly, it implies a critique of the paternalist attitude of the collapsing empire towards its former colonies as embodied by the discourse of *Hispanism*, which Peninsular intellectuals had built as a mixture of solidarity and “family” ties. Thirdly, the novel may be read as a metaliterary discussion on literary norms, namely, the linguistic code of Spanish world-literature. The latter traditionally having been equated with Peninsular Spanish, Valle-Inclán’s novel advocated a linguistic switch from Peninsular Spanish to a pan-Hispanic Spanish, wherein the larger number of speakers from Latin America had, on the one hand, the dominant share and on the other hand, a tool for adequately representing the reality of the former colonies.

A reading of *Tirano Banderas* as a metaliterary code for Spanish world-literature is in line with contemporary discussions. On April 15, 1927, Guillermo de Torre published in *La Gaceta literaria* an article titled “Madrid, meridiano intelectual de Hispanoamérica” (Madrid—the intellectual meridian of Latin America), in which he argued against Paris as the literary capital city of Latin America and defended the links with Spain. The hostile reaction this article provoked in Latin America is well known, as voiced by magazines such as *Martín Fierro* in Argentina. (Borges’s reply will resort to the Italian linguistic heritage as contained in Lunfardo.) Less well known is that on the Peninsular side of the Atlantic there was also a hostile reaction, as proven by the Madrilenian magazine *Post-Guerra* (see Santonja), whose directors Rafael Giménez Siles and José Antonio Balbontín had been in charge of *El estudiante* during the period in which *Tirano Banderas* was published in installments. Could cultural hybridization in Valle-Inclán’s *Tirano Banderas* be the literary equivalent of Max Henríquez Ureña’s theoretical reflection in his 1930 *El retorno de los galeones*, a key text in the history of the Boom?

Despite the linguistic difficulties of *Tirano Banderas*’s “sermo hispanoamericano,” Pavitt only included three footnotes corresponding to three terms rendered in their Spanish form: *gachupines* (Valle-Inclán, *The Tyrant* 5), *maestrante* (27) and *cepo* (278). One may think that further footnotes were unnecessary, for the translator dealt with the “sermo hispanoamericano” by replacing it with an equivalent Anglophone *sermo*, a linguistic code for English world-literature. However, this is not the case. In fact, of the three reviewers, two stressed the failure of the translation in this regard. For the anonymous contributor to *The New York Times Book Review* (December 22, 1929), “[i]t is symptomatic of the loss of power which so frequently

characterizes a translation that the subtitle of *The Tyrant* should be rendered *A Novel of Warm Lands*” (Anon. 152). And for an authorized literary critic, professor and translator (between Spanish and English) such as Ángel Flores, who could compare Pavitt’s version to the original, the “philological exuberance, so exciting to the contemporaries of James Joyce, fades (through no fault of the translator) in Miss Pavitt’s version” (150). Both the mention of Joyce (most probably his *Ulysses*) and the contention that it was not the translator’s fault deserve further attention.

In 1926

As mentioned in the introduction, we have an experimental world history for 1926, of fifty-one entries divided into three sections, “Arrays,” “Codes” and “Codes Collapsed.” “The book’s main intention,” argues Gumbrecht, “is best captured in the phrase that was its original subtitle: ‘an essay on historical simultaneity’” (xiv). The key entry wherein *Tirano Banderas* is registered within this history of 1926 belongs to a collapsed code, namely, “Action = Impotence (Tragedy).”

Tragedy generally involves conflicts between intrinsically stable normative systems. In situations of generalized uncertainty, however, when all norms have disappeared and when people cannot be held responsible for the consequences of their Actions, the one gesture that counts is to place Action, as a form that resists chaos, in opposition to the threat of disorder. (Gumbrecht 352)

The melodramatic gesture of the dictator’s supreme sacrifice for the sake of order is best encapsulated in Santos Banderas’s discourse when visited by the high ranking representatives of the Spanish community at the beginning of the novel. Pavitt’s translation provides a non-simultaneous simultaneity for the “uncommon” reader.

—Me congratula ver cómo los hermanos de raza aquí radicados, afirmando su fe inquebrantable en los ideales de orden y progreso, responden a la tradición de la Madre Patria. Me congratula mucho este apoyo moral de la Colonia Hispana. Santos Banderas les garanta que el día más feliz de su vida será cuando pueda retirarse y sumirse en la oscuridad a labrar su predio, como Cincinato. Crean, amigos, que para un viejo son fardel muy pesado las obligaciones de la Presidencia. El *gobernante*, muchas veces precisa ahogar los sentimientos de su corazón, porque el cumplimiento de la ley es la garantía de los ciudadanos trabajadores y honrados. El *gobernante*, llegado al trance de firmar una sentencia de pena capital, puede tener lágrimas en los ojos, pero a su mano no le está permitido temblar. Esta *tragedia del gobernante*, como les platicaba recién, es

superior a las fuerzas de un viejo. (Valle-Inclán, *Tirano* 55-56; emphasis added)

—It is with satisfaction that I observe how my brothers of race established in this country, reaffirming their unshakable faith in the ideals of order and progress, respond to the traditions of the Mother Country. This moral support of the Spanish Colony is a source of great satisfaction to me. Santos Banderas has none of that thirst of power which his adversaries criticize in him. Santos Banderas assures you that it will be the happiest day of his life when he can retire from public life and sink into obscurity to work his strip of land, like Cincinnatus. Believe me, my friends, the duties of the Presidency are a very heavy burden for an old man. An *executive* frequently has to disregard the dictates of his heart, for in the enforcement of the law lies the safeguard of honest and industrious citizens. Faced with the necessity of signing a death-warrant, an *executive* may feel his eyes will tears, but his hand must not tremble. This *tragedy of the executive* is, as I have just been saying, too heavy a burden for an old man. (Valle-Inclán, *The Tyrant* 16-17; emphasis added)

For an uncommon reader such as Gumbrecht “tragedia del gobernante” translates as “politician’s tragedy” (356). His (ironical) rendering may very well be due to the influence of one of his simultaneous readings—Jules Romains’ *Le Dictateur*, in which one finds “the establishment and the maintenance of the ideal *vie unanime* closely associated with the principles of strong leadership, even of dictatorship” (Norris 130). This is obviously in sharp contrast to Valle-Inclán’s aims for *Tirano Banderas*, a novel which mirrors the Latin American “republics” in Santa Fe de Tierra Firme by refracting them into Primo de Rivera’s dictatorship and vice versa. In contrast to Gumbrecht’s “politician’s tragedy,” for Pavitt “tragedia del gobernante” is “tragedy of the executive,” a phrasing which tellingly resonates with Primo de Rivera’s dissolution of the executive within the military Directory and Martin Decoud—Joseph Conrad’s problem figure in *Nostromo*: “I—I—executive member” (135).

In a telegram dated March 30, 1923 and addressed to Don Roberto—as R.B. Cunninghame Graham was affectionately known, Conrad informed him about two letters, one from Vicente Blasco Ibáñez and other from Ibáñez’s publishing house. In fact, Blasco Ibáñez had first approached Cunninghame Graham with the plan of publishing a Spanish edition of Conrad’s novels. In a letter dated March 10, 1923, Blasco Ibáñez presented himself to Conrad as “the Spanish novelist,” some of whose works had been translated into English and “been well received, especially in the United States,” such as *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* and *The Enemies of*

Women. Blasco Ibáñez's project was translating Conrad's works into Spanish and publishing them within one of the series of his publishing house Prometeo—"La novela literaria" (The Literary Novel). "I am attempting," said Blasco Ibáñez to Conrad, "to make known to the Spanish public all the great contemporary novelists, and I write a twenty to thirty page preface to each volume, treating the writer's life and work. [...] I also oversee the translations to ensure their accuracy and the faithful rendering of the writer's ideas."

Translation of Conrad's novels into French was how Blasco Ibáñez had access to them for "alas, I read English badly" (Stape & Knowles 205). And André Gide was responsible for Conrad's entry into French world-literature once he took over the position of director of *Les Œuvres Complètes de Joseph Conrad*, a Gallimard project (West). For Conrad, it was natural that, after French world-literature, Spanish world-literature would be regarded as a milestone for his world career. "I am very glad to know of your interest in my work," replied Conrad to Blasco Ibáñez on March 21, 1923. "I wish ardently to be presented to the Spanish public under your auspices. This is an unexpected honour. I assure you that I appreciate it deeply" (Davies & Moore 54). One has to conclude that J.B. Pinker—Conrad's agent—did not reach an agreement with Blasco Ibáñez, for none of Conrad's novels was included in the ninety titles of "La novela literaria."

In 1926, the same year of *Tirano Banderas*, *Nostromo* was published in Barcelona by the firm Montaner y Simón under the translation of Juan Mateos de Diego. This is an important simultaneity (to be added to Gumbrecht's list), for Conrad's novel also confronted the Spanish audience with an imaginary South American republic—Costaguana—under a dictatorship. As with Valle-Inclán's novel, Conrad's was poorly received. And as Jacques Berthoud put it for *Nostromo*, the same applies to *Tirano Banderas*: both earned "notoriety as [...] novel[s] that one cannot read unless one has read [them] before" (97). Both novels have an European narrator who has to understand an "exotic reality," and both novels have been included among the front-rank of modernist literature. In world literature, Valle-Inclán and Conrad met at the crossroads of translation between Spanish and English world-literatures to depict a postcolonial society engaged with global capitalism. Both novels were unconventional and remained unpopular with mass audiences. *Tirano Banderas* remained slightly more unpopular, for Pavitt's translation was reprinted just once and a new translation was not needed until 2012, whereas Mateos de Diego's translation of *Nostromo* was reprinted several times and three new translations have been published between 2003 and 2008.

However, one lesson that translation studies provides to world literature is that going global is not simply a matter of the number of reprints and the degree of fidelity

of translators. Let us remember now Flores's above quoted words: the "philological exuberance" of *Tirano Banderas* "fades (through no fault of the translator) in Miss Pavitt's version." The entry of a work into a literary system by way of translation cannot be understood as an exclusively linguistic switch, but as a multi-level inter-systemic switch. When *Tirano Banderas* was translated into English in 1929 for the US market, the translation concurred with the way in which other Spanish writers were being translated (especially, Blasco Ibáñez) and how Latin American novels were being translated. In the 1920s and 1930s this was a market niche for commercial publishers and small presses (Levine 298), which provided their audience with a realist mode proper of the *novela de la tierra* (novel of the earth). The erasure of the "philological exuberance" by Pavitt placed *Tirano Banderas* in this genre, but Valle-Inclán's novel was still a much more complex work than Mariano Azuela's *Los de abajo*, which was also translated in 1929 by Enrique Manguía (*The Underdogs*). Pavitt's translation model was also the one Harriet V. Wishnieff/de Onís applied later to Latin American novels, for she normalized regionalisms and experimental language. No distinction, therefore, can be made between Pavitt and Wishnieff in this regard. As for Conrad's entry into Spanish world-literature, in contrast to Valle-Inclán's case, the translation of *Nostromo* was not sporadic and haphazard, but the result of a "translation packet" conceived as the equivalent of the Gallimard project (Coll-Vinent 218) by Joan Estelrich while he was in charge of Montaner y Simón.

For both English and Spanish world-literatures, *Tirano Banderas* and *Nostromo* resulted in excessive models in the original and in translation. If, as Fredric Jameson puts it, modernism originated in "an aestheticizing reaction against the sordid realities of a business civilization" (68), *Tirano Banderas* and *Nostromo* are modernist novels *avant la lettre*. The reaction in these novels was, in Borges's words, "writing a fantastic story,"—even if realistically—for "the world itself is fantastic and unfathomable and mysterious" (qtd. in Robles 17). This is of course a matrix for the Boom and the genre of the "dictator novel." As for language, whereas the foremost writer of Spanish world-literature—Gabriel García Márquez—said he prefers Gregory Rabassa's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* to his original, Borges developed an alternative version of Valle-Inclán's *sermo latinoamericano* by bringing English into Spanish. But all this already goes well beyond the scope of this paper.

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Notes

1. “The common reader [...] differs from the critic and the scholar. [...] He reads for his own pleasure rather than to impart knowledge or correct the opinion of others. Above all, he is guided by an instinct to create for himself, out of whatever odds and ends he can come by, some kind of whole—a portrait of a man, a sketch of an age, a theory of the art of writing” (Woolf 1).
2. In contrast to Steiner’s elitist view of the threads of thematics, I agree with Woolf in that the common reader may be “worse educated” (1) and yet no less *engaged*. The Colombian community most probably did not know that “Homer’s Odysseus comes after Joyce’s Ulysses” (Steiner 299) and nonetheless did know how to read the *Iliad*.
3. The first edition of *Tirano Banderas* was printed on December 15, 1926, by Rivadeneyra and copies were sold directly by Valle-Inclán (Dougherty, *Guía* 40). The second edition was printed on December 10, 1927. Before the book-format, the novel was published in installments in the magazine *El estudiante* (in both series, Salamanca and Madrid), whereas one section was published as an independent story—*Zacarías el Cruzado o Agüero nigromante* (Nº 225 of *La novela de hoy*, September 3, 1926). See Speratti Piñero.
4. I arrive at the conclusion that the anonymous editor of the 2004 special issue of *ADE* is Hormigón for some passages of the introduction are identical to what Hormigón says on Lowry’s article in his book (191).
5. By “translation package” I refer to the market strategy of some publishing houses whereby, after the success of a specific work, an award or the death of the writer, the house translates her/his “complete works.”
6. Between April 1934 and February 1935, the Mexican magazine in English *Mexican Life* published *Tirano Banderas* in installments, more precisely, Pavitt’s translation, though the identity of the translator is not provided. *Mexican Life* was founded by Howard S. Phillips in 1924. This is an interesting piece of information regarding an English afterlife of *Tirano Banderas* in Mexico, where Malcolm Lowry arrived on November 2, 1936. His novel *Under the Volcano* presents some striking similarities to *Tirano Banderas*, which I will analyze in a future paper.
7. There are some inconsistencies in the information provided by these scholars. The most accurate data are those provided by Serrano Alonso & Juan Bolufer and Serrano Alonso. In contrast to Serrano Alonso, whose data on translation cover Valle-Inclán’s lifetime, my data are restricted to the period 1918-35. If one takes into consideration the period previous to 1918, the number of translations into French is higher than into English. It is my contention that this is due to the cultural capital of the French language. In the number of translations I list, I count neither reprints (for instance, the 1934-35 reprint of *The Tyrant*), nor translations of the *Sonatas* as independent works.
8. Juan Bolufer (229) argues that Valle-Inclán’s visit to New York, after his travel to La Habana (Santos Zas, “Valle-Inclán y la prensa”) was related to his wish to explore the possibilities for his works be translated into English.

9. Publishing British editions of the same US translations within one a year or two was common practice. When it comes to translations of Latin American novels, an issue I will tackle later, the British market was much more reluctant than the US market to engage in language experiments in English, at least until the 1980s (Levine 297).
10. As stated by Serrano Alonso, “we are very far from saying that we do know the corpus of translations during the writer’s lifetime,” for further research on journals and magazines is necessary (15; my translation). To my knowledge, Serrano Alonso’s research is the most important contribution.
11. I use the term “debut” as defined by Lundén, Ekelund, and Bolkéus Blom: “A ‘prose-fiction debut’ is understood here as a book-length publication, that is, a short story collection or a novel, written for adults and included as such in one of the various publishing records” (303).
12. “The question anybody who longs for a radical transformation of the society we live in should ask is not the naive one whether it is possible to overthrow a regime based upon a hypothetical violence, but whether it is possible to save the people even against their will” (“Psicopatología”).
13. According to Hormigón, there is one further translation, by Paul Patrick Rogers of *Jardín umbrío* (Henry Holt, 1928): “*Jardín umbrío*, edition and translation by Paul Patrick Rogers” (1006; my translation). However, this was an edition aimed at learners of Spanish, which did not include a translation into English, but notes and vocabulary.
14. “The language, which admits and searches for idioms and terms from all Latin America, greatly contributes to a sense of indecisiveness” (Díez-Canedo 163; my translation).
15. Santos Zas (“Valle-Inclán y Cuba”) has shown how Valle-Inclán formulated a previous experiment on American linguistic syncretism in his 1897 tale “La Feria de Sancti Spiritus.” This tale was not translated into English during the period which concerns us here.
16. Interestingly, a recent defense of Paris as the “literary Greenwich” is due to Casanova in her discussion on world literature.
17. “With his wordy discourse, excessive and assertive, he [Primo de Rivera] reminded me of many improvised generals I met in Mexico and some South American republics” (Blasco Ibáñez 30; my translation).
18. Wishnieff translated for the firm Alfred A. Knopf many Latin American writers; for the translations into English published by this latter firm of Pío Baroja, see González Ariza.

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易卜生戏剧的文学伦理学批评导言

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亨利克·约翰·易卜生（Henrik Johan Ibsen, 1828-1906）作为一个对世界剧坛产生深远影响的人物，其作品的丰富性和复杂性一直是研究者们津津乐道的原因。百十年来易卜生相关研究资料可谓瀚若星辰，但是这并不影响我们对易卜生戏剧进行重读和再阐释，比如《浙江工商大学学报》2013年第1期刊发了“文学伦理学批评：重读易卜生”¹的专栏论文，以及《世界文学研究论坛》在2012年第1期刊发了“易卜生戏剧的文学伦理学批评”²的专栏论文，相关研究论文采用文学伦理学批评方法，结合文本细读，对易卜生戏剧的再阐释有着十分重要的意义。因为“用文学伦理学批评的方法研究易卜生，显然可以深刻揭示出易卜生戏剧的新特质，发现被我们忽视了的價值存在，这就是不同的伦理冲突导致的一系列各种各样的伦理问题……无论是易卜生的社会问题剧还是其他的戏剧，无不以提出伦理问题和伦理思考为特征。无论剧中的人物如何活动，他们都无法超越伦理选择的过程……易卜生戏剧的价值不仅在于充分揭示了他那个时代不同社会的人所经历的伦理选择的复杂性，而且也揭示了整个欧洲文明是怎样在自身的伦理选择过程中形成的”（聂珍钊 22）。

文学伦理学批评方法强调回到文学作品中的现实语境中去，以其特定的伦理环境出发，分析人物所面临的伦理问题为要旨。根据文学伦理学批评，文学本质上是伦理的艺术。我们运用文学伦理学批评过程中，所涉及的批评术语诸如伦理环境、伦理身份、伦理两难、伦理选择，以及“斯芬克斯因子”、理性意志、自由意志、人性因子、兽性因子等³，都是从具体文学作品的分析出发，根据具体的人物形象所涉及到的伦理命题来探讨作家的伦理旨趣。因此，我们拒绝抽象地理解文学伦理学批评的相关术语。比如讨论“伦理选择”的问题，并非抽象地谈伦理选择，而是基于人物特定的身份和立场，以及该人物所面临的伦理难题时所表现出的善恶观念及其所做出的善恶行为，这一过程才是该人物的伦理选择的过程。同时，我们也拒绝贴标签式的批评模式，如对某某作品的文学伦理学批评。学术问题来自于文本细读，在此基础上才能运用某种研究方法进一步进行挖掘和阐释。此外，我们在运用文学伦理学批评方法过程中，需要厘清伦理、道德与价值的关系：伦理作为一种不以人的意志为转移的、天然的关系，既是固定的、也是发展的，不同时期有着不同的伦理；伦理是对道

德的概括和总结，是对道德的抽象化和理论化。在某一个特定的时期，道德标准的变化是以这个时期的伦理规范为前提的，而价值则体现为对这一伦理规范影响下的道德行为和道德现象的评价。本期专栏“易卜生戏剧的文学伦理学批评”系列论文试图运用文学伦理学批评对易卜生戏剧进一步分析和阐释，共选择了3篇论文，重点探讨易卜生的三部作品：分别是：《厄斯特罗特的英格夫人》（*Lady Inger of Ostrat*, 1854）、《皇帝与加利利人》（*Emperor and Galilean*, 1873）和《社会支柱》（*Pillars of Society*, 1877）。

郭晶晶的论文“论《英格夫人》中的伦理困境与伦理选择”抓住了戏剧的主人公“北方女英雄”的伦理身份，分析在民族责任和母子亲情中挣扎的主人公因为错误的选择而造成民族和个人悲剧，由此探讨伦理身份与伦理选择之间的复杂关系。作者指出，通过历史事件与历史人物进行重写从而寄托了作者深邃的伦理思考：每个人都兼具多重伦理身份，因此，当人们在人生中面临一些重要的选择时，基于不同伦理身份做出的不同选择往往会相互矛盾。而在民族危难的关键时刻，只有基于民族大义，根据自己的社会身份而非其他身份做出的选择才是最正确的选择，也只有将民族大义至于个人恩怨和个人得失之上，才是对个人利益的最好保护，这让我们对《英格夫人》有了一个全新的认识。

柏灵的论文“论《皇帝与加利利人》中朱利安的背叛与灭亡”，紧扣朱利安从王子成为凯撒，后又背叛君士坦提乌斯罗马成为罗马皇帝这一伦理主线，分析朱利安传奇的一生。作者指出，朱利安的命运是他不断进行伦理选择的结果，他的每一次伦理选择又与他身份的变化息息相关；易卜生通过朱利安命运，表现了人作为斯芬克斯因子的伦理存在以及伦理选择在个人命运发展中的重要性，这为我们重新理解《皇帝与加利利人》提供了新的视角。

郭雯的论文“《社会支柱》：一部讽刺与救赎的伦理剧”分析资产阶级伪善道德观的代表人物博尼克的伦理选择与道德救赎。作者指出：个人欲望与社会良心、精神自由与经济独立、放纵与救赎、现实需要与追求真理的冲突是禁锢人们精神自由的枷锁；而剧中博尼克的自我忏悔和道德救赎，不仅让世人引以为戒，吸取道德教训，也体现了易卜生对于重建社会道德体系的伦理要求和取向。通过作者的上述分析，我们能对“社会问题剧”之一的《社会支柱》有一个崭新的认识。

三位研究者紧紧抓住了伦理选择这一核心问题，连同伦理身份等具体的问题，结合了文本细读，挖掘出作品中的伦理主题；同时，三位研究者没有空泛地讨论伦理身份与伦理选择，而是基于戏剧人物特定的伦理关系，分析戏剧人物的道德行为与情感纠葛，为推进我国易卜生戏剧研究提供新的思考。

作为“现代戏剧之父”，易卜生对于世界戏剧的贡献，已经被广泛地认可；易卜生对他之后的一代又一代戏剧家的影响也是不争的事实。无论是美国的尤金·奥尼尔、田纳西·威廉斯，亦或是中国的曹禺、田汉等剧作家，都无一例外地推崇易卜生戏剧并从中吸取创作的经验。正如阿瑟·米勒所说“我不认为今天的作家以易卜生的创作方法为自己的模式，但是易卜生作为一个现代作家

的杰出地位仍然被不断强化”（227）。时至今日，易卜生戏剧依旧频繁地被世界各地的剧场搬上舞台，可以这么说，易卜生依然在影响着世界剧坛。“当下，易卜生戏剧与布莱希特、契科夫、莎士比亚、希腊悲剧相比肩其名，成为世界上演出频率最多的作品”（Erika Fischer Lichte 1）。因此，运用文学伦理学批评方法进一步研究易卜生戏剧，将对我们理解易卜生戏剧的独特魅力提供参考。

注解【Notes】

1. 《浙江工商大学学报》2013年第1期刊发的3篇易卜生研究专题论文，由聂珍钊教授主持并撰写主持人语“文学伦理学批评：重读易卜生”，收入了由尚必武撰写的论文“寻找伦理存在的自我——《培尔·金特》中的理性意志与伦理选择”、李纲和张晓舒撰写的论文“伦理身份与人的责任——重读《小艾友夫》”和张连桥撰写的论文“自我救赎与伦理情怀——《布朗德》中的道德困境与伦理选择”，受到学界一致好评。
2. 参见本刊2012年第3期刊发的3篇易卜生专题论文，分别是由朱黎航撰写的论文“身份困惑与伦理选择——《海上夫人》的主人公艾梨达分析”、由林宛莹撰写的论文“人生的建筑师——论《建筑师》中的身份追寻与心灵孤独”和由郑美善撰写的论文“‘究竟社会正确，还是我正确？’——论《玩偶之家》的伦理身份与伦理禁忌”。
3. 参见聂珍钊教授的论文“文学伦理学批评：伦理选择与斯芬克斯因子”（《外国文学研究》2011年第6期）和“文学伦理学批评：基本理论与术语”（《外国文学研究》2010年第1期）等论文。

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责任编辑：尚必武

论《英格夫人》中的伦理困境与伦理选择

郭晶晶

内容提要：《英格夫人》讲述了一个在民族责任和母子亲情中挣扎的“北方女英雄”因为错误的选择而造成民族和个人悲剧的故事。作品向观众和读者展示了母子亲情和民族利益之间的冲突和选择，从而说明在民族危难的关键时刻，舍弃亲情才是大爱，放弃个人恩怨和个人得失才是对个人利益的最好保护。

关键词：《英格夫人》；伦理困境；伦理选择

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Title: The Ethical Dilemma and Choices in *Lady Inger of Ostrat*

Abstract: *Lady Inger of Ostrat* tells the story of a Northern heroine who struggles between patriotic duty and maternal love. Through the creation of this character and her tragedy brought about by her own wrong choices, the play shows to the audience and readers the conflicts between national interests and personal interests and thus warns us: at the critical moment when a nation is in danger, it is wise to abandon personal interests for the interests of our country.

