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Special Thematic Issue
Ethical Literary Criticism: International Perspectives

Edited by Shang Biwu

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Ethical Literary Criticism: International Perspectives

Shang Biwu
School of Foreign Languages, Shanghai Jiao Tong University
800 Dongchuan Road, Shanghai 200240, China
Email:biwushang@sjtu.edu.cn

Abstract This article is an introduction to the thematic cluster "Ethical Literary Criticism: International Perspectives." It begins with a brief overview of recent works on ethical literary criticism in the West and those produced in the East, suggesting a necessity for a dialogue between Western perspective and Oriental perspective. The bulk part of the article is devoted to explicating the major arguments of all the contributions. In doing so, it reveals that Western ethical literary criticism, assimilated either by philosophy or by narratology, has hardly developed into an independent school of critical theory, while Chinese ethical literary criticism, with its distinctive terminologies and critical frameworks, has emerged as an exciting new critical theory.
Key words ethical literary criticism; philosophy; narratology; stylistics; sociology
Author Shang Biwu is a Distinguished Fellow of English at Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Fellow of the National Humanities Centre, United States, and editor-in-chief of *Frontiers of Narrative Studies*. His areas of research include narrative theory, ethical literary criticism, and twenty-first century fiction. An author of *In Pursuit of Narrative Dynamics* (2011) and *Contemporary Western Narratology: Postclassical Perspectives* (2013), he has published about seventy articles, critical notes, and book reviews in such international journals as *Style, Language and Literature, Journal of Literary Semantics, Modern Fiction Studies,CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture*, *Semiotica*, *Primerjalna književnost*, *Foreign Literature Studies*, and *arcadia: International Journal for Literary Studies*.

The second decade of the twenty-first century witnessed a new upsurge of ethical criticism in Western academia, which is saliently evidenced in such works as Steve Brie, and William T. Rossiter's *Literature and Ethics: From the Green Knight to the Dark Knight* (2010),Toker Leona's *Towards the Ethics of Form in Fiction:*

Narratives of Cultural Remission (2010), David Parker's *Ethics, Theory and the Novel* (2011), Jakob Lothe, and Jeremy Hawthorn's *Narrative Ethics* (2013), Nora Berning's *Towards a Critical Ethical Narratology: Analyzing Value Construction in Literary Non-Fiction across Media* (2013), Adam Zachary Newton's *To Make the Hands Impure: Art, Ethical Adventure, the Difficult, and the Holy* (2014), and Liesbeth Korthals Altes's *Ethos and Narrative Interpretation: The Negotiation of Values in Fiction* (2014), to name a few. Equally noteworthy is the popularity of ethical approach to literature in the East, which is largely in debt to the rise of ethical literary criticism proposed by Nie Zhenzhao. Ethical literary criticism, according to Nie, designates "a critical theory that reads, analyzes and interprets literature from the perspective of ethics so as to identify its ethical nature and moral teaching function" (Nie13). Unlike Western ethical criticism, which has been assimilated either by philosophy or by narratology, ethical literary criticism has fully fledged into an independent school of critical theory in China.

When talking about the nine lives of theory, Jane Elliott and Derek Attridge observe that " 'Theory' was never a single, self-identical object and, in fact, one of its signature reflexes was the resistance to such 'totalizing' groupings, which were usually seen to commit the epistemological violence of reducing the rich heterogeneity of a complex field to a single homogeneous concept" (Elliott and Attridge 2). Along somewhat similar line, one can postulate that ethical criticism has never been a single and unified grand theory. At issue is what we are supposed to deal with, in particular, the plethora of ethical criticism developed against different critical traditions. About the correlations between ethical criticism and other critical approaches, Marshall Gregory suggests that "What the humanities in general need is an ethical criticism that is intellectually defensible, not to replace or displace other critical approaches but to complement them"(Gregory 194). I'd like to further extend Gregory's argument by claiming that different strands of ethical criticism are not to replace each other but rather to form a type of complementary relation. To this end, in "The Rise of a Critical Theory" (2014), I place much emphasis upon the dialogue between ethical criticism in the West and ethical literary criticism in China, and I firmly believe that "the more our exchanges involve a sharing of ideas about the two traditions and innovations, the more we can learn from each other and the more productive the relationship is likely to be" (Shang 35).

My expectations have been largely fulfilled by the 4th International Symposium on Ethical Literary Criticism held in Shanghai Jiao Tong University from December 19th to December 21st, 2015. As an organizer of this conference, I was delighted to

see it attended by nearly 300 scholars from more than 10 countries and regions, including the United States, England, Germany, Russia, Norway, Hungary, Estonia, South Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Mainland China. Among these attendants are not only the graduate students and young scholars eager to join the academic community but also quite a few eminent, experienced, and internationally recognized scholars. To name a few, Marjorie Perloff, Charles Bernstein, Ansgar Nünning, Vera Nünning, Péter Hajdu, William Baker, Geoff Hall, Jüri Talvet, Brian Reed, Knut Brynhildsvoll, Simon C. Estok, Igor Olegovich Shaytanov, Youngmin Kim, Yuanmai Wu, Zhenzhao Nie, and Di Wu. There were all together 17 plenary speeches and 14 panel sessions, embracing a diverse array of broad topics, such as theoretical explorations of ethical literary criticism, ethical literary criticism and interdisciplinary studies, and ethical literary critical perspective on national literature, in addition to a wide range of issues thoroughly explored and heatedly discussed.

