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Abstract The Center for Faulkner Studies at Southeast Missouri State University is one of the most important Faulkner Studies centers in US, and Dr.Christopher Rieger, the director of the center, is a famous Faulkner scholar, and has published his book *Clear-Cutting Eden: Ecology and the Pastoral in Southern Literature,* which is an very important and influential book in the field of American southern literature study. His book analyzes a kind of post-pastoral prospective reflected in Faulkner and other three American southern writers' works during "The Great Depression," and he considers that these southern authors put more emphasis on seeking a more interdependent and cooperative ecological model rather than an individualistic and competitive model from the past in order to achieve a sense of balance between the human and the nature, or between technology and wilderness, or the urban and rural. This book has been regarded by the American scholars as one which has made a great contribution to the American southern literature study. Dr. Rieger is also very interested in the comparative study of Faulkner and Chinese writers, and has written one paper on the comparative study of Faulkner and Moyan. On the July of 2015, due to the need of the research "William Faulkner and his influences on contemporary Chinese writers "sponsored by national Social Science Fund, Li Mengyu came to the center for an academic visit and had a special interview with Dr.Rieger, the interview covered such topics as the new Faulkner research approaches, the historic and cultural background in Faulkner's writing, race, gender, religion, modernity and postmodernity, and the comparative study of Faulkner and Chinese contemporary writers, hopefully, this interview can provide some new thoughts and perspectives for Faulkner study in Chinese academic circle.
Key words Christopher Rieger; William Faulkner Study; new approaches

Author Li Mengyu, Ph.D, Professor of College of Liberal Arts, Journalism and Communication, Ocean University of China.(Qingdao, China, 266100). Her academic interest is the comparative study between Chinese and western literature. She is currently focusing on the study of William Faulkner and contemporary Chinese literature. The interview is the periodic research of the project "William Faulkner and his influences on contemporary Chinese writers " sponsored by national Social Science Fund（13BWW007).

Li Mengyu (Li for short hereinafter): Dr. Rieger, It's my great pleasure and honor to have an interview with you on William Faulkner, since you are an expert in this field. My first question is, as the director of the Center for Faulkner Studies in your university, could you please introduce your center briefly? What role does it play in Faulkner studies in the US as well as outside of the US?

Christopher Rieger (Rieger for short hereinafter): The Center for Faulkner Studies here at Southeast Missouri State University was established in 1989 at the same time that we acquired the Louis Daniel Brodsky collection of William Faulkner materials. So it was because we acquired the Brodsky collection that we started the Faulkner Center at the same time. Mr. Brodsky was a famous collector of Faulkner, and he collected the largest personal collection of Faulkner materials, at that time, over 10,000 items. After working with Dr. Hamblin, who was the founding director of the Faulkner center, he eventually donated the collection to our university. So he wanted to make sure that the collection was used by scholars and that it didn't just sit in a room somewhere and one could never see it. So the Faulkner Center was established to try to promote the collection and bring people from around the world to use it, and promote the study of Faulkner's work. We host visiting scholars, we have people working on books and articles on Faulkner who come to use our collection, the Blotner papers in particular, and we host a conference every two years that brings scholars together to present their work on Faulkner.

Li: So I also know you have an online course on Faulkner?

Rieger: Yes, that was another thing we did to promote the collection of our university; a massive open online course or MOOC was created to help people read Faulkner on their own. A lot of times, people don't have a chance to read Faulkner with a professor or in class, and sometimes it can be difficult to read by yourself, so we created the MOOC to help people read Faulkner's novels and understand them.

Li: OK, actually, in China last year, I received an e-mail about your MOOC from

professor Hamblin. I was very pleased to get the news, and also visited the MOOC course website and registered, and I found many very interesting topics and also introduced it to my students. Next question: You are a Faulkner expert. Could you please introduce your study on Faulkner?

Rieger: Yes, a lot of my work on Faulkner is ecocriticism, that's the main approach I take, which is a study of the natural world, the environment and how they are related to Faulkner's work. So, for instance, I have a book with a chapter on *Go Down Moses,* which is Faulkner's important novel that most tackles the questions about the environment and the relationship between humans and the nature, and I recently published an essay on *The Sound and the Fury* using an ecocritical approach to that book also, to see how nature and the environment are significant in the novel as well.

Li: And I found this approach in China is also very popular. Many scholars use this ecological approach to study Faulkner's novels. Previously, I published a book *On the Study of Shen Congwen and Faulkner's Novels in Multidimensional Perspectives*. I have also made a comparative study of two authors from the ecological approach.

Rieger: That's great! We have a scholar from Japan who has come here to our conference who also does ecocritical approach to Faulkner too.

Li: So, it is a very insightful approach to get close to Faulkner's novels and works. Next question, Could you please introduce the contemporary criticism on Faulkner in the US? What are the major approaches in Faulkner studies in American contemporary academic circles?

Rieger: There is still a lot of work being done on Faulkner. People use a lot of different approaches, and one of the newer ones that people are using more would be disability studies, a fairly new field. There is recently a book, published by Taylor Haygood using disability studies applied to Faulkner, and we have published some essays in our books using that approach as well as the approach of trauma theory. Also popular recently have been cultural approaches to Faulkner, especially looking at popular culture, and how that has a lot of intersections with Faulkner's work. We usually don't think of Faulkner as a popular author, but some new work has been done about how his work has connections to popular culture, music, movies, popular literature, magazines, things like that. This year "The Faulkner & Yoknapatawpha Conference" at the University of Mississippi was about Faulkner and print culture, and many of the presentations looked at how Faulkner's work engaged with the

popular culture from that time period.

Li: So, I'd like to know more about the "The Faulkner & Yoknapatawpha Conference 2015" conference held at the University of Mississippi this year. I know you have just returned from the conference. Could you tell me about it?
Rieger: Yes, again, the theme was Faulkner and print culture, so there are a lot of different presentations, but like I said, a lot of people looked at Faulkner's connection to the publishing industry, and popular culture, so there were presentations on magazines, and how he was portrayed in the popular media. The cover art of his books, and how his novels fit into the paperback revolution of the time period, connections between Faulkner and other important figures in publishing and literary industry at that time, some of those were included also too. So, there was a wide variety of presentations.

Li: What was the topic of your presentation?
Rieger: My topic was Faulkner's revision process during his novel *A Fable*, some last minute revisions that he did to this novel. I used some materials from our Brodsky collection to illustrate how Faulkner worked and how he made changes. Especially in this novel, he made some important changes very late in the publishing process, when it was almost ready to go to press.

Li: A very interesting approach, and as we know, Faulkner is often labeled as a writer of the south in US. What do you think the significance of the south is to the understanding of Faulkner's works?
Rieger: Well, I think if you want to do a historical or cultural approach to Faulkner, then you need to understand southern history and southern culture; otherwise, you have an incomplete view of his connections to his history and to his culture, because Faulkner himself was very much interested in southern history, and the way that southern history has been presented to southerners and non-southerners over the years. And he also engaged with some of the issues of his day, things that are history to us now, that were very much contemporary issues to him. Faulkner would often engage with those issues as well too. You don't have to understand the south or think Faulkner is only a southern writer. And I think meeting with some international scholars has helped us to see that Faulkner can be thought of in other ways too, not just as a southern author.

Li: Just now, we talked about cultural contexts; if we examine Faulkner's works in

cultural contexts，what other cultural contexts have exerted influences on Faulkner besides southern culture?

Rieger: One example in southern studies these days is to look at is what called the global south. So, not just the American south, but South America, the Caribbean, even Africa or other parts of the southern hemisphere around the world, and to see connections between the American south and other souths. Faulkner sometimes can be placed in that context as well too. He has novels that touch on Caribbean settings, for instance, like *Absalom, Absalom!,* and he engaged in other issues that go far beyond the south to other places.

Well, and also we can study Faulkner in an American context, not just southern, but as an American writer, because many of the issues he is talking about are really American issues and are not southern issues. He happens to use the south as his location, because that's what he knows, that's where he's from, so he can write about that more authentically. But he uses that to talk about American culture as a whole. So when he is talking about race, for instance, he is not simply talking about race relations of the south, or not only about race relations of the south, but American race relations in general.

Then, you can also see him in international contexts too. I think that helps explain why his works are popular in places like China and Japan, because he writes about issues that affect all humans, universal issues, so you can see that clearly in a novel like *A Fable*, which was set in Europe, not set in Mississippi or the south at all. The south in other works too could be extended to that larger context, for instance, the problems of rural people and farmers and those issues I think can be understood by people in a lot of countries. That might be one reason some Chinese respond him, because he is talking about the clash between urban and rural and something like that is still happening in China, small towns versus big cities, and past versus the present, and so a lot of cultures can identify with that.

Li: Ok, just now you talked about cultural contexts and the global south, and it is a very interesting topic. In China, some scholars have made some comparative study of Faulkner and Su Tong, who is also a very famous writer whose writings focus more on southern settings of China, and this global source reminds me of this situation in China. Among various approaches in Faulkner studies, and also I notice there are the modernity approach and post-modernity approach, and what have scholars found out by using them?

Rieger: I think the modernity approach you are referring to is a historic one namely, looking at the whole artistic movement of modernism in the past. The first three or

four decades of the 20th century, would be the chief time period for modernism. So scholars have looked at other modernist authors, like James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, and how Faulkner's style and literary, writing are similar to theirs. They have looked at modernism in other forms too, like painting, in particular. So we know, for instance, that Faulkner when he traveled to Paris in 1925, viewed many modernist painters, and this was influential on him. So some critics have looked at connections between modernist painting and Faulkner's modernist writing. Those would be the main ways to look at modernism. There are several books that study Faulkner in connection to modernism as a whole.

Li: How about post-modernism approaches?
Rieger: Post-modernism I think again would be a method of connecting Faulkner to areas of the culture that seemingly don't have much connection. So again you could go back to the popular culture approach that I mentioned earlier，that would be popular in post-modernism approach, or also the ways that Faulkner often reuses his own material. After he wrote a story he would often come back to it later and take some material from it and use it in a different way in a future story. Those are techniques of post-modernism in particular too. That would be a couple of examples.

Li: I am also very interested in Faulkner and psychological approaches; could you please introduce this research approach in the US?
Rieger: Yes, the psychological approach was very popular with Faulkner, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s, and it is still used today, but it's not quite as popular as it was in those days. Freudian approaches were some of the early ones. John T. Irwin has one of the most famous and influential books on Faulkner using a Freud psychological approach, called *Doubling and Incest/Repetition and Revenge*. Lots of other approaches have been used since then, not just Freudian, but Lacanian approaches and using more contemporary psychological theories to understand Faulkner as well. Faulkner certainly writes about the unconscious a lot, people who do things without knowing why they do things. The return of the repressed is a big feature in Irwin's book, and because Faulkner's characters are psychologically complex, I think there is a lot to study. He depicts characters who are very complicated, he often gives us their inner thoughts, and a lot of their family history and memories and stories. So compared to some other authors, he provides us with a lot of information about primary characters who lend themselves very well to psychological study.

Li: In China, there are also scholars who show some interest in Faulkner psychological approaches. For instance, some scholars have made some particular studies using Freudian theory. I know you have published a book *Clear-Cutting Eden: Ecology and the Pastoral in Southern Literature,* could you please you explain a little bit about the title, "Clearing-Cutting Eden" and the book as well?

Rieger: The title refers to a couple of different things. One is a historical tendency of authors and another people to refer to the south as a paradise or Eden. In the early part of the 20th century, in particular, the natural world has been destroyed at a very fast rate in the south, in America as a whole, but particularly in the south. Because it was a more rural place, you could see the destruction of the natural environment more clearly there. So that is one aspect of the title reference and also Eden refers to an imagined place of perfection that may not have ever existed in reality. There is a tendency by some people to romanticize the past and to think of the past in the south as better or more perfect, and to want to reclaim that somehow, even though it may not have really existed. So the book uses an ecocritical approach to study four southern authors, all of them writing during the Great Depression: Faulkner, Erskine Caldwell, Zora Neale Hurston, and Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings. So I use ecocritical and also historical approaches to look at how the Great Depression affected those authors' portrayals of nature and the environment in their fiction.

Li: You have just mentioned that in the final part of this book, you have made a study on the post-pastoral perspective of William Faulkner's *Go Down, Moses*. Could you please introduce your main view and how it is reflected in Faulkner's *Go Down, Moses*?

Rieger: In the book as a whole, I talk about how the pastoral originally in southern literature is seen as a balanced middle ground, between the city and wilderness. So in older southern literature, traditional pastoral versions had a farm or the plantation as a pastoral space where these competing forces were balanced. It was a kind of paradise in that sense. But as we get into the Great Depression era, there is so much environmental devastation and destruction that the plantation and farm now come to be seen as very problematic places，and authors are not willing to look at those places in the same ways as previous authors were. So even though these new authors still use versions of the pastoral, the pastoral middle ground moves from the farm and plantation closer to the actual wilderness, in order to achieve or hope to achieve that sense of balance, such as the balance between the human and the nature, or between technology and wilderness, or the urban and rural. The writers are still trying to use the pastoral mode to find that balance with the middle ground,

but the location of it has shifted.

Li: How do these changes in the pastoral relate to ecology?
Rieger: I think that you see in this time period of the 1930s and 1940s that these southern authors put more emphasis, for instance, on cooperation, collective action, and interdependence among people and between people and their natural environment, so that a more interdependent and cooperative ecological model replaces a more individualistic and competitive model from the past. As I argue in the book, I think this is largely because of the effects of the Great Depression. For example, environmental disasters of the era, like floods, droughts, soil erosion, widespread logging, and a boll weevil infestation, illustrated to many people the ways that the human and natural worlds were interconnected.

Li: I have another question: I'm very interested in Faulkner's cultural setting. For instance, Faulkner's novels are set in *the* Bible belt. We know Christianity has also exerted very strong influence on Faulkner.
Rieger: That's true. Faulkner certainly was raised Christian. Later in life he was not necessarily a very devout churchgoer or devout Christian. But he knew the Bible very well. He often used story patterns or themes or motifs or character types from the Bible. In his fiction, there are a lot of references to the Bible, so I think it is helpful to understand Christianity and the Bible in order to understand Faulkner. However, Faulkner at times could be very critical of religion too. I don't think he was critical of religion itself, as much as he was critical of the ways that people sometimes use or misuse religion for their own purposes, so he could show the problems with doing that, just like with everything else. Faulkner was very willing to show problems with Christianity and religion.

Li: How about the issue of race? Even nowadays, for the black American, there are still some problems. So what do you think of the significance of Faulkner's writings in terms of this racial problem?
Rieger: Faulkner in some ways is very ahead of time when he writes about race. He shows us in *Light in August*, for instance, that race really has nothing to do with skin color, and so he is writing that book in early 1930s, and this is a topic that still gives people trouble today. But we still have many of those same racial issues in our society today, although they may take different forms now. So he still has something to teach us or something to say about contemporary American society.

Li: Ok, it still has a significant meaning today.
Rieger: There is a recent journal article that talked about connections between *Light in August* and Barack Obama, and his own personal story and the way that he has been treated by some groups in the country or media figures. So I think that is an interesting connection to the present.

Li: How about women's issue or gender issues? What is Faulkner's attitude towards women?
Rieger: Well, that is a good question, and there is still a quite bit of debate about Faulkner's women characters and how he presents women. So some people see a lot of problems what the way the presents his women characters, that he uses stereotypes, that he shows a very limited picture of women, but other people would argue that he has a lot of strong women characters, and he is showing us these very limited women characters. But he is doing so in order to point out the problems of male dominated culture or patriarchal culture, so that he showing us the realities but he is not necessarily agreeing with those realities that may be oppressive to women. Rather, he is showing us how difficult life is for women, that it is men who make it so difficult for women. So that is still a topic of debate: how we should view Faulkner's female character and Faulkner's own view about women.

Li: You delivered a speech on the comparative study of Faulkner and Mo Yan at the Faulkner & Yoknapatawpha Conference last year. I am glad to know you have showed an interest in Chinese contemporary writers. Now I'm doing a National Social Science Fund project on Faulkner's influence on contemporary Chinese writers, and also you have written one paper on that topic.
Rieger: Only one, so far, I will be very interested to see your work as well too.

Li: Hopefully later on we can cooperate and do some more studies in this field.
Rieger: Sounds good, I look forward to it.

Li: I have read your paper, which is very insightful. What do you find are the similarities and differences between the two writers? And what has caused you to do this kind of research?
Rieger: I think there are a lot of similarities between Mo Yan and Faulkner, their experimental narrative technique for one thing. They both use stream of consciousness techniques or they shift viewpoints a lot in the same story, and they move around in time a lot in their stories, so the past and the present are mixed

up together in the ways they tell their stories. My presentation last year at the conference was specifically about two novels, Faulkner's *The Unvanquished* and Mo Yan's *Red Sorghum*.

Both those novels dealt with war and civil war, particularly, so I am interested in how they both portray war in their home territories, civil war, particularly. And there are a lot of similarities. In particular, I think they have very similar relationships with the past. Both authors seem to be very critical of the past and to look at the past with a critical eye, and they want to tell the truth about the past, where others have covered up the truth. But yet, both of them also retain a dialectical view of the past in some ways, and there is something very positive and appealing about the past to them as well. So in my presentation I talked about how figures from the past in both novels take on legendary status almost. And people in the present can never hope to measure up to these legendary figures of the past. Even though they are very critical of the past, both authors see the present as smaller and less significant than the past. The past is full of giant and mythical figures, deeds, and stories, and the present is very small and uninteresting by comparison, at least in their characters' minds. So, I think both of the authors have that ambivalent relationship with the past: they don't like it and they want criticize it in some ways, but they are still attracted to it.

Li: As you have mentioned in your paper, that is a complex attitude which reflects the two enchantments and disenchantment with the past.
Rieger: Yes, exactly. Both opposite feelings at same time are present.

Li: I found your views about strong women also very interesting.
Rieger: Yes, that is another interesting comparison. Because both stories are set far in the past from when the writers are writing them, both of them project very strong female characters backward into the past who are more brave and better equipped to deal with the war in some way than the male characters. Some male characters are very dishonorable in the war setting. But each of these authors uses a strong female character who is a real leader of the people in both novels, and these women are very dedicated to their families, showing loyalty, courage, strength, and bravery.

Li: At the beginning of your talk, you mentioned that your center, hosts visiting scholars every year, including visiting scholars From China and Japan?
Rieger: We have quite a few Chinese visiting scholars who have come in the last 10 years. Usually there are an average of two or three Chinese scholars every year, who come and stay with us, sometimes just for few weeks, sometimes for an entire year,

and they are very interested in Faulkner and interested in the way we teach literature and writing. They have other interests besides Faulkner, too, sometimes that bring them here. We also have quite a few Japanese scholars. We have annual program with a local company here in town, called Biokyowa. Biokyowa has an office in Japan and a factory in Cape Girardeau, and this Japanese-American company helps us to pay for a Japanese scholar to come over once a year for about two weeks and do research in our collection. At our conferences, we have scholars from Japan and China, Canada, Nigeria, Australia, and France come to present their work. Just in the last year, we have had a visiting scholar from the University of Dubai, who came for several weeks and do some research while, and we got scholars visiting from all around country. We also have graduate students and scholars who come to use our collection for particular projects. They are working on books, dissertations, or articles, and that has been great for us to have different people to come to visit us here and use our resources.

Li: Just now you mentioned so many scholars from all over the world visiting your center. Could you please share your comments on Faulkner from an international perspective?
Rieger: It's interesting that Faulkner appeals to so many people from different parts of the world. Because sometimes in the United States, people do still think of Faulkner as a southern writer, but I think that is a limited way to view him. I think Faulkner's popularity in so many other countries prove that he has appeal that is not just a regional appeal or even just a national appeal. He writes about topics that people anywhere can identify with, the gender issue, for instance, or the community and the individual, past and present, how they clash. People everywhere can identify with a lot of those themes.

Li: Thank you very much for sharing you insights of Faulkner. You are warmly welcome to visit China to give lectures on Faulkner and on the comparative study on Faulkner and Chinese writers.
Rieger: Alright, I'll see you in China.

Li: I look forward to that day. Thank you very much.
Annotation: Special thanks to my postgraduate student Yangyan who helped edit the recording interview.

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Silence and Communication in Shakespeare's Dramatic Works[1]

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Abstract Silence is in this article looked at as a formal element which obtains its meaning within communication processes. This meaning has to be ascertained by the recipient in a creative process. General observations on the history of silence in literature are followed by a theoretical discussion, which starts with the definition of silence as a meaningful suspension of speech and distinguishes various forms of silence. A distinction between silence and stillness makes it necessary to include manifestations of silence in modern authors like Samuel Beckett. Textual analysis is opened by examining a special rhetorical figure, silence as a break within a sentence (*aposiopesis*), in *Julius Caesar*, *King Lear, Hamlet*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*. In the central part of the essay silence is investigated as a significant component within the thematic concerns of several plays, for instance the relation between silence and death in *Hamlet*, the villain's silence in *Othello* and female silence in *Measure for Measure*. With regard to the comedy *Much Ado About Nothing* and the tragedy *Titus Andronicus* two different forms of silencing a person by force are treated, kissing and mutilation. With its new orientation on form and communication this article goes beyond Harvey Rovine's standard study on silence in Shakespeare (1987).

Key words Silence; stillness; sign; zero-signifier; pause; form; communication; aposiopesis; iconicity.

Author **Wolfgang G. Müller** is retired Professor of English Literature at the Friedrich-Schiller University of Jena. He received his academic education at the

1 This article grew out of a joint iconicity-oriented project I was involved in with Michal Ephratt from the University of Haifa. Although our common work yielded many intellectual pleasures and insights, our approaches turned out to be ultimately incompatible. All passages which are indebted to Michal Ephratt's expertise are identified scrupulously. — The text of this contribution was read and discussed in the research group of Dirk Vanderbeke at the University of Jena. I owe deep gratitude for many hints and suggestions.

universities of Mainz, Manchester, and Leicester. He taught as Professor at the universities of Mainz, Leicester and Jena. Book-length publications include *Rilke's, Neue Gedichte"* (1971), *The Lyric Self* (1979), T*he Political Speech in Shakespeare* (1979), *Theory of Style* (1981), *English and Scottish Balladry* (1983), *Dialogue und Conversational Culture in the Renaissance* (2004), *Edition of Shakespeare's Hamlet* (2005), *Don Quixote's Intermedial Afterlives* (2010) and *Genre in Shakespeare* (2015). He published articles on rhetoric in Renaissance literature, the tradition of Don Quixote in English literature, narratology, intertextuality, iconicity, the letter as a genre, ethics in literature and detective fiction.

General Observations on Silence in Literature

Silence has always been an essential element of drama, a genre which, one would think, lives to great extent on speech and dialogue. In fact, the very beginning of the European tradition of drama coincides with a remarkable prominence of silence (Vogt 2001). In Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* Cassandra falls silent, to the surprise of the chorus, as she perceives Agamemnon, who has just come home from the Trojan war, stepping on the red cloth. Conscious of all the bloody deeds that occurred in Agamemnon's house and full of foreboding of the crimes to come, she is overcome by speechlessness, which after about 300 lines gives way to inarticulate cries that are later followed by meaningful speech. Silence is here a sign of sorrow which transcends all that can be expressed in words. In another of Aeschylus's tragedies, which is, however, not extant, Niobe silently mourns the loss of her children for three whole days.[1] About two and a half thousand years after Aeschylus silence turns out to be as important as ever in the works of Samuel Beckett, both as a theme as well as a formal element. He incorporates blanks and pauses in his works, for instance in *Waiting for Godot*, which interplay as equals with words (Weagel 2002). In his plays the meaning of silence cannot easily be identified as the result or equivalence of emotional occurrences occasioned by extreme sorrow, fear, protest, terror or beauty, but silences appear rather as signs of disorientation. The meaning of silence is often found in these modern plays in the inexplicability of a world emptied of meaning and in the loss of direction and motivation. It would be

1 To refer to another prominent example from classical antiquity, there are many significant moments or phases of silence in Homer, for instance immediately at the beginning of the Iliad, the priest Chryses walks silently along the shore after Agamemnon refused to release his cherished daughter Chryseis, or there is Achilles' silent grief for the death of his dearest friend Patroclos. In Homer there is even a formula referring to silence that is repeated 15 times: "They all fell silent. They sat there speechless." I owe gratitude to Arbogast Schmitt from the University of Marburg for drawing my attention to these passages.

an important project to investigate the development of the use and significance of silence in drama which led to the extreme position of Samuel Beckett.[1] The fact that silence emerges as a sign of a general loss of meaning in Beckett is not an isolated phenomenon. Analogously, as an author John Cage, who was also a writer, says in the visualized form of his *Lecture on Nothing* (printed in *Incontri Musicali*, August 1959), in which silences are indicated by visual spaces[2]

I have nothing to say
and I am saying it *and that is*
poetry *as I need it*

The empty spaces between these words and phrases are "iconic" for silence, in that they both resemble and function as absences. The constant interruption of the text by empty spaces and the concomitant irregular arrangement of the words visualize, in the written form of the "Lecture," loss and renunciation of meaning.

A distinction which ought to be made, especially when dealing with silence in modern works, is the differentiation between silence and stillness. John Cage's notorious *4,33*, in which a pianist sits for more than four minutes before his instrument without once touching the keys, is an experiment in stillness rather than silence.[3] A problem here is the lack of terminological clarity. The word silence can

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1 In such a history Scandinavian literature would play an important role. To mention a significant example, there is an innovative novella, written towards the end of the nineteenth century, which represents a love relation between a man and a woman who do not once talk to let alone touch each other, Ola Hansson, *Sensitiva amorosa* (1887). I owe this reference to Knut Brynhildsvoll from the University of Oslo. An important aspect of Ibsen's art is the dramatist's frequent silence on the inner life and motivations of his characters, for instance in *Hedda Gabler*, which is designed to initiate a thinking process in the audience. As far as the theme of silence is concerned, Ingmar Berman's film *The Silence* (1963) represents an extreme point in this Scandinavian tradition. For general studies on silence see, for instance, Dannenhauer 1980, Hart Nibbrig 1981, Luhmann/Fuchs 1989, Plett 2004, 430-431.

2 Cage, 2012, 109. The present arrangement of the text passage follows the first printed version *Incontri Musicali*, August 1959. There have also been theatrical productions of *Lecture on Nothing*, for instance by Robert Wilson, premiered on August 22, 2012 at the Ruhrtriennale Festival, Jahrhunderthalle, Bochum.

3 See, for instance, Gann, Kyle, *No Such Thing as Silence: John Cage's 4'33"*, Icons of America. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010.

mean many things. It is a kind of cover term which usually includes stillness.[1] Yet in my present research context it may be useful to look at silence as a sort of blank or absence within a spoken or written environment. It is part of the communication of two or more participants, which is not the case when we speak of the silence of the sea or when the word has a symbolic meaning as in the silence of the lambs. Like silence as stillness, wider concepts of silence such as silence as "the supreme form of wisdom" (Vanderbeke 65) or silence as "the general consecration of the universe" (Melville 204)[2] are external to verbal interaction; they have no actual communicative relevan our ce, although they may be of deep significance. Stillness can, of course, be commented on as is the case at the beginning of *Hamlet*, where not a mouse is stirring, as one of the guards says.

Referring to the problem of silence and stillness in modern texts, a note on a very short work by Samuel Beckett set in a stage context, "Breath" (written form published in *Gambit* 4.16, 1969), may be appropriate. It includes silence, breathing-in and breathing-out accompanied by corresponding light effects, and isolated cries (vagitus). Silence is here part of an acoustic, respiratory, and visual event, which suggests, but does not specify meaning.

> Curtain
> 1. Faint light on stage littered with miscellaneous rubbish. Hold about five seconds.
> 2. Faint brief cry and immediately inspiration and slow increase of light together reaching maximum together in about ten seconds. Silence and hold about five seconds.
> 3. Expiration and slow decrease of light together reaching minimum together (light as in 1) in about ten seconds and immediately cry as before. Silence and hold about five seconds.
> Curtain

Analogous to the extreme shortness of the text, its action is strongly limited, reduced to two faint cries, a birth-cry (vagitus) at the beginning and a death-cry at the end and the actions of breathing in and out, accompanied by light effects. It is a drama in miniature with rising and falling action. After each of the three "scenes" — the initial focus on rubbish lying flat on the stage and inspiration and expiration

1 A characteristic title of an article is Lipov, Anatoly. "4'33" as the Play of Silent Presence. Stillness, or Anarchy of Silence?" *Culture and Art*, 2015, numbers 4 and 6. Part 1, 436-454.

2 This is quoted in Vanderbeke 2011, 67.

— a "silence" is held five seconds. There is no communication represented on the stage, but because of the constellation of cries and silences this seems to be, other than Cage' s *4,33*, a real instance of the aesthetic use of silence and not stillness. The work presents itself as a pointed instance of Beckett's reductionism. Particularly, the actions of crying and breathing are dissociated from a human context, since they are the result of amplified recording. Correspondingly, the five-second phases of silence are the result of stage machinery. The whole is a reductive treatment of human existence, focussing on elementary reactions like crying and breathing and emphasizing meaninglessness by the use of silences and rubbish as the only stage properties. The silences mark beginning and end as nothingness. However, it is necessary to emphasize once more that Beckett's short play presents silence dissociated from human communication on stage. As far as the relation between silence and stillness is concerned, a brief reference to one of Maurice Maeterlinck's symbolist plays may be useful. In *L'Intruse* ("The Intruder") (1890) there is stillness in that a baby does not cry for weeks after birth and the nightingales do not sing for the time being. The mother is shut off from her family silent in a room. Yet there is communication and silence as part of communication among the rest of the family. So here we are half-way between the traditional representation of silence as part of communication and silence as stillness.

Looking from the use of silence/stillness in modern works back to Shakespeare's plays, a huge historical distance opens, which makes us see the Elizabethan dramatist in perspective. Anticipating our findings, we can say that representations of stillness are rare in Shakespeare and that silence is practically in all its instances part of communication and gains its effectiveness in its deviation from and opposition to dialogue. Also it is to be noticed that Shakespeare's use of silence is in a strong way embedded in the tradition of rhetoric, which had been aware of the expressiveness and persuasiveness of silence. Although in Shakespeare's plays silence is by far not as experimental as in some of its modern varieties, where it assumes a powerful epistemological and psychological presence, it is still an extremely important aspect of his art which needs attention. In fact, it will be shown that in his use of silence Shakespeare reveals his supreme craftsmanship as much as in other aspects of his art which have received more attention. The present article starts approaching silence in Shakespeare's plays from a rhetorical and formal perspective,[1] but constantly includes a discussion of its communicative context. The rhetorical approach begins by looking at silence

1 What Luckyi (2001) says, namely that" the notion of silence as a powerful rhetoric in itself [...] can be traced back to classical sources", holds true for Shakespeare, too.

as a consequence of syntactic breaks, which suspend the end of an utterance, a figure called aposiopesis in rhetoric. Then the meaning of selected instances of silence will be determined by examining their grammatical and metrical features and their integration in the plays' communicative processes. Moments of silence tend to occur at crucial places in the plays' development of the plot and in the representation of characters. One of the significant aspects derives from the question that if a character speaks or falls silent in a critical situation is frequently a matter of personal decision which can have profound ethical implications. Moreover, a character's silence may stimulate the recipient to ask for his or her motivations and thus proceed to essential questions raised in the play. With its new orientation this article hopes to supplement Harvey Rovine's (1987) standard study on silence in Shakespeare.

Some Theoretical Aspects

Before going into Shakespeare, it is necessary to make a few theoretical points. Silence is part of language.[1] It is not a mere renunciation of speech, but it has a meaning, or, as linguists say, in a somewhat problematic definition, it is a zero-signifier carrying meaning (e.g. Ephratt 2011).[2] Since within its context silence carries meaning, one may be tempted to call it a motivated sign (Fischer/Nänny 2001). However, the peculiarity of silence as a sign is that it has no concrete verbal body to which its meaning is attached, so that an iconic approach to silence is problematic if not bound to failure. If all instances of silence are semiotically alike, if they all have the same sign-structure — i.e. zero — silence as a sign is tautological. The fact that silence is or can be meaningful, does not derive from its nature as a sign, but from contextual features. Aspects to be considered in the process of identifying the meaning of silence are the possibly self-declared motivation of the silent person, the interlocutors' or witnesses' attempt to account for the silence, and the integration of the silence in the dialogue. The present

1 It is not "beyond the language" (Jäkel 2004).

2 "Zero signifier" is a useful concept, if no phonetic signal occurs, but one is expected, for instance in morphological paradigms. This is the case, for example in German/Nominative Singular "der Mann-0" versus Genitive/Singular "[des] Mann-es." The question is if silence can be correlated to phenomena like Jakobson's "zero phoneme" or to the phenomenon of 'zero derivation' in English word-formation. A distinction hast to be made between "the presence of nothing" and "the absence of something." Whether we can speak of silence as a kind of "presence of nothing" is doubtful (as distinct from the "absence of something" occurring in morphology). For a wide-ranging article on the phenomenon of zero signifiers see Ohnuki-Tierney, 1994.

contribution emphasizes the role of silence in communication. In a communicative context silence can, as is known from real-life discourse, have a powerful effect and emerges in a great number of varieties. Silence is most conspicuous in dialogue, when an interlocutor fails to make an expected utterance. We must be aware that silence interacts with speech in many ways and reveals a much greater semantic potential than well-known expressions such as "pregnant pause" or "eloquent silence" suggest. Perhaps it is the very fact that silence is a blank space or "zero position" in a text that is responsible for its openness to interpretation. As far as literature is concerned, silence as the absence of expected speech is particularly effective in drama, which usually brings characters on stage, who are involved in verbal exchange. In this genre silence stands out as a deviation from a norm, for we go to the theatre not only to watch a spectacle but also to hear actors talking to one another (in dialogue) or to themselves (in soliloquy).

A classification of different forms of silence cannot be provided here. But it is useful to draw a basic distinction between voluntary (intentional) silences and involuntary (unintentional) silences. Voluntary silences serve many functions. They are the result of the decision to dispense with an expected utterance in a communication situation. A case of involuntary or unintentional silence may be speechlessness caused by emotional stress, for instance when a person is so shocked in a situation that words fail him/her. Another cause of involuntary silence may be the loss of the capacity for speech due to illness or death. A special variety of involuntary silence is forced silence, which may be the result of coercion[1] or threat or physical harassment, the latter occurring for instance, when a person is gagged or has the tongue cut out. For the latter cases of forced silence there are instances in Shakespeare, which will be discussed. Even though there may be borderline cases such as the silence of a speaker who is interrupted and forced into the role of the listener, a phenomenon occurring in quarrel scenes in drama, just as in real-life dialogue. That a typology of different forms of silence does not really help in the case of Shakespeare derives from the fact that the varieties of silence are innumerable and of protean shape. To illustrate this phenomenon an example from *King Lear* is adduced which defies classification. It involves a significant occurrence of silence in dialogue, when there are two or more interlocutors and only one takes the floor to make a decisive pronouncement. Thus at the very end of Shakespeare's

1 Coercion can also occur in dialogue. A question may, for instance, be put in such a way that a desired answer is prompted or provoked. See Aaron Fogel, *Coercion to Speak: Conrad's Poetics of Dialogue*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press,1985. I owe this reference to Christian Wehmeier, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena.

King Lear there are three candidates for an authoritative utterance (Albany, Kent, Edgar) and only one makes it. Interestingly, two versions of the play (Quarto, Folio) allocate the crucial utterance to different characters, producing entirely different closures of the play with differing implications concerning the future of the kingdom.[1]

Since we are dealing with drama, which is designed to be performed on stage, it is necessary to consider the relation between silence defined as absence of speech and the physical representation of silence on stage. Also a distinction can be made between silence as pure absence of speech and body language performed silently.[2] An interesting instance of the combination of silence accompanied by physical action is the moment when in Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* (II.4) Queen Katherine silently walks about the court to the King and kneels down before him and only then starts speaking. Silent body language is here an impressive action of female assertion in a male-dominated context. A more complex example is when Hamlet holds Ophelia by the wrist and, with the other hand over his brow, peruses her face for a long time and after waving his head three times raises a deep sigh. When leaving her, he still looks at her without speaking a word.[3] The present contribution concentrates on the written text, though we are aware that stage directions have to be taken into account and that body language, for instance facial expressions and gestures and the relative positions of the interlocutors in space, may add meaning to silence. It is obvious that much gets lost in the transition from performance to text, just as much may be retrieved in the passage from text to performance.[4]

1 The issue at the play's end is the distribution of political power among those left in charge of the kingdom after the tragic events that have happened in Lear's and Gloucester's families. If the last utterance is assigned to Edgar, as in the Folio Edition, there is an outlook for a stable and responsible government within the bounds of the country. If the play's concluding words are spoken by Albany, as in the Quarto Edition, a wider, intercontinental political vision would be envisaged. Philip McGuire (1985: 89-121) devotes a chapter of more than thirty pages to this problem in a fascinating analysis of the two endings of *King Lear* which is, however, concerned preponderantly with speech attribution and only indirectly with silence.

2 Ephratt (2011, 2016) makes a doubtful distinction between verbal silences (the choice of the speaker to express content by a null verbal signifier) and non-verbal silences.

3 Silence accompanied by physical communication is in this mediated by Ophelia in a narrative. Norbert Greiner places this scene in the cultural tradition of the harlequin.

4 As readers of play texts, we are often unaware of the potential impact of a character's silence, because it does not appear before us on the printed page in the same way the words of the speaking characters do (Rovine, 1987, 2).

Silence is in this article looked at as a formal element which has a meaning within communication processes. This meaning is motivated and has to be ascertained by the recipient in a creative process. I will begin with silence as a break within a sentence (*aposiopesis*) in plays such as *King Lear, Hamlet*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*. After terminological reflections concerning the distinction between silence and pause I will turn to silence as a significant component within the thematic context of a number of plays. In *Hamlet* the relation between silence and death is discussed, in *Othello* the villain's silence and in *Measure for Measure* female silence. With regard to the comedy *Much Ado About Nothing* and the tragedy *Titus Andronicus* two very different forms of silencing a person by force are treated, in jocular way by kissing and in a violent way by mutilation.[1]

Aposiopesis

Aposiopesis is a rhetorical figure signifying a disruption of discourse by omitting the expected end of a clause or sentence.[2] The discontinuation of a syntactic unit may beused as a rhetorical device prompting the hearer or reader to complete the statement. A good example illustrating and at the same time explaining the way the figure works is to be found in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. Brutus receives exhortative anonymous letters which are meant to make him join the republican conspiracy against Caesar. One of these letters contains the following statement: "Shall Rome, et cetera?" (*Julius Caesar*, II.1.151) The incomplete sentence has the desired effect. Brutus completes it: "Thus must I piece it out: / Shall Rome stand under one man's awe?" (II.1.51-52) A more emotionally charged instance of aposiopesis is represented in Cleopatra's dying statement in A*ntony and Cleopatra*, in which the Egyptian Queen's death is formally expressed by the breakup of the sentence, "What should I stay — ," which is completed by her attendant lady Charmian, "In this vile world?" (V.2.304). An additional iconic aspect of aposiopesis is in this case the breakup of the line — iambic pentameter — after two stresses, so that metrically room is given for the queen's dying. The breakup of the sentence and the breakup of the line coincide:

> What should I stay —
> *Dies.* (V.2.312).

The fact that Charmian completes Cleopatra' statement with the words "In this vile

1 All Shakespeare quotations are taken from the Norton Edition, ed. Stephen Greenblatt, 1997.

2 See Sloane 2001, 28.

world?" iconically stresses the friendship of the two women, which is a positive ethical value within disaster. They share the same line and the same sentence. One can only marvel at Shakespeare's artistry in packing so much meaning into this moment. For the actresses it is a challenge to do justice to Shakespeare's rhetorical and metrical realization of this dying moment. A culmination of Shakespeare's art of aposiopesis occurs just in the scene which represents Cleopatra's simulated suicide. Here it is the eunuch Madrian who reports to Antony that Cleopatra's last words were "Antony, most noble Antony!" (IV.15.30) and that in her dying groan the name Antony was broken into two. This is an instance of aposiopesis reduced to a single word. Mardian describes that in this one-word aposiopesis Antony's name "was divided / Between her heart and lips" (IV.15.32-33). What he means is, that only half of the word was spoken by the lips and the other half remained in her heart."[1] That this enormous display of rhetorical power has the strongest effect on Antony and finally drives him into suicide is thus made dramatically credible. As an example of the strongly expressive character aposiopesis may assume, a part of the last scene of *King Lear* can be adduced. A Gentleman enters with a bloody knife in his hand, saying, "It came even from the heart of — O, she's dead!" (V.3.198). The Gentleman breaks off, unable to finish the sentence after the preposition "of" and to refer to the person concerned. After the interruption, which is marked by a dash, he starts a new sentence,[2] thus verbalizing the silence. An interesting textual problem occurs at this point. The just-quoted line is taken from the Folio Edition. In the Quarto Edition the Gentleman's utterance breaks off after "heart of" (V.2.19), so that the aposiopesis stands more clearly per se.

Terminological Excursus: Silence, Aposiopesis, and Pause

As was said above, aposiopesis is a rhetorical figure signifying the breakup of an utterance before its end. The silence involved in aposiopesis is usually short-timed. It is a figure of speech in that it is motivated and in that the hearer is expected to supply the omitted part of the utterance. However, it is a fact to be observed particularly in oral discourse that not all breaks before the end of an utterance imply meaningful silence. An example from Ian McEwan, *Nutshell* (2016) is a reference to cats: "'Cats can be a bloody nuisance,' Claude says with an air of helpfulness. 'Sharpening their claws on the furniture. But.'"[3] The adversative conjunction "but" is not followed by an antithetical utterance, as the narrator explains: "He [Claude]

1 See John Wilders' 1995 edition, 256.

2 Another iconic device is the use of the exophoric pronoun "she" which refers to Cordelia.

3 Ian McEwan, *Nutshell* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2016) 50.

has nothing antithetical to add." In the present case the break obviously derives from the incapacity of the speaker to continue the clause begun by him. Such breaks are actually an element of the character's idiolect occurring all through the novel. In another instance from the same work the breaking off of clauses seems to be the result of real or pretended feeling. A woman, who has lost (actually murdered) her husband, a poet, is asked to join a commemorative poetry reading. The request is pervaded by so many syntactic disruptions that meaningful silences do not occur: "I'm so, so sorry. If you or. Could say a few. But we'd understand. If you. If you couldn't. How hard it" (137). The term aposiopesis, which implies meaningful ellipsis, can hardly be applied to such an incoherent way of talking. Linguistically oriented research has found out that such instances of "gaps and holes and silence" are more characteristic of oral than written speech.[1] "Omissions, evasions, or uncomfortable silences" (ibid.), as found in Joyce and McEwan, have hardly anything in common with the rhetorical figure of aposiopesis and the term should be avoided with respect to them. Our comparative glance at modern texts has made it clear how deeply Shakespeare is embedded in the classical rhetorical tradition and how much his language is removed from authentic oral discourse.

Another terminological problem arising in this context is the relation between silence as a shorter or longer omission of expected speech in a communicative situation and a pause as a deferral or postponement of an intended statement. It is true that the speaker or interlocutor is silent during the time-span of the pause, but he or she does not refuse to make an utterance. The statement is only postponed for a time. At this point it may be useful to comment on a pause in Antony's funeral oration in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar,* which has erroneously been referred to as an example of aposiopesis in rhetorical handbooks (Sloane 2001, 29). The orator pretends to pause in order to get his emotions under control again.[2] It is his intention to make the pause appear motivated emotionally — it may possibly be motivated, one never knows in Antony's rhetoric — so that it assumes a similarity to aposiopesis. The intended effect of this pause is enhanced by a boldly realized instance of metonymy. The speaker maintains that his heart is Caesar's coffin and that he has to wait for it to come back again:

Bear with me.

1 Dirk Vanderbeke, Volker Gast and Christian Wehmeier, "Of Gaps and and Holes and Silence: Some Remarks on Elliptic Speech and Pseudo-Orality in James Joyce's Short Story 'The Sisters,'" *International Journal of Literary Linguistics* 6, No 1, Art 5 (2017):1-15.

2 See Stroh 2001.

My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar,
And I must pause till it come back to me. (*Julius Caesar*, III.2.102-104)

The speaker's pause has a dramatic function in that it is filled by a conversation of the hearers on stage, who comment on Antony's speech in statements such as "Methinks there is much reason in his sayings" (*logos*), "Poor soul, his eyes are red as fire with weeping" (*pathos*), and "There's not a nobler man in Rome" (*ethos*). Antony's continuation of his speech is also referred to by one of the plebeians: "Now mark him, he begins again to speak" (III.2.14). This pause has not only a multiple effect on the hearers, as their comments indicate, it is also an explorative pause in that it is used by the speaker to test the effect of his words. It is a moment of silence on the part of the orator, which does not miss its effect on the audience during the performance, but it is by no means an instance of aposiopesis.

Silence and Death: "The Rest is Silence"

Most of the instances of aposiopesis analyzed above have shown that there is a particular relation between death and silence in Shakespeare. Silence as a signifier is characterized by the absence of sound. The living human subject changes upon its death into an inanimate object that is specifically characterized by a permanent absence of speech.[1] Breathing one's last frequently coincides with speaking one's last words. By death a person loses living capacities. Especially the capacity to talk, which is one of the unique features of humankind, is demolished. That is the reason why a person's final articulated words, his or her dying words, are accorded so much significance, for instance Jesus' "Seven Last Words on the Cross." Another example would be Goethe's "More light" ("Mehr Licht") or Caesar's "Et tu, Brute." Even prisoners are sometimes permitted to make a "gallows speech" before their execution. In drama, which is sustained by speech and verbal exchange, the loss of speech is a significant concomitant of death. Silence is accentuated in moments of dying from the Greek tragedies to Shakespeare's plays. We have seen that in Cleopatra's last utterance dying and loss of speech coincide conspicuously. Analogously at the end of Antony's dying speech breathing his last breath and the loss of the ability to speak go together: "Now my spirit is going; / I can no more" (IV.16.60-61). Leaving out the verbal signifier "speak" in "I can no more" is iconic to the content: dying is concomitant with Antony's lack of speech.