Key words: *Lady Inger of Ostrat*; ethical dilemma; ethical choices

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易卜生的早期戏剧和他的早期诗歌一样，“充满民族奋发精神与浪漫主义激情，幻想丰富、个性突出、冲突尖锐”（王忠祥 8），而《厄斯特罗特的英格夫人》（*Lady Inger of Ostrat*，简称《英格夫人》）就是其中的一部。该剧创作于 1854 年冬，1855 年春在卑尔根剧院首次演出。由于作家的创作技巧尚不圆熟，导致情节过于冗杂拖沓，因此戏剧在初次上映时并未获得观众和评论家的太多关注。然而，也正是这部未受关注的戏剧预示了一个天才剧作家的即将诞生¹。

《英格夫人》是一部五幕悲剧，讲述了一个在民族责任和母子亲情中挣扎的“北方女英雄”因为错误的选择而造成民族和个人悲剧的故事。该剧取材于挪威历史，但是剧作家并没有简单地再现历史，而是将历史事件与历史人物进行重写，把他们的故事与当时挪威争取民族独立、民族解放的斗争结合起来。这种结合不仅表现了易卜生的爱国主义、民族主义精神与反对外来侵略的政治

热情,更寄托了作者深邃的伦理思考:每个人都兼具多重伦理身份,因此,当人们在人生中面临一些重要的选择时,基于不同伦理身份做出的不同选择往往会相互矛盾。而在民族危难的关键时刻,只有基于民族大义,根据自己的社会身份而非其他身份做出的选择才是最正确的选择,也只有将民族大义置于个人恩怨和个人得失之上,才是对个人利益的最好保护¹。

一、双重伦理身份

剧中的英格夫人出身于挪威高贵的罗迈尔家族,以厄斯特罗特为领地。就社会身份而言,她是厄斯特罗特领地的女领主。由于当时挪威许多受人尊重的老贵族先后死去,罗迈尔家族便成为反抗丹麦统治的一支重要力量。而作为领主的英格夫人由于其特殊的地位以及对国家的忠心,被视为挪威人民的救星,承担着重要的民族责任。正如她的小女儿艾梨纳所言,挪威贵族和人民相信“上帝在你前额上盖了他的印章,选派你领导受压迫、自己无能为力的人民。骑士和贵族在宴会厅里对你歌功颂德,甚至各地的农民,不分远近,也把你当作国家的支柱,挪威的救星,大家都相信,由于你,幸福日子会重新出现!大家都相信,由于你,全国会出现一个光明的新时代”(221)²。她被认定是为国家“劈碎枷锁、恢复主权的人物”(231-232)。就当时的历史背景和英格夫人的特殊地位而言,作为领主的英格夫人,被挪威人民寄予了很大的希望,她的责任就是带领挪威贵族和人民将挪威从丹麦的统治下解放出来。

多年来,英格夫人确实是不负众望。身为女性,她具有超常的刚毅和果决,十年来“一直诚心诚意遵守着自己的诺言,把本国人的灾难困苦放在自己的肩膀上”(286)。除了国家的灾难和自己的责任之外,她不把任何事情放在心上,并因此在人民群众中建立起了极高的威信。挪威人民敬重她,把她“当作一位崇高伟大的妇人看待”(221)。

然而,领主仅仅是英格夫人的社会身份,一个人除了社会身份以外还兼具其它身份。就性别身份而言,英格是一个女人。作为一个正常的女人,她和别人一样有恋爱、结婚、生子的愿望。在克努特·阿尔夫孙的灵床旁边许下诺言后的十年中,英格夫人一直信守着自己的诺言,甚至放弃了作为一个正常女性的情感需求。在她还是一个小姑娘的时候,就有许多人向她求婚,当时的她一心想到的是人民的灾难,自己肩负的民族责任,根本没把儿女情长放在心上,因此,当她的女友都为人妻、为人母的时候,她仍然独身一人。然而斯都吕的出现改变了这一切,这个男人唤醒了 she 长期以来压抑着的对爱情的渴望,她的女人的性别身份因爱情而得到了强化,领主身份也因此而受到了淡化。和斯都吕伯爵在一起的那年的冬天她完全沉入爱河,享受着爱情的滋润,几乎忘却了自己作为领主的责任。英格夫人自己也承认自从认识斯都吕伯爵以后对于国家的事情她想得越来越少了。这一次恋情的结局是,在没有取得合法婚姻的情况下,她生下了一个私生子,从此具有了另外一个身份:母亲。

其实,生活在社会群体中的每一个人的身份都不可能是单一的,除了社会身

份外，还有在家庭中的身份。不同的身份要求人们履行不同的责任和义务。但由于种种原因，人们在履行这众多的责任时往往会遇到一些困惑和麻烦，尤其是在履行一种责任和履行另一种责任发生冲突时，麻烦就更大。作为领主，英格理当承担起对国家和人民的责任，尤其是在国家处于危难之际，她应该团结挪威贵族、带领挪威农民共同抵御外来侵略；而作为母亲，她又担负着保护孩子的责任，特别是当自己的孩子被控制在他人之手，成为政治交易的一颗棋子，成为她履行民族责任的羁绊之时，母爱和民族责任就发生了激烈冲突。由于当时所处的特殊历史环境以及英格夫人在其中所处的特殊地位，她面临的问题似乎更加突出。

二、伦理困惑和挣扎

“客观的伦理环境或历史环境是理解、阐释和评价文学的基础”（聂珍钊 14），所以英格夫人在处理双重伦理身份而带来的伦理责任时所处的特殊历史环境是我们解读文本的关键所在。这出悲剧发生于 16 世纪的挪威，当时丹麦统治着挪威，同时又通过瑞典国王古斯塔夫的领导控制着瑞典。但是瑞典人民一直都没有屈服于丹麦的统治，不断地进行反抗。以彼特首相为首的反对派一直都在暗中准备，等待机会发动起义。挪威国内的情况则比较复杂，反抗丹麦统治的挪威贵族几乎被斩尽杀绝，留下的也被迫离家出逃，流亡在荒山密林里。在挪威南部，很多贵族由于既得利益的驱使都拥护丹麦人，而在英格夫人所在的北方，挪威农民一直都有把丹麦人赶出去的愿望，并且一度在英格夫人的领导下进行过艰苦卓绝的斗争，但后来因为英格夫人的犹豫和退缩，又没有另外一个有势力和号召力的领袖起来领导，他们不得不苟延残喘于丹麦人的统治之下。

在这种背景下，英格夫人的特殊身份就使得她所处的地位变得十分重要。正如前文所示，英格夫人是厄斯特罗特的领主，曾经领导过挪威人民的反抗斗争，在挪威人民中具有很高的威信。因此，瑞典的反对派领袖彼特首相极力争取她的支持，鉴于英格夫人在人民心中的地位和威望，争取到英格夫人的支持无疑就争取到了挪威人民的支持，这样他们就可以联合起来推翻瑞典国王古斯塔夫的领导，选取新的国王，从而摆脱丹麦对瑞典的控制。从这一点来讲，挪威人民和彼特首相领导的反对派的利益是一致的，因为如果瑞典摆脱了丹麦的统治，就会大大削弱丹麦的势力，同时给长期以来一直都在争取民族独立的挪威人民以极大的精神鼓舞，从而处于摇摆状况的挪威贵族就会和挪威农民联合起来，共同推翻丹麦的统治。丹麦人对此当然是心知肚明，因此，英格夫人也成了丹麦人的拉拢对象。如果得到英格夫人的支持，他们对挪威的统治就非常稳固了。相反，如果英格夫人和彼特首相联合起来，不仅他们在瑞典的统治要遭到毁灭性打击，在挪威的统治也必定受到影响。因此，英格夫人成了三国政治博弈中一个至关重要的人物。

从以上分析可以看出，挪威和瑞典的利益是一致的。既然如此，英格夫人

的立场也应该十分清楚，她应该和彼特首相联手共同抵抗丹麦的统治，以实现当年的誓言。然而，英格夫人的儿子和他的特殊身份和处境把这个看似简单的事情变得复杂化了。英格夫人和斯都吕伯爵的儿子是非婚生儿子，属于“私生子”。

“私生子”被看作是破坏伦理规则的产物，而“社会的伦理规则是伦理秩序的保障，一个人只要生活在这个社会里，就必然要受到伦理规则的制约，否则就会受到惩罚”（聂珍钊 19）。为避免惩罚，“私生子”的身份常常被隐匿起来。该剧中，英格夫人的儿子尼尔·斯丹孙的身份也是这样处理的。

英格夫人与斯都吕伯爵有了私情并生下这个私生子，却又没有办法让他拥有正常的社会伦理身份，拥有正常的家庭生活。为了隐瞒伦理犯罪，这个孩子被交给瑞典的彼得首相去抚养，从此他的身份被隐匿起来。这种母子分离给英格夫人造成了极大的痛苦。她整天为儿子担惊受怕，“他在生人手里受教养，我担心那些人也许会在心里种下堕落实苗。”（281）更为不幸的是，斯都吕伯爵死后，这个孩子被彼得首相所控制，成了政治交易中的一颗棋子。彼得首相利用这个孩子一直不断地对英格夫人施加压力，告诉她“哪一天你全心全意跟我们合伙，哪一天我就把你儿子送回挪威，早一天都办不到”（280）。在这种情况下，对儿子的牵挂使得她“心神不宁”、“整夜睡不着”，以至于“一天比一天消瘦”，“脸色越来越苍白”（210）。她每夜在宴会厅里来回走动，“低声哀诉”，“好像一个痛苦的鬼魂”（215）。

这个孩子给她造成的不仅是无尽的精神折磨，还有巨大的现实困扰，成了英格夫人一生的牵挂和履行国家职责的羁绊，让她失去了往日的理想和果敢，陷入伦理两难的境地，对儿子的牵挂使她挣扎于民族利益和个人得失之间。虽然丹麦人和彼特首相都想得到她的支持，但是站在两个敌对阵营的英格夫人的处境又是十分的尴尬和困难。一方面，丹麦和瑞典哪方面都想争取她，哪方面又不敢完全信任她。另一方面，为了既得利益她应该和丹麦人合作，而民族关系又让她和“反叛分子”结合在一起。无论是从国家利益来讲还是从儿子的安危来考虑，英格夫人似乎都应该毫不犹豫地站在彼特首相的一边，支持挪威农民对丹麦人的反抗。可是在剧中她为什么总是反复无常，迟迟不愿行动呢？首先，作为母亲她深爱着自己的儿子，又因为儿子出生后的遭遇和目前的处境，她对儿子的感情更胜过一般母子之情。因此，英格夫人格外担心她的行为会将儿子置于非常危险的境地：一旦她有所行动，而她的行动被国内支持丹麦人的南方贵族发觉，这些人会对她的儿子不利。虽然没有任何证据证明国内支持丹麦人的贵族知道有关她儿子的任何消息，她却始终担心着事情的暴露，从而给儿子带来伤害，乃至给他带来杀身之祸。“如果他们发觉了我的秘密——喔，我知道！——为了剪断母亲的翅膀，他们会把对付克里斯替恩二世的手段——如果他不逃走的话——对付我儿子，结果他性命”（280）。其次，丹麦人也从未放松过对她的戒备，他们对她威胁利诱，逼她和他们合伙。虽然没有明证可以证明他们知道她有个儿子，但作为一个受良心折磨的敏感母亲，英格夫人在他们的言语中总是能感觉到某种暗示。所以，在尼尔·列凯提到她的儿子时她的反

应会是这样：“你知道这件事！你——你！那么他在什么地方？——你在哪里把他逮住的？你打算把他怎么样？（尖声喊叫）别杀他，尼尔·列凯！把他交还我！别杀我的孩子！”（278）从英格夫人的激烈反应中我们可以得到这样的信息：她一直相信丹麦人知道她的秘密，而且他们会因为自己的关系而对她的儿子不利。对此，她这样坦言：“我对本国人抱着一片忠心；然而，我自己不能做主。有些事不得不瞒人，否则我就会遭受致命伤。然而只要让我在这方面一得到安全，你就可以看清楚我是不是忘了我在克努特阿尔夫孙灵床前发下的誓言。”（273）显然，这里需要瞒人的事情就是她的儿子，正是这个儿子成了她履行誓言、采取行动的障碍。

既然她对本国人抱着“一片忠心”，在需要她站出来领导反抗斗争的时候，她的无所作为就不能让她心安理得了。她曾经是一个带领挪威人民反抗丹麦统治的女英雄，她深知人民的期待，自己的责任。并且就她的性格而言，她绝对不愿屈服于任何人的控制，也不愿她的国家受制于丹麦。当她因为对儿子命运的担忧而不能履行民族义务的时候，她的内心是极度痛苦的，受道德感和民族感的折磨，她每天晚上像幽灵似的在宴会厅来回走动。“我身上压着这个诺言的重担，我的头发都花白了”（228）。她深知自己的责任，却无法履行自己的责任，在伦理两难的困惑中度日如年。因为不能履行曾经许下的诺言，在内心里她一直受到谴责，甚至不敢正视挂在墙上的先辈的画像，她“把克努特·阿尔夫孙的画像翻过去朝着墙”，因为“他的眼睛把她盯得太紧了！”（214）她以为这样就可以减轻良心的折磨，可是在她选择一己私利而牺牲国家利益的时候，她总感到“脸色惨白的灵魂——去世的祖先——阵亡的亲族。——啊，他们的眼睛从每个角落紧紧盯住她（我）！”（229）一方面，她担心儿子的命运，因为对儿子命运的顾忌，她不敢稍有闪失而让自己的敌人抓住了把柄；另一方面，她在犹豫、徘徊中深感良心的不安，不敢面对自己的祖先，不敢面对挪威人民，因为她知道他们都在看着她、在谴责她，她的责任感和她的良心让她生活在自责、惶恐和不安中。正是英格夫人所处的特殊伦理环境使她陷入伦理两难的境地，从而使一向办事果决的她在民族大义面前患得患失、犹豫不决，致使民族解放运动陷入瘫痪状态。

三、伦理选择及悲剧结局

在该剧中，英格夫人有过几次关键性的伦理选择，正是因为她在面临这些选择的时候过于考虑亲情，从而让自己背弃了领主的责任而做出错误的选择，最终成为“由利己而导致毁灭的典型代表”（煦佟 119）。

英格夫人的领主身份决定了她对国家和人民应付的责任。然而长久以来，儿子的安危一直困扰着英格夫人，影响着她的决定。自从儿子被交由别人抚养后，英格夫人没有一天的安宁，她每天都生活在担惊受怕、含羞忍辱之中。对孩子教育的担忧、对孩子安危的担忧无时无刻不在蚕食着母亲脆弱的心。在她犹豫、徘徊的时候，实际上她已经做出了选择，那就是把儿子的安危置于民族利益之上，

只记得自己是个母亲而忘记了自己还是被寄予厚望的领主，忽视了作为领主应该承担的责任。她似乎忘记了这样一个道理：在国家面临危难的时候，个人的安危是难于保全的。在接下来的一系列选择中，她更是完全站在一个母亲的角度来考虑问题，一步一步地把剧情引向最后的结局。

在本剧开始的时候，英格夫人领地的农民和英格夫人的仆从得到消息，瑞典的达尔斯人民起义反抗古斯塔夫国王了，并且请求英格夫人发放兵器，批准假期，以便参加达尔斯人民的军队。这是个帮助瑞典人民解放自己的绝好时机，如果挪威贵族和农民同心协力、团结一心，他们就可以把丹麦统治者赶出挪威，这是英格夫人“最盼望的事情”（217），她也看出来这是最佳时机。所以在片刻迟疑之后，她答应了人民的请求，这让那些长期跟从她的人们感到她又回到了从前，又是他们曾经认识和信赖的英格夫人了。可是，尼尔·列凯的一封信却让她改变了主意。她深知国家的命运掌握在她手里，她有权力号召人民一起行动，而且他们也在等着她发号施令，而且这种机会一旦失去再也不会有了，这是国家命运的关键时刻！可是，她又犹豫了！这又是为什么呢？

我们先来看看她的说法：英格夫人认为在国内还没有团结一致的时候，“斗智”胜过“斗剑”，这是一种斗争策略，“可以争取一段喘气的时间”（223）。无论说法怎样，表明的意思只有一个：时机尚不成熟。事实上，英格夫人心里比谁都清楚，这只是拖延，而且拖延的结果是“为一个人，牺牲许多人”（229）。这里的一个人除了她的儿子还会是谁呢？“二十多年来我一直在处心积虑地救我的孩子”（291），孩子成为她一切行为的准则。虽然知道这样做有悖于祖先，有悖于挪威人民，她还是选择了为儿子的安危而牺牲大家的利益。正是她的拖延使起义错失良机，使挪威人民更加深陷于被统治的地位。

在儿子和“斯都吕小伯爵”之间进行选择是母爱和民族大义之间的又一次选择。保住了儿子就圆了英格夫人多年来母子相见的梦想，保住“斯都吕小伯爵”则留下民族独立的希望。而英格夫人这次错误的选择不仅造成了民族悲剧，也造成了错杀亲子的个人悲剧。

英格夫人的儿子尼尔斯·丹孙至始至终都是这出剧的关键人物。从他被带走的那一刻起，英格夫人再也没有见过他。他本来是彼特首相派到厄斯特罗特城堡会晤挪威贵族斯卡克达夫的使者，却误将敌国丹麦使臣尼尔·列凯当成自己应该会晤的人，并向他和盘托出自己的秘密使命，并把全部文件和信札拱手交给了尼尔·列凯，完全听命于尼尔·列凯，对英格夫人隐瞒自己的真实身份，冒充已死的尼尔·斯都吕，结果被英格夫人派人杀掉。

那么，尼尔·斯都吕又是谁？英格夫人为什么要杀死他呢？尼尔·斯都吕就是斯坦恩·斯都吕伯爵的儿子和合法继承人，现在的斯都吕伯爵。恰恰就在农民起义即将在达尔斯发起之前，斯都吕伯爵却突然去世了，这件事除了他母亲、彼特首相和府里几个老家人外，其他人一概不知。因为斯都吕伯爵是起义的集合中心，“如果他去世的消息一传播出去，人心就会涣散，事情就会完蛋”（263）。天无绝人之路，正在这个时候尼尔·斯丹孙出现在达尔斯，斯丹孙是

斯都吕伯爵的同父异母的哥哥，因为两人长得酷似，被达尔斯人民当成斯都吕受到了热烈欢迎。达尔斯的局势本来就不稳定，他一去，人民就公开起事了，而且还要推选他当瑞典国王。无意中，尼尔·斯丹孙促成了这场农民起义，而因为斯都吕伯爵在这次农民起义中的关键作用以及他的影响力，不知底细的丹麦人正不惜代价派重兵四处追杀他。

如果的确如英格夫人知道的那样，眼前的这个人就是斯都吕伯爵，那么对于这么一个关键人物，作为谙熟政治之道的英格夫人，他的价值及对农民起义的意义她不会不知道，可她为什么还会让人杀了他呢？其中最明显、最直接的原因就是“斯都吕伯爵”的存在威胁到她的儿子尼尔·斯丹孙的性命，影响了他的命运。在尼尔·斯丹冒充的斯都吕伯爵带领的起义军被瑞典指挥官颜斯·别尔凯埋伏的军队击败后，他逃回到厄斯特罗特城堡，在瑞典指挥官即将冲进来抓“斯都吕伯爵”的时候，他决定“要买性命和自由，把事情全都告诉他”（301）。他本来是要把自己冒充斯都吕伯爵的事实告诉瑞典指挥官从而免去一死，而时时刻刻总在惦记着儿子的英格夫人却误以为“斯都吕伯爵”（尼尔·斯丹孙）要用出卖她儿子的秘密来挽救自己的性命，所以她要用一条命换一条命。所以，出于母亲保护儿子的本能她决定杀死“斯都吕伯爵”。

英格夫人杀死“斯都吕伯爵”固然就是为了确保儿子的安全，但其中另外一个因素也不容忽视，那就是列凯无意中说出的一句话：想当“国王母后”。如果说在儿子处于危难中，作母亲的唯一心思是想着如何把儿子救出来，“谁爱当国王谁当”，那么，在英格夫人确定儿子马上就要回到自己身边的时候，她的想法就不那么简单了。她不仅要保证儿子的安全，还要保证儿子的地位：“难道我儿子就不该跟那人一样承袭斯都吕家族的名位？”（292）她明明知道儿子能回到她身边是她多年的愿望，她该知足了，她也明明知道“当国王母后”的想法会引起上天的“发怒”，以至于“降灾殃”于她，被一己私利冲昏头脑的她却无法放下这个想法，她无视斯都吕伯爵对瑞典人民起义的意义及接下来对挪威独立运动的意义，做出了损害民族利益的事情，造成了错杀亲子的惨剧，同时也把农民起义的最后一点希望毁掉了，给民族独立造成了无法挽回的损失。

英格夫人悲剧的根源源于关键时刻错误的选择。母子亲情固然是世间最伟大、最无私的感情，值得尊重和理解。但是，作为一个人民寄予厚望的领导人，倘若在国家处于生死存亡的时候，只顾惜母子亲情而置国家利益于不顾，甚至牺牲国家利益来保护母子亲情，不仅是不明智的举动，甚至是可耻的行为。正如剧中的英格夫人，假如在一开始从民族利益出发她就和彼特首相合作，无论起义成功与否，她都会被载入史册，被挪威人民永远铭记，同时，很有可能她深爱的儿子也早已回到她的身边；假如在她面对挪威农民参加瑞典起义的要求时，把儿子的安危以及把和列凯之间的个人恩怨稍稍放一下，可能后面的故事就要重写；假如在她动手杀死“斯都吕小伯爵”之前，稍稍念及另外一个母亲的失子之痛，念及一下“斯都吕小伯爵”之死给起义带来的毁灭性打击，那么无论是什么样的理由都无法让她举起屠刀，儿子的性命虽然堪忧，但至少不至

于落个错杀亲子的下场。可是，历史是不会重演的，所以才有“一失足而成千古恨”这样的至理名言。英格夫人的时代虽已过去，但该剧仍然是一记警钟，告诉我们什么才是正确的选择。

注解【Notes】

1. Archer, William. "Introduction." *The Works of Henrik Ibsen*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911.
2. 本文中所有《英格夫人》的引文均出自潘家洵等译《易卜生文集》（第一卷），人民文学出版社 1995 年版，以下引文只标出页码，不再一一注明。

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论《皇帝与加利利人》中朱利安的背叛与毁灭

柏 灵

内容摘要：《皇帝与加利利人》取材于史实，讲述了罗马皇帝朱利安的一生。朱利安从王子成为凯撒，后又背叛君士坦提乌斯成为罗马皇帝，皇帝朱利安致力于建立第三帝国但遭到人民的反抗，最后朱利安被推翻，其试图建立的帝国也遭毁灭。朱利安的背叛和毁灭是他不断进行伦理选择的结果，他的每一次伦理选择又与他伦理身份的变化和他对人性的理解密切相关。易卜生以朱利安的选择和由此导致的结局，表现了人作为斯芬克斯因子存在以及伦理选择在个人命运发展中的重要性。

关键词：《皇帝与加利利人》；文学伦理学批评；伦理身份；斯芬克斯因子；伦理选择

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Title: On Julian's Apostasy and Destruction in *Emperor and Galilean*

Abstract: Drawing upon history, *Emperor and Galilean* revolves around Julian's life from prince to Caesar, from Caesar to the Emperor of Roman and to his final tragic death. The changes of his identity and his understanding of humanity are the underlying reasons for each of his ethical choice, which in turn constitutes dramatic transitions of his life. Staging Julian's apostasy and destruction, this play presents the Sphinx Factor and the important role ethical choices play in the life of individuals.

Key words: *Emperor and Galilean*; Ethical Literary Criticism; ethical identity; Sphinx Factor; ethical choice

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《皇帝与加利利人》（*Emperor and Galilean*, 1873）是易卜生最长的一部戏剧作品，易卜生曾经在许多场合强调这部剧作的重要性。在我国对《皇帝与加利利人》的研究较其他易卜生作品研究而言相对薄弱。《皇帝与加利利人》分为两部，第一部《凯撒的背叛》讲述朱利安从王子成为凯撒和背叛君士坦提乌斯皇帝的经历；第二部《朱利安大帝》中，成为罗马皇帝的朱利安因推崇古希腊众神教，迫害天主教徒而遭到激烈的反抗，朱利安最终被推翻，其建立的帝国灭亡。该剧从最初的构想到完成历时九年，期间易卜生还创作了另外两部具

有影响力的戏剧《布兰特》和《皮尔·金特》。《皇帝与加利利人》的构思产生于这两部剧作之前，却是在这两部剧作之后才最终完成，这三部作品在主题上也呈现出某种一致性，都表现了伦理选择与伦理身份之间的关系和对人性的思考。如果说布兰特始终恪守牧师伦理身份，以宗教理性引导自己的每一次行为选择，那么皮尔·金特则是受欲望驱使而抛弃人的伦理身份和伦理责任的另一极端。在《皇帝与加利利人》中易卜生进一步探讨了伦理身份如何影响人的伦理选择。朱利安的命运是他不断进行伦理选择的结果，而他的每一次伦理选择又与他的身份变化和对人性的理解相关。易卜生通过朱利安的命运，表现了人作为斯芬克斯因子的存在以及伦理选择在个人命运发展中的重要性。

一、宗教选择与人性思考

《皇帝与加利利人》的剧名暗含贯穿整部戏剧的两大宗教矛盾，即当时罗马的国教基督教和敬奉奥林匹亚山众神的古希腊多神教。罗马皇帝君士坦丁大帝认识到君主专制和一神论能够有效的实现君主集权，出于巩固皇权的目的，君士坦丁大帝宣布基督教为国教。在后来的一个世纪里，基督教与皇权联合起来控制了社会生活的方方面面，曾在罗马有着重要影响的古希腊文化和众神崇拜逐渐被取代。到朱利安时代，古希腊文化和宗教成为异教，它以传播雄辩术的方式存在，其目的是使基督教徒能够使用古希腊辩术对抗异教徒，传播基督教文化，起到以夷制夷的作用。

戏剧开篇接连出现的两个神启将朱利安置于两种宗教的选择之中。朱利安出生时他的母亲梦到了阿克琉斯。正当朱利安向阿加松表示他不理解梦的含义时，被驱逐出罗马的异教哲学家暗示朱利安就是伟大的异教徒利巴尼奥斯等待的精神上的“阿克琉斯”，他说朱利安的辩才和对希腊哲学的热诚使他能够成为未来新王国的领导人。异教哲学家告诉朱利安，正是出于对朱利安才能的畏惧和对他亲近希腊文化的不安，朱利安的导师黑格博流斯才不得不假借异教徒利巴尼奥斯的名义不断散布谣言诽谤朱利安，以图在朱利安与异教之间制造隔阂。在惊讶黑格博流斯的所作所为完全违背基督教教义之余，朱利安开始思考神启的含义。与此同时，阿加松告诉朱利安他前来罗马同样是出于神的启示。在参加对异教的斗争后，阿加松得到了神的启示，神启告诉他朱利安是上帝选中的人，上帝需要朱利安离开罗马“进入洞穴与狮子战斗”——即让朱利安学习敌人的哲学，像保罗那样用异教的知识 and 技巧打败异教徒。对于异教的神阿克琉斯的启示，基督教徒阿加松十分不安，他让朱利安坚定自己的信仰，相信基督的指引。

一个是做异教“精神上的阿克琉斯”，一个是像基督教徒保罗一样“进入洞穴与狮子战斗”。两种选择都指引朱利安进一步学习异教古希腊文化，但是目的却有所不同，一个是为了建立异教的新国家，一个却是对抗异教从而巩固基督教。面对两种选择，朱利安站在了基督教一方，这是由他的伦理身份决定的。其时的罗马皇帝君士坦提乌斯不仅沿袭了基督教国教制度，更进一步巩固基督

教的地位以加强君主集权。作为罗马皇帝君士坦提乌斯的侄子，作为从小接受基督教教育的教徒，朱利安毫不怀疑基督教教义即真理，他愤恨异教徒利巴尼奥斯将君士坦丁堡变成了亵渎神灵的巴比伦，于是他选择遵循基督教的启示，离开罗马去雅典，去异教徒的地方学习异教知识以巩固基督教的地位。

在雅典期间，朱利安却开始对基督教和异教进行反思。朱利安的反思源于发生在安条克的一场伦理犯罪。受人尊敬的亚力山德里亚人克莱马蒂奥斯未经法律审判就被处决，原因竟然是克莱马蒂奥斯拒绝了岳母的乱伦要求。他的岳母出于报复，用一串价值连城的珍珠买通了凯撒加勒斯妻子，买到了处死克莱马蒂奥斯的处决令。这一桩违背伦常的事件使整个安条克成了被诅咒的城市：“骇人听闻的无耻行为像瘟疫一样在安条克流传开来，一切罪恶活动都已苏醒，从最阴暗的角落里爬了出来……仿佛一个臭气熏天的深渊正在打开，妻子告发自己的丈夫，儿子告发他们的父亲，教士告发他们的教徒”（194）。¹ 当朱利安听闻这一切时，他控诉到：“是啊，你满可以问这是什么世道，一个基督教杀人犯，一个信基督的淫妇，一个女基督徒——”（194）。朱利安从这桩伦理犯罪以及由此引发的伦理混乱中看到了原欲引起的罪恶。这一切发生在基督教徒身上的事实使朱利安开始怀疑基督教能否如它所宣扬的那样引导人，实现人的精神净化。

在异教徒的身上，朱利安看到欲望以及由欲望导致的犯罪同样存在。朱利安曾试图运用异教徒的知识与利奥巴斯展开世俗真理与神的真理的辩论，然而，他发现与真理相比，以利奥巴斯为代表的异教徒更看中物质欲望的满足，因为学生的供奉是满足和维持他们的物质生活的来源，于是他们打着教授真理的旗帜，为抢夺学生大打出手。对利奥巴斯，朱利安这样评论到：

利奥巴斯知识渊博，但是他不是一个伟人。利奥巴斯非常贪婪，他爱虚荣……他可以详述各种美德的本质和标志。这一切他了如指掌，就像他图书室里的书伸手可取，可是他自己实行这些美德吗？他的生活和他的教训一致吗？他算是苏格拉底和柏拉图的继承人——哈哈。（197）

苏格拉底和柏拉图的道德教诲没能让利奥巴斯的欲望受到理性的约束。他对美德的本质和标准了如指掌，然而在现实生活中却仍然受欲望的控制，其行为毫无美德可言。朱利安嘲讽利奥巴斯根本不配做崇尚道德的苏格拉底和柏拉图的继承人。此时，朱利安的思考已经超出了两种宗教本身而上升到伦理的层面。他对安条克犯罪的控诉和对利奥巴斯的评价表现了他对人性思考，尤其是对人的欲望的反思。在朱利安看来，无论是基督教徒还是异教徒，当他们的欲望膨胀时，教义只是他们用来掩盖欲求的幌子。物欲横流使朱利安发出“何处寻找真理”的感叹：