The current thematic cluster is one of the most fruitful results of this conference, featuring international perspectives on and multiple approaches to ethical literary criticism. It begins with Charles Ross's interview with Nie Zhenzhao, the Chinese founder of ethical literary criticism. In this wide-range interview, Nie elaborates the definition of ethical literary criticism, the origin and function of literature, and the ethics/morality distinction. In particular, he says much about the differences between ethical literary criticism and aesthetic criticism. In Nie's opinion, ethical literary criticism sees literature as a moral means for undertaking ethical selection; while aesthetic criticism regards literature as a sensual means for aesthetic appreciation. Equally illuminating is Nie's elaboration of natural selection and ethical selection, which are considered as the two pillars of his critical enterprise. Arguably, ethical selection is the second selection after natural selection in the history of human civilization. Completing natural selection, human beings must undergo ethical selection so as to transform "animal man" into "ethical man."

Nie's oriental perspective on ethical literary criticism is met with Western perspectives starting with Ansgar Nünning's paper, which forcefully argues that narrative theory and ethical literary criticism should be seen not as strange bedfellows but as natural allies, despite the regrettable fact that classical narratology largely ignored questions concerning context, history, interpretation, norms and values, while ethical criticism has not been much concerned with formal issues or narrative techniques. In his article, Ansgar, apart from offering an overview of the different trajectories of narratology and ethical literary criticism,

and the recent attempts at reconciling and synthesising narratological and ethical approaches, lays out the premises and concepts of narratology and ethical literary criticism to do each others' service. In doing so, Ansgar concludes that "the more narratological ethical literary criticism becomes, and the more interested in ethics and the dissemination of values narratology becomes, the better for both."

Ansgar's attempt to combine the insights from narratology and ethical literary criticism is further consolidated by Vera Nünning's efforts. In her contribution, Vera dwells on the cognitive and ethical potential of fictional narratives. As a part of her larger project in *Reading Fictions, Changing Minds* (2014), Vera's essay aims to synthesize psychological research and the theory of narrative. Taking the findings from recent psychological study on the persuasive power of fictional stories to change readers' beliefs and to improve readers' cognitive abilities, Vera focuses on the potential of fiction to enhance readers' abilities of social cognition, and reveals how ethical issues are intricately involved in the cognitive processing of fictional narratives. Thought-provoking are the future directions outlined by Vera, such as the cognitive potential of popular fiction, the hierarchies of values embedded in fictional stories, and possible links between the values disseminated in a story and the genre it belongs to, all of which deserve an in-depth exploration and set up a scholarly agenda for the rest of us.

Equally interdisciplinary is Geoff Hall's contribution, which tries to bring together the strengths of stylistics and ethical literary criticism. As an established scholar of stylistics, Hall is fully aware of the fact that both stylistics and ethics are essentially about choices: stylistics is the study of linguistic choices, while ethics is the study of moral choices. That said, stylistics and ethical criticism can be brought into a fruitful dialogue if one starts from the idea of *choice*, which, in Hall's view, is "a notion basic to both stylistics and to ethics." The words used in a text and the words that readers express preferences and perspectives often have an ethical import. Specifically, Hall takes Henry James' fictions as an object of analysis, demonstrating how a stylistic awareness can help critics to pin down the ethical implications of literary texts.

Like the Nünnings and Hall, Knut Brynhildsvoll also intends to reconsider ethical literary criticism from an interdisciplinary perspective. However, there are substantial differences in their explorations: in the contributions by the Nünnings, the counterpart of ethical literary criticism is narratology; in Hall's contribution, the counterpart is stylistics; while Brynhildsvoll attempts to shed a new light on ethical literary criticism from the science of sociology. In particular, Brynhildsvoll intends to examine the changing ethical evaluations with reference to Norbert Elias and

Peter Dürr. In doing so, he argues that as far as ethical criticism aims at obtaining a change in the reader's mind, it depends on the inherent capacity of the text to transcend his/her expectation horizon and create an awareness of the need for a spiritual renewal.

While the above scholars' contributions are marked by their synchronic feature, Kenneth Womack and William Baker's draws a brief review of Anglo-American ethical criticism diachronically. Observing that "ethical criticism's fusion with continental philosophy has produced a more theoretically rigorous form of literary critique that continues to elevate its status as a viable interpretive mechanism," Womack and Baker bluntly claim that "ethical criticism offers a valuable lens for examining the manner in which literary characters experience moments of moral clarity and interpersonal change." To illuminate this argument, they take Ford Madox Ford's *Parade's End* as an object of analysis. With reference to Levinas's ethical philosophy and its critical matrix of alterity, they try to reveal Ford's ethical imperatives in *Parade's End*, which aims at altering readers' perspectives of war and atrocity via his well-honed Impressionistic techniques.

As a Vice-president of International Association for Ethical Literary Criticism (IAELC), Jüri Talvet embraces Nie's ethical literary criticism and speaks highly of the newly founded IAELC, the mission of which, in Talvet's opinion, is "to initiate a new trend of international literary scholarship that would form a certain counterweight to Western literary studies, which at least since the last quarter of the 20th century have indeed oscillated between two extremes: on the one hand, linguistic-formalistic research (including narratology, cognitivistics, language philosophy applied to literature, etc.); on the other hand, sociological approaches (discourses on power relations, postcolonial scholarship, gender studies, etc.)." Talvet agrees with Nie in claiming that "there was very little hope that big or small 'peripheries,' if they continued to follow the main fashionable trends proceeding from Western 'centers,' could ever contribute to universal literary scholarship or world literature studies by their own, original points of view, reflecting realities beyond 'centric' Western literary currents and criticism and their faithful imitations in the 'periphery.'" In his contribution, Talvet reflects upon the possible origin of Western ethical literary criticism in Dante Alighieri's philosophical treatise *Convivio*, assuming that the formation of a theory/philosophyof ethical literary theory ran in parallel with ethical practice in the first great European literary masterpieces of the budding new era — Dante's own monumental *Comedia* and the following creation of the early Italian Renaissance writers.