Another impressive instance of dying going together with loss of speech is the poetic description of Ophelia's death by drowning, when she is pulled "from her

1 For this passage I am indebted to Michal Ephratt.

melodious lay / To muddy death" (*Hamlet*, IV.7.153-154). Ophelia's transition from life to death or from song to silence is iconically marked by enjambment: a mismatch between the language (syntactic clause and semantic content) and the text's metric layout. The text slides typographically across different lines.

Hamlet's dying words, "The rest is silence" (V.2.300), signify that for him speech has come to an end and that there is nothing to expect but silence, while in his "to-be-or-not-to-be" soliloquy he had still said that "in that sleep of death what dreams may come" (III.1.68). In their absoluteness, Hamlet's last words imply that there is nothing to follow but silence, which excludes anything coming up internally or externally. He denies a beyond, a transcendent world in which there is room for speech or sound.[1] In order to recognize the ethical dimension of Hamlet's last utterance, we have to look at the context of his words. At the most extreme moment, when the poison is running in his body, he settles the succession in the Danish state by nominating Fortinbras as the future king. Fulfilling his responsibility for Denmark, whose dynasty has been extinguished by the play's tragic events, he reveals his moral status.

From a Christian position, Hamlet's last words — "The rest is silence" — are to be recognized as an agnostic stance, which is, however, countered in Horatio's subsequent apotheosis,

> Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet prince,
> And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest. (V.2.30-303)

The absoluteness of Hamlet's retreat into silence is put into perspective by the prospect of a transcendent world as reflected in Horatio's apotheosis. Horatio's lines are a moving obituary on Hamlet. A "noble heart" is assigned to him and a term of endearment ("sweet prince") addressed to him and he is imaginatively lifted to heaven, accompanied by the song of angels, an absolute contrast to silence.

The Villain's Silence in *Othello*

In Act V, Scene 2 of *Othello* the protagonist, the black general of the Venetian navy, has to go through a terrible anagnorisis, as he learns that his subordinate, "honest Iago," has deceived him perfidiously and manipulated him to kill his innocent wife Desdemona. Asked by Othello why he "thus ensnared my soul and body" (V.2. 309), Iago makes his last utterance in the play:

1 As Watson (1994, 97) says, for him [Hamlet] there is "no longer on any prospect of a judgment beyond".

Demand me nothing. What you know, you know.
From this time forth I never will speak word. (V.2. 309-310)

Iago rejects the question, fobs Othello off with a curt tautological remark ("What you know, you know") and retreats into silence. This refusal to explain his deeds has been called "one of the darkest moments in *Othello*" (Vanderbeke 68). The problem now arises what the meaning of Iago's silence is. It is not simply the speechlessness sometimes observed in criminals that have been caught out.[1] The villain's brusque denial to answer Othello's question, reveals Iago's callousness, yet Othello's unanswered question leads us to what is perhaps the most decisive of the play's problems, the issue of motivation. Coleridge had spoken of "the motive-hunting of motiveless Malignity" (Coleridge, vol.2 315). This comment implies that Iago's crimes are a manifestation of pure evil, which does not need motives, such as revenge for being passed over for promotion.[2] His denial of speech ties in with Shakespeare's conception of Iago as a character, who never in the whole play makes an utterance which is not on in a way or other related to his evil intentions. He is the incarnation of negativity, which is expressed in his earlier self-definition, in which he defines himself as "I am not what I am" (I.1.65), a devilish antithesis to Yahwe's self-definition as "I am that I am" (*The Bible*, Exodus 3: 14). Thus his final retreat into silence is a manifestation of inhumanness — an absolute absence of speech and humanity — of a character who has entirely lived on his obsession to destroy persons who are free of evil, Othello, Desdemona, and Cassio. Iago's silence is not only the extreme opposite of the wisdom of silence, which has been praised in classical antiquity and in various religions, but also is a silence that acts in the world of the recipients. Beyond the ethical nullification of the villain pointed out above, leaving Othello's question unanswered Iago's silence serves as a speech act activating the drama's readers and audience (Austin 1962). The silence causes the passive observers watching the play to attempt, in a kind of turn-taking, to fill in

1 The ethical (and later on legal right) of the suspected to avoid self-incrimination.

2 We cannot here go into a detailed discussion of the motivation issue. I would only like to point out that depth psychology can be overemphasized. From the point of view of modern psychology and psychiatry it is known that a humiliation such as neglect of promotion to the advantage of a competitor may rankle in a person and have disastrous consequences. See Haller, 2015. Racial hatred is an additional motive for Iago, who in his temptation of Othello maliciously plays on the latter's sense of racial inferiority. It is always surprising how much Shakespeare knew about spiritual abysses in humans.

the "pregnant" answer. [1]

The Equivocal Nature of Isabella's Silence in *Measure for Measure*

Female silence is a much-discussed topic in Shakespearean research.[2] This article cannot attempt to make a general contribution to this topic let alone participate substantially in feminist studies of Shakespeare. Following is a discussion of Isabella's silence at the end of *Measure for Measure*. As it will be shown, Isabella's silence is equivocal not only in being self-chosen and simultaneously determined by the Duke's domineering personality, but also when considered as part of a relation between representatives of different genders. Isabella has proved to be a very eloquent pleader during the play, but when, at the end, she receives the Duke's marriage proposal, she does not answer nor respond in any other way, at least as far as the text tells us.[3] This silence can be interpreted as a silent protest to Duke Vincentio's masking his identity in the play, and keeping the truth away from Isabella about the fate of her brother Claudio and being, on the whole, a rather dominant and even manipulative character, which shows even in his proposing to Isabella. How to deal with Isabella's silence is to a great extent a matter of the production of the play. But one grammatical fact is quite important. When proposing marriage to Isabella, the Duke expressly asks her to answer him or, rather to fulfill his request, as the grammatical form of the imperative indicates — "Give me your hand and say you will be mine" (V.1. 490). Yet Vincentio immediately proceeds to other matters, which excludes the possibility for Isabella to answer. At the play's very end he once more says:

> Dear Isabella,
> I have a motion much imports your good,
> Whereto, if you'll a willing ear incline,
> What's mine is yours, and what yours is mine. (V.1.531-534)

One would think, these two utterances expect a reaction from the woman, but the Duke does not leave her room for an answer, because his speech is at this point, as

1 For this idea I am indebted to Michal Ephratt.

2 The standard monograph on silence in Shakespeare is Rovine 1987. Studies concentrating on silent women are, for instance, McGuire 1985, Luckyi 2002, Spar 2010.

3 This kind of speechlessness has been addressed with the term "open silence", coined by McGuire 1985, to describe a silence which may be interpreted in different ways, especially in theatrical performance.

more often in the play, dominantly monologic. In the last quotation, an imminent communication of the two seems to be envisioned, but hardly a real dialogue, because the Duke only wishes her to lend a "willing ear" to his words. Thus there are two aspects to Isabella's silence. First, it is a clear pragmatic fact that she refrains from answering and thus from explicitly complying. Her silence defines her as other than the submissively compliant woman.[1] Second, her silence can also be interpreted, at least to some extent, as the result of the commanding attitude of the Duke, which does not allow for real dialogue, or, to put it another way, her voice is not really expected to be heard even in such an important decision as marriage. Isabella's silence seems in this intricate case to be self-chosen and simultaneously determined by the Duke's domineering personality, albeit not by force. What we witness here, is an extraordinary ambiguity of the meaning of silence, which represents a challenge to reader, actor, and director. Shakespeare's treatment of silence at the play's closure casts a shadow on the ending of a play, whose status as a comedy is anyway extremely doubtful. Isabella's taciturnity is more ambiguous than Cordelia's silence in *King Lear*.[2] When requested by her father to express their love for him, the two elder daughters make a big show of love in exaggerated flattery, while Cordelia explicitly denies using any rhetoric, which results in her losing her share in the inheritance of the kingdom. The denial to answer a question or to provide an expected comment to an offer or request is in Shakespeare always a sign which challenges the reader or spectator to find out the meaning.

Forced Silence I: Kissing in *Much Ado About Nothing*

The idea of enforcing silence in a comic context by stopping a mouth with a kiss comes up twice in *Much Ado About Nothing*. In the first instance Claudio makes a speech on "Silence" as "the perfectest herald of joy" (II.1.267), yet his love declaration to Hero is rather verbose, even though it emphasizes the unique expressiveness of silence. Hero, who belongs to the silent women in Shakespeare, does not give an answer, whereupon Beatrice, who is one of the most eloquent female characters in Shakespeare's plays, advises her to speak or, if she cannot do so, to "stop his [Claudio's] mouth with a kiss" (II.1.271-272). The apparent contrast between verbose Claudio and reticent Hero calls for further comment. Claudio's praise of silence, which goes together with a love-declaration, is one of the most

1 "[Isabella's] silence has to be evaluated as more than a meaningful reply." Lichterfeld 2015: 306. Transl. W.G.M.

2 Cordelia's silence is actually verbalized silence, a demonstrative act which she defends with much eloquence.

frequently quoted passages from Shakespeare,

> Slilence is the perfectest herald of joy; I were but little happy I could say as much. Lady, as you are mine, I am yours. I give myself away for you, and dote upon the exchange.

There is a contradiction between Claudio's panegyrical words on silence and his alleged claim that his happiness would be little if he could express it in words. There seems to be a false ring in his words, just as the context is dubious, since it is Don Pedro who had arranged the love relationship and had immediately before wood and won Hero for Claudio during a masked ball. It is quite clear that these do not belong to the great lovers in Shakespeare's plays. This impression is enhanced by the role Hero plays in the scene. She does not speak a word in this love-related context. In the whole long scene, in which she and Claudio's love is a central topic, she has only two modest lines. As a lover she, just as her groom, has simply not enough personal substance to be convincing. So it is dramatically logical that later she becomes the victim of an intrigue and is publicly humiliated and cast out during the wedding ceremony in church by Claudio, who not once comes to doubt the calumny against his bride. She does in no way represent the contemporary ideal of the silent woman, an ideal which finds expression at the time in an allegorical term like "Lady Silence" and in Coriolanus' praise of his wife Virgilia "as my gracious silence" (II.1.161).[1] To attribute this ideal to Shakespeare, the author, would anyway be preposterous, because he brought so many witty and eloquent women on stage, which make his comedies what they are, above all Beatrice (*Much Ado About* Nothing), Rosalind (*As You Like* It) and Viola (*Twelfth Night*). With their continuous comic word-fencing, the second couple of lovers in *Much Ado About nothing* represent a counterpart to Hero and Claudio. This is also made clear, when towards the end of the play the topic of kissing comes up again. Beatrice will not stop her witty bantering, so that her lover Benedick, kisses her, saying, "Peace! I will stop

1 See Wolfgang G. Müller, "Das Problem weiblicher Identität bei Shakespeare," *Die Frau in der Renaissance*. Ed. Paul Gerhard Schmidt (Wiesbaden: Harrassowith Verlag, 1994): 223-241.

your mouth." (V.4.96)[1]

Forced Silence II: The Use of Violence in *Titus Andronicus*

The motif of silencing a person by gagging her/him with a kiss also emerges in the most violent example of forced silence in Shakespeare, Lavinia's abuse in *Titus Andronicus*, which is part of the play's overall revenge plot. When Lavinia sees herself threatened by rape by Tamora's two sons, her passionate protest is interrupted by Chiron:

> LAVINIA
> No grace? No womanhood? Ah, beastly creature,
> The blot and enemy to our general name,
> Confusion fall —
> CHIRON
> Nay then, I'll stop your mouth. (II.3.182-184) [*Grabs her, covering her mouth.*]

These are Lavinia's final words in the play. It is significant that putting her to silence is the result of verbal and physical aggression, the kiss here being an act of violence, a preliminary of the rape that is to follow. The iconicity of the passage is metrically enhanced by the fact that the violent interruption of her speech coincides with enjambment, the break of the line, which is indicated by Jonathan Bate's arrangement of the half-lines which has been adopted, together with the stage direction, in the above quotation.[2] Already before their infamous deed the two rapists had planned to mutilate their victim, so that she cannot betray their names. They cut out her tongue to prevent speech and they cut off her hands to prevent writing. In Shakespeare`s source, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the victim, Philomela, succeeds in making known the crime and its perpetrators by sewing an embroidery.

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1 In contradiction to most editions, the editor of the Third Aden Edition of *Much Ado About Nothing* (London etc.: Bloomsbury, 2009), Claire McEachern, assigns this speech to Leonato, because this reading "also provides for a more egalitarian accommodation between the lovers which seems in keeping with the tenor of their relationship throughout (316). This is an example of a feminist position asserting itself in an editorial detail. It is noteworthy in this context that, as we have shown, it is a woman, Beatrice, who earlier on advises Hero to "stop his [Claudius'] mouth with a kiss" (II.1.270-271). Thus the idea of using a kiss to quieten a lover's flood of words is not alien to both sexes in this play. This is another kind of egalitarianism between the sexes than the one envisioned by the editor of the latest Arden edition of the play.

2 See Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus*. Ed. Bate. 1995, 179, footnote 184.

The additional precaution, taken by the assailants in Shakespeare's play, the cutting off of Lavinia's arms,[1] fails, since she succeeds in writing the names of the rapists in the dirt, using a staff she holds with her mouth and between the stumps of her arms.

After the loss of her capacity for speech Lavinia wanders about in the play as a silent woman, and in the play there is a search for a language of signs that enables her to communicate what happened to her. All this is semiotically highly significant, but we concentrate on a "dialogue" between the two rapists and their mutilated victim:

> DEMETRIUS
> So, now go tell, an if thy tongue can speak,
> Who 'twas that cut thy tongue and ravished thee.
> CHIRON
> Write down thy mind, bewray thy meaning so,
> And if thy stumps will let thee play the scribe.
> DEMETRIUS
> See how with signs and tokens she can scrawl.
> CHIRON
> Go home, call for sweet water, wash thy hands.
> DEMETRIUS
> She hath no tongue to call nor hands to wash,
> And so let's leave her to her silent walks. (II.4.1-8)

Lavinia is cynically demanded to do — speak and write — what she cannot do as a consequence of her mutilation at the hands of the two victimizers. The passage represents a perversion of dialogue in that Lavinia is addressed with imperatives without being able to respond. Such a one-sided dialogue, i.e. a dialogue between two addressers and an addressee, who has been robbed of the power of speech, is a transgression of the rules of communication, just as the whole situation is a transgression of moral law. The mutilation of the dialogue form corresponds to the mutilation of the victim of violence, which is an extreme instance of iconicity. The whole passage harps on the semiotic aspects of a terrible crime

1 Shakespeare's characters know Ovid's story. Marcus Andronicus refers to the story of Philomela, noting that "she but lost her tongue", while Lavinia found a "craftier Tereus" who "cut these pretty fingers off, / That could have better sewed than Philomel" (II.3. 41-44). Lavinia, mutilated, runs around with the book of "Ovid's *Metamorphosis*" (IV.1. 42), and her father wants to read to her "the tragic tale of Philomel", treating of "Tereus' treason and his rape" (IV. 47-48).

Conclusion

The very fact that as a sign silence has no concrete verbal body and is still motivated and meaningful, is the reason for its enormous semantic and expressive potential, which is unfolded in communicative contexts. An occurrence of silence in a text is a challenge to understand or establish its meaning. While Shakespeare, other than a modern writer like Beckett, does not make silence an overall theme and formal element of his works, he places instances of silence at crucial moments in his plays and makes them constitutive elements of dialogue and characterization and of the play's ideational substance. Silence, which presents itself as an epistemological enigma in dramatists such Samuel Beckett, Tom Stoppard and David Mamet, is in Shakespeare's works an inexhaustible source of meaning to be retrieved by the recipient. It is a paradox that silence as non-speech can have a stupendous communicative power.

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“The Struggle to Find Meaning:” Masculinity Crisis in Sam Shepard’s *True West*

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Abstract As a set of socially constructed traits and behaviors, masculinity is generally connected with men. Some of these masculine attributes include freedom, integrity, financial independence, strength, and stability. These traits vary by context and are affected by social factors. When a man is unable to conform to the stated expectations, he is said to be in crisis either consciously or unconsciously. This paper brings to the fore the issues of masculine identity, the crisis of masculinity, and its consequences regarding the male characters, Lee and Austin, in Sam Shepard’s *True West*. The role of their disintegrated family, the stress over their future careers, as well as their backgrounds bring both Lee and Austin to the verge of crisis. The consequences are committing crimes, drinking alcohol, giving vent to their anger, frustration, and perpetrating violence.

Key words identity; masculinity; masculinity crisis; *True West*; Sam Shepard

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Introduction

As one of the America’s most acclaimed dramatists, Sam Shepard has written about fifty plays and has spotted his plays lightening not only theater houses but also the coffee shops and college campuses throughout the American and European stages. Many of his plays such as *Action* (1975), *Angel City* (1976), *Buried Child* (1979), and *True West* (1980) deal with the loose boundaries of identity, the question of freedom, and the inability of finding a true self on the side of characters. Shepard’s

interest in exploring the dramatic forms emerged in Europe after the World War II is observed from the fact that he has combined the notions of The Theater of the Absurd and features of American culture with the violence and anarchy which are pervasive in Pinter's drama. He has mentioned in one of his interviews that "I'd like to try a whole different way of writing now, which is very stark and not so flashy and not full of a lot of mythic figures and everything, and try to scrape it down to the bone as much as possible" (Chubb 208).

In *Modern American Drama*, C. W. E. Bigsby argues that Sam Shepard has "found in performance a symbol of lives which are the enactment of stories with their roots in the distant past of ritual and myth as well as in a present in which role and being have become confused" (193). This confusion of role and being is another way of saying that Shepard's characters struggle with their troubled identities and search for their stabilization. Bigsby further points out that in Shepard's plays "there is no consistency. Moods, dress, identity can switch in a second; characters are fractured, divided, doubled until the same play can contain, as independent beings, what are in effect facets of a single self" (116).

Shepard has been revered by many scholars and critics, for example, Carol Rosen puts Shepard on a pedestal considering him to be "after all the most original and vital playwright of our age" ("Emotional Territory" 1). Likewise, William M. Demastes suggests that "the originality and ingenuity of Sam Shepard have placed him among the top of America's list of playwrights" (97). Regarding the themes of his plays, Richard Gilman in his introduction to *Sam Shepard: Seven Plays* encapsulates that "the majority of his plays deal with one or more these matters: the death or the betrayal of the American Dream, the decay of our own national myths, the growing mechanization of our lives, the search for roots, and the travail of the family" (xi).

True west, Shepard's first major play, is first premiered at the Magic Theater in 1980 and is set in the temporary world of California, as Shepard himself has called it (Bigsby 186). Performed in two acts, *True West* revolves around four characters in general and two brothers, in particular; Austin and Lee. The action takes place in a kitchen and an adjoining alcove in a Southern California suburb. Austin, who is in his early thirties, is a married Hollywood scriptwriter who is currently visiting his mother's house while his mother is away in Alaska and left him in charge of the house. His older brother, Lee, on the other hand, is a petty thief who has just been back visiting his father in the desert and now enters his mother's house for the first time in five years. In Act 1 we see the rivalry between Austin and Lee. While Austin struggles to focus on his screenplay, Lee keeps asking him silly

questions. Their reconnection is an opportunity to get to know each other better. Austin's patience and prudence are in sharp contrast with Lee's dominant, volatile and shady character. Saul, a stereotypical Hollywood producer, comes between the two brothers and creates antagonism between them. When Saul and Austin discuss Austin's project, Lee steps in and tells Saul that he can write better stories than those of his brother. Lee believes his story to be more authentic. He sets a meeting with Saul and makes Saul fall for his story. The logical, calm and reserved Austin we see in Act 1 turns into a jealous, domineering, and querulous character in Act 2. It is as if the two brothers suddenly shift roles and Lee becomes Austin and Austin adopts Lee's personality. Austin cannot stand Lee's story and does not waste his time writing it down. Lee taunts Austin with his lack of courage and coaxes him into breaking into people's houses. Meanwhile, seeing that Lee bewilderingly fiddling with the typewriter, Austin goes and steals a whole bunch of toasters. While Austin and Lee childishly arguing, their mother returns home confused by his son's appearances as well as the state of her house. Austen tells her that he and Lee have decided to live in the desert like their father's but Lee thinks that Austin is not prepared to live in the desert. Austin responds by trying to strangle Lee, meanwhile, their mother bursts out of the house in dismay, Austin lets go of Lee, and as he walks to the door, Lee stands up. The lights fade as Austin and Lee face each other.

David Castronovo calls *True West* the "wild parody and disjointed presentation of crazed American dreams" (104). In a related vein, Matthew Roudane observes the characters in *True West* to be "less concerned with social change and more fixed, at best, on discovering some genuine force in a world filled with shattered families and the iconography of popular culture" (3). In contrast to his previous plays which portrayed opaque imageries and confusing monologs, Shepard's *True West*, in a sense, is simply understandable and transparently obvious. Douglass Watt comes to the same conclusion with his review in the *New York Daily News:* "what we see before us in *True West* is a slicker Shepard, but one just going through familiar paces in a thin variation on the old theme" (366).

Some critics pay attention to the autobiographical aspect of *True West* and study the relationship between the father living in the desert and Shepard's actual father who also spent some time in the desert since he could not "fit in with people" (Shepard, "Motel Chronicles" 56). Alex Vernon, on the other hand, analyzed the issue of staging violence in Shepard's *True West* and *The Day of the Locust* and argued that "violence can only be contained and controlled, either ritually or artistically, for so long; for as long as identity formation remains an unending process" (147). Sheila Rabillard worked on the plot, structure and the local order of

Shepard's plays and claimed that "*True West* is structured with astonishing strictness according to principles of repetition and reversal, both on the scale of gesture and visual image and in terms of the general behavior of the two principal characters" (52). Furthermore, Juan A. Tarancon in a rather thorough study worked on the mystic aspect of Shepard's *True West*. According to Tarancon, Shepard has changed the conventional meaning of myth and used "stories and characters borrowed from every expression of popular culture to make poignant statements about contemporary man" (8). Reliance on the mythic dynamism of *True West* makes Tarancon conduct both a holistic reading and a deconstructive one.

For Shepard, himself, in the heart of *True West* is the "conflict between the intellect and the emotions, the physical wild man part and the reasonable, intellectual side" (Weber 37). He stated that "I wanted to write a play about double nature, one that wouldn't be symbolic or metaphoric or any of that stuff, I just wanted to give a taste of what it feels like to be two-sided" (Rosen, "Sam Shepard" 119).

Very close to the aim of this paper is a study conducted by Sahar Ahmad Mokbel on Shepard's *Curse of the Starving Class* (1977). She dissected the play in the light of gender studies and analyzed "the struggle of the American man inside his Family" (19). She, further, examined the role of father and son in the face of masculine crisis and assigned the crisis of masculinity to be the result of the destruction of the postmodern family. Likewise, this paper attempts to examine Shepard's *True West* considering the issues of masculinity, the role of family, and crisis. Masculinity as a socially and culturally constructed entity plays a major role in the lives of Austin and Lee. In fact, growing up in a society where masculine men are expected to be active, domineering and strong, creates a major crisis for both men and women. The family in *True West* resembles the whole society. Shepard's representation of a deteriorated family is to criticize American society. This paper aims to look at those masculinity issues Austin and Lee are struggling with and examines how these issues in the modern society become a major crisis. Consequently, we will see how the crisis of masculinity reveals itself in the form of violence on the part of Austin and Lee and therefore reflects in the society. The two brother's drinking problems, as well as the sudden shift of their identities, are other issues related to the crisis of masculinity.

Discussion

Masculinity, in general, is a set of representation connected with being a man. While for some, masculinities are biologically grounded, it is concluded that they

are "socially and historically constructed" (Hearn & Morgan 4). These socially constructed attributes have found their place in the mind of a child and conformity to them becomes the ideal image occurring in infancy. As a universal common trend, masculinity is characterized by virility, energy, and strength while femininity is nothing but submission, innocence, and passivity. These contrastive gender distinctions are much revered, acknowledged as well as criticized in the world of literature. The issues of masculinity and the characteristics attributed to men are highly debatable. However, what is definite is the crisis men go through when performing masculinity.

Due to its wide applications of the concept, what the crisis of masculinity means actually remains unclear. According to John MacInnes, the crisis of masculinity arises from the "fundamental incompatibility between the core principle of modernity that all human beings are essentially equal (regardless of their sex) and the core tenet of patriarchy that men are naturally superior to women and thus destined to rule over them" (11).

Likewise, Tim Edwards chooses two sets of concerns from which masculinity crisis originates. According to him, crisis either happens from without or from within. The former is related to "the position of men within such institutions as the family, education, and work" (7-8) while the latter "centers precisely on a perceived shift in men's experiences of their position as men" (8). These two sets of crisis directly affect each other in a way that a crisis from without can be a crisis from within and vice versa.

Before examining these two sets of crisis in *True West*, it necessary to have some ideas about the masculine identity and the criteria on which Austin and Lee's identities are formed. Masculine identity in a narrow sense is the personal conception of oneself as male and in a broad sense is the manifestation of male intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Work and consequently financial security as the fundamental factor of masculinity is the central core of masculine identity. The plot of *Tue West* reaches the point that Austin and Lee's masculine identities become dependent on the producer, Saul Kimmer. Austin has attempted to build a relationship with Saul over time based on mutual trust and understanding as well as his own talent. On the other hand, Lee's sudden intervention shatters Austin's future prospects and encourages violence in him throughout the course of the play. According to Mathew Roudane, Austin and Lee "find themselves caught within a terrible binary of hope and hopelessness, struggling with their own distorted versions of objective reality" he, then, states that these two characters typically exist in an ongoing "state of shock" (2). This state of shock is the same as the masculine

crises Austin and Lee are struggling with. One can claim that since the characters are in fluctuation, they are on the quest to find authenticity in life or as Lee says "What I need is something authentic, something to keep me in touch" (60). For Mark Siegel, "Neither character embodies in himself a healthy, integrated personality, nor is there during the course of the play any indication that they will merge or repair each other" (246). Annette J. Saddik sees both Austin and Lee as two characters craving for stability and fixed identity, however, they realized that freedom only achieved through their instability and fluidity in their characters (130). It is also reflected in the idea of 'shift' in both Lee and Austin's moods; the former from active to passive and the latter from passive to active aggression and finally violence. Nonetheless, the character's understanding of their situation only aggravates their crises.

While Lee enjoys more fluidity and freedom as one of the advantages of his immoral life, Austin is taking pleasure in his stability. Lee has the miraculous ability to change his identity throughout the course of the play. Lee's barging in on Austin at the very outset of the play destroys Austin's autonomy and ruins his solitude. Lee steals Austin's identity and shatters his social status. Austin, on the other hand, "wishes to… relinquish himself to the positive freedom and anonymity of Lee's present" (Williams 60).

Heredity plays an important role in forming both Austin and Lee's identities. It is presented in the play how the sons can inherit the same characteristics as those of their father. The father is absent in the play; however, through Austin and Lee's conversation, there are some hints that their father is a drunk old man who lives in the dessert. William Kleb takes the absence of the father, who is being called 'the old man' many times by sons, as a "rumor, a ghost, a memory" (71). The father's absence is filled in by his son's presence especially Lee. Like his father, Lee is characterized by his manliness, humor, violence, vigor, and masculinity. In fact, Lee is a stand-in for his father. For example, in the first scene when Austin offers Lee money, Lee speaks up for his father:

> (Lee *suddenly lunges at* Austin, *grabs him violently by the shirt and shakes him with tremendous power*)
> LEE. Don't you say that to me! Don't you ever say that to me!
> (*just as suddenly he turns him loose, pushes him away and backs off*)
> You may be able to git away with that with the Old Man. Git him tanked up for a week! Buy him off with yer Hollywood blood money, but not me! I can git my own money my own way. Big money! (7)

Here, the absent father plays the role of the desired masculinity featured by traits that are not necessarily based on appropriate social masculine norms such as drinking alcohol, living in the dessert and having no proper occupation. Moreover, we can see that Lee as a representative of his father stands up for him and does not allow Austin to do what he did to their father. Nevertheless, later in the play, Lee suggests that they help their father with the money they earn from the script. Lee's close relationship with his father is explicitly illustrated in his defense of his father:

> LEE. We could get the old man out'a hock then.
> AUSTIN. Maybe.
> LEE. Whatdya' mean, maybe?
> AUSTIN. I mean it might take more than money.
> LEE. You were just tellin' me it'd change my whole life around. Why wouldn't it change him?
> AUSTIN. He's different.
> LEE. Oh, he's a different ilk, huh?
> AUSTIN. He's not gonna change. Let's leave the old man out of it.
> LEE. That's right. He's not gonna change but I will. I'll just turn myself right inside out. I could be just like you then, huh? (27)

According to Michael Taav, Lee "views himself and his father as being, in essence, identical — and therefore equally susceptible to change—and is insulted that Austin would view them otherwise" (124). There are scenes in which Lee is satisfied with the way he performs his distinct masculinity and proves to be the man. For example, Lee desires to go into dog fighting as a masculine act. "God that little dog could bear down. Lota' money in dog fightin'. Big money" (28) or he used to catch snakes on the hills. Lee proves his masculinity via expressing these bold acts seen as true and proper on his part.

On the other hand, Austin is the one who is always at home, passive, preoccupied with house plants, toasters, keeping the sink clean and finally he is the one who is in charge of the house. Austin's grave problem with Lee is that he reminds him of his father or as Stephen Bottoms points out, Lee's presence "inevitably brings the buried past back to the surface" (194). Austin's comfort zone is demolished once Lee challenges him to steal a toaster or keeps telling him that he will not survive in the desert. In other words, Austin's masculinity triggers to the point of murder and violence, he begins to drink alcohol, break into people's houses, and choke Lee with the telephone wire. Austin's ambivalent behavior speaks of his

masculinity crisis originating from his hidden desires toward a unique masculine figure and reunion with Lee and his father.

Such ambivalence lies in the fact that whether he wants to stay in his state, undisturbed by Lee or he wishes to take off to the desert and reunite with his father. On and on, in *True West*, Lee and Austin's struggles to find identity and masculine stability roots in their family and heredity, triggering a major crisis that is represented by violence and other aggressive acts like crime and drinking alcohol.

Now that we have examined Lee and Austin's identity construction and have seen that there is a shift in their identities from the onset of the play until the end, it is about time we demonstrated the consequences of their masculine crisis and the ways they are presented in the play. For Tim Edwards, family is the most complex arena within which the crisis of masculinity resides. Accordingly, for Shepard, the family is the base of everything: "What doesn't have to do with family? There isn't anything…Even a love story has to do with family…everyone is born out of a mother and a father, and you go on to be a father. It's an endless cycle" (Adler 111). In *True West*, the family is fragmented and denigrated. The father lives in the desert, the mother takes off for Alaska, Austin who is married and has a family of his own now lives with his mother and finally Lee goes back to home after five years. That being said, the disintegration of the family creates a crisis for each member of the family.

Work, as "the most fundamental foundation of masculine crisis," is connected to the crisis without and created a chaos for the unemployed (Edwards 8). Unemployment itself creates two most important crises; poverty, and loneliness. The case with *True West* is that Austin and Lee struggle with their jobs and neither one sees the other profession as fit and socially revered:

> LEE: You probably think that I'm not fully able to comprehend somethin' like that, huh?
> AUSTIN: Like what?
> LEE: That stuff yer doin'. That art. You know. Whatever you call it.
> AUSTIN: It's just a little research.
> LEE: You may not know it but I did a little art myself once. (Shepard 4)

Here, Lee looks down on Austin and the kind of job he does. He takes art for nothing as if everyone is capable of doing it. Lee mocks Austin at the beginning of the play distracting Austin of his writing and keeps saying "I realize that yer line a' work demands a lota' concentration" (3).

The quality of each character's masculine performance depends directly on the success in their work. Austin's success as a scriptwriter rests on Saul's financial support and assistance. However, the deal Austin hopes to make with Saul is much too petty for Lee to be taken seriously. Austin struggles to make Lee understand what he is doing:

> AUSTIN: Look, it's going to be hard enough for me to face this character on my own without —
> LEE: You don't know this guy?
> AUSTIN: No I don't know — He's a producer. I mean I've been meeting with him for months but you never get to know a producer.
> LEE: Yer tryin' to hustle him? Is that it?
> AUSTIN: I'm not trying to hustle him! I'm trying to work out a deal! It's not easy.
> LEE: What kinda' deal?
> AUSTIN: Convince him it's a worthwhile story. (13)

Thus, when Lee barges in on him with a new idea, Austin's working career becomes exposed to danger and consequently, the crisis occurs "I can't believe this. I just can't believe it. Are you sure he said that? Why would he drop mine?" (Shepard 31).

On the other hand, Lee's immoral risky job as a thief denigrates his social status. He is already unemployed and lives a poor nasty life. At first, Lee unknowingly struggles with his crisis, however, as the actions proceed, he becomes more aware of his status and crisis. The consequences of Lee's crisis manifests itself in his drinking problems, committing crime, and the act of violence. The same is correct with regard to Austin's fall into crisis.

The issue of crime can be observed as a social reaction toward individual's masculine crisis. Committing crimes are profoundly linked to the male sex. As Edwards points out, crime "is strongly related to rising unemployment…which finds expression and outlet through aggression and violence" (11). At first, Lee is the only one who has committed a crime i.e. breaking into other houses. Lee sees stealing as a totally masculine act and he is immensely proud of it. He goes as far as challenging Austin into stealing a toaster. When Austin steals a bunch of toasters, Lee remarks "I never challenged you! That's no challenge. Anybody can steal a toaster" (45). Lee commits crime without labeling or even seeing himself as a criminal. He takes pride in his masculine acts not realizing he is in deep crisis. In other words, he perceives his masculinity as quite normal.

Violence is another crisis or ground for Austin and Lee to perform their masculinities. Hearn proposes that violence is a "resource for demonstrating and showing a person is a man" (The violence of men 37). Lee's attitude toward killing or violence is generally a negative one. When Lee becomes afraid of the possibility that Austin would kick him out, he states his opinion about American family thus:

> AUSTIN: You're my brother.
> LEE: That don't mean a thing. You go down to the L.A. Police Department there and ask them what kinda' people kill each other the most. What do you think they'd say?
> AUSTIN: Who said anything about killing?
> LEE: Family people. Brothers. Brothers-in-law. Cousins. Real American-type people. They kill each other in the heat mostly. In the Smog-Alerts. In the Brush Fire Season. Right about this time a' year. (25)

Here, Lee's definition of the American people as killers is oddly interesting. His acts show both his detestation and admiration for family violence. Lee speaks ill of his brother and sees his intention as evil. In the meantime, he provides the ground for Austin's act of violence at the end of the play. Austin strives to strangle Lee since Lee decides not to bring Austin along to the dessert: "AUSTIN: (*tightening cord*) You're not goin' anywhere! You're not takin' anything with you. You're not takin' my car! You're not takin' the dishes! You're not takin' anything! You're stayin' right here!" (61). Austin's violent act upon Lee is an outlet for performing Austin's masculinity.

Another scene of violence in the play is when Lee has enough of fiddling with the typewriter and starts to smash it with the golf club. The typewriter can be a symbol of social status and institution. It is a means of achieving success and securing one's future, however, since Lee is unable to get around the typewriter, he ruins it violently.

The violence portrayed in the play on the parts of Austin and Lee is a means of showing their masculinities and a source of venting their crisis. As Kerry Carrington and John Scott demonstrate, masculinity is highly fluid and variable and one of the strategies employed to articulate masculinity is violence (660-1). In other words, masculinity is a combination of biological, social and cultural make-up.

Another issue which is quite prevalent throughout *True West* is drinking alcohol. It is another consequence of the crisis of masculinity in the case of Austin and Lee. As a model for his sons to follow, the alcoholic father is the main reason

behind the destruction of the family. As both a masculine act and distraction, alcohol is a nesting ground, a safe haven as well as an escape strategy in the face of crisis. Both Lee and Austin take turn drinking alcohol throughout the play. Lee, who never seems to eat, gulps down beer throughout the play, strongly reinforcing the impression of a primitive, uncivilized tramp. Despite being an aftermath of their masculine crisis, alcohol is also used as a catalyst bringing the brothers together and joining them with their drunk father:

> LEE. You sound just like the old man now.
> AUSTIN. Yeah, well we all sound alike when we're sloshed. We just sorta' echo each other. (39)

Here, Austin's shift of his character is vividly presented as a result of drinking alcohol. Alex Vernon recapitulates Lee and Austin's situations in this manner "The brothers' constant dispute over "true-to-life" versus "contrived" stories, and original versus cliché dialogue, is underscored by their own identity struggles and by their cliché speech" (136).

As it is illustrated, the crisis of masculinity occurs in the forms of violence and crime unless one performs it according to accepted social norms. While in crisis, men unconsciously accept who they are and believe their behavior to be the true kind of masculinity in which one can perform and follow. However, when one feels in danger either socially or physically, they grow a sense of frustration and loneliness in themselves. The same is true about Austin and Lee. For them, frustration is regarded as a search for masculinity in society.

Conclusion

As a social and cultural construct, masculinity plays an important role in the way men confront the problems of life. To make a division, the crisis with masculinity either happens within such institutions as family, education, and work or from men's experience of being a man. In this paper, we concluded that the construction of identity has a relationship with the crisis it brings about. It also represented that the lack of unity in the family and its fragmentation is the main reason behind the brother's masculinity crisis. Austin's job as a scriptwriter is threatened when Lee meddles in his affairs with a new story and Saul naively falls for it. Therefore, Austin falls into crisis, commits crimes, begins drinking alcohol and finally struggles to kill his brother, Lee. Austin's shift of character and disposition from the beginning of the play toward the end indicates his crisis of masculinity and identity

as well as his instability and fluctuation. On the other hand, Lee, as a man who has performed his masculinity and positioned himself as a man, is already faced with a crisis. He is already drunk and prone to committing crime and violence. Lee is attached to his root since it can define his identity. He is a representative of his father while Austin is inclined toward his mother and feminine attributes. Moreover, the absence of the father wreaks psychological devastation on the Austin and Lee and casts a shadow on their lives.

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Deconstruction as the Construction: Paul de Man's Ethicity of Allegory

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Abstract The article discusses Paul de Man's treatment of the ethicity of allegory in the *Allegories of Reading*, particularly a difficult passage in the chapter "Allegory" (*Julie*), where de Man describes ethics or ethicity as "a discursive mode among others" and defines it as "the structural interference of two distinct value systems." Despite the acknowledged opacity of the passage, many scholars quoted it, interpreted it and incorporated it in their own elaborations on ethics and literature. The article claims that the established interpretations of the passage are erroneous. In addition, it seeks to demonstrate that the close reading of de Man's text discloses its inconsistency. The conclusion is that de Man's famous, but enigmatic formulations cannot serve as a ground for a fruitful ethical literary criticism.

Key words Paul de Man; allegory; ethical literary criticism; Hillis Miller

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When discussing deconstructive ethical literary criticism, one cannot avoid the name of Paul de Man.[1] The discovery of his wartime journalism raised questions about the ethical grounds of deconstructive enterprise and indirectly probably even

1 The author acknowledges the financial support from the Slovenian Research Agency (research core funding No. P6-0239).

stimulated the ethical turn of Deconstruction. But the so-called "de Man affair" is not of my concern here. In what follows, I will rather pay attention to de Man's understanding of the relation between literature and ethics.

De Man briefly dealt with this issue already in one of his wartime articles ("Sur les possibilites de la critique"), where he defended the autonomist position, and much later in the "Foreword to Carol Jacobs, *The Dissimulating Harmony*," where he introduced what he called the "ethos of explication" (de Man，*Critical Writings* 220). His most extensive treatment of the topic, however, can be found in his tropological interpretations of Rousseau in *Allegories of Reading*, particularly in the chapter "Allegory" (*Julie*). Here de Man discusses the Rousseau's novel, in particular the *Second Preface* to it, consisting of the dialogue between R. (Rousseau himself) and his interlocutor, and regarding the referential status of the novel. Rousseau refuses to either affirm or deny his authorship, and this figure of impossibility of "reading" his own text de Man calls allegory, conceived as "a supplementary figural superposition" to the rhetorical structure of the text normally consisting "of a figure (or a system of figures) and its deconstruction" (de Man, *Allegories of Reading* 205). Such understanding of allegory leads him to the conclusion that this trope *per se* is ethical. Let me quote a longer passage:

> In the text of the *Second Preface*, the point at which the allegorical mode asserts itself is precisely when R. admits the impossibility of reading his own text and thus relinquishes his power over it. The statement undoes both the intelligibility and the seductiveness that the fiction owed to its negative rigor. The admission therefore occurs *against* the inherent logic which animated the development of the narrative […] The reversal seems opposed to the best interests of the narrator. It has to be thematised as a sacrifice, a renunciation that implies a shift in valorization. Before the reversal, the narrative occurs within a system governed by polarities of truth and falsehood that move parallel with the text they generate. Far from interfering with each other, the value system and the narrative promote each other's elaboration. […] But in the allegory of unreadability, the imperatives of truth and falsehood oppose the narrative syntax and manifest themselves at its expense. The concatenation of the categories of truth and falsehood with the values of right and wrong is disrupted, affecting the economy of the narration in decisive ways. We can call this shift in economy *ethical*, since it indeed involves a displacement from *pathos* to *ethos*. Allegories are always ethical, the term ethical designating the structural interference of two distinct value systems. In this sense, ethics has nothing to do

> with the will (thwarted or free) of a subject, nor *a fortiori*, with a relationship between subjects. The ethical category is imperative […] to the extent that it is linguistic and not subjective. Morality is a version of the same language aporia that gave rise to such concepts as "man" or "love" or "self," and not the cause or the consequence of such concepts. The passage to an ethical tonality does not result from a transcendental imperative but is the referential (and therefore unreliable) version of a linguistic confusion. Ethics (or, one should say, ethicity) is a discursive mode among others. (Ibid. 205-206)

This is admittedly a very difficult passage (henceforth I'll refer to it as the *Passage*). Joel Black calls it "extravagant" (Black 193), Marc Redfield "dense, seductively iconoclastic" (Redfield 49); Eva Antal admits to have problems "with the real meaning of de Man's ethicity" (Antal 15). Alex Segal comes to the conclusion that due to its difficulty de Man's formulations in the *Passage* "seem to avoid ethics altogether" (Segal 274). Also Hillis Miller in *The Ethics of Reading* confirms its unreadability. He describes it as "intricate" (Miller, *The Ethics of Reading* 61), as "an exceedingly odd definition of the term ethical" (ibid. 49), and on another occasion he stresses that "certain aspects of what de Man says do not quite make sense, not at least from the point of view of ordinary logic and reason" (Miller, "'Reading' Part of a Paragraph in *Allegories of Reading*" 164). This seems an accurate description of the *Passage*, but also of de Man's *Allegories of Reading* as a whole. It can be supported with other observations, such as Jonathan Culler's when he states: "de Man's writing is special — and often especially annoying — in its strategy of omitting crucial demonstrations in order to put readers in a position where they cannot profit from his analyses without according belief to what seems implausible or at least unproven" (Culler 229). Let me round up this series of quotes with a confession of de Man's close friend Derrida: "even for his admirers and his friends, especially for them, if I may be allowed to testify to this, the work and the person of Paul de Man were enigmatic" (Derrida 592-593).

It is thus a common knowledge that de Man's writing is not very generous to the readers who want to get a clear picture of what they read, and in particular this holds true of the *Passage*. Yet surprisingly, despite its opacity, the *Passage* proved to be extremely popular. It has been — or at least the crucial parts of it have been — quoted by many scholars such as Joel Black, Christopher Norris, Eva Antal, Simon Critchley, Robert Eaglestone, Paweł Marcinkiewicz, Patricia Ward, Namwali Serpel, Jonathan Culler, Smaro Kambourelli,William Handley, David Parker, Rüdiger Heinze, Martin McQuillan, Geoffrey Harpham, Marc Redfield, Alex Segal, Barbara

Johnson, Werner Hamacher, Jospeh Hillis Miller and probably several others (here I list only those who I studied).[1] With a single exception of Norris, all scholars quoted it affirmatively without being able to grasp it fully. Some of them tried to decipher and interpret de Man's formulations; others simply took them for granted, while some others even applied them to their own readings. All this deserves attention since, as I will argue in what follows, in my view, 1) all these interpretations of the *Passage* are erroneous, and 2) de Man's enigmatic formulations cannot serve as a ground for a fruitful ethical literary criticism. Unfortunately, the time limit will not allow me to pay due respect to this very complicated issues. I will have to summarize my argumentation instead.

Let me turn to the first point of my discussion. I want to make it clear that my aim is not to criticise all the misreadings (de Man would probably claim that they are necessarily such). They are mostly not the result of the interpreters' incompetence, but of the obscurity and inconsistencies in de Man's text. Since the majority of interpretations seem to follow (explicitly or implicitly) the lines of Hillis Miller's understanding in *The Ethics of Reading*, I'll exemplify the most common failure with his misreading.