从东到西都有对我的呼唤，要求我拯救基督精神，这意义究竟何在？

它在哪里？让我去拯救的基督精神又在哪里？在皇帝身上还是凯撒身上？我觉得他们的所作所为在大声喊叫“不要，不要”。难道在好色的半人半兽的朝臣身上？他们手抚肥大的肚子，哆哆嗦嗦地问“上帝之子是创造于虚无之中吗？”……还有帝国境内大批衣衫褴褛的民众，他们捣毁庙宇，杀害异教徒和异教徒的家族！他们这样干也是为了基督吗？哈哈——为争夺被害者的遗物，他们自己又你争我夺打的不可开交。……难道在城市里？在君士坦丁堡的面包师身上？他们最近挥拳斗殴，要用武力在解决三位一体到底是三个人还是由三种神性的有形体现而组成。（205）

朱利安开始怀疑基督教是否是一直追寻的真理。在以基督教为国教的罗马，基督教义本应是必须遵守的伦理准则，但是罗马皇帝的所作所为却与其信奉的教义背道而驰。皇帝君斯坦提乌斯为了夺得王位，杀害了朱利安一家十一口人，并对朱利安和加勒斯严密监视，使他们一直生活在死亡的恐惧中。为了消除朱利安同胞兄弟加勒斯的反抗隐患，君士坦提乌斯立加勒斯为皇位继承人凯撒，也一并分化朱利安与加勒斯，消除他们联合谋逆的可能。而凯撒加勒斯在安条克施行酷政，他的妻子因为一串项链满足了克莱马蒂奥斯乱伦的岳母的复仇欲望。不仅皇室贵族，罗马城民也打着维护基督的旗号杀害异教徒，目的只是为了满足自己的物欲。朱利安用“半人半兽”来描述欲望膨胀的朝臣，他的描述将人的非理性行为归咎于人身上的失控的动物本能，即人身上的兽性因子。²朱利安看到基督教理性并没能使这些教徒的动物本能得到约束，反而成为他们满足欲望的工具，因此朱利安指责他们是“半人半猪”（202），他怀疑在基督教中能够找到“真理”的存在。

与这些人相对，朱利安在苏格拉底，柏拉图，俄狄浦斯，米迪亚等人身上看到了美：“诗文酒会上的苏格拉底不美吗？还有柏拉图和其他纵情求欢的兄弟们……想一想俄狄浦斯，米迪亚和勒达吧”（202）。在基督教徒的眼中这些异教徒是罪恶的，而朱利安却在他们身上看到了美，他问巴锡耳：“告诉我，巴锡耳，为什么这些异教徒的罪恶这么美？”（202）这里需要指出的是，古希腊对美的解释与现代不同，它强调的不是美学意义上的概念而是“美”的伦理内涵。³换句话说，美意味着道德高尚。所以，当朱利安说在苏格拉底，柏拉图，俄狄浦斯等的身上看到了美，他意味着在他们身上看到了伦理道德的美。

苏格拉底和柏拉图的哲学探讨伦理的意义和人的道德本质，都是以伦理道德为生活的准则。正是因为朱利安对当时罗马人的欲望膨胀和道德堕落感到忧虑，所以他将目光投向古希腊，他在苏格拉底和柏拉图身上看到了美，看到了伦理道德的力量。在犯下伦理大罪的俄狄浦斯和米迪亚身上，朱利安同样看到了伦理道德意义上的美，他说“如果有人指责半人半猪的基督教徒也干了他们所干的事，如果要指责他们，这些基督徒就会向上帝发誓，矢口否认的。想一想俄狄浦斯，米迪亚和勒达吧”（202）。这表明，在朱利安看来，俄狄浦斯与这些基督徒有所不同，因为他敢于面对自己犯下的罪恶。朱利安认为俄狄浦斯

尽管犯下乱伦之罪，但是他自始至终是一个具有伦理意识的人，在发现自己是犯下杀父娶母的乱伦大罪的元凶后，俄狄浦斯强烈的伦理意识促使他挖下自己的眼睛，正如聂珍钊教授所指出的，俄狄浦斯的悲剧“是一个在伦理和道德上自我发现、自我认识和自我救赎的悲剧，自始至终都是他的伦理意识在起作用”（聂珍钊 2006：116）。而米迪亚悲剧的伦理意义同样在于此，尽管她毒死伊阿宋的新娘并杀死自己的孩子做法源于被伊阿宋抛弃后失控的愤怒情绪，但是由于她犯下的弑子伦理大罪，仍然受到了命运严厉的惩罚。而基督教徒并非不犯罪，而是否认自己的罪行。因此朱利安看到的美，是指俄狄浦斯伦理意识所表现出的道德美，是指古希腊悲剧中对弑父娶母，杀害亲生子的伦理禁忌的严厉惩罚而起到的警示作用，而这正是“半人半猪”的基督教徒所缺乏的伦理教诲。

除伦理意义外，在朱利安对古希腊文化赞美中还暗含着另一层对人性的思考。他赞美“诗文酒会”上的苏格拉底，柏拉图和“纵情求欢”的兄弟，亚西比德，以及希腊神话中的勒达。这表明朱利安并不否认或者回避人的自然本性和欲望，他所崇尚的古希腊文明，不仅仅具有伦理道德的指导意义，也包含对人的本能的正视。正如布莱恩·约翰斯顿（Brain Johnston）所指出的，朱利安的此番表述反映了“从基督教对肉体 and 思想双重压迫中觉醒的十九世纪的反思”（247）。朱利安认为基督教通过对本能的回避与压制来实现精神救赎是一个谎言，他批评基督教对人的自然本性，尤其是自然情感的压抑，认为这是基督教控制人的自由意愿的手段：

自从那个加利利的先知成为世界的舵手，人性成了违禁品。按他说是，生命应该死亡，爱与恨同样是罪恶。他使人的血肉发生变化了吗？离不开大地的人就不再是从前的人了吗？我们内心最深处健康的灵魂应该抗拒这一切。我们应该有的意愿，偏偏违背我们自己的意志。（339）

基督教强调现世赎罪，压制一切人的自然情感和欲望，使活着时与死无异，甚至要用死来实现自我救赎，朱利安质疑基督教能够因此使人的血肉发生变化，得到灵魂的重生。在朱利安看来，基督教一方面以压抑人的自然本性的方式成为统治者控制自由意志，实现统治欲望的工具，另一方面基督教理性不仅不能使人的自然本性得到理性的引导和控制，反而成为满足欲望的工具。

朱利安对基督教和古希腊文化的思考反映了他对人的认识，人即是他口中所说的“半人半兽”的生物。从文学伦理学批评的角度来看，“半人半兽”是斯芬克斯因子的表现。斯芬克斯因子由两部分组成，即人性因子和兽性因子。人性因子即人的伦理意识，是指人能够分辨善恶的能力，而兽性因子是人在进化过程中动物本能的残留，是人身上非理性的因素。朱利安承认人的动物本能，即欲望的存在，但是他对苏格拉底，柏拉图，俄狄浦斯的推崇表明他重视人的伦理意识的引导作用，认为只有当人的自然本能处于伦理意识的控制之下时，人才能实现真正的灵肉和谐。朱利安认为与基督相比，真正实现灵肉和谐的人

是亚当，这进一步说明朱利安对伦理意识的重视。在基督教教义中，亚当因为欲望而吃下智慧树上的果实，犯下原罪，因此作为亚当后代的人类均打上了原罪的烙印，应该通过苦修和对欲望的克制来实现自我救赎。然而，从伦理的角度来看，伊甸园中的亚当一开始与其他动物并没有区别，他按照上帝的塑造，与其他动物一样按照自己的自然本性生活。当他吃下智慧树上的果实后，才有了伦理意识，知道了善恶美丑，也就拥有了自己的自由意志，才真正的将自己与动物区别开（聂珍钊 2011：4）。亚当具有人的欲望，但是却通过伦理选择获得了明辨善恶的伦理意识，从而将自己与动物区分开，朱利安将亚当作为灵肉和谐的完美代表，表明他既承认人的本能和欲望的存在，又希望人能够通过自己的伦理意识实现肉体欲望与精神的和谐。

朱利安的思考表明，他此时所面对的并非是在异教和基督教之间的宗教选择，而是一种伦理选择，即在异教和基督教之间，如何选择才能唤醒人的伦理意识，使膨胀的欲望能够得到伦理意识的规范和指引，真正实现肉体和精神和谐。面对由欲望泛滥造成的罗马社会伦理混乱，此时的朱利安就像是希望能够以自己的力量恢复社会秩序的哈姆莱特，他希望能够像亚当那样作出正确的伦理选择。

二、凯撒朱利安的背叛

在《皇帝与加利利人》中，基督教与异教的矛盾表现了由奥林匹亚众神代表的肉体帝国，也就是异教的美，与受难的基督所代表的基督教精神帝国，也就是基督教牺牲精神之间的矛盾冲突。而在崇尚自我牺牲，否定现世肉体欲望，期盼精神升华的基督教徒身上，朱利安看到了无法抑制的欲望以及由此造成的犯罪，在被基督教视为罪恶的，推崇世俗生活享受的异教徒身上，朱利安看到了推崇伦理道德的美。因此隐藏在宗教矛盾之下的，是更为普遍的矛盾，即人本能欲望与伦理意识，人性因子与兽性因子，灵与肉之间的矛盾，这一“二元对立的冲突使人类生活问题重重，并在人类生活中不间断的上演”（Norman Rhodes, 113）。朱利安为了选择能够真正实现灵肉和谐的真理，前往以弗所，希望马克西莫斯能够为他指明道路。

马克西莫斯通过通灵的法术，让朱利安见到了两个灵魂，这两个灵魂被马克西莫斯称为人类历史上第一帝国和第二帝国的奠基石。第一个是该隐，而第二个则是犹大。该隐背叛了他的兄弟亚伯，被上帝流放到荒漠，建立了人类的第一个城市，后来发展成为人类文明的父系社会。而犹大背叛了基督，基督的血却为人类的罪恶赎罪。从神话的角度来说，人类的进化与发展有赖于毁灭与创造构成的不间断的循环，因此该隐的毁灭，带来人类物质社会的发展和最初的家长制社会建立，而犹大的毁灭则带来基督为人类的殉难，从而使人类社会进入基督教的精神世界。⁴ 马克西莫斯告诉朱利安，他将是第三个帝国的奠基人。而正是这个第三帝国，可以帮助朱利安实现灵与肉的和谐：

马克西莫斯 第一个是建立在认知之树上的帝国——第二个是建立在十字架上的帝国。

朱利安 第三个呢？

马克西莫斯 第三个是奥秘的帝国，它建立在认知之树和十字架之上。因为它对二者即恨又爱，因为他生命的源泉即在亚当的树林，也在各各他。

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马克西莫斯所描绘的第一帝国和第二帝国展现了人类社会发展的两个阶段。人类社会初期，以满足人类繁衍需求的物质生产为主，古希腊众神传说表现人的自然本性，是以生殖繁衍为主的社会发展时期的表现；而强调自我牺牲，克制本能与欲望，以苦修生活换得精神救赎的基督教时期，则是人类完成了从动物到人的生物选择后，以基督教教义作为伦理法则的伦理选择，是人类进入精神世界的阶段。而马克西莫斯预言的第三帝国则是这两者的结合，它源于第一帝国，是亚当吃下智慧果实后的诞生的世界，这意味着第三帝国承认人的自然本性，即欲望和本能的存在，但是强调伦理的作用。尽管基督教统治的第二帝国是人类社会进入伦理社会的标志，代表人类社会精神发展的较高阶段，但是，基督教以人的自然本性为罪恶的标志，因此走入试图完全压制人的自然欲望的极端。而只有第三帝国才是灵肉和谐的发展阶段，因为它“吸收了异教主义和极端教义，如他所设想的那样，成为人类成熟的标志。与人类社会异教的幼年期和基督教的成年期有所不同，……使冲突的精神与肉体和解”。⁵

然而，此时的朱利安没有听从马克西莫斯的指导，作出背叛罗马建立第三帝国的选择，这是由他的伦理身份决定的。该隐和犹大的背叛者身份暗示朱利安将会成为基督教帝国的背叛者，他必须像该隐和犹大一样才能完成这一使命，因此朱利安惊恐地拒绝马克西莫斯的指引，因为尽管他看到了基督教统治下仍然存在着由于欲望导致的各种犯罪，并且急迫地想要找到解决的途径，但是作为罗马国民，基督教徒，罗马皇帝的血亲及臣子，他无法通过背叛自己的国家，自己的宗教，背叛与自己有着血缘关系和君臣关系的君士坦提乌斯来实现这一目的。朱利安的伦理身份决定了他的伦理责任，而作为一个推崇伦理道德，具有伦理意识的人，朱利安几次拒绝推翻皇帝君士坦提乌斯。在他被任命为凯撒并且在抵御敌国的战争中取得胜利后，面对宫廷中朝臣的诽谤和嘲讽，面对海伦娜的怂恿，他所想的还是如他原来的期望一样，去一个偏僻的地方生活，去建立属于他的新的世界。甚至在君士坦提乌斯听到兵变传言，慌忙出逃后，朱利安仍然打算将兵权归还与他。所有这一切都表明朱利安对伦理的遵从。

但是，随着剧情的推进，当皇帝君士坦提乌斯谋划的一系列阴谋的暴露后，朱利安最终做出了推翻罗马君主的选择。君士坦提乌斯出于分化他和加勒斯的目的，首先封加勒斯为凯撒，却又出于对加勒斯的怀疑，密谋害死了加勒斯，为了稳定朱利安，又封朱利安为凯撒，并在他出战退敌期间，迅速新娶王后，以此谋划一个新的帝位继承人。君士坦提乌斯的一系列举动客观上造成了朱利

安身份的变化，他意识到自己不再是罗马帝国的臣子，而是一直被罗马皇帝阴谋迫害的人，君士坦提乌斯切断了君臣之间的伦理关系，使朱利安失去了为人臣的身份，也因而不需要再承担这一身份所负有的伦理责任。同时，朱利安认识到，在君士坦提乌斯政教一体的集权统治下，所谓的宗教理性，并非真正意义上的伦理意识，而是压制人的本性和自由意愿从而巩固集权统治工具：

我明白了君士坦丁大帝为什么让这种束缚意志的教义在他的帝国境内取得胜利和权威。布置在皇宫四周的持矛置盾的近卫军远没有这种直指尘世生活之上的，征服人心的信仰来的可靠。你仔细观察过这些基督徒没有？眼窝深陷，两颊无光，胸脯平摊。各个全都如此。他们完全像纺织裹尸布的工人。他们无所追求，在沉默中消磨自己的一生。太阳为他们照耀，而他们却看不见，大地供给他们富饶的一切，而他们却无此需要——他们唯一的愿望是弃知绝欲，忍受痛苦，然后他们便可以死去。（280）

身份的变化和对人性的思考使朱利安做出了最重要的伦理选择，即推翻君士坦提乌斯的统治。朱利安的背叛一开始与其说是出于权力欲望的驱使，不如说是为了真正建立一个神启所指示的第三帝国。他是罗马基督教的反叛者，他的反叛出于对社会道德堕落的观察，出于对压制人性的思想的反抗。

推翻君士坦提乌斯后，朱利安成为罗马皇帝。基于他对人性的观察和思考，朱利安选择通过恢复古希腊宗教的方式建立灵肉和谐的第三帝国。朱利安修缮众神的神庙，以传统的祭祀仪式对奥林匹亚山上的神进行祭拜。与此同时，朱利安并不禁止基督教徒继续按照他们的信仰生活，他表示他尊重自由选择的权利，并希望在恢复古希腊教义后，基督教徒能够自己认识到基督教的不足。朱利安对希腊众神教的恢复不是完全重建希腊众神崇拜中人的欲望的无限释放，而是带有理性修正的性质。他试图在尊重人的本能的同时，用理性和克制予以引导。朱利安遵守一种近似斯多葛学派的生活法则。刚刚登上皇位时，他祈祷不要陷入权利的诱惑和野心的泥坑，面对属下对他的赞颂，他非常理智地予以拒绝。朱利安致力于纠正宫廷中奢华生活，改变在君士坦提乌斯在位时人们利用宗教信仰满足自我欲望的错误做法。他辞退所有奢侈的仆役，重新采取适当的节俭措施。同时，朱利安通过阅读古籍，努力证明在推崇人的本性的古希腊宗教中存在着智慧与知识，存在对世界万物所遵循的伦理法则。他认为狄奥尼索斯是激发诗人和哲人灵感的源泉，敬奉古希腊神的僧侣按教义只能食用高处生长的果实，这是灵魂渴望向上，向往真理的表现。朱利安试图从古希腊宗教中总结出规范人们生活的法则，证明恢复古希腊众神崇拜并非是导向肉体崇拜的退化，而是通往灵肉和谐的途径。对朱利安，罗马市民曾经有这样的评价：“他走路是眼睛低垂，规规矩矩。我告诉你们，他是正派的，他不看女人。我敢打赌，从他妻子去世后，他很少有一——你看，他整夜写作，所以他的手指像染匠一般黑”（342）。可见，朱利安举行祭祀狄奥尼索斯的仪式意在唤醒自然本性与自由意愿，

但是并非强调欲望超越理智的至高地位，正如约翰·斯通所说：“背教者朱利安试图恢复异教精神，但是他所遵从的异教教义没有狄奥尼索斯的狂野，非理性以及放纵，而更多的是马克奥勒留以及斯多葛学派的节制。他的气质更像是他那些冷静严肃的基督教朋友，格雷戈里和巴兹尔”。⁶这表明，面对基督教与异教，朱利安根据自己对人性的理解，作出了选择，他试图通过自己的努力，通过恢复古希腊文化，寻找实现灵肉和谐的第三帝国的途径。

三、皇帝朱利安的毁灭

推翻君士坦提乌斯，成为罗马新的皇帝后，朱利安的伦理身份发生了变化。而这一变化使他恢复古希腊宗教以实现灵肉和谐的初衷也开始发生变化。当基督教徒强烈反对朱利安恢复异教的主张，并公开予以抵抗时，朱利安认识到恢复古希腊众神教不仅具有伦理上的重要性，更具有政治统治需求上的紧迫性。罗马皇帝的伦理身份使朱利安对古希腊神的敬奉逐渐具有了巩固统治的政治意义。所以，朱利安开始清除异教，任命利维塔调查所有君士坦提乌斯任命的基督教官员，利用酒神的庆典来试探民众对恢复古希腊众神教的态度。他开始变成另一个君士坦提乌斯，试图运用宗教信仰控制人民的思想和意志，以巩固自己的统治，只是他选择的宗教与君士坦提乌斯有所不同。

巩固政权的欲望蒙蔽了朱利安的双眼，他曾经能够辨别利用宗教满足私欲的意图，而现在他却无法认清那些为了满足自我欲望而在信仰之间摇摆的人。宫廷理发师和朱利安的老师黑格博流斯，曾经是虔诚的基督教徒，然而在朱利安成为罗马皇帝后，立即抛弃基督教，皈依古希腊众神崇拜，这在朱利安看来，他们的举动是对自己天授神权的承认和对新的宗教的虔诚信仰。此时的朱利安已经没有了明辨是非善恶的伦理意识，他判断正误的唯一标准是是否遵循他所推崇的宗教信仰。对于转投古希腊众神的教的人，即便犯罪也予以原谅，而对基督教徒则给予无情的打击。为了惩罚信奉基督教的安条克人，朱利安任命粗暴无礼，没有任何正义感的亚历山德罗作为安条克的新总督，命他烧毁基督教的经文，鞭打基督教徒使安条克人陷入恐慌和灾难中。此时朱利安已经背离了他建立灵肉和谐的第三帝国的初衷，他为了建立自己的权威巩固政权，肆意压制人民的自由意愿，剥夺他们生存的权力。他曾经反对基督教对人的自然本性的压迫，现在却在安条克人生活必需都无法满足的情况下浪费财物祭祀古希腊神灵。当异教徒掠夺基督教徒的财物，将他们赶出自己的住所时，朱利安却辩称这正是为了帮助基督教徒按其教义所指，抛弃一切物质欲望从而进行精神的苦修。

在推翻君士坦提乌斯的过程中，朱利安实现了一系列神启的暗示，他穿上了皇帝的紫袍，实现了公民阿波灵拿看到的穿紫袍的幻象，君士坦提乌斯将海伦娜许配给他，他认为自己获得建立新的帝国的纯洁的女子，即便是反抗君士坦提乌斯时看似不详的预兆也被证明是天神给他的指引，使他顺利地推翻了君士坦提乌斯的政权。由此，朱利安认定自己是被上天选中的拯救者，是母亲梦

中的阿克琉斯。在狄密史台斯和马莫提乌斯等人的吹捧之下，朱利安渐渐忘记了自己的初衷，他将阿谀奉承的狄密史台斯和马莫提乌斯委以重任，与他初登王位时，面对奉承表现出来的理智大相径庭。为了证明自己才是天命的统治者，朱利安派遣校官约维安在耶路撒冷重建基督预言将永劫不复的神庙。他试图用暴力让基督教徒承认，全世界的权威是朱利安皇帝而不是加利利的预言家。当重建耶路撒冷神庙的失败被基督教徒看做是上帝对朱利安的惩罚时，朱利安进一步认识到基督教已经成为他的统治的障碍：

这个耶稣基督是有史以来最大的叛乱者。与他相比，布鲁图斯算什么——卡西乌斯又算什么？后两人只不过谋害尤里乌斯凯撒一人，而前者却谋害所有称为凯撒和奥古斯都的人！能够想象皇帝和加利利人之间会有和平吗？……他生活与人们的反抗意识之中，生活于对所有可见权力的反抗和藐视之中。皇帝的都归皇帝，上帝的都归上帝一再也没有比这更狡猾的说法了。这意味着什么？那属于皇帝的还有多少？这种说法就像是一根把皇冠从皇权头上打落的大头棒。（383）

在成为罗马皇帝之前，朱利安反对基督教的原因之一是基督教是君士坦提乌斯集权统治的工具，因此他的反叛就是为了解放人的天性并赋予人民自由选择的权利，同时使人的本能欲望受到伦理道德的引导。而现在，成为罗马皇后，他与君士坦提乌斯一样试图实现政教统一，从思想上统治人民。基督教徒的出于信仰意愿的反抗被朱利安看作是对君主权威的藐视。如果将此处朱利安对“皇帝的都归皇帝，上帝的都归上帝”这句话的理解与第一部中模拟审判时的理解进行对比，则不难发现朱利安伦理身份变化带来的认识变化。在模拟审判中，朱利安为自己拒绝向皇帝纳税作出辩解，他向扮成法官的格雷戈里问道如果上帝的都归上帝，皇帝的都归皇帝，那么臣民的财产中有多少应该归于皇帝又有多少应该归于上帝？朱利安的辩解事实上提出了一个皇权和神权哪一个至上的问题。当格雷戈里无法做出回答时，朱利安进一步质问“皇权的界限又在哪里？”他将格雷戈里放弃审判看作放弃为皇权辩护，他说道“我们的格雷戈里——由于他把自己放在皇帝对立的位置——也就和上天结成了最亲密的联盟”。可见在当时的朱利安看来皇权是有界限。而现朱利安则认为，“皇帝的都归皇帝，上帝的都归上帝”这句话却是对皇权的挑战，“再也没有比这更狡猾的说法了。这意味着什么？那属于皇帝的还有多少？这种说法就像是一根把皇冠从皇权头上打落的大头棒”。他原本推崇自由意愿，认为有高于皇权的权威存在的，但是现在成为罗马皇帝的朱利安则要努力实现皇权至上。此时的朱利安已经从遵从人文精神，试图建立新的伦理秩序的哈姆莱特，变成了为实现权力欲望不择手段的麦克白。对朱利安而言，承认神权大于王权的基督教徒是他通往最高权力的最大障碍。

膨胀的欲望使朱利安对待希腊众神的态度也发生了变化，他开始认为自己

与众神处于平等的地位，他说：

众神有时候在打瞌睡，或者至少是众神对人间事务很少过问。……我们甚至目睹某些神不支持善意的努力，而此努力正是有利于众神的尊严和光荣的。但我们不必在这类事情上妄加品论，也许我们可以这样认为，指导并支持天地万物的众神有时将权力委托给人——无疑这并未贬低众神本身；不正是由于众神才使一个受到如此高度恩宠的人——假定已找到此人——诞生人间吗？（391）

朱利安认为自己就是受到众神恩宠的人，他将自己与给普罗米修斯相比，他认为为众人谋取的幸福比众神所赐予的更多，因此有资格被置于神的位置。朱利安认为世人对自己的反抗与嘲笑，就像他们对普罗米修斯的功绩的无知一样。他认为自己的功绩像普罗米修斯一样，可以与阿克琉斯以及赫拉克勒斯相比较。因此他让人们在军中塑造他的半身像，让人像崇拜神一样祭拜他。

如果说朱利安反对基督教的初衷是为了实现肉体与精神的和谐，那么现在他的目的却是为了实现自己的权力欲望。成为罗马皇帝的朱利安开始与第三帝国的意图背道而驰。马克西莫斯敏锐的指出了这一点：“你想使青年又重返回童年去。肉体的王国已经被精神的王国吞噬掉，但这精神的王国并不是最后的，就像一个青年一样，你想阻碍青年的成长，阻碍他成长为成人……阻碍将实行双重统治的第三帝国”（384-385）。第三帝国的最高权威是精神王国和世界王国的弥赛亚，而不是皇帝。将皇帝的权力排除在外的第三帝国，无法满足朱利安的权力欲望，他要证明自己才是世界王国的最高权威，于是朱利安作出征讨普鲁斯的选择，他要做“普居鲁梦想做而亚历山大试图做过的事”，他要“占有世界”（386）。在膨胀的欲望驱使下，朱利安做出这一选择最终导致自己的毁灭。

朱利安的背叛，建立第三帝国以及他最后的毁灭，每一次选择都与他伦理身份的变化和对人性的思考有关，而他的每一次伦理选择都改变了他的命运，并最终导致他的灭亡。在《反叛者朱利安》中，朱利安面对基督教和古希腊众神教，遵从自己罗马臣子的身份所作出选择，为了巩固基督国教地位前往希腊学习，同时在对人性的思考中，朱利安看到人身上“半人半兽”的斯芬克斯因子，以及由欲望导致的犯罪。为了唤醒人的伦理意识，构建灵肉和谐的第三帝国，朱利安选择推翻皇帝君士坦提乌斯的统治，并通过恢复古希腊文化和众神崇拜以实现自己的目的。这一选择同样也与朱利安伦理身份的变化有关，君士坦提乌斯谋害朱利安的举动客观上造成了朱利安身份的变化，君士坦提乌斯切断了君臣之间的伦理关系，使朱利安失去了为人臣的身份，也因而不需要再承担这一身份所负有的伦理责任。在《朱利安皇帝》中，当朱利安成为罗马皇帝，这一伦理身份使他巩固皇权作为最高目标。朱利安开始出于集权统治的目的

推行古希腊宗教，迫害基督教徒；权力欲望的膨胀使朱利安将自己上升到神的地位，并疯狂地试图证明皇帝的权威和能力超越加利利的预言家基督。在这样的欲望驱使下，朱利安最终导致自己的毁灭。

注解【Notes】

1. 易卜生，《易卜生文集》（第四卷）北京：人民文学出版社，1995。以下随文注明页码，不再一一说明。
2. 在文学伦理学中，兽性因子是人在进化过程中的动物本能的残留，是人身上存在的非理性因素。兽性因子主导人的自然意志，主要表现为人的不同欲望，如性欲、食欲等人的基本生理要求和心理动态。参见 聂珍钊：“文学伦理学批评：伦理选择与斯芬克斯因子”，《外国文学研究》6(2011):6-8。
3. See Trausti Olafsson, *Ibsen's Theater of Ritualistic Vision: An Interdisciplinary Study of Ten Plays*. (Bern: Peter Lang AG, International Academic Publisher), p. 60.
4. 参见 Trausti Olafsson 对朱利安在通灵法术中见到的两个灵魂的分析，第 58 页至第 63 页。
5. 参见 Norman Rhodes's introduction in *Emperor and Galilean*. (New York: Charles Scribners' Sons, 1991)p.24.