Similarly, Zheng Jie also applies Nie's ethical literary criticism to her

analysis of Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens*. Focusing on the cultural and historical background of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, Zheng specifically interrogates the ethical environment of Timon's tragedy. In order to reconsider the tragedy through reference to Shakespeare's reflection on ethics in the play, she explores the conflicts between feudal ethics and the ethics of contract in the transition from feudal economy to modern capitalism. Zheng's close reading of the text suggests that the secular, asocial, and unethical image of Timon reflects the collective ethical anxiety hang over the heads of the Elizabethans and Jacobeans.

Then it follows Wang Songlin's exploration of Thomas Carlyle's ambivalentattitudes towards social change. Reading Teufelsdröckh in *Sartor Resartus* and Carlyle's other writings, Wang reconstructs and evaluates Carlyle's appeals for social order as well as the Gospel of work as a remedy for moral degradation of his time. Throughout his contribution, Wang stresses that in the heart of Carlyle's change and ambivalence dwells the agony of a prophet of modernist consciousness who was acutely wary of the potential chaos, contradiction and even the absurdity far beyond his era.

This thematic cluster ends with Younghoon Kim's reading of D. H. Lawrence's *The Virgin and the Gipsy* along the line of ethical philosophy. He begins with Nietzsche's critique of morality before moving to Deleuze's idea of ethics. For most part, Kim examines the relationship between Yvette and the gipsy by resorting to Lévinas and Derrida. In doing so, he attempts to disclose Lawrence's commitment to ethics and morality.

Finally, I want to extend my heart-felt thanks to all the contributors of this thematic cluster, without whose enthusiasm and cooperation, this project would never be possible. Their professional ethics adds a new layer to the wide spectrum of ethical literary criticism.

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A Conceptual Map of Ethical Literary Criticism: An Interview with Nie Zhenzhao

Charles Ross
Comparative Literature Program, Purdue University
500 Oval Drive, West Lafayette, IN 47907, USA
Email: rosscs@purdue.edu

Abstract Nie Zhenzhao is professor of English literature and comparative literature at Central China Normal University, and editor of *Foreign Literature Studies*. Currently, he serves as Vice-President of such organizations as China National Foreign Literature Association, the International Association for Ethical Literary Criticism (IAELC), and Chinese/American Association for Poetry and Poetics (CAAP). As the founder of ethical literary criticism in China, Nie is mainly engaged in studies of literary theory, and ethical literary criticism in particular. His publications include *Ethical Literary Criticism and Others: An Anthology* and *Introduction to Ethical Literary Criticism* among many others. In this interview, Nie elaborates the theoretical frameworks and core concepts of his ethical literary criticism, among which are natural selection and ethical selection. Natural selection, according to Nie, is a biological selection that differentiates human beings from other animals in their physical forms; while ethical selection helps human beings to be fundamentally different from other animals in the sense that they have acquired ethical consciousness. To better illustrate this point, Nie uses the Greek Sphinx and Shakespeare's *Hamlet* as examples.
Key words Nie Zhenzhao; ethical literary criticism; natural selection; ethical selection; ethical natural selection; Sphinx factor

Interviewer Charles Ross, a former Fulbright-Hays Scholar in Italy, and a founding editor of *Forum for World Literature Studies,* is Professor of English and Director of the Comparative Literature Program at Purdue University. His books include the first English translation of Matteo Maria Boiardo's Italian romance *Orlando Innamorato* (1989), *The Custom of the Castle from Malory to Macbeth* (1997), *Elizabethan Literature and the Law of Fraudulent Conveyance: Sidney, Spenser, Shakespeare* (2003), a verse translation of L. Paninius Statius's Latin

Thebaid (2004), and several edited collections of essays, including *Shakespeare in Hollywood, Asia, and Cyberspace* (2009).

Ross: *In "Art of Poetry" Horace says the purpose of literature is to teach and delight, to which Sir Philip Sidney added that literature should also move readers to virtuous action. Is that how you define ethical literary criticism?*

Nie: Ethical literary criticism is a theory and methodology for reading, interpreting, understanding, analyzing and evaluating literature from an ethical standpoint. It argues that literature is a historically contingent presentation of ethics and morality and that reading literature helps human beings to reap moral enlightenment and thus make better ethical choices. The mission of ethical literary criticism is to uncover the ethical value of literature.

Ross: *Many people, including Nietzsche, believe literature retains its origins in the written contracts (records of debts) for which writing was first used, as in ancient Babylon. In what way does Chinese literature as a written form remind us of these beginnings?*

Nie: Ethical literary criticism holds that human beings invented written language out of their ethical needs, and then used the written characters to document their life stories and their understandings of ethics. In this way texts were formed and literature came into being. Ancient literature such as Greek epics and Chinese oracles can be seen as the earliest literary texts which record human ethical life and the development of moral norms. With the establishment of human political institutions such as democratic government and the modernization of various social systems, literature, now often called "artistic expression of society", continues to express social systems, moral norms, and legal rules. As a matter of fact, the ethical nature and teaching function of literature can be traced to its earliest beginnings.