But let me first complete de Man's treatment of the "ethicity" of *Julie* as started in the *Passage*. The *Passage* is immediately followed by this important statement: "But the Preface and the main text of *Julie* are ethical not only in this wider sense. They are also moralistic in a very practical way" (de Man 206), and this practical ethical — or moralistic — dimension is exemplified by "R.'s lengthy considerations on all the good his book will be able to do for its readers" (ibid.). The following pages of the chapter are devoted to this dimension, to the necessity of its appearance. It is obvious that de Man makes a break here. While his definition of ethics in the notorious *Passage* is opaque, extravagant, even impossible to understand, the practical ethical dimension brings us to more familiar ground in this respect. Rousseau himself as well as Julie are inclined to give moral lessons. Now, the

1 Apart from works quoted in the bibliography see also: Simon Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction: Derrida and Levinas*; Robert Eaglestone, *Ethical Criticism. Reading After Levinas*; Paweł Marcinkiewicz, *The Rhetoric of the City: Robinson Jeffers and A. R. Ammons*; Patricia A. Ward, "Ethics and recent literary theory: the reader as moral agent"; Smaro Kamboureli, "The Limits of the Ethical Turn: Troping towards the Other, Yann Martel, and Self"; William R. Handley, "The House a Ghost Built: "Nommo," Allegory, and the Ethics of Reading in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*"; David Parker, "Introduction: the turn to ethics in the 1990s"; Rüdiger Heinze, *Ethics of Literary Forms in Contemporary American Literature*; Wener Hamacher，"LECTIO: de Man's Imperative."

problem for the interpreters seems to be the following: although de Man explicitly distinguishes the two modes of ethical in *Julie*, namely the rhetorical/tropological and thematic mode or, in his own words, the ethical in "the wider sense" and the moralistic, the theoretical and practical ethical dimensions, he never explains clearly the relationship between both. And this seems to be the source of confusion for Hillis Miller and many others. Although the rhetorical and the thematical "ethicity" happen on different levels, the interpreters tend to explain the opaque rhetorical or theoretical ethicity by means of more accessible practical morality, since this obviously remains the only possibility for them to make the enigmatic formulae of the *Passage* to have some sense. To this purpose, Hillis Miller equates de Man's *morality* or *ethicity*, contained in the last four sentences of the *Passage* — ethicity understood by de Man as a "renunciation" and "sacrifice" (ibid. 206) (thus as a *negation*) — with the "making of ethical judgments" (Miller, *The Ethics of Reading* 48) (thus with a *positive*, affirmative activity). Consequently, he concludes: "Ethicity is a region of human life in which lying is necessarily made into a universal principle, in the sense that ethical judgments are necessary but never verifiably true. The failure to read or the impossibility of reading is a universal necessity, one moment of which is that potentially aberrant form of language called ethical judgment or prescription" (ibid. 51). Such a conclusion certainly serves well Hillis Miller's own purposes, the development of his own ethics of reading. It can also be said to be consistent with de Man's understanding of language. However, it wrongly interprets the *Passage*, ignoring the fact that the *Passage* tries to define "the figural mode with the ethical tonality" (de Man, *Allegories of Reading* 188), the immanent ethicity of *rhetorical* devices, of allegory as a *trope*, and has nothing to do with the making of ethical judgments, pertaining to the *practical* ethical (moralistic), *thematic* dimensions. Certainly, Hillis Miller wants to cope with de Man's dictum that "Ethics (or, one should say, ethicity) is a discursive mode among others," but fails to do so. To my knowledge, the majority of attempts to understand the *Passage* — although some of them are quite thorough, eloquent and sophisticated — fail in a similar way.

Now I turn to my second point. The close inspection of the *Passage* reveals how idiosyncratic, eccentric and enigmatic de Man's understanding of ethics is. While in the chapter "Metaphor" of the same book ethics is defined as "depending on relationship among men" (ibid. 156), which is, I believe, a common perception, in the *Passage* de Man introduces a very different, actually the opposite notion of ethics that has explicitly "nothing to do […] with a relationship between subjects" (ibid. 206). Here ethicity is understood as intrinsic tropological mode, in the last consequence linguistic, being therefore only "a discursive mode among others"

(ibid.). Such an understanding is possible, of course, but it makes sense only if tropological operation in question — the allegorical mode — displays features that we normally ascribe to the area of ethics (otherwise the denomination "ethical" would be completely arbitrary and therefore of no use). But this is exactly what we are missing in the *Passage*.

To be sure, de Man seems to offer a clear definition of what he understands as ethical, when he asserts: "Allegories are always ethical, the term ethical designating the structural interference of two distinct value systems" (ibid.). But this definition is problematic in more than one sense. Hillis Miller rightly observed that contrary to Derrida, de Man "has a tendency, in spite of the fact that each of his essays is the 'reading' of a particular text, to move to levels of absolute generality" (Hillis Miller, "'Reading' Part of a Paragraph in *Allegories of Reading*" 164), which necessarily leads to confusions. The above definition of ethical as "the structural interference of two distinct value systems," referring to *all* allegories, is a very good example of this. It is much too general[1] to be useful or valid. First, it is too presumptuous when claiming that allegories are *always* ethical in this sense. And second, I see no reason why the structural interference between two distinctive value systems such as, for instance, cognitive or epistemological and aesthetic would be ethical. — But the definition remains problematic even if we give up its generality and read de Man's formula as applied specifically to Rousseau's *Julie*. The two value systems involved in the structural interference here are obviously the ones comprising of the categories "of truth and falsehood" and of "the values of right and wrong" (ibid.), yet it is not quite clear that either of them are ethical values. While for Barbara Johnson the interfering value systems are the referential and the moral (Johnson 68), for Martin McQuillan, for instance, they are "the referential and the linguistic" (McQuillan 126).

Of course, de Man's statements make more sense if we understand them as Barbara Johnson does. If *pathos* denotes seductive power of fiction that doesn't challenge the referential authority, Rousseau's renunciation, his sacrifice of this authority, can be understood as a shift to *ethos*. In de Man's interpretation he doesn't seduce his readers any more, pretending that what he recounts is *true*; instead he does what is *right*, he resigns his authority against his own interests, and this is an ethical move. Hence, one wonders where does the confusion about the value sys-

1 Generality is a recurrent problem of ethical literary criticism, and de Man is a good example in this respect. I would like to use this opportunity to repeat my claim that "when discussing *literature and ethics*, one should avoid as much as possible generalizations and strong statements" (Virk, "Complexities" 6-7; see also Virk, "Etična" 19).

tems come from then. How can such a competent and well informed reader of de Man as McQuillan, the author of a Routledge Critical Thinkers series monograph on de Man, make such a *faux pas*? My guess is that not only possibility, but even the necessity of misreading is inscribed in de Man's own text on the ethics of allegory.

To be sure, the tropological treatment of ethicity as such is not an impossible task. De Man conceived allegory as ethical already in "The Rhetoric of Temporality" where he explicitly discussed the *ethics of renunciation* and stated that allegory *renounces* "the nostalgia and the desire to coincide" (de Man, *Blindness and Insight* 207). Yet such a treatment raises some questions that become evident in the *Allegories of Reading*. The first problem shows up when we discover that de Man, when discussing Rousseau's inability in the *Second Preface* to confirm the referential authority of the text and speaking in this respect of renunciation and even sacrifice, actually falsifies. If we closeread in a deconstructive manner, it becomes obvious that at least in this particular case the term "ethics of renunciation," when referring to the rhetorical level of the text, to the allegory as a trope — and not to the thematic level, for instance, to Julie's renouncing her love to Saint-Preux —, is misleading. To renounce or to sacrifice something that belongs to you may be an ethical deed; but in the *Second Preface* this is not the case. Rousseau doesn't really know if he is entitled to the authority of the author of *Julie* or not. He would be able to renounce, sacrifice this authority if it belonged to him. But since it doesn't, or at least it is not clear whether it does or not, he simply cannot do it. If there is something he "renounces," than this is the desire of the other, his interlocutor, who would like him to have such authority. But this desire belongs to someone else, and we cannot really renounce someone else's desire. The sacrifice in the ethical sense can only be the sacrifice of something which is ours. Such a sharp thinker as de Man ought to be aware of this; however, he seems to be motivated to use the inappropriate metaphor in order to support his claim (that allegories are always ethical).

The second problem with the *ethics of renunciation* on the rhetorical level is that it is a metaphor, a personification and as such, according to de Man's own principles, aberrant. One should never forget that metaphors are not to be taken literally. We cannot transfer metaphorical objects, their properties and relations directly to the reality. If someone says that he has a frog in his throat, we won't wonder how the slimy little beast got through his mouth into his throat. In this respect it is clear that de Man, when speaking of the ethicity of allegory, doesn't really discuss "the will of a subject," the subjectivity of Rousseau, but the rhetorical properties of the text, its tropological structure. De Man is quite explicit about this: "Taken literally, Rousseau's assertion that he does not know whether he or his fictional characters wrote

the letters that make up *Julie* makes little sense. The situation changes when we realize that R. is merely the metaphor for a textual property (readability)" (de Man, *Allegories of Reading* 203). Yet despite the fact that de Man has a clear mind about the personification he uses, he nevertheless makes wrong conclusions. It seems that he himself became the victim of the aberrant metaphorical substitution he chased so fervently. Unreadability as a key feature of allegory is *per se* a matter of referentiality, of epistemology. It only becomes a matter of ethics for de Man by virtue of an aberrant substitution inscribed in the metaphors of renouncement and sacrifice.

De Man would of course object to my comments. He would probably point to the final sentences of the *Passage* where he stresses the linguistic level of his treatment of allegory as ethical that has nothing to do neither with the everyday-practical ethical level nor with the traditional (Kantian) moral philosophy. It is simply a designation of a rhetorical mode or operation built on the analogy with the "real" ethics. However, while this analogy seems to make more sense in the case of "The Rhetoric of Temporality," it is not that watertight in the case of the *Allegories of Reading*. Here the "unreadability" (uncertain referentiality) that belongs to the order of *cognition*, to the domain of *hermeneutics*, is arbitrarily described in terms of renunciation and sacrifice and in this manner translated into the domain of *ethical*. The allegories as de Man conceives them are thus not ethical due to their intrinsic nature, but due to the misleading translation.

Consequently, it is no surprise that although the *Passage* from the *Allegories of Reading*, defining the ethicity of the allegory, has been widely quoted and discussed, de Man's conception of ethicity as "a discursive mode among others" hasn't got many followers. In principle, de Man's tropological analyses ought to be a perfect starting-point for the *rhetorical ethical criticism*, but what we know today under this title (the work of James Phelan, for instance) doesn't show any sign of de Man's influence. There have been, as mentioned before, quite a lot of references to the *Passage*, yet mostly in a very general way, invoking the name and idioms of de Man as authority in order to support the credibility of their own enterprises, but without really productively and expediently applying his method and conception of ethicity. The most famous exceptions in this respect are Barbara Johnson and Hillis Miller, but their use of de Man's formulations from the *Passage* cannot be treated without certain reservations. I already briefly discussed Hillis Miller, therefore I'll only mention Johnson here. In *The Wake of Deconstruction*, *s*he *translates* de Man's tropological treatment of the ethical dimension of allegory to the real-life political practice, which is a disputable translation. Not only does the Man in the *Passage* explicitly delimit his purely linguistic conception of the ethics from the domains of the

real-life practice and subjectivity, but even when he (not on the level of allegory as a trope but on a practical-ethical level of moralistic discourse) discusses praxis, he adds the following warning: "The resulting discourse of praxis is however not only devoid of authority (since it is the consequence of an epistemological abdication), but it occurs again in the form of a text. The *Second Preface*, however practical it may be in its concerns, is not more of an action than the rest of the novel" (de Man, *Allegories of Reading* 209).

To conclude. It is of course not to deny de Man's merits regarding many areas of literary criticism; however, the ethical literary criticism, at least in my view, is not among them. De Man's treatment of ethics in the *Allegories of Reading* is too remindful of the attempts of German romanticists such as Schelling or Friedrich Schlegel to build a system of transcendental idealism by means of theoretical *construction*, undisturbed by the "banalities" of the real life experience and practice. Such a discourse — in my view self-referential and in the last consequence even tautological — may be pertinent to some domains, but it doesn't seem to offer a suitable approach to the domain of ethics. In this respect Christopher Norris is right when he concludes that de Man's treatment of the ethics of allegory results in the "emptying-out of ethical categories to the point where they seem entirely disconnected from issues of practical choice and commitment" (Norris 183). Such a concept that conceives ethics as an intralinguistic phenomenon does not only deviate from established Western conceptions of ethics, but is also not compatible with the ethical literary criticism as practiced by Nie Zhenzhao, who understands ethics as "the ethical relationship or ethical order between man and man, man and society, or man and nature" (Nie 88).

In order to avoid misunderstandings, I must add that my verdict doesn't concern the ethics of Deconstruction in general. The importance of Derrida's treatment of ethics — for instance of his deliberations on the relation to the Other, on friendship, gift, responsibility, hospitality etc. — for the ethical literary criticism remains invaluable. This is why his ideas have been so widely applied in the ethical literary criticism. Despite the numerous references to the *Passage*, the same does not hold true of de Man's treatment of ethics in the *Allegories of Reading.* Due to the linguistic absolutism, such an "ethics" remains trapped into a self-referential loop, being only "a discursive mode among others" — and nothing more.

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Acculturation and Identity: Appraising Santhals' Transition through Folktales

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Abstract The Santhal tribe, one of the most significant tribes in India, with all pride, have been trying to keep their tradition, culture and language alive but over the time, their transactions with the neighbouring communities has changed their way of life. Their close association with the Hindus and the Christians has developed a new set of attitudes towards their cultural, social, political, and religious practices. The present paper investigates these partial changes that came about in the process of acculturation. Folktales have been used as means to explore the changes which would help the readers in gauging their evolved liquid identity. The paper analyses them in the light of acculturation of the Santhals as a subaltern group. It is largely based on the works of Rev. P.O. Bodding and A. Campbell who managed to collect and translate the Santhal folk tales with the purpose of giving voice to the voiceless.

Key words assimilation; culture; Folklore studies; South Asian Studies; tribal literature

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Introduction

In connection to the acculturation among the Santhals, this paper talks about the

relationship of the Santhal tribe, the largest tribal community in North-Eastern India, with other neighbouring groups like the Hindus and the Christians. The Santhal tribe belong to the Austro-Asiatic Linguistic group. This tribe is, by far, one of the significant tribes in India in terms of both its numerical dominance and its attestation of self-identity through the Santhal rebellion[1]. The Kolarian[2] tribes of India, of which the Santhals are the most imperative ones, are the last vestiges of the race and their conventional abode is thought to be the Santhal Parganas[3] in parts of the Chota Nagpur plateau in Jharkhand. They inhabited the hilly areas in close association with flora and fauna, though due to the growth of human population, civilization and deforestation, they have migrated from their traditional dwelling places in the hilly and forest areas to different parts of the country (Mathur *Santhal* 30). Today they are widely distributed in different parts of Chota Nagpur plateau covering neighbouring parts of Bihar, Bengal, Orissa, Chattisgarh and Assam (Bodding, *Santal* 709-711). With all pride and honour, they have tried to keep their tradition, culture and language alive to some degree; although their close association with other communities like the Hindus and the Christians, has developed a new set of attitudes towards their cultural, social, political, and religious practices. This may have occurred in the course of their endeavours to forge a new identity which was an after-effect of acculturation process (Carrin-Bouez). This bilateral process, as observed by Berry, is a twofold process of change in terms of culture and psychology. These changes take place as a result of the close association between two or more groups of different cultures and their individual members respectively. At the group level, it engages transformations in social arrangements, institutions

1 This insurrection has reference to the establishment of the Permanent Land Settlement of 1793. The settlement pattern initiated by the British took away lands from the Santhals which they had cultivated for centuries. The zamindars took land on auction from the British government and gave it to the peasants who took it for cultivation. Thereby an attempt was made by the Santhals to get rid of the money-lenders and zamindars.

2 E.T.Dalton in his "Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal**,**"has classified his chosen tribes of Bengal, Bihar and Orissainto two groups: aborigines and "Hinduized aborigines." He subdivided the first into the Dravidian and the Kolarian on the basis of language, which according to him was "the most obvious affinity." He categorized Santhals as the Kolarians.

3 SanthalPargana is one of the divisions of Jharkhand, Dumka being its headquarter. Today this managerial division contains six regions: Godda, Deoghar, Dumka, Jamtara, Sahibganj and Pakur. In the past, SanthalParganas contained a region of a same name, in undivided Bihar state, India. Prior to that, in 1855, amid British India, SanthalParganas was made as a district, and was a part of the Bengal Presidency.

as well as in cultural practices. At the individual level, it entails changes in an individual's behavioural repertoire. This change is a long-term process and it even takes generations and centuries for the changes to come about, which occur for several reasons comprising colonization, migration and much more (Berry 698). It continues for long after the initial contact among culturally plural societies. The cultures often end up learning and adopting each other's language, predominantly that of the dominant culture; they even adopt each other's religious practices, share food preferences, dress patterns and social interactions which are attributes of each group. At times, these mutual adaptations and adjustments take place rather easily, but sometimes acculturative stress and cultural conflict arise during the intercultural interactions. At times acculturation may become "reactive"; there is partial or full acceptance or rejection that is people might accept or reject the cultural influence from the dominant group and can return to their 'traditional' mode of life (Berry 702). Additionally, the variability with which the acculturation process takes place is also to be considered as there are differences among the individuals, families as well as large and small socio-cultural sub-groups. Similarly, there are deviations in the ways and methods while going about the process of acculturation[1]; the degree to which the people achieve acceptable and satisfactory adaptations is also considered. The phenomenon of acculturation has been taking place since ages, but it is said to have been noticeable after the growing concern for the effects of domination of indigenous people by the Europeans. Later, it centred on the immigrants as to how they changed after their settlement into the respective receiving societies. Lately, much focus has been given to the ethno-cultural groups who undergo change, as a result of living mutually in culturally plural societies. It has been observed that the indigenous national population demonstrate resistance because of neo-colonization, while immigrants, refugees and sojourners stream out of these political and economic changes, and thus an outsized number of ethno-cultural populations become established in most of the countries. Taking cue from the above discussion, the present paper seeks to unveil the gradual changes the Santhal tribe witnessed through the passage of time.

Historiography of Transition

With reference to the concept and process of acculturation in the indigenous tribes, several factors can be listed which result in changes in tribal culture, such as measures undertaken by the government, the spread of education, communication facilities, the process of urbanisation, community development projects,

1 This process is termed as acculturation strategies.

occupational mobility and contacts with neighbouring societies. In the Indian context, colonialism was the major factor behind changes in tribal culture. The colonial rule by the British for nearly two hundred years had a variegated impact upon different *Adivasi*[1]communities in India. It shaped a wide range of responses among the tribal people in the course of their transition to modernity. With this, there were many changes, as their political institutions and socio-economic organizations came to be deeply affected. During the nineteenth and twentieth century, the British administration formulated a twin strategy so that they could integrate the tribal regions within the provinces of British India. The two strategies comprised the imposition of system of paternalistic rule by district officers and secondly that of a new legal structure which was imposed upon the unified tribal community construction. The status of different tribal groups began to be redefined by this changed mode of political control. Not only this, it even purged much of the authority of the established tribal leadership. This ultimately resulted in dissolution of the old village establishments and the deformation of the functions of the key village operatives (Das Gupta and Basu 1). Changes in the rural social structure and the utilization of new lawful definitions normally affected upon the *Adivasi* economy too. Prior it had been based upon a nearby reconciliation of farming and timberland items, however under the frontier manage, there was an observable expansion of settled development and a take-off from swidden cultivation. The second real improvement identified with the reservation of backwoods. Towards the finish of the nineteenth century, bigger parts of the woodlands were put distant for villagers, accordingly of which there was a more noteworthy reliance on agricultural production. There was likewise more influx of outsiders into these districts and relocation of Adivasis from their countries to far away ranches and mines looking for business. These had huge financial and social ramifications (2).

The pre-colonial situation of India is not very well known as there are no records to elucidate it but supposedly in the sixteenth century, some of the tribes such as Bhils and Kols were supposed to have been politically recognized by the Mughal Empire. In addition to these, before the formation of states, the respective chiefs of the tribes such as Gonds, Cheros and Nagbansis, encouraged the settlement of some non-tribal communities like Kurmis, who, as K. Singh conjectures, owned advanced farming technology and this in itself was sufficient to create the agricultural surplus that the new states required (Singh 1921-1931). These newly created states by the Mughal Empire became the breeding ground

1 *Adivasi* is a hypernym for a composite group of aboriginal tribal groups of South Asia. They constitute a good percentage of the population of India and Nepal

for Sanskritization[1]. With respect to this, M.N. Srinivas stresses that the first noticeable change was detected among the Coorgs from South India, who began adopting Hindu values which were related to the concept of purity. They did this in order to meliorate their position in the caste system. They started worshipping the higher Hindu Gods and adopted the vegetarian diet with the help of Brahmins[2]who settled in the tribal areas. Thus, in the central part of India, the tribal people were no longer isolated but instead they had economic relations with the Hindus. On the other hand, the tribal villagers were unable to develop their tribalist ideal and responded positively towards their Sanskritization. Because of this, they adopted Sanskritisation, with the help of which they began to be recognised by the Hindus. It was observed that the Santhals also tried to adopt some of the Hindu values. Some of the Santhals adopted the Hindu practices by putting on the sacred thread[3]around the body, which gave them the authority to perform religious rituals like the upper caste Hindus. Adding to this, some of the Santhals even made reformations in their diet by becoming vegetarians which were a practice followed among the Brahmins.

These claims of becoming Hindus were not acknowledged and thus the Sanskritization process was discouraged in the Santhal society. The other important reasons behind this were that firstly, the Santhal insurrection (1855-1857) had posed an image of Hindus as 'land exploiters' and secondly, the Christian education was thought to provide them a greater prospect of social ascension. Hence, it was understood by the Santhals that there was a difference between claiming a subjective status and a status which is recognized by a dominant caste. Moreover some of the agents of Sanskritization were thought to be impure as they were not the Brahmins themselves but some preachers (gurus) or (*Ojhas)* who had started teaching some splinters of local Hinduism to the Santhal *Ojha,* that is the witch-finders who were not a dominant caste. They just reinterpreted some Hindu knowledge and amalgamated with their own notion of religious practices which even incorporated sacrifices and practice of exorcism (Das Gupta and Basu 19-23).

Later on, the colonial rule developed a policy for the protection of tribes

1 M.N. Srinivas introduced the concept of sanskrtization in his book "Religion and society among the coorgs of South India" to name the process by which a low caste tries to reform its practices in order to claim a higher status in the hierarchy of castes.

2 Communities like Brahmins and artisans came and settled in the tribal areas. The Santhals requested the Hindu Brahmins to perform their religious practices. The Brahmins, in return, received grants of land for performing the ritual services.

3 Wearing a sacred thread around the body symbolizes the transference of spiritual knowledge. This is a Hindu religious practice.

calling them "ethnic communities" who needed a special jurisdiction which was ironically meant for controlling and encroaching upon their minds and space. Thus, the British administrators planned a series of reforms like agrarian laws and protection of tribal leadership. The British sought these measures for smooth governance and a superiority complex reformation. They likewise, took recourse to put an end to tribal customs such as human sacrifice and female infanticide which was being practiced mainly among the Bhils (1840-1865). This also led to the construction of roads which was even used for the exploitation of raw materials and transportation of products from plantations. This added to their degradation and led to an end of the tribal independence. Apart from the exploitation of their "Mother Nature," during the late eighteenth century, the Santhals were subjected to colonial processes like forced labour. This was evident from the historical event of clearing the forest tracts of Rajmahal Hills in Bihar (now Jharkhand). There was a massive migration of the Santhal people towards this area and the consequence of this was the weakening of the Santhals as a tribal community resulting in fragmentation of the tribal clan and the territorial organization upon which the tribal leadership was based. Gradually, there began to be development in the tribal areas, with the development of industries, owing to the exploitation of mineral resources. Meanwhile, the missionaries became very active and they tried to impose their puritanical ethics, guided by the evangelization process. Apart from these ideological concerns, the missionaries even tried to guide the tribals in favour of the restoration of their lands against the Hindu landowners. This series of exploitation resulted in a number of reactionary movements against the Hindus, the Christians and the British, like The Revolt of the Gonds (1819), Chero disturbances in Chotanagpur (1820) and Khond resistance to the abolition of Meriah sacrifice (1830) (20). This was the first phase of tribal movements. The second phase keeps up correspondence with the development of colonial organization. The movements like Kherwar movement (1871-1857) and Santhal rebellion (1855-1857) developed a political and religious dimension in the second phase.[1] The last phase of the tribal movements was noticeable by the participation of tribes in the national struggle for

1 The Kherwars started taking recourse to Hindu practices and consulted the Hindu preachers in times of crisis. As a matter of fact, the Kherwar movement did not gain significance in the Santhal Parganas where educational activities by the missionaries were very active (19-20).

freedom. The Gandhian influence[1] became very obvious among the Bhils, the Gonds and the Hos. Ultimately, in this process, the tribal society adopted the new colonial economy.

The impact of colonialism was such that it ended in emergence of a number of tribal movements from 1820-1857. Since then at least for the Santhals, these movements had been important as they tried to promote the reformation of the tribal values in the face of the Hindu hegemony. The "awakening" among the tribal people paved the way for acculturation and the Santhals adapted themselves to different dominant castes in different ways in the states of Bihar, Bengal and Orissa. These differences can be elucidated by different influences acting upon them. For example, the Santhals of the undivided Bihar were much influenced by the Christianisation, the then determining factor. In contrast to this, the Santhals of Bengal were more influenced by the dominant Hindu society and their relation was least disturbed by conflicts as opposed to those in Bihar who were influenced by Christianity (19-20).

It has been noted that though the Santhals aligned towards the acculturation process but somehow tried to reaffirm tinges of their Santhal identity by evolving emblematic response to the acculturation process. These responses are sensed at particular levels of their beliefs, be it religious or social. It is said that the borrowed or acquired items may be micro semantic units which are fused in the tribal center of convictions. For instance, according to the informants of Carrin-Bouez in his anthropological study of the Santhal society, there are numerous Santhal villages where the village priest pours water or rice-brew over the highest point of a slope or a hill in the process of praying to get rain. The prayers are addressed to the *buru bonga* who is the mountain deity. In some other villages, one can locate a Hindu rendition of a similar custom where milk is offered instead of water while a Hinduized mantra might be tended to *Otere bonga,* a Hindu "ground deity." In the second form of the custom, the connection with the predecessor mountain can be no longer be traced. According to the informants, the accomplishment of the custom lays on virtue of the naeke (village priest), and some *naeke* wear sacred thread but this does not mean that they consciously imitate the Brahmin (Carrin-Bouez 24). This can be further explained by relating these to the Sanskritisation procedure, whereby the minor borrowings stealthily inch in the brains of the villagers which is

1 This movement politicised the tribals and generated a set of tribal political leaders who engrossed themselves in the national struggle not paying heed to the assertion of tribal identity. But in this respect, the Gandhian influence even added to the rise of political awareness and to the spread of democratic ideals among the tribals as a whole. The *Sap hor* movement (1905) was the first instance of Sanskritization among the Santhals.

instilled in their intuitive self. However, they consciously believe in inheriting their forefather's traits which eventually came through Sanskritisation as a process of acculturation.

Recounting Acculturation through Tales

These socio-cultural details form an important and indispensable part of the folklore of the Santhals. Their oral culture reflects that acculturative traits have kept on dominating their folklores, be it dance, painting, songs or folktales. Out of this magnum opus of folklore, the folktales are the only parameter to measure the acculturation as it judges the metamorphosis and traces the journey of transformation. The present paper would discuss the surviving relics, the Santhal folktales collected by P. O. Bodding[1] and A. Campbell[2]. Aryan or Hinduized influence is spotted in the stories. Traces of religious hybridity are to be found in the tales. In the story "The Silly Women" and "The Story of some Women." Hindu religious customs are hinted at, which are followed by the characters in the story. In an attempt to offer sacrifice to the ancestors, the women folks make some preparations for the purification process that is done by washing of hair and clothes followed by plastering the foot of a sal tree by cow-dung which is assumed to be a purifying agent and thence they apply vermilion, that is *sindur* which is meant to be an indispensable part of any Hindu worship performed. In the tale "The Story of a King and a Jugi" also we witness the Hindu way of performing rites. The Jugi suggests the king to bathe and wash hair to perform the rites so that his

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1 Reverand Paul Olaf Bodding (1865-1938) was a Norwegian missionary, folklorist, linguist and ethnographer. He served in India for 44 years (1889–1933), dedicating his life to the Santhal tribe. He operated basically from the town Dumka in the Santhal Parganas district. He came to help Borresen and Skrefsrud in their missionary work. He indulged in collecting Santhali Literature consisting of folksongs, folktales, legends, medicines, witchcraft and record their daily life. He documented these with the help of Kolean, an old Santhal *guru*. After Bodding died, his wife Mrs Christine Bodding handed over the documentations to the Oslo University Library in Norway. It was published later on by another folklorist, Steven Konow. Sangram Murmu, a man from the Godda subdivision helped Bodding with the Santali language. He even collected few stories as he had good contact with his people. He got a nominal remuneration from Bodding to write and collect stories. The tribals claim that most of the stories were written as well as collected by Sangram Murmu himself (Datta 173-174) .

2 Rev. Dr. Andrew Campbell of Gobindpore, published in 1891, a collection of *Santal Folk Tales,* which he had collected from the district of Manbhum (now in Jharkhand). Other biographical details of Campbell could not be traced due to paucity of sources.

wife could bear children. This use of sacred and purifying objects like cow-dung, vermilion and washing of clothes and hair before worship is part of the preparation of religious worship among the Hindus but these are witnessed in the tales which are supposed to be Santhali in nature and origin. On this pretext it might be argued that in the context of religious hybridity, the thing to be kept in mind is not the conversion of a person to an imposed religious belief system but how diverse belief systems interrelate with the local and traditional cultural religious frameworks. The acculturated practices followed by the Santhals were influenced by their encounter with the Hindu and the Christian communities which, as a result made changes in their religious practices. To prove their local religion as "pure," the Santhals might have had the tendency to follow the superior classes which gave rise to religious hybridity. They were not the only ones, in fact, Hinduism too was influenced by the missionaries as a result of which the Hindus formed various societies such as BrahmoSamaj and the Arya Samaj, which inculcated many reforms in their religious practices so that the Hindu tradition could be made more acceptable to the missionaries as well as religious scholars in the West. In a nutshell, it can be concluded that the way Hinduism began to be interpreted and practiced in the beginning of the twentieth century, reflects a lot of changes and proves the presence of "religious hybridity."

Adding to these borrowings, at times readers can relate similar parallel tales in the bulk of the Aryan tales. In this connection, the stories about jackals by Bodding needs a special mentioning as stories related to jackals have always been a part of the treasure trove of traditional Indian tales. Here the borrowings can be noted but with a difference which proves the retention of Santhals' inimitability. Usually in collection of other traditional tales, like "The Clever Jackal" or "The Lion and the Jackal" from the Panchatantra collection, jackal is a dextrous and clever animal but even a cursory scrutiny of the Santhal tales shows that the jackal has been not been characterised and described in a uniform way. The jackal enacts different roles. Sometimes it is malicious and at times treacherous too. Bodding has compared the jackal with the foolish devil in European folklore (Bodding *Santal* IX). It has been noted that the folktales might have originally belonged to the Kolarian tribes, and thence might have been adopted by other Aryans. It is said that the latter ones made use of animals in their tales to introduce certain doctrines and specially for teaching political wisdom. Under this criterion, the lion acted as a king and the jackal, being crafty and wily, acted as the minister to the king who would always come to king's rescue. This idea is said to have been imported into Santhal folklore with a difference (Bodding, *Santal* X). In Bodding's collection there are fifteen tales about

jackals and their astute craftiness in order to serve their means which are sometimes good and sometimes unfair. The jackal is thought to be the ultimate judge who resolves the conflicts by means of his ultimate wit and intelligence amalgamated with wickedness. The jackal is called *toyo* in Santhali but in the process of gender identification, we come across the Hindi word *andia* which is used to indicate the male jackal. It has been found by Bodding that whenever any Santhal narrator would speak about the craftiness and shrewdness of jackal, he would always say the expression *sat siyaler budi* or the wit of seven jackals. Here we notice the use of Hindi words throughout. In the story "*Toyo haram budhi rean*" or "The Jackal and Husband and Wife," we find the jackal coming to the rescue of the husband and wife by saving them from the ghost or the *bhut,* which is again a Hindi term. In the story "*Toyo artarup rean*" or "The jackal and the leopard" there are instances of jackal saving the traders from the ravenous leopard using his wit and presence of mind.

In the folktale "*Toyo reak khisa*" or "The Astuteness of the Jackal," there are evidences to be found which show the acculturation process among the Santhals even when it comes to village administration. References to the village council have been mentioned where an old man goes to the head of the village for judgement. It is witnessed that the head sends his messenger for calling the people of the village. This seems to be the by-product of the Santhals' contact with the non-Santhals. The Santhals, earlier did not have this administrative process but after coming in contact with the non-Santhalis, be it the Hindu or the Christians, they started replicating what they saw. The village headman began to be designated as *manjhi* and the village council consisted of five people which was called *more hor,* which seems to be the adaptation of the *panchayat* of the Hindu villages. This close investigation hints that though Santhals had accepted much from their Hindu neighbours, but they were equally desirous to maintain their identity which shows the assimilatory tendency present in the tribe. They assimilated many things but did not fully accept the cultural and traditional traits of their neighbours. The result of this was a curious and creative heterogeneous mixture of Santhali and non-Santhali elements which were regarded by the Santhals as symbols of their unity and clarity in their ways (Orans and Jay 109-110).

Apart from the loan words and phrases, we even find evidences of parallel tales in the well-known collections of other languages, mainly Hindi which seem to have been derived from sources other than Santhali. Campbell's collection of Santhal folk tales has some stories which relate to the Hinduized or semi-Hinduized aborigines. In the story "The Magic Lamp," we find traces of the story "Aladdin and

the Magic Lamp." which has been translated from Arab to English and then in many other foreign and Indian languages. Here it is to be noted that The Santhali story "The Magic Lamp" has a different protagonist but the story line is same as the story "Aladdin and the Magic Lamp." In this story too, we have a poor boy like Aladdin who was equally tortured like Aladdin by one of his relatives. But ultimately, he encounters a magic lamp which fulfils all his wishes. The contrastive point is that in Santhal version of the story, a fairy comes out of the magic lamp that fulfils all the wishes of the poor boy but in "Aladdin." a genie would come out of the lamp in order to cater to the orders of his master (Campbell 1-6). Thus, here we notice that the tale has been adapted and modified by the Santhals so that it suits their language, culture and tradition. On the other hand, the modes of thought and social usage of words may be sensed by the presence of untranslatable words or phrases which undeniably point out the source from which they have been derived. Besides this, there is mention of the word "Hanuman" in the Santhal narrative "The Story of a Hanuman Boy" titled "*Harukora rean*" in Santhali. In this context, it is to be noted that the word "Hanuman" is of Hindu origin and is related to the Hindu myth of "Lord Rama" and his disciple "Lord Hanuman" who is supposed to be an incarnation or "*avatar*" of Lord Shiva.

In these cases, it is to be comprehended that the concepts might be the result of acculturation process or cultural hybridity. In this process, it is quite difficult for the person to maintain their inherent identity be it cultural or social. Here the Santhals are the 'other' who were doubly oppressed as they were subjected to the rule of the British as well as the people belonging to higher castes in India which contributed to the acculturation among the Santhal people. To accentuate this supposition, the story "The Magic Lamp" needs to be mentioned where the protagonist of the story ends up in marrying the princess which is symbolic of the inherent desire of a less privileged person to merge with the mainstream, taking recourse to whatsoever means possible. Here the poor boy after becoming rich by the help of the fairy of the magic lamp, marries the king's daughter. The poor boy here might represent the Santhal community, who are engaged in the process of mimicry by allowing themselves to follow and to mimic the ruling class. Hence it can be hinted that as it was difficult for Indians of higher class to resist mimicry of British, so was it difficult for the Santhals even to resist the influence of neighbouring Hindu and Christians. Additionally, the best example for mimicry (the close cousin of cultural hybridity) is found in the tale "The Story of a Hanuman Boy" where the boy who looked like an ape, was out-casted from the society along with his mother, for looking like an ape. But this did not stop him from working hard to be at par

with his brothers so that he could be accepted into their community along with his mother who was claimed guilty of giving birth to such an abnormal child. His ultimate weapon was to marry a girl with the help of who he could completely be at par with the dominant society. In this case Bhabha's mimicry can be taken into consideration. Though Bhaba's cultural dictum is situated in the context of colonizer and its subject, but here if we expand the relationship beyond the strict constrain of colonialism to the context of dominant Hindu and the subaltern Santhal then it can be said that the tribals being the deprived and the oppressed ones took resort to mimicry to be able to become one with the upper caste people. Here mimicry is seen as a conciliatory pattern. It is a sort of binary opposition between the oppressor and the oppressed which results in modes of obligation and imposition inclusive of the demand of the colonized people to be like the colonizers thus resulting in mimicry. The term accentuates the crevices between the pattern of courteousness and civility as set by the Europeans and its imitation by the colonised people in a faintly distorted form in order to merge with the oppressors so as to prove their worth. He goes on to affirm that mimicry may be regarded as a means to dodge the control of the colonial master. He defines colonial mimicry in following words in his work, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse":

> colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed recognizable Other, as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite. Which is to say, that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference (Bhabha 126).

According to Bhabha, mimicry is nothing but an overstated thing which results in an exaggerated copying of culture, manners, ideas and even language as in the case of the 'Hanuman boy' and the poor boy who had the magic lamp. Hence mimicry comes out to be a sort of repetition with some difference concluding the fact that it is not evidence of the colonized's serfdom.

Other instances of acculturation are to be found in "The Story of Sit and Bosont" in Campbell's collection where the second wife of the king asks him to send away his son to some remote place and not allow him to come back to the palace. It is to be noted that here we find references of the Hindu epic "*Ramayana*." where, "Kaikeyi," one of the three wives of king "Dasaratha," through treachery, banished "Rama" from the kingdom and sent him to fourteen years of exile so that she could place her own son "Bharata" on the throne. The theme remains the same

in the Santhal narrative too but there are certain changes which are made in order to provide peculiarity to the narrative. Here the cultural hybridity plays a major role as living in close communion with the non-Santhals and in an attempt to infuse their beliefs with those of the higher society, the Santhals even adopted their myths, tales and legends but with a difference. We even find the names like "Ram," and "Lakhan" being used as names of characters and they even relate to these Lords in the tales but with some deviations. This instance demonstrates that the colonizers expect the colonized to be identical to the colonizers, but it somehow fails in many cases as in the case of the Santhals. This happens because there is formative non-equivalence between the inferior and the superior class which clarifies the phenomenon of a particular class' supremacy over the other.

In addition to cultural and religious hybridity, there are loan words which are largely used about articles of food and dress; the words like *mithai*[1]*,ladu*[2] for sweets, *dal*[3]for beans, *panahi*for shoes are mentioned which bear witness to the tinges of civilization which was a result of acculturation. Other borrowed terms which are non-Santhali in nature cater to some low professions like the trader is called *bepari, muci* is used for shoemaker, *kamar* for blacksmith and *gadwan* for the carter. Similarly, the names of certain tools and objects of daily need too have foreign origin such as *botol* for bottle, *basta* for bag, *sui* for needle, *lota* for a jug, *churi* for knife and *laser* for razor. Market is called *bajar, kirin* is used for the expression "to buy" which is of a non-Santhal origin. However, the assimilation process is so much so that the particular word has given rise to many derivatives like *akrin* word is used for the expression "to sell" and *kikrinhor* is used for a seller or a salesperson. Even the Bengali words *taka* for rupee and *lekha* for counting are used which add to the degree of acculturation process among the Santhals. In addition to these, with reference to the calculation of time, the Santhals use loan words which either are taken directly or are derivatives of the original word. For example, the word *ghari*is used to express a span of time, *tin din* is used for "three days," *bar cando*for two months, *bochorpurakate*for the expression "after a year," *cirocal*for "a long time," *jivetbhor*for lifelong and *jaejug tire jug* is used for forever.

In many of the stories, we find mention of words related to lifestyle of common

1 According to Oxford Dictionary, mithai is a collective name for Indian sweets, such as burfi or gulab jamun: Origin: From Hindi; Pronunciation: /mɪˈtʌɪ/

2 As per Oxford Dictionary, laddu is an Indian sweet made from a mixture of flour, sugar, and shortening, which is shaped into a ball. Origin: From Hindi laḍḍū. Pronunciation :/ˈlʌduː/

3 According to Oxford Dictionary, dal is split pulses, lentils. Origin: Hindi dāl. Pronunciation :/ dɑːl/

household. In this case too, we find many words which are Hindi in origin. The word *orak*for house has retained its old name but some modifications have been observed; like the word *bhitar* is used for inner part of the house, the door is termed as *duar, culha*is used for fireplace where food is made, coal is termed as *angara. Pukhri* and *bande* are used for ponds and tanks. The relationship terms are even not untouched by the non-Santhal or Hindu influence; wife is called as *bahu, naihar* refers to the bride's father's place; words like *mama sasur* for maternal father in law and *bhagna* for nephew are certain Hindi terms which seem to have been adopted by the Santhals. There is usage of prefix, suffixes and infixes which the Santhals did in order to amalgamate the non-Santhali language with the Santhali which ultimately resulted in the production of an altogether different variable which was neither purely Santhal nor non-Santhal by nature. The borrowings from the Hindi vernaculars could be found in abundance. There are instances of assimilation of words in sentences. For example, in a sentence like *bicar pahiltalinpe,* which means "first decided between two of us," *talinpe,* which is a part of the word *pahiltalinpe,* is of Santhal origin but the rest are borrowed from other non-Santhali languages. It has been noted that the foreign elements are very well assimilated in the sentences used by the Santhals. Though the grammar remains the same, but the vocabulary easily gives way to the foreign elements. Thus, the new words formed are inflected according to Santhali rules. Foreign verbs are conjugated in the Santhali way. For instance, the expression *calak-kantahe kana* which means "he was going"; *bujhauketa,* means he understood; in these two expressions, the terms *cal* and *bujhau* are Hindi but the rest of the terminology is indigenous in nature. In other instances, Hindi nouns are inflected as verbs in accordance with the Santhali grammar, where practically every word can be used to denote a predicate; for example, *bidakaea,* which means "they sent him off," "gave him permission to go," *bahuadea* which means "gave him a wife." This state of conversion, assimilation and changes in the process of Hinduisation of Santhal language has been going on for a long time. The ancient vocabulary has been replaced with a new one with some grammatical principles being the same thus resulting in peculiar shape of a mixed tongue. The fact is that significance of non-Santhali languages is still felt strongly by the Santhals but the admixture in their language shows off their linguistic mentality which is still strong (Bodding *Santal* XI-XVI).

Conclusion

In light of the above examination, it is suggested that development of acculturative traits in the Santhals has included particular procedures that are idiosyncratic

of the multicultural society not withstanding broad procedures that likewise occur in mono-social settings. The Santhals who were in close contact with the missionaries or the Hindus, resulted in undergoing the process of acculturation. Amid such contact progressive propensities seem to have happened. Culture-contact has changed Santhal society to some extent. The instructive procedure of social association accordingly has given a connection to the Santhal society and a vital component of social acknowledgment and change. Some critics have dependably contended that this procedure has prompted to estrangement, to the deserting of conventions, hereditary roots and methods of thought. Despite this it can be said that culture-contact prompting to social communication has had greater advantages than detriments when it comes to the Santhal society. This cultural gap seems to have weakened the tribal solidarity to some extent but has however given them a new ethnic identity by the help of which they have been able to voice their stand amid other cultures.

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The Detective Novel: A Mainstream Literary Genre?

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Abstract It has often been maintained that the detective novel belongs to the category of entertainment narrative and as such has too much in common with trivial literature in order to be considered an equivalent counterpart to the mainstream norms of epic expression. In my article I dispute such assertions and show on the contrary that the modern crime genre has developed new standards of narration, which are comparable to the masterpieces of contemporary novel fiction. Instead of being something of inferior value, the best crime novels have conquered a status of excellence within the broad field of modern narration. I confirm my observations through references to modern Scandinavian crime novels and in so doing I discuss the role of the detective as a modern representative of the spirit of Enlightenment, who intends to elucidate the criminal scenery and bring the perpetrator to justice. Finally, I focus on the occupational understanding of the detective role in modern crime novels, hereby paying attention to questions regarding the ethical understanding of the detective's profession.

Key words Crime novel; detective story; symptomatological methods; scientific criminology; delight of anxiety; the ethical detective

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In the theory of crime literature one usually makes a distinction between the crime novel and the detective story. In the crime novels the plot is based on the conflict

between characters, which have a complete different relationship to the principles of law and order. The tension between good and evil is however not only a characteristic of crime narration, it belongs to the structural features of almost all classical novels and theater plays, where it appears as struggle between contradictory mental attitudes in the field of social, economic, erotic and familial norms. In order to produce the thrilling effect it is more or less unavoidable to introduce narrative configurations, which enable the reader to clearly distinguish between protagonists and antagonists.

In the following I don't want to further comment on this general form of generating narrative conflicts. Instead I want to draw the attention to the detective story, in which there is a strict distinction between the lawbreakers and their persecutors. The hero of this kind of novels is the detective, who either on his own or on behalf of the society takes measures to combat criminal activities and bring those committing criminal actions to justice. The designation detective is derived from the Latin verb *detectare*, which means to solve, to clear up. Because the detective is engaged in deciphering criminal acts, he is mostly regarded to be a cooperator in reestablishing the social balance, which through the criminal activities of gangsters has been brought into disorder. Hereby he proceeds to a figure, which on account of his job is regarded to represent ethical values. At first glance it looks like the detective is working for a clean society with a limited threat from criminal outsiders, whose aim is to destabilize the civil society and undermine the respect for the corporal integrity and the property of fellow citizens. In the following I intend to question this idealistic view of the detective and examine to which degree the detective stories reflect the idea of the detective as an ethical hero, whose main ambition is to release the society from the tyranny of criminals, who attack the basic values of a human society

In order to avoid simplifications, I want to stress that the ethical borderlines between the detective and the crime novel often are blurred. And it is important to be aware of the fact that the roles of good and bad in many novels are reversed. In his essay *Der Verbrecher aus verlorener Ehre* Friedrich Shiller, the German classic, explained the reasons for being an honorable lawbreaker and in his short story *Michael Kohlhas* Heinrich von Kleist described the psychological outline of a man, whose extreme sense of justice makes him guilty and proves the truth of the Latin proverb that *summa jus,* is turning into *summa injuria.* It is of course a special situation when the detection is directed against lawbreakers, whose only guilt consists in their solidarity with those who due to the prevailing social conditions cannot escape poverty. In Norway one of the most famous robbers of the 18th century was Gjest Baardsen, who, provoked by the class distinctions, started a social redistribution

of goods. In a popular ballade his criminal adventures are subject to great homage: "He stole from the rich and gave to the poor." In the eyes of the authorities he was a gangster, who offended against law and order, but in the eyes of the majority he was a social revolutionary, who through his criminal actions draw attention to a social order, where the robber is the noble man, whereas the authorities are the real robbers.