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《社会支柱》：一部讽刺与救赎的伦理剧

郭 雯

内容摘要：在《社会支柱》中，易卜生讽刺了以博尼克为代表的资产阶级伦理道德，指出它已成为禁锢人们精神自由的枷锁。本文运用文学伦理学批评方法，探讨博尼克这个典型人物如何进行伦理选择和自我道德救赎。从情节结构上来看，戏剧以博尼克的公开忏悔作为高潮和结局，他最后给所有人一个交代，皆大欢喜。从写作手法技巧来看，博尼克与楼纳为代表的进步女性之间形成对比，实则象征着新旧两个世界的价值观、道德观的差异。就主题而言，这是一部伦理剧，以救赎为主线，主人公解构伦理结的过程充满着道德教诲，体现了易卜生对于重建社会道德体系的伦理要求和取向。

关键词：《社会支柱》；伦理选择；公开忏悔；道德救赎；文学伦理学批评

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Title: *Pillars of Society*: An Ethical Drama of Satire and Redemption

Abstract: In *Pillars of Society*, Henrik Ibsen satirizes the bourgeois ethics and morality by the representative Bernick, implying the fact that the ethical morality has become the restriction of people's freedom. From the perspective of ethical literary criticism, this paper attempts to analyze how Bernick, the typical character, chooses to do while faced with ethical dilemma and moral redemption. As to the plot structure, the climax is Bernick's public penance, which seems to give everyone a final answer and leads to a happy ending. As for the writing techniques and skills, the contrast between Bernick and Lona, who is the representative of new women, is actually the symbol of contradiction of the values and morality between the old and the new. Therefore the theme of the drama centers around the redemption as the ethical line and conveys moral education during the character's deconstruction of the ethical knots. Meanwhile the drama displays Ibsen's ethical desire to reconstruct the social and moral systems.

Key Words: *Pillars of Society*; ethical choice; public penance; moral redemption; Ethical Literary Criticism

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19世纪七八十年代,挪威正经历着变迁,伦理道德、习俗、价值观念等都发生了翻天覆地的变化。易卜生对社会问题进行挖掘和整理,诸如个人欲望与社会良心、精神自由与经济独立、放纵与救赎、现实需要与追求真理的冲突。

《社会支柱》(*Pillars of Society*, 1877)是易卜生四大“社会问题剧”之一,从题目上来看,就运用了反讽,批判了唯利是图、无恶不作的“社会支柱”博尼克(Bernick)以及整个社会现状。作为社会建设与道德规范方面的“支柱”,博尼克享有极高的威望,然而,他却是靠欺骗大众和家人成就了十五年后的社会地位。受害人楼纳(Lona)和约翰(John)再次出现,就是博尼克需要解开伦理结的时刻。解开伦理结就必须进行伦理选择:是否要隐瞒罪孽,是否要毁灭证据,是否能私下忏悔。最终,他受到楼纳的规劝和自我良心的谴责,通过在公民面前的公开忏悔来进行道德自救。博尼克这个人物不仅让世人引以为戒,吸取道德教训,最后他给所有人一个交代,也道出了易卜生重建社会道德体系的愿望。

一、伦理环境与博尼克的典型形象

《社会支柱》的创作背景极具典型性。重回当时的历史中,可以发现,欧洲是传统道德的象征,奉行保守理念。美国人在挪威当地经营船业等商业活动,无形中会有两种力量的碰撞,即美国资产阶级自由理念与挪威小资产阶级的陈规陋习。挪威人提到激进的美国时,显得清高而不屑,他们认为美国过于先进,带来了新的价值观,从而会影响他们的传统道德,拒绝新事物和新理念。然而,随着时代变迁,处于转型期的挪威已然充斥着金钱至上、唯利是图的价值观及虚伪的道德观,“他们只要谈到掏钱的事——咱们这儿不拘什么事归根结底小算盘都是打到钱上头”(297)¹。在这部戏剧中,易卜生常借罗冷博士(Doctor Rorlund)之口说出所谓的“真理”,让读者领略挪威当时的道德观。别人相信也愿意听从罗冷的话,因为他也是众人眼中社会地位较高的教师。他说:“瞧瞧那些现代的大社会,表面上金碧辉煌,里头藏着什么!说句不客气的话,除了空虚和腐败,别的什么都没有!那些社会没有道德基础。干脆一句话,现代的大社会像粉刷的坟墓,里头全是虚伪骗人的东西”(286-287)。这种描述充满反讽和作家对现实的隐忧。

戏剧启幕时,似乎一片祥和,一群妇女在博尼克家聊天,博尼克与商人们正在办公室商议修铁路计划。然而,在高尚体面背后尽是腐朽的道德观和世俗的价值观。“不同历史时期的文学有其固定的属于特定历史的伦理环境和伦理语境,对文学的理解必须让文学回归属于它的伦理环境和伦理语境,这是理解文学的一个前提”(聂珍钊,“文学伦理学批评:基本理论与术语”19)。易卜生一开始就通过罗冷教授描述出一个典型的资产阶级社会,这是他戏剧创作

的技巧，因为罗冷也是保守落后的旧道德的卫道士，他的话语时常无意识地自欺欺人。他极力维护社会秩序，追求真理，倡导社会的纯洁，反对虚伪，而实际上他的所言所为与他宣扬的理念恰好相反。他贪图棣纳（Dina）的美色，却因其母亲的通奸丑闻瞧不起她，根深蒂固的社会习俗和偏见，使他认为棣纳也是“属于堕落女人的一类”（Lapsed and Lost）（310）。整个挪威资产阶级的个人主义、利己主义、虚荣虚伪一览无余。

这样典型的伦理环境促成了典型人物形象，影响着人物的性格，同时典型人物也能影响社会环境。博尼克正是在这样一个充满矛盾冲突的社会中，成为众人好评的社会栋梁。然而，随着剧情的发展，读者便发现博尼克是个伪君子，霸道却胆小。他表面上有钱有势，开着一家经营船舶修理和海上运输的公司，热心慈善事业，是社会建设与道德规范方面的支柱。他内心却有个惊天秘密：十五年前，他与漂亮的女演员有过风流史，事后，他让妻子贝蒂（Betty）的弟弟约翰当了自己的替身以便逃脱罪名。同时，博尼克母亲的公司也面临破产，他便制造了私开银柜、盗窃公款的假案，让人怀疑是约翰所为，来封锁不利的言论。博尼克为了继承妻子姑妈的遗产，抛弃了贝蒂的姐姐楼纳，从而骗婚成功。之后，约翰逃往美国，楼纳也随之而去。十五年后的博尼克更加利欲熏心、心肠歹毒。他利用手段推掉影响生意的沿海铁路计划，又勾结商人暗中修建支线，从支线沿途的自然资源中谋取暴利。

在外人眼中，博尼克是一名“有身份”的人物，他自己也认为是“社会上有地位的人，应该格外多出力”（315）。然而，他却具有复杂的身份：他是公认的“社会支柱”，是十五年前的罪犯，是楼纳的情人及妹夫，是约翰的朋友及姐夫。而从他十五年前的错误开始，他早已不配拥有“社会支柱”的头衔。他拥有被扭曲的灵魂和变态的人格，道貌岸然、表里不一。十五年前，他亲手埋下了罪孽的种子，是他今后做出伦理选择和忏悔的根源。由于自己的罪孽，他并不是每日安然无恙、舒心过日子的，否则也不会因为看见楼纳和约翰的再次出现，而吓得忧心忡忡、夜不能寐，甚至想通过金钱作为补偿，或是谋害恩人约翰。

易卜生将博尼克与家庭的关系、与他人的关系以及与自我的关系，作为戏剧人物塑造的核心内容，突显了当时的伦理秩序和道德规范，揭露了旧世界的虚伪性。首先，博尼克拥有“幸福”的家庭，他自己也信誓旦旦地承认“家庭是社会的核心。一个人要是有个好家庭，有几个可靠的正经朋友，亲亲密密地过日子，没有什么扫兴的事情”（320）。然而，传统家庭典范实则是靠出卖感情和欺骗婚姻而得到的。妻子贝蒂一直以为他们的结合是出于真爱，她对博尼克崇拜而尊重。博尼克却为人强势，从不让她参与事业或加入讨论。对儿子也是严厉束缚其自由和兴趣爱好，并要求其按照父亲意志做事。他认为如此的生活模式使他们的家庭“成为本地人的模范”（383）。博尼克曾经的爱人是贝蒂不同胞的姐姐楼纳，约翰又是贝蒂的亲弟弟、是博尼克的朋友和恩人，因此楼纳和约翰都是贝蒂的姐弟，自然也是博尼克的亲人。可是，他为两人叛逆传统

的行为感到羞耻，认为他们的反叛是幸福生活中的污点。同时，他为两人知道自己的秘密而感到恐惧，在重逢后，他软硬兼施，希望对方不要揭露自己的罪过；当得知约翰会坐“印第安少女号”这艘偷工减料的货轮回美国后，他让船如期使出，可以让约翰出事故而被淹死，以销毁罪证。博尼克不仅欺骗了妻子、家人和合伙商人，也欺骗了公众，他沉醉于骗取的好名声中，逐渐迷失了自我。

其次，从社会角度来看，博尼克是为社会谋福利的大人物，是老板，并代外国政府执行领事职务。然而，他对工人阶级代表渥尼（Aune）却百般责难、毫不同情。在使用新机器的问题上他与渥尼起了争执，渥尼心里害怕，他祈求博尼克改变想法，“我怕新机器挤破工人的饭碗。先生，你常说咱们队社会有责任，可是，据我看，社会对咱们也有责任。为什么社会不先训练一批会用新技术的工人，就冒冒失失把科学上的新发明用在工厂里？”（341）可是博尼克仍要解雇祖孙三代都为博尼克公司服务过的老员工渥尼。由此可见，渥尼话语中透露了双重信息，一是博尼克的冷酷自私，二是挪威社会经历工业革命时的历史变迁。典型的伦理环境与典型的人物形象相结合，体现了环境与性格的相互作用。

最后，博尼克的典型性还表现在他的理性意志与自由意志的对立与冲突，从而使自己成为一个悲剧的矛盾的人物，也在犯罪的过程中失去了理智和情感。其实，每个人都具有理性意志和自由意志，前者使人有伦理意识和道德，后者使人任凭原欲肆虐。“文学作品中这两种意志相互对立，能影响人的道德行为”（聂珍钊，“文学伦理学批评：伦理选择与斯芬克斯因子”8）。博尼克脱离理性意志的束缚，任凭自由意志操纵人生，丧失了最基本的道德。他为所欲为，千方百计利用各种关系与机会使自己成为他所处的小社会中一名上等人、头面人物，他可谓是众人眼中“理想的公民，道德的模范”（473）。可是早在欺骗贝蒂订婚期间，博尼克就违背了婚姻中的伦理道德，即诚实忠诚的爱情观，任凭自由意志驱使，与旅行剧团的女演员通奸。随后在事业中他又散布谣言栽赃于约翰。由于十分惧怕伦理惩罚，他居然都让约翰承担丑闻。当楼纳和约翰回国后，博尼克最担心的是他们会说出秘密，击垮他辛苦钻营而来的一切。但亲自面对约翰和楼纳时，他的心理有所起伏，不是没有一点负疚感。他向约翰坦白“我的家、我的家庭幸福——还有我在社会上的地位——这一切都是你成全我的”（360）。他的内心很清楚罪人需要有所担当，只是他惧怕赎罪。他向楼纳吐露了隐藏多年的心声，“现在让我把实话告诉你。那时候我不爱贝蒂，我扔下你不是为了我有新相好。我扔下你，完全是为钱。我不能不那么做，我必须把钱弄到手”（379）。不敢承担责任、为罪恶赎罪的人，内心一定不比那些为罪过自责自愧的人好受。

博尼克在十五年的伪善生活中，以社会给予他的身份苟活，如果不是楼纳和约翰的再次出现，他的秘密将永远埋在他的黑暗生活中。即使他偶尔想起往事，只要他们不出现，也不至于内心备受煎熬、软硬兼施地阻止揭发，他仍可以骄傲自大地活在那座城市的上流社会中。易卜生幽默而讽刺地批判了资产阶级，博尼克提到“咱们这个勤劳耐苦的小城市是建筑在艰苦的道德基础上的”（319）、

“目前正是我最需要道德威望的时候，我不能说实话”（408），这两句话自相矛盾，是对整个社会最大的讽刺。

二、伦理选择与公开忏悔

如果客观地站在当时的历史和伦理现场来看，博尼克是个可悲可笑的人物。十五年前，他因为自己的野心抱负，亲手将自己逼上了一条不归路；十五年中，他的内心自欺欺人式地以“社会支柱”的行为规范为社会做大事，他在谋取暴利的同时，也确实为这座海滨小城创造了一些福利，并非一无是处；十五年后，他终究要自食其果，接受惩罚。易卜生并没有将这个恶贯满盈的坏人置于死地，而是把他的赎罪方式设计为良心发现、最终向善，进行公开忏悔，希望他进行道德上的自我救赎，只有拯救了灵魂，才能得到真正的重生，这也表达了作家伦理思想体系的终极关怀。

“从文学伦理学批评的观点看，几乎所有的文学文本都是对人的道德经验的记述，几乎在所有的文学文本的伦理结构中，都存在一条或数条伦理线 (ethical line)，一个或数个伦理结 (ethical knot or ethical complex)。在文学文本中，伦理线同伦理结是紧密相连的，伦理线可以看成是文学文本的纵向伦理结构，伦理结可以看成是文学文本的横向伦理结构”（聂珍钊，“文学伦理学批评：基本理论与术语” 20）。博尼克在十五年前犯下的罪恶，实际上就是戏剧中预设的伦理结，解结的过程是戏剧发展的必然结果，是细读文本、批评文本的过程，也是戏剧在第三幕的高潮部分。博尼克面对约翰和楼纳的回归，深感恐慌，他所处的伦理环境也随之变化。面对可能被揭露的罪行和可能被社会剥去的身份，他必须进行伦理选择：是否要继续隐瞒罪孽，是否要毁灭证据，是否能私下忏悔。这三个伦理结等待他自己去解开。

博尼克在解结过程和道德自救中充满了矛盾与困难。一方面，他的身份是一名公认的“社会支柱”，是“十足的上等人”。他活在他人的褒奖中，暂时忘记自己犯下的错。他靠欺骗被众人冠以“社会支柱”的头衔，俨然成为一位名副其实的大人物，行使着应有的责任和义务，肩负着为国为民鞠躬尽瘁的职责。另一方面，由于他本人对于犯罪所要承担赎罪的恐慌，使他从一开始就决定靠欺骗和隐瞒“平静地”生活。在婚姻中，他背叛了基督教文明与道德传统，在订婚期间就有风流韵事，而且婚后继续隐瞒欺骗妻子，以博得妻子的爱情。他惧怕丑闻，当初让约翰承担了罪责远赴美国，还瞒着约翰造谣说他偷了母亲公司的巨款，以挽救自己破产的命运。十五年后，约翰和楼纳再次出现，他私下向两人忏悔了当初对朋友和爱情所犯下的错，还想用钱做个了结，也算是对约翰的交代。在贿赂无望之际，他竟然希望约翰能够一去不复返。约翰准备乘坐的“印第安少女号”因腐朽可能沉没，这样他的秘密也会永远沉入海底。这种害怕承担责任、恐惧赎罪的心理一直伴随博尼克，无论是隐瞒罪孽、毁灭证据或是私下忏悔，都不是最好的方法。按照当时的伦理规范，博尼克如果想不被社会鄙视或遗弃，只有靠赎罪获得心灵解脱，而赎罪的方式便是公开忏悔。因

为，“社会的伦理规则是伦理秩序的保障，一个人只要生活在这个社会里，就必然要受到伦理规则的制约，否则就会受到惩罚”（聂珍钊，“文学伦理学批评：基本理论与术语” 19）。

道德和理性终究要束缚人类的自由意志，一切罪恶注定要受惩罚。易卜生在戏剧中早已为博尼克的赎罪做了伏笔铺垫。博尼克的妹妹马塞 (Martha) 在不知情的情况下，指责约翰“你做错了事应该回来赎罪”，“难道你不记得你害得一个女人没饭吃，没脸见人，把性命送掉？难道你不记得你害得一个女孩子你在青春时期过痛苦的日子？”（371）可见，真正有伦理道德观念的人都懂得承担责任的道理，而真理也是整部戏剧宣扬的重点。

博尼克寻求真理、踏上赎罪之路并非一帆风顺，由于他的身份和性格，增加了他进行公开忏悔、道德自救的困难。他是靠楼纳不厌其烦的讽刺和劝说，逐渐演变为“忏悔式的人物”。很明显，易卜生通过说教的方法，把道理和教训寄托在故事中，使人物接受心灵洗礼。按照黑格尔在《美学》中关于教训的力量，艺术的任务在于用感性形象来表现理念，艺术表现的价值和意义在于理念和形象两方面的协调和统一。² 黑格尔认为“如果教训的终极目的是心灵性的、自在自为的，那么艺术作品就应该把这种自在自为的本质上是心灵性的内容作为认识对象”（黑格尔 63）。艺术中伦理道德内涵的存在形式，应该暗寓地含在作品里，明确地表达了艺术理想与其伦理道德内涵的关联与统一，“这就是黑格尔的以认识功能为中心的真、美、善三种功能的统一说”（朱立元 123）。易卜生希望通过楼纳为社会传递“正能量”，使人的心灵重新净化。

但是楼纳的说教并不顺利。楼纳指责博尼克今天的地位是靠十五年的谎话支持，“是个三方面的谎话。第一，对我撒谎；第二，对贝蒂撒谎；第三，对约翰撒谎”（383）。楼纳成为了批判现实主义的代言人，她讽刺博尼克，“不错，这十五年里头，你给自己、给别人出过许多力，做过许多事。现在你是本地第一号有钱有势的大人物。大家都得听你的话，因为在人家眼睛里你是个干干净净、没污点、没毛病的人。你的家庭可以做模范，你的行为也可以做模范。可是这些外表堂皇的东西，连你自己在内，只是建筑在一片流沙上。要是你不趁早打主意救自己，早晚有一天，只要有人说一句话，你和你这座富丽堂皇的空架子马上就会陷到泥坑里”（384）。易卜生对于道德教育的力量持有肯定态度，希望以此批判现实，改良社会。楼纳以道德模范的称号反讽博尼克，以此激发他内心向善的最原始的道德力量。

楼纳的说教是循序渐进的，博尼克起初并不配合。由于惧怕惩罚，他为自己进行了道德辩护，好让自己在良心上过得去。自我辩解实际上是他在道德上感到恐惧的情感宣泄，是他企图通过为自己辩解来减轻恐惧。在博尼克与楼纳的对话中，我们可以看到怯懦的博尼克自欺欺人。

博尼克 谁的良心上都有见不得人的黑斑点。

楼 纳 你们这种人还自命为社会支柱？

博尼克 社会上找不出比我们更好的人。

楼 纳 那么，这种社会垮台不垮台有什么关系？现在社会上最流行的是什么？无非是撒谎、欺骗。就拿你来说吧，你是本地第一号人物，有钱有势，人人敬重你，可是你会把犯的恶名声安在一个好人的头上。（406）

诚然，博尼克也曾选择“赎罪”，只不过他的方式是赔偿损失，用钱来弥补约翰的损失，以此慰藉自己的“良心”。当楼纳当着他的面撕毁那两封作为罪证的信件时，博尼克的世界崩溃了，令人不可思议的是，这位“模范”继而把赎罪的希望寄托于儿子，“我要他恢复我的事业，并且替我赎罪”（460）。可是，事与愿违，当他得知自己十三岁的儿子也偷偷乘坐“印第安少女号”去美国游玩时，他才开始心急如焚、悔恨交加，所有这一切触动了他的“良心”，以至于他决心在集会上说出多年的秘密，公开忏悔。

关于市民集会的描写，仍然不失幽默讽刺的力量。当博尼克看见住宅对面一副灯彩大标语“社会支柱卡斯腾·博尼克万岁”时，他嚷道“快把标语摘下来！我不愿意看！快把灯吹灭”，“快把挖苦我的标语摘下来，听见没有！你们难道看不见这些灯光一闪一闪地都在眨眼笑咱们？”（464-465）这实际上表现了博尼克良心上的自责，认为别人挖苦他，其实是扪心自问，觉得不配“社会支柱”的称号。灯光如同众人眨眼讥笑这些上流社会的人物，也像是上帝早已看见他所有的罪恶，即将对他实施惩罚。这样的描写也很像中国的古语“人在做，天在看，善有善报恶有恶报，不是不报，时候未到”，而就在这天晚上，一切即将转变。

“从纯社会的角度来说，公开忏悔是融入社会的一种方式：没有忏悔，罪人就被排除在社会之外，或者与社会格格不入”（杨革新 100）。就在民众大肆宣扬道德、褒奖博尼克的时候，他撕开了自己的面具，希望民众了解一个真正的自己。他当众说到“诸位，首先你们必须彻底了解我，然后每人也扪心自问，让咱们在今天晚上真正开始一个新时代。咱们要抛弃旧时代，把旧社会的假面子、假道德、假正经和怯懦的劣根性都送进博物馆让大家去展览，当做个教训”（478）。博尼克承认了当初的罪孽，把谣言当众揭穿。对当地人来说，这无疑是个晴天霹雳。虽然历来许多评论家认为博尼克仅仅通过楼纳的说教和劝说就得到了改变，妻子儿子都原谅了他，家人皆大欢喜，这些是缺乏说服力的。但是易卜生坚信人是可以转变的，相信存在于人的本性之中的善是不可摧毁的。即使是反面人物，他的言行举止起到了警戒作用，他的公开忏悔是从道德上进行自救，以求重构自己的道德观，使自我更为完善。

三、伦理秩序与道德的重构

易卜生选择挪威和美国两个国家作为整部戏剧的要素，并非偶然，它们各自代表着新旧伦理体制和道德规范。两个国家形成鲜明而强烈的对比冲突，正是推动故事情节发展不可或缺的因素，也成为突出戏剧主题的技巧。易卜生创

造了不可忽视的女性人物，楼纳、棣纳、马塞。她们阳光向上，更能接受美国先进的思想观念，鄙视虚伪的道德观，追求自由、真理、反抗传统道德束缚。一方面与博尼克所代表的上流社会形成对比，另一方面是呼吁整个社会需要逐步摆脱博尼克这样的堕落人物，从而建立崭新的世界。

挪威当时的父权制社会，尤其上流社会中的男人，总是显示出病态，怯懦而不敢承担责任，可能因为这样，易卜生才通过女性形象作为批判现实、改良社会的代言人，难怪博尼克在最后也说“这几天我学会了一条道理：你们女人是社会的支柱”（486）。当时的社会秩序、伦理秩序和道德规范急需修复和重建。易卜生通过博尼克的公开忏悔来表达对旧世界的憎恶，与旧社会的决裂，寄托了自己改良的愿望。最后，博尼克从“恶”的泥沼中被救、自救出来，意识到改革的重要性，发自肺腑地感叹道“要老老实实在地彻底修理。咱们这儿有好些事都应该老老实实在地彻底修理”（485）。这正是真理所在，要重建腐朽的道德体系，打破旧社会风俗的禁锢与偏见，要把诚实、真善美广泛传播，抛开虚假、自私，只有这样，才能成为真正的“社会支柱”。

《社会支柱》中，以罗冷教授为代表的传统道德观念的卫道士，始终贯穿整部戏剧。易卜生借用他的言行举止来讽刺博尼克和旧道德观，也道出了当时挪威社会狭隘的爱国主义、民族主义。罗冷希望挪威永葆民族的纯洁性，社会习俗只有传统的精华，不能被外来文化和思想玷污，挪威的道德观就是要保持自己的传统，为本地谋利便是爱国的表现。可他又明确地称赞博尼克是一个爱国公民，因为他不只顾本地的利益。博尼克和罗冷等上流社会一致认为美国唯利是图，不如挪威优良的民族传统。狭隘的民族主义和地方主义弥漫在当时的挪威社会，他们不愿多了解其他国家优秀先进的事物，在讥讽别国“缺点”的同时，实际也批判了自己已有的缺点和恶习。

剧中的新女性崇尚真理，摒弃恶习，呼吁自由精神作为“社会支柱”。楼纳最具代表性，她是新世界、新思想、新伦理道德观念的代言人。她曾“把头发绞得精短，下雨天穿着男人的靴子到处乱跑”（305），到美国公开演讲，还出过一本“胡说八道的书”（307）。这个形象在传统道德的卫道士眼中是极其怪异和叛逆的。楼纳勇于讽刺上流社会虚伪的“堕落妇女进德会”，“这些道德衬衣有一股霉味儿——好像死人穿的寿衣。告诉你们吧，我是闻惯了大草原上新鲜空气的人”（331）。楼纳在美国的经历，让她看见了挪威腐朽的道德体制。美国社会相对自由、开放、民主、平等，她希望把新鲜空气放进来，实际上是想改变挪威的现状。楼纳在劝告博尼克的过程中，更加体现了她追求真理的精神。她瞧不起社会中假正经、假善良、假纯洁的道德宣扬，直到戏剧落幕，她对博尼克说道“妹夫，你学会的道理靠不住。真理的精神和自由的精神才是社会的支柱”（486）。她的话语隐含双重含义，一是对博尼克十五年来所信奉的道德观的彻底否定，二是新世界宣扬的真理战胜了旧世界虚伪的传统，也表达了易卜生渴望彻底颠覆时代的信念与决心。

棣纳是居住在博尼克家的女孩，母亲就是那名“堕落”的女演员。棣纳的

出场就因世俗的偏见而被认定为“堕落的女人”。人们认为上一代的境遇、品行、命运一定会遗传给下一代，“这种民族风俗习惯结晶的伦理道德，它像黑格尔说的那样，具有神圣的性质，是‘不成文的法律’，被认作永远正当的东西”（聂珍钊，“苔丝命运的典型性和社会性质” 117）。实际上，棣纳善良纯洁，热情大方，她内心一直有个愿望，就是远离挪威这个假正经的地方。“我恨不能马上就走得远远的。我自己有办法，只要我不跟这些规矩正派的人住在一块儿”，“我不会学她们的那副千金小姐的正经派头”（311-312）。她的语言充满讽刺力量，既是对那些虚伪的上流社会女性的抱怨，又是对整个社会的不满。棣纳憧憬美国更好的社会，她询问美国归来的约翰，“美国的人是不是很讲道德”，“他们是不是像此地的人这么正经，这么规矩”，“我希望他们不这么规矩，不这么讲道德”，“我希望他们自自然然的做人过日子”（358-359）。这些话语实际上是易卜生对挪威现状的讽刺。最后她与约翰产生感情，并希望远嫁美国去寻找心中向往已久的伟大的真理。可见，棣纳是个有思想、有远见的独立女青年，她希望摆脱桎梏，冲出禁锢的牢笼。她希望学习美国新女性，“要工作，做个有出息的人。要对人家有贡献，不愿意只做个被人家收容的人”（448）。这与挪威父权社会的观念格格不入，他们认为女人应该是家中的天使，是男人的附庸，不应参与任何社会工作。资本主义经济决定了男女地位的不平等，而这个伦理秩序是挪威社会公认的“真理”。

另一位女性便是博尼克的妹妹马塞，她也崇尚美国独立自由的精神。棣纳与约翰的结合，在不知情的外界眼中，绝对触犯了伦理禁忌，原因就是约翰当年与棣纳母亲通奸，害得母亲窘迫致死。而马塞却认为他们应该追求自由，冲出传统习俗的禁锢，去美国生活“本地的风俗习惯把咱们压得多苦啊！棣纳，起来反抗！跟他结婚！让大家看看，咱们有胆量反抗传统的风俗习惯！”（448）马塞对美国也充满向往之情，“那地方一定很美丽，天比这儿宽，云比这儿高，人们呼吸的空气比这儿自由”（449）。这个强烈的对比，与其说是旧观念与新观念的对立，不如说是整个挪威伦理道德与美国先进性的对比。

易卜生的戏剧由于精湛的技巧，使得结构、人物、性格、高潮充满张力，他也成为了国内外戏剧家纷纷效仿的对象。博尼克的洗心革面，公开忏悔是该剧发展的最好的结局。除了博尼克、罗冷等形象以外，易卜生还刻画了几位不可或缺的新女性形象，把反讽和教训的艺术方式寓于剧中，呼吁重建伦理秩序和道德基础是整个社会发展的必然趋势。没有真正强大的道德基础，家庭、婚姻、社会也无法走向自由与和谐，这也正是易卜生“社会问题剧”的现实意义。

注解【Notes】

1. 本文所引《社会支柱》原文出自 Henrik Ibsen, “Pillars of Society”, in *The Works of Henrik Ibsen, The Viking Edition, Vol. VI* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1911)。汉译采用潘家洵译文（参见《易卜生文集》第五卷，人民文学出版社，1995 年）。以下仅标注英译本页码，

不再一一说明。

2. 参见黑格尔：《美学》，第1卷，朱光潜译（北京：商务印书馆，1979年），第90页。

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Chong Yag-yong's "Howling of a Woman, with the Penis Cut off Her Husband," A Poem of Old Korea

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Abstract Chong Yag-yong's "Howling of a Woman, with the Penis Cut Off Her Husband" written in Chinese characters is a poem that we call people's poetry. The poem contains in it some subjective emotion and intellect, which I analyze in this paper. I translate the whole poem into Korean for the readers.