Ross: *I take it that because of your focus on the origins of literature, you view ethic and morality as interchangeable.*

Nie: To some scholars, the terms of ethic and morality are considered interchangeable. However, to me, they are different. In my opinion, ethic is a general term encompassing both moral terms and immoral terms, while morality is a specific term excluding immoral terms. That said, ethic is a neutral word which can be interchangeable with morality only in some particular context. For example, we may use the term of ethical value or moral value to commend a person's action when he saves the boy from drowning at the risk of his life, but we can't use moral action to discommend someone who refuses to save the boy from drowning.

Therefore, the moral teaching function of literature is not just determined

by its moral value, yet, in a broad sense, by its ethical values. To me, literature is essentially a guidebook for the moral teaching of humanity. Its ethical nature and teaching function are derived from its earliest existence and original aims, which can be aptly demonstrated by a huge number of literary works. For instance, Homer's poetry conveys to the reader the ethics of living; Hesiod's "Theogony" helps the reader to know the world; Greek tragedy teaches the reader to abide by the ethical order and moral codes. The process of reading is closely related to the process of aesthetic appreciation, which serves as an important means of moral enlightenment. In short, moral teaching is the fundamental function of literature.

Ross: *In what way is literature a record of lived experience, a sort of guidebook to living based on the lessons of the past?*

Nie: In the beginning of human civilization, the basic problem for human beings to solve is how to tell human beings from the rest of the animals. In contemporary society, it is possible for us to live a harmonious life as we know what we should do and how we should practice the tenets of ethics or morality. However, it was rather difficult for primitive human beings, since they were just in the process of acquiring this knowledge from their life experience.

It was a very difficult and long process of exploration. At first, they related their own experience of morality in the form stories to their children, to their relatives of the tribe, and then to a wider society through the circulation of oral tales. In this way, people could learn how to live well by taking the experience of their forefathers and people of other tribes. In fact, what they told forms the early literature, which is now called *oral literature*. However, I should say that *oral literature* is an incorrect term, since it was narrated through memory. It can be better addressed as *brain text*. In other words, oral literature is not literature per se but the brain text related via oral narratives. Anyhow, just like written texts, oral literature aims to teach readers how to live a good and happy life, which is the earliest form of ethics. In this sense, literature is the imaginative presentation of ethics, which serves as a guidebook for living.

Ross: *That raises the question of how moral functions may change over time, as conditions change.*

Nie: In modern times, we abide by the existing social order which has been generally formulated on the basis of ethics. Literature, no matter it is in the written form or oral form, embodies social institutions, law and rules derived from ethics. Moral teaching function of literature remains unchanged despite the changes of conditions.

Ross: *Then there is a difference between moral criticism and ethical criticism.*

Nie: Unlike moral criticism, ethical literary criticism does not simply evaluate a given literary work as good or bad on the basis of today's moral principles. Instead, it emphasizes "historicism," that is, the examination of the ethical values in a given work with reference to a particular historical context or a period of time in which the text under discussion is written. The overarching aim of ethical literary criticism is to uncover ethical factors that bring literature into existence and the ethical elements that affect characters and events in literary works. It seeks to illuminate issues concerning the events, the characters and their actions from an ethical perspective, and to make an ethical evaluation accordingly. In this way, we could use literature to teach people and tell them how to learn with the help of literary criticism.

Though some traditional ethical critics have attempted to unpack ethical elements in literature, they have usually analyzed literature from their personal ethical values and moral principles or, at best, the moral principles of their contemporaries, which not only makes their critique unreliable but also causes a much more serious problem by inverting ends and means. Theoretically, their point of departure should have been to analyze literature from an ethical perspective, or to put it differently, the ethical value of the literary text should have been the target of their research, and their moral principles should have merely served as toolkits in that process. However, in practice, the analysis of literary texts ceases to be their target of investigation and their personal moral principles takes priority. By contrast, ethical literary criticism represents a particularly strong call for objectivity and historicism. Grounding itself in specific historical contexts or ethical environments, ethical literary criticism sees the contemporary value of literature as the rediscovery of its historical value.

Ross: *Yet literature is more than just a list of rules or suggestions. It is not a code, but a shaped presentation of ideas in attractive form.*

Nie: Here is a difference between ethical literary criticism and aesthetic criticism. The former takes literature as the tool for teaching people to be rational but the latter takes literature as the tool for getting aesthetic enjoyment of sensual pleasure. In short, ethical literary criticism sees literature significant in educating readers, while aesthetic criticism sees literature significant in bringing sensual pleasure.

However, ethical literary criticism does not deny the value of aesthetic criticism but takes it as one of the important means of understanding literature for ethical aims. Aesthetic criticism helps us to read and enjoy literature for receiving moral enlightenment. In other words, without any moral purpose, the aesthetics of literature would cease to exist. In ethical literary criticism, the primary purpose

of literature is not to provide entertainment but to offer moral examples for human beings to follow by way of literary enjoyment, to enrich their material and spiritual life with moral guidance, and to achieve their self-perfection with moral experience. In brief, only by working together with morality can the aesthetic value of literature be fully realized.

Ross: *Why not just have a list of rules handed down from generation to generation. Or is there such a group of basic ideas, a form of tao? What is the role of literature?*

Nie: Literature teaches by giving illustrations of ethical choices. It is a pedagogic tool for human beings to learn how to live responsibly. In fact, we cannot find other tools as effective as literature. Possibly, there might someone arguing against this by saying "we could learn from our parents, but not from literature." Indeed we can learn from our parents and other members of our family, but how do they teach us? I think they mainly teach us by adopting literature.

In our childhood, we acquaint with literature from our parents as they sing cradlesongs and tell fairy tales to us. When we get older, we will learn more from literature in primary school and then in middle school. Even when we study in university or get a work after our graduation, not saying our work in the department of literature, we still learn from literary readings.