The idea that the state through its institutions is the real guilty one in criminal affairs is still a widely held opinion. In the detective stories of the Swedish authors Sjöwall/Wahlöö inspector Beck exposes a lot of crimes, where the swindlers are single criminals, but where the Swedish state is the real guilty one because it has failed to create a social security, in which the roots of crime has been eliminated. The psychosocial decline of the perpetrator is the result of his socialization. That means the culprit's psychogram is at the same time the sociogram of the society. This is a very one-sided explanation of the reasons for criminality. As Fritz Lang has shown in his famous film *X* there are x factors responsible for a criminal career, and in this multiplicity of causes the detective story has an inextinguishable supply of materials for new narrations.

The idea of a non-violent society remains however an unattainable ideal. In Western societies the police is the only institution, which has the license to use violence. The role of the detective is far more controversial. He is a partner in solving criminal cases, but he is usually working independently and on his own account.In the history of detective narration one finds a wide specter of characters, which look upon their activities in a total different way. It is worthwhile to be conscious of the etymological relation between detection and enlightenment. Both have their semantic roots in the Latin verb *detegere*, which means illuminate, uncover. According to his role understanding the modern detective works on behalf of a customer in order to solve a criminal affair. As far as this activity challenges his sense of justice and mobilizes his resistance against the evil it is reasonable to ask if he looks upon himself as a sort of ethical detective, who aims at cleaning the society and restoring what the criminal mind has destroyed. So far this description is correct, the detection has a certain similarity with Henrik Ibsen's conception of dramatic writing. It has been asserted that Henrik Ibsen in his plays entered into the dirt in order to clean it, whereas Emil Zola entered into it in order to take a bath.

Criminal plots are integral parts of novels and dramas ever since the genres were launched in ancient times. Accordingly, one traces the roots of criminal literature back to Sophocles and asserts that one finds features of criminal tension in classical novels and dramas from Shakespeare to Dostojewski. In his book *Dødens*

fortellere (*The Narrators of Death*) Willy Dahl, the senior expert on criminal novels in Scandinavia, underlines that "there is no definite distinction between criminal narration and other forms of fictional writing" (102). Ibsen research has shown that Ibsen received creative impulses from Sophocle's Ödipus *Rex* and that he developed his retrospective technique as a modern form of detective discourse. Through his reversal of dramatic expression Ibsen paved the way for a reversal of the relation between author and reader. The reader and the theater spectator become partner in the detection of past events. This role adoption is the result of a change of perspective, due to which the dramatic actions are not depicted in the moment they are taking place, but reflected from the scope of a later time, the implication of which is that the pure train of events are tuned down, while reflections and analyses are upgraded. The result of this is that Ibsen's plays are impoverished in terms of external action. Ibsen in his contemporary plays has improved this dramatic method in a way that caused early critics to blame him for choosing undramatic topics, more suitable for novels than for theater plays. Some of the early criticism of his plays was that they were undramatic, that they dealt with material and motifs that were actually unsuited to dramatic treatment. Georg Lukas and Raymond Williams saw *Hedda Gabler* as a novel and Peter Szondi claimed in his study *Theorie des modernen Dramas* (*Theory of modern Drama*) that the Ibsen drama is based on undramatic "material for a novel." But in contrast to the advocates of the Aristotelian views of drama, Szondi sees nothing negative and reprehensible in this approach to the novel. Quite in reverse. He points out that the drama is not an eternal and immutable genre, an a priori anthropological entity, but a historical category that is subject to changing views of times and fashions., and he emphasizes that the development away from "the dramatic drama" to "the epic drama" is hastened through the growth of historical experiences that do not simply fit just like that into a traditionally handed down system of forms and norms.

In more recent Ibsen research, it has been pointed out that Ibsen's analytical drama with its retrospective perspectivisation is closely related to literary genres and scientific methods that were introduced and developed at the end of the 19th century, first and foremost with the detective novel and psychoanalysis, but also with the science of art, criminology and even edition philology. According to the semioticist Thomas A. Sebeok all these sign systems have their origin in medical symptomatology, which is a method of diagnosing disorders on the basis of seemingly insignificant signs and clues.

In this connection it is interesting to note that three of the most important representatives of the symptomatological disciplines were themselves doctors: Sig-

mund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, Giovanni Morelli, the representative of a comparative science of art, who in his studies ascribes to graphological or grammatological details the very greatest weight as clues to the style of an epoch or an individual, and Arthur Conan Doyle, the creator of the modern detective story and the character of Sherlock Holmes, who explains his method with the words: " You know my method Watson. It is founded upon the observation of trifles."

The Austrian literary researcher Hans H. Hiebel regards Henrik Ibsen's analytical dramatic technique as a significant part of this symptomatological discourse and emphesises that his contemporary dramas form a clear parallel to the psychoanalytical detection of past events. The kinship between the psychoanalyst and the literary detective rests on the fact that they both endeavor by means of clues to understand events in the past and that in their efforts they seek to reconstruct "the primary scene" that constitutes the basis for contemporary conflicts. Psychoanalysis and detective stories have in common the fact that they work on securing, interpreting and linking clues. Both the analyst and the detective have — to put it linguistically — to do with significants that are unreadable because they lack a context that make them comprehensible, and their task consists in recreating the lost connection by reading together the fragmented signs in such a way that they provide plausible solutions to the mysterious cryptograms that are presented.

Much of the topicality in Ibsen's plays has its basis in the fact that they are on the one hand subtly structured throughout while on the other hand they are full of ambiguities and display numerous polysemous passages that appeal to the reader's or audience's reconstructive powers of detection. The key to the understanding of Ibsen's plays are the numerous hidden symptoms, clues and signs, which form inner mental engrams or purely material traces of the kind that are investigated in criminal cases. Hans Gross, the founder of scientific criminology, demands in his handbook from 1893 that he investigator shall record all possible clues — from faeces, traces of hair, stains on clothing, footprints and fingerprints etc. and with an unprejudiced eye conduct the investigation in all directions at once. These methodological approaches may in many ways serve as a model for the hermeneutic treatment of the Ibsen drama, which basically operates with isolated signs and fragmented connections that are only made rationally available in the course of the process of analysis and confirm Søren Kierkegaard's sober statement that life is lived forwards, but is understood backwards. The reason why edition philology has been brought in as an example of detective discourses is connected with the fact that this discipline is concerned with reconstructing the original text in order hereby to get onto the track of the inspired textual movement. Indeed, there is a great difference between recreating

an authentic text and bringing forth as many authentic readings as possible. There is however one central difference between the literary and the criminal detection. The literary detection provides never a final solution while the criminal detection aims at solving criminal cases.

Obviously the crime novel belongs to the symptomatological disciplines which challenge the analytical intelligence of the detective. The more complex a detective novel is, the more opportunities the detective has to shine and show his superiority, whereas the police inspector and less talented investigators are following false tracks and fall victims to what in the language of criminal jargon is called "red herings," an expression for lack of sensitivity to read criminal traces, quite in sharp contrast with super star detectives like Sherlock Holmes and Hercule Poirot, who never are led astray through hasty conclusions. In order to demonstrate the superiority of the modern detective the author has to create a highly complex and enigmatic plot, which only the analytical detective with his spiritual gifts is able to see through and disclose.

Compared to the early detective novels, in which action was the dominating element, the new detective novel is characterized through its constructed and mysterious plot, which emphasizes the puzzle character of the narrative course. The only successful way to catch the perpetrator is to crack the criminal code through reconstructing the operative strategy of the criminal mind. Thus the criminal detective has a lot in common with all those, who protect the main principles of the civil society and use their intellectual capacity in the service of law and order. In the narrative tradition of crime detection, the detective seldom questions his social solidarity and his own role as supporter of the established order. Of course, the fictional detectives are provided with different job attitudes and mental approaches to their work, but they seldom doubt their own position as advocates of an obliging social justice. And here we have touched a crucial point, then in the criminal genre one generally miss representations of the ethical detective, who is working on eliminating the evil and reestablishing a society where the rules of an ideal community are prevailing. In Peter Nusser's study *Der Kriminalroman* (*The Crime Novel)* one finds a statement, due to which the detective and his reader share a common moral obligation toward a social system, which both of them don't query (42). In the manuals to criminal narration one seeks mostly in vain after statements about the detective's occupational understanding. The main emphasis is attributed to the detective's working method. The authors of criminal detection devote themselves to methods from the psychological and natural sciences, according to which "the micrological look" (Ernst Bloch) promises to solve the criminal mysteries in analogy to the logic of the exact

natural sciences.

Compared to the early production of criminal B-narration, whose plots, style and mode of expression were quite simple and adapted to the preferences of the lower classes' standard of education, the modern detective story with its complex structure and entangled texture appeals to readers with higher education, who compete on equal terms with the detective in clearing up the complicated cases. The brain appeal of the modern A-detective stories constitutes their stimulating receptive effect. Thus the popularity of modern detective stories depends on the intellectual challenges they deliver and the excitement they supply the reader with, who suffers from the lack of dramatic tension in his own life. From the point of view of ethical literary criticism, it is noteworthy to observe that the civilized human being in his peaceful and pleasant home still has a need for cruel and bad imaginations. What Nie Zhenzao calls the Sphinx factor is in the life of cultivated people still active, but in the controlled form of literary consumption.

Thus it is not surprising that in the Scandinavian countries the production and consummation of detective novels is higher than in comparable European nations. This phenomenon has been subject to scientific considerations, and social research has given a credible answer to the dissemination of all kinds of crime literature. Peter Nusser in his introduction to *The criminal novel* refers to Alexander Mitscherlich and Michael Balint, who have described cultivated people's "delight of anxiety." The prevailing security leads people to enjoy the missing risks of their own lives by reading detective novels, in which the moral task of the detective consists in defeating the fictional attacks on the basic principles of the human way of living together. The frequency of such reading habits indicates that the reader needs a substitute for a boring every-day life. It is however on the other hand a convincing proof of the detective novel's lack of ethical considerations that the detective seldom looks upon himself and his activities from a moral point of view. He is firstly preoccupied with collecting technical proofs of guilt and putting the single traces into a damning chain of evidence. On the other hand, the final results of his occupational efforts lead to a temporary reestablishment of the lost harmony. From this point of view, the detective plays an important role in removing cancer cells from the body of the morbid civil society. Nonetheless the detective is often himself a lonely wolf, a rather shabby figure, divorced or living in instable relations, addicted to drinking, spending much time alone in his office, waiting for new jobs, such as for instance the disillusioned, but acute detective Varg Veum in Gunnar Staalesen's prize awarded detective novels from the city of Bergen. His detective shares a lot of character features with other fictional detectives, who pay no great attention to ethical stan-

dards of behavior although they counteract the demoralized criminal actors and their attacks on the civil society and its moral values.

In order to explain the standard procedure of crime detection I want to recall a scene from August Strindberg's *Et drömspel* (*A Dreamplay*), where the deans of the university faculties are sitting in front of a closed door discussing what may exist behind it. The detective however is smarter. He is looking for a key to open it and turn on the light so that he can start investigating the hidden mysteries behind the closed door. In many detective stories one can notice an inversion of this proceeding like in many final scenes in Agatha Christie or in some of John Dickson Carr's novels, in which all the figures including the murderer are gathered inside a single closed room, where nobody can enter or escape and find the way out until the detective through his analytical production of evidence has figured out the guilty one.

In spite of the detective's attempt to solve criminal cases and fight the evil his ambitions are seldom based on ethical demands. He is good as far as he meets the requirements of the criminal genre and the expectations of entertaining quality, but he is far from being an ethical hero, who gives priority to moral challenges and an ideal occupational practice.

It is a strange fact that the educated reader of criminal stories voluntary resorts to reading matters that evoke a state of joyful anxiety. This psychological ambiguity may be difficult to understand, even if you look upon it as a sort of pleasure-seeking masochism. In order to grasp this phenomenon with reference to the criminal novel it is advisable to consult German existential philosophy, where it is crucial to make a distinction between two notions which describe different aspects of anxiety. *Angst* is the term for an objectless fear, the fear of having been thrown into a worldly existence, while *Furcht*, the other term, means the fear of something concrete, the fear emerging from wild animals, fire, bankruptcy and of course criminals, who terrify their surroundings and threaten to devaluate the prevailing harmony of *The Social Contract*. The bourgeois citizen is consuming fictional horror sitting in his convivial armchair drinking a glass of wine and smoking a cigar. However passive this compensational activity is, it offers the reader an opportunity to identify himself with the detective and his attempts to reduce criminal violence and it strengthen his sense of moral awareness. In so far the reader's response to detective stories may be regarded as a contribution to ethical literary criticism. The opinion has however been subject to deviating standpoints. Nils Norberg, a Norwegian specialist in crime literature maintains that Raymond Chandler transformed "the tough private detective into a romantic ideal and made him a spokesman of right and moral" (29).

Willy Dahl has expressed the view that the fictional detective never was meant

to be a realistic figure, whether as an individual nor a social agent. He is due to Dahl "a mythological character who performs a ritual" (Dahl, *Festskrift til 90-årsdagen* 251). His real function is to "question both the individual and the collective moral" (Dahl, *Festskrift til 90-årsdagen* 253). The more crime literature has improved its literary quality the more it has been accepted as a subgenre of mainstream literature. Literary research in what Jury Tynjanov calls the back-yards of literature has shown that awarded crime authors have a higher and far more developed vocabulary in their books than have authors of average non-crime literature. Among the many outstanding writers of detective stories in Scandinavia to day I want to mention the Norwegian star-author Jo Nesbø, whose crime novels with the master detective Harry Hole have raised the standards of crime novels with regard not only to the criminal plot, but also to the details of occupational knowledge and the rough language of gangsters, such as sociolects, jargon and cryptograms. This new genre mastery has made his crime novels not only to world bestsellers, but has reached a new level of artistic craftmanship, which proves that the detective novel now has conquered a position among the mainstream expressions of the fine arts.

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The Burnt Doll: The Dialectical Image and Gender Fluidity in Sandra Cisneros' Short Story "Barbie-Q"

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Abstract Commenting on Walter Benjamin's concept of the dialectical image and its applicability to his study of nature as ruin in allegory, Susan Buck-Morss notes in her work *The Dialectics of Seeing* that "the illumination that dialectical images provide is a mediated experience, ignited within the force field of antithetical time registers, empirical history and Messianic history." Viewing the burnt doll in the short story as a dialectical image will solve what James Phelan in his work *Living to Tell About It* refers to as "the puzzling signals about the relation between time of the action and time of the telling." The burnt doll is an image of the ruin and an emblem of the transient nature of capitalist culture. It is a dialectical image in the sense that it constructs an alternative gender identity that is futuristic and fluid, gathering its building material literally out of a warehouse fire that has caused the new Barbie dolls to be sooty and, in the case of one of them, cousin Francie, disfigurement as it now has "a left foot that's melted a little." The telling is done by an anonymous young girl to her sister and involves an imaginative narration about two dolls which the girls dress and undress; the dolls fight over a boyfriend, an "invisible Ken." They are on the lookout for new dolls on a Sunday that is presumably time present or immediate past and find Career Gal and Sweet Dreams, sooty and water-soaked dolls damaged by fire. The defective, melted left foot may easily be disguised "if you dress her in Prom Pinks." That way "who's to know." The final statement summarizes the ambivalence of an uncertain future project: The dialectics between the natural wholeness of inherent gender and the future fluid, literally melting or melted gender is manifested in the emblematic image of the melted left foot. It is there though hidden from public view.

Key words Redundant telling; the fetish; the dialectical image; fluid gender

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Introduction

The objective of the article is to interpret and elucidate the relation between first-person narration and an evolving ethical consciousness and attitude in the narrating subject. Socioeconomic deprivation is constructively utilized by the anonymous narrator who turns a restricting, negative condition into a positive challenge, thus opening up a cultural critique of materialism and of societal stereotyping of the feminine. The ultra-short story makes up a textual fragment that contains a dense and subtle comment on the psychological and intellectual strategy employed by the narrator as she negotiates and constructs an individualized ethic.

Redundant Telling

Sandra Cisneros' short story "Barbie-Q" is part of the collection *Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories* (1991). The most comprehensive interpretation of the story to date has been done by James Phelan in his work *Living to Tell About It. A Rhetoric and Ethics of Character Narration.* In his examination of the story and in his work generally Phelan is concerned with "the multilayered communications that authors of narrative offer their audiences, communications that invite or even require their audiences to engage with them cognitively, psychically, emotionally, and ethically" (Phelan 5). I will begin by focusing on character narration in the story, as does Phelan. The elucidation of this phenomenon will be followed by a discussion of Walter Benjamin's concept of the dialectical image in the *Passagen-Werk*, his work on the Paris Arcades — commercial passageways constructed in the early 19th century and consisting of shops with display windows - which he started writing in 1927. My discussion necessitates that I reproduce the story in full here; it is ultra-short, consisting of only six paragraphs:

Barbie-Q

For Licha

Yours is the one with mean eyes and a ponytail. Striped swimsuit, stilettoes, sunglasses, and gold hoop earrings. Mine is the one with bubble hair. Red swimsuit, stilettoes, pearl earrings, and a wire stand. But that's all we can afford, besides one extra outfit apiece. Yours, "Red Flair," sophisticated A-line coatdress with a Jackie Kennedy pillbox hat, white gloves, handbag, and heels included. Mine, "Solo in the Spotlight," evening elegance in black glitter strapless gown with a puffy skirt at the bottom like a mermaid tail, formal length gloves, pink chiffon scarf, and mike included. From so much dressing and undressing, the black glitter wears off where her titties stick out. This and a dress invented from an old sock when we cut holes here and here and here, the cuff rolled over for the glamorous, fancy-free, off-the shoulder-look.

Every time the same story. Your Barbie is roommates with my Barbie, and my Barbie's boyfriend comes over and your Barbie steals him, okay? Kiss kiss kiss. Then the two Barbies fight. You dumbbell! He's mine. Oh no he's not, you stinky! Only Ken's invisible, right? Because we don't have money for a stupid-looking boydoll when we'd both rather ask for a new Barbie outfit next Christmas. We have to make do with your mean-eyed Barbie and my bubblehead Barbie and our one outfit apiece not including sock dress.

Until next Sunday when we are walking through the flea market on Maxwell Street and *there!* Lying on the street next to some tool bits, and platform shoes with the heels all squashed, and a fluorescent green wicker wastebasket, and aluminum foil, and hubcaps, and a pink shag rug, and windshield wiper blades, and dusty mason jars, and a coffee can full of rusty nails. *There!* Where? Two Mattel boxes. One with the "Career gal" ensemble, snappy black and white business suit, three-quarter-length sleeve jacket with kick-pleat skirt, red sleeveless shell, gloves, pumps, and matching hat included. How much? Please, please, please, please, please, please, until they say okay.

On the outside you and me skipping and humming but inside we are doing loopity-loops and pirouetting. Until at the next vendor's stand, next to boxed pies, and bright orange toilet brushes, and rubber gloves, and wrench sets, and bouquets of feather flowers, and glass towel racks, and steel wool, and Alvin and the Chipmunks records, *there!* And *there!* And *there!* And *there!* and *there!* and *there!* and *there!* Bendable Legs Barbie with her new page-boy hairdo. Midge, Barbie's best friend. Ken, Barbie's boyfriend. Skipper, Barbie's little sister. Tutti and Todd, Barbie and Skipper's tiny twin sister and brother.

> Skipper's friends, Scooter and Ricky. Alan, Ken's buddy. And Francie, Barbie's MOD'ern cousin.
>
> Everybody today selling toys, all of them damaged with water and smelling of smoke. Because a big toy warehouse on Halsted Street burned down yesterday — see there? — the smoke still rising and drifting across the Dan Ryan expressway. And now there is a big fire sale at Maxwell Street, today only.
>
> So what if we didn't get our new Bendable legs Barbie and Midge and Ken and Skipper and Tutti and Todd and Ricky and Alan and Francie in nice clean boxes and had to buy them on Maxwell Street, all water-soaked and sooty. So what if our Barbies smell like smoke when you hold them up to your nose even after you wash and wash and wash them. And if the prettiest doll, Barbie's MOD'ern cousin Francie with real eyelashes, eyelash brush included, has a left foot that's melted a little — so? If you dress her in her new "Prom Pinks" outfit, satin splendor, with matching coat, gold belt, clutch, and hair bow included, so long as you don't lift her dress, right? — who's to know. (Cisneros 14-16)

The character-narrator is unnamed and apparently addresses her sister, the narratee. It is difficult to identify the narrator's age, but we may venture an educated guess through what is revealed by the dialogue between the Barbies in the game the two girls play: "You dumbbell! He's mine. Oh no he's not, you stinky!" which would indicate that the "I" is a pre-adolescent. Phelan states that "Cisneros also shows how impressionable the character narrator is by having her voice echo the language of the marketing division of Mattel toys: for example, "sophisticated A-line coatdress with a Jackie Kennedy pillbox hat, white gloves, handbag, and heels included" (Phelan 8). Phelan notes further that Cisneros, as implied author, reveals not only the age of the character narrator but also her naivete and "thus establishes substantial distance between herself and her speaker" (loc. cit.). The way I read the story, it seems to be clear already early on that the ethics of narration that Phelan points to is conditioned upon the approximation of one perspective to another, i.e. to what extent the informed perspective of the implied author will eventually be embraced by the character narrator whose heightened knowledge of her situation and of the fake perfection of the Barbie doll will in turn inform the readers and elicit their sympathy. Phelan is right, of course, in claiming that there is "substantial distance" between Cisneros qua implied author and the character narrator. However, I am wondering whether this distance is not already subtly eliminated at the very begin-

ning. Answering that question depends on how much irony and self-consciousness we read into the game the two sisters are playing with the Barbies. "Dumbbell" and "stinky", for example, may carry overtones of mockery and satire, but it is difficult, not to say impossible, to place the mocking voice; does it belong to the implied author or to the character narrator?

Race or ethnicity is not identified in the text. The focus is on social class. Phelan notes that "this is a story about the desire of a lower-class girl" (loc. cit.), whereas all the other stories in the collection *Woman Hollering Creek* is explicitly about Chicano/a experience. So the cultural narrative behind "Barbie-Q" is to be identified as something other than the narrative about Chicano/a experience. Phelan states that two cultural narratives are relevant in connection with the story; he calls the first "Dangerous Role Model Barbie": Here, "Barbie's plastic body — white, curvaceous, blond, tall, and thin — becomes an impossible ideal created by corporate America against which American girls can't help but compare themselves negatively" (9). — The second cultural narrative Phelan calls "Endlessly Acquisitive Barbie"; here "Barbie's outfits and other accessories, which proliferate incessantly to keep up with changing fashions in clothes and other personal items as well as with changes in society, become a sign of Barbie's upper-middle-class identity and the conspicuous consumption that goes with it" (loc. cit.).

Phelan points out that the progression of the story is lyric. This is significant. For lyric progression, according to Phelan, is a "progressive revelation of characters and their static situations" (10). In some stories the reader's judgment of the characters' choices and actions is replaced by sympathetic identification. And in others, e.g. "Barbie-Q," judgment is tied "not to characters' choices but to the relation among their vision of their condition, that of their implied author, and ours; at the same time, these judgments will be mediated by our emotional responses to the characters" (10-11).

The relational dynamics or dialectics generated by the two (three, if we include that of the reader's) perspectives, that of the implied author and that of the character narrator, is imbedded in the overall construction of the narrative. The occasion for the narrative cannot be inferred till we reach the last paragraph, and as Phelan notes it is difficult to locate the speaker in time; the difficulty is compounded by the "present tense of the first five paragraphs as well as the shift from the iterative narration of the second paragraph to the singular narration of the next three" (11). The last paragraph shifts to the past tense ("didn't get") and we become aware that some time has passed since the acquisition of the damaged dolls ("smell like smoke …. even after you wash and wash and wash them"). Now, says Phelan, "we can reinter-

pret the tense of the first five paragraphs as historical present and plausibly surmise that the occasion is within a few weeks of the Sunday on which the girls got their new dolls and outfits — perhaps even as early as that afternoon or evening" (11). It is still difficult to resolve what Phelan refers to as "the puzzling signals about the relation between time of the action and time of the telling" (loc. cit.), for when exactly is "next Sunday?" "Next" seems to be *prior* to what happened next. Phelan gets around this temporal paradox by seeing it as a sign that "the character narrator is a young girl, one that has not fully mastered the handling of temporality in storytelling" (loc. cit.).

However, an even more puzzling feature is manifested by the technique of the first five paragraphs where the narrator, as Phelan notes, is "needlessly telling the narrate what she already knows" (loc. cit.). Phelan calls this technique *redundant telling,* defining it as "a narrator's apparently unmotivated report of information to a narratee that the narratee already possesses" (loc. cit.). Phelan concludes that "redundant telling resides in the *author's need* to communicate information to the audience, and so we might use the longer phrase *redundant telling, necessary disclosure* to describe it" (12). Phelan notes that the redundancy, in the case of "Barbie-Q" is unusually extended and therefore needs to be refined "because the technique reveals that the implied author's indirect address to the authorial audience can interfere with the narrator's direct address to the narratee" (loc. cit.). We may identify two tracks in character narration, "the narrator-narratee track, and the narrator-authorial audience track" (loc. cit.). The narrator-narratee track shows the narrator as reporter and interpreter of information for the narrratee, and the narrator-authorial audience track makes the narrator assume the function of unwittingly disclosing information to the audience. The adverb 'unwittingly' is used here by Phelan to characterize the nature of the author's indirect address to the audience and of the interference of that address with the narrator's direct address. I am speculating, as I have indicated earlier on, that the interference may be symptomatic of a higher awareness being immanently present in the character narrator already from the onset. If that is indeed so, we may infer that what Phelan calls "the predominance of disclosure functions over narrator functions" as well as "the artificiality of the narration" and "the synthetic component of both the character narrator and the narrative as a whole" (15) may actually be potential signs of a subtle confluence of the character-narrator and the implied-author functions. What purpose might such a confluence serve? It might serve to indicate that the awareness achieved at an unspecified point in the future designated as "next" is achieved prior to the historical present of the first several parts of the narrative, and this results in the "synthetic" and "artificial" nature of the

narrative as a whole, artificiality being propelled by the character-narrator's heightened knowledge and endowing the narration with the tone and style of parody.

It is this heightened awareness that makes it abundantly clear that the narrator of "Barbie-Q" is not socialized. She desires the sooty, smoky and water damaged dolls. As Phelan points out, just as "Francie's barbequed leg can be hidden under her outfit, so too can the character narrator's poverty and even her ethnicity become beside the point: "who's to know" (17). Phelan concludes that the character narrator shows defiance and expresses a strong spirit, and this elicits the audience's sympathy. Thus the story makes a powerfully ethical point. Phelan notes that "Barbie-Q" is ethically challenging because our response to the character narrator contains the following elements: "(1) our sustained emotional investment in her desire; (2) our recognition of Cisneros' departure from stereotyped treatments; and (3) our positive judgments of some aspects of the character narrator's response to her situation" (25). We are guided by the author "to share her respect for the girl," as Phelan puts it (loc. cit.).

Phelan proceeds to speculate that there are a number of ways "to counter the explanation that Cisneros is employing redundant narration": "(1) to read the narrator and the narratee as the same character — that is, to understand the narrator's monologue as addressed not to a playmate or a sister but to herself, perhaps in the guise of an imaginary friend; (2) to define a specific occasion for the narration that makes it mimetically plausible; and (3) to find a specific rhetorical purpose for the narrator's telling the story to the narratee" (26). Among the three statements listed by Phelan as hypothetical ways to counter the author's use of redundant telling, I am most intrigued by the first one. The narrator's subsuming or incorporating the narratee and her turning the narratee into herself, or into the other, may be read as part of a general process in the story whereby the subject subsumes the object, here the Barbie doll. The doll, the desired object, is projected from the subconscious onto external reality and then re-introjected. The doll circulates as an image literally "pirouetting" on the borderline between internal and external reality: "On the outside you and me skipping and humming but inside we are doing loopity-loops and pirouetting." The spinning motion performed by the two (if there are two) preadolescent girls expresses a state of mental vertigo, a psychophysical dizziness staged around an invisible center occupied by a heterogeneous image which, despite its being loaded with multiple meanings, becomes obscure. Read this way the Barbie becomes 'the obscure object of desire', to borrow the title of Luis Bunuel's film, even to the extent that the object is erased. Perhaps the most radical description of this phenomenon is to be found in Ralph Waldo Emerson's essay "Experience" when he says:

> We have learned that we do not see directly, but mediately, and that we have no means of correcting these colored and distorting lenses which we are, or of computing the amount of their errors. Perhaps these subject-lenses have a creative power; perhaps there are no objects. (Emerson 77)

I will explore further the subject-object relation in my discussion of Walter Benjamin's *Passagen-Werk* (volume V of the *Gesammelte Schriften)*, highlighting Benjamin's concept of the dialectical image and his comments on the fetish. But first I turn to a brief discussion of Benjamin's fascinating interpretation of children's games.

Children's Games

The character narrator of "Barbie-Q" and her sister are playing house, or rather playing doll house. The dolls form an extended family mirroring a real nuclear family consisting of related female and male children and their friends: "Bendable legs Barbie with her new page-boy hairdo, Midge, Barbie's best friend, Ken, Barbie's boyfriend. Skipper, Barbie's little sister. Tutti and Todd, Barbie and Skipper's tiny twin sister and brother. Skipper's friends, Scooter and Ricky. Alan, Ken's buddy. And Francie, Barbie's MOD'ern cousin." The conspicuous absence of adults in the series is indicative of the authorial intent, i.e. to highlight the world of children as pregnant with discovery, with discovering the new anew as Benjamin would have it. It is, of course, also significant that the new damaged dolls are found in a flea market, scattered among miscellaneous discarded objects that make up the refuse of a consumer society: "… some tool bits, and platform shoes with the heels all squashed, and a fluorescent green wicker wastebasket, and aluminum foil, and hubcaps, and a pink shag rug, and windshield wiper blades, and dusty mason jars, and a coffee can full of rusty nails." Benjamin comments on a specific game played by children where they have to construct a short sentence: "Game in which children construct out of given words a very short sentence. This game appears to have been to order for goods on display. Binoculars and flower seeds, wood screws and banknotes, makeup and stuffed otters, furs and revolvers" (Benjamin 994).

In her work on Walter Benjamin's Arcades Project, *The Dialectics of Seeing,* Susan Buck-Morss notes that, according to Benjamin, children are "less intrigued by the preformed world that adults have created than by its waste products. They are drawn to the apparently valueless, intentionless things" (Buck-Morss 262). Children gather different materials and bring them together in new intuitive rela-

tionships. The series of dolls referred to and cited above is such a new intuitive relationship. The series is particularly interesting because it presents, in a dense form, a temporal acceleration accompanied by a spatial contraction. In a word, *montage*, a filmic technique whereby ever more distant relatives and friends are brought together in a form so condensed as to practically constitute an assembly of dolls on top of one another, or within one another, like a Russian doll set. The dolls are scattered in space yet assembled, curiously, in the child narrator's mind. Susan Buck-Morss notes:

> What Benjamin found in children's consciousness, badgered out of existence by bourgeois education and so crucial to redeem (albeit in a new form), was precisely the unsevered connection between perception and action that distinguished revolutionary consciousness in adults. This connection was not causal in the behaviorist sense of a stimulus-response reaction. Instead it was an active, creative form of mimesis, involving the ability to make correspondences by means of spontaneous fantasy. (263)

According to Benjamin, children exhibit a mode of cognition that had deteriorated, phylogenetically and ontogenetically, thus impairing the mimetic faculty. Children restore and empower the mimetic faculty by playing games where they impersonate not only adults but also objects, for example toy trains. Dance is of course one of the most ancient mimetic performances, enacted in order to stimulate the cognitive functions of magical correspondences and analogies. Buck-Morss notes that Benjamin "holds open the possibility of a future development of mimetic expression, the potentialities for which are far from exhausted. Nor are they limited to verbal language — as the new technologies of camera and film clearly demonstrate" (267). I find Benjamin's interest in film particularly relevant to my reading of "Barbie-Q," especially the scene at the flea market where I see the character narrator's eye acting as a camera lens zooming in on the dolls and the objects lying next to them: "… and Alvin and the Chipmunks records, there! And *there!* And *there!* And *there!* and there! and there! and there!" The refuse in the flea market is no longer refuse. It gains significance as it forms new correspondences while increasing the child narrator's ability to engage in mimesis. The accidental, scattered assemblage of discarded objects in the market place serves to accomplish more in the narrator's and the reader's mind than a mere critique of capitalist consumption. The objects, telescoped by the narrator's camera eye, "pirouette" and perform a spinning dance that place them in a new order whereby their value is re-evaluated. The damaged dolls retrieve the

original, immanent meaning that they had lost in their undamaged state.

Benjamin claims that capitalism caused Europe to fall into a dream state, a sleep, while it at the same time, paradoxically, reactivated mythic powers. Collective symbolic meaning, in the premodern era, was transferred through literature, the arts and history as the narration of tradition. Benjamin states that this is no longer possible. In a comment on Marcel Proust he writes:

> the present process of childrearing boils down simply to the distraction of children. Proust could appear as a phenomenon only in a generation that had lost all bodily, natural expediences for remembering, and, poorer than before, was left to its own devices, and thus could only get a hold of the children's world in an isolated, scattered, and pathological fashion. (Benjamin 490)

However, as Susan Buck-Morss notes, Benjamin is not pessimistic about the loss of tradition; for him "the rupture of tradition now frees symbolic powers from conservative restraints for the task of social transformation, that is, for a rupture of those social conditions of domination that, consistently, have been the source of tradition" (Buck-Morss 279). — The damaged Barbies are a sign that the child narrator is waking up from the world of her parents. The repeated supplication "Please, please, please, please, please, please, please" is a manifestation of this waking up. The waking up is a breaking up of the same story: "Every time the same story. Your Barbie is roommates with my Barbie, and my Barbie's boyfriend comes over and your Barbie steals him, okay? Kiss kiss kiss. Then the two Barbies fight." The little word 'okay?' with a question mark appended to it indicates that the character narrator's consciousness of her own situation has progressed to a point where she is able to conduct an ironic staging of a trivial fight between the two Barbies, a banal sexual contest that is all the more ironic and absurd because the presumed boyfriend, Ken, is invisible. The girls (if there are two of them) prefer asking for "a new Barbie outfit next Christmas" to asking for money for "a stupid-looking boy doll." The rhetoric of parody is the effect of a willful transformation of sexual desire and the investing of that desire in the purchasing of outfits, the external paraphernalia belonging to the commodity. Benjamin is in agreement with Marx concerning price tags. When given a price on the market, the commodity becomes an abstraction, losing its real particularity and assuming a phantom-like objectivity. It turns into a bewildering thing, full of metaphysical subtleties. In a discussion of the commodity and allegory Benjamin comments:

> How the price of the commodity is arrived at can never be totally foreseen, not in the course of its production, nor later when it finds itself in the market. But just this is what happens with the object in its allegorical existence. The meaning which the melancholy of the allegoricist consigns to it is not one that was expected. But once it contains such meaning, then the latter can at any time be removed in favor of any other. The fashions of meanings in Baroque allegory changed almost as rapidly as the prices of commodities change. The meaning of the commodity is indeed: Price; as commodity it has no other. (Benjamin 466)

The character narrator plays around with the "meaning of the commodity," however, "From so much dressing and undressing, the black glitter wears off where her titties stick out. This and a dress invented from an old sock when we cut holes here and there, the cuff rolled over for the glamorous, fancy-free, off-the-shoulder look." The "dressing and undressing" indicates an effort to search for a substance, perhaps a "metaphysical subtlety," underneath the outfits. The search reveals nothing, the *no thing* of the bodiless doll, the mannequin *en miniature*, originally dressed up for her appearance in the display window and now taken apart, undressed and re-dressed with an old sock, a piece of human clothing. Thus the Barbie enters the creative field of the dialectical image.

The Dialectical Image

Susan Buck-Morss comments that Benjamin "replaces the lost natural aura of the object with a metaphysical one that makes nature *as* mortified glow with political meaning. Unlike natural aura, the illumination that dialectical images provide is a mediated experience, ignited within the force field of antithetical time registers, empirical history and Messianic history" (Buck-Morss 245). The dialectics of the image is examined and applied to the commodity by Benjamin in the Arcades Project, the *Passagen-Werk.* The commodity exhibits contradictory faces: fetish and fossil, wish image and ruin. Poised in between waking and dreaming, the commodity participates in a dialectics made up of contradictory terms: natural history as fossil/historical nature as ruin; petrified nature/transitory nature; mythic history: fetish (phantasmagoria/mythic nature: wish image (symbol). Buck-Morss explains the terms of the contradictory dialectics outlined above, saying that Benjamin places the fossil within the "discourse of ur-history," as the visible remains of the *ur-phenomena.* Benjamin sustains "the physiognomy of the fossil," seeing it as a trace, an imprint of objects visible "in the plush of bourgeois interiors or the velvet linings of

their cases." Buck-Morss continues:

> The *fetish* is the keyword of the commodity as mythic phantasmagoria, the arrested form of history. It corresponds to the reified form of new nature, condemned to the modern Hell of the new as the always-the-same. But this fetishized phantasmagoria is also the form in which the human, socialist potential of industrial nature lies frozen, awaiting the collective political action that could awaken it. The *wish image* is the transitory, dream form of that potential. In it, archaic meanings return in anticipation of the "dialectic" of awakening. The *ruin,* created intentionally in Baudelaire's allegorical poetry, is the form in which the wish images of the past century appear, as rubble, in the present. But it refers also to the loosened building blocks (both semantic and material) out of which a new order can be constructed. (211-212)

The Barbie doll is the fossil, the imprint of an object that, at the beginning of "Barbie-Q," is part of a bourgeois, upper-middle class consumer society: "Yours, "Red Flair," sophisticated A-line coatdress with a Jackie Kennedy pillbox hat, white gloves, handbag, and heels included. Mine, "Solo in the Spotlight," evening elegance in black glitter strapless gown with a puffy skirt at the bottom like a mermaid tail, formal-length gloves, pink chiffon scarf, and mike included." The subtle, hardly noticeable inclusion of the 'mermaid tail', adds a potentially revolutionary dimension to the Barbie already at this early point. The mermaid tail is that which Benjamin calls a *trace* of an ur-phenomenon, a vestige of nature appearing in a haphazard series of items of clothing that threaten to render it invisible. Yet it is there, and it for this reason that the apparently insoluble puzzle of the distance between the time of telling and the time of action in the story may be cleared up. I would suggest that the time of telling and the time of action are one in "Barbie-Q." They seem to diverge in the story, but the divergence is only apparent. Telling and action coincide as a *montage*, spatial *and* temporal, of ur-history and modern history. In the dialectical image, here the doll as commodity, past and present intersect. At the intersection the *same* may suddenly, almost subconsciously, in the dream state that is, turn into the *different.*

That is what happens here. Inserted into the Barbie outfits, the mermaid tail manifests an immanent dialectic that crosses time and space. "Every time the same story" becomes, on the one hand, the fetish, i.e. the doll, as an arrested form of history, and on the other hand fetishized phantasmagoria that breaks through the always-the-same. Further, Barbie as wish image is the dream form of a potential

awakening. Finally, Barbie as ruin appears as rubble, miscellaneous discarded objects in the flea market, but the new damaged dolls found there are also building blocks out of which the character narrator constructs the beginning of a body out of the bodiless.

Commenting on fashion, Benjamin compares it to death. Buck-Morss notes that fashion makes "the inorganic commodity itself the object of human desire" (101). Benjamin writes that fashion is "the dialectical switching station between woman and commodity — desire and dead body" (Benjamin 111). Commodity fetishism is connected with sexual fetishism as it "lowers the barrier between the organic and inorganic world" (118). Mimicking the mannequin the modern woman enters history as a dead object, thus repressing her own productive power. Changing fashions is a way of teasing death. "Barbie-Q" exposes this teasing ironically by having the character narrator assume a rebellious stance even from the beginning. The rebellion that culminates at the end begins with the insertion of the mermaid's tail, the beginning of a new body. The discovery of the damaged dolls at the flea market is accompanied by the pirouetting 'inside', literally signifying a "revolving" around in a swirling motion both propelled by and propelling the *montage* composed of burnt, water-damaged dolls. The burnt fetish in the market place continues the construction of a body initiated by the mermaid's tail. The two Mattel boxes spotted by the character narrator contain smoke-damaged, sooty Barbies: One with the "Career Gal" ensemble, one with "Sweet Dreams," an ironic division of the work and home spheres the major signifiers of which are the "black-and-white business suit" and the "dreamy pink-and-white plaid nightgown." The fetish and the wish image go through a parallel, simultaneous descent and ascent as they are foregrounded by the character narrator's perception.

Fire and Water

Walter Benjamin conceived of his *Passagen-Werk* as a fairy tale containing two temporal dimensions, mythical time and historical time. The fairy tale was imbedded with dual strands of dreaming, the collective dream and the personal dream. European civilization as Benjamin saw it was submerged in a collective dream from which it had to wake up. In order to wake up from the dream the subject would have to be immersed deeper into the dream state so as to re-discover the mythic dimension. As I have noted earlier, the child is uniquely equipped to re-discover the mythic potential lost in industrial society. As Susan Buck-Morss says, the creative consciousness of the child "reinvests the objects with symbolic meaning and thus rescues for the collective memory their utopian signification" (274). Benjamin's

fairy tale comes close to a Jungian collective unconscious containing archetypes. In his essay "The Concept of the Collective Unconscious" C. G. Jung offers the following definition:

> The collective unconscious is a part of the psyche which can be negatively distinguished from a personal unconscious by the fact that it does not, like the latter, owe its existence to personal experience and consequently is not a personal acquisition. While the personal unconscious is made up essentially of contents which have at one time been conscious but which have disappeared from consciousness through having been forgotten or repressed, the contents of the collective unconscious have never been in consciousness, and therefore have never been individually acquired, but owe their existence exclusively to heredity. Whereas the personal unconscious consists for the most part of *complexes*, the contents of the collective unconscious is made up essentially of *archetypes*. (Jung 59-60)

Jung adds that the concept of the archetype "indicates the existence of definite forms in the psyche which seem to be present always and everywhere" (loc. cit.). It is these "definite forms in the psyche" that the child is singularly well adapted to retrieve, and which Benjamin tries to retrieve through the "fairy tale" of the *Passagen-Werk*. As I have indicated earlier, Benjamin is not pessimistic about industrialization per se. On the contrary, like the French Surrealists who used industrial products and a variety of technological items and innovations to compose their art works, among which we find a one-armed, humanlike gas pump, Benjamin's sees industrialism as a potential reactivation of the utopian. Commenting on children Benjamin writes:

> The fact that we have been children in this time is part of its objective image. It had to be thus in order to release from itself this generation. That means: we look in the dream-connection for a teleological moment. This moment is one of waiting. The dream waits secretly for the awakening; the sleeper gives himself over to death only until recalled; he waits for the second in which he wrests himself from capture with cunning. So it is too with the dreaming collective for whom its children become the fortunate occasion for its own awakening. (492)

The archetypal symbol of the mermaid's tale in the first paragraph of "Barbie-Q" is there as a potential awakening of the character narrator's consciousness, facilitated

by the association of the mermaid with water and with the ensuing metamorphosis. The merging of the mermaid, water and nature, and the human, the "old sock," produces a duality that is not a division but at least a tentative fusion. In the two last paragraphs the toys are described as "all of them damaged with water and smelling of smoke." The smoke I still rising in the air "from a big toy warehouse on Halsted Street" that burnt down the day before. Hence the fire sale and the deflated prices. The character narrator (and her sister, if there is one) can now get the Barbies and outfits they want, and they don't care if the dolls are water-soaked and sooty, or if they "smell like smoke when you hold them up to your nose even after you wash and wash and wash them." The allusion to Shakespeare's *Macbeth* may not be intentional, but it certainly reinforces the impression of a stain, here soot instead of blood, and a smell of smoke that cannot go away no matter how much you scrub. The natural elements of fire and water have done their work. Through water the mermaid has re-emerged, fusing with the female child, and through fire Francie has been endowed with "a left foot that's melted a little": the plastic shell of the doll/mannequin has been partly perforated by fire and is starting to melt, beginning to be metamorphosed into the live, fluid skin that inaugurates a feminine gender different from the stereotype represented by the upper-middleclass whole Barbie.

Precisely as Benjamin will have it, the awakening is undertaken secretly and with cunning: "If you dress her in her new "Prom Pinks" outfit, satin splendor with matching coat, gold belt, clutch, and hair bow included, so long as you don't lift her dress, right? — who's to know." The Barbie Francie *in herself* represents one of those "definite forms in the psyche which seem to be present always and everywhere." Francie has thus turned into the character narrator, or vice versa if you will, the character narrator has become Francie. The metamorphosis is complete.

Conclusion

One may thus conclude that the burnt doll with the partly melted foot represents a significant, even revolutionary step into adulthood and reality. The real world is a state of continuous flux and so is identity, here a feminine identity that is presented as a forceful challenge to conventional middleclass culture and ethics. The transitory nature of things, potentially negative and destructive, becomes a powerful vehicle for internal and external change.