Key words Chong Yag-yong; people's poetry; emotion; intellect; *Mongmin simso*

What follows is a translation of an old poem in Chinese characters, "Howling of a Woman, with the Penis Cuff off Her Husband,"¹ by Chong Yag-yong, the greatest *Sirhak* (practical science) scholar (1762-1836):

The howling of a woman echoes
Through the court of a government office
Toward the indifferent sky.
I often hear that a husband who joined the army could not come back,
But I have never heard that a man cut off his own penis.

Along with her Father-in-law who is dead and her own child
who was just born,
Her husband is enlisted by the army, and, in fury and protest, the woman
ran to the Office, with the blood-dripping penis cut off her husband,
But the tiger-like guard at the gate is holding her off,

And turned her back with his threatening voice;
He even comes and drives their cow away from the cowshed.

The husband having blamed his own penis
For giving birth to a child, he went into his room with a knife;
The red blood is flowing in the room.
What a thunder in a dry sky!

Though guilty, how could he be thus punished?
Though worried, how could he cut his own penis?

Like Heaven and Earth, the yin and yang are in harmony;
To give birth to a son and a daughter is the Heaven's law;
When even a castrated horse or pig is saddened.
Wouldn't a wife, who could no longer give birth, be sad
when her husband is no longer a man?

Those in power live and play for life,
Paying no tax, neither a grain nor a piece of cloth.
Both he and they are the same people;
How could they then treat him like that?

I sit by the window alone and just recite poems
of cuckoos and doves in the Book of Poetry. (Lee, Si Whan 11)

I have translated the poem into Korean so the readers can understand it easily. According to *Mongmin simso* (*Admonitions on Governing the People*), one of the many books he wrote in banishment and forced retirement, Chong composed this poem in the fall of 1803 at the age of 42 while living in Kangjin, Chunnam, the south western province of Korea; the poem deals with a special case. A young woman who lived with her husband in the reedy field gave birth to a baby, and the infant was enlisted in the Military Conscription Registration in three days of his birth. And a government servant came and drove away their cow. Her husband said, "It is because of this that we have been suffering," and cut his penis off with a knife. His wife went to the Government Office to protest, carrying the blood-dripping penis, but though she was crying and asking him to let her in and report it to the Governor she was chased away. Hearing about the sad story, Chong composed a poem.

Even before we study the subject and the form of the poem, because we are moved by the sad story alone, we consider this poem good. Because of this, the poet—the novelist, in particular - wants to find a special topic. I want to draw attention to the Modernist movement in Korea that stresses the choice of subject matters in literature.

It is important for writers to find good subjects; if you are not interested, it is difficult for you to find a good topic, and in this respect, paying attention to the subject of a poem is meaningful, of course.

Looking back now, we can vividly recall various movements, such as rural literature, national literature, people's literature, and workers' literature, all of which actively participated in reality. At that time, poetry dealt with special stories and incidents of people's life: self-immolations, poison drinking, tortures, uprising, criticism, and so on. But now they are nothing but passing winds. It is because a special story or incidence is only a subject; if a poem focuses only on revealing it, it may neglect the poet's subjective emotion which can move the readers. As a result such a poem is like a heap of bones of a body without flesh. People forget such a work once the world changes. If literature wants to stay alive and be moving - no matter what it deals with in whatever situation or reality - it must depict in positive light what is essential in humanity, what is universal.

Chong Yag-yong's "Howling of a Woman, with the Penis Cut Off Her Husband" written in Chinese characters can be considered what we call people's poetry. It contains in it some subjective emotion and intellect. By subjective emotion, I mean the emotion expressed by the poet who has heard about the incident. In this poem the speaker reacts in two ways: emotionally and intellectually. Emotional responses are expressed in such lines as:

1. ... I have never heard that a man cut off his own penis;
2. Both he and they are the same people;
How could they then treat him like that?
3. I sit by the window alone and just recite poems
of cuckoos and doves in the Book of Poetry.

And the intellectual responses are found in such lines as:

Though guilty, how could he be thus punished?
Though worried, how could he cut his own penis?

Like Heaven and Earth, the yin and yang are in harmony;
To give birth to a son and a daughter is the Heaven's law;
When even a castrated horse or pig is saddened.
Wouldn't a wife, who could no longer give birth, be sad
when her husband is no longer a man?

As quoted above, the speaker criticizes the inhumane legal system and also says that humans live following the principle of yin and yang from generation to generation by giving birth to offspring. Besides, the speaker is brave enough to criticize the local government by exposing the dark life of people:

Those in power live and play for life,
Paying no tax, neither a grain nor a piece of cloth.

As in this poem, a good poet should state not only the fact but also express his emotion and intellect in poetic diction. But excessively emotional or intellectual displays could do more harm than good in a poem. A good poem is an emotional response in a form striving for aesthetic truth in poetic language characterized by implication, comparison, emotion, music.

To cite an example from the poem: is the speaker able to calm down hearing the astounding story of a couple, by just reading the "poems/ of cuckoos and doves in the Book of Poetry"? Probably not. He is in banishment; it may be that the speaker in the poem is making a comparison between this incident and the principle in the poems he is reading: just as there is a law of nature in the birds raising offspring, there should, he seems to claim, be a law of governance between the ruler and the people. And there is in the poem helplessness for an intellectual who is in banishment and cannot do anything for the people, too.

Note

The original poem is 哀絕陽：

蘆田少婦哭聲長 / 哭向縣門號穹蒼 / 夫征不復尙可有 / 自古未聞男絕陽
舅喪已縞兒未澡 / 三代名簽在軍保 / 薄言往愬虎守閭 / 里正咆哮牛去阜
磨刀入房血滿席 / 自恨生兒遭窘厄 / 蠶室淫刑豈有幸 / 閩閩去勢良亦憾
生生之理天所予 / 乾道成男坤道女 / 驅馬殯豕猶云悲 / 況乃生民思繼序
豪家終世奏管弦 / 粒米寸帛無所損 / 均吾赤子何厚薄 / 客窓重誦鳴鳩篇

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A Study of A Selection of Literary Essays by Korean Writers Living in Manchuria

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Abstract *A Selection of Literary Essays by Korean Writers Living in Manchuria* is the only anthology of the Manchu essays in Manchukuo, the puppet state of Japan. We find two themes. Geography is one. The literary space is expressed by juxtaposing the present (Manchuria) and the past (Korea) when the essayist talks about geography. Mythology is another to discover the identity of old and current Korea. And several others, who take different ways to express themselves, tend to keep distance from the time and place they are in, and instead focus on literary problems seriously and realistically, to cope with their rages and tragedies in Manchukuo.

Key words travelog; mental space; hybridity; mythology; literature of exiles

Introduction

Thirty years have passed since the literary work written in Manchuria in the 1940's was called the dark age of literature or pro-Japanese literature.¹ But since then many scholars have studied this work, and it still remains a problem to be solved.² The spiritual aspects of Korea in the early 1940's were diverse; some resulted from Japanese Imperialism, others from Capitalism, Enlightenment, Democracy, Exiled Government. Despite this diversity, there appeared pros and cons in everything. Though we were under the Japanese rule, we could not create a variety of applications of the new movements. This paper aims at understanding what happened in Kando (Jiandao) as in the literary essays at that time.³

Literary Scenes in the 1940's in Manchuria

1. Choi Namsun's "Chunsanyugi"

Five of the essays by Choi Namsun are in the book, the selection of which is the largest in it; of these, "Chunsanyugi 1 and 2" draw my attention. Since 1920's Choi has made efforts to make the beauty of nature in Korea known to the people. He does

the same thing in these essays. Literature reflects society, and these essays are his poetic responses to it:

The Liaodong Peninsula is the extension of Baekdu Mountain; so is the Korean Peninsula. Historically, Kojosun extends left and right from Chunsan Mountain; so do Kokuryo and Balhae . Korean people toiled and shed sweat here.... I have just scaled the Ilbong summit and think of the old territory of Korea, and who would blame me for my recollection. (“Chunsanyugi”) ⁴

Choi Namsun retraces the great nations Kokuryo and Balhae, the old Koreas. It is, however, not possible for history alone to restore history; so, to do so, he brings geography so he can cultivate the spirit of Korean people. He observes Baekdu and Keumkang Mountains, and characterizes the people of Korea by their similarity to the looks and features of the two mountains. He summons geography to feel the breath of ancestors in it.

As quoted above, his attitude toward history is shown in the essay. He restores the old territory of Kokuryo and Balhae to the space of Korean history.

He traveled the colonized peninsula to abstract the national characteristics so he could inspire the people with the need for independence. The travel essays “Chunsanyugi 1 and 2” are his efforts to that end. The essays are interspersed with *sijo*, an old form of Korean poetry, the aim of which is to reinvent history so it can interconnect not only past and present, but also future. That he sees Chunsan Mountain as part of the Baekdu Mountain Range is his intention to bring back the old Korean history.

By combining geography and history, he breathed the sentimental, psychological, philosophical, aesthetic breath into the nation. Choi Namsun composes poems overlooking Chunsan, believing it is our territory. This is how Chunsan becomes part of us when we read his essays. He experiences and recognizes what is now foreign soil as where our ancestors lived and tilled the fields. In the 1940’s Chunsan was ruled by Japan. It was in fact a land of war. He attempts to resuscitate a mythology of Korean race, and using the unique form of Korean poetry, *sijo*, he sings to enrich the life of Korean people there. He has written an article “*Bulham Cultural Theory* (1925),” in which he defends Dangun Mythology that Japan denies.⁵ He says that his theory is independent from Japanese scholarship, and it is seen as a diplomatic document in defense of Dangun Mythology.⁶

Literature can internalize geographical beauty, thus making it deeper and more attractive.⁷ Thus, Choi Namsun expands literary space through geography to make room for a new mental space for Koreans. In this respect Chunsan in “Chunsanyugi 1

and 2” is a Korean mountain.

Choi earlier said in the preface to “Simchunsoonrae” that “the rivers and mountains in Korea themselves are the history, philosophy, poetry, spirit of Koreans,”⁸ and again in “Chunsanyugi 1 and 2” locates the spirit of Koreans in geography.

2. Hybridity in Manchuria

It is impossible to see many things in literature from one point of view; each work needs a different point of view to read it. There was not much in Manchuria in the 1930’s, but with the inflow of Japanese capital it turned into a complex hybrid society, and in Korean residents there were pro- and anti-nationalism in the 1940’s. Japan had instilled an Imperialistic ideal of *Ojokhyopwha*, or Five Races Live in Harmony, in Manchuria, where many immigrants considered Manchuria a land of opportunities: investors and politicians in power worked together, all types of people with diverse social backgrounds, who had taken shelter here from the direct dangers of World War II, vied for more power. For nationalist Koreans Manchuria was a space where they gathered to build a nation again; so, their essays’ connotations and denotations were different.

In short, they were between two opposing forces, Japan’s dark and firm control and China’s slow, lukewarm political action. Koreans were second best, after Japanese, as Korea and Japan had just been united, but for this reason, Koreans were held in check by Chinese. As a result, it was not easy to lead life in Manchuria. An essay “Neighbors” by Ahn Sugil clarifies this:

A poet, they say, visited the waiting room at the train station where he could hear people speak in dialects. Or on a night when crickets were singing, he heard a train sound a steam whistle like a calf’s cry, which reminded him of his hometown. My house is in front of the station so the whistle could be heard in bed.

And my house is by the hotel Daewha which has the flavor of Renaissance style. The quietude of the garden, where at dusk an army of crows visit the ancient trees, people could instantly forget that they are at the heart of a city.

But I have never been to the station without a duty. Nor do I have a desire to enjoy the midnight whistle in bed nor the crow cawing in the trees.⁹

We can glimpse the capital flow in. The station is crowded with people who left hometowns; near is an expensive hotel for them. There is a hybrid society forming with the capital flow-in. My house is near the station that could remind me of my hometown, but I do not visit the waiting room without business. Though I work hard,

I lack in and am obsessed with money and not free to enjoy leisure.

In this essay we see the first class people stay and enjoy life in the hotel. Ironically, the second class people have a chance to enjoy the first class people enjoying life in the hotel. “I” also want to drop in and enjoy the leisure at hotel. But he says it’s nothing but a sentiment. It’s ironical, because though he takes pride in being poor as poet, he still wishes to enjoy it. The essay uncovers an aspect of social conflicts arising between classes of people.

In interpreting Korean literary works in the 1940’s, it is not desirable to apply dichotomy even if it is seen from the perspective of nationalist view point. It is not possible to read “Neighbors” in such light, for instance. Mechanical dichotomy could serve as a good tool to explain an epoch. It is not an appropriate means to look into literary works. In particular, it is not good for an essayist who refuses to have his thoughts and consciousness suppressed.

3. National Sentiment in Manchuria

The second largest selection of essays was made from Shin Youngchul’s.¹⁰ He was an important editor in Manchuria but did not treat the living conditions of Korean residents in his work. Literature reflects life, but he escapes from it. Though literature does not depict life as it is, it helps it overcome difficulties by dealing with people’s needs and desires in literary works, the tendency of which is exemplified in “The Morning on the Namman Plain” or “News from Shinkyung.” His essays show how the newly arrived Koreans see the landscapes. Our sentiments, that is, meet with the new places and scenes:

The old apricot trees are pink and in full blossom: it’s my home, a Shangrila. It’s far different from the world that is full of hatred, jealousy, struggles, rivalry. At that time, how could I have imagined that I would come to live on these vast plains where snow falls like mad in April? Who could have known that I would come here?

My dear brother Arim! Now I no longer regret that I cannot appreciate the apricot blossoms in my hometown. Even if I do wish, my hometown cannot embrace me again. So, I will appreciate the yellow leaves of ginkgo trees in late fall instead of the apricot blossom.¹¹

The train has passed the station of Oryongbae, which is famous for hot springs in southern Manchuria. And as we approaches Andong prefecture, the wild flowers are everywhere. Some flowers are blown by the wind like the breast ties of girls’ costume. How soft they are? The white buckwheat blossom is in full bloom on the bank of the

bean field beside the rice fields. It's as if I am hearing a folk song.

On the bank of turnip fields a couple of boys in white are chatting, walking with their trouser tips rolled up and their lubber shoes in hand; on the edge of the stream under the train bridge Korean wives and brides in yellow blouses and pink skirts strike and strike wooden mallets on wet clothes to clean. To see them here, how could you say it is Manchuria?¹²

The first one quoted above is the second essay of the three in "New from Shinkyung." The speaker misses his hometown as he is looking at the apricot blossom in Manchuria. The speaker's emotion is vividly visualized in the essay. In Manchuria it is so cold in winter that the head of a cow is frozen; the winter is over and it is spring. The author compares spring both in his hometown and Manchuria. "The first thing in early spring in Korea is the apricot blossom, which adorns beautifully and brilliantly the spring of his hometown," he says in his essay, complaining that spring in Manchuria is never like spring in his hometown. He feels comfortably at home recalling his hometown's apricot trees in full bloom, in the face of the rough spring in Manchuria. He accepts Manchuria as a livable space. Though many problems face him, he makes time to contemplate the landscape in Manchuria.

In the second quote the author treats Andong prefecture as if it is part of Korea. It is the same attitude Choi Namsun has when he considers Chunsan part of Baekdu Mountain. This is what the two writers do by dusting the mildewy names of places in geography books to give life to them in their literary works. The two writers' agony is between the lines in their essays. They summon the meaning of places from history and treat past and present together in the essays. It may be a way for them to live the present without pain. We feel sorry for their literary efforts to be satisfied with the present.

Identity in *A Selection of Essays by Korean Writers in Manchuria*

1. Praising the Land of Life

Manchuria is vastly expansive. The dark land spreads immensely in the three north east provinces. Shinkyung is flat with no mountain. Hyun Kyungjun describes spring in Manchuria as follows:

My ears tickle busily eavesdropping spring come near.

"The snow melts. Which will flower first?"

"Azaleas, maybe?"

.....

My angels lead me out, before me and after, by the hand, and my hair is blown though it's not windy. I feel light as a feather flying in the air, leaving

all the worries behind. The road is the same as I used to travel on, but I feel it strange and am not accustomed to it today.

Glancing over the mountains still covered with snow, they look nearer and snug. The river is not yet a river. The river edge lined with willows is frozen with thick ice.

The river has on its frozen surface places of water glimpsed here and there, like hearts of lovers. The twigs of willows are full of flexibility and vigor and make a circle when they are pulled and let go.¹³

This is a feeling of the landscape of the approaching spring. At that time rice fields covered all over Manchuria.¹⁴ But it is the Mado River, where a wife and a child were buried, as in Kim Dongsik's "Lamentation."¹⁵ That land is described here as a land of rebirth, or an essential place where a dragon rises. Desires of possession and attack are transformed into happiness here. It is purposeless: children are angels, uncles enjoy an outing in spring. The mountains with snow on top look snug, the willows along the river show bursting buds of elasticity. Seeing signs of spring in Manchuria, Korean writers respond romantically:

When I was leaving Shinkyung at 10 pm last night, it was kind of cold and was likely to snow; on the following morning, arriving at Daeryon station, I felt kind of hot with the thick layers of my inner clothes. As I got to the Songpo hotel, I opened all the windows to the south and seated myself: it was a new world now. Looking at the acacias I felt as if I were in spring already, though I had to travel further.¹⁶

If spring comes to my hometown, will it not come to Manchuria? If swallows and nightingales come to Korea, will they not come to Manchuria? Spring inches toward north one step after another.

As I hear from neighbors who lived here for a long time, swallows may be around in the suburbs of Shinkyung by now, and last June during the Ranrang Festival I myself heard nightingales sing from the forest of the Booksan Park.... swallows are flying and nightingales are singing here; then, how can I treat Manchuria coldly?¹⁷

Manchuria is a vast new world. It takes 13 hours from one point to another there. Nightingales come back and sing, which reminds the writer of the spring in Korea. The plain is so wide and wild that the principle of life is felt strongly. Winter attacks as if to kill all in Manchuria. But with spring life comes back. "I" experience the dignity and mystery of life once in spring, which compels him to write his friends

about the wonders of Manchurian spring. Hidden in this essay is something abrasive in life:

The luxurious dreams of the young in Monte Carlo blink in red and blue neon lamps—moderns enjoy things exotic—one little fantasy of hometown melts and passes on the train windows and passes. There is a sign of corrupted conditions in here.

Samjungjong with all lights gone—Oh, is it the ruins of the last day of Pompeii? In it there might be Frankenstein's monsters dancing in the dark windows.¹⁸

There is some sign of decadence, which is in contrast to the signs of Romantic sentiment. Shikkyung was the new capital of the imperial Japan. Calling the city the special city of Shinkyung, they constructed broad streets, huge buildings for taking care of affairs, and even tunnels under the city, in order to conquer the whole continent. In the essay above, there is some melancholia. The fantasy of hometown conjured over Shinkyung by neon lamps is not a fantasy; it is a sign of the fin de siècle, along with the dark images.

Shin Youngchul was friendly enough to be an editor of *Bandosawha and Naktomanju*, but his essays keep some distance. In his essay there is some sentiment of Korea beneath the surface. It gives solace to us. While editing *A Selection of Literary Essays by Korean Writers Living in Manchuria* he printed the songs of Koryo's Confucian scholars and the sijos of Josun Dynasty's loyal subjects, in addition to lyrics and poems of landscapes, which have nothing to do with politics, on purpose.

2. Mental Space of Korean Residents

A Selection of Literary Essays by Korean Writers Living in Manchuria has many travelogs: Choi Namsun's "Chunsanyugi 1 and 2" as well as "Baekjakjae Banil"; Yom Sangsop's "Travel in the Rain"; Ham Seokchang's "Kilim Yongchungi" and "Recalling Potatoes"; Shin Youngchul's "Morning on the Namman Plain." Also included in it are Kim Jokyu's "Note on Baekmuk Tower"; Park Palyang's "Impression of Shinkyung's Night" which depict travels. They have something common: they also sommon national sentiment. To cite two writers' essays: Choi Namsun's "Chunsanyugi 1 and 2" and Ham Seokchang's "Kilim Yongchungi 1 and 2":

(1)There is grotesque sublimity in granite rocks hit by wind and rain; there the rustling of winds in full forests; there long vales and blue streams; there

shapely rocks: they must be our fathers' land. So, it's not new but old to us. To look at them again, this Donghak is like the entrance to Bobong Mountain in Seoul; to look down from here, the vale's like the front of Byokyeon Rock in Sojang Mountain. I come to enjoy the Korea in Manchuria: once in the Songwha river; twice in the Manroku. Now here in Chunsan I first see the Diamond Mountains but it may be the last for me to do so.¹⁹

(2) It is not enough to say I have seen all of Chunsan. But though I have trodden on a corner of Chunsan, to learn that Chunsan is part of Korea in terms of landscapes and history is a biggest thing for my trip.²⁰

(3) I see the breaking of ice on the Songwha river for the first time; explosions of the river ice into pieces; then all moving. Horses and people traveled on the hard ice yesterday, but the water is glimpsed here and there on the ice. It's like soldiers at the signal tower sending the smoke into the sky to signal the arrival of the time.... It looks like the same news that all places rose by sending the smoke signals: all seem determined to rise for the same purpose, though in silence.²¹

(4) The water now flows again but is still cold. Though it snowed a few more times, it is calm, and I take a walk along the river with some relish. Yet, I am not fully satisfied, waiting for the spring days. It is still as cold as in winter. I think of my hometown with the soft grey buds of the willows; of the hazy hills and the azaleas, which just have twigs of buds like the tits of 16 year old girls' breasts; of the flowers smiling in the sunlight. I murmur the Tang poet Jang Kyongchung's "A Song of River."²²

The first quote combines two summits: Chunsan and Dobong are combined to be the origin of the Korean race. Choi Namsun prepared his lecture note "Manmong Culture" (June 1941) in which Korea and Japan seem to be in harmony and conflicts as well.²³ Choi began to talk about the spiritual aspects of old Korea in "Pungakyugi," (1924) which is a travelog. In "Chunsanyugi" he praises both Manchuria's Chunsan and Korean mountains. He aims at finding the origin of Eastern Culture in Tangun Mythology, which is what he calls "Bulhammunwha." Choi finds the identity of Korea that he finds in Chunsan. He's somewhat impatient. But to use the other's space in his essay is the same as in his earlier essays. His approach to the mythology is to defend the spiritual Korea in the face of Japanese distortion of Korean history. That "Chunsan is part of Korea in terms of landscapes and history" shows that he does not recognize that Koreans are second class citizens to Japan.²⁴ He discovers the people's identity in his mind space.

In the third quote the characteristics of travel essays are expressed. To travel is

to move from a familiar space to an unfamiliar space. A travel is to experience new tensions and changes in emotion by meeting with new people and new places of nature, which is expressed well in what is quoted above. As the author watches huge pieces of ice melting, he idealizes the beauty of nature with curiosity and surprise. His consciousness does not conflict with his sense of the epoch nor does he resort to the mythology of Korean race. But as a writer he has the same sense of responsibility for being a Korean writer as Choi Namsun. This is a coincidence, but meaningful.

The fourth is a lyrical depiction of the pleasure of welcoming spring. He meets spring on the frontier but remembers his hometown in spring. His sense of art is compressed in Jang Chunkyung's poem. It's because of the new place. He is in a mental space, free from worries of the age, like the two writers.

3. Life and Death in Manchuria

Choi Namsun's friendliness to Japan has found space in his essays, "Reading," "Chunsanyugi 1 and 2," "Baekjakjae Banil," "Manchurian Incident and Education."²⁵ These essays were written between when he declared nationalism and when he supported Japan openly. "Baekjakjae Banil" is an appreciation of Baekjakjae in Dalian he visited, where could see the calligraphy and books stored; The language in this essay is different from "Chunsanyugi."

"Manchurian Incident and Education" is very different from his other essays. The essay calls the Manchurian Incident (1931) a holy war. Choi, it is unbelievable, justifies the war and teaches its lesson for the young.

"Reading" is free of idealism. He says reading is an act of seeking truth. It should be an act separated from ideology, history, age, he declares. It is different from "Chunsanyugi" which combines history and geography, or from "Manchurian Incident and Education," which lacks logic and reason.

Yom Sangsop was a writer keeping distance from his age. It is interesting that the two writers with different personalities have something in common: keeping distance from his age. At that time Yom had resigned as editor for the *Mansonilbo* and worked for a company in Andong, but he, a writer of realism, was still respected by the Korean writers living in Manchuria.²⁶

Yom's "Wujoonghaengrogi" is set neither in Manchuria nor in the 1940's. He recalls the day when he and his older brother went on a trip to Kimchun as it rained cats and dogs. This essay has nothing to do with the Manchu affairs. It is the same as Choi Namsun's "Reading." Oblivious to the rise and fall of a new empire, he indulges in a different problem in his essay.

In this respect, Kim Jokyu's "Note on Baekmuk Tower" shows a clear characteristic:

(1) All through the night his sister will be waiting for Mr. Choi alone, so he will, he says, have to go back tonight. Thrusting a few crumpled bills into his pocket, he says goodbye to me, which makes me sad. On an unusually cold late afternoon he, pushing his school hat deep down, disappears into the dusk, casting a long shadow, turning back again and again and looking at the front gate of school. Mr. Choi who will walk 50 *li* through the dark country road, and his sister, seized with fear, anxiously waiting alone in the room cocking her ears for the steps of Mr. Choi....²⁷

(2) Since then he has never shown up and I have almost forgotten him, but a few days ago I received a letter written in his beautiful hand. It was from Tokyo. He sold the rest of their property to pay for the tuition of her sister who will graduate in a year and went to Tokyo, and now every morning he runs through the alleys and streets to deliver newspapers.... He is determined that he will succeed.

Compared with the heavy shadow he cast, when he vanished into the dusk on a spring day, his shadow is now full of hope and ambition, as he is shaking the bells of newspaper delivery and running in the alleys and streets.²⁸

As above, the background of what is quoted in the first is Manchuria, while that in the second is Tokyo. In Manchuria Choi is hopeless, while he is full of hope in Tokyo. In Manchuria it is dusk, and it is dawn in Tokyo. In the former anxiety rules while in the latter there is stability. The narrator experiences both conditions of life.

What matters here is Choi escapes from the conditions of Manchuria and goes to those of Tokyo: that is, from the marginal of the colony to the center of the empire. He is determined to succeed with all my might: what does it mean to succeed to Mr. Choi and to the teacher?