Literature is indispensable to us. Whenever we make choices by making value judgments about what sorts of lives worthy living, we almost always draw inspiration and guidance from our readings. It is almost impossible to make choices without evaluating events which we have already experienced or without the help of the guidance by literature.

Ross: *How does ethical literary criticism handle the difference of humans from animals after natural selection? What is your natural selection?*

Nie: It helps to think in terms of two ideas, natural selection and ethical selection. I will talk about natural selection first from ethical literary criticism. In my definition, natural selection is the process of evolving from ape to man. It is the selection of the form as man but not man as the civilized one. I mean that natural selection takes role only in human form evolving from ape but not in transformation of savages into civilized ones. Even though we have completed it in the history of evolution, everyone still must undertake it within context of ethical selection.

In the history of human civilization, if we can apply a Darwinian idea to the civilizing process, human beings have undergone natural selection and gradually begin ethical selection by their ethical consciousness and especially the awareness of their existence as humans. The Sphinx, a literary figure in ancient Greece, can be

taken as a symbolic outcome of natural selection. Though Sphinx has human's head evolved from some creature, she is an animal because her animal factor plays a dominant role in her life before she becomes aware of her as a human being. That is to say, it is not natural selection that differentiates man from animal. At first, humans are animals in nature, just coming out of natural selection. Eventually humans could differentiate themselves by their ethical consciousness, which is embodied by the human head that, such as Sphinx has, makes it possible for us to lay the foundation to know our difference of the form as humans.

Ross: *And the second approach, ethical selection?*

Nie: Ethical selection is the second one after natural selection in the history of civilization. In my definition, it is the process of man to be moral one after he completes natural selection. For example, the birth of child is outcome of natural selection meanwhile it means the completion of natural selection. But how does the child become a real man? It is the ethical selection. Factually, it is not human but the reason contained in the human's head that makes himself out of animal. The natural selection will no longer work on the child after he was born. That is to say, it is only ethical selection that transforms him to be ethical one from biological one.

In this stage, human factor is the force to initiate man to make ethical choices during his whole life of ethical selection. It can differentiate himself from animal by the realization of human nature determined by human factor in Sphinx. It is human factor that differentiates man from animal, which means that man and animal are differentiated not by form but by human factor which becomes human nature in ethical selection.

There are two factors about Sphinx: animal factor and human factor. The animal factor is animal remains coming from ape or animal, but human factor is the new gain from ethical selection. It is animal factor and human factor that determine man to be animal man or ethical man. As the human factor of Sphinx is the major one, the ethical man is more human being than animal man. Therefore, it is the human factor that determines man to be human being with human nature.

Ross: *Do you see a clear moment of transition between natural selection and ethical thinking?*

Nie: Where is the point at which humans move from natural selection to ethical selection, or from animal beings into human beings? I think the point is that the self-confirmation of ethical identity as ethical man but not form of biological man after the completion of natural selection. It is only after ethical identity as ethical man confirmed by man himself that man can enter the process of ethical selection.

From the viewpoint of the history of civilization, the self-confirmation of

ethical identity is the self-confirmation of us as human beings. We are Oedipus' answer to the Sphinx Riddle (it is humans who walk on four legs in the morning, two at noon, and three in the evening).

Therefore, a self-confirmation of ethical identity is the logical starting point of ethical selection. We first become human by selecting according to the determined rules of what an ethical person can or should do. We make choices that determine our ethical identity. We decide what and how to select whenever we determine to do anything.

Ross: *You mentioned the birth of child is natural selection. In your view did natural selection really end?*

Nie: Yes, it ended. The natural selection had completed when human began their ethical selection in the history of civilization. Even if the birth of child could be seen as natural selection only from biological point of view, it is not right to consider it as the fact to prove the incompletion of natural selection because marriage, the kind of ethical choice, is the condition of child, the natural selection. So, the birth of child is the outcome of ethical choice after all, and we could call it ethical natural choice within the context of ethical selection. With the help of teaching and learning, a child begins the process of ethical selection that distinguishes him from animals. So we can say that natural selection is in the past tense while ethical selection is in the present continuous tense. This is also the difference between natural selection and ethical selection.

Ross: *Can you give us a literary example that illustrates this moment of transition from natural to ethical selection?*

Nie: Shakespeare's *Hamlet* offers a good illustration. Why does Hamlet become to hesitate to revenge his dead father? It is the self-confirmation of his ethical identity as the son of Cloudius because of his marriage with Gertrude. As the ethical identity of Cloudius' step-son, there would be a problem of patricide and regicide, which were originated from natural selection in blood, if he were to kill Cloudius. It is right for him to revenge but it is right not to revenge as well because of ethical taboos. In other words, it is right for him to revenge his ceased father but it is equally wrong to kill his step-father. We can say that Hamlet's ethical dilemma causes his hesitation, and therefore we can conclude that the well-known monologue "To be or not to be" is not about pondering over death and living but about Hamlet's ethical choices. From Hamlet's hesitation, we can see how he chooses to confirm his self-identity.

The ethical selection in civilized society is different from natural selection in the evolution of humans through history. In fact, we go through the ethical selection

by way of various choices initiated by the Sphinx factor consisting of human factor and animal factor. After natural selection, the human factor and animal factor, which are always combined together in humans, play a role in ethical choices. Those two factors can be changed into free will or rational one. The human factor turns into rational will, and animal factor turns into natural will and free will. Those different wills determine us as ethical beings.