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A Possibility of Lyrical Progression: An Analysis of the Thing-power in Natasha Trethewey's *Native Guard*[1]

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Abstract Natasha Trethewey is a former US Poet Laureate, whose third collection of poems *Native Guard* (2006) won the 2007 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry. It is a book about her personal history, her mother's memories and the nation's memories during the Civil War (1861-1865). Through details such as photographs, daffodils, her mother's tombstone, a black solder's palimpsest journal, a monument, etc., Trethewey depicts many "things" in the 26 poems in *Native Guard*. In light of Phelan's narrative progression (2007) and Bennett's "thing-power materialism" (2004), this paper argues a possibility of lyrical progression which is embodied in Trethewey's *Native Guard*. The poems are arranged in a sequence of three sections and form a flow of matter-energy both for the speaker and the readers, which gives impetus to the development of Trethewey's emotions and changes of her mood. The interactive dynamics between the poet and the readers construct the lyrical progression in the book.

Key words Natasha Trethewey; *Native Guard*; thing-power; lyrical progression

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Natasha Trethewey is a former US Poet Laureate whose collection of poems *Native Guard* (2006) won the 2007 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry. It is her third book, after *Domestic Work* (2000) and *Bellocq's Ophelia* (2002). It was followed by two other collections of poems, *Beyond Katrina: a Meditation on the Mississippi*

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Gulf Coast (2010) and *Thrall* (2012). Trethewey's work has been read through the lens of history, memory, loss and biracial problems. A great deal of research has demonstrated her contributions to the African American contemporary Southern society, and poetic and women's literary traditions (Hall 2009; De Cenzo 2008; Debo 2008; Kim 2011; Turner 2012; and Davis 2011).

Native Guard is a book about Natasha Trethewey's personal history, her mother's memories and the nation's memories. It consists of three sections: elegies to Trethewey's late mother who died at the hands of her second divorced husband; a black soldier's documentary records about the erased history of the Louisiana Native Guards during the Civil War; and the poet's mediation on her own identity development as a biracial poet. Through details such as photographs, daffodils, her mother's tombstone, a black solder's palimpsest journal, and a monument, Trethewey depicts many "things" in the 26 poems in *Native Guard*. The question arises why Trethewey positions all these concrete objects and places in the particular sequence she chooses and divides them into three sections of the book. If the structural design of this book reflects the dynamic progression of her lyrical experiences, it adds gradually to an emerging theme. This paper argues a possibility of a lyrical progression embodied in Trethewey's *Native Guard.* In light of Phelan's narrative progression (2007) and Bennett's "thing-power materialism" (2004), I would suggest that the "things" in this book, arranged in a sequence in the three sections, form a flow of matter-energy both in the speaker's and the readers' experience, which gives impetus to the lyrical progression. The following three sections will first introduce the theoretical scaffolding of "narrative progression" and "thing-power" for the proposal of a lyrical progression, and then focus on the three "things" and their effect on the speaker and the readers. The fourth and final section deals with the completion of the lyrical progression in *Native Guard*.

Phelan's Model of Narrative Progression

Borrowing Phelan's conception about narrative progression, this paper proposes that there exists a lyrical progression in poetry. Phelan does not spend much time discussing lyricism, for his main efforts are devoted to fictional narratives. However, at least twice in his works he has distinguished between a lyrical and a narrative progression (Phelan, *Narrative as Rhetoric* 1996; *Experiencing Fiction* 2007). Here I would offer a brief summary of Phelan's ideas on lyricism before explaining what "lyrical progression" means.

First, Phelan's rhetorical definition on lyrical poetry identifies two main modes: (1) somebody telling somebody else (or even himself or herself), on an occasion,

that something is — a situation, an emotion, a perception, an attitude, or a belief; (2) somebody telling somebody else about his or her meditations on something. This point differentiates the lyrical from the narrative. Unlike narrative poems, lyrical poems record the speaker's thoughts and feelings. Second, in lyrical poetry, the authorial audience is less in the position of a judgmental observer, and more in the position of a participant. The readers are invited to adopt the speaker's perspective in order to experience the change of the feelings in the speaker. This element of lyricality also depends on the absence of the distance between the implied author and the "I" of the poem. Third, the standard case of tense for lyrical poetry is the present. Lyrical poetry does invest in characters and events but mostly in their thoughts, attitudes, beliefs, emotions, and specific conditions. Fourth, the dynamics of the audience's response stems from adopting the speaker's perspective without judging it (Phelan, *Narrative as Rhetoric* 33). Thus, the double movement of lyrical poetry is toward fuller revelation of the speaker's situation and perspective;, toward deeper understanding of, and participation in, what is revealed on the audience's part (Phelan, *Experiencing Fiction* 3-6). Based on the above points, it is possible that there exists a lyrical progression as referring to Phelan's narrative progression. While narrative progression emphasizes the interaction among the author, the text and the reader, a lyrical progression also has a two-way interactive communication process. Phelan presents a model in rows and columns so that, reading across, one can see how the two aspects of textual dynamics and the two aspects of readerly dynamics develop (Phelan, *Experiencing Fiction* 21).

Beginning	Middle	Ending
Exposition	Expasition	Exposition/Clasure
launch	Voyage	Arrival
Initiation	Interaction	Farcwell
Entrance	Intermediate Configuration	Completion

There are three stages — beginning, middle, ending — and twelve aspects of narrative progression. The first two rows focus on the textual dynamics, while the third and the fourth rows focus on the activity of the authorial audience, or readerly dynamics. Based on Phelan's ideas on lyricism and his model of narrative progression, we can formulate the following ideas of "lyrical progression" which may prove very useful in dealing with lyrical poems.

First, in a lyrical poem, there might not exist a distance between the speaker and the author. That is to say, the speaker fades back into the image of the implied

author. Just as in most of Trethewey's poems, the implied author is identical with the speaker and the poet herself. Therefore, the belief or thought of the speaker in a lyrical poem is always shared by the implied author and there is no ironical distance between them. Second, as there is no conflict between the speaker and the implied author, the readers' attention is directed towards the poem's thematic point and readers are asked to take in, understand, and contemplate the speaker's argument or thought for its own sake. Last, the poet presents an idea or an attitude in the poem, and the readers' response to the poem is not complete until readers pass some judgment of that idea or attitude. This judgment is not internal to the poem but external to it; it is part of evaluating what we are asked to take in, and, in effect, it is an evaluation of the implied author and the poem itself.

During the course of the lyrical progression, the beginning unit generates the movement by introducing the speaker's meditation on a topic, which will arouse the readers' attention or inspire a projection through which they can contemplate their ideas on the topic as well. The middle unit develops with ongoing communicative exchanges between the speaker and the readers. The textual dynamics and readerly dynamics collaborate with each other to build an intermediate configuration until the readers achieve an evolving response to the overall development of the speaker's mind and thought. The lyrical progression is completed in the end unit. The speaker experiences a movement of the change of her feelings and emotions, while it also affects the readers' attitude and thoughts toward the topic at the end. The whole poem provides an opportunity for the readers to experience and participate in the speaker's mental activity throughout the lyrical progression.

In Wordsworth's poem "I Wandered Lonely as A Cloud," the speaker's mood changes from the beginning to the end. The readers can sense the speaker's mood changes by interacting with the text. At the beginning, the speaker feels lonely and he wanders aimlessly upon the hill by the Lake District. Upon seeing the large patches of daffodils, he experiences surprise, excitement, relief and companionship. At the end of the poem, when the speaker comes home, his spirit connects with the daffodils and the Nature by reflecting on the relief from solitude daffodils bring to him. In the lyrical progression of this poem, the speaker "I," the implied author, and the poet can all be identified as one person. The poem also vividly depicts the speaker's psychological development. Within the communication between the textual details and the readers' schematic information, readers are initiated into understanding the speaker's feeling in the progression.

The poem "I Wandered Lonely as A Cloud" not only exemplifies the possibility of lyrical progression, but also raises other questions — if there is lyrical

progression, what would be the impetus of it and how does it push the proceeding of the movement? As in this poem, it is the daffodils that push the development of the speaker's emotion. Most of the time, humans are the active subjects in the world, but "things" like worms, birds, or a dead rat also have the capacity to "animate, to act, to produce effects dramatic and subtle" (Bennett 6). In the following section, it will be discussed that all matter is pulsing with life and the "thing-power" (Bennett 1-19) of the vibrant matter may function as the driving force for the lyrical progression in some of the lyrical poetry.

Bennett's Ideas on "Thing-Power"

Jane Bennett gives voice to a thing-power in her essay "The Forces of Things" and highlights the active role of nonhuman materials in public life (Bennett 2004). She quotes W. J. T. Mitchell, "Things, ...[signal] the moment when the object becomes the Other, ...when the subject experiences the object as uncanny and feels the need for what Foucault calls 'a metaphysics of the object'..." (Mitchell 156-157). Bennett wants to dissolve the binary between subject and object, showing objects are alive because of their capacity to make a difference in the world, to have effects, to shape the web of interrelationships of which they are a part. She also develops the "thing-power materialism" to explore the "less specifically human kind of materiality," to what she calls "thing-power." Bennett figures materiality as a protean flow of matter-energy and the "thing" as a composed form of that flow.

For Bennett, the thing-power has different kinds of effect on humans (the animate): the power that commands attention; the power of turning inanimate things into animate, to act, to produce dramatic and subtle effect; the power as an agency to make connections and form networks of relations; the power of being an *actant* — which does something, has sufficient coherence to perform actions, produce effects (Bennett, "The Forces of Things" 351-359). Bennett's thing-power theory confirms the "acting" power of inanimate things and in her thing-power materialism, the things have the power to move humans and they are also self-movers that have free will.

In Franz Kafka's short story "Cares of a Family Man," the protagonist Odradek is a spool of thread who/that can run and laugh. The animate wood exercises an impersonal form of vitality and it straddles the line between inert matter and vital life. In Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, the writer depicts the thing-power through which she creates a horror effect. As mentioned in Bennett's essay (2004), the "thing-power" sometimes has a negativity, which makes itself known as an uneasy feeling of internal resistance. But this negativity is also the same matter from which

positive realizations emerge. In the following section, three things are selected from Trethewey's collection of poems — her mother's tombstone, a black soldier's journal and the Monument. All of them exert an ambivalent feeling on the poet's mind. At the same time, they also provide an opportunity for Trethewey to find a way out from the loss of her mother and develop her own cultural identity by reading and reflecting on the black soldier's work.

Things, Lyrical Progression and *Native Guard*

There are three things with negative powers in the book *Native Guard:* Trethewey's mother's tombstone in Section one; the black soldier's palimpsest journal in Section two; and a monument built by ants in front of her mother's grave in Section three. These three things in three separate sections in the book push the proceeding of Trethewey's confession on not tending her mother's memories well, with relation to the accusation of the nations' history erasure of the Louisiana Native Guards, and her struggling attitude toward her biracial southern poet identity. The appearance of three things in a sequence in the book marks the three stages of the progression: beginning, middle, and ending. In the following section, this paper aims to analyze the three things-powers and their effect on the speaker (the implied author/the poet Trethewey) and on the readers (both authorial readers and flesh-and-blood readers).

Through Trethewey's emotions toward her mother's death, her attitude to the nation, and her Southern experience, we see a great change from loss and ambivalence to forgiveness and love. This section focuses on the three "things" to analyze the lyrical progression of *Native Guard*. The analysis consists of four parts — description of the things; exploration of the thing-power; operation on two-way interactive communication; proceeding of the lyrical progression.

The first poem of the book *Native Guard* "Theories of Time and Space" is like an invitation sent from Trethewey to her readers to come and join her on a journey into the Deep South. The readers are like tourists, ready to take the ferry to a tourist spot. Literarily it is about a journey to an island near her hometown, Gulfport, Mississippi and she writes:

> "Try this:
> head south on Mississippi 49, one-
> by-one mile markers ticking off
>
> another minute of your life. Follow this
> to its natural conclusion—dead end

at the coast, the pier at Gulfport where
riggings of shrimp boats are loose stitches

in a sky threatening rain" (Trethewey 1)

The speaker in this poem is not identified but it can be acknowledged as Trethewey herself. The poet recalls the journey before she wrote this poem and it was after she went with her husband and her brother to Ship Island. Her younger brother Brett had never been there and Trethewey wanted to show him the island. It is not the first time Trethewey went to the island and she noticed that during the tour there was no mentioning of the black soldiers who had been stationed and died there. The island is a symbolic place which not only refers to the exact site where the Louisiana soldiers were buried with no markers, but also refers to the Trethewey's hometown and the South. During or after the journey, there is a moment that gives Trethewey a strong desire to write about being taken on the tour and being awakened to something (McHaney 58). That is why she writes:

"Everywhere you go will be somewhere
You've never been.
…
On the dock
Where you board the boat for Ship Island,
Someone will take your picture:

The photograph—who you were—
Will be waiting when you return." (Trethewey 1)

This poem marks the beginning of the lyrical progression and the beginning unit proceeds to the end of Section one in this book. The exposition here is about the speaker's background--she is familiar with the land for she was born here. She knows about the island and tells the readers that there would be someone taking photos of the tourists. The launch is the revelation of the speaker's state of mind toward the South. When she says "everywhere you go will be somewhere/ You've never been," she expresses her ambivalent attitude toward this land. But for the readers, the initiation is to read along the rest of the poems, which is like accepting Trethewey's invitation to the South. The launch is the readers' doubt and wonder

for the abstract ideas and figurative lines, which request both authorial audiences and the flesh-and-blood readers to assume the perspective of the speaker in order to experience similar emotions.

Tombstone

The tombstone in "Graveyard Blues" from section one is a further exposition of Trethewey's emotions related to her mother's death, discussed briefly above along with its negativity in terms of its thing-power. The inanimate thing — the tombstone, provokes a strong feeling of loss of one's mother.

Graveyard Blues
It rained the whole time we were laying her down;
Rained from church to grave when we put her down.
The suck of mud at our feet was a hollow sound.
When the preacher called out I held up my hand;
When he called for a witness I raised my hand—
Death stops the body's work, the soul's a journeyman.
The sun came out when I turned to walk away,
Glared down on me as I turned and walked away—
My back to my mother, leaving her where she lay.
The road going home was pocked with holes,
That home-going road's always full of holes;
Though we slow down, time's wheel still rolls.
I wander now among names of the dead:
My mother's name, stone pillow for my head. (Trethewey 8)

The final image of this poem rests on the "stone pillow for my head." The stone pillow here is a strong image of hard, or cold comfort to the poet. The combination of the phrase "stone pillow" not only tells the readers that her mother is dead with the word of "stone" to relate to the tombstone, but also inspires empathy among the readers for the poet who has lost her mother. The readers can imagine Trethewey laying her head down on her mother's tombstone and deriving a kind of comfort from it. The tombstone also commands attention to the readers for more information about it for there is an ambiguity in the last two lines:

"I wander now among names of the dead:
My mother's name, stone pillow for my head." (Trethewey 8)

The poet was walking in the cemetery after she buried her mother. She passed by

those tombstones and it is possible that her mother's name is also one of these names. It is also possible that while she was walking among those dead names, there is no tombstone for her mother, so that she could only imagine that the pillow for her head is the tombstone for her mother because every night before her sleep, she would miss her mother. The tombstone creates a gap between reality and text; and the gap induces pain and suffering of Natasha Trethewey. Trethewey's mother was killed during a domestic violence incident involving her divorced second husband. For various reasons, when her mother was buried, there was no tombstone in fact. Natasha Trethewey recalled in an interview, because her mother was killed by her second husband, it would not be proper to inscribe the murderer's surname on the tombstone and it would not be right to put Trethewey's biological father's name on it either, for Natasha's younger brother would not agree. The truth is, there is no tombstone on her mother's grave. The gap between reality and the text generates energy to push the lyrical progression further.

So, the image is real in the second interpretation of the tombstone that Trethewey's mother does not have any kind of stone on her grave. There is no marker, no memorial at her grave, and Trethewey had lied about this. In McHaney's interview with the poet, she confesses that:

> *"It was stunning to me when I realized that I had, for the sake of one poem, told a lie and needed to fix it in another one."* (McHaney 48)

Later, Trethewey writes another poem "Monument" as a testimony to her lie and about her not tending her mother's grave. It is at that moment that Trethewey realized these elegies to her mother could be in the same book with the Native Guards (McHaney 45). Her mother's history that had not been properly memorialized, remembered, and tended by someone native to her. Her mother is just like the black soldiers, for whom there is no monument. In a way, she and those soldiers were both erased from the landscape. Therefore, the progression moves to the next stage and also to the next section of the book.

At the beginning unit of the progression, this poem reveals to the reader the speaker, a daughter who lost her dear mother and her sorrow can be observed from the "stone-pillow" image. The readers are ready to listen to the sad story of the daughter. The poem "Graveyard Blues," combined with other poems in this section, provides information about Trethewey's late mother. Writing elegies to her mother for Natasha Trethewey is not only recalling her mother's memory but also exposing a strong traumatic pain in the daughter's heart.

Palimpsest Journal

In the second section of *Native Guard*, Trethewey writes about the erased history of a regiment of African American soldiers in the Civil War. They were stationed on the coast of Trethewey's hometown Gulfport, Mississippi. It is a coincidence for Trethewey to hear the stories of these soldiers. She had visited Ship Island many times never having seen any markers about this historic event. Trethewey is interested in the Louisiana Native Guard and she does research on the historical documents about these soldiers. These Native Guards consisted of freed slaves who were charged with guarding the while Confederate prisoners.

The discovery of Colonel Daniels's cross-written document records on a diary at the home of a Confederate inspires Trethewey to write the corona sonnet "Native Guard." It is a palimpsest journal written by a black soldier from the Louisiana Native Guards. He found the journal at one of the Confederates' abandoned homes:

"*December 1862*
...We take those things we need
from the Confederates' abandoned homes:
salt, sugar, even this journal, near full
with someone else's words, overlapped now,
crosshatched beneath mine. On every page,
his story intersecting with my own." (Trethewey 26)

In the journal, there are not only words of the black soldier, but also the words of its original owners. The speaker in the poem is not Trethewey this time — it is the black soldier who is recording his personal history and the collective memories of the Louisiana Native Guards.

In the palimpsest journal, there are a lot of crosshatched lines where the literate black soldier writes letters for the illiterate Confederate soldiers. Trethewey felt it was ironic that the white soldiers were disadvantaged because of the lack of education, while this black soldier was ordered to write letters for them. It would be the soldier who would not only have the job to write home to the families of deceased Union soldiers, letting them know that they had died, but also who begin to write for these other white prisoners who wanted to send word back home. But these white prisoners do not trust him. They would write down something on their own like an X (In history the X was a legal personal signature of a person signing the document).

"*February, 1863*
...Some neither read nor write,
are laid too low and have few words to send
but those I give them. Still, they are wary
of a negro writing, taking down letters.
X binds them to the page—a mute symbol
like the cross on a grave. I suspect they fear
I'll listen, put something else down in ink." (Trethewey 27)

Bennett emphasizes the thing has power by "virtue of its operating in conjunction with other things" (Bennett 54). She further explains the world as a network of relations that "various materialities constantly engaged in." Thus, when Trethewey's mother's tombstone creates a sense of loss and regret both in the speaker's and the readers' mind, it could also relate to the black soldier's journal in a way. Trethewey's mother does not have a tombstone and Trethewey confesses that she could have had one made but she didn't. Writing the elegies to her mother, in a way, is erecting a tombstone for her. It is why Trethewey presents the documentary records of these erased soldiers' history into the second section of this book. Writing it down erects the monuments to history (Haney 29). So Trethewey empowers a fictional character, the black soldier, as the speaker in this corona sonnet with writing and making history. This speaker not only keeps records of his own personal history, but also of the collective memories of the Louisiana Native Guards. The palimpsest journal connects with the tombstone and also with the monument in section three, since the action of writing is like erecting a monument. The three inanimate things interact with each other and give impetus to the lyrical progression in *Native Guard*.

In this middle unit of the progression, the speaker is not the implied author/the poet, but a narrator/a character in the poem. The opening line of this sonnet is "Truth be told" which is repeated in the last line. The speaker's anger is expressed through the repetition as the implied meaning of "truth be told" is that the truth has not been told properly (Birdsong 107). It is also the accusation of the implied author/the poet, that the nation has not properly remembered the history of the Louisiana Native Guard. It has been mentioned previously that there is no marker on Ship Island where these soldiers had worked and been buried. At this dynamic level, the readers' responses toward the speaker's strong emotion changes along with more details of the documentary records. The soldier's palimpsest journal reveals how these soldiers had been trained to participate in the war but later were required to do the dirty work, guard the imprisoned Confederates, and were finally killed by Union

soldiers. Readers are taken in by the records of the journal and empathize with these soldiers. The readers' evolving configuration of these soldiers' tragic memory takes shape from the onset.

The outstanding feature of "crosshatching" of the journal can be read as a metaphor of Trethewey's poetry which is the integration of her personal story, crosshatched with the public history of the soldiers (Turner 160). It is the thing-power of the palimpsest journal which could be linked to the writing of the whole book *Native Guard* and the collection of poems is itself a palimpsest. It is this matter-energy that motivates Trethewey to cross-write her own personal history of being a biracial southern poet with the history of the nation.

Monument

There are eleven poems in section three of *Native Guard* and the poem "Monument" is placed by the side of "Elegy for the Native Guards" right before the concluding poem "South." The monument is in fact a mound built by ants in front of her mother's grave.

Monument
"Today the ants are busy
beside my front steps, weaving
in and out of the hill they're building.
I watch them emerge and—

like everything I've forgotten—disappear
into the subterranean—a world
made by displacement….
At my mother's grave, ants streamed in
and out like arteries, a tiny hill rising

above her untended plot. Bit by bit,
red dirt piled up, spread
like a rash on the grass; I watched a long time
the ant's determined work,
...Believe me when I say
I've tried not to begrudge them

their industry, this reminder of what
I haven't done. Even now,

the mound is a blister on my heart,
a red and humming swarm." (Trethewey 43)

In this poem, the speaker is the implied author and the poet Trethewey. She comes to her mother's grave and notices that a group of ants are working on building a mound in front of the grave. For the speaker, the mound is like a tombstone, like a monument the ants build for her mother. The thing-power of the monument is a negativity which arouses pain in Trethewey. She confesses that she should have done the work herself but she didn't, which explains how she feels when she sees the mound — "It is like a blister on my heart/a red and humming swarm" (Anderson 89). The speaker is making a judgment of herself, which also takes in the readers to evaluate the speaker's judgment. As the only daughter, isn't it a shame for not tending her mother's grave properly and nor tending her mother's memories well?

As Bennett's thing-power materialism suggests, negativity is the same stuff out of which positive things emerge (Bennett 365). Another possible way to read the implication of the monument is to place it in the context of the entire book, not specifically in the context of tending the mother's grave as a daughter. Trethewey's writing elegies to her mother means erecting a monument for her. This poem is arranged side by side with "Elegy for the Native Guards" because this elegy is Trethewey's erecting a monument for the Louisiana Native Guards as well. Thus, it can be read as the resolution of Trethewey's regrets for not having done her duty and accusation of the nation for not tending well the Native Guards memories. In the ending unit of the lyrical progression in this book, the readers experience a dynamic turning before the farewell. The speaker's negative feeling expressed in the text interacts with the readers' evolving response toward the speaker, which brings the readers closer to the speaker. The following section will conclude the lyrical progression.

Completion of Lyrical Progression

Three sections of the book *Native Guard* seem to the readers as juxtaposition at first sight, but from the poet's perspective, by analyzing the lyrical progression, we see there is a meaningful design in the book with the current sequence. This connection and relations of the three sections also embody the thing-power proposed by Jane Bennett.

This book is like a palimpsest itself: section three is the autobiographical story of Natasha Trethewey herself and it is cross-written with the elegies of her mother and the documentary records of the Louisiana Native Guards. Section three marks

the ending unit of the lyrical progression with Trethewey's own history of being a biracial southern poet. Trethewey finds the intersection is a gift and claims *Native Guard* is a book about intersections of white and black, north and south, slave and free (Turner 160). In another poem in this section, "Pastoral," Trethewey writes about her dream and in it she is taking a picture with the Fugitive poets and she pictures herself "in blackface" in the middle of the photograph.

> "We're lining up now—Robert Penn Warren,
> his voice just audible above the drone
> of bulldozers, telling us where to stand.
> Say "race," the photographer croons. I'm in
> blackface again when the flash freezes us.
> My father's white, I tell them, and rural.
> You don't hate the South? they ask. You don't hate it?" (Trethewey 35)

By standing along with the Fugitives, Trethewey is interacting with the canon of Southern poetry not by creating something new, but by filling in the spaces in the tradition. Trethewey thinks her work is a synthesis of the tradition of Southern poetry and there is the theme of love of country in this case of the South—or of a desire to cling to it--despite all the pain and suffering and all the attempts at dispossession (McHaney 32). Finally, she resolves her struggling attitude toward the South, as she writes, "in my native land, this place they'll bury me" (Trethewey 46). The progression of Trethewey's attitude toward her mother's history, the nation's history and her personal history proceeds to a resolution in section three of *Native Guard*. This book is like a monument Trethewey is building with words and writing her mother's name, the Native Guards' name and her name on it.

Bennett believes the relevant point of thinking about the thing-power is a function of grouping (Bennett 354). The three things discussed in this paper are closely related with each other. The tombstone is an expression of Trethewey's mourning over her mother's death and connects with the palimpsest because both Trethewey's mother and the Louisiana Native Guards are forgotten and not remembered properly. The tombstone and the monument are also related to the ants' laboring work of building a mound in front of her mother's grave, which symbolizes erecting a monument for her mother. Trethewey's writing the elegies for her mother and the black soldiers keeping the palimpsest journal are both part of making history.

Last but not least, the lyrical progression completes its two-way interaction

communication process. The completion of the dynamic in the ending unit is marked by the readers' understanding of the title of the book *Native Guard*. "Guard" is from the first O.E.D. definition which is almost obsolete, that is "to take care." "Native" is used by Trethewey in "Native Daughter" that C. Vann Woodward uses when he talks about the early part of the twentieth century (Haney 29). It was the Daughters of the Revolution who were the Native Daughters, and they were the ones responsible for creating a lot of the public memory about the Civil War. They were erecting monuments, they were hosting events, remembrances and non-Daughters were excluded from this act of public memory making. The title of the book does not only refer the Louisiana Native Guards, but also to Natasha Trethewey as a native daughter, a native guardian to her mother and her memory; and to the nation's memory. At the completion stage, both for the authorial audience and the flesh-and-blood readers, after their evolving response toward the overall development of Trethewey's changes in her emotions and attitudes, there emerges a new sense of reflecting on their own identity as a "Native Guard" as well.

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Reading Discourses of Violence in Gloria Naylor's *The Women of Brewster Place*

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Abstract The paper examines the narratives of violence in Gloria Naylor's *The Women of Brewster Place.* The black women characters are presented as fragile bodies and easily available commodities not only for the white men but also for the men of their color. The rape episodes in the novel suggest the vulnerability of the women whose bodies are considered as holes "or containers: fragile, static, open, waiting to be filled with everything from semen to language" (Hite 133). Violence is a dark reality for the black women. It comes to them in the form of rape, sexual abuse by partner, domestic violence, verbal abuse, slavery and racism. While investigating the nature of violence in *The Women of Brewster Place*, the attempt is also to probe into the lives of Black women characters to showcase their material and psychic realities — pain, trauma and their resilience to fight back.

Key words Violence; Black female bodies; Gloria Naylor; Racism; Sexism

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Introduction

Violence is a primordial issue that persists ever since the existence of mankind. Bound with notorious explications in its interpretation, this equivocal term, can be documented as the execution of some vicious act involving extreme-force, destruction, pain or suffering or can even denote the idea of widespread fighting.

The literary discourses on violence do not posit it as a constant entity as theorists believe that the term itself has undergone 'democratization'[1] in temporal terms. Violence is often seen as "any uninvited but intentional or half-intentional act of physically violating the body of a person who previously had lived 'in peace'" (Keane 6). Foucault considers violence as an act of "confinement" or "imprisonment" something that is "privatized," "sanitized" or "camouflaged" within the four walls of a prison, an asylum or a hospital for one's "improvement."[2] While talking of violence within the psychological framework, academicians like Nathan Dewall, Craig Anderson and Brad Bushman have asserted violence as a product of "aggression"[3] that has its goal of "extreme physical harm, such as injury or death" (Dewall et al. 246). Naylor's *The Women of Brewster Place* renders the element of violence, which acts as a "unifying force"[4] in the lives of the seven women. These women live in a dead end street of Brewster Place. They are shaken by their ordeal which is dark, dreary and full of violence. Brewster Place becomes "a common prison and a shared home" (*TWBP*, Back cover) for them to rediscover their self, their community and home. Their lives are woven together in such a way that "Not one woman lives alone; no one loves too long in vain; no one mourns alone" (G. D. Kendrick 390).

Violence against Black Women

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1 The term "democratization" is used by John Keane in *Violence and Democracy* in order to denote the changing connotations of violence that was experienced since the middle of the eighteenth century. Keane refers to three additional attributes conferred to the meaning of the term: i) broadening of its "scope of application" ii) it's becoming "heavily context dependent" and iii) its variability in "space and time" (Keane 30).

2 Idea extracted from Michel Foucault's notion of violence which is explained in a concise way in John Keane's *Violence and Democracy,* ch 3. "Thinking Violence" (Keane 37) here, Keane while discussing the 'anonymous' and institutionalized nature of violence refers to Foucault's case analysis dealing with the privatization of violence deploying it from "public sites of punishment."

3 Dewall, Anderson and Bushman are the professors of psychology. They have given their own theories of violence conducting experiments on diverse individuals outside the laboratory in their essay entitled "The General Aggression Model: Theoretical Extensions to Violence." As per their analysis it is 'aggression' that acts as the basic source for any sort of violence.

4 Fanon has used the expression "unifying force" in his postcolonial discourses of violence that was also borrowed by B.K. Jha in his article entitled "Fanon's Theory of Violence: A Critique." Jha has discussed the various elements of Fanon's thoughts, laying special stress on his unique interpretations of the issue of violence (Jha, 1988).

Violence though was never a product of gender, yet records[1] suggest that women are (or have been made) more liable to endure violence than their male counterparts, who equally embody a possibility of getting globally victimized by acquaintances or strangers as much as they embody the reality of getting domestically victimized by their intimates that is husbands or boyfriends which is ten times more than such infliction of violent crimes on men (see R. Bachman's survey under "Violence against Women: A National Crime Victimization Survey Report," 1994) Brittney Nichols in one of her works dealing with intimate violence against women broadly classifies abuses endured by women under three major subheadings: physical abuse[2], sexual abuse[3] and emotional abuse[4]. Distancing oneself from the predicament of women in general, the women of color suffer beyond the casualties and penalties of womanhood. It has been established that "Black and Hispanic females had a higher risk of experiencing a crime of violence than white and non-Hispanic females" (R. Bachman 2). These women in their tender age groups, or having a status of being unmarried/never married/divorced/separated, or having lower education levels with lower family incomes were the "most vulnerable to becoming the victims of violent crime" (Bachman 1) than males, or their white and non-Hispanic female counterparts. Probing forth exclusively on the sufferings of black women, one witnesses them to have been victimized since history, as slaves, slave breeders, undergoing the brutalities of rape, lynching, physical and psychological tormenting

1 See articles under the edition *Intimate Violence Against Women: When Spouses, Partners, or Lovers Attack*.

2 Nichols says abuse includes: "slapping, hitting, kicking, burning, punching, choking, shoving, beating, throwing things, locking a person out of the house, restraining, and other acts designed to injure, hurt, endanger, or cause physical pain" done to a woman (Lundberg et al. 5).

3 For Nichols, sexual abuse comprises "sadism and forcing a person to have sex when he or she does not want to; forcing a person to engage in sexual acts that he or she does not like or finds unpleasant, frightening, or violent; forcing a person to have sex with others or while others watch; or forcing a person into acts that make him or her feel sexually demeaned or violated. Sexual abuse may also include forcing a woman into reproductive decisions that are contrary to her wishes or forcing her to have sex without protection against disease or pregnancy" (Lundberg et al. 5).

4 While emotional abuse for Nichols includes, "consistently doing or saying things to shame, insult, ridicule, embarrass, demean, belittle, or mentally hurt another person." It, "may also involve withholding money, affection, attention, or permission; destroying property; forcing a person to do thing she or she does not want to do; manipulating; hurting or threatening children or pets; threatening to either abandon a person or take his or her children away. It may also include refusing to help someone who is sick or hurt; ridiculing a person's valued beliefs, religion, race, heritage, or class; or insulting a person's family or friends" (Lundberg et al. 6).

as well as enduring brutal deaths. Their sufferings have not come to an end with the abolition of the slave tradition. Violence still penetrates and manifests in their lives through the practices of 'sexism' and 'racism' while at a deeper psychological stratagem they are "still struggling under the scars of slavery" (Ashford 74). Apart from sexual and racial violence in the lives of these women, violence that operates at the level of class deepens their scars. Thus the black women are evidently the "doubly" and "triply" oppressed ones, who silently "suffer and struggle" (Anna Cooper qtd. in Hooks, *Ai't I a Woman* 2).

Sexual Violence: Rape and Date Rape

Sexual violence is a "global problem" which is "ubiquitous; it occurs in every culture, in all levels of society and in every country of the world…Sexual violence takes place within a variety of settings, including the home, the workplace, schools and the community" (WHO, 2003 1). Such kinds of violence, being independent of one's sex and sexual demarcations (that is irrespective of the victim being a male/female/child/adult/homosexual/heterosexual/asexual and so on), in its definition, carries "a wide range of behaviours, from rape at gun-point to sexual coercion under a threat of dismissal" (WHO, 2003 6). Sexual violence, like other forms of violence, mostly victimizes women. It befalls upon them in the form of sexual assault, marital rape, date rape and rape. In the case of black women, as per the reports of R. Bachman, sexual violence, like any other forms of violence becomes more obvious than that for a white woman. Black women's (like those of the Hispanic women) probability of being raped, or getting sexually assaulted, or being forced into sexual activities in both the domestic and public sphere is still more common than a white or non-Hispanic women.

In *The Women of Brewster Place*, Gloria Naylor touches upon the multiple shades of violence that are characteristic of systematic oppression of the black women. Through her characters she not only voices the sufferings of the "invisible black females" (Carabi 26), but also speaks for the entire experience of woman as a whole, in different class and age groups. Naylor's narration of the rape episode of Lorraine by C.C. Baker and his friends in the dark alley of Brewster Place is one of the most excruciating scenes of violence. By raping Lorraine, Baker and his friends exercise the "violent (re)assertion of the legitimacy of the masculine universe" thereby leading to the "dehumanization of the female sex and the feminine symbolic" (Toit 88). Rape is a vengeful act and the frustration and anger involved in it depicts the male psychology in terms of dealing with a woman. Men rape women for several reasons; most frequently as a

> punishment for being uppity, for getting out of line, for failing to recognize one's place, for assuming sexual freedoms, or for behavior no more proactive than walking down the wrong road at night in the wrong part of town and presenting a convenient, isolated target for a group of hatred and rage. (Brownmiller 254-55)

In the case of Lorraine, all these reasons stand instrumental, but her homosexual orientation becomes one of the major causes for her rape. Taking up the issue of homosexuality in contrast to the women's experience, Naylor wanted to probe deeper into the various aspects of "female sexuality," to exhibit the different modes of oppression; she says: "The worst thing a woman wants to be called is a whore. A whore or a lesbian. Women get scared of those two words. So, therefore…I wanted to look that. I wanted to look at female sexuality" (Ashford 83) . Lorrain's rape can be read as an outcome of the hatred of the entire patriarchy as a whole that is directed towards a woman who is not driven by *their* imposed masculinity and instead chooses homosexuality over heterosexuality. This act of sexual violation is not just an outcome of a momentary offense, but of that long-condensed deep-seated insult of rejection that patriarchy faces when it witnesses the very women around them (their wives, daughters, friends or any female) rejecting *their* manliness. Complying with the thoughts of the Leeds Revolutionary Feminists on the 'Political Lesbianism' that views a heterosexual-couple to be "the basic unit of the political structure of male supremacy"[1] where the act of 'penetration' becomes symbolic of the 'oppressor' entering into the body of the 'oppressed', Caroline Gonda writes that the personal choice of heterosexuality of a woman reflects her willing participation in her own oppression at the hands of the patriarchy. In order to put an "end" to this "male supremacy," Gonda considers Berson's arguments of a woman's "political choice" of "becoming woman-identified" (Jackson & Jones 1). Here, rape of a homosexual woman depicts the intolerance of the rapists for women's freedom to choose a sex partner. The fear of losing male supremacy, of being castrated leads them to a sense of humiliation. Therefore, by violating a homosexual woman *he* tries to reassert *his* lost supremacy and control (what Berson calls the "male supremacy" or what Kitzinger and Wilkinson have termed "heteropatriarchy"). This point is best illustrated in the lines when C.C Baker abuses Lorraine just before the rape:

1 The Leeds Revolutionary Feminists on political lesbianism and the hegemonic connotation of heterosexuality say "every woman who lives with or fucks a man helps to maintain the oppression of our sisters and hinders our struggle."

> I'm gonna show you somethin' I bet you never seen before." C.C. Baker took the back of her head, pressed it into the crotch of his jeans, and jerkily rubbed it back and forth while his friends laughed. "Yeah, now don't that feel good? See, that's what you need. Bet after we get through with you, you ain't never gonna wanna kiss no more pussy. (*TWBP* 170)

After forced vaginal intercourse, the rapists take Lorraine "from behind." Molly Hite associates female sex organs like the vagina with — "law, convention, society… and with women" while the anus, in contrast "is aligned with the forbidden" (Hite 126). Lorraine's forced vaginal and anal intercourses are not only symbolic of the violation of law and social order, but also the violation of the forbidden. Like the anal intercourses, homosexuality is also seen as a taboo, something which is against the law. The male rapists in Lorraine's case try to re-assert the idea of the punishment given to a woman, especially to the one who violates the heterosexual norms, leaving the idea that — violation of the forbidden (forced anal intercourse) shall be the best punishment for attempting the forbidden (female homosexuality).

Describing the transcendence of the victim's physical suffering to the eternal psychological one, Naylor writes:

> Lorraine was no longer conscious of the pain in her spine or stomach. She couldn't feel the skin that was rubbing of her arms from being pressed against the rough cement… it was all one continuous hacksawing of torment that kept her eyes screaming the only word she was fated to utter again and again for the rest of her life. Please. (*TWBP* 171)

Leading to her "humiliation and pain," Lorrain's rape not only reduces her body to flesh denoting her availability, but also kills her "spirit" seizing her ability to "project herself in the world." Regarding such materialization of the female body Tiot comments, "the reduction of the woman's body to mere flesh and sheer availability is *needed* as a foil over against which masculine sexual subjectivity as the superior opposite of female sexuality may be established real" (Toit 88). The rapists stuff her mouth with a paper bag, a commanding gesture to "shut up" thereby putting her voice in his service who "wants to hear her cry, beg, moan and plead… not employing her voice to assert and defend herself, but rather to affirm the rapists sense of power" (Toit 89). Rape leads Lorraine to the "silencing of her voice" choking her spirit through "threats, gagging and suffocation." Lorrain succumbs

under the pressure of brutality. Her helpless plea and refrain go in vain. On the contrary, for the rapist, rape becomes a kind of "re-creation" that "rejuvenates" and "invigorates him, "swelling his sense of being alive" thereby "affirming his superior power" (Toit). His "coupling of sex with violence and aggression" projects him as high as a "conqueror" or an "invader" (Toit). It is the "man's structural capacity to rape" and the "women's corresponding structural vulnerability" (Brownmiller 13) that posits her weakness and helplessness to her opposite gender. So, woman becomes materiality and the rapist becomes the conqueror who belittles the woman equating her to an object. The dynamics of gang rape, on the other hand, is viewed as a "ritualistic aspect" that conveys the idea of "male bonding" where a woman becomes "the vehicle for the interaction of the men amongst themselves" (Toit 87-89). On the other hand rape for a woman, particularly for a lesbian traumatizes and brutalizes the already existing pain and fear that she undergoes daily in her life- be it at school, workplace, or within her society. She has to live with so many "theys" (*TWBP* 166) who keep blaming her, setting her culturally out of the mainstream.

Moreover, both physical and Verbal abuses crush the victim's soul from within. While dealing with the different types of abuses, Brittney Nichols categorizes verbal abuse under the broad heading of emotional abuse which pertains to "doing" or "saying" certain things to "shame, insult, ridicule, embarrass, demean, belittle or mentally hurt another person" (Lundberg et al. 6). Emotional abuse is often considered as the "worst kind of abuse" where "one individual systematically diminishes and destroys the inner self of another" (Lundberg et al. 15). Moreover, calling the victim by names like "dyke" or "lesbo" turns out to be much intense and traumatic for the sufferer. Such "name calling" and "criticism," as Grotheus and Marmion believe is a means to demean a woman making her feel "powerless," "useless" and dehumanized (Lundberg et al. 25).

Date rape is another kind of sexual violation of a woman forcing her to engage in a sexual intercourse that does not take her consent. Generally, such kinds of rape are conducted by the rapist during the process of dating a woman wherein both the victim and the rapist are known to each other (Smith 54). The sexual violation of Etta by Woods is yet another instance of patriarchal violence in the form of a date rape. The episode depicts the social irony highlighting Clergymen like Reverend Woods as a symbol of deceit, who view woman no more than a sex toy and for whom the sex act is a "business"; Woods admits: "Well… that's the nice part about these worldly women. They understand the temporary weakness of the flesh and don't make it out to be something bigger than it is" (*TWBP* 73).

Both Lorraine and Etta are raped by their own community people. In the

case of the former, it becomes a vengeful act while the latter becomes the victim of male sexual fantasy. Rape, therefore, becomes the "male fantasy of totalizing the phallic power, highly reassuring to patriarchy" (Baines 89). Talking about the black male's uncanny inclination towards sex, bell hooks in *We Real Cool: Black Men and Masculinity* says, "Sex has been all the more addictive for black males because sexuality is the primary place where they are told they will find fulfillment. No matter the daily assaults on their manhood that wound and cripple, the black male is encouraged to believe that sex and sexual healing will assuage his pain" (Hooks*, We Real Cool* 69). For the black males, hooks believes sex to have become "the ultimate playing field where the quest for freedom can be pursued in a world that denies black males access to other forms of liberating power" (Hooks*, We Real Cool* 69). Since they lead their lives in the fear of "white racism," "humiliation" and "black women" they do not hesitate in becoming the "beast," and interestingly, the mainstream culture "requires" and "rewards" them for "acting like brutal psychopaths" and for "their will to do horrific violence" (Hooks*, We Real Cool* 69).

Another instance of sexual assault is seen in the master slave relationship of Ben's daughter and her white master Mr. Clyde which is also reminiscent of Lutie's assaulting in Ann Petry's *The Street*. Both, because of their colored bodies were promiscuously considered as "prostitute" by their white masters, who perceive their bodies as "available sex objects" (Hooks, *Ai't I a Woman* 58). Narrating her predicament, Naylor tries to look deeper into the act of sexual assault which is solely bore by young black girls who are forced to earn livelihood for their family selling their black body which is already labeled "transgressive," yet at a deeper level we examine that the load is equally shared by helpless fathers like Ben, who are left to endure the stings of this violence in their psychologies throughout their life.

In the cases of Etta and Ben's daughter, the black female body, as hooks, Sielke and others believe, is viewed by the opposing gender as "transgressive" and "sexually deviant" when hooks states, "Undesirable in the conventional sense, which defines beauty and sexuality as desirable only to the extent that is idealized and unattainable, the black female body gains attention only when it is synonymous with accessibility, availability, when it is sexually deviant" (Hooks, *Black Looks* 65-66).

Domestic Violence

Statistics have confirmed that "violence occurs in one quarter of all marriages" (Menjivar & Salcido 899). Domestic violence, thus, refers to the acts of violence practiced within the domestic domain usually in a marriage or cohabitation. Such

abuses are carried to gain control over the victim, proving one's supremacy to their intimate partners. Violence manifesting at domestic level can be stratified into all its possibly prevalent forms of physical, sexual, emotional, verbal or economic abuse, including acts of intimidation, isolation or any sort of controlling behaviour inflicted by one partner (dominating) on the other (dominated). Considering the plight of females alone, concentrating on the predicament of immigrant women who seem to be "pathologically prone to violence" (Menjivar & Salcido 902), the rate of domestic violence is witnessed higher among these women. For them life becomes even more challenging as they have to face "multiple challenges" when they "resettle in a foreign country." Narrating the plight of the immigrant women and the infliction of violence upon them, Naylor in *The women of Brewster Place*, subtly takes up this issue of domestic violence, weaving it along the narrative of Ciel and Eugene. She not only tries to depict violence through their unhealthy relationship, but her main concern lies in exploring the cons of such abuses that engulf the victim, her home, her child, her sanity, condemning her to a lifetime isolation.

Ciel is a victim of domestic violence. Her husband Eugene "who cannot give her any kind of support, emotional or economic, and the anguish of the death of a child" (J.V. Branzburg 117), abuses her physically, emotionally and verbally. She is also forced to undergo abortion against her will. Domestic violence and frequent quarrels have been a reality in a black woman's life. It was so obvious in the life of Ciel too that she could pre-hand acknowledge her upcoming fight with Eugene even in her thoughts, "He wants to pick a fight, she thought, confused and hurt" (*TWBP* 93). Domestic violence in most prevalent cases is followed by the child abuse or child neglect cases at times exhibiting serious harmful effects on such children (see Findlater & Kelly). These effects are mostly psychological. While dealing with the story of Ciel, Naylor diverts the narrative from Ciel's domestic violence to her eternal suffering caused due to the loss of her only child Serena in one of such quarrels. She was only interested in discussing a mother's life-long curse of enduring a life that was "worst than lifeless-worst than death" (*TWBP* 102). The setting of domestic violence provided a background to Naylor in order to reveal the sufferings of a childless mother, her insanity and her isolation, that seeks refuge under the companionship of other similar women who make Ciel believe that "It would heal" (*TWBP* 104) and "the tears would end" (*TWBP* 105).