Kim Jokyū first published a poem in *Shindonga* in 1932. He belonged to *Dancheung*, which pursued pure literary works, but he was a friend to poet Limwha, who was a member of KAPF (Korea Artists' Proletariat Federation). He was imprisoned involved in Kwangju Students' Incident while in Sungshil Middle school. That the narrator in "Note on Baekmuk Tower" remains silent toward reality is incongruous with the author's personality. The author shows emotions instead of rages. Many thought that as there appeared a new nation in Manchuria there will be a new world, but his essay does not show any response, not to mention enthusiasm. Depiction of reality of life is too real, beyond the problem of the colonizers and the colonized. A young man thrown into the cold world is just about to come to life. The writer who witnesses the rise and fall of a nation can predict the resilience of man as

in this work. The emotion expressed in the work is another face of rage and sadness toward reality.

As the circumstances were this complex, if we consider a literary essay is founded on facts, it would not have been possible for us to order him anything. It would be merely an order for another idealism, an order to regulate their philosophy in a different world. Our order is nothing but a today's measure that is ill fit for their cold reality.

Conclusion

Manchurian literature in the 1940's has been studied from different perspectives. However, literary essays by Manchu Korean writers have not been dealt with so far. And this is the result of such an attempt. This paper is a survey of *A Selection of Literary Essays by Korean Writers Living in Manchuria in the 1940's*.

First, this book is a lyrical achievement in prose. At that time literature was concerned with the problem of East Asia, not with reality in Korea. But *A Selection of Literary Essays*, however, reinforces things Korean. It is, as a result, a literature of exiles.

Second, Choi Namsun shows his literary space both in "Chunsanyugi 1 and 2" and "Bulhammunwharon." In contrast to his personal life, his works put Manchukuo and Korea together, and confirm the identity of Korea by comparing the geographical identity in both nations.

Third, all works are based on the places and things in the new imperial state Manchukuo, but they depict realistically the ideas and philosophies that were abstracted from realities. Kim Jokyu's "Note on Baekmuk Tower" is an example. It is a way to cope with rages and tragedies in the face of the rise and fall of nations.

Notes

1. Oh Yang Ho, "Reconsidering The Dark Age of Literature," a paper read at the 23rd National Conference on Korean Language and Literature, Korean Culture Study Center, 1980.
2. The typical example is the subject of diaspora taken by International Association of Korean Studies. I have studied this problem and published four books including *Korean literature in Kando* (1988) and *Kando Literature and Life: Bae Seok*.
3. *A Selection of Literary Essays by Korean Writers Living in Manchuria in the 1940's* is a hand-written copy. Its price is 65 *Jon*. ShinKyung Special City: Josun Literature Publishing, 1941. It was then the only magazine for Korean essayists in Manchuria.
4. Choi Namsun, "Chunsanyugi 2," *A Selection of Literary Essays by Korean Writers Living in Manchuria in the 1940's*. ShinKyung Special City: Josun Literature Publishing, 1941. 46-48.

5. Jo Hyunsul, "The Dawn of Eastern Mythology and the Formation of Modern Psychological Geography," *A Study of Nationalist Literary History*, Vol 16. Seoul: Nationalist Literature Study Institute, 2000.
6. Oh Munseok, "A Problem of Immanent Continuity in Nationalist Literature and Pro-Japanese Literature – Focusing on Choi Namsun," *Modern Literature Study*, Vol. 30, Association of Korean Literature Studies, 2006.
7. Archibald Geikie, *Types of Scenery and Their Influence on Literature*. Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1070. (1st published in 1898). 59.
8. Ed. Korean University Research Center for Asian Affairs. *Yukdang, Choi Namsun* 6. Seoul: Hyonamsa, 1973. 259.
9. Ahn Sugil, "Neighbor," *A Selection of Literary Essays by Korean Writers Living in Manchuria in the 1940's*. ShinKyung Special City: Josun Literature Publishing, 1941. 67-68.
10. Shin Youngchul (1895-1945) was born in Seoul. His pen name is Yakrim. He studied philosophy at the Department of Philosophy, Dongyang University, Japan, where he was a writer belonging to a society of student writers Saekdonghoe. In 1919 a critique was published in the *Maeilshibo*, and soon he became an editor for *Orinee* and *Beolgeungon*. He went to Shinkyung to become a journalist for the *Mansonilbo*, and edited the essays students had contributed to the paper and published a book *Students' Letters*. In November 1941 he edited *A Selection of Literary Essays by Korean Writers Living in Manchuria* and a collection of literary works *Earth That Awakens*, with a preface "Beyond the Earth That Awakens." In 1943 with a Japanese name Pyongsanyoungchul, he edited *Bandosawha* and *Nakto Manchuria* in which he wrote a long article "Past and Present of Korean Residents in Manchuria." He was the chief of literary section for the *Mansonilbo*, and died in Shinkyung at age 50.
11. Shin Youngchul, "When the apricot trees are in blossom," the same book. 58-59.
12. Shin Youngchul, "The Morning of Namman Plain," The same book. 87.
13. Hyun Kyungjun, "Hand that sells spring," The same book. 4-5.
14. Ji Bongmun, "A Woman of the Arctic," *Korean Literature* (January, 1937).
15. It is a pure Korean name of Manchuria. See "Lamentation," the *Mansonilbo*, May 2, 1942: "The southern country is five thousand ri away; so is my hometown/ My wife is buried; so is my child/ Mado River, bury me here." Also see "Woodland," *Earth That Wakens*. Shinkyung, 1941.
16. Choi Namsun, "Baekjakjae Banil," the same book. 34-35.
17. Shin Youngchul, "Swallows and Nightingales," the same book. 67.
18. Park Palyang (Kim Yosu), "Impression of Shinkyung's Night," the same book. 95.
19. Choi Namsun, "Chunsanyugi 1," the same book. 45.
20. Choi Namsun, "Chunsanyugi 2," the same book. 52.
21. Ham Seokchang, "Kilim Youngchungi 1," the same book. 24.
22. Ham Seokchang, "Kilim Whanjungi," the same book. 25-26.
23. Jo Hyunsul, "Manchurian Mythology and Modern Talk" and "Modern Culture and Geography,

and Manchuria in East Asia,” in The 26th Conference Proceedings of Korean Literature Study Center, Dongguk University, February 2, 2007. P. 8.

24. Yun Hyutak, “The Truth and Falsehood of Second Class Citizens in Manchukuo,” *Yuksahakbo*, Vol. 169 (2001).

25. Choi Namsun drafted “The March 1st Declaration of Independence” in 1919, started *Dongmyung* in 1922 to promote nationalism, wrote “Climbing Baekdu Mountain” in 1926, in which he discovers the souls of Korean race in Korean landscapes and heightens his discussion of race to sublimity. But when he left the Privy Council and became the advisor to the *Manmongilbo* in Shinkyung in April 1938, he changed his mind; as he assumed the professorship at the Konkuk University in Manchuria in 1939, he wrote “On Holy Thoughts of Race in East Asia,” in which he declares the same ideology expressed in his another essay “Manmongmunwha” (June 1941): he justifies the establishment of a nation in Manchuria in terms of cultural backgrounds, and wants to play a role in building a nation of moral and cultural obligation. But what is interesting is that his thoughts are directed to the science of Korean studies with Dangun on top in his theory. He openly began supporting Japanese Imperialism since 1943, when he came back to Manchuria and wrote to support the enlisting of Students Soldiers.

26. Ahn Sugil, *One Goosefoot*. Seoul: Munyechangjaksu, 1977. 256, 259.

27. Shin Youngchul, ed. *A Selection of Literary Essays by Korean Writers Living in Manchuria in the 1940's*. ShinKyung Special City: Josun Literature Publishing, 1941. 82-83.

28. Shin Youngchul, the same book. 83-84.

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Sol Jungsik's Early Poems

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Abstract Sol Jongsik (1912-1953) began writing poetry early, in 1932, at age 20 but he did not write much until 1947. During the five-year period from 1945 to 1950, he published about 60 poems, publishing three books, *Bells* (1947), *Grapes*, and *Rages of Gods* (1948). He is a key to understanding the Korean literature just before and after the Korean War.

Key words *Bells*, *Grapes*; *Rages of Gods*; Korean War; political ideology; modern poetry

Introduction

Korea from 1945 to 1950 experienced the bitterest and most confusing social changes in its history: Liberation from the Japanese colonial rule, the division of the peninsula, the breaking out of the Korean War. People were jubilant when it was freed from Japan; the US and Russian army took over Korea and it was divided under the military governments. Then until the Korean War broke out, Korea had to experience conflicts and confusion amid the forces of ideologies and political parties for control of the north and south Koreans.

Korean writers aimed at creating a national literature free from Japan, but political and social whirl winds followed. As Korea was freed on August 15, 1945, beginning with a literary movement led by Lim Wha, many literary organizations had been created, each supporting its own political ideology. Lim Wha and Kim Namchun created Literature Construction Movement on August 16, 1945 in defense of leftist ideology, whereas Song Young, Park Se Young, and Han Hyo made Josun Proletariat Movement on September 17, 1945. The latter movement joined Josun Literary Association on February 8, 1946 to found a national literature movement. The rightists also created literary bodies: Yang Judong and Yu Chijin created Jungang Writers' Association on September 18, 1945; Jung Inbo and Park Jongwha began Josun Writers' Association on March 13, 1946; Kim Dongri and Yu Chiwhan formed

Young Writers' Association on April 4, 1946. Lim Wha tried to apply the Proletariat ideals of workers and people to literature, whereas Kim Dongri pursued pure literature that emphasized individuality, humanity, creativity. Jo Jihun offered a new poetics that synthesized both ideals.¹

This period was characterized by occasional poems, which “expressed the joy of liberation and praised social and political changes.”² Much of the poetry was resulted from a flood of political ideologies, but its literary value is now questioned.³ We can read such poems written by Lee Yongak, Oh Jangwhan, Lim Wha, Sol Jongsik.

Of these writers, Sol Jongsik (1912-1953) was most representative in both quantity and quality of his poetry. His writing career began early, in 1932, at age 20 but he did not write much until 1947. During the five-year period from 1945 to 1950, he published about 60 poems, publishing three books, *Bells* (1947), *Grapes*, and *Rages of Gods* (1948). He also wrote stories: a novel *Youth* in 1946, and a series of stories *Francis Duset* in a newspaper in 1946, and in 1948 two short stories *A Game Maker* and *Death of a Painter*, and a newspaper serial story which stopped. He was the most productive, more than any, in our literary history.⁴ He as an intellectual also “played a role in selecting and reflecting upon the ideology and national identity of Korea in the transitional period.”⁵ He is a key to understanding the literature of that period.

Sol Jongsik was born in 1912 into a Confucianist family, finished education in Yonhee College, and studied English literature at University of Mount Union in Alliance, Ohio, USA and Shakespeare at Columbia University in the city of New York.⁶ When he came back to Korea, he worked in a mine owned by his family for a while before his teacher recommended him to a post in the US military government in Seoul, where he did a lot of different jobs. Later he became the editor in chief in *The Seoul Times* in April 1948, and was friendly to the USA. He was, it seemed, in a better position to be a leader. However, contrary to our expectations, he joined the Josun Literary Association in 1946 to serve as a committee member of Foreign Literature Committee on April 4, 1946 and as a committee member of Seoul Office of People's Literature Movement in August 1946, and joined the Josun Communist Alliance recommended by Lim Wha. In the following year, in August 1947, he became the chair of the Foreign Literature Committee and wrote stories and poems and did much translation. In 1949, his third book of poetry *Rages of Gods* was forbidden and he joined People's Association. In 1950, when the Korean War broke out, he joined the People's Democratic Republic of Korean Army and served in Culture Training Bureau 7, the Headquarters of PDRK Army Command. When they retreated, he went with them to the North. He served as an interpreter for the PDRK Army at the Truce Talk in July 1951. He was indicted for treason and spying to overthrow People's Democratic

Republic of Korea, and was executed along with Lim Wha and Lee Seungyop on August 6, 1951.

Sol Jongsik has not been studied, except that some, including Kang Yonghill, Kim Kwangkyun, Kim Kirim, Kim Byungdeuk, Sang Min, and Jung Jiyong, reviewed his poetry. There are about ten items of studies on him including MA theses. Some mentioned his poetry in passing when they talked about the Korean poetry from 1945 to 1950.

Sol Jongsik's Early Poems

Critics paid attention to three of his books *Bells* (1947), *Grapes*, and *Rages of Gods* (1948). He wrote about 60 poems during the five years from 1945 to 1950. Kim Kirim, the central figure at that time, commented in *Literature* (March 1947) on his *Bells*: "If pure poetry is to aim at one and single Truth, poetry is to deal with the emotions of the people fighting for freedom. *Bells* is an answer fit for such an artistic aim." He also commented on *Grapes*: "*Bells* was the best book of poetry last year, and *Grapes* is another brilliant book at the beginning of the New Year."⁷ Kim Byungdeuk said, "*Rages of Gods* is the biggest warning to the poets in 1948. The poet has learned Modernist poetry abroad, and made full use of the techniques Korean poetry has not had so far.... What lacks in his poetry is that his poetry is too rhetorical." San Min said, " 'The Newspaper Grows Large' is the greatest poem after the Liberation. The theme is huge and the statistics is boring, but the greatest achievement in this poem is that it is a big plan for the whole people.... *Rages of Gods* has depth in a strong context, which is to be sure the best crop in 1948,"⁸ and that the book is faithful to the ideology his Association pursues. Jung Jiyong commented on *Bells*, "... I agree that this is the best book since the Liberation."⁹ Jung further sympathized with the poet: "*Grapes* is 'more erudite and deep (compared with *Bells*).' 'For this reason, Korean poetry is to get angry, cry and faint. A revolution is a luxury for a poet, and we Koreans have poetry of a dire kind, like his.'"¹⁰ In the meantime, some critics, such as Yoo Jongho, Oh Seyoung, and Ko Hyongjin, made critical remarks on *Rages of Gods* and *Grapes*.

Compared with these three books of poetry, Sol Jongsik's early poetry has not been studied. His first work was published in January, 1932 when he was 20, in the *JoongAng Ilbo*: he got the first prize in the Literary Competition with a play titled "Where is China going?" In March, 1932, he got the third prize in Students' Work in *Dongkwang*, a literary magazine, and in April his poem "A New Song in a New Vessel" and another of his essay got the first prizes in the same magazine. But his works were not that good, compared with the poems written in the 1930's which is called the Golden Period of Korean poetry, and most of his poems were etudes. And

the total number of his poems was nine.

However, we need to pay attention to these early poems. Literary views of his epoch are displayed in “A Song Sung on the Street,” “A New Song in a New Vessel,” “Cemetery,” and “A Poem.” Some show simple life, in which the speaker pursues a source of life in nature: “Lifting a bucket of water at dusk,” “Hometown,” “Summer is over,” “Fountain,” “Autumn.” Some of these poems were collected in *Bells*, and “A Poem (1932),” “Cemetery (1931),” “Fountain (1932),” “Autumn (1936)” were written in the early 1930’s.

Innocence and Truth

Probably the best two of his early poems are his first poem “A Song Sung on the Street,” which displays a candid view of the colonized Korea, and “A New Song in a New Vessel.” They provide encouragement to desperate farmers:

Rise, rise, rise!
 Rise! Rise now, brother!
 Poor little thing, are your legs broken?
 Hurry! Stand up! Your big brother will help you stand up!
 Now, throw away a pair of hand propeller spikes
 you used to push yourself forward,
 Seat yourself on the crude ice board, under which electrical codes are lined;
 Stretch your legs and straighten your back. Run, run on the river ice to a
 marching song of mine.

.....
 Listen, comrade!
 A poet is a worker on a construction site:
 He has muscles of iron, broad shoulders, a strong waist,
 deep and clear eyes.
 He is the biggest discovery under the blue sky.
 This discovery is not to be carved on a beautiful marble,
 But on a great Ginkgo tree.

Then your song will grow as the tree grows.
 (“A Song Sung on the Street: A Song I Was Singing to My Brother, Stamping
 My Foot Before I Met My Comrade.” Stanzas 1 and 6. *Dongkwang*. March
 1932.¹¹⁾)

In the poem a brother tells his younger brother to stand up and run though he is in difficulty, as indicated in the subtitle. This is the poet’s expression of how he sees his

society. What is noteworthy in this poem is that though it is his first poem, its last stanza sums up the poet's view of literary work. He defines a poet who "has muscles of iron, broad shoulders, a strong waist,/ deep and clear eyes." He also declares that a poet is "the biggest discovery under the blue sky."

Sol has revised the last stanza and put it in "Poetry" collected in *Bells* (1947). In it, the speaker says that a poem is both "a melody composed by a genius and the air that touches on your inner ears." It is not something carved on a marble, but a scar scratched in your heart. It is also a noise from fractured bones. The notion of the poem as a noise from fractured bones is further developed in two other poems "A Song in a New Vessel" and "Cemetery." "A Song in a New Vessel" depicts contrary to the title the miserable life of farmers in the colony. The poem consisting of eight three-line stanzas begins with a father who throughout the night picks up ears left in the field after a harvest in order to pay back his debt. Their life should be led normally according to seasons but it is not and full of worries, with no hopes ahead. During a harvest, they pick ears, while their real property is auctioned. Worries fill their life all seasons. The poem ends with a stanza:

On summer nights, farmers mix with farmers
To worry about the irrigation works
That will make water flow through their fields.

In Stanza 7 the speaker, who has read in the newspaper that the old building Yungmudang (where the military training took place) in Kyongbok Palace is to be demolished by the Japanese government, juxtaposes the flea blood-stained newspaper's one line news about Yungmudang's demolition and the reality of miserable farmers' life. He points it out that both farmers and their nation are as slight as the one-line news in the flea blood-stained paper.

Nature as Home

Sol Jungsik makes an attempt to restore ideal space in his poetry through family and hometown, which is in sharp contrast to the dark reality of life in the colony as depicted in "A Song Sung on the Street," "A Song in a New Vessel," and "Cemetery." This is the same attitude as Baek Seok and Ro Chungmyong had.¹² Sol's poems, "Lifting a bucket of water at dusk," "Hometown," "Summer is over," "Fountain," "Autumn," are the examples.

"Hometown" is quoted in full:

Gourd flowers are in bloom amid low fence bushes:

And the shadow of a butterfly hops, hops on gourd flowers;
 A bat slips in:
 His long wing tips glimmer, glimmer in the dim moon shadow;
 Then disappear beyond the mulberry trees;
 Grandpa, do you sit still and make a mosquito-smoke fire
 On the front ground?

Chicks give their mom little, little notes of call
 On this late morning, near the platform of sauce pots;
 A young boy drives a cow to the hill
 Along the irrigated water way.
 Grandma, sitting near the head of a cousin still sound asleep,
 Do you still run the old comb that is like your teeth through your grey hair
 This morning too?

And look at Stanza 3 “Summer is over”:

(Go back to the fields and forests we love:)
 The sun is going down beyond the hill,
 Winds blowing through our hearts;
 Many a note of insects singing
 Echoes through bushes and coils of plants,
 Cats coming home after sauntering.
 Then Grandma gathers the dried leaves of mulberry for smoking.
 The cow cart carries languidly
 on its wheels the summer evening,
 cornering the distant back village:
 When the boy driver, sitting on a bundle of grass fodder,
 Singing along the bells of the cow, is turning around the hillside road,
 The terrier barks and barks, running out the bush clover door to greet his master
 Who works by the day.
 Then Grandpa's climbing down the lookout hut in the field.

(“Summer is over—I miss autumn,” *Dongkwang*. October 1932)

It is interesting that the characters that appear in “Hometown” and “Summer is over” are grandmother and grandfather. They are not mother and father. It may be that what the speaker in the poems pursues is a source that is more original than now, in which he wants to be in touch with rest and peace and solace. The way he pursues is neither

to be dreamy nor imaginative; he just reconstructs the simple memory of how he lived and what he saw and experienced in that rural space: it is lyrical realism of Sol's. There follows more:

Girl,
 It's time to rest your hands spinning the wheel.
 Get out of your home,
 the Mother's earthen pot put on your head;
 All go play with fire this evening;
 Come go with me into the forest,
 Where star light glimmers all over;
 Peace comes hurting none;
 Let us go scoop up a bucket of fountain water
 And scatter on our grass that is drying up.
 ("Fountain" (1932), *Bells*)

As in these poems, Sol adores nature and wants to go back to his family and nature in the countryside. But the poems are rooted deeply in reality. As his early poetry participates in society, his nature poems are not simply nostalgic but firmly based on this sense of reality. His nature poetry is not simply an act of participating in the ideal of community, but an expression of his Romantic sensibility and sentiment.

In closing, in his early career as poet Sol Jungsik wrote only a small number of poems until the 1945. And critics thought they are etudes. But As we have read above, his early poetry is more than student's work: his home is a primordial form of life and a means of expressing his Romantic sentiment. And some of his poems, such as "Hometown," "Summer is over," and "Fountain," are good enough in both form and content, particularly the poetic language, compared with major poets of Korea in that period.

Notes

1. See Choi Dongho, *A History of Modern Poetry in Korea* (Seoul: Korea UP, 2004) 44-48.
2. Jung Haekyung, "Departure and Pursuit of Identity in an Era of Division: An Introduction," *A History of South and North Korea's Literature* (Seoul: Nanam Publishing, 1995) 127.
3. Ko Hyungjin, "Poetry of 8.15 Liberation," *Modern Poetry in Korea*. Ed. Korean Poets' Association (Seoul: Minumsa, 2007) 214.
4. Kim Yongjik, *Korean Poetry in an Age of Liberation* (Seoul: Minumsa, 1989) 219.
5. Jung Jiyong, "About Bells," *The Kyonghyang Newspaper*. March 9, 1947.

6. To study in the USA was then rare and it was reported in an article titled "Mr. Sol Jongsik went to the USA to study" in the *Dong-A Ilbo* (Daily) in November, 1945. See Sol Kwanhi, "Four Brothers and Sisters in Old Age Missing Father Sol Jongsik," *Daesan Culture* (Spring) 2012: 83.
7. Kim Kirim, "The Poetics of Rage: A Comment on Grapes," *People's Voice*. 4.4 (April 1948).
8. Sang Min, "A Poem of Obligation: Reading *Rages of Grapes*," *The Free Newspaper* (January 18), 1949.
9. Jung Jiyong, "About Bells," *The Kyonghyang Newspaper*. March 9, 1947.
10. Jung Jiyong, "About Grapes," *The Collected Work, Vol. 2: Prose* (Seoul: Minumsa, 1988) 309-310.
11. The text is taken from *A Selection of Poems by Sol Jungsik*. Ed. Kwak Myongsuk, (Hyundai Munhak, 2011).
12. Chun Mijong, "A Study of Sol Jungsik," *An MA Thesis* (Sogang University, 1992) 16-18.

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Perfecting Mind and Its Qualia of Silence in Korean *Sŏn* Poetry

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Abstract Korean Sŏn poetry displays many formal traits and contents profundity, in highly condensed poetic ideas, paradoxically more expressive by omission of sundry epithets. Its ideational quantum is so speedy and reductive but powerful as to strike out sparkling imagery. Its aesthetic elegance is a little rough and tough, but its enlightenment resounds its vast seismic vertical depth silently to its origin. Its frequent use of the rhetorical condensation, conceit, disconnection, paradox, parallelism, physical figuration, the union of opposite qualia, indefinite reality, and transcendental metaphors makes Sŏn poetry strike down to the essence of the mind, usually called the Buddha's Nature.

Key Words Korean Sŏn Poetry, Zen, Buddhism, Zen Cognitive Poetics, Enlightenment discourses, Narrative

Introduction

All poems have conducted an expressive act on the things to represent human mind. Throughout the literary history, poetry shows autobiographical narratives. Poetic process is an interplay between the formative process of personal experience and the structuring process of it for its own uniqueness. In poetic creativity, the poet's personal intentionality can be reflected in the poem's narratives.

Poetry is not silence. It can represent some qualia of silence, but cannot be the silence itself, nor depiction of it as it is. In it an intelligent act abstracts the meaning of life in causal relation to the expressing poet. Zen¹ poetry proclaims that one of its primary tenets is "Direct Transmission of Mind," or mindless transfer, or wordless representation of mind itself. For Zen poets, life always *portrays* its Zen-like narratives and poetic representations.

Zen strives to embody the reality of man in inevitable life pains. It is the most

rigorous mental process to attain such an impossible project. Is it possible to express the religious truth without verbal representation? Zen masters are well aware of this difficulty, but always toil to grasp a concrete way to see such a state of mind. Many have achieved a right mind and right action in the process of meditation. Zen's intentionality can predestine the topological features of peninsular Korean *Sŏn*, which is different from the continental Chinese Ch'an or the insular Japanese Zen.

This essay studies the poetic consciousness of Korean *Sŏn* poetry, with its distinguishable literary properties. The Zen poetry of Korea, China, and Japan is phenomenologically similar, since they are founded on similar ideas and practices for hundreds of years. However, people have different minds and different temperaments and show different poetic responses. I delineate the unique features of Korean *Sŏn* poetry by focusing on three domains of mind: cognition, affection, and action.

Characteristics of Korean *Sŏn*

1. History

Korean Buddhism is a part of the East Asian Mahāyāna Buddhism traditions. In the fourth century, Koguryŏ (37 BC-618 AD), one of the Three Kingdoms (Paekch'ŏ and Silla), introduced Chinese Buddhism into the Korean peninsula and the early Korean Buddhism "developed with it very closely (with the neighboring countries) and also influenced the development of Buddhism in Japan"(Keown 448) since then. It has many aspects of new development in sophisticating philosophy of Buddhism, winning over the consenting minds of ordinary people as well as the noble ruling classes, absorbing the indigenous religious tradition of shamanism, and harmonizing all the traditional ideas including the Confucian ways of life, too.

Korean *Sŏn* has been recognized as a coherent and cogent subitism, a school of Sudden Enlightenment and defined as a unique denomination to its regional features. When Korean *Sŏn* Masters have displayed their peculiar traits so long, their collective narrations can have continuously formed certain national traits and religious meanings congruent to Korea. I can say it would have functioned as the foundations of Korean *Sŏn* poetry and formed its unique poetic self. So I'd like to locate and value those properties, based on the context of the past poetic experience and their represented works. They can surely imply new aspects of Korean *Sŏn*, still strongly underlying in the Korean culture.

Let's see briefly the Korean *Sŏn* history which can provide an overarching narrative context: The first *Sŏn* master who introduced Ch'an Buddhism to the old Korea is recorded as Pŏmnang² (法郎 632-?), who was ordained by the 4th Patriarch Daoxin(道神) in China.³ Pŏmnang is known to have gone to Tang Dynasty, circa 647-54 AD during the reign of the 27th Queen Sŏndŏk, Silla Dynasty.⁴ At that time

when he came back from China to spread out his Sŏn practices, the Kyojong(教宗, Scholastic School) was so prevalent. At last he led an ascetic life and taught his disciples. Among them, Sinhaeng(愼行 704-779) went to Tang dynasty to study further and founded one of the 9 Mountains in Korea. It is also said that the full-fledged Sŏn Buddhism was “officially introduced around late Koryŏ dynasty (13th C) (Keown 697).

However, nowadays the recognized founder of Korean Sŏn School of Sudden Enlightenment is academically claimed to be Toŭi(道義), who was ordained by Chijang(地藏) in 813 AD and became the Patriarch of Kaja Mountain School. Since the later part of Silla Dynasty (BC57-925AD) and the early Koryŏ dynasty (918-1392), 9 mountain schools of Sŏn Buddhism were founded. Among them, the 8 schools follow the teachings of 6th Patriarch Huineng’s teachings of Sudden Enlightenment.