Ross: *In other words, each process meets the test of our sense, what we normally think of as evolution and ethical choice.*

Nie: Yes, natural selection undergoes by way of evolution while ethical selection undergoes by way of teaching and learning. We make choices (that is our choice behaviors) throughout our lives but we can't make the right choice without teaching and learning. Through the instruction of literature, we could find models and excuses for our ethical choice. Ethical selection draws on literature for teaching, learning, education and instruction. For example, children can learn to tell good from bad by the enlightenment of fairy tales. Literature provides adults with models for making individual ethical choices.

Ross: *What is practical use of the theory you refer to as Ethical Literary Criticism?*

Nie: By the teaching function of literature, ethical literary criticism can be used to help readers and learners to get enlightenment, education, instruction, and guidance as they analyze, interpret, comment on, and evaluate literary texts. Ethical literary criticism is based on reading. It asks us to evaluate literature from an ethical perspective. It asks us to look for the moral rules at play in a given set of circumstances. This helps us understand morality.

Ethical literary criticism is therefore a method of interpreting literature. Using literary texts, it elaborates, analyzes, comments on, and evaluates the different motivations, actions, and processes of ethical selection. It uncovers moral models, both as examples and as warnings. It helps us develop the capacity to think about complex human interactions.

Ross: *In other words, it is literature that gives urgency to writing.*

Nie: In short, the aim of ethical literary criticism is to offer varied experiences, lessons, instructions and inspirations for our learning, teaching and enlightenment. Without those, I would even say, literature would be nothing; literary critics would be nothing; and ethical literary criticism would be nothing but marks on a page.

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Narratology and Ethical Criticism: Strange Bed-Fellows or Natural Allies?*

Ansgar Nünning
Institute for English Studies, Justus-Liebig-University
Otto-Behaghel-Str. 10, 35394 Giessen, Germany
Email: ansgar.nuenning@anglistik.uni-giessen.de

Abstract Exploring the relation between narratology and ethical criticism, this article argues that these two approaches to the study of narrative fiction are neither strange bed-fellows nor as incompatible as the fact that most of their respective practitioners tend to ignore each other's work may suggest. It is argued that narrative theory and ethical literary criticism could and should be seen as natural allies in that their respective concepts and perspectives present complementary and mutually illuminating approaches to an understanding of the ethics and politics of narrative form. The essay provides a brief overview of both the different trajectories of narratology and ethical literary criticism, and of recent attempts at reconciling and synthesising narratological and ethical approaches. Moreover, it attempts to sketch out some of the premises and concepts of an ethical narratology that puts the analytical toolkit developed by narrative theory to the service of context-sensitive interpretations of novels that focus on the question of how narratives serve to disseminate norms and values. An alliance between the two approaches could arguably be an important force in the current reconceptualisation of literary studies and the ongoing development of new forms of ethical literary criticism.

Key words classical and postclassical narratology; ethical criticism; narratives as cultural ways of worldmaking; dissemination of values; the ethics and politics of narrative forms

Author **Ansgar Nünning** is professor of English and American Literature and Cultural Studies at the University of Giessen. He is the founding director of the "Giessener Graduiertenzentrum Kulturwissenschaften" (GGK), of the "International Graduate Centre for the Study of Culture" (GCSC), and of the European PhD Network "Literary and Cultural Studies". He has published widely on narrative theory, English and American literature, cultures of memory, and literary and cultural theory, including 15 monographs and text books as well as more than 200

scholarly articles in refereed journals and collections of essays. His narratological publications include articles on narratological approaches and concepts, e.g. unreliable narration, the implied author, multiperspectivity, description, and meta-narration. Recent publications include a special issue on "Recent Trends in Narratology" of the journal *GRM: Germanisch-Romanische-Monatsschrift* (2013).

1. Prologue: Strange Bed-Fellows or Natural Allies? Introducing the Aims and Scope

At first sight, narratology and ethical criticism seem to be strange bed-fellows at best, incompatible approaches to the study of narrative fiction at worst: While classical narratology largely ignored questions concerning context, history, interpretation, norms and values, mainly focussing on formal and structural features of narrative texts ever since its invention in the 1960s, ethical criticism has not been much concerned with formal issues or narrative technique. Practitioners of ethical literary criticism do not often avail themselves of narratological concepts and models, often skirting such formal issues involved in narrative representations as narration, focalisation, multiperspectivity, polyphony, and the dialogic orchestration of norms and values. Although we have recently witnessed a great revival of interest in the study of narratives across various disciplines and domains, narratology and ethical interpretations of narratives still seem to be oceans apart. This holds especially true for classical narratology, whereas rhetorical approaches to narrative like those championed by James Phelan and some of the more well-developed recent approaches in narrative theory, e.g. feminist narratology, are much more interested in interpretative concerns.

Against this backdrop, this essay will argue that narratology and ethical criticism, despite their contrary theoretical and methodological assumptions, are not as incompatible as the fact that most of the practitioners of the two approaches tend to ignore each other's work may suggest. I will argue that narrative theory and ethical literary criticism could and should be seen as natural allies rather than strange bedfellows in that their respective concepts and perspectives present complementary and mutually illuminating approaches to an understanding of the ethics and politics of narrative form. More specifically, the article pursues two goals: First, it will try to provide a brief overview of both the different trajectories of narratology and ethical literary criticism, and of recent attempts at reconciling and synthesising narratological and ethical approaches. Secondly, it will attempt to sketch out some of the premises and concepts of an ethical narratology that puts the

analytical toolkit developed by narrative theory to the service of context-sensitive interpretations of novels that focus on the ways in which narratives serve to represent, disseminate and critique norms and values (cf. Erll/Grabes/Nünning). By doing so, I hope to show how narratological categories can be used in order to tease out the ethical implications of narrative fiction, arguing that ethical interpretations of narratives would stand to gain a lot by actually applying the categories provided by narratology. By the same token, the toolkit of the latter could be put to the service of ethical and political concerns that are generally considered to be more vital for literary and cultural studies than structuralist analyses and taxonomies.