Racial Violence

Racism is a crude reality in the lives of the blacks, no matter where they come from or no matter where they migrate to. They run from the South, where racism was explicit, so as to find solace in the North; however, the shift of the

geographical space, the dislocation/relocation does not bring any change in their living conditions. Therefore, in a disillusioned state, they build up their own community. Brewster place is a home to that community which bears the mark of their blackness, of differences, of inferiorities, and of impurities. Their bodies and minds are continuous reminders of their being black and being different, unfit for the mainstream. Violence arising from racial atrocities is the core concern behind most of the violations endured by the characters in the novel. Though the characters reside in a totally segregated black community, they never cease to suffer the adversities and damages of racism done to them. From physical abuse of Lorraine to psychological abuse of Kiswana, all these incidents can be seen as an implicit outcome of racial violence. Even the male members of Brewster Place are not left untouched by its dominating influences.

Naylor's description of the external features of "*the two*" characters — Lorraine and Theressa is subtly coded with the notorious implications of racism. She describes Lorraine as "the lighter, skinny one" who was "readily accepted" by the women of Brewster Place. Theresa on the other hand is described as "the short dark one- too pretty, and too much behind" (*TWBP* 129). While the overt phrases describe the physical attributes of the two ladies, they also carry undertones of racism that abuses the doctrine of multiculturalism and breeds separatist tendencies[1]. Lorrain's "lighter" skin tone and "skinny" body associates her more with a white occidental woman. On the other hand Theresa's "dark" complexion and "short" bodily stature with "too much behind" associates her with a woman of color

1 In the views of critics like Markus, Plaut, Wolsko et al., the notion/discourse of "multiculturalism" was established to stress the importance of cultural diversities, the recognition of diverse ethnic, racial and cultural groups and the explicit valuing of this diversity in the mainstream settings. This traditional ideology though many a times seemed to fail in achieving its proposed goals. According to Plaut's concept of multiculturalism, it is defined as something that stands in contrast to the so called "color-blindness". Thus multiculturalism celebrates differences, intolerance and violence.

thereby projecting her as an oriental woman of the east[1]. Apart from their opposing physical appearances, both the women participate in the bond of homosexuality. Lorraine's skin color and body type make her the "other's-other" in the conservative black society of Brewster Place. She can be examined from two angles, first as an occidental and second as a lesbian. These two characteristics set her culturally out of the mainstream. Even though Theresa's black body is stereotypically viewed as something that bell hooks calls "expendable" with its "accessibility and availability," the trauma of rape befalls solely on Lorraine, making her a suitable victim. By violating Lorrain's "tall" "yellow" body, C.C. Baker and his friends culturally overpower the "Other." Here the victim "is regarded involuntarily, not as subject whose 'otherness' is recognized and respected but rather as mere object potentially worthy of bodily harm or even annihilation" (Keane 36). This kind of ideology governing the violent act of rape is catalyzed by the Eurocentric notions[2] (obsession with the phallus) where rape is based on racial differences, as in Walker's *Meridian*, where the black rapist Tommy Odds, after raping the white Lynne, justifies the act as his only way to liberate himself from white oppression. The same ideology results in the case of Lorraine, where Baker being a black tries to

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1 The point is illustrated in terms of the bodily representations of the oriental women, as per the exaggerations of the occidental male gaze. A black woman or the Oriental women of the East, apart from being labeled as "sexually deviant," carrying a body that is "transgressive" and "expendable," is simultaneously projected as a woman who is also "immoral" and "sexually loose" in terms of her character. These kinds of spurious representations of black women thereby contribute to her erotic or pornographic projection in all fields of discourses including literature and media (like in movies, magazines cartoons etc.). Throughout literature or in early films for instance, the black woman is depicted concealed within the stereotypical image of a "tragic mulatto," or in fashion magazines, the black models are erotically depicted as something "less human" that resemble more a "robot" or the "mannequins," thereby always being projected as a thing that encapsulates within itself the "danger of asserting sexual desire." Such kinds of representations regarding the bodily stature of black women further promotes the Eurocentric notions of the representations of the occidental white women, contrasting and carving her out as a 'goddess', her white body being symbolic of The Virgin Mary, "pure," virtuous," "innocent" being "not sexual and wordly" (Hooks 1982 and 1992).

2 Louise du Toit in his book, *A Philosophical Investigation of Rape,* discusses Jean Baudrillard's concept of the western sexuality that is obsessed with 'phallus' and therefore lives under the 'repressed' fear of castration, that shall seize away his masculinity. Baudrillard also projects the "naked female body" being representative of the phallus as well as a "castrated" body with "holes" that has to surrender itself to the phallus (Tiot 2009).

liberate himself from white oppression by raping the "tall" "yellow" "lighter skinny one"— Lorraine. Unfolding the secrets of interracial rapes as that of Lorraine or Lynne, hooks defines such rape as the converging point of the tussle between the long debated issues of "racism" and "sexism" (Hooks, *Ai't I a Woman* 82). Beyond such racial oppressions, the black male is also witnessed to be burdened with the question of his masculinity, where his "inability" to distinguish his "male role" due to the "most damaging impact of slavery…that did not allow the black male to assume the traditional role" as a "protector and provider" (Hooks, *Ai't I a Woman* 88). Finding no connections with his eastern-traditional roots of black masculinity, he turns towards the west looking forward to the Eurocentric notions of masculinity and manhood that is completely phallocentric in nature. Therefore, a man of color is throughout eager to prove his masculinity to a woman (particularly a white) in order to prove his equality with or even superiority over the sexuality of a white man, proving that he is "jest as good as any white man" (Sielke 35).

The characters of color in *The Women of Brewster Place* seem to be deeply affected by the prevailing adverse notions of Colonialism and Euro-Centralism, which, since ages have developed a negative impact on the minds of the black, colonizing their psychology and streamlining their thoughts accordingly, when they "were often unable to let go the idea that whites are somehow better, smarter, more likely to be intellectuals, and even that they were kinder than the black folks" (Hooks, *Black Looks* 10). Thus the thought of a man of color regarding himself and his physical appearance is always shaped on negative grounds, generating a kind of shame for himself and his entire race. This is the result of the deep-seated psychological upheaval taking place among the blacks.

This implicit form of long-condensed and genetically-transmitted psychological abuse can be identified apparently in the daily conversations and dialogues of the male characters like Butch Fuller and in the prayers of Reverend Woods, and also in in the dialogues of female characters like — Kiswana Browne. While talking to Mattie Michael, Butch Fuller says, "Too much sun on the main road … And since black means poor in these parts — Lord knows, I couldn't stand to get no poorer" (*TWBP* 12). Similarly, Reverend Woods psychological turbulence is reflected in his prayers: "Yes, Lord — grind out the unheated tenements! Merciful Jesus—shove aside the low-paying boss man. Perfect Father — fill me, fill me till there's no room, no room for nothing else, not even that great big world out there

that exacts such a strange penalty for my being born black"[1] (*TWBP* 65). Kiswana's physical appearance does not support her to identify herself with the blacks. If her soul resembles the black, her body resembles the white. But deep within, she finds herself more as a black. Her obsession with her black identity becomes a source not merely of "pride and joy" for her, but also of "strength and confidence" (Sen 1). This kind of uncanny love for "otherness," as hooks states "offers a new delight, more intense, more satisfying than normal ways of doing and feeling" (Hooks, *Black Looks* 21). This is what happens in Kiswana's case. Her strong sense of belonging to the blacks fosters her rage and incompatibility towards the whites or any other racial or cultural group. While her physique prevents her from identifying herself with the blacks, her psyche restrains her from relating herself to the whites. It manifests itself into a state of "identity disregard" according to which an individual is seen continuously "ignoring" or "neglecting" any sense of identity with others (Sen 20).

Regarding the futile nature of such racial notions, Brooks and Hebert assert, "Race can no longer be seen as a biological category, and it has little basis in science or genetics" and the "Identifiers such as hair and skin color serve as imperfect indicators of race" (Brooks & Hebert 297). Such colonization of minds leads to the psychological upheaval of the characters, seizing their personal identities and their sense of belongings, shaping their notions on negative grounds regarding themselves and their entire race as a symbol of shame. hooks calls this phenomena as "black self-hatred," where the blacks try to imitate the whites in every respect so as to "attain whiteness" (Hooks, *Black Looks* 10). Such kind of racial segregation leads to psychological violence which is even more fatal than the physical ones, to which hooks says, "sexism was insignificant in the light of the harsher, more brutal reality of racism" (Hooks, *Ai't I a Woman* 1).

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1 These lines of Woods are reflective of the cruel history of slavery that charged the blacks for their being black. According to Robert H. Walkup's testimonies, the blacks were, in those days being so severely put through the wringer that they cried "NOBODY KNOWS THE TROUBLE I'VE SEEN! NOBODY KNOWS BUT JESUS!." Thus, Lord Jesus was their only savior and the blacks looked upon His mercy. Christianity was not just viewed as a release from violence but was also treated as a means to maintain black oppression. This can be studied simultaneously with Volanda Pierce's writings on the autobiographies of the African American Slave Narrative tradition that speaks of the Christianity and the authoritative role of the Bible when he writes "White desires the liberty to speak directly from the bible, because to preach from this sacred text is to speak from a position of authority" and to "allow a slave or former slave to take bible in hand and speak a message that is applicable to everyone is to give him, an "African," power" (Fisch 95).

Conclusion

In its final analysis, Gloria Naylor's *The Women of Brewster Place* takes up the various discourses of violence to study the predicament prevailing in the black society. She writes for the "invisible black people" (Carabi 26), basically focusing on the sufferings of the black women and subtly weaves it with the adversities of racism that was present in Brewster Place, despite being "untouched by whites" (Brantzburg 117). Though Brewster Pace is a fictitious cartography, yet through her vivid portrayal of the characters' plight and agony, she makes it a real one. In the novel, violence becomes both a source as well as an outcome for most of the actions. It is also employed as a tool to depict the social irony. Confining it within the parameters of gender and sexuality, violence brutally casts itself through the rape of Lorraine, sexual abuse of Etta and Ben's daughter's reducing of the female body into merely holes "that makes women preeminently vessels or containers: fragile, static, open, waiting to be filled with everything from semen to language (Hite 133). It also portrays the black female body as "sexually deviant," "available sex objects," "prostitutes" and "sexual savages who are unfit for marriages" (Hooks，*Ai't I a Woman* 58). Through Ciel's narrative, Naylor projects the atrocities on women in the domestic domain. Thus rape is a heinous crime that emanates from suppressed aggression of black masculinity and reflects "failures" (Hooks, *We Real Cool)* in all dimensions of manhood. Violence as an outcome of racial segregation can be seen penetrating within the physical parameters of the body, transcending deeper into the psychological domain, clinging and corrupting it. Hindering the process of the decolonization of black minds, violence runs through the characters' thoughts, actions and is reflected through their speech as well.

While looking at the lives and predicaments of these black inhabitants of Brewster Place one is reminded throughout that sex, race and class are all firmly bound to one another in such a manner that one finds violence simultaneously operating at all these levels for a systematic oppression of black women. Thus, by "attempting to create a little microcosm of a certain experience" (Carabi 27) Naylor voices the experiences of Black women who speak a 'simultaneity of discourse', where "the politics of sex as well as the politics of race and class are crucially interlocking factors" (Smith, qtd. in G. Lewis 28).

Thus, Naylor's *The Women of Brewster Place* presents the dark and uncanny experiences of the black women characters, their trauma which emanates from the violence inflicted upon them, and their everyday tactics of survival and resistance. The stories of the women of Brewster Place unfold "the discourses through which

black women constitute their multiple selves, give meaning to the content of their lives and define the parameters within which their 'experience' is produced and lived" (G. Lewis 28). Weaving together the stories of seven women, Naylor brings forth their experiences, sufferings, struggles, resilience, hope, and their desire to live with dignity. While narrating the discourses of violence in the lives of black women, Naylor intends to present their struggle, as she says in an interview, "As a writer, I'm going to tell you that it's more interesting to write about people who have struggled" (Rowell 184). Though these suffering souls come from different corners to Brewster place with a hope to have a better life, unfortunately they continue to suffer at the hands of their people. Nevertheless, trauma is the wound of the mind, these characters manage to create "an untrammeled female space" for themselves which is "rife with potential" (Stave 266). Despite their knowledge of their material reality, of their fate which is as dead as the streets of Brewster Place, they try to seek a way to survival through the shared feeling of womanhood "in a community pieced together bit by bit, torn apart and mended again" (Kulp 9). It is through their strong will and passion to move ahead in life, these women build "a community of women…sustaining, enabling, and enriching the lives of each other" (Khaleghi 131). Violence, thus, being an inevitable reality of their lives also becomes their unifying force.

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To the Lighthouse: Memory and Art Therapy

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Abstract This paper is devoted to the issues of memory, art therapy and creation and their contributions to the survival and well-being in Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*. Suzanne Nalbantian's ideas are employed to investigate the memory in *To the Lighthouse*. Nalbantian's theories are based on Jean-Pierre Changeux's neuroscientific theories which would be linked with Antonio Damasio's proposition concerning the nature of the arts. Therefore, as the consciousness and memory are some means to contribute to the well-being and quality of life, the arts follow this similar path to, first, argue that Woolf's long term memories of her childhood, which helped her to create *To the Lighthouse* led to her well-being and optimal life through modulating her emotions and feelings concerning her mother; and, second, to abolish the gap, the feud, the so-called difference, between literature and science through tracing the roots of the arts to the biological notions of consciousness and memory. Simply, this paper argues that *To the Lighthouse* and Lily's painting in the novel are both engendered through the long term memory. These creations, consequently, led to the well-being of their creators because art has a therapeutic nature due to consciousness and memory.

Key words *To the Lighthouse*; Memory; Antonio Damasio; Suzanne Nalbantian; Art Therapy

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Introduction

Literature and science carry such a feud with each other that their borders are marked with a red line, to the extent that trespassing of each field to the other is considered heresy. This literature/science dualism has resulted in a gap between the scientific and literary fields that almost hindered the exploration of new vistas for novel researches and ideas in both cultures. C. P. Snow in 1959 by delivering his lecture "The Two Cultures" provoked the debate about the separation between the humanities and the sciences as a major hindrance for the growth of knowledge. This debate was climaxed by E.O. Wilson's book *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge,* published in 1998. In this book, he endeavors, among many things, to unite the sciences with the humanities. Wilson uses the term "consilience" for the unification of all knowledge: "A 'jumping together' of knowledge by the linking of facts and fact-based theory across disciplines to create a common groundwork of explanation" (8). Although Wilson's book "does not attempt systematic argument" (Easterlin 4), it was an effective call for interdisciplinary researches. In literary study "committing to consilience means making our theories of literature and culture consistent with the best scientific understandings" (Gottschall 21).

Most arguments against consilience revolve around Wilhelm Dilthey's notion that the human studies "cannot be a continuation of the hierarchy of the natural sciences, because they rest upon a different foundation" (qtd. in Freeman 22). In other words, the knowledge in the humanities is incommensurate with the sciences. Dilthey believes in "the autonomy of the human sciences" and bases his notion on

two arguments (Mantzavinos 11-12). The first argument states: "The method of the natural sciences consists in explaining the regularities in nature with the help of law-like statements. The method of the social sciences consists in comprehending social reality on the basis of understanding. Understanding is thus the means available to the researcher to apprehend the meaning of texts, actions, and social phenomena" (Mantzavinos 12).

The second argument that Dilthey relies on for the difference between social and natural sciences "postulates the primacy of the object of inquiry over the method of inquiry"; in other words, "in the natural and social sciences, this means concretely that the difference in the structure of the natural and social ontology forces the researcher to employ respectively different methods to research different objects" (Mantzavinos 13). Therefore, Dilthey believes in an impassable line between social and natural sciences.

Most opponents of consilience believe in Dilthey's arguments. For example, Tony Jackson contends that literary study is "a kind of inquiry that is relatively distinct in method and aim from empirical-scientific inquiry" (322). Gottschall believes that this difference-in-foundation argument has been the most important impediment to consilience: "The most important impediment is the old and largely unexamined assumption that the objects literary scholars study, and the questions we ask, are of a fundamentally different kind than those addressed in all nonhumanities disciplines" (57).

Mantzavinos in his book *Naturalistic Hermeneutics* rejects Dilthey's arguments by following statements: First, self-consciousness does not always lead to valid and true understanding of our conditions, like in anosognosia disease (16). Anosognosia is a condition that a person with a special disability is unaware of having that disability. In this disease a person is going to be tricked by his/her self-consciousness; therefore, understanding is not a good methodological tool to lead to the validity of theories in the social sciences and the humanities. Second, Mantzavinos argues that "developments in modern brain research indicate that natural scientific methods can, in principle, be applied to human behavior" (17). For example, FMRI technology, which is a technique of brain imaging, can tell us about the function of the brain and, consequently, human behavior. Thus, the knowledge produced in the scientific fields is not necessarily incommensurate in other fields, such as the humanities, because the objects literary scholars study and the questions they ask are not necessarily different from the sciences.

Therefore, Mantzavinos proposes the unity of method: "There is no fundamental methodological difference between the natural sciences, on the one

hand, and the social sciences and humanities, on the other" (ix). A note of caution is necessary here: "The idea of the unity of the method is to be confused neither with the demand for a universal language nor with the demand for a unified science; instead it is a minimalistic requirement to set up hypotheses whenever one attempts to acquire knowledge and to test them critically using empirical evidence" (Mantzavinos xi).

Thus, by expanding the method of trial and error into the humanities, scholars can use the potentialities of their respective fields to make sound and valid hypotheses and theories that could, even, be utilized in other fields, such as the sciences. Aside from Mantzavinos' arguments, this paper endeavors, through analyzing *To the Lighthouse*, to depict that there is no literature/science dualism because the arts are the extension of the biological and neuroscientific notions of consciousness and memory.

Damasio and Memory

Memory is one of the properties that are indispensable for consciousness in order to record and recall. Damasio contends that it is due to this mechanism of recording and recalling that we are able "to maneuver the complex world around us" (*Self* 91). For example, our ability to recognize people and things and "our ability to imagine possible events" depend "on learning and recall"; therefore, recording and recalling "is the foundation of reasoning and navigating the future and, more generally, for creating novel solutions for a problem" (91).

The mechanism of memorizing is as follows. The brain does not simply record the shape or structure of something, but "the memory of an object is *the composite memory of the sensory and motor activities related to the interaction between the organism and the object* during a certain period of time" (Damasio, *Self* 92). In addition, it is the values of things or events to be recorded or remembered that specify "the range of the sensorimotor activities" (92); for example, "the memory of unique entities and events, namely, those that are both unique and personal, requires high-complexity contexts" (97).

Thus, memories of specific objects and events are affected by their past conditions of recording: "Our memories are *prejudiced*, in the full sense of the term, by our past history and beliefs" (Damasio, *Self* 92). However, because "memories are not stored in facsimile fashion and must undergo a complex process of reconstruction during retrieval," they "may not be fully reconstructed, may be reconstructed in ways that differ from the original, or may never again see the light of consciousness" (Damasio, *Feeling* 286-87). It is also possible that when we recall

a memory, it may trigger a chain of other memories that may seem unmotivated or unexplained "although a web of connections does indeed exist sub rosa, reflecting either the reality of some moment lived in the past or the remodeling of such a moment by gradual and unconscious organization of covert memory stores" (287).

For now, the question is, biologically, how does the brain record, store, and recall an event? "Does it create a facsimile of the thing to be memorized, a sort of hard copy placed in a file? Or does it reduce the image to code — digitize it, as it were? Which? How? Where?" (Damasio, *Self* 95). We hold our memories in dispositional form: Dispositions are "know-how formulas that code for something" (93). Dispositions are efficient because they are capable of storing a large number of memories in a limited space to be remembered rapidly and almost precisely; in sum, "we . . . never had to microfilm various and sundry images and store them in hard-copy files; we simply stored a nimble formula for their reconstruction and used the existing perceptual machinery to reassemble them as best we could" (94).

It is in the dispositional space that "dispositions hold the knowledge base as well as the devices for the reconstruction of that knowledge in recall" (Damasio, *Self* 100). Dispositional space is located in association cortices and consisted of convergence-divergence zones. The function of: "CDZs consists of re-creating separate sets of neural activity that were once approximately simultaneous during perception — that is, that coincided during the time window necessary for us to attend to them and be conscious of them. To achieve this, the CDZ would prompt an extremely fast sequence of activations that would make separate neural regions come online in some order, the sequence being imperceptible to consciousness" (Damasio, *Self* 102).

In order for dispositions to become maps and, consequently, images for recalling a memory, they should "act on a host of early sensory cortices [the image space] originally engaged by perception. The dispositions would do so by dint of connections diverging from the disposition site back to early sensory cortices" (Damasio, *Self* 98). Based on the above hypothesis, several arguments would follow. First, "the dispositional space guides the image making but is not involved in displaying images itself" (107). Second, dispositions, in other words, are "implicit formulas for how to reconstruct maps in the image space" (109); therefore, the contents of the image space are accessible consciously while in the dispositional space "*the contents of dispositions are always unconscious*. They exist in encrypted and dormant form" (100). Third, where the recalled memories are "played back would not be that different from the locus of original perception [the image space]" (98). Finally, the dispositional space and the image space "point to different ages

in brain evolution, one in which dispositions sufficed to guide adequate behavior and another in which maps gave rise to images and to an upgrade of the quality of behavior. Today they are seamlessly integrated" (109).

Woolf and Memory

While scientists investigate data detached from the experience of that data, the neuroscientific investigation of memory in literature provides crucial information about subjective experience of memory beyond experimental restrictions: These studies "provide a new kind of empirical data for understanding memory in its phenomenological expressions" (Nalbantian "Autobiographical" 255). Aside from contributing to science, consilience is beneficial to the humanities as well: For example, this collaboration contributes to literary studies by updating or amending the stale, invalid, and indeterminate theories and methodologies of literary criticism; in sum, "biocultural criticism and theory strengthen the aims and practices of literary studies" (Easterlin 5).

To the lighthouse is the optimal choice for investigating memory because of several reasons. First, it is based on the autobiographical memory of Woolf's childhood; therefore, its "autobiographical basis gives a factual frame of reference against which to judge the authenticity or veracity of the memory episodes whose truth is embedded in their fictional rendition" (Nalbantian, "Autobiographical" 256). Second, as Suzanne Nalbantian contends, *To the Lighthouse* is a "metacognitive or *process*-oriented" novel; it means that this autobiographical work covers "subjects, revelatory metaphors, and dramatic scenes that bring to life in vivid, specific terms the workings of physiological memory in different phases of encoding, consolidation, and retrieval"; simply, this novel "reveal[s] how memory is constructed, helping us to understand different kinds of memory processing" ("Autobiographical" 256). For example, the process of associative memory plays an important role in Woolf's art. Associative memory focuses "on the physical and cognitive environments that initiate retrieval, where a cue may have symbolic form" ("Autobiographical" 261). In *To the Lighthouse* the process of associative memory is widespread; in this novel, the "emotional memories are attached to material objects and places by association; they are dependent upon the exterior world to be revived. This is quite different from the Romantics, for whom memory may be projected upon a locale yet remains independent of it" (Nalbantian, *Memory* 85).

Third, in *To the Lighthouse* the investigation of memory is facilitated because of Woolf's use of the stream of consciousness technique: "The stream of consciousness is the conveyer of memories, perpetually linking the past and

the present" (Nalbantian, *Memory*, 99). This presence of the past in the present is more intensified in Woolf's works because of her particular style: "I dig out beautiful caves behind my characters; . . . The idea is that the caves shall connect, and each comes to daylight at the present moment" (qtd. in Nalbantian, *Memory* 83). Therefore, in Woolf's novels, the past always haunts the present: Nalbantian believes that, "contrary to a Proustian return to the past, where the present seems to be temporarily effaced, the Woolfian memory process integrates the past and present in the search for a definition of selfhood" (*Memory* 85). Moreover, Woolf's other technique in treating memory is to reverse "the teleological shape of memory, so that the present is always already opening out into the future as a moment of the past to be looked back on"; by this technique, "Woolf builds a store against the riskiness of living" for self to protect "itself against the risk of a traumatic forgetting that would leave it, like Septimus, at the mercy of the roar of outside forces" (Waugh 39).

Encoding and Storage

To the Lighthouse is divided into three parts which corresponds to three levels of memory processing, "the encoding, the storage and the retrieval of memory" (Nalbantian, *Memory* 80). It is in the first part, "The Window," that the memory of Mrs. Ramsay "is encoded in the brains of the family and friends by her association with the guiding light of the lighthouse whose 'long steady stroke, was her stroke.' This lighthouse 'stark and straight' becomes the stable embodiment of a memory that will persist over time" (Nalbantian "Autobiographical" 257). This fictitious lighthouse reflects Godrevy lighthouse where Woolf's family summer-house resided; Woolf as a kid encoded the memory of her mother, Julia Stephen, through the association with this actual lighthouse. In sum, in *To the Lighthouse*, "the encoding, which originally introduces the links of association, are the basis for the retrieval in a similar environment" (Nalbantian *Memory* 82).

The second part of the novel, "Time Passes," corresponds to the second level of memory processing, the storage. In the second part where there is no participation by primary characters and when ten years have passed and Mrs. Ramsay is dead, senses of darkness, sleep, and forgetfulness pervade the atmosphere; this atmosphere reflects the processes of consolidation and storage of memory through which the short memory transforms to the long term memory:

> Part II of the novel is a metaphorically long night which proliferates into ten years of night and darkness, involving the First World War, three deaths in the

> family (Mrs Ramsay and two of her children), despair, vacancy, bad weather and apparent oblivion, with no allusion to any "thinking" or "feeling" subjects. This atmosphere can also suggest a long span of sleep and the unconscious atmosphere with no remembering subjects or artistic creation. But from the neuroscientific standpoint this ten-year period might very well represent the consolidation of memory through this so-called dormant stage of "sleep." It may support the hypothesis that emotional arousal, highly operative in sleep states, strengthens memory storage. (Nalbantian, "Neuroaesthetics" 363)

Retrieval and Creation

After strengthening the memory storage in such a long span, part three, "The Lighthouse," which reflects the retrieval of memory, starts. Lily Briscoe, the artist in *To the Lighthouse*, involves herself in a process of creating that Nalbantian calls "the memory painting" (*Memory* 1). It takes ten years for Lily to finish her painting after returning to the abandoned summer-house where her inspiring figure Mrs. Ramsay is no longer alive. Lily's return to the place where her memories of Mrs. Ramsay are first shaped is crucial for their retrieval: "The contextual element is significant for this type of long-term episodic memory, where there is similarity between engraphy (the encoding of information into memory) and ecphory (automatic retrieval from memory triggered by a specific cue)" (Nalbantian, "Neuroaesthetics" 363). After executing the first necessary act for retrieval of memories, returning to the same place where memories are first encoded, Lily immerses herself in the process of remembering through physical associations and cues available in the external environment.

Therefore, after ten years of encoding and consolidating, Lily's memories are triggered on a September morning — which suggests "the alert state of the prefrontal cortex and the enabling condition of vigilance. . . . In the early morning hours, they [characters] are indeed 'alert' and 'vigilant'" (Nalbantian, "Neuroaesthetics" 363-64) — by different things, most importantly, the lighthouse. Lily has attached the figure of Mrs. Ramsay to the lighthouse through the process of association: The "stroke of the Lighthouse . . . was her [Mrs. Ramsay's] stroke, for watching them in this mood always at this hour one could not help attaching oneself to one thing especially of the things one saw" (Woolf 225). The sight of the lighthouse, among other things, provokes Lily's emotion to remember the memories of Mrs. Ramsay after ten years in order to finish her painting. Thus, emotions play an important role in the mechanism of memory: It is "the evocation of those

emotional memories associated with Mrs Ramsay" that leads Lily to finish her painting (Nalbantian, "Neuroaesthetics" 363). Woolf in her diaries wondered: "I feel that strong emotion must leave its trace; and it is only a question of discovering how we can get ourselves again attached to it" (qtd. in Nalbantian "Autobiographical" 259). Through her art, especially through *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf provides the answer: Emotions leave their imprints on the memories, and retrieval of those emotional memories almost attaches us to the original emotions. For example, Virginia as a kid "tied the 'deep emotion' of the loss of her mother to the visual image of the real Godrevy lighthouse in St Ives, Cornwall — an actual view from the summer house (called Talland House) that her family enjoyed over the years of her happy childhood" (Nalbantian, "Neuroaesthetics" 363). Therefore, through the lighthouse in the novel (which reflects Godrevy lighthouse in St Ives, Cornwall), Lily (Who reflects Woolf) remembers the memories of Mrs. Ramsay (who reflects Julia Stephen, Woolf's mother).

Jean-Pierre Changeux believes that "artistic and scientific creation are part of an individual history which itself stems from an anterior historical evolution" ("Creation" 4). Hence, *To the Lighthouse* is a tangible proof of Changeux's statement because both the novel and Lily's painting are based on Woolf and Lily's individual histories respectively. The painting, which reflects the novel, relates Lily the character to Woolf the author because "there is the retrieval of memory through the means of their respective art. . . .The memory is materialized in the painting, just as Woolf's memory of her mother is materialized in her novel" (Nalbantian *Memory* 81). Simply, each of them uses their past experiences in order to create an art. According to Changeux, the process of creation, especially in the painting, follows the following path:

> During the "mental experience" of creative work, these multiple evolutions overlie and connect with each other. Beginning with the first "confused shapes" (Leonardo da Vinci), randomly born bits on which, according to the French poet and essayist Yves Bonnefoy, "the imaginary rests," one can distinguish the "first idea," a still crude outline that is nevertheless importantly connected to the subject's own definition. Then this mental object, sifted through the filter of reason, becomes reality on paper by multiple "external drawings" of the graphic sketch, or *disegno*. Representations from the "internal circuit" give way to precise movements of the hand and fingers (often acquired after a long period of practicing one's art) that finally direct the pen or the paintbrush. A cascade of activity in premotor, then motor areas extends the internal, implicit

> evolution of mental creation. ("Epigenetic" 66-7)

Both Lily and Woolf, respectively, after ten and thirty-one years (Woolf's mother died when Virginia was thirteen years old, and *To the Lighthouse* was written when she was forty-four years old) of experiencing confused shapes and processing them unconsciously, gave birth to their mental creations. Unconscious processing is essential for solving problems and initiating creativity. Conscious processing is only able to focus on a limited number of thoughts for a limited time while the range of nonconscious processing is vaster. The list of nonconscious processing includes:

> All the fully formed images to which we do not attend; 2. all the neural patterns that never become images; 3. all the dispositions that were acquired through experience, lie dormant, and may never become an explicit neural pattern; 4. all the quiet remodeling of such dispositions and all their quiet renetworking — that may never become explicitly known; and 5. all the hidden wisdom and knowhow that nature embodied in innate, homeostatic dispositions. (Damasio, *Feeling* 288)

Thus, the second part of the novel corresponds to the unconscious processing of the data gathered in part one to be implanted consciously in Lily's painting in part three. The unconscious processing, by gathering a flood of data to process, reflects wholeness and contributes to creativity: "She rammed a little hole in the sand and covered it up, by way of burying in it the perfection of the moment. It was like a drop of silver in which one dipped and illumined the darkness of the past" (Woolf 307). Here the little hole reflects unconsciousness, which is buried beneath consciousness, that contains the complexity and wholeness of the moment to be processed in order to arrive at better comprehension of the past. This is the reason that remembering an experience is almost more enlightening compared to experiencing a new one because memories are backed by unconscious processing. It is also interesting that readers, like Lily, participate in the creation of the painting by gathering the data in the novel in order to manipulate them consciously and unconsciously to shape a whole picture of the novel in their minds, which reflects the painting: "As no such painting actually exists, readers are prompted to imagine the painting, thereby totally participating in its creation with the memory fragments that are offered in the text" (Nalbantian, "Neuroaesthetics" 364).

In sum, Lily's "memory painting," which reflects Woolf's memory novel, shows that "how explicit declarative memory involving the conscious retrieval

of life facts and events can be closely linked to the artistic process" (Nalbantian "Autobiographical" 258). Retrieval of memories in *To the Lighthouse* occurs through the following mechanism: "Once an experience is stored, simple visual cues can stimulate the recall of those old memories" (258). It is the sight of the lighthouse, as well as the tablecloth, that triggers the retrieval of memories; therefore, sight plays an important role in the retrieval of memories for Woolf: "Whatever the reason may be, I find that scene-making is my natural way of marking the past" (qtd. in Nalbantian *Memory* 79). Scene-making of the past is related to the visual memory. It is creativity that transforms this visual memory and "with characteristic parsimony, embodies it in metaphor, metonymy, analogy, and other devices of literary expression. When memory is productively 'distorted,' its component of creativity becomes more visible for analysis" (Nalbantian "Autobiographical" 271). Rather than their literary disguise, the actual retrieved memories "are not direct recall of past events, but reconstructions from physical traces stored in the brain in latent form" (Changeux, "Epigenetic" 64).

Finally, in *To the Lighthouse*, the existence of different things as physical associations such as the lighthouse, the tablecloth, and even the place itself — which collaborate with the mind and the body to resurrect the past memories — challenges: "The view of creativity as a teleological process that involves the transference of an already formulated *mental* 'vision' onto or into a suitably receptive *material* medium, realised as 'design.' This is the conception of the creation of art that reaches back to the poetics of Aristotle and forward to Romantic and Idealist theories of inspiration. A version of the dualist account of the soul" (Waugh 39).

Thus, Woolf, by *To the Lighthouse* and through Lily's character, depicts that creation is related to the history of the interaction between a person's entire organism and his/her external environment: "Mind, intention, 'vision,' are not the cold blueprints of an architect, purely mental acts of initiation, but a living bio-culturally distributed process that emerges through a complex autopoetic emergence out of the mutually interconnected relations of body, mind and world" (Waugh 41).

Creation and Well-being

To the Lighthouse is considered an autobiographical novel because it corresponds to Woolf's long term memory of her childhood. Through this novel, Woolf intends to retrieve the memory of her mother, Julia Stephen. In other words, she, like Lily, uses her art to dip "into the past there" (Woolf 307) or to tunnel "her way into her picture, into the past" (308) to retrieve the memory of her mother figure, but why?

Woolf describes the initiation of *To the Lighthouse* as follows:

> It is perfectly true that she [Woolf's mother] obsessed me, in spite of the fact that she died when I was thirteen, until I was forty-four. Then one day walking round Tavistock Square I made up, as I sometimes make up my books, *To the Lighthouse;* in a great, apparently involuntary, rush. One thing burst into another . . . I wrote the book very quickly; and when it was written, I ceased to be obsessed by my mother. (qtd. in Nalbantian, *Memory* 80)

Woolf also emphasizes the role of her mother in constituting her childhood memories: "Certainly there she was, in the very centre of that great Cathedral space which was childhood; there she was from the very first. My first memory is of her lap" (qtd. in Nalbantian, *Memory* 79). These quotations show that Woolf's memory of her mother haunted her until she retrieved and turned them into a work of art by recreating "her mother both through the character of Mrs Ramsay (who also dies) and through the Godrevy lighthouse which becomes a fictional lighthouse on an island in the Scottish Hebrides" (Nalbantian, *Memory* 80). After finishing the novel, Woolf feels: "When it was written, I ceased to be obsessed by my mother" (qtd. in Nalbantian *Memory*, 80); "I suppose that I did for myself what psychoanalysts do for their patients. I expressed some very long felt and deeply felt emotion" (qtd. in Nalbantian, "Neuroaesthetics" 362). How is creation capable of such a therapeutic act?

We are predisposed to creation because: "The human brain proceeds in a direction opposite to the 'input-output' mode long proposed by cybernetics. It always projects onto the world, in a spontaneous and internally generated fashion, mental representations that it tries to test against an external reality that is intrinsically devoid of meaning. This projection, as a generator of mental forms, represents an essential predisposition of the human brain toward creation" (Changeux, "Creation" 1). Therefore, we, humans, through the extended ability of our mind, are capable of projecting meaning onto the meaningless world. In other words, humans compensate for the so-called meaninglessness of the world through their creations. For instance, Woolf tries to compensate for the cruelty, transience, and meaninglessness of the world, which separated Woolf as a child from her mother, by retaining the memory of her mother in *To the Lighthouse* forever: "Both the novel itself and the painting within the novel represent the artistic work which lodges the memory of the mother figure in permanent fashion" (Nalbantian, "Neuroaesthetics" 362).

Damasio suggests that "the arts prevailed in evolution because they had survival value and contributed to the development of the notion of well-being" (*Self* 211). The question is: How can the arts contribute to survival? "They helped cement social groups and promote social organization; they assisted with communication; they compensated for emotional imbalances caused by fear, anger, desire, and grief; and they probably inaugurated the long process of establishing external records of cultural life" (211). For example, concerning the therapeutic nature of creation and memory, Waugh contends that in *To the Lighthouse* "Woolf explored that apparent loss of centre by writing a novel about the transmutation of grief into the form of a work of art"; by doing so, "memory might therefore be the final ingredient for recovering and securing a weighted and profound sense of "me," as an individual soul" (38).

In addition to the compensation for emotional imbalances, Woolf uses her art for communication. Communication seems to be one of the origins of the arts: "At the birth of arts such as music, dance, and painting, people probably intended to communicate to others information about threats and opportunities, about their own sadness or joy, and about shaping social behavior" (Damasio, *Self* 210). Clearly, Woolf communicates, in *To the lighthouse*, the catastrophic and evil nature of war to be reflected upon, the imbalances in the family relationship to be reconsidered, and the difficulty of being a female in a patriarchal society to be reformed; this is how Woolf's art contributes to survival and well-being. Woolf uses narratives for her creation and communication. Damasio contends that one of the manifestations of communication is storytelling. Endowed with consciousness to improve the quality of life, we have:

> Invented forms of consolation for those in suffering, rewards for those who helped the sufferers, injunctions for those who caused harm, norms of behavior aimed at preventing harm and promoting good, and a mixture of punishments and preventions, of penalties and praise. The problem of how to make all this wisdom understandable, transmissible, persuasive, enforceable—in a word, of how to make it stick—was faced and a solution found. Storytelling was the solution. (Damasio, *Self* 208-9)

Conclusion

The survival-oriented nature of the arts is due to its origin: The arts are "the remarkable gifts of consciousness to humans" (Damasio, *Self* 211). Thus,

first, the arts are made possible because of consciousness and memory: "Once autobiographical selves can operate on the basis of knowledge etched in brain circuits and in external records of stone, clay, or paper, humans become capable of hitching their individual biological needs to the accumulated sapience" (206). Second, because the aim of consciousness and memory is to contribute to the well-being and quality of life, the arts follow this similar path. For instance, lily's act of transferring her long term memories of Mrs. Ramsay into her painting reflects Woolf's use of her childhood memories for creation of *To the Lighthouse* in order to decrease the harmful emotional imbalances caused by the loss of her mother: "I [Woolf] suppose that I did for myself what psychoanalysts do for their patients. I expressed some very long felt and deeply felt emotion [concerning my mother]" (qtd. in Nalbantian, "Neuroaesthetics" 362). In addition, by tracing the roots of creation — in *To the Lighthouse* — to the biological and neuroscientific notions of consciousness and memory, this paper substantiates that the gap, the feud, the so-called difference, between literature and science is nothing, but a fiction.

*all italics are original

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Existential Failure in Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*

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Abstract This paper, by the means of illustrating the specific elements of Existentialism including "absurdity," "existential Angst" and "ethical decline", aims to show how Gregor as the main character of *The Metamorphosis* fails to fulfill self-definition. Kafka's protagonists are lonely because they are caught midway between a notion of good and evil, whose scope they cannot determine and whose contradiction they cannot resolve. This makes them to become alienated from a society in which fear is a central idea. Gregor, due to his family's financial issue and fear of being shame in the society, is unable to burst of his inner pressure. This pressure causes him to look for death as a suitable tool to escape of absurdity that society and his family offered him earlier.

Key words existentialism; Franz Kafka; *The Metamorphosis*; absurdity; existential angst

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Franz Kafka (1883–1924) is among the most intriguing and influential writers of the last century. During his lifetime he worked as a civil servant and published only a handful of short stories, the best known being *The Metamorphosis*. His other three novels, published after his death, helped to found his reputation as a uniquely perceptive interpreter of the twentieth century. "Kafka's stories present symbolically his inner personality so professionally that understanding his stories is possible just when one has a precise view of his life" (Huber 178). His relationship with his

tyrannical father, whom the only conclusion of his training was a son with a guilty conscience, full of feeling of terror, anger and lack of self confidence, is depicted throughout his works. As he mentioned in a letter to his father, he has suffered from a sense of guilt, since he was a child, which is the result of his lack of self-confidence and he notes that this is his father who is responsible for these all (Kafka 55).

The Metamorphosis is one of Kafka's most interesting works which was written in 1912 and published in 1915. It is the story of a salesman, Gregor Samsa, who one morning transferred in to a verminous bug. He was hidden in his room by his family and finally he died due to an apple which was thrown by his father. "This story is more than just a transformation of a human being in to a big insect" (Barfi 107). Vladmir Nabokov, in this case, referred to anyone "Who reads *The Metamorphosis* beyond just a fantasy as a good reader" (Nabokov 161). *The Metamorphosis* is a projection of his own life, even when Gregor Samsa transferred into a verminous bug. Like Kafka, his character Gregor, in *The Metamorphosis*, suffers due to his failures to exist within the ideal established by the Existential framework. Gregor's failures to successfully confront the world, or even to defend his own existence, result in his annihilation; first symbolically, as he is systematically stripped of meaning and humanity, and then corporeally, as his body can no longer take the alienation from its spirit and relinquishes its frail grasp on life in an anti-climatic death scene.

Absurdity

"Absurdity is related to human condition in which humans face nothingness" (Davachi 87); it is from the encounter of a human's need and the unreasonable silence of the world. As Camus believes, "In this unintelligible and limited universe, man's fate henceforth assumes its meaning. A horde of irrationals has sprung up and surrounds him utile this ultimate end. In his recovered and now studied lucidity, the feeling of absurd becomes clear and definite" (Camus 21). In order to clarify the concept of absurdity in *The Metamorphosis*, it is necessary to study the text carefully to understand how good and evil notions lead the main character to overwhelm in his alienation which makes him to reject any possible hope for his problems.

Beyond Good and Evil (beyond rationalism and moralizing) is the idea that promulgated by Nietzsche. This idea, among others, utters that "There was no absolute good or absolute evil in the world. All was relative, created by human being in their attempts to rationalize and make sense of the world" (Bressler 124).

Various iterations of this thought run through Existentialist thought, whereby, once again, the individual is defining its own environment, and its existence is affected by this process of definition. The way this notion is manifested in *The Metamorphosis* is in Kafka's lack of judgment of his characters. Take the father and the sister as examples. There is no castigation of guilt put upon them by the narrator for neglecting and even turning against Gregor. They, as far as the text supplies, act in a way to better their own lots in life. They break away from dependence and become free-moving, self-sufficient entities. This, it would seem, is what Kafka suggests is more important than notions of good or evil, right or wrong. In fact, at the end of the story, the family freed from their burdens, are presented in a pleasant light. Gregor, who brought guilt onto himself at every turn, and who dies to lessen the burden of himself on his family, is presented as pathetic.

Furthermore, it might be said that Gregor's primary failure is his neglect of self-definition; or in other terms, his spinelessness, which is manifested symbolically in his insect form. Gregor is passive at every turn which makes him become alienated from his surrounding world. Perhaps the greatest consequence of Gregor's metamorphosis is the psychological distance it creates between Gregor and those around him. Gregor's change makes him literally and emotionally separate from his family members — indeed, from humanity in general — and he even refers to it as his "imprisonment." After his transformation he stays almost exclusively in his room with his door closed and has almost no contact with other people. At most, Grete spends a few minutes in the room with him, and during this time Gregor always hides under the couch and has no interaction with her. Essentially he has become totally isolated from everyone around him, including those people he cares for like Grete and his mother. In fact, "The alienation caused by Gregor's metamorphosis can be viewed as an extension of the alienation he already felt as a person" (Blauner 107).

"Humans need meaning, even though, it appears there is no meaning to be found. Much of life is characterised by such absurd paradoxes: we build our lives on the hope of tomorrow, yet tomorrow brings us closer to death, the ultimate enemy; we live as if we don't know about the certainty of death" (Camus 114). No matter how hard Kafka's heroes strive to come to terms with the universe, they are hopelessly caught, not only in a mechanism of their own contriving, but also in a network of accidents and incidents, the least of which may lead to the gravest consequences. Gregor's inability to sleep, his hopes and fears from everyday life are described in terms of the nightmarish and ghostly; he is ''often haunted by the idea'' (Kafka 29) that he will return to his normal position in the family and

in society. The inversion of the dream-like and reality thus permeates the very language in which Gregor's thoughts are described, wedding the dream language and the anxiety over physical act of sleep. Instead of trying to make the absurd aspects of his life conform to a logical explanation, Gregor now sees any hope for normalcy as the most absurd and nightmarish thing of all. There being alienated from the world around, he comes to accept that hopelessness is what waits for him.

In the end, it is difficult for the reader to sympathize too much with Gregor, or to judge his family too harshly for wanting to be free of burden he had become. Gregor fails to take himself out of absurdity and nothingness because lets himself to be alienated from the family and the world around him. This alienation makes him not to think for any hope, though, he used to have it in early stage after metamorphosis.