Among many masters, Chinul (知訥 1158-1210) introduced *hwadu* (話頭, *huatou*) meditation “as the fastest way to attain enlightenment, but reserved it for the high-capacity practitioners” (Keown 453). Hyesim (慧諶 1178-1234) wrote Sŏnmun Yŏmsong (禪門揔頌 *The Collection of Cases and Verses of the Sŏn School*, 1226), a basic text of Korean Sŏn, compiling 1125 verses and prose verses, or *kongan*. Other masters are Kyŏngha (景閑 1299-1375), Ch’ungchi (沖止 1226-92), Powu (普愚 1301-82), Hyekŭn (惠勤 1320-76), Tŭkt’ong (得通 1376-1433), Sŏljam (雪岑 1435-93), Powu (普雨 1515-65), Hyuchŏng (休靜 1520-1604), Taenŭng(1562-1649), Myŏngcho (1593-1661), Wandang (Kim, chŏng-hŭi 1786-1856), Ch’oŭi (草衣 1786-1866), Sŏngwu (惺牛 1849-1912), Yongsŏng (龍城 1864-1940), Mangong (滿空 1871-1946), Sŏngch’ŏl (性徹 1912-93), and other modern masters. They are in the line of Linji (?-866/7) and Mazu (707-86) of the Southern Ch’an Buddhism schools. Most Korean Sŏn Masters focus on *Kanhwa Sŏn* (懇話 *kanhua*) which emphasizes to practice the ultimate way to reach awakened enlightenment as well as an equal emphasis on doctrinal teachings.

Most of the Korean Sŏn masters display the tradition of Sudden Enlightenment, whose origin of this teaching can be started from Pojo Chinul. His teachings constituted “the dominant form of Sŏn Buddhism in Korea since the thirteenth century.” (Keown 461) To most masters, human nature is originally perfect and has undamaged original wisdom. Therefore, enlightenment means realizing their own nature and sustaining its enlightenment state throughout lifetime. The initial sudden awakening (解悟 *hae’o*) cannot sustain continuously as they hope, and naturally needs gradual cultivation of it. Most Korean masters, especially Sŏngch’ŏl, denies such a gradual transition of Gradual cultivation after sudden awakening, for which Chinul claimed “the follower of intellectual knowledge is the heretical and wrong way

of practicing Sŏn Buddhism”(Keown 461).

Korean Buddhism is defined as syncretic Buddhism (會通 *hoet'ong*), state-protecting Buddhism, and Minjung (Grass roots) Buddhism. Syncreticism signifies unification, appropriation, harmonization, or “interdenomination”(Keown 455) to reconcile the imported ideas (usually from China) within the existing thoughts, such as Hwarang spirit (Cadets’ code of conduct), Sonbi (scholars) spirit, Confucianism, shamanism, and other mentality. This syncretic spirit has been so strongly promoted throughout the Korean history as well as the Buddhists’.⁵

2. Typical Poetic Components of Sŏn

It is vital not to supervene on a subjectivism or relativism when I look into the typical Korean Sŏn poetry. I highlight the culturally embedded formal features or contexts (temporal and spatial characteristics, contents, narratives, and others) in the Sŏn poetry.

The universal traits of Zen poetry: Zen poetry forbids the personal narratives and self-representations as they can be, not to be too much autobiographical emotions over the religious connectivities, as often found in the (post) modern poetry and even common lyric poetry. It asks for more affective restraints, formal simplicity, lucidity, enhanced tropological expressions, linguistic reductionism, etc. At the same time, paradoxically enough, it urges the masters to experience their own individualized enlightening version, supreme mental or spiritual states, to express such mentality most powerfully and uniquely. These dual aspects (personal experience and impersonal expressiveness) may sound paradoxical or irrational to the ordinary audience at the first sight. Never so!

If a master wants to see and experience the real nature of human mind, he first starts from his individual mind, not from the above or external entity. Then, he ex-presses it out to the observing eyes of other monks or the masses in his own creative and innovative ways. In this imminent moment of seeing the real Nature, the immediate reproduction of the looming truth can be recognized at first by cognitive awareness and then affective synesthesia, and then union of cognitive and affective awareness, which is usually called the state of enlightenment, i.e. real active potential to practice in reality what is enlightened. In this illuminating experience, an objective way of expression to reveal such mental discovery should be spontaneously reconstructed and represented literarily to the perceiving others. In other words, the internal enlightening mentality should be verbalized as a communicable mind.⁶

Zen poetry clearly perceives and recognizes these spontaneous and recurrent subjects in the immanent mind and the objects in the transcendental world, out of which Zen masters co-opt some special features for their mental or spiritual

illuminations. They are asked to reveal the mental experience of personal enlightenment concretely and vividly, not abstractly or metaphysically. Their literary representations should not be conceptions or concepts, but the experience itself of the things as they are, i.e. the universal wisdom on how the enlightenment occurs attainably, since it is nobody but themselves that experience the real Self-Nature or enlightenment.

In this context, the depiction of the real enlightenment, a newly uplifted mental state, needs somewhat different verbal communication to express its imminent state of vivacity, immediate and profound. This representing literariness of immediacy calls for new narratives, more natural and vivacious to the real inner Nature of mind, more powerful enough to draw out the deep truth. Accordingly, its narratives are to reconstruct the pure self of the Zen poet (master) and represent it for the readership of or availability to the general public. This transformative faculty of the mental states into a readable literariness requires quite a new literary creativity and its transferring techniques. As a result, Zen poetry can surpass other types of poetry in the sense of description, communication, understanding of the self and world, and life mystery itself.

Based on this fundamental universality of Zen poetry, Korean Sŏn poetry has developed its unique features in accommodation with its own environmental and ethological constituents. The typical traits of the Sŏn poetry can be traced in three aspects; formal aspects (coherence, organization, stylistics), contents aspects (meaningful themes, compelling ideas, imminent values), and literary techniques (union of opposite qualia, indefinite reality, and transcendental metaphors).

In formal aspects, Sŏn poetry uses the rhetoric of condensation, conceit, disconnection, paradox, parallelism, figuration of things, which are almost similar to the rhetoric of modern poetry. Its style is short, concise, semantic-based, metaphor-centered, and 4 line-prevalent. It is the linguistic form that represents the final thoughts of Sŏn Buddhism poetically. In other words, Sŏn takes up a literary medium of expression, called poem, to represent the state of enlightenment experienced by the Sŏn practitioners. In Sŏn poetry, contents are preemptive, not form. In contents aspect, Sŏn poetry likes to catch up the life as it dashes to the master. It is to concretize the external things for better understanding of the supremacy of life, or reality itself. Naturally, it likes to get down to the bottom of the Self-Nature. In techniques, the basic writing techniques can be said as paradoxical usages, which frequently use “the union of opposite qualia, indefinite reality, and transcendental metaphors” (Song 13).

The union of opposite qualia (metaphors) signifies to distort the normalcy and daily routineness and to let the normal and abnormal be harmonized into a more uplifted mental state. It is oneness of opposite elements towards a higher spiritual

dimension. Good examples can be cited as follows; “holding a hog in an empty hand,” “The bridge flows and the water stays clean,” “A muddy ox ploughs the (celestial) moonlight on the water.” The transcendental metaphors are to find a figure of speech which finds similarity in two dissimilar things. It is a metaphoric expression to find sameness in dis-sameness. Good examples are found in “Mud is the bone in the green stone” (Hyuchong), “Go to One Two Three Four/ Come four three two one” (Mukyŏng). The idea of indefinite reality reflects the fundamental principle of Sŏn, where they don’t distinguish the essence of mind from the physical phenomena. The Sŏn’s reality is to cut off the logical barriers still lingering in the symbols of poems and to transcend the judging mind or dialectical selective mind. The words, phrases, or Sŏn poem itself consist of endless realities and create them on indefinitely, not just implying symbols. A good example can be the poem by Hyobong below.

Korean Sŏn Poetry

It is almost impossible to describe so many narrative traditions compiled for 1500 years here. I will select some poems to tip off their linguistic structures, meanings, and imaginative techné.

Let’s start with a poem, somewhat lyric and literary, by Hyesim who wrote *Sŏnmun Yŏmsong*, the most popular book for the students of the Sŏn Poetry.

Pondside, I sit alone, serene,
I see a monk down in the water.
Silent, we see each other, smiling.
I know language is no responsive.
(Shadow)⁷

In his leisure time, he likes to see his Self. Who is the image reflected on the surface of clear water? He might start a whispering dialogue to his self-image without any assuring answer. Silent smile and serene air currents come back to his self-questioning mind. Here his inner voice fire-cracks, “Don’t rely on words,” Pulip munja (不立文字)!

Yesterday it is in the hands of the master.
Today it is in the palm of his disciple.
When so hot waves sweep us all mad,
Nothing forbids it to raise fresh wind.
(Fan)

He recited this poem when his teacher, Chinul, invited him to betray his mind for submission of his Law, handing over the fan out of his sleeve. In the disarrayed years of late Koryŏ dynasty, it's hard to keep or raise "fresh air," or authentic Law, in the "hot waves," signifying the corrupt society.

It is the place no pains can arrive.
 There is a heaven and earth, all removed.
 If you ask me, "What is it?" I will say
 it is the Nirvanic Gate of Great Serenity.
 (Death Song)

In his death bed, he says to his servant, "I am too busy today." He sat up in his meditative position and sitting, passed away into the place of no pains, which might be a remote universe, where all peaceful serenity is waiting for him in emptiness. He might be still thresholding over his Nirvanic Gate in his picnicking journey somewhere.

Ch'ungchi wrote about the routine thingness of the life, which reflects the world of Buddha as it is:

Half clear, half mizzling, the sky is murky.
 Now warm, then chilly, the spring is tranquil.
 The gate closed, I lie down for long till the sunset.
 A bell tolls, soft and remote, tapping my window wall.
 (Things Are)

Life is not to do something, but better leave it as it is. The seasons come and go, but everything keeps its own places as tranquil as they are. Men are just to lie down and listen to the last melodies of life at dusk. What a brilliant moment of life not to be thinking of anything at all, except his own! Emptiness is not just a vacancy of time, but feeling nothing in fullness.

Kyŏngha wrote about his enlightening process:

A stone lady gives a birth to a child all of sudden.
 A wooden man strokes a spot on the forehead in darkness.
 A dark Konryun tribe rides on the iron horse.
 Immediately somebody strikes the golden whip.
 (To Monk Chikong)

This is a typical poem of enlightenment which symbolizes the final state of nirvanic ecstasy. All the Sŏn-practicing monks wish to bear and deliver an infant of final illumination. After long years of meditation and practice, the infertile woman barely comes to have a Buddha's baby, even tiny or not fertilized completely yet, at a particular moment all of sudden. Then, a wooden man, probably dry and husked old, not sapping juicy yet, come to recognize the blissful occasion and anoint the baby just born by spotting on his forehead. However, there is still a long way to go ahead of a new born. This is just a starting point. So he rides on a new iron horse like the dark-skinned barbarian Tibetans (Konryun tribe), and then all suddenly somebody, invisible or non-existential, whips a shiny golden lash again. This might be second or supreme state of enlightenment.

Who is the first stone woman? She is a symbol (metaphor) of desperate monks to fertilize themselves with the Buddha. Attaboy! A congratulatory event of the first child birth! Her husband, another wooden man, nods on her first anointment. Yet, the anointer and the anointed are the same 'hallucinated' entities, maybe dry and unskinned yet. Who bears a child and who dare to nod and anoint her? So they must be reborn as a new people riding a new horse in a different region of uplifted intelligence, refined affection, and more active ethical behaviour. Who is the last man whipping the man on the iron horse? It may be the Self, the Nature of Buddha, or the Image of The Goddess of Mercy. Who is being whipped, riding on his horse of prideful mind? It might be the empty vanity, dusty emptiness in the hall, or nothing itself.

Let me cite a few more poems of enlightenment, similar to the above poem:

A muddy ox hugs the moon and runs away under the sea.
 A stone tiger holds a baby and sleeps in front of a rock.
 An iron snake pierces its ways into the diamond eyes.
 Mt. Konryun rides on an elephant and pulls away a heron.

(Hyŏbong)

A muddy cow ploughs the moonlight on the water.
 A wooden horse makes up the skylscapes in the clouds.
 The valiant tunes of old voice are the bones in vain.
 A lonely voice of the heron resounds long into the sky.

(Soyo Taenŭng)

In the sunny village, the cold frost is frozen in bandages.
 The flower bloomed on the iron tree reflects its brightness.
 A muddy ox yowls and wails, then runs into the sea.

A wooden horse weeps to the wind, a voice filling all the ways.
(Höpaek Myōngcho)

These enlightenment poems select different metaphors and semantic profundity from other lyrical literary poems of daily life. They all frequently employ quite strange metaphors to coersively assimilate two different things and signify the ultimate reality of enlightenment.

Naong's poem displays the daily routine mind, in which the illuminating supremacy of the highest mind can be detected, even leisurely taking nap:

With a true empty mind of doing nothing,
I take a nap on a stone pillow in the rocks.
Do you ask me where my real power is?
A single white robe, tattered through life!
(In the Mountains)

Hyuch'ong tells us the typical lyricality on the Korean landscape and the sorrow of memory:

Petals fall, the temple closes deep for long.
The spring-cherishing guest never returns.
The wind sways the shadow of the crane's nest.
The clouds moisten the robe of a sitting monk.
(Passing by the old temple 2)

What a neat poem to restrain the ebullient sorrow! It depicts objectively and emotionlessly, but its serene compassion oozes out so breezingly, silence in movement.

Ch'oŭi, well-known as a monk of tea, refines the departing pelt-in sorrow into a genuine meditative objectivity, seized mellowness, and recreated empty mindedness:

Departing you, I turn my head to the dusky heaven.
The thought of you turns around the smoky fine fog.
Today's morning fog leaves with the coming Spring.
Ghostly emptiness, I fall into sleep with falling petals.
(Departing You)

Sōngwu shows that every moment of our life is full of enlightening state of mind:

The opportune place dismantles the emptiness.
 The flower in void comes to fruition everywhere.
 Thou should know this is also the vernal light.
 Its abstruse aroma wafts into my meditating room.
 (Coincidental Song)

Mangong sees an archetype of Sŏn masters, another Buddha, in Sŏngwu (his pen name is Kyŏnghŏ):

The mirror is empty; in origin there is no mirror.
 The ox is enlightened; he is not an ox any more.
 It is not nothing, but everywhere, every place,
 The eyes are wakeful, all liquors and women.
 (Eulogy of the Portrait of Kyŏnghŏ)

He not only admires a monk, but also sees its nihilistic beauty of enlightenment. Where there is neither ox nor mirror, everything is gone to nothing. However, to his wakefulness appear only the mundane pleasures of life. When we say it is not this, then this cannot be it again!

Sŏngch'ŏl presents his prominent spirit and valor in his song of enlightenment:

The Yellow River flows reverse to the summit of Mt. Konryun.
 The Sun and Moon lose their light, the Earth submerges.
 Suddenly I make a chortle and turn about erecting my head.
 The blue mountain stands amidst the white clouds as old.

His enlightenment can drill through the river and the universe. When he turns around as if he won the world with a guffaw, he just sees the same world as it is, nothing changed. Then, what is the enlightenment and what is not? Does a mental and spiritual transformation make any new seismic change? Even if he realizes or attains the highest stage of mental awakenings, the river flows and the mountain is there as if nothing has been changed. From here, a serene reflectivity of life spreads out to a new dimension. Light comes from tranquility. The tranquility stands on the reflective light. Therefore, two things are both complete and changing, they are not being born and dying, not increasing and reducing.

Conclusion

When Sŏn masters really master the scriptural truth and their hermeneutic meanings in Buddhism, fully understand the causal efficacy of the real life, faithfully interpret the human desires and their ensuing pains, and responsively recognize the intentions of his Father masters and all the life wisdom, at last they can presumptively produce their poetic selves and narratives as a token of self-realization, which could be called Sŏn poetry, a literary outcome of spiritual supremacy. When they are poetically inspired on all the enlightening events, meaningful or sundry, of the secular and religious life, they can impose some insightful meanings on the factual or imagined things or ideas as truthfully as they can see.

As shown above, Korean Sŏn poetry displays many typical traits in its formally coherent four lines and five Chinese letters in a line, highly condensed poetic ideas, paradoxically more expressive by omission of sundry epithets. Its stylistic organization of ideation is so speedy and brief but powerful as to strike out sparkling imagery. Its aesthetic elegance is a little rough and tough, but it trills with its vast seismic after-tremors silently but powerfully. Its frequent use of the rhetorical condensation, conceit, disconnection, paradox, parallelism, physical figuration makes Sŏn poetry strike down to the essence of the mind, usually called the Buddha's Nature. Its concise-but-bullets-cocked style is all semantic-based, metaphor-centered, and new imagery prevalent. This linguistic formality represents the primary poetic features of Korean Sŏn poetry.

In contents, Sŏn poetry drives the masters to the high cliff edge, risky and shaky, but at the last imminent moment it bursts into an immediate poem to awaken us wide in the eye of the storm. It disarrays the traditional language system, almost urging them to forget its orders and conventions even for a moment, just to see a new dimension of perception. Its imminency in the sense of contents aspects is to immediately salvage out meaningful themes, compelling ideas, or a life-long pending project, i.e. enlightenment. Its poetic content usually hits headlong on the mental state of enlightenment, either full-fledged or by way of routines, everydayness. All the life constituents (eating, shitting, sleeping, drinking, etc) are subject to good enlightening process. Seeing the Nature is not away from the daily routines. The content of enlightenment is never metaphysical things, but everyday's concrete realities.

In techniques, the prominent feature is to use many paradoxical usages. Sŏn poetry likes to unionize completely-opposite qualias (imagery, metaphors, symbol, etc), which conversely proves there is nothing opposite or conflicting in the universe. One is not different from many; many is zero away from one. Seeing is the same as emptiness, and void is color. To fuse them into a harmonious state, Sŏn poetry distorts reality purposefully, ab-normalizes the normalcy, breaks for a connection, split for a new uplifted oneness. This constructing technique is not to build up an

arch gate, but to serendipitously find “spandrels”⁸ of emptiness, underneath which “The bridge flows and the water stays clean.” Such spandrel-like metaphors can be called transcendental figures of speech which combine two dissimilar things for better-convincing poetic power. It is a metaphoric expression to find sameness in dis-/un-sameness. This spandrel effect of metaphors brings indefinite reality, always lurking for a poet’s opportune literary stroke. Who can dare cut down or demarcate the boundary of emptiness in the spandrel void vastness? There is no dialectical stone mark, but only the looming smile of lotus in the stone.

Notes

1. Here I use Zen, a Japanese translation of 禪, when I signify the generic properties of Zen Buddhism in the Far East, since it has been historically introduced to the western readers that way. However, I’ll use Ch’an for the Chinese Zen; *Sŏn* for the Korean Zen; Zen for the Japanese Zen, when I signify specific regional distinctions.
2. The Korean writing system is known as Hankŭl, which uses the standard Roman alphabet pronounced as in English, with the exception of the two vowels ɔ (as in cot) and ŭ (as in burn). In addition to it, I used MacKeun-Reishauer System here.
3. According to “The Monument to Chijeung Monk,” *Tomb Epigraphs of Four Mountains*(四山碑銘) by Ch’oe, Chi-won(857-?), Pŏmnang’s ordained pedigree is Toshin--Pŏmnang —Sinhaeng—Chunbŏm—Dohŏn who is called the National Monk Chijeung. Dohŏn founded his own mountain school. See Song, Jun-young, *The World of Zen Poetry: Reading with Modern Language*, (P’urŭn Sasang: Seoul) 525.
4. The exact personal information on his birth, death, and other personal activities are not known to us now, but Chong, Yak-yong(1762-1836) clearly recorded Pŏmnang’s name in his work, *The Study of Son Buddhism in Korea*(大東禪教考), Daedun-sa Chronicles, Vol.4, Asia Culture Pub.1983, p.3. See also Yi, Neung-hwa, *The Complete History of Yi-Dynasty Buddhism*(조선불교통사), annotated by Research Institute of Buddhism Culture, Dongkuk University Presees: Seoul, 2010, vol. 1, 12. Snelling writes in *The Buddhist Handbook*, “the Chan school was introduced (to Korea), traditionally around 630 AD” (149).
5. Hoet’ong syncretism in Korean Buddhism can be found in most masters’ analects; Hyuchong says, “the Kyo Scholastic Buddhism is the Buddha’s words and the Sŏn Meditational Buddhism is the Buddha’s mind.” Tŭkt’ong tries to break down the boundaries of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism.
6. Of course, verbalization is a side-effect of enlightenment, not its own target. It is a kind of virtue or grace from the enlightened monks. That’s why the conative stage (actualizing or practicing the mental enlightenment into real action) is so emphasized in Sŏn Buddhism.

7. All the translations are mine, based on the original texts.
8. Spandrel is a kind of side-effects of dream, serendipitous product, not purposed from the architecting itself. See Owen Flanagan, *Dreaming Souls: Sleep, Dreams, and the Evolution of the Conscious Mind* (Oxford University Press: NY, 2000).

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中国外国文学学术史研究的新突破

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一、总序：难得一见的精彩文章

陈众议先生的新作《塞万提斯学术史研究》（凤凰出版传媒集团，译林出版社 2011 年 12 月第一版）出版了，可喜可贺。在对《塞万提斯学术史研究》评说之前，不能不先说陈众议为“外国文学学术史研究”撰写的总序。这篇文章从外国文学学术史研究的视角，在世界政治和经济演变的大背景里，对外国文学研究的发展进行纵向和横向考察，对文学研究中的种种现象进行归纳总结，对学界一些重要问题进行深入反思，放眼世界，纵论天下文学，真知灼见，尽显其中，是近些年来难得一见的精彩文章。

在“外国文学学术史研究”项目启动之前，外文所曾经主编过对中国的外国文学研究以及中国文学研究都产生了重要影响的三套丛书：“外国文学名著丛书”、“外国古典文艺理论丛书”和“马克思主义文艺理论丛书”。与之相比，“外国文学学术史研究”不仅继承了三套丛书的传统，而且还更进一步，在研究的规模、水平、深度和广度上都将超过前者，堪称空前的创举。“外国文学学术史研究”通过对一批经典作家作品的解剖，从学术史研究的角度考察其经典形成的过程，以为今天的借鉴。从根本上说，它的核心价值就在于对学术研究方法论的强调以及对学术研究价值的追求。学术史研究，其本身就是一种方法论的体现。总序说得好：“格物致知，信而有证；厘清源流，以利甄别。”“学术史研究既是对一般博士论文的基本要求，也是一种行之有效的文学研究方法，更是一种切实可行的文化积累工程，同时还可以杜绝有关领域的低水平重复。”文学研究抑或任何其他学术研究，都需要对前人的研究进行梳理，这既是研究的基本方法，也是一种基本的学术规范。学术史梳理和研究是进行学术研究的前提。不了解自己所从事研究的学术研究历史，不对前人的研究进行分析总结，不对前人的研究进行批评、借鉴和吸收，不了解前人的研究做了哪些工作，取得了哪些进展，解决了哪些问题，还有哪些问题没有解决或没有提出，我们就会出现短视、近视、盲视，陷入主观主义。学术研究切忌管中窥豹，将自己束缚在一个有限的学术小圈子里，进行所谓的自我解构，自说自话，自以为是。

然而在目前一些研究中，学术研究中的短视现象并不少见。

改革开放以来，大量西方的文学批评被介绍引入中国，形成了我国文学批评的中西融合、多元共存的局面，推动着我国文学批评的发展。但同时我国文学批评也存在着严重的西化倾向，在文学批评方法及话语权方面缺少我们的参与和原创，在现有文学批评方法与理论的成果中很少有我们自己的创新和贡献。如今一些打着文化批评、美学批评、哲学批评等旗号的批评，往往颠倒了理论与文学之间的依存关系，割裂了批评与文学之间的内存联系，存在着理论自恋、命题自恋、术语自恋的严重倾向。这种批评不重视文学作品即文本的阅读、阐释、分析、理解，而只注重批评家自己对某个文化命题的求证，造成理论与实际的脱节。在这些批评中，文学作品被肢解了（用时髦的话说，被解构了、被消解了），变成了用来建构批评者自己文化思想或某种理论体系或阐释某个理论术语的片断。在有些人眼里，文学批评似乎是没有真理的自我诠释的批评。

对于学界出现的这种隐忧，陈众议一针见血地指出：“在有些人眼里，甚至连相对客观的真理观也消释殆尽了。于是，过去的‘一里不同俗，十里言语殊’成了如今的言人人殊。于是，众生喧哗，且言必称狂欢，言必称多元，言必称虚拟和不确定。”不仅如此，陈众议还深刻地描述了学界乱象：“至于意识形态‘淡化’之后，跨国资本主义的一元化意识形态更是有增无已；真假不辨，善恶不论，美丑混淆，也是所在皆是；个人主义大行其道，从而使抽象的人性淹没了社会性；普世主义势不可挡，以致文化相对主义甚嚣尘上。文学从大我到小我，从外向到内倾，从摹仿到虚拟，从代言到众声喧哗；真实给虚幻让步，艺术向资本低头；对妖魔鬼怪和封建迷信津津乐道，任帝王将相和无厘头充斥视阈，能不发人深省？”真是切中时弊的精辟之语。的确如此。在后现代语境中，经典文学首当其冲，不是被迫“淡出”，便是横遭肢解，传统认知、伦理价值和审美取向被颠覆，人性和兽性的区别被模糊。“无论解构主义者初衷何如，解构风潮的实际效果是：不仅相当程度上消解了真善美与假恶丑的界限，甚至对国家意识形态，至少是某些国家的意识形态和民族凝聚力都构成了威胁。”对于这种危害，我们不能不保持一份清醒。

出于一个正直知识分子的良知和责任感，陈众议认为对西方理论的系统反思、分析和批评势在必行，而借助学术史的梳理和研究，除了可以重新唤醒人们对外国文学经典作家、作品的正确认识之外，也同样有利于我们尝试着构建自己的文学批评理论，改变以往照搬国外的理论多、自己原创少的历史。可以说，这篇总序正是众议先生对我国外国文学研究的历史和现状认真思考的结果。

二、《塞万提斯学术史研究》：一部开山之作

“外国文学学术史研究”的提出和实施既是对我国外国文学研究历史的总结，也是对我国学术现状的反思以及对未来学术研究如何发展的探讨，尤其是对学界不良风气的拨乱反正。所以陈众议说，“外国文学学术史研究大系”项目的启动，“意味着我国的外国文学研究已开始对解构风潮之后的学术相对化、

碎片化和虚无化进行较为系统的清算”。显然，“外国文学学术史研究”这套丛书的面世，将会起到应有的导向作用，有助于我国外国文学研究的健康发展。

众议先生提出“外国文学学术史研究”的构想之初，我就为他的这一设想感到欢欣鼓舞。在为“外国文学学术史研究”写作的总序中，陈众议言简意赅地阐明了社科院支持的这一重大项目的宗旨：“立足国情，立足当代，从我出发，以我为主，瞄准外国文学经典作家作品和思潮流派，进行历时和共时的双向梳理。”“外国文学学术史研究”目前分两个系列由十六部学术史研究专著和十六部配套译著组成，研究的作家有塞万提斯、歌德、雨果、康拉德、庞德、高尔基、肖洛霍夫、海明威、普希金、茨维塔耶娃、左拉、狄更斯、哈代、菲茨杰拉德、索尔·贝娄、芥川龙之介。根据规划，学术史研究不是止于上述作家，还要持续发展，研究更多的作家。在“外国文学学术史研究”系列中，由陈众议亲自撰写的《塞万提斯学术史研究》是其中的第一部。我一直期待着这部开山之作的出版，因此当我收到这部著作时，心中不免有几分激动。

《塞万提斯学术史研究》是对学术史研究思想的成功实践，充分体现了总序的学术思想。全书由“塞万提斯学术史”、“塞万提斯学术史研究”和塞万提斯研究“重要文献目录”三个部分组成。各部分自有重点，但又相互联系，形成缺一不可的整体。