I should like to hasten to add, however, that this article is by no means the first attempt to align narratology and ethical criticism. On the contrary, as the next section will show, there have been a number of fruitful attempts at reconciling and synthesising narratological approaches and ethical criticism, and the present essay is, of course, very much indebted to the work of those colleagues whose contributions are briefly reviewed in section 2. Moreover, I neither intend to ignore the theoretical and methodological differences between them nor do I want to suggest that they have a similar agenda, because they obviously do not. The overarching objective and gist of the argument is rather very similar to the main goal of an excellent recent collection of articles on postclassical narratology: "This is not a call for a prescriptive unity of methods and models but an attempt to align the many disparate ways of doing postclassical narratology [...] and to check out their moments of overlap as well as the extent of their incompatibilities" (Alber/Fludernik, "Introduction" 5).

One of the main reasons why the project of an ethical narratology is arguably both desirable and promising is because narrative fiction is one of the most important means of disseminating norms and values. As Andrew Gibson, for example, shrewdly observed, "[i]t is literature and the novel [...] rather than philosophy, that best express contradictions between significant values or systems of values" (Gibson 8). As Barbara Herrnstein Smith observes at the beginning of her fine essay on the intricate and thorny topic of "Value/Evaluation," "[i]ssues of value and evaluation tend to recur whenever literature, art, and other forms of cultural activity become a focus of discussion, whether in informal or institutional context" (177). Debates about value(s) and evaluation, and the ethical dimension of literature have indeed been perennial issues in literary criticism and literary theory, even "central to Western critical theory for at least the past two hundred years" (ibid.).

The last two decades, however, have witnessed a renewed interest in the

relationship between literature and values and the ethical dimension of literature, culminating into what has been dubbed 'the ethical turn' and the reemergence of a reemergence of ethical criticism. While the developments and new perspectives subsumed under such umbrellas as 'the ethical turn' and 'ethical criticism' have been mapped by a number of fine surveys (cf. e.g. Eaglestone; Davis/Womack; Hadfield/Rainsford/Woods), the complex and reciprocal relationship between literature and value has not received as much attention as it arguably deserves: "the importance of literature and other media for the dissemination of ethical values within a culture has not yet been duly acknowledged and submitted to scrutiny" (Grabes 3-4). The development of a narratologically-grounded form of ethical literary criticism could thus be an important force in the current reconceptualisation of literary studies and the ongoing development of new forms of ethical literary criticism.

2. Why and Where Narratology and Ethical Criticism Have So Far Largely Failed and Occasionally Managed to Meet: Attempts at Reconciling Narratological and Ethical Approaches despite Different Agendas and Trajectories

To present the outlines of what I have provisionally called an ethical narratology, we need to at least briefly historicise and contextualise the debates in which I shall make a modest attempt to intervene. When narratology was invented in the late sixties, four of the things that were lost were context, history, interpretation, and ethics. Classical narratology was first and foremost geared towards the formalist analysis of narratives, providing a host of neologisms and ingenious typologies of narrative forms and techniques. Ethical criticism, on the other hand, is mainly concerned with content rather than form, focussing as it does on questions of morality and the norms and ethical values represented in, and disseminated by, works of literature.

As already observed above, narratology and ethical criticism, at least at first sight, therefore seem to be very strange bed-fellows that have hardly got anything in common. While narratologists largely eschew ethical and ideological issues, practitioners of ethical criticism and approaches that are considered to be mainly interested in ideological issues have not displayed much interest in either questions of representation or formalist or structuralist analysis: "Ideological critique often opposes itself to formalist narrative analysis, and this opposition filters into university English classes, where formalisms are like the slightly odd cousin no one

invites for holidays" (Elias 281).

By trying to align narratology and ethical criticism, I should like to argue that such dichotomies as the one between "the uncontaminated fields of 'classical' narratology" and the "contextualist dimensions of contemporary 'postclassical' narratological scholarship" should not be exaggerated (Darby 423). They arguably present us with a set of false choices: between text and context, between form and content as well as form and context, between formalism and contextualism, between bottom-up analysis and top-down synthesis, and between "neutral" description and "ideological" evaluation. The problem with such binarisms is not so much the ingrained structuralist fear that the formalist and descriptivist paradigm will inevitably be polluted by the invasion of ethical and ideological concerns, as the failure of such rigid distinctions to do justice to the aims and complexities of textual analysis, interpretation, and cultural history.

It is the attempt to address these complexities, to cross the border between textual formalism and historical contextualism, and to close the gap between narratological bottom-up analysis and cultural top-down synthesis that is the motivating and driving force behind such projects as an applied cultural narratology (cf. Nünning, "Where Historiographic Metafiction and Narratology Meet"), which is sensitive to the cultural contexts and ideological and epistemological implications of narratives, and the topic at hand, i.e. the development and refinement of an ethical narratology.