Existential Angst

Guerin Wilfred defines that "Existential angst describes the internal conflict experienced by every conscious individual due to the fact that the world is not a rational place and existence can be maintained only by constant struggle" (226). The implications of this idea range from the notion of something as basic as finding a means to provide the most basic needs for survival, to struggling with the idea of searching for and defining meaning in the world, trying to communicate and to establish meaningful relationships with other creatures, etc. All existential struggles represent the conflict that naturally opposes the original state of human existence, which is the simple karmic existence in the womb. In this framework, the point of birth, the exit from the safety and peacefulness of the womb, into the world of horrors and uncertainties, is a very crucial moment where existence is defined inside the framework of the world as we know it.

In *The Metamorphosis*, it is this womb-like state, without conflict, decision or self-definition that Gregor longs to return to. However, of course, this is impossible, and "Gregor's escapist attitude is largely responsible for his failure in life" (Bennett 75). Gregor's desire to escape is illustrated throughout the text. Escape, in fact, is a motif which manifests itself in Gregor's sleeping to escape, avoiding decisions, and his eventual physical and mental exhaustion, all which lead to his ultimate escape through death.

A second manifestation of existential angst resides, ironically, in free choice. "That ultimate prize coveted by all of humanity, says the Existentialist, is also one of the biggest burdens on the human, and a source of omnipresent anxiety" (Frankl 55). With complete freedom of choice, the average individual would quickly become overwhelmed. This is compounded by the fact that as conscious

beings, humans know that every decision they make is irreversible and determines outcomes they cannot even fathom, Further the individual operating solely for the good of its own existence, without regard for society as a whole, becomes quickly alienated. It is Gregor's denial of self-definition and choice that has put him at the whim of the world. His faith in the world as a rational place has been proven absurd by his irrational transformation into an insect. Gregor clearly fails in this vein as he seeks to avoid decisions at every turn. He lets decisions make themselves.

Moreover, communication is a prime source of existential angst. This is in part due to the fact that communication always involves struggle. There is no pure communication; in every instance, something is inherently lost because the tools of communication are imperfect. Communication is also a major motif in *The Metamorphosis*. "Gregor's inability to communicate is central to his difficulties at the outset of the story. His world soon becomes unintelligible, perhaps mirroring his feelings about communication, and symbolizing his relinquishing of any real effort to make it work" (Sarkar 96). Throughout the story, Gregor attempts to communicate with body language, a fundamental communication, but in most instances, this fails or is misinterpreted.

To Sum up, Gregor have the others to make choice on behalf of him. Being in far from any choices derived from the point that he is not eager to learn that he should have self-definition in order to change along with the world changes. Moreover, the difficulties of physiological communication after metamorphosis and physical communication after metamorphosis bring have too much pressure that he is unable to connect to the world around.

Ethical Decline

A major German Enlightenment philosopher by the name of Immanuel Kant came up with the ethical principle that you should act toward others as if your actions served as a universal law applicable to everybody, including yourself. It's another way of saying that you should do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Kafka puts a twist on this whole ethical tradition by making the subject of ethical debate in The Metamorphosis a bug. And not just any bug — a vermin, a pest. So what happens to ethics when the subject is a bug? Should we do unto vermin as we would have vermin do unto us? What if we can't determine what Gregor is exactly? Which laws apply to Gregor? The ongoing reasons in this paper which bring the collapse of the ethics include guilt, fear that resulted in death as a tool to escape.

Humans feel obligated to do certain things. It makes them feel good, or worthwhile. Gioia belives that if these responsibilities are not met or to the

obligator's own standards then guilt comes upon them (94). In The Metamorphosis, by Franz Kafka, "Gregor's self-condemnation keeps him trapped. Gregor is enslaved to his family: (Munro 98). Therefore Gregor's guilt emerges from the families' burden. The excerpt below is a key passage to understanding Gregor's guilt:

> Believe me, sir, there's something the matter with him. Otherwise how would Gregor have missed a train? That boy has nothing in his mind but the business. It's almost begun to rile me that he never goes out nights. He's been back in the city for eight days now, but every night he's home. He sits there with us at the table, quietly reading the paper or studying timetables. (Kafka 10)

Guilt can be derived from different situations. Gregor's guilt was from his obligation to work. Even Gregor's mother, a bystander, could see his dedication to his job. Life without amusement becomes stressful and unpleasant. Throughout the novel Gregor finds himself stressed out because of his dissatisfaction with his ability to provide for his family. Gregor, finally near the end of the novel, finds satisfaction in something: his sister's violin.

Gregor and his family have the fear of being judged by the society. This fear which is along with the idea of shame as a motivational factor is relevant here, and is illustrated by such events as the situation in which Gregor frets over the way he will be perceived by his family when the attorney comes to check on him. It is also relevant in instances in which Gregor hides himself from his family to grant them respite from suffering his grotesqueness. This fear has been originated from the idea of social judgment which is also central to the entire story– that Gregor's change was only "A symbolic manifestation of the way society made him feel, as seen through the eyes of social judgment (Fromm 101). In turn, by coming to see himself this way, by his existential weakness, in letting others define him, Gregor allowed himself to be transformed.

After becoming injured by his father, and finding himself ceasing to eat or sleep, Gregor Samsa dies alone in an isolated room. The death of Gregor Samsa in Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* occurs under most unusual circumstances and is ironically celebrated by his family rather than mourned. His unusual death cannot simply be attributed to one fatal causation, but is left ambiguous. Possibly, the neglect and abuse from his family killed Gregor's insect self. Maybe Gregor selfishly gave up on life, finding things too painful tocontinue. Literary critic Michael Ryan argues that "Gregor embodies a cycle of suffering, death and

rebirth. He explains that, for Gregor, death is a goal. Through this he suggests that Gregor's death has an overall purpose" (145). Walter Sokel presents an alternative idea that "Gregor's death was not purposeful but due to an inner conflict between his desire to rebel and to appease those who love him" (206). The confusion surrounding his death is also further complicated by the fact that his family does not mourn his death, but instead seems relieved as if freed of a burden. His family goes out, and the mood of the story immediately evolves, becoming brighter and more joyous.

As a result, Gregor has been caught in the mid way of thinking about the benefit of himself or his family. However, his family does not follow him in this notion and they easily put him away after his metamorphosis. They were good with him until the time that he was the source of financial outcome; Gregor becomes useless after he changes to a useless bug. There this is Gregor's people who lead him to think of death as a tool for freedom. He wishes to die to get rid of the injustice world in which he has been situated.

Conclusion

Kafka's protagonists are lonely because they are caught midway between a notion of good and evil, whose scope they cannot determine and whose contradiction they cannot resolve. This is what make them alienated from the surrounding and far from any hope they look for death as a suitable tool to escape. From Kafk's portrayal of Gregor's life before the change, we can see that the transformation is also a logical continuation of certain changes that were occurring inside Gregor's mind and his demise can be understood, in part, as a failure to address or to try to interrupt any of these things before it was too late. Gregor failed to change with the changing world. In conclusion, it may be said that the metamorphosis would not have occurred in either of these two cases: if Gregor had not nurtured hostility toward his work and his boss, or if he had revolted openly and thrown up his job without regard to his parents. It comes as the climax of a secret history of hostility and guilt. These combine to erupt in the catastrophe which mutilates and destroys him who has failed to face the turmoil in his soul.

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"The Burden of Representation": Absence and the Deferral of Meaning in Yasmine Ghata's *The Calligraphers' Night*

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Abstract The study explores the question of representation in the first novella of the Lebanese-French writer Yasmine Ghata, *The Calligraphers' Night* (2006). Narrating from the afterlife, the protagonist Rikkat Kunt presents the reader with two simultaneously attached-detached narratives spanning her life as wife and mother and as a calligrapher. Her search for meaning in the two narratives drags the reader into deeper analysis of the absence and deferral of meaning in the process of representation. Building on Kobena Mercer's "burden of representation" and Jacques Derrida's "deferral of meaning," the study aims to show that meaning in Rikkat's double narrative is unconquerable; it is endlessly produced but never exhausted. Neither as wife and mother nor as a calligrapher could Rikkat realize this truth; it is only after death that she is able to accept the fact that no matter how hard she tries to make up for loss through producing meaning, some state of absence is sure to result from the constant deferral of meaning. After all, and as Derrida has always taught us, the sole conductor of the process of representation is the word, which is driven "by the absence that makes it necessary." (Reynolds 4) This realization is enough to turn the process of representation into a burden, even after death.

Key words representation; absence; deferral of meaning; "burden of representation"; death

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Introduction

Nothing much happens in Yasmine Ghata's first novella, *The Calligraphers' Night*

(2006).[1] In fact, what happens does so only in retrospect. A dead woman, conscious enough of her death, is going back in time to when she is alive to narrate the bits and pieces that make up her life story. The present constitutes no more than one short chapter of this autobiographical novel; the others are an attempt to revisit a life that has ironically come to an end before it had even started.

To have a character put his life in the past years into a narrative questions the authority of the narrator, what about having a dead character put her whole life into a narrative after her death? The question of representation pops up on the first page of the novel leaving the reader with doubts as to whether a character from somewhere beyond temporal and spatial definition is able to author her story. With death being a metaphysical reality, how could the reader accept a narrative emanating from it? To narrate from the afterlife, therefore, is the challenge that Ghata and her dead narrator take up in this work. With no distinct categories to set an outline for the narrative, the act of narration becomes beyond control jumping back and forth between what has taken place before it and what will take place after it.

This fluctuation between a past which the reader is not in the least sure it has taken place and a present which is so threatening that the reader is sure to feel intimidated to take for granted leaves him with a number of questions that demand answers. Why has Ghata chosen to have a life story, to a large extent based on a true one, narrated by a *dead* woman? Why has she given authority to a narrator who is not only removed from lived reality, but is in all ways separated from it by death? Is she trying to question the conventional act of representation and, therefore, trying to redefine it on new grounds? A clear cut answer to the above questions is hard to arrive at, even after reading and rereading the novella. But, what is certain from a first reading of it is that Ghata is far from being traditional in choosing a retrospective narrative for her novella. A dead female calligrapher, based on the real figure of her late calligrapher grandmother, reminiscing about a life that has come to an end is enough to prove that Ghata writing *The Calligraphers' Night* is no Dickens writing *Great Expectations* (1861).[2]

1 *The Calligraphers' Night* (2006) is originally written in French. It is translated into English by Andrew Brown.The character Rikkat Kunt is based on the author's grandmother who has been a calligrapher.

2 Dickens' *Great Expectations* (1861) is a novel of education (*bildungsroman*). The term *bildungsroman* is originally German. It was coined by the philologist Karl Morgenstern in 1819 and was later employed in 1870 by Wilhelm Dilthey. As a novel of education or formation, it focuses on the journey of maturity that the character undertakes from childhood to adulthood. Maturity is achieved at the end of the journey though usually with difficulty.

But to get the message behind Ghata's novella is not only to realize that her narrator is a dead woman called Rikkat Kunt. It is also to realize that what distinguishes it from any other work narrating the life story of a woman struggling to prove herself to everyone around her is the non-conventional way it addresses the question of representation. In two simultaneously attached-detached narratives; one narrating the protagonist's life as a wife and a mother and the other narrating her life as a calligrapher, Ghata has managed to question whether the act of representation is a means of self-fulfilment or self-assessment; whether it is an attempt at filling gaps or an attempt at highlighting the absence caused by them.

To this end, the study aims to show that Rikkat's narrative is not only an attempt at self-discovery or self-realization, but is also an attempt at redefining the act of representation as an ongoing process of signification. Whether or not Rikkat's attempts at representing her life can be described as successful is not what a wise experienced reader would care for; what matters more for him is to figure out whether Rikkat's search for meaning in her two narratives yields answers to her questions. Is meaning a guaranteed product of the process of representation and is therefore conquerable? Or is it (meaning) endlessly deferred in an ongoing process of signification, emulating, in one sense or another, the eternal state of death with which she begins her story?[1]

The Act of Representation: An Act of Deferred Signification

In "Representation and Resistance: A Cultural, Social, and Political Perplexity in Post-Colonial Literature" (1999), John Yang defines the act of representation in writing as an act of resistance. (1) In the postcolonial context Yang has chosen for his study, the connection seems feasible, since by writing the postcolonial writer is not only reflecting his national identity and culture, but is also resisting being swept away by the mainstream identity and culture of the colonizer. But, to rethink Yang's words in the context Ghata has chosen for her novella leaves the reader wondering what form resistance takes in the narrative of the dead Rikkat. Yang's argument can be of help here. In his discussion, Yang rejects the empowerment-marginalization opposition in light of which postcolonial literature is traditionally written, read and analyzed, situating the process of writing at the junction between those two

1 To ask which narrative gives a more convincing answer to the question raised by the study is not what this study aims at. After all, and as was pointed out in the Introduction, an experienced reader/critic would not limit his understanding of the text to looking for answers to such questions, but would rather direct his attention elsewhere; to where a critical understanding of how the search of meaning is fueled by the ongoing process of signification that Derrida unearths in the text.

opposites, rather than at either side of them. "Resistance theory in postcolonial literature refutes the very notion that idea of representation also connotes further subjugation" (1), Yang explains, indicating that if postcolonial literature is restricted to a discourse "existing simply to react against or resist dominant ideology" (1), it fails to fulfill the function it is there for; resistance. To this end, a 'compromise', as Yang calls it, has to be set between the two sides of the equation placing the act of representation within a dynamic continuum that is "inevitably hybridized, involving a dialectical relationship between European ontology and epistemology and the impulse to create and recreate independent local identity" (qtd in Yang 2).

Yang's call for a middle ground from which to author a text revolutionizes the conventional approach to the question of representation in two ways. First, the act of representation is defined as an ongoing process, indicating that meaning is endlessly produced but is never exhausted. To explain, what entices the author to produce meaning is some feeling of loss that he feels he needs to make up for. This feeling (of something being lost), which translates also into the author's need to discover who he is and how he has come to be who he is, creates an absence that he tries through producing meaning to fill. As he embarks on this process of self-discovery and meaning production, he experiences a fake sense of satisfaction telling him that what he has authored so far is producing meaning and that the state of absence that has left him with feelings of loss and chaos is gradually disappearing. This contentment, however, lasts not as long as the author wishes it to, for not long after his needs are gratified, he once more experiences a state of loss, doubled by feelings of disappointment and frustration. Eventually, he comes to the realization that meaning is not fixed and therefore unconquerable and that the more he tries to conquer its changeable nature, the more it defies his control.

Second, defining the act of representation as an ongoing process makes resistance to fixed meanings and predetermined readings possible. In his article, Yang argues that representation and resistance are intertwined; they go hand in hand spanning an ebb and flow of interwoven discourses that make up the text. This point is also brought up by Serena Guarracino in her discussion on the role of the postcolonial writer in J.M. Coetzee's *Summertime* (2013). In the article titled "The Postcolonial Writer in Performance: J.M. Coetzee's *Summertime*," Guarracino argues that the act of representation is an act of resistance because it is essentially an event, "a performative act in the complex nexus of discourses" (101), which are constantly changing as meaning is produced: "To think of literature as an event means to stress its transient state against the apparently stable nature of the written text- a text that is, or may be, performed into 'literariness' by each reading,

including academic readings and writings" (103).

Guarracino's words stress the same point brought up by Yang; resistance lies at the core of any act of representation. To write is to start an event that does not to come to an end with the last word in the text, which means that resistance to the act of representation is present throughout the text. Two points are worth mentioning here. First, resistance to the act of representation is a gradual act. It does not usually happen at one moment in time; it extends over a duration of time (writing or reading). Moreover, it is accumulative; it builds on what has already taken place as well as what will take place in the future. This indicates that, like the act of representation, it is far from being a static act where a story is expected to begin with "once upon a time" and end with "happily ever after."

If to represent is to resist, then there is a point in agreeing with Kobena Mercer in "Black art and the burden of representation" (2008) where he describes the act of representation as a "burden" that weighs the writer down (1). As long as meaning is being produced, its static nature is being resisted allowing the act of representation to go with no restrictions. This leaves the author, whose needs are not gratified, exhausted and frustrated. "The burden of representation," in this sense, is what makes the act of representation go on and what resists the fluidity with which it flows. Going back to the discussion above, it becomes clear that the writer writes to express himself and to be able to assess himself, which means, he (the writer) is constantly in conflict with what he writes. Where is meaning in all he has written? Which gaps are filled and which are left empty? Is he free from the state of loss, caused by absence, when the act of representation is about to reach its end?

All these questions occupy the mind of the writer/narrator engaging in the act of representation in writing. Rikkat, and Ghata by extension, suffer hard beneath this burden, though not in the same sense Mercer uses in the postcolonial context; the new sense of the term here extends to a wider context which is more comprehensive. Their burden is the burden of every author[1] whose attempts at achieving a complete act of representation leaves him with the same sense of loss he has started with, with it only becoming a doubled one.

Referring to Jacques Derrida's view of writing as an ongoing process of signification gives more depth to the discussion. In *Of Grammatology* (1967), Derrida defends writing against the derogatory hierarchy which privileges speech

1 The term author is employed in the study to refer to the maker of any type of work. The author can be a writer, a narrator, a composer or an artist.

as a medium of representation over writing.[1] Though this opposition is of no direct concern to the present study, his argument in defense of writing is essentially important to understanding how the process of signification is at work in the text. To start with, signification is a non-referential process, meaning that the process of meaning production is not one that has a start and an end and that meaning is not necessarily produced at the end of this process. Second, signs are not self-contained entities; they do not refer to some meaning stored in them.[2] Quite the opposite, they refer to other signs, which in their turn refer to other signs, creating, in this way, an infinite cycle of deferred referrals. In this process, what Derrida calls a 'breach' is created between what is intended to be represented and what is represented in actuality in the text. This means that the state of absence which has originally necessitated the act of representation in an attempt at filling it is not necessarily eliminated, and might become a doubled one as the act of representation comes to an end. Here, what matters is whether the author is aware of the fact that the act of representation is not as simple as 'once a process ends, meaning is produced'. No guarantees are given to the author of the text; which means that the act of representation could eventually take the author back to the starting point (the initial state of absence which necessitated the search for meaning), or could even drag him back further to where loss is intensified and meaning is further lost.[3]

Derrida's description of the act of signification as a deferral of meaning should not, however, be solely taken from its dark side. Some hope can be found

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1 In "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of Human Sciences" (1967), Derrida criticizes the structuralists' overdependence on abstract structures. Structures are made up of the word 'events' which he defines as ruptures (redoublings of the structure): "The appearance of a new structure, of an original system, always comes about…and this is the very condition of its structural specificity- by a rupture with its past, its origin, and its cause" (120). He also criticizes the structuralists' belief that a structure should have a fixed center. According to him, the center exists inside and outside the structure simultaneously; therefore, the center is not the center. In the absence of a center, the bond between the signifier and the signified is broken initiating play in an endless cycle of meaning.

2 Saussurian linguistics, the launching pad of Srtucturalism, is based on the concept of the sign, which, according to de Sausssure, is made up of the signifier (the voice or the image) and the signified (the abstract concept associated with the voice or the image). The signifier and the signified serve as two faces of the same coin, but they exist in an arbitrary relation, in the sense that the relation between the signifier and the signified is not natural.

3 For further information, see *Of Grammatology* (1976), translated into English by Gayatri Spivak. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

despite the bad news it carries. How? As signs come to form an ongoing cycle of signification, the possibility is established for creativity. This means that the more meaning is deferred, the more fixed interpretations and predetermined readings of the text are resisted. Here, springs up the hope to make up for the state of loss the act of representation can leave the author with. The more creative the author is, the abler he is to take advantage of this flippancy. The key to understanding Derrida's praise of the text as a space of endless possibilities, therefore, is to realize that there are no set expectations awaiting the maker/inscriber of the text. Whether or not meaning will be produced, whether or not absence will be made present is a matter beyond the author's control. The sole conductor of this process is the word; the sign which, as Jack Reynolds (1995) explains Derrida has always taught us, is driven "by the absence that makes it necessary" (4).

Representation and Production of Meaning in *The Calligraphers' Night*

In his review of Ghata's first novella, Maureen Freely (2006) highlights the autobiographical nature of the work, but he refuses to mark it as solely an autobiography of the author's deceased grandmother, Rikkat in the novel. His belief that "though it is faithful to the known biographical facts of her grandmother, it refuses to be contained by them" (1) shows the reader that Ghata's concern is not to only tell the life story of her grandmother. After all, what would a dead woman get from telling her story if she were dead? She is already dead; what struggles she has won, she has already done, and what struggles she has lost, she has already done. In other words, no change is expected to take place after telling her story; nor does the reader expect to find a *bildungsroman* in it. Plus, if she is being Spencerian or Shakespearean in seeking immortalization through her art, then this is again mostly unlikely, since Rikkat's life journey is not that of a person running after fame after her departure. Immediately with the first lines of the novel, she clearly states that her "departure was without fuss, like [her] life" (3), which tells us readers that a fame-oriented story is far-fetched here. A third possibility, and a more convincing one, would be that telling that story is Rikkat's, and Ghata's, attempt at understanding the act of representation which lies at the core of the writing process (writing and inscribing). Both Rikkat and Ghata are trying to come to terms with how the words on the page come to produce meaning and whether the created meaning is stable or transient.

In the novella, the search for meaning takes the form of two consecutive narratives that Rikkat narrates after her death: the first is of her as a calligrapher, the second is of her as a wife and as a mother. The two narratives, though not equal

in portion, embody the narrator's, as well as the author's, attempt at understanding how meaning is produced in the text. To start with, Ghata's protagonist is a dead woman narrating her story after her death. This means that had not she died, she would not have been able to narrate her story. Death is a condition indispensable to the materialization of this narrative. Another point to keep in mind is that what Rikkat produces is neither a chronological narrative nor a sequential one. What she produces is best described as vignettes representing scenes from her life. In one of the reviews of the work, the reviewer (2007) remarks that *The Calligraphers' Night* "…traverses the life of calligrapher Rikkat Kunt" (1), indicating that this work is not a narrative in the traditional sense of the word. First, Rikkat, as a narrator, is speaking from two different positions. This means that Rikkat's narrative is not the traditional grand narrative that is one-sided, but is a combination of small narratives that equally contribute to the form of the novella.[1] Second, Rikkat's narrative does not stick to a clear timeline; it goes back and forth in time to where her memory slips. One reason could be her being dead; her memory falters and time ceases to be the distinct category that gives meaning to events. What is more, Rikkat's rejection of a chronological narrative indicates that she has never seen her life as a continuous scene. The fragments that make up her life are what give meaning to it and what she has tried hard to copy into her narrative: a fragmented life producing a fragmented narrative so far, but what about meaning? If Rikkat could put up with a life torn between being here and there, and then put up with a narrative torn between now and then, then could she put up with meaning torn between presence and absence?[2]

Loss and the Constant Need for Compensation

After the death scene which opens the novel and which sets expectations

1 Lyotard's terms "grand narratives and small narratives" form an intrinsic part of postcolonial criticism. The first half of the twentieth century witnessed the publication and circulation of grand narratives of the colonizer, which were written and explained according to his point of view. In contrast, the second half of the twentieth century saw the rise of small narratives which were written from the point of view of the colonized, who has been silenced for a long period of time in the grand narratives.

2 The term "absence" has its roots in the poststructuralist theory of psychoanalysis. Analyzing the pshyco-sexual development of the child, Jacques Lacan explains that the child experiences feelings of loss upon the renunciation of the mother, which is the tax he pays for initiation into the social (the world of the father). The absence of the mother leaves him bereaved as he tries seeking for the lost object of desire (the mother) in substitutes to make up for his loss, but he never succeeds to fill in the absence caused by the renunciation of the mother and has no other choice but to bury the feeling of loss inside him.

for a work narrated from a place and a time that are hard to identify, the reader is introduced to Rikkat as a calligrapher. The voice he hears is that of an artist fidgeting with her tools to produce art:

> Qalams, makka, divit and the whiff of ink they exhaled were within reach, standing in order of size and how often I used them, all at a distance from each other so as to avoid any jealousy or quarrels. Once I was dead, they would have killed each other. So I departed serenely, abandoning my tools that had become the extensions of my hands… (3)

This introductory scene is set carefully for the reader, in a way that he would never expect Rikkat to be torn between two roles in life, and later between two narratives. Rikkat is an artist by instinct; engaging in an act of representation where meaning is struggling to be born out of the absence that necessitated its birth. It is a birth right that her calligraphy tools own her, she never seems to belong to another but her qalams, makkas and divit.

A moment later, however, the reader realizes that Rikkat has at least one son, the one mentioned among the six people attending her funeral and begins to steer away his thoughts from the possibility of a one-sided narrative about an artist. Rikkat being introduced as a mother shovels all possibilities upside down. The meaning she produces is not only the product of her art, being a mother and a wife offers her another leeway to make present that absence. Still, the dead Rikkat calls herself a 'calligrapher' more than she does a wife or a mother. She even identifies herself as a member of a group of calligraphers, speaking as one of them: "We calligraphers know this ritual by heart" (8). And though "[her] life flashes past in front of [her] at the speed of light, assails [her] and then withdraws without warning" (8), what she remembers more than anything are the years during which she has passed from being a student to a teacher of calligraphy "especially the beginning of [her] career as a teacher at the Academy of Fine Arts" (9). Her memories (and her voice) as a mother and a wife are still secondary at this point, leaving the reader with the conclusion that this narrative is most likely an outlet for the calligrapher in herb who has tried through her art to produce meaning.

Giving this point some thought, however, makes us hamper our expectations and refrain from drawing hasty conclusions. Rikkat's two positions as narrator are equally important to the question of representation. If she were trying through her narrative to make up for her loss and produce meaning, then doing so as wife and mother is as important as doing it as calligrapher. No doubt, calligraphy is an art

where meaning is created through the power of the word. It is not only a process of copying one text into another. In the novella, Rikkat describes calligraphy as an act where authority is exercised and meaning is produced through the process of inscribing/copying the text:

> My pupils observed my precise, controlled movements. I dyed the paper. I covered it with a sticky preparation, soaked in a decoction of tea, then coated it with a protective layer to prevent the ink from penetrating into the fibres. Once the page was dry, I polished it with a flint stone; my students fascinated, swayed to the rhythm of the stone on the now silky leaf of paper. (9)

Rikkat's description of the process through which she creates a text reflects a master of the art. Her steps are firm and she is experienced enough to know that with one step missed, the whole process is ruined. As a calligrapher, Rikkat is productive; her hands produce meaning as they bring together paper and ink with precise movements. In this part of the narrative, the reader sees Rikkat at her best, wielding authority and knowing exactly how the loss that her art is making up for is not only kept under control, but is also directed to produce meaning.

But what about Rikkat the wife and the mother? Not much later in the novel, the reader is told that Rikkat has married twice and begotten two kids, one from each marriage. Her first marriage to Ceri, dentist and father to Nedim, has proved to be a failure. They spend several years separated though married, each living in a different city especially after Rikkat gets a job and has to settle nearby. In fact, Rikkat has commitment to her work as a calligrapher more than she has to her marriage to Ceri. Later, when the relationship seems to come to an end, it does so peacefully. Both take the same decision of divorce and Nedim stays with his mother. Through those years, Rikkat finds in Nedim what she has missed in Ceri but found in calligraphy; an alternative to the loss caused by a failed relationship. "I left Ceri behind me, left the mud of Konya, the real earth of the freshly ploughed furrows and the ghosts of the dervishes hovering over their lost fiefdom. Jerome went back with me" (30).

The second courting in Rikkat's life proves by no means to be a more promising one. Mehmet Fahreddin, who, though "born in Tirana…had the manner of a Western diplomat, and went so far as to copy the accent" (47), is no more than a failed alternative to Ceri. Rikkat notes that after her divorce and the death of her father, her all-female family "lacked a masculine authority figure" (47), which, ironically enough, is filled by Mehmet, whose acquaintance with her father has

made him seem an appropriate replacement. Later, Rikkat will feel ashamed of telling why he left, taking with him her second son Nurullah. Apparently, Mehmet, instead of becoming the family's new masculine authority and making up for their loss, has set its members apart and left a great deal of pain after his departure with Nurullah to Lebanon. As she narrates this part of her life, Rikkat repeatedly refers to how angry Mehmet has felt every time he has seen her working in her studio. Contrary to Ceri's passive reaction to Rikkat's love for calligraphy, Mehmet's reaction has been aggressive: "Mehmet came in without knocking, overturned the inkpot on the squared sheets of paper, picked up old Selim's divit and hurled it through the studio window. He left without a word" (56).

It is only after Mehmet rapes her sister that Rikkat realizes that Mehmet is not the right match to fill in the absence created by the departure of Ceri and the death of her father. But, this time, she finds it hard to find another alternative to make up for her loss. There is no Nurullah to start a new life with like when she has had Nedim after her first divorce; Mehmet has taken Nurullah with him to Lebanon and Rikkat has no choice but to grieve for his absence, leaving it unattended.

Fake Gratification and Transient Meaning

Loss and the constant need to make up for it is also present in Rikkat's life as a calligrapher.[1] But, here Rikkat manages to deal more successfully with it and to find ways to steer it away creatively. First, Rikkat loves the art and sees it not as a replacement for anything or anyone. Moreover, her skill in producing a piece of writing springs not from a need to fill in the absence that the departure of three family members has created in her life.

> Thus it was that I became a calligrapher. This legacy, capable of transmitting to me the talent of a virtuoso calligrapher, would long preserve its master's habits, the skills of his hands and the ability of his fingers. Aware that his heritage was to turn my life upside down, I kept it secret, I hid my joy just as I had become accustomed to hide my pain, and just as easily. We calligraphers are impenetrable; ink teaches us to remain opaque. (21).

1 One reason why Rikkat resorts to immerse herself in the world of calligraphy after her two failed marriages is that she knows that this world is beyond the authority of human relationships, especially those of marriage. Explaining that most calligraphers are unmarried, she goes on to describe them as "hybrid beings, neither men nor women, which is why God keeps them close to himself" (41). Rikkat's words explain why in most cases calligraphers are isolated from other people, why they commune with the dead and why many of them end up committing suicide.

Rikkat's words on how she becomes a calligrapher bring to mind a couple of points. First, death (absence) functions as a stimulus not only in one of her narratives, but in both of them. Just as her father's death necessitates the presence of an alternative masculine figure to make up for this loss, the death, suicide in this case, of Rikkat's calligraphy mentor, old Selim, necessitates a replacement. But, here the replacement helps to relieve the pain caused by the loss of her mentor more than in the case of Ceri or Mehmet. To Rikkat, old Selim does not only leave his tools, but what is more precious and enduring; the legacy. He makes Rikkat his own replacement so as not to make his absence irretrievable. While the bereaved daughter looks for a masculine figure to fill the absence created by her father's death, old Selim has already found in her a suitable heiress to take up and preserve the art of calligraphy after him. Neither does he fear not finding the right match, nor does he hesitate to make his match a woman! Showing more bravery than Rikkat, old Selim's decisions in ending his life and beqeathing his legacy to his female pupil seem firm and well-placed.

> People came and slipped [Selim] out of the scarf that had strangled him; he was as stiff as his qalams, as hard as the wood of his paintbrushes… To my great surprise, …, I found a parcel addressed to me. Under the piece of string that tied the whole package together, there was inserted a slip of paper with my name, 'To Rikkat', carefully written. (19)

The smooth transference from male mentor to female pupil, however, invites all kinds of confused feelings on the part of the reader; appreciation, gratitude, doubt and irony. How viable is this transference? First, the art of calligraphy is traditionally identified as a male-dominated art; rarely is a woman seen to take up calligraphy as a profession. In the novella, Ghata describes Rikkat's visits to the "building that had been granted to these old men" (11) with tongue in cheek; Rikkat's role does not go beyond being a mere assistant who would "pass unnoticed, … prepare the paper and ink, clean and tidy away the tools, make sure the studio functioned properly" (11). Even after becoming a teacher of calligraphy, Rikkat could not convince her pupils of how she has managed to survive in this all-male territory; as a teacher, she never "satisfied their curiosity; they were only ever half convinced" (10). And so was she. In fact, other than practicing the art of calligraphy in the classroom for a couple of hours on working days, Rikkat's talent has been short-lived and intermittently

productive.[1] Whenever she has wanted to practice calligraphy, she has had to isolate herself in her studio which transformed into a "refuge for dreamed of virtuousities, a hospice for pretentious old men, and the antechamber of death" (11). Practicing calligraphy has meant detachment from life around her; the way she uses the tools of old Selim, which have become an "integral part of [her] body, an extension of [her] hands" (20), has turned practicing calligraphy into a form of magic.[2] Not to forget her prolonged communings with the spirit of old Selim, which got into the habit of paying Rikkat visits while she was working in her studio.

> Selim's soul was scrutinizing my fingers watching over my reactions with tenderness examining how I would welcome his tools. I was his only heir, and I needed to show myself worthy. Thus it was that I became a calligrapher. This legacy, capable of transmitting to me the talent of a virtuoso calligrapher, would long preserve its master's habits, the skill of his hands and the agility of his fingers. (20)

Rikkat's description of how Selim's soul supervise her work is ironic. The loss she has failed to make up for as a wife and to a lesser extent as a mother seems not to find relief through calligraphy as well. First, describing herself as "an only heir" makes it highly unlikely that practicing calligraphy is taking her anywhere. Calligraphy is an art; it cannot be owned or bequeathed from one person to another. Not even is the talent a property to be transferred from one to another. At one point in the novella, Rikkat discloses this secret which she describes as a "ritual" (8) known to calligraphers by heart: "Calligraphers have all tried to seize this divine presence, but mms has ever succeeded" (8). Awaiting for a "visit from the Most

1 In 1928, the Turkish ruler Ataturk replaced the Arabic alphabet with the Latin alphabet as the official language of the country. Though his decision has played an important role in initiating the country into modernity, it has had reversed effects on the art of calligraphy and its practitioner. Their position as inscribers of holy texts, especially the Qur'an, became secondary and their art lost much of its popularity and value. The events of Rikkat's life take place around this period; this explains why many of her attempts at practicing calligraphy end with frustrating results.

2 In a 2007 review of the novella, the reviewer notes that Rikkat's narrating her story from the afterlife and the meetings she has with dead calligraphers while alive add elements of magical realism to the work. To quote her words, "The story is lyrically told. It has an almost dream-like quality to it, weaving elements of magical realism into the story of Ghata's real-life grandmother who the novella is based on" (1). Her note can serve as a launching pad for further research on Ghata's work as an example on magical realism.

High" (8) makes all calligraphers equal competitors in heirship. No calligrapher is privileged over another, which is another calligraphy secret Rikkat shares with the reader. The qalams are superior to all and they are "never wrong" (45); their authority extends hers. Second, Rikkat's feeling that she needs to prove herself worthy to a dead figure shows that calligraphy is not helping her as it should be. It is no challenge to challenge a dead man. After all, Selim is no real person except for Rikkat! The visits he pays her are never shared by anyone other than both of them. Yet, Rikkat's description of those visits make them seem so real that the reader's doubts as to how reasonable Rikkat is are hardly aroused.

> The imaginary vapours of white lead, vinegar, or camphor-based fermentation rose to Selim's nostrils as he saw his years as a young apprentice and the warnings of his teacher pass before his eyes. The old madman slipped his secrets to me, and I disclosed them in a tone worthy of the Ten Commandments. (36)

It must be pointed out here that Rikkat does not only share these visits with old Selim; other spirits of calligraphers pay her visits also, one of whom is a woman. Esma Ibret is the spirit of a female calligrapher who, tired of aspiring for perfection in this art, could only find it in death. To Rikkat, old Selim's visits are more tolerable than Esma who is never satisfied with any of Rikkat's writings. She "corrected several times over a character that was on the point of making a hole in [her] page" (38). Later, the reader is informed that Esma has been the student of a tyrannical master of calligraphy who, unlike the complacent Selim, is "always finding fault" (37) in her work. Thus, to look for support and encouragement in her figure would do no good for the confused Rikkat. In fact, Esma's visits leave Rikkat forlorn every time she tells her that she "left this world without having tasted the perfection of an immaculate piece of work or an ideal composition" (38).

Like her meetings with old Selim, Rikkat's meetings with Esma raise confused feelings. First, the reader gets the impression that Ghata supports the stereotypical view of calligraphy as a masculine art; a female artist of calligraphy cannot be as successful as a male artist. This shows in the two confused females, Rikkat and Esma, who are both struggling to survive in this profession. Both have been apprenticed by male masters, who have had extensive experience in calligraphy and who have chosen them to take over this profession after their death, but neither is confident enough of whether their writings are creative enough to meet the expectations of their mentors or not. What is more is that those only-female

meetings do not seem to proceed as smoothly as mixed meetings do in the novella. Esma, who is supposed to be older, wiser and more experienced is hard to please, and Rikkat, who is supposed to be looking for guidance and advice in Esma, feels intimidated by her presence. Referring to Harold Bloom's *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973) and Sandra Gilbert's and Susan Gubar's response to it in The *Madwoman in the Attic* (1979) can help understand why Rikkat's attempts to make up for her loss and produce meaning through her art do not seem to be productive enough. In his book, Bloom stresses the hereditary nature of art (calligraphy in this case): the father author establishes himself as an authority during his life, then bequeathes his art to a younger male successor he chooses. On his part, the young author takes pride in this inheritance, but at some point in his artistic journey, it becomes necessary for him to free himself from what becomes a source of anxiety, rather than pride, in order to establish himself as a legitimate contributor to the canon (20-25). Gilbert and Gubar offer a more feasible reading of Bloom in a feminist context. A young female artist is all the way faithful to her female ancestors. Even after she is well-established and no longer in need of their support, she resorts not to forsaking them for her own advantage. That is why, Gilbert and Gubar describe this all-female territory as a space infused with all feelings of sisterhood such as gratitude, loyalty and belongingness. (22-32)[1]

The Bloom-Gilbert and Gubar argument, however, does not seem to apply to the master-pupil relations we see in the novella. First, the two male father calligraphers, old Selim and Esma's mentor, choose to pass their art not to male successors, but to female ones. They probably find less threat to their authority in a female heir, more than they do in a male one. Second, no feelings of revenge or even anxiety are sensed on the part of those female successors. In fact, they are both obsessed by the figures of their dead mentors and are eager to please them, more than themselves. Moreover, Rikkat and Esma share none of the feelings of sisterhood which Gilbert and Gubar associate with female artists; none is comfortable in the presence of the other and none is willing to support or encourage the other. What conclusion should be drawn here? One opposite to the Bloom-

1 In "Infection in the Sentence: The Woman Writer and the Anxiety of Authorship" (1979), Gilbert and Gubar note that women writers feel intimidated by the scarce number of female writers to fall back on in the literary canon, and, as a kind of defense mechanism, they develop feelings of belongingness and gratitude towards their literary foremothers. "Women writers participate in a quite different literary subculture from that inhabited by male writers, a subculture which has its own distinctive literary traditions…a distinctive history [as] the daughter of too few mothers, today's female writer feels that she is helping to create a viable tradition which is at last definitely emerging" (23).

Gilbert-Gubar one. The artists we meet here do not find in calligraphy what they have thought they would; the absence they are trying to fill remains as is and the meaning they are trying to produce is instantly lost. Old Selim is frustrated and ends half-mad after he "grew irritable when his hand refused to obey him" (19) as he has tried through his writing to picture "a universe peopled with *diw* and *djinns*" (19). Eventually, he commits suicide. Esma's mentor grows tyrannical and easily angered, the effect of which he passes onto Esma who inflicts this torture not only on herself, hastening her death, but on others around her as well.

Doubled Absence and Bitter Disillusionment

Contrary to the high expectations Rikkat hopes to achieve through calligraphy, her experience as a calligrapher seems to weigh her down the more she gets immersed in it. "The vertical strokes and ligatures if the letters that ferment [Esma] even in [her] sleep" (38) seize her turning her into a lifeless soul wandering "around on the frontiers of the inhabited word seeking to retrieve their instruments" (38). The exchanges she has with Esma make her realize that the latter's "[transgressing] the laws of the Beyond" (38) has made her pay with her life for doing so, for every calligrapher "was authorized to reveal the whys and wherefores of the place of eternal repose" (48). Esma has spent a lifetime seeking an ideal composition, so has old Selim and her despotic mentor before. Now, Rikkat is in the same place seeking after their idealism as they have done once. And though it is true that Rikkat is not the daring Esma or the mad Selim, who would aspire to "a strict horizontality, as [their] letters were not sturdy enough to be torn apart just yet" (8), she also slips into the same route of running after this supremacy. Unknowingly, she commits the same sin of which old Selim has repeatedly warned her; impatience.

> Certain qalams, it is said, crumple their tips, mutilate themselves until they bleed, so as to put an and to their careers as torturers. Impatient calligraphers cut them into a bezel shape and abandon them among the waste of the studio. A qalam that has been recut has a shorter life expectancy than a new qalam. (9)

No doubt, Rikkat is guilty of impatience; of cutting short a life that is to begin. Her aggressive behaviour hides behind it a desire to have the upper hand over her tools, her papers and her words, which seem to have come to defy her authority. Those transgressions, though she is sure were never permissible and never will be, do not deter her from causing "a knowing and methodical massacre" (10) as long as her authority is not lost. After her death, she recalls taking this to an extreme.

> At that point I began to torture the letters, placing them in quarantine in the upper corner of the page. Crowding them together until they started to suffocate. The words piled on top of one another, slew each other. A knowing and methodical massacre, a virtuoso combat. I was daring to do what my predecessors had never imagined. (10)

Like Esma, Rikkat has to pay hard for such a transgression. Exceeding limits fires back and this time instead of her forcing the letters into the places she has chosen for them, she has to struggle to "hold back their need to make up for the wasted years" (26). A voice from the dead, shying away from committing such a deadly sin, has to intervene. Old Selim shows to teach Rikkat that the "comings and goings" (26) of the "erotic figures…on the cardboard-backed paper" (26) owe nothing to her. This experience, she confesses, has left her bewildered and confused: "Had I contributed to this work? I still wonder. Perhaps the letters had left Selim's pious hands to land in mine, avid for new experiences" (26).

But why would the letters leave Selim's pious hands and land in hers? Rikkat's words are otherwise meant. If the letters have the ability to leave one hand and land in another, then the credit for this liveliness goes back to them, not to old Selim or to Rikkat. The letters are moving from here to there to show that no matter how restrictive the authority of the artist is, they will manage to set themselves free. Two points are worth pondering on here: the relation of the artist to the work and the production of meaning. As we read Rikkat's words, we come to realize that no calligrapher is alien to the truth that the art of calligraphic writing, like any art, is beyond control, once he (the calligrapher) gets "caught up in the game, [his] qalam followed their circumvolutions" (15). The game of a calligrapher, like the game of any writer, is a game of language; what produces meaning is the letter, not the one inscribing it. In a review of the novella, the reviewer (2007) touches on this point by arguing that Rikkat's talent as an artist is driven by the power of the letters she inscribes. No matter how hard she tries, she can never fight back the "irresistible pull of her art" (1). But, the game of language, as Derrida (1977) explains, is an endless game.[1] As language no longer has a stable structure, it is decentered and

1 The same point about the play of language is stressed by Roland Barthes in "The Death of the Author" (1967) in which he declares the author dead and replaces him by the alternative authority of language. Here again, the text is freed from the hegemonizing authority of the author and this paves the way for an ongoing process of signification. Both Derrida and Barthes tell us that as authority is lent to language in the text, a scriptible, not a lisible, piece of art/writing is produced. This means that the newly born text is no longer a mere reflection of a set reality, but comes to create that reality, giving more possibility for change and resistance.

'play' is introduced into it breaking the one-to-one relationship between its signifiers and its signifieds (109-111). As a result, signs float freely establishing multiple relations with multiple signifieds at the same time, producing an infinite process of signification where meaning is simultaneously produced but deferred.

The central role language plays in the production of meaning helps understand why old Selim, Esma and Rikkat equate calligraphy with torture, turning it into a burden. The three of them seem not to truly understand, at least while alive, that the letter is the authority lurking behind any piece of writing they copy; that is why they fail to interpret their struggle to get letters in the right shape and end up talking about the torture practicing calligraphy has got them into. For them, the letters are passive; they reproduce the original text as is making no contribution whatever. But, the truth that slips their minds is that the original text is no divine text to copy verbatim. Every time it is copied, it is being produced anew because of the letters that make it. Old Selim is the first to realize how intricate a process of representation is for a calligrapher, though, ironically enough, he does so too late; after his death. In one of his meetings with Rikkat, he stresses this point by explaining that "pleasure owed nothing to the model imposed; their [tools] copulation with the paper should not stiffen a divine obeisance, but rather engender an obscene tangle of letters" (26).

Selim's words after his death go in line with Derrida's arguing that meaning is constantly produced but is deferred in the text; 'there is no outside text' Derrida's well-known maxim says (158-59). By drawing the line between the original text and the copy produced by the calligrapher, Selim is in fact annuling the viability of the bond between what signifies and what is signified in the copied version. As writing begins, the signifier (the original text) detaches itself from the signified (the copied text), initiating an ongoing process of signification where meaning is constantly produced but never exhausted. On his part, old Selim comes to realize this truth about the art of calligraphy only after his death. This explains why in this scene, the reader hears Rikkat noting that "Selim himself could no longer distinguish between copy and model. The illusion was maintained even in the reflections of ink. The stiffening letters continued to exchange sighs of contentment through the Holden liquid" (26).

Rikkat seems not to understand Selim's words though she repeats them, for a whole hour after the script is written, she still wonders if she has really contributed to producing this piece of writing. Had she understood Selim's implications about the deferral of meaning in the copied script, she would have chosen, like him, to forsake her authority as author of the text and transfer it to the letters forming the text. But, for the inexperienced Rikkat, Selim's words are too hard

to apply. A calligrapher's job is to copy; copying is an attempt to make up for the state of absence resulting from the loss of meaning. As the calligrapher copies, he produces a series of alternatives (copies) to the original text, which, contrary to his expectations, holds the meaning back from him, leaving him in a doubled state of loss. Believing that by copying the original text he is creating it anew and producing the meaning that has been for long lost for him leaves him with a feeling of satisfaction. This fake sense of fulfilment, however, lasts not for as long as the calligrapher wishes. Soon enough, he wakes up to the bitter realization, that no original text and copy can blindly match; a gap is always there separating the two and reminding the calligrapher that meaning is property of no one.