“塞万提斯学术史”部分是全书的基础与前提。这一部分以时间为序，重点对自17世纪以来《堂吉珂德》研究的学术史进行梳理。400年来的塞万提斯研究，在很大程度上就是《堂吉珂德》研究，因此作者把塞万提斯学术史研究的重点放在对《堂吉珂德》研究的考察上。作者细心的搜集不同时期有关塞万提斯与《堂吉珂德》的文献资料，进行甄别和分析，引用和评论，总结不同时期的研究特点，得失功过。跟随作者优美文字的引导，我们仿佛变成了能够穿越时空的旅游者，浏览了一遍由评论家、研究家和读者写就的《堂吉珂德》评论史和接受史。在这条时间隧道里，我们似乎见识了不同时代各色人物对《堂吉珂德》的评价，听到了“或褒或贬，甚至大褒大贬”的不同声音。经历了18世纪理性主义时代的思考，从浪漫主义时代开始，对《堂吉珂德》的评价可以说扫去了笼罩在塞万提斯头上的阴霾。德国哲学家谢林把《堂吉珂德》同《伊利亚特》与《奥德赛》相提并论，称古人尊崇荷马，今人膜拜塞万提斯。海涅评论说：“塞万提斯、莎士比亚、歌德成了三头统治，在记事、戏剧、抒情这三类创作里各各登峰造极。”司汤达称发现《堂吉珂德》“是我生命中最重要的事件”。马克思和恩格斯也高度评价塞万提斯。恩格斯认为，“堂吉珂德和桑丘·潘沙的旅行实在可以算是真正的奥德赛”。至此，在陈众议的笔下，终于让我们看到一部伟大的文学经典在怎样的历史中炼成了。

第二部分“塞万提斯学术史研究”是全书的重点，由7章组成，分别讨论了塞万提斯的矛盾和偏见、反讽或戏仿、虚构与真实、经典的偶然性与必然性、否定之否定以及《堂吉珂德》与经典背反和文艺复兴运动，可谓是从理论上对塞万提斯的全面讨论和总结。作者在全面介绍和评说塞万提斯的诗歌、悲剧和

喜剧、短篇小说及《堂吉珂德》的基础上，首先对塞万提斯的创作思想及艺术成就作了深入系统、客观科学的评述和论证。作者高度评价了塞万提斯的反讽或戏仿，认为它们是《堂吉珂德》赖以成功的重要元素，不仅使小说充满了喜剧（或悲喜剧）效果，而且奠定了小说的基本（故事）架构。接着作者又转而探讨塞万提斯关于虚构与真实的艺术思想，认为在他的笔下，虚构与真实的界限开始模糊，以致水乳交融。

作者以《堂吉珂德》为个案，论述文学经典的诸多问题，如经典形成的偶然性和必然性、经典的二律背反等。今天已经没有人否认《堂吉珂德》是不朽的文学经典，然而这部充满创造性、想象力和哲理光辉巨著，却并未被同时代人所认可，只是在经过了 100 多年的时间陶冶之后，才被接受为经典。作者因此认为，经典的形成需要批判和继承以及继承和创新，而这一特点在《堂吉珂德》这部经典小说中得到了有机的统一。的确如此，由于历史的局限性，一些伟大的文学作品往往要经历被误读和误解的过程。因此作者指出：“文学作品的经典化或非经典化过程又绝妙地反射出时代社会有所偏侧、有所扬弃及其隐含的特殊的认知方式、价值判断和审美取向。”

作者并没有止于对文学经典形成规律的探讨，而是更进一步将对经典的论述引申到更高层面，即借助对塞万提斯的研究展现作者从整体上对文学创作、理论及批评的全面思考，对文学批评现状的忧虑。作者认为，后现代主义之后的“无中心”、“多元化”情态正好契合了二元论“解构”之后“不分你我”、“不分西东”的跨国资本主义的全球化（即跨国资本的一元化）的态势。作者借助对《堂吉珂德》的研究展开对现实的批判，精辟地指出：“全球化和多元性其实也是一个悖论，说穿了是跨国资本主义的一元论。而整个后现代主义针对传统二元论（如男与女、善与恶、是与非、美与丑、西方和东方等等）的解构风潮恰恰顺应了跨国资本的全球化扩张：不分你我，没有中心。”作者正确地指出这一倾向的本质：“跨国资本主义时代的极端个人主义本质上是消解民族的、地域的价值判断和认知方式的，但是这并不意味着所有二元关系将从此消弭。”从中可以看出，作者的思考已经超越了论述《堂吉珂德》本身的意义，彰显了一个中国知识分子的可贵的民族责任感。

总之，《塞万提斯学术史研究》不仅总结了塞万提斯在世界文学史上 400 年来的历史，揭示了《堂吉珂德》如何成为文学经典的过程，而且还通过对塞万提斯的研究讨论了文学经典以及诸多文学理论与批评问题，为我国外国文学研究的拓深和繁荣提供了弥足珍贵的经验。作者站在中国的立场上评说西方文学，为我们提供了“以我为主”研究外国文学的方法与思路。作者在这部著作中表现出务实求真的学风，文字朴实，充满诗意。作者无论是分析问题，还是归纳总结，处处透露出眼光的远大和见解的高明。我相信，这部著作的出版，无论是“外国文学学术史研究”，还是对外国文学教学和研究，都将带来重要启示。

责任编辑：杨革新

她作为个体在说话

——评《艾丽丝·默多克小说研究》

胡全生

内容摘要：作者“作为个体在说话”的《艾丽丝·默多克小说研究》，是中国文学批评园地里一枝由“伦理转向”催发的艳丽奇葩，它表现出三大特征：重新关注文学伦理问题，解读不入俗套，浓墨重彩默多克的“朝圣之旅”。

关键词：《艾丽丝·默多克小说研究》 伦理转向 文学伦理

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Title: She Speaks as an Individual: Review of *Art and Morals*

Abstract: *Art and Morals: Iris Murdoch's Fictional World* is one of the most beautiful flowers due to the “Ethical Turn” in the garden of Chinese literary criticism in that its author “speaks as an individual” and that it is characterized by revisiting literary ethics, revolting against the convention of theory-first and interpretation-second, and focusing on art and morals in Murdoch’s fiction.

Key Words: *Art and Morals* ethical turn literary ethics

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在国内众多的艾丽丝·默多克的研究中，“作为个体在说话”的，且说得有声有色的，以笔者愚见，恐怕当属何伟文教授的《艾丽丝·默多克小说研究》（以下简称《研究》）。“作为个体在说话”语出默多克的《作为道德指南的形而上学》。在讨论“‘老的’、好的、可敬的文学评论家”如何分析文学作品时，默多克说道：“文学评论家是作为个体在说话，而不是作为科学家”（何伟文 9）¹。科学家说话总是离不开理论，总是离不开体系，总是满口专业术语，总是力求全面、系统。如此甚好。文学评论家，就默多克看来，却有别于科学家：她关注点点滴滴即细节，而不是所谓的系统性。文学关注生活，而生活是由点点滴滴做成的；文学评论家关注的是文学，故自然要审视文学家用甚点滴以及如何用这些点滴做成生活。

默多克的重要性尽人皆知：她是“二十世纪下半叶英国最杰出的小说家”，“研究当代英国小说是无法绕开默多克的”（1）。默多克的复杂性也无人不晓：谁能说得清她是什么（或说哪一类）作家？她显然是个哲学家，可她却说“我反对存在主义”（Biles 120），称自己“从不是存在主义者”（Slaymaker 425）。她

虽然穷尽一生精力探讨艺术与道德的关系，可“在美学伦理哲学理论领域（却）没有合适她的位置”（Ruokonen 15）。有人甚至将她描述为“愤怒的青年”，罗伯特·斯科尔斯（Robert Scholes）认为她实际是写“怪异小说”（“fabulation”）（Bradbury 350, 403），也就是说她写后现代主义小说²，可她却“表示不赞成后现代主义小说”，“把自己看成是一位‘现实主义小说家’”（59, 250）。有人认为她的《网下》是存在主义小说，可她却说“我不愿说自己是哲学小说家”（Biles, 116）。因此，如何言说默多克及其小说，则是评论家必须首先面对的问题。诚如阿如乔（Araújo）所言，“默多克既是哲学家又是小说家，积极地著述出版了半个世纪，对那些致力于研究她的著述的人提出了可喜的挑战：如何平衡她的哲学文章与小说？尤其是她的伦理思想在她的文学创作积累中起了什么相关作用？默多克的哲学是作为道德指南移入文学的吗？”（Araújo 2）

面对这“可喜的挑战”，何伟文教授积多年之功，欣然接受。她深知这个中的艰辛，感觉“虽竭尽全力仍不能为（自己）多年的默多克小说研究找到一个令人满意的‘系统’”。因此，她避开“下定义”，不寻觅“系统化理论框架”，“摆正”默多克既是小说家又是哲学家的关系，深深扎入作品，终于看清默多克的“朝圣之旅”：始于“迷惑”行于“关注”终于“善的真实”（9）。细看起来，《研究》表现出三大特征。

一、重新关注文学伦理问题

《研究》的中文标题是《艾丽丝·默多克小说研究》，但在此中文标题下写有其英文标题：*Art and Morals: Iris Murdoch's Fictional World*。直译成中文就是《艺术与道德：艾丽丝·默多克的小说世界》。只要阅读了《研究》，读者就知道这英文标题实际更贴切《研究》的内容。

文学必然涉及伦理，只是在20世纪，有相当长的时间，奉行文学自治论（autonomism）的批评家，太专注于文学作品的“文学性”、“文本性”、“互文性”等文学本体论问题，将文学中的伦理问题抛之脑后，因此明确主张文学与伦理关系密切的作家就受到了冷落，默多克也不例外。“虽然常有人说，她当属讨论文学对伦理之影响的第一人，但很少有人详细评论她这方面的观点，而总体评论她对伦理学和美学的相互关系所持的观点的，就更少了”（Ruokonen 15）。不过，在我们进入21世纪之际，情况发生了变化，出现了“伦理转向”（Ethical Turn）（Araújo 1）。这“伦理转向”的出现给默多克研究带来勃勃生机，一如英国的艾丽丝·默多克研究中心注意到的，“过去的10年见证了全球范围默多克研究的复兴，这主要是因为文学批评理论中出现了‘伦理转向’。”“如今，她被引用为伦理转向的主要思想家和实践者之一”（Centre）。

好像是与西方的“伦理转向”相呼应，中国的外国文学研究界也开始注重文学中的伦理问题。这当中的领军人物便是聂珍钊教授。他是中国的文学伦理学批评的创立者、阐发者和实践者。2004年，针对国内的“理论情结”，他发表了《文学伦理学批评：文学批评方法新探索》，评判了那种伪批评的倾向，

即“假借新的批评方法的外衣，把对文学的具体的批评变成了美学的、哲学的抽象分析，甚至变成了对理论自身的研究，文学批评的论文性质出现了变异，即变成了哲学论文、美学论文”，提出要“开始思考另一种批评的可能性，即作为方法论的文学伦理学批评”（聂珍钊 17, 18）。此后，他连发数文，阐释并实践这种批评，给中国的外国文学批评界带来了新鲜空气，催发了许多优秀研究成果。

《研究》正是在这样的形势下做成的。虽然《研究》未有明言，但我们还是可以视它为“全球范围默多克研究的复兴”之作，是文学伦理学批评的一大实践，启迪我们重新思考这个古老的、但却在上个世纪被遗忘了的文学伦理问题。

二、不入先理论后解读的俗套

不知从何时开始，如今的一些著述或博士论文，都落入一种近似八股的俗套：先理论后解读。大凡研究某个作家的小说、诗歌或戏剧，先找出一种理论大谈一番，然后用来解读作家、作品。这种做法虽无可厚非，然天下文章一般造，岂非近似八股？

再说，一个作家的作品又岂能用一种理论解读得了，且这种研究方法恐怕实际就是先给作家、作品定位，比如女权主义的，存在主义的，或者后殖民的等等，然后再找相对应的文学批评理论，用来解读作品。这种做法，说到底，岂不就是先给结论再找证据？但文学评论没有这么轻易的事，尤其是遇上那些难以定位的作家，比如默多克。默多克既多产又多样，即是小说家又是哲学家，该用何种理论来解读她呢？只因为她著书讨论了萨特就用存在主义的哲学思想？可她却否认自己是存在主义者。只因为她承认“我当然是个女权主义者”（Dooley 430）就用女权主义批评理论？可这样读下来的，充其量不过是从一种角度切入而得的心得，也就是说只涉及该作家的一个方面，绝非“全面、系统”得了；就算在这一方面做到了“全面、系统”，那也只是一个方面的“全面、系统”而已。相比之下，较为有趣的做法，窃以为是文本分析（即解读）先行，细读中渗透着理性的辨析。《研究》一书正是这样研究默多克小说的。它不求所谓的“系统化理论框架”；它根本就没有“理论框架”章节。之所以如此，原因可能有二：一是作者明白，无论用哪一种理论，都可能难以企及默多克小说的全部精髓；二是作者在评论默多克的小说时还遵循默多克的教导——“远离理论和概念就是驶向真理”（8），因为她认为“避开给默多克这样复杂而又艰深的作家下定义或者找到对之进行论述的系统化理论框架，也许是明智之举”（9）。结果，我们看到的，是作者只管分析默多克的作品，其中以小说为重，哲学和文论著述为辅，笔笔落在默多克小说的最核心问题。这就是《研究》的第三大特征了。

三、浓墨重彩默多克的“朝圣之旅”

艺术与道德关系如何，可谓默多克穷其一生求索解答的问题，并在这求索

中经历了“从‘迷惑’经过‘关注’走向‘善的真实’的朝圣之旅”（2）。可以说，《研究》全书论述的就是这“朝圣之旅”的三个阶段。这一点，连《研究》的篇目也标示得清清楚楚、明明白白。《研究》共分四章，第一章讨论“艺术和道德”，第二章讨论“迷惑”，第三章讨论“关注”，第四章讨论“善的真实”。毋庸置疑，《研究》的精华在二、三、四章。这三章共解读了九部默多克的小说（每章三部），精辟地阐述了“朝圣之旅”的三个阶段，做成了对默多克小说研究的一大贡献，填补了我国默多克研究中的空白，因为在国内众多的默多克小说研究中，注意到艺术与道德为默多克小说的核心问题的当有不少，但是能看清并证实默多克在求索解答艺术与道德是何等关系的路上实际经历了一三阶段“朝圣之旅”的，却尚无他人。从这点上说，《研究》丰富了我国的默多克研究。

或许太专注于这“朝圣之旅”的三个阶段，何伟文教授未将自己研究默多克的成果全都收入其中，有的仅以“附录”的形式出现在《研究》里，窃以为此非明智之举。两篇“附录”均有深度且不乏洞见，但一旦以“附录”而设，其光彩便暗淡了许多。其实，它们还是完全可以放入正文内的，只需找个适当的地方便行。比如“附录二”《语言之病痛，再现之危机——论艾丽丝·默多克的语言观》一文。既然认为默多克的“语言观与她独特的‘崇高’小说理论密切相关”，既然知道默多克“指出当把观照的对象从自然景象换成人类生活的景象时，康德的崇高理论可以转化成艺术理论”（270），而且，既然“我仍想概括性地说，她回到她的道德哲学的中心”（278），那就说明，默多克的语言观归根结蒂还是与她的道德观密切相关，而这也就说明，这个对她语言观的研究，实际还是属于默多克的“朝圣之旅”部分，涉及了艺术与道德的关系，因为对于作为小说家的默多克来说，艺术指的就是语言艺术。默多克之所以不接受德里达的语言观，乃是因为她不认同“文本之外别无它物”，而是认为文本之外还有道德。

注解【Notes】

1. 本文引文除另注释外，均源自《艾丽丝·默多克小说研究》，以下仅标注其页码。
2. 在 Robert Scholes 那里，fabulation 与元小说 (metafiction) 相差无几，也就是说后现代主义小说了。

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Realistic yet Illusive: Features of the Writing Techniques in *The Stone Diaries*

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Abstract Carol Shields, as one of the most eminent authors in Canadian literature, is famous for *The Stone Diaries*, which won her both the Governor General's Award and the Pulitzer Prize. This paper aims to study the novel's structure, content, theme, genre, narrative skills and so on as to present its writing features and to present the artistic effects achieved by the author's implementation of the techniques. *The Stone Diaries* is a combination of determinate and indeterminate features, including indeterminate genre, narrator, and self erasure, which increases the tension in the interpretation of this work.

Keywords *The Stone Diaries*; postmodernism; realism

Being currently the only novel winning both the Governor General's Award and the Pulitzer Prize, *The Stone Diaries*, while receiving accolade, also causes some disagreements among readers, critics, and scholars as to whether it is a realistic novel or a postmodern one. Some argue that *The Stone Diaries* is a realistic novel. For instance, Xinmin Liu maintains that *The Stone Diaries* has strong characteristics of realism and is far from being a postmodern novel (Liu 95).

Other critics such as Ling Wang and Mingli Qin argue that *The Stone Diaries* is a postmodern work. Based on the anti-plot feature of *The Stone Diaries*, they argue categorically that this novel should be categorized into postmodernism. Both arguments, as a matter of fact, are reasonable and hold water to some extent; however, it is detrimental in casting *The Stone Diaries* into either of the two categories. Instead, this article will analyze the writing techniques by studying the novel's genre, narrative skills, contents and plot, from which it can be seen that Shields's sophisticated skills not only contribute to the novel's success, but also promote the revolution of contemporary novels.

Certainties in *The Stone Diaries*

Realism is a literary movement in the 19th century, which intends to represent life as it really is. From the perspective of reader-response, it is concerned with the intended effects on readers, that is “realistic fiction is written to give the effect that it represents life and the social world as it seems to the common reader, evoking the sense that its characters might in fact exist, and that such things might well happen” (Abrams, et al 303). Realists believe that their novels can fulfill the mission of documenting real life. Besides, they believe each story should have a clear and complete plot which is about specific characters and a specific ending since everything is determined. In other words, realistic novels should at least be characterized by the following traits: a clear structure, a coherent content and a distinct theme. Luckily, many parts of *The Stone Diaries* meet these requirements.

First of all, the structure of *The Stone Diaries* belongs to the category of realistic novels with each of the 10 parts coherent with one another and is arranged in a chronological order. The ten chapters of *The Stone Diaries* are Birth, Childhood, Marriage, Love, Motherhood, Work, Sorrow, Ease, Illness and Decline, and Death respectively. From the titles of each chapter, it is obvious that the ten parts are not put together in a collage way. Instead, they are arranged in a linear and chronological way with one part following another, and altogether they tell the life story of the protagonist Daisy from her birth to death. In fact, this arrangement is an epitome of a realistic writing, and resembles very much the structure of the famous realistic novel *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* written by Thomas Hardy. *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* consists of seven parts: Phase the First: The Maiden, Phase the Second: Maiden No More, Phase the Third, The Rally, Phase the Fourth: The Consequence, Phase the Fifth: The Woman Pays, Phase the Sixth: The Convert, and Phase the Seventh: Fulfilment. By the arrangement of these seven parts, the tragic life story of the protagonist Tess is told in a chronological way with coherent contents, and this arrangement is readable and acceptable. With respect to the structure of postmodern novel, Gass, the eminent postmodernist, says that our world lacks meaning and coherence (Hu 52). Federman says that he prefers incoherence and he thinks that his whole life is to live for it which is a path into chaos (Hu 52). Its plot is anti-plot as held by Ling Wang and Mingli Qin, and novels of anti-plot are those whose “time relation and cause and effect relation are featured by distinctive incoherency and fragmentation” (Wang and Qin 67). For example, the former ten parts of the famous postmodern works *In the Heart of the Heart of the Country* include chapters such as A Place, Weather, My House, etc. with each chapter having no connection from the one preceding it and the one following it or the other ones. In this sense, *The Stone Diaries* does have traits of realism.

Secondly, *The Stone Diaries* distinguishes itself by its coherent contents. When looking upon *The Stone Diaries*, readers are firstly impressed by its autobiographical title, and then by its vivid characters and logical plots. These three factors altogether contribute to the novel's realistic content. First of all, its autobiographical title makes readers believe that *The Stone Diaries* documents the life experience of a person whose name is Stone. After reading its first chapter, readers' impressions are strengthened by its realist features of detailed and lifelike descriptions. Besides, realistic novels aim to depict reality. In realistic novels, subjects depicted are what can be found in daily life. Therefore, since what *The Stone Diaries* depicts is daily life or common life of human beings—from cradle (birth) to dust (death), the content of *The Stone Diaries* in this sense is of realistic feature, and appeals to more readers.

Thirdly, the feminist theme of the novel makes *The Stone Diaries* possess realistic features. For example, it deals with unequal gender relations on page 121 and deals with Daisy's happiness when she is working and her sorrow when she is fired. Realism deals with various themes, such as war, gender relation, and so on. Thus, in this sense *The Stone Diaries* is featured with realism and does not frustrate readers as does postmodern writing.

Indeterminacy in *The Stone Diaries*

Despite the above-mentioned certainties, features of indeterminacy also abound in *The Stone Diaries* and help the novel achieve the effects which cannot be realized by realism. Some postmodern writers do not believe novels can be representations of real life, and they think there can never be an ultimate truth in the world because nothing is destined, so they deem that there is no specific plot or specific ending. Besides, in their point of view, language is unreliable, so subject, history, reality, truth, and etc., all constructed by language, are also unreliable. Thus being completely different from realists, postmodernists "greatly weaken or even cancel the fundamental function of literature, i.e. the function of reflection and depiction of real life" (Li 60). In addition to that, postmodernists also hold that the world is in chaos and disorder, and that there is no center in this world. Therefore, under postmodernists' pen, it can be found that their texts are "full of fragment structure and multi-dimensional narrative perspectives", and readers can hardly conclude the themes of their works. They want to "subvert the foundations of our accepted modes of thought and experience so as to reveal the meaninglessness of existence and the underlying 'abyss,' or 'nothingness' on which any supposed security is conceived to be precariously suspended" by the technique of indeterminacy, word play, and so on (Abrams, et al 203). In other words, postmodern works are characterized by the indeterminacy of plot, theme, genre, narrative skills, unreliable description, and so on. Features of indeterminacy are

manifest in *The Stone Diaries*: its genre, its narrative skills, and also its content.

Firstly, indeterminacy exists in the genre of *The Stone Diaries*. Professor Liu Xinmin believes that *The Stone Diaries* is an autobiography, and he holds that it is “written in the form of autobiography telling the story of a common woman Daisy Goodwill’s experience from birth to death” (Liu 91). Though it is also mentioned in the former part of this paper that *The Stone Diaries* has an autobiographical title, it is not of certainty that it is of an autobiographical genre because the novel itself violates the definition of autobiography in the latter part of the novel. Generally speaking, autobiography is a genre in which “the narrative subject and the writing subject, i.e., the narrator and the author is the same person. ‘I’ narrates ‘my’ life story, and what is imitated is a real image of ‘myself’”, and here “‘I’ refers to the author alive in a real life (Shang 64). Based on this concept, it can be concluded that *The Stone Diaries* is not totally qualified as an autobiography because if *The Stone Diaries* were an autobiography of the protagonist Daisy, then she should have been alive when she writes it and she can never depicts scenes after her death, but there is a depiction of Daisy’s death. Therefore, the author and the protagonist of this novel are not the same person. However, what if the last chapter of death were imagined by Daisy when she had been writing her autobiography and she just wanted to add it into the whole? With such questions unresolved, the genre of this novel becomes indeterminate. Readers in this way become more active in reading this work: they have to be alert as to what is true and what is fictional in the work, or in other words, can they trust the narrator?

Secondly, indeterminacy exists in the narrators, which again reinforces the indeterminacy of the novel’s genre and makes readers think more. As indicated by Xiaojin Shang, “the narrator, the author, and the protagonist in the autobiography are the same one, and there is no division between them”. However, numerous examples in the novel show the existence of more than one narrator. For example, the following is a description of how Daisy feels when she suffers from measles:

Well, you might say, it was doubtless the fever that disoriented me, and it is true that I suffered strange delusions in that dark place, and that my sullen eyes in the twilight room invited frightening visions.

The long days of resolution, of silence, the torment of boredom—all these pressed on me, on young Daisy Goodwill and emptied her out. (Shields 75)

From the above example, it can be seen that in the first sentence it is Daisy the protagonist who narrates how herself feels about measles but the second sentence is narrated by someone in a third person’s point of view in which the narrator and the protagonist Daisy become two distinct individuals and violates autobiographical

writing's requirement. Besides, more examples show different narrators exist. For example, after Mr. Flett's death, there is a sentence describing how Daisy feels about her husband's death:

But does she actually pine for this dead partner of hers? For the calmness offered up by the simple weariness of their love? How much of her available time bends backward into the knot of their jointed lives, those twenty connubial years? To be honest, very little. There, I've said it. (Shields 230)

From the above example, it can be seen that it is narrated in a first person point of view, and the narrator is not Daisy herself. By the two examples mentioned above, it can be concluded that *The Stone Diaries* has at least three narrators: Daisy, a first-person narrator that is not Daisy, and a third-person narrator. No matter who these narrators are, they make the identity of the narrator become indeterminate, deconstruct the novel's autobiographical genre, and attribute the characteristics of indeterminacy to *The Stone Diaries*. Thanks to the indeterminacy of narrators, readers can construct their own interpretation of the text rather than accept what is told by the author.

Thirdly, the content of *The Stone Diaries* also manifests features of self-erasure and metafictionality. In this way, the readers' participation is invited. First of all, many examples in *The Stone Diaries* show the feature of self-erasure. For instance, in order to leave a lifelike impression on readers, the author includes many photographs with names of the characters written below them. However, after a close examination, it can be found that those pictures are contrary to what is described in the novel. For example, in the novel, Daisy's mother is described as an obese woman and taller than Daisy's father. However, in the photos, it can be found that Daisy's mother is not as obese as described and is shorter than Daisy's father. Thus, in this sense, the photos of Mr. and Mrs. Goodwill serve as a tool of self-erasure and deconstruct what is said about them. Another example of self-erasure: in the novel there is a scene depicting the year 1936 when Daisy is to come to visit Mr. Flett. It tells that Mr. Flett writes "six letters a year for twenty two year" to Daisy from the time Daisy leaves his house (Shields 141). However, this functions as a self-erasure because Daisy leaves Mr. Flett in 1916 when she is 11 years old and comes back in 1936 with twenty years past, which contradicts the "twenty two years" of correspondence.

Besides self-erasure, another prominent feature, metafictional writing, also appears in *The Stone Diaries*. Metafictional writing, as is utilized by John Barth in his short story "Lost in the Funhouse", means to explore a theory of writing fiction through the practice of writing fiction. In *The Stone Diaries*, metafictional writing can be seen:

What is the story of a life? A chronicle of fact or a skillfully wrought impression? The bringing together of what she fears? Or the adding up of what has been off-handedly revealed, those tiny allotted increments of knowledge? She needs a quiet place to think about this immensity. (Shields 340)

From this example it can be seen that within the novel the question of how to write a story is discussed, and the meta-fictional feature which is manifested so obvious cannot be nullified by the realistic writing permeated here and there in the novel.

Conclusion

From the above analysis, it can be seen that both determinate features and indeterminate features exist in *The Stone Dairies*. By the implementation of both techniques, Shields makes the text become more appealing and involves readers' participation: on one hand, certainties in works are more readable and more acceptable to readers but fail to involve readers' interaction in novel writing because realistic writings pursue the truth of details, and construct a lifelike surface; on the other hand, indeterminacy invites readers' participation in reconstructing the story through inference and imagination.

Besides, Shields's combination of certainties and uncertainties adds something new to realism, and promotes and advances the development of contemporary novels. Realists' works are still welcomed by readers due to the vivid and lifelike descriptions while "postmodernists who make works become a word play and emphasize the fictional nature of the novel make their works lack the targeting of reality and the depth of thought, and it is likely they will become boring" (Zhou 103). Thus, Shields's combination of the techniques of certainties and uncertainties can be viewed as a breakthrough in the skills of novel writing. Just as Carol Shields herself says:

Some postmodernists think there is no point beyond the language game, but I think there can be—and I don't know why we have to talk about these two forms of fiction [naturalism and postmodernism]. Why we can't have something in the middle—which is, I suppose, what I'm trying to do. Because postmodernist ideas do allow you to do things that you can't do as a naturalist. (Wachtel 44)

All in all, realism, which is less extreme than naturalism (in Carol Shields' own words afore-mentioned) for its works depict more real pictures than do naturalistic works, is more acceptable to readers, and its combination with indeterminacy not only contributes to the conveyance and construction of novels themselves but also guides a possible direction as to how the contemporary novels can evolve.



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