The refinement of an ethical narratology can follow in the footsteps of quite a number of the "new narratologies" (cf. Nünning, *New Narratologies*) that have demonstrated what the point of narratology might be by applying its insights and categories to the analysis and cultural interpretation of a broad range of texts. Cases in point include e.g. feminist narratology, intercultural narratology, and postcolonial narratology (cf. Sommer). Shifting their attention to the ways in which narrative functions as an active cognitive force in its own right which is involved in the actual generation of attitudes, discourses, ideologies, values, and ways of thinking, such cultural narratological approaches focus on what structuralist narratology ignored and left unanswered: the crucial question "of how literary production is engaged in the ongoing process of cultural construction" (Bender, *Imagining* xv). For want of a better term, I have elsewhere suggested that one might call such an approach "cultural and historical narratology" (see Nünning, "Towards"; "Surveying").

Like feminist narratology and gender-oriented narrative theory, such a cultural narratology could be a model for aligning narratology and ethical criticism. In the

clarion-call article for the development of what has by now become a blossoming and important approach, the founding mother of feminist narratology, Susan Lanser, delineated what the agenda and the main theoretical moves of such a narratology were:

> A narratology for feminist criticism [...] would be willing to look afresh at the question of gender and to re-form its theories on the basis of women's texts [...]. In both its concepts and its terminology, it would reflect the mimetic as well as the semiotic experience that is the reading of literature, and it would study narrative in relation to a referential context that is simultaneously linguistic, literary, historical, biographical, social and political. (345)

With the benefit of hindsight, one can only admire both the vision delineated by Lanser and the impressive subsequent achievements of the approach she has championed and further refined ever since. What is more, the highly successful manner in which she managed to integrate seemingly incompatible, but actually complementary approaches to the study of narrative pointed and paved the way for analogous projects like postcolonial narratology.

The recent diversification of approaches in narratology has resulted in an increasing interest in the forms and functions of narrative worldmaking and a shift of attention towards the question of how narrative forms contribute to our understanding of such phenomena as gender, ideology and ethics. While the mere systematic and formalist analysis of narrative, once the central point of narratology, has largely gone out of fashion, narrative theorists have begun to turn their attention to cultural, ethical and ideological issues. Many practitioners of such new contextualist approaches as feminist narratology, intercultural narratology or postcolonial narratology have begun to apply the analytic tools of narratology to a broad range of narrative texts and media beyond literature in a narrow sense and to research questions associated with the domain of ethical literary criticism.

The main reason why I am drawing attention to such approaches as feminist narratology, cultural narratology and postcolonial narratology is that they demonstrate how the study of the mimetic and semiotic dimension of literary texts can be productively combined in the analysis of narratives. These approaches can thus provide models that scholars working in the fields of ethical literary criticism could fruitfully adapt and emulate. More specifically, they show how the respective blind spots and shortcomings of narratology and ethical criticism can be overcome. Although there are always exceptions that confirm the rule, ethical criticism has

largely failed to come to terms with questions of narrative form, as Gibson has rightly emphasised: "But the most crucial problem with the criticism I have been discussing is the extent to which it ignored all the various problematisations of narrative and narrative 'form' [...] in novel theory from the 1960s onwards" (11). He goes on to elaborate on how theorists and practitioners of ethical criticism have mainly been interested in the philosophical dimension of ethics, while largely eschewing the complex issues involved in literary representation:

> The theorists and critics avail themselves of the latter [i.e. philosophers like Rorty, MacIntyre and Nussbaum] — or of the debates as cast by the philosophers — to skirt a lot of the inconvenient problems that continue to haunt the theory of the novel in the wake of structuralism and post-structuralism. This is the case, above all, with regard to three issues: narration, representation and the unity of the work. (Gibson 12)

Other theorists have also noticed that ethical literary criticism has largely ignored or skirted what Hayden White and others have called "the content of the form." Terry Eagleton, for instance, wryly observes: "It is remarkable how often the philosophy of literature ignores the morality of form in its high-minded pursuit of ethical content" (Eagleton 46). It is only fair to add, however, that narratology has also got many blind spots, having largely failed to take into consideration questions of content, history, ethics and ideology.

However, there have been a number of interesting and successful attempts at reconciling and synthesising narratological approaches and ethical criticism. Although an all-too-brief account cannot do justice to their theoretical sophistication, at least four approaches deserve to be briefly reviewed because of their relevance for the topic at hand: James Phelan's rhetorical narrative theory, Andrew Gibson's postmodern ethics of the novel, Wolfgang G. Müller's ethical narratology, and, most recently, Nora Berning's project of a "critical ethical narratology. "

Exploring narrative as a rhetorical act, James Phelan's rhetorical narrative theory serves to shed new light on the ethics of reading and the treatment of ethical problems in narrative fiction. In contrast to most work in ethical literary criticism, Phelan's comprehensive approach not only takes into consideration a broad range of elements of any narrative, including characters, narrators, setting, plot structrure, and progression, it also manages to bridge the gap that has so far separated narratology from ethical criticism, to the detriment of both, one might

add. As Alber and Fludernik have pointed out, "[r]ecent rhetorical narratology [...] can be regarded as an important contextualising venture that opens the text to the real-world interaction of author and reader, and hence provides a perfect model for discussing the ethics of reading and the treatment of ethical problems in narrative fiction" ("Introduction" 11). Since Shang Biwu has provided a detailed account of Phelan's rhetorical theory of narrative in his book *In Pursuit of Narrative Dynamics*, it may suffice to refer the reader to his excellent monograph.

Although it is not as much informed by the concepts of narrative theory as Phelan's approach, Andrew Gibson's postmodern ethics of the novel provides a stimulating attempt at aligning philosophy and contemporary literary theory. Gibson clearly delineates what the main concerns of his approach are: "For the ethics and the ethical temporality which interest me emerge from contemporary theory, and this study is precisely concerned with the elaboration of a postmodern or post-theoretical ethics of the novel" (5). Taking the philosophy of