Moving from one stage to another in this cycle is not a smooth process. Feelings of disappointment, bitterness and loss await the calligrapher. In the novella, the reader sees shattering examples of this. Old Selim commits suicide, Esma leaves life carrying the torture resulting from a mission declared impossible and Rikkat gives herself away to a life haunted by the dead. None of the calligraphers in the novella is able to handle this tough experience or overcome its consequences. In one of the letters Selim has written before his self-inflicted death, the reader senses the despair which is likely to have led to his suicide.

> There came a day when his breath ceased to irrigate my ink, and my hand fainted when he left me. I have often called out to him, but he has never deigned to reply. Then I decided to join him in his dwelling to him to forgive me. I am still waiting to be granted a hearing. (22)

Selim has most likely been able to find more peace of mind after his death; otherwise, he would not have been able to disclose the reality of what it means to inscribe a text to Rikkat. But, Rikkat lacks the experience as well as the foresight to take what he says seriously. Selim's "calligraphic farewell" (22) transfers to her "a glimpse of his torment" (22) only and "refusing to share it with anyone" (22), she prefers to "shut [herself] away in the secret of [her] master" (22) rather than "lending ordinary words to this narrative" (22). Rikkat has to experience those feelings in person; to learn this lesson from another will be useless.

Rikkat does not commit suicide, nor does she gasp her last breath with torture. Her death comes "as gentle as the top of the reed dipping its fibres in the inkpot, swifter than the ink being drunk by paper" (3). But though, like Selim and Esma, she dies without having produced an ideal composition, her defiance is in fact much stronger; the reader sees an extremist rejecting a secondary author position. Later in

the novella, Rikkat gets a job at the university as an instructor of calligraphy. There, she earns the reputation of being one of "several of [them] who wanted to modernize calligraphy" (112), despite knowing that such digressions are sure to "[draw] the lightning bolts of the Most High down on their heads" (112). Here, Selim's and Esma's realization is experienced by Rikkat and though her reaction is not as self-destructive as theirs, it is not less dramatic. The first step in this realization, as she sees it, is trying to change the nature of this art by modernizing it, and this, as she notes towards the end of the novella, nearly makes her "lose (her] faith" (112) that she seemed to "fear neither God nor death" (112) anymore.

What is more, the death of Rikkat's second son leaving his six-year-old daughter orphaned and his wife widowed pushes her defiance beyond limits. Her loss is too deep to be consoled; not even her passion for calligraphy can relieve or lessen it like when she has lost a first and a second husband. Her letters seem not to serve as an alternative to her feelings as a bereaved mother. Nurullah's death intensifies her desire to refuse ending up with the same state of absence every time she produces a piece of writing. No piece of writing could undo his loss.

> What am I supposed to do with these piece of writing that will not give me back my son? What am I supposed to do with a God who use my hand to write his breath? In any case, my my fingers burn on contact with my instruments. They suddenly grew stiff and died at the same time as my son; all that remains is to bury them. (113)

Rikkat's words do not only reflect her sorrow at her son's death, they reflect disappointment as well. The feelings of defiance the reader has seen in her as a university instructor initiating the art of calligraphy into a modern phase take a different form. In place of her ideal expectations, feelings of despair and compliance are sensed. Her loss is intensified leaving the absence she has thought she can make present doubled and the letters she has thought she can subdue through her authority as an author free to conduct their game. After her son's death, Rikkat becomes even more passive than old Selim and Esma; she blames calligraphy for not being able to get her son back.

Though Rikkat goes back to her lessons after Nurullah's death, nothing is the same. Her hands start trembling, her papers slipping, her qalam vibrating. Once as she is teaching her students how to sharpen a qalam, she is wounded and has to have her hand bandaged by Muna, the student who has been present in the funeral scene early in the novella. The reader learns later that Muna has been Rikkat's special

student, the way she herself has been to Selim. To her, Rikkat bequeathes the legacy of her art, just as Selim has done so in the past.

> The following day, my colleagues gave their pupils a swift overview of my oeuvre: in their view, I had reformed the traditional art of calligraphy by opening it up to contemporary variations, and had made the rules of the discipline less strict. Unusual remarks. Only Muna had grasped the meaning of my work and knew the secret behind my departure. (4)

What secret has Muna known? The reader might wonder. The same secret the old Selim has disclosed to Rikkat who chose not to "[lend] ordinary words to" (22) out of fear of "[depriving] it of all its magic" (22). Rikkat has tried, just as Selim has done, to explain to Muna the torture she has to undergo to arrive at the same realization, and like him, she seems not to have Muna fully understand how shattering the experience has been. Just like herself, Muna chooses to keep the secret for herself. The experience is new to her, and inexperienced as she is, she is sure to lack the needed courage to deal with it in the right way.

The point worth stressing here is that this time a female calligrapher is bequeathing her art to a female one, which is different from the two previous cases. Here, feelings of sisterhood, loyalty and support are sensed between the two, reminding the reader of Gilbert and Gubar's rereading of Bloom's story of murder. Muna understands Rikkat and is the only one who shares her secret. She supports her in her weakness and hides no feelings of revenge towards her. Rikkat also seems not to be like the tyrannical male mentor of Esma who has sought to keep her under his control. Her relationship with Muna is based on mutual understanding and, unlike other teacher-student relationships the reader gets introduced to in the novella, is more egalitarian. Muna keeps close to her teacher in her life and in her death making sure to close "the door behind her after switching off the lights" (115). Together with Rikkat, Muna has a better chance to arrive at the same realization with less suffering.

Representation in Death: Meaning Doubly Deferred

Rikkat keeps not from the reader the feeling that her end is near. Her dreams disentangle part of what she has foreseen. In the last pages of the novella, she describes what she has seen in the dream as "forms of writing that were difficult to discern dragged [her] into a labyrinth in which words and voices mingled" (116) as she "dived into a naked space" (116). Rikkat sees herself reading some writing which fades away as she reads it. It turns out that the words in that piece of writing

disclose the same secret that old Selim has passed to Rikkat but which she chooses not to understand while alive.

> He is deferring them
> To a stated term.
> But when their term is come- surely God
> Sees His servants. (116)

Rikkat's death comes as a necessity more than as a relief to her from the fits of shaking, for a calligrapher not serving God is good for nothing but death; a truth Rikkat eventually comes to realize. But this necessity is not long deferred. A truth lies beneath it; a truth long sought after but never achieved. Rikkat tells the reader that as her death has drawn near, "God and Selim had finally joined together" (116) hinting at the truth God and Selim (the god of a calligrapher) might have all that time been the same without her having taken the slightest attention of it.

A life-saving realization, but a too-late one. Rikkat has eventually managed to make up for the absence which in her life as a calligrapher, wife and mother, she could not. No piece of writing of the living Rikkat could have matched those lines which illuminate her way to where she could join Selim and Esma singing praises of the Most High. Here, her writings are no longer in a state of deferral; she and the written word become one and the same, constituting a state of everlasting presence that succumbs to no pain, loss or frustration. Still, the dead Rikkat gives her reader no peace in reading her narrative; her "pen falls from [her] hand" (117) in an endless state of deferral and she is again wondering "What will become of [her] work after [her]?" (117)

A gap is created by Rikkat's death; it takes the reader all the way back to the beginning, to her attempt to find an alternative to eliminate this absence through marriage, motherhood and the art of calligraphy. But though death has ushered her into this phase where absence is made present and meaning is no more deferred, Rikkat is still not able to capture the 'presence' she has all the time been seeking. Disappointment, bitterness and loss are likewise sensed in this sheltered space and, to the dead Rikkat narrating this story, the question that stems from this endlessness is "What is the point of continuing to describe the void, the emptiness and silence?" (117)

No doubt, the dead Rikkat knows the answer to this question. All calligraphers come to know it as they are transferred to the after-life which makes them share a glimpse of God's omniscience. But a price, one paid for dearly, awaits them. Here, away from any human contact, they can only disclose this truth as constantly absent-

present; heard but never understood, read but never deciphered. Muna will have to become the dead Rikkat to "establish a dialogue" (108) between the here and there, the now and then to capture it. They will have to "recognize the path [they] have trodden," (108) to know where their lines are taking them. "Calligraphers are not free" (108), Rikkat realizes. Here or there, now or then, it is the letter leading their way, treading their steps, becoming them, and "no longer [having] any secrets from each other" (109).[1]

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1　Though the reader is from the beginning informed that Rikkat has died, the novella has an open ending. This, most likely, is done on purpose by Ghata who the reader realizes, as the novella draws to an end, cares more about raising questions rather than answering them. Part of the secret lurking behind writing this novella is for the reader to realize that he plays an important role in decoding its message and that the process of writing does not end with the last word of the text.

André Brink's *Rumors of Rain*: An Intersection of Entangled Liminal Beings

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Abstract This paper endeavors to address the socio-political situation of ethnicities' lives through literature. André Brink is a South African novelist whose *Rumors of Rain* (1978) demonstrates the situation of ethnicities during apartheid. Victor Witter Turner (1920-1983) is a British cultural anthropologist whose concept of liminality will be exclusively studied in this paper. Brink's novels have been examined by different researchers. However, most of them have demonstrated either historical characteristics of his novels or a particular ethnic group in them. Although like the colors in a rainbow one ethnic group may allocate a greater range than others, such a suffering regardless of their ethnicity and color, gathers them in the same structural spot and provides them with the relatively same socio-political condition. The significance of the present research is relevant to the very fact that the dominant impression supposes the blacks to be in a more in-between situation; however, this research reveals liminality in the lives of other ethnic groups as well. The present paper comes up with this conclusion that different ethnicities are like the guests in a carnival who are welcomed equally without any priority and superiority. South Africa has become an anti-structured entity in which the boundaries between high and low are broken and due to the fixation of the beings in liminality, the very liminality itself seems to have become an integral component of South Africa.

Key words Apartheid**;** André Brink; Afrikaners; Ethnicities; Anti-Structured Entity; Liminality; South Africa.

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Correspondence between being an ethnicity and the sense of belonging has become a thought provoking issue in the enquiries regarding the identity crisis of the ethnic groups. Therefore, the objective of the present study is to address liminality in *Rumors of Rain*. Here, the main interest is to find out how does Brink represent the status of different ethnic groups before the transition in South Africa through the use of liminal spaces? In order to find the answer, three questions will be raised: First, how does Brink represent liminality, i.e., what techniques does he use to represent liminality? Second, how does he present each of the four dominant ethnicities in regard to the existing liminal spaces? Third, can any changes be predicted to occur after this era in the history of South Africa or not?

Brink's novels have been examined by different researchers. Most of them have demonstrated either historical characteristics of his novels or a particular ethnic group in them. Regarding the situation of all ethnicities living in South Africa, no significant exploration has been offered so far. The following is a review of the most important works in this vein. Lenta (2010) addresses the significance of Cape slavery in Brink's *A Chain of Voices* (1982) and Yvette Christiansë's *Unconfessed* (2006). She argues that slaves have become conscious of the reality of their own harsh existence. Viljoen (2007) studies the characters' situations in the process of getting authentic spirituality in liminal situations.

Diala (2006) focuses on the thematic similarity of Malraux's *Man's Fate* (1933) and Brink's *Rumors of Rain* (1991). He demonstrates that following Marlaux's tradition, Brink's fiction gives priority to rebellion against tyranny and tries to bring human being into a sense of consciousness to feel and understand their own dignity. Diala (2005) examines Brink's *Looking on Darkness*. He clarifies Brink's concern with writer's responsibility in a state of moral and political siege. Brittan (2005) studies Brink's *Rumors of Rain* and *A Dry White Season* (1979) with special reference to sex and violence in them. Sanders (2002) addresses the role of South African intellectuals by looking at the work of a number of key figures.

Burger (2001) proposes an analysis of Brink's *Devil's Valley*. He puts emphasis on the role played by stories and narratives in a community. She emphasizes the significance of narrative for forming individual and collective identity. Meintjes (1998) acknowledges the postcolonial tendencies in Brink's prose oeuvre and has claimed that in *Imaginings of Sand* (1996), colony, colonizer and colonized fuse into one. Kossew (1997) scrutinizes Brink's *Imaginings of Sand* (1996). She comes up with the conclusion that since the understanding of past seems to be an imaginary

thing, finding truly reliable stories becomes a problematic issue in the post-apartheid era. Kossew (1996) studies the novels of two most remarkable white writers, J.M. Coetzee and Brink. She indicates that Brink's critical texts contrast with Coetzee's neutrality.

This paper approaches the concept of liminality from the view point of a British cultural anthropologist, Victor Witter Turner (1920-1983). In terms of what we have discussed so far, we need to demonstrate the way Brink represents the situations of ethnicities through liminality. Therefore, an exclusive investigation of the concept of liminality will be useful here. Historically, the concept of liminality was introduced by the French ethnographer and folklorist, Arnold Van Gennep (1873-1957) in *Les Rites de Passage* (1909). Turner has developed Arnold Van Gennep's theory of liminality, and has written several books. Turner has observed that Van Gennep's concept of *The Rites of Passage* includes three phases: "separation, margin (or limen=threshold), and reaggregation" (Turner, *On the Edge* 158). According to Turner:

> The first phase comprises symbolic behavior signifying the detachment of the individual or group either from an earlier fixed point in the social structure or a set of cultural conditions ("a state")"; during the intervening liminal period, the state of the ritual subject (the "passenger") is ambiguous; he passes through a realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state; in the third phase, the passage is consummated. (Turner, "Betwixt and Between" 6)

The second period or liminality means "threshold" in Latin (Turner, *The Ritual Process* 94). Consequently, liminality is a middle, or an in-between state in which the individual's transition occurs from one state to another. Among the above three stages of the rites of passage, Turner has devoted a large part of his discussions to the concept of liminality which is the second stage. The characteristics of this period will be discussed thoroughly.

Communitas, anti-structure, ritual subject, liminal beings and situations, liminar, novices, initiands or neophytes, transition and passage are the most key terms used by Turner in studying the concept of liminality. Turner has attributed several features to liminal places, beings and situations. Since he has lived with the Ndembu tribe, he has based his argument of liminality on the ritual society of Ndembu people. "The Ndembu term comes from the vocabulary of hunting and exemplifies the high ritual value attached to this value….they associate this term with aspects of the chase" (Turner, *The Forest of Symbols* 48). Moreover, he has

depicted that all of his publications deal with aspects of the ritual system of the Ndembu people of northwestern Zambia in South-central Africa.

"Liminality is not confined in its expression to ritual and the performative arts" (Turner, "Frame, Flow and Reflection" 466); his ideas are not just restricted to ritual societies, contexts other than ritual ones could be examined in terms of liminality as his major theory. For Turner, two aspects of society are "structure and liminality" (Turner, *On the Edge* 11). Subsequently, there might be no structure and hierarchy in the liminal phase in that it is contrasted to structure by Turner. Turner has found the essence of liminality to be a "release from normal constraints" (Turner, *On the Edge* 160). Liminality means to be "free from the pragmatics of the commonsense world" (161). Socio-cultural liminality provides conditions for "criticism" (ibid, 170). In other words, in liminality one can comment on and criticize the society (Turner, "Frame, Flow and Reflection" 467).

Liminality is a "definite stage in the passage of an initiand from status A to status B" (Turner, *On the Edge* 160). In the way indicated, liminality "must bear some traces of its antecedent and subsequent stages" (ibid). Subsequently, a liminal being occupies neither the A position nor the B one. The liminal being shares the characteristics of both A and B, and is a mixture of the features of the antecedent and subsequent stages. According to Turner, liminal figures are "neither living nor dead," (ibid, 7) "Neither male nor female" (ibid, 8). In the liminal period, "distinctions and gradations tend to be eliminated" (ibid, 9). Liminal human beings are "stripped of status role characteristics" (Turner, "Frame, Flow and Reflection" 471). Liminality in locations and spaces are of a high significance in the present research. Accordingly, instances for almost all of the characteristics of liminality and their definitions will be offered throughout this paper.

Brink's *Rumors of Rain* demonstrates the situation of ethnicities and the sociopolitical situation of South Africa during apartheid. The central Afrikaner character in the novel, Martin, believes that history has supplied them with all of the required facilities to survive in the land. The novel is concerned with the land owned by Martin's family. Land as a tie which connects its owner to his/her so-called country of origin, is decided to be sold. Therefore, this loss will designate the previous owners with a crisis in their situation and in a country in which they acquire no more the very basic elements of connection. The lives of other ethnicities as well as Afrikaners are presented in this paper. They are described in some common critical moments and situations. The references to the questioned sense of ownership and belonging to South Africa becomes more conscious for its ethnicities. Liminality and the techniques in representing them will be enumerated

one by one. Accordingly, liminality will be employed as an instrument in deploying the crisis in the situation of ethnicities and in different dimensions of the involved characters' lives.

> This hostile world, ponderous and aggressive because it fends off the colonized masses with all the harshness it is capable of, represents not merely a hell from which the swiftest flight possible is desirable, but also a paradise close at hand which is guarded by terrible watchdogs. (Fanon, *The Wretched* 52-53)

Palmer's study (qtd. in Ratiani) depicts the situation of liminal beings. He argues that they live "in the gap between worlds" (web). The central character in the novel finds himself in an abyss and claims that "there is an abyss between the man I once was and the man I am" (410). It sounds that such big abysses lead to the total vanishing of the human beings' existence on the Earth, the more they attempt to set themselves free from them, the more they are drowned within it. Brink is not that much concerned with the racial discrimination imposed upon blacks; conversely, he gathers ethnicities in the same context to give us a clear understanding of their common situation.

Brink chooses art, here literature, to represent the situation of ethnicities in South Africa. Ratiani conducts a historical study of liminality and demonstrates the very liminality of different types of art. Consequently, a liminal genre becomes the ground for representing liminality, it could be called a meta-liminal instrument. Aristotle takes poetry to be a liminal genre in that it is in a "liminal space that separates philosophy from history," it imitates both of them. Sidney calls poet a liminal being, one who is a "mediator" or "an intermediary between historical truth and philosophical abstraction," "between reality and imagination." Schiller considers art as a "third reality," one which is placed between sensation and thought. Shelly defines art and poetry in an in-between space, between "reality and the world beyond." Sartre takes imagination as a liminal entity, Iser offers a formula in which literary invention or illusion is placed between reality and imagination ("Liminality and the Liminal" 2-3). All of the stated examples above prove the very liminality of the genre through which Brink examines the lives of ethnicities.

The setting of the novel is closely connected with road. It turns out to be one of the most compelling evidence for liminality in this novel. Martin goes on a journey to arrive at the farm. During the journey he is in his car on the road. The very road itself is a space between a beginning and an end or a destination, between the point of departure and arrival. This liminal space becomes the setting of the novel. "A

whole swarm of gnats plastered on the windscreen and the wipers out of order" (1). Accordingly, future is opaque or blurry and the world of future becomes an unknown entity.

Viljoen argues that there is a close relationship between places and the human actions in them. He assumes these places to be the result of human actions in them ("Journeys from" 195). In order to propose an exploration of liminality, it would be more appropriate to study first the associations between human beings and the places in which they spend time and life. It could be one of the approaches through which Brink specifies liminality in the lives of different ethnicities. Brink indicates that one of the basic needs or the most basic urge in human beings is "to make signs," as a result every human being tends to leave a mark, to signify his/her existence in that place. Otherwise, the human being will never feel satisfied (Brink, *A Fork in the Road* 327); that is why all of the efforts of the human beings are to guarantee their own survival.

Lack of a sense of belonging is one of the situations that people hate to be in. Thus, the characteristic of mirror will be carefully taken into account here. A mirror "can't hold an image" (12). On different occasions in the novel, we observe that Martin looks back through the rearview mirror at whatever he has gotten past from, he views the past fleeting scenes in every moment, such transient moments and what has been observed in them gets past from both the memory of Martin and the mirror. Mirror's incapability to hold images, puts it in contrast with a camera which holds images and makes permanent images rather than temporary ones. The time and space are frozen within it. Conversely, in a mirror, each presence is replaced by an instantaneous absence. Human beings are exceedingly in need of leaving a trace to prove their existence; however, Martin passes and nothing is left in neither the memory of the mirror nor the road. Here, mirror could be taken as a metaphor for whatever places and situations in which he has existed once. This is the general liminal conditions of Martin, who represents the situation of almost all of the Afrikaners in the novel. Such a situation signifies that Martin does not meet his need of survival due to the lack of existence of a mark to prove his existence.

In another investigation of liminality, Brink points out that the road is covered by "thick silence of the fog" (25). Such a fog metaphor, makes the road and all of its constituent parts "invisible" (Turner, "Betwixt and Between" 6). Being in a fog, creates a liminality that one who is entangled in it should wait for the atmosphere to be cleared of vagueness. Liminality could be also observed in the emotional aspect of Martin's life. He has many love affairs in apartments and hotels. Turner depicts "ambiguity" as a feature of liminality (*The Ritual Process* 106). Martin

attributes such a future to his own apartment in which he has affairs with his beloved, Bea. In such a circumstance he regards himself to be completely free from any barrier. He proposes that in such relationships, women "demand from you no more than an arranged fee." He introduces it as one of the situations "which leaves one completely free." It is due to the fact that neither of the people involved in the relation, impose responsibility upon the other, whereas a mutual responsibility exists in a married life (7).

Martin does not care about what happens in his married life, instead he continues his stricken with liminality affairs. In spite of the influential political, social and psychological elements in determining liminality, the body of human beings should be taken into consideration. Martin's body is a liminal entity by itself, in that it is the body that can help him pass from the pre-liminal-stage (self) to post-liminal stage (society). In effect, human's body is placed between the individual's experience and the world. Martin is left on this bridge and fails to integrate with the society, he cannot be regarded as a full citizen in the society. Regarding liminal beings, Turner states that "they have physical but not social reality, hence they have to be hidden" ("Betwixt and Between" 8). It is the existence of Martin's life which should be hidden. To be hidden is the space between presence and absence, a presence which is negated by a subsequent indication of an absence.

The year 1948, is the beginning of apartheid which has not been yet replaced with a new sociopolitical state. Turner argues that by "state," he means "any type of stable or recurrent condition that is culturally recognized" ("Betwixt and Between" 4). In addition, it is through the passage from one stable state to another that a transition could be completely conducted. In contrast, South Africa is still on the move, and has not passed from it, it is stricken with liminality. Brink asserts that "the fear of rejection is incredibly strong in Afrikaans society because that society has habitually been isolated (also geographically) from the rest of the world" (*Mapmakers: Writing* 77). Thus, all of the inhabitants will be recognized as isolated human beings as well.

It is confirmed that "the nation is depicted as one great family, the members as brothers and sisters of the motherland or fatherland;" thus, nation and family are two similar entities (Smith, National *Identity* 79). Each group of ethnicities, either Blacks, Whites, Coloreds or Asians in South Africa could be considered as a member of South Africa which equates to a family in a macrocosmic sense. Isolation is the characteristic of liminal beings and since South Africa is isolated from the rest of the world, all of its ethnicities or inhabitants are isolated too. Accordingly, all South Africa and its constituent parts are suffering from the generally pervaded

liminal circumstance.

Turner elaborates on two kinds of liminality: "rituals of status elevation" and "rituals of status reversal." The first kind is related to a promotion in the status of one's life and the second type is the reversal of a status (*The Ritual Process* 167). In the present novel, the second type of liminality is observed in that almost from the beginning of the novel there are references to drought which has stricken the land (6); and in the last pages of the novel the wipers come to be used in clearing the windscreen from the fallen drops of rain. Therefore, the geographical circumstance is reversed and drought is replaced with a heavy rain which causes flood.

Color is another technique used by Brink in demonstrating liminality in the novel. Grey is a color between black and white and happens to be the most frequent color in the novel. It forms the background color of the novel. Merriam Webster Online Dictionary describes the gray color as "having an intermediate and often vaguely defined position, condition, or character" (web). Luscher focuses on the psychological exploration of the grey color:

> A neutral grey, containing no color at all and therefore free from any affective influence, while its intensity places it halfway between light and dark so that it gives rise to no anabolic nor catabolic effect- it is psychologically and physiologically neutral. (*The Luscher Colour* 26)

Lack of color, neutrality, lack of anabolic and catabolic (constructive and destructive) effects, being neither mental nor physical, which means being neither abstract nor concrete, are the characteristics of grey color that make it appear as a liminal issue. We will enumerate on some instances during the rest of the study. Martin's car is a "grey Mercedes" (40). This color makes both the car and subsequently its passengers invisible. While describing the courtroom, Martin says that the walls are covered with "grey curtains" (61). Curtain is a cover that distinguishes outside and inside; moreover, it is the boundary between the outside and the inside world. They could be both a way to connect the worlds or a barrier between them. The drawn curtains put the people in an isolated environment and leads to their seclusion from the outside world. Accordingly, grey color and curtains could be a metaphor for an indeterminate and being on a fence like situation.

Grey is the color of those who do not take a particular side in discussion, those who prefer to sit on the fence rather than being on its either sides. Martin calls political attitude a "dangerous grey area" (106). Aforementioned discussion indicates that human beings' actions are extremely influenced by their environment

and in such a circumstance the politicians do not determine their status clearly. The members of such a nation will be indispensably affected by the situation. Consequently, Martin, a conservative Afrikaner, is the one in whose behavior and condition, such liminal and in-between characteristics are manifested.

Being on the farm, Martin describes his situation in this way: "The first dark grey light was just beginning to filter through the windows; it was as yet impossible to distinguish anything outside. The lamp isolated us at a corner of the large table"(209). Hence, the grey color leaves Martin with an incapability to see the outside world. Martin uses the grey color to describe the hills as well. Grey has taken everything under its surveillance not only the interior domains but also the world beyond them. Martin sees everything in a grey color; he even uses this color in describing the times of the day. For instance, he refers to the day he spent with Welcome, one of his Black friends, as a "dull grey afternoon" (362). As a result, the whole life of Martin is doomed to colorlessness, which makes him completely invisible.

Due to the fact that human beings suffer greatly from being simultaneously in and out of something, and to be both included and excluded or being left in an in-between state which is a limbo too, they always seek to find a loophole to set themselves free from such unbearable conditions. Conversely, it seems to be a failure; in that, while discussing to be black or white rather than being black and white, Louis tells Mr. Lawrence, a character in the novel, that '"You think you can keep everything nicely separated through apartheid," Louis went on, like a bloody fly on a windowpane. "White here, Black there. But this isn't chess. It's people" (367). To put it differently, Louis claims that since in the society, in spite of the chess play, we are dealing with human beings, distinguishing human beings could not be an easy thing to do. Being in liminality and on the boundary between categories, forms an indispensable part of the life of ethnicities in South Africa.

Martin considers his life full of "*ifs*" (171, italics in the original). *Ifs* stand for suppositions. They indicate situations which could be both real and unreal, possible and impossible. In if sentences, the results could not be claimed without any doubt. They are conditional terms which indicate dependence on other situation for their actualizations. *Ifs* stand between doubt and certainty and signify liminality in Martin's life and speech.

Another instance of liminality is the immigration from villages to the cities. Mabin introduces a type of migration which is "circular" ("Dispossession, Exploitation" 14). It is exactly the type of migration in *Rumors of Rain*; in that the migration here is bilateral. It is urban to rural and vice versa. Martin is originally

a rural man and he goes on a journey to The Cape of Good Hope which is a rural setting. In such a circumstance "the entire households have frequently not migrated as a whole" (ibid 13). To give an illustration, Martin's mother is still living in the Cape of Good Hope, such a lack of a complete migration process leaves people swaying between rural and urban context. It does not lead the transition to become successfully conducted. Such a coming and going creates a kind of dependence for inhabitants of each. This dependence and lack of ability to govern oneself independently leaves the individual in oscillation between these two contexts of life and makes them liminal beings.

Being entangled between the dilemma of choice is one of the other techniques used by Brink in representing liminality in the life of Martin. He confronts a kind of undecidablity, he does not know whether he should help his convicted and imprisoned friend, Bernard, or not.

> Martin: "Bernard, do you realize the risk I'm exposing myself to if I—"/
> Bernard: "Everybody gets a chance to decide with open eyes" (199).

It resembles the Hegelian tragedy in that if he chooses to help him, he may put his own life at stake, if not, he betrays the very rules that govern friendship and define a good friend as the one who helps in need.

Martin's wandering is presented in the novel via the use of words like maze and labyrinth (378, 381). Such words become images in the novel. Klapcsik describes labyrinth as "a barrier between the known and the unknown" (*Liminality in Fantastic* 107). In such a situation, one finds himself/ herself lost in the warp of time and difficulties. The individual cannot find the paths of entrance and exit. It is a place within interior and exterior and that is why Martin asserts: "but in my panic I'd lost all sense of direction" (397).

Being in the jungle, Martin sees an old man and he describes liminality to something like this old man's presence. He says "I was lost. And behind me, somewhere close by but *invisible*, he was lurking like a *shadow*, the evil old man" (397, my italics). His presence resembles that of a shadow and shows a situation in which presence and absence are simultaneously combined. Henceforth, getting lost is a technique to demonstrate liminalty. Martin gets lost in the jungle and sees an old shadowy man. Martin is wandering in the jungle. He cannot recognize the back and the forth path of his movement. Hence, he is left in a coordinateless spot, a blind spot, in which he cannot see the world beyond. He enumerates on his situation in the jungle in the following way:

> The first time I stopped again was when I recognized something familiar on a thorny branch in front of me. A small patch of material. For a moment I refused to believe it: it had to be someone else's. But the rag belonged unmistakably to my expensive imported jacket. I could match it with a tear on my shoulder. How on earth had I started crawling in circles? If that was true I was really lost. Night would catch me here. (398)

While he thinks he is proceeding on his way, he suddenly finds a torn piece of his cloth ahead. It proves his previous presence there; then he notifies that he is stymied in a vicious circle, worse than this, is the lack of existence of any sign, even the sky does not equip him with any sign to find his path through.

Music is another example of liminality. It affects the personal feeling. Although temporarily, it frees the listeners from the concerns and worries which bother the psyche. Since the problems do not vanish permanently, music provides the listener with a relaxation. It creates a liminal situation in the mind of the listener. In his car and in Aunt Rainie's Party, Martin listens to music and finds it "the *only pure form of escape*" (122). After the end of the played music, the person reintegrates into the previous and the very harsh reality of life. This music throws him into a kind of seclusion. Seclusion is one of the features of liminal beings.

The breaking of Martin's glasses is another means of representing liminality. When Martin breaks them inadvertently, he is placed in a liminal space. Not having his glasses to wear, he describes the scene in the following way:

> All precision had disappeared from the landscape, leaving me lost and angry in the midst of it. Damn it! Suddenly my own farm had become strange to me. I could still see well enough to find my way, but all detail was lost, all definition blurred, *all familiarity gone. I felt isolated, abandoned among the dull hulks of things*. (223; my italics)

The aforementioned situation is called liminal in that without the glasses, Martin is neither completely blind nor has sharp eyes to see the environment clearly. Martin's life is "doomed to incompleteness" thus he lacks perfection. This imperfection leaves him in a permanent liminality (499). Almost in the middle of the novel, Martin elaborates on the life of several generations of his ancestors. All of them have been in the same context and their lives have been full of wandering, riots, wars, and years in detention (234-235). He says that "they've all been losers"

of history (243). In the way indicated, nothing has changed for them, they have experienced the same life all through the previous years.

The more mirrors are used in a space; the more bewildered human beings will become. Similarly, the more borders are constructed, the more confused the people will become. The increasing number of borders is what Martin and Louis take into consideration. Regarding their life condition, Martin proposes that "We're creating more and more frontiers all the time" (294). The number of borders is constantly increasing; therefore, they are more disconnected with the world they are living in, and it seems as if they are put away from the world and whatever constitutes it.

While describing Louis, Martin uses the phrase "boy-man" (312). Such a hyphen shows the hyphenated character of Louis. He is left on the bridge between these two poles and has not passed from it. Moreover, Louis says that "war makes a man of one;" he assumes that war is one of the rituals that makes a man out of its participants, the soldiers, (316). Louis proposes that during the war, "we were like zombies, we dropped down to sleep wherever we could find an open spot" (ibid). Here Louis describes all of the soldiers as zombies. As could be defined and presented, zombies are a kind of liminal creatures, which in a categorized system, could be placed between dead and alive. In other words, they are "neither dead nor alive" (Turner, "Betwixt and Between" 7). According to Turner, such a falling between the living and the dead is the characteristic of liminal beings. Louis does not successfully pass from this in-between state, the boy-man state. Tuner has used the phrase "made man" (ibid, 10). Accordingly, Louis has not become a man yet.

Turner states that "homogeneity;" "abolition of rank" and being "disregard for personal appearance" are the characteristics of liminal beings (*The Ritual Process* 105-106). Louise has problem with either if he has been made man or not, or if war has made a man out of him or not, he shows this obsession by asking "I'd become a man, hadn't I?" (320). In *An Act of Terror*, Brink notes the same point that "war makes a man of a boy" (251). Narrating the events of the war, Louis claims that "*Jesus, you should have seen the mud up there. We were grey from head to feet"* (328; italics in the original). Being covered by clay makes them appear similar without any difference in appearance. All of the participants are homogenized by the clay which has covered them.

War is a liminal time and space which traumatizes those who are involved, those who observe and experience many scenes of atrocities either exerted by themselves or other people. Therefore, it becomes exceedingly difficult for the traumatized to reintegrate into the peaceful society (post-liminal phase), peaceful moments without war. War overtakes every one with its destructive effects. The left

traumatized psyche does not let them have a productive and constructive life; that is why, Louis is not regarded as a useful person in life; he is aware of such a fact and states that "I'm not going to stay an invalid for the rest of my life"(45). Near the end of the novel, Martin talks about Louis and infers that:

> And suddenly, while I was still thinking about possible remedies, he put out his hand to turn on the wipers as well. To my amazement they responded immediately, swishing to and fro in mechanical precision. Louis looked at me. With a smile of satisfaction, he said: "I fixed them on Saturday when I washed the car. Just a loose connection." It was a sensation both of relief and singular humiliation. As if he had finally and independently taken control himself. (488)

The above description signifies a pretty successful event which foreshadows independence for Louis; it may promise prosperity and an entrance into the post-liminal era. Focusing on some of Freud's theories, Turner acknowledges that if someone is afraid of an issue or a phenomenon, and suffers from the psychological wound caused by that issue, the best way to combat the fear is to face it and identify with it (*The Ritual Process* 176). In such a circumstance, Martin takes Louis along while going on the journey. Martin asserts "I'd brought him along with the intention of trying to "find" him" (255). His son is still suffering from the destabilizing effects of the war. Martin gives him an opportunity to narrate his memories of the Angola war.

Narration acts like a remedial technique for Louis to release himself from the undesirable memories and the irritating experiences of the war. Hence, Martin helps him get out of the trauma and be reintegrated into the healthy psyche which he enjoyed of having before the war. Martin claims that "All the months since Louis's return we'd been trying to handle him with understanding and patience: something traumatic had happened and we had to help him re-adapt to life" (255). Although there are some minor references to the individuals' release from undesirable liminality in the novel, the dominant condition which is not promising, is more significant. Despite dancing a shaky flame in the wind, it is most likely going to be off rather than on.

Bernard is another Afrikaner who is suffering from fixation caused by liminality. In terms of Martin's description of him "he had never outgrown his boyhood" (30). Turner defines liminality as a position "between boyhood to manhood" ("Betwixt and Between" 10). Bernard remains between these two polarities. He goes on trial in Pretoria and his sentence is ratified there too.

Imprisoning people indicates the ignorance of their presence and existence; that is to say, the ignorance of their identity in society. When a person is imprisoned, he/she is deprived of the sociopolitical identity constructed by him/her in the society. Prison is a liminal space and the imprisoned is humiliated by being imprisoned. Brink has elaborated on the situation of South Africa and referres to what John Berger has offered in his *Art and Revolution*.

> In Berger's view, shared by many others, most of the problems in the world today are related to the exploitation and degradation of people all over the world, and to their struggle to liberate themselves from the most humiliating of these forms of exploitation and degradation. (*Mapmakers* 47)

The imprisoned people are disinherited of the social identity, and they do their best to get out of prison to reintegrate in to the society, a society in which they will be able to reestablish their denied identities. The imprisoned confronts a gap or an abyss which creates a barrier between his individual being and his social being. Brink identifies that almost all of the human beings' activities touch upon their "urge to communicate;" henceforth, "they should have the right to communicate" (*Mapmakers* 50). All of human beings' struggles are to set themselves free either from prison or other undesirable situations in which their identity is questioned. Jewkes argues that when someone is sentenced to life imprisonment, it is like a doctor telling his patient that he/she is going to die. Such a lifelong imprisonment puts the whole life of the individual in liminality. In this case, liminality is no more a temporary phenomenon and turns out to be a stable or nearly a stable one ("Loss, Liminality" 366-367). According to Jewkes, prison is a liminal place, and consists of uncertainty, chaos and danger. In such a place, the prevailing customs and normal behavioral codes are reversed (ibid, 375). Discussing Bernard's sentence, Louis claims:

> To sit there for life — that's worse than a death sentence. Especially for a man like Bernard. The judge said he wanted to be merciful: but a life sentence was the worst they could have done to him. And they bloody well knew it. (407)

The liminal characters use a coded language which is beyond the realm of normal language. It is a specific language among them. The very meaning of the words they use carries secrecy and like their existence, it seems to be inconceivable by their surroundings. The meaning of such a coded language is hidden just like their

own existence. They have been detached from the society not only socially but also linguistically (semantically).

Louis asks his father "How long is a life sentence really?" to which Martin replies: "for however long you manage to keep alive" (135). Since the answer of the question is the prisoner's life until death, life imprisonment itself creates a permanent liminality which prevails the whole life of Bernard.

Different ethnicities experience somehow common liminality with Afrikaners. As it is proposed in the jacket design of the novel "André Brink's story of a community on the edge of collapse, spurred to profound self-realization." All of the ethnicities' situations are on the brink of collapse:

> Nine or ten stories up a building in the process of construction a Black man was sitting on a narrow ledge, his legs dangling over the edge. All the windows were crammed with people leaning out to watch him; below, in the parking lot, a crowd was jostling round a small circle cordoned off by constables standing arm to arm. "What's he doing up there?" I asked a man next to me. "Been up there since eleven, they say he wants to jump." From a window overlooking the ledge a police officer was trying to talk to the Black man. It was too far away to make out what he was saying. The Black pulled up his legs, tautening his whole body, obviously preparing to jump. (27-28)

This Black man represents the situation of almost all of the Blacks in South Africa; their situation is standing on the edge or on the brink. It is the edge of life and death, suspense, and indeterminacy. These conditions show liminality in the life of Blacks. Louis asserts that "the Black soldiers who were with us, the Unitas" (317). War is a liminal space. Camps and the operational areas (318-319) are liminal spaces; in that soldiers from different ethnicities are gathered there. The soldiers undergo the same liminal situations. Charlie and Martin set up the following conversation:

> Charlie: "Have you ever thought about how similar you and I really are?"
> Martin: "You're exaggerating."
> Charlie: "You think so? We come from the same sort of place. Then we both went overseas." More subdued, he added: "And then we both came back. What the hell for? What did we really hope to find? We don't belong any more, man. You're just as bloody detribalized as I am." (300)

Here, liminality is completely obvious for both the Blacks and the Afrikaners.

Charlie, the Blackman, elaborates on a shared pain which is the lack of a sense of belonging for both Martin and him (73). There is another conversation between Martin and another Black man:

> The Black man: "That's my land over there."
> Martin: "Morocco?"
> The Black man: "No, Africa. My home is farther to the south, Nigeria."
> Martin: "We're from Africa, too."
> The Black man: "It's not good to be away from it." (73)

Martin adds:

> That was the full extent of our conversation. But through it, for the first time in my life, I really became aware of Africa: that continent linking me to so many generations of men, past homo sapiens, millions of years back to homo habilis: my land and that stranger's (ibid, italics in the original).

Accordingly, South Africa is a common land in which different ethnicities inhabit. In such a common context, they are provided with somehow the same opportunities. Compared with war, detention centers are liminal spaces in that all of the detainees spend time in the same context and there is no superiority or inferiority in their status. They are equal. For instance, one of Bernard's co-detainees is a Colored man (159). As a result, the accused people have the same situation in detention centers. In such a case, the skin color does not make any difference and ethnicities without considering themselves as different beings due to the color of their skins, are suffering from the same unpleasant situations in South Africa.

Martin talks about his friendship with two men on the boat and on his way back to South Africa, one of which will be discussed here, his newly made friendship is with a young *Indian* doctor; they spend much time together on the voyage. They discuss their common interests in both music and their country which they "loved in equal measure." Martin adds that what upsets him most is the restriction that both of them suffer from. Martin claims that:

> The fact that, upon our arrival in Cape Town, good friends as we were, we would not be allowed to have a meal or a cup of tea together in any hotel or restaurant. What was more, if I ever had a son and if he were to fall in love with Mewa's daughter (one of the prettiest and most delightful little children

> I had ever seen), he would be jailed for it. Such are the small personal, subjective experiences which may prompt a change in one's entire view of life. (104)

Both Martin and the Indian doctor suffer from the rules of separation between ethnic groups. The separation rule between ethnicities is imposed by the government. Martin acknowledges that, although the Indian doctor and he could be good friends, they were not allowed to communicate with each other freely. In the following, we observe that both sides of the relationship, regardless of their ethnicities, suffer from the segregation laws imposed by a superior organization.

Bernard offers some love cases in which the partners were prohibited to marry each other. Once there was "a Colored teacher who'd had a relationship with a White secretary for over a year. If the law had allowed it, they would have got married" (107). After being imprisoned for a while, "they both committed suicide by gassing themselves in a car" (ibid). Therefore, being white or colored does not matter anymore and both ethnic groups are suppressed in equal ways. In the conversation between the ANC (The African National Congress) leader and Martin, the leader assumes that:

> If you place the races of one country in two camps, he said, and cut off contact between them, those in each camp begin to forget that those in the other are ordinary human beings; that each lives and laughs in the same way, that each experiences joy and sorrow, pride or humiliation, for the same reasons. Thereby each becomes suspicious of the other and each eventually fears the other, which is the basis of all racism. (114)

The world does not have any special tendency to a particular ethnic group. To put it differently, "The world is neutral" by itself (411). The world itself does not consider a particular ethnic group as the other of another one. Subsequently, these categorizations and divisions are the results of some social contracts, the setting of different races and ethnic groups are due to the social and political rules, which are created by the ruling powers themselves. In most of the cases, like the one explored above, the ethnic groups do not want to be the subject of such divisions. That is due to the fact that they suffer from the joint pain which is the very fact of being a minority ethnic group. In the long run, the situations in which almost all of the ethnic groups are gathered together, the liminality has been demonstrated not only for Afrikaners but also for other ethnic groups too.

The text and its context is full of liminality, ethnicities have been detached from a pre-liminal phase and have not yet been reincorporated into the post-liminal phase. Martin is the representative of not only Afrikaners, but also other liminal ethnic groups. He asserts that "My convictions are based on the belief that revolutions, although they change political power, make no difference to the basic lot of people" (51). Although a revolution may occur in a political order, it makes no difference for the ethnicities. All in all, no change will occur to favor minorities in society and even if it rains (rain as a metaphor for a change in political power), the flood caused by it, will sweep all before it and the situation won't improve.

In *Rumors of Rain,* Brink employs techniques like migration, journey and road, shadow(a simultaneous presence and absence), fog, physical body, jungle and getting lost in it, music, breaking of the glasses, variety of borders, boy-man, zombies, war, fixation, life sentence, edge, detention centers, camps and the operational areas, mirror, curtain, hyphenated human beings, hybridity, prison, being sentenced, blurring of vision, bifurcation or dilemma of decision making, illegal men and women love affair, symbolic usage of the grey color, boats, hotels and apartments as the conventions of representing liminality.

Rumors of Rain demonstrates quite well the sociopolitical situation of South Africa. Investigating liminality in the novel, the present paper comes up with this conclusion that being a minority acts like a uniting factor that negates other differences and gathers different ethnicities in the communitas. Using the term communitas will be a more preferred term in comparison with society in that according to Turner, communitas brings a sense of anti-structurality and emerges in the liminal phase and due to the fact that South Africa is in a way haunted by liminality, it is better to be called the communitas of South Africa rather than the society of South Africa. Consequently, the liminal beings are in communitas rather than a structured society.

Crisis, uncertainty, equality, unanimity, suspension, lack of a sense of belonging, wandering, invisibility, silence, anti-structurality, being left on the brink, oscillation and fixation are all according to Turner, characteristics of liminality which have been entirely explored in the novel. Most of the solutions to the existent liminalities are peripheral and carry some properties of liminality in themselves. To bring forth an illustration, one can allude to music, which is employed to get the characters out of a wider sense of liminality; however, it is liminal in itself. None of the remedial techniques are long-lasting. They just help the characters forget their miseries temporarily. The remedy could be effective only and only if the ethnicities

are provided with a sense of belonging; however, it has never been fulfilled.

The desire to be accepted in South Africa as full citizens is not met and it resembles an unrequited love in that South Africa does not respond to such desires. The transition from the state of being a colonized minority to a state of being completely independent citizens seems to be an incomplete process; therefore, the threshold won't be crossed successfully and the minorities' request will be denied rather than being ratified. The unfulfilled desires make the minorities in a life-long wander in search of a possibility and capability to incorporate themselves into South Africa. We do not employ the term re-incorporate here in that they have never been incorporated into the so-called *their* country. Liminal beings won't outgrow their transitional status. Liminality becomes a public phenomenon rather than a private one in South Africa. Due to the fact that the characters' aspirations for a development in their circumstance and social situations are moldered, they will appear as decentralized subjects in the postcolonial or the post-apartheid era.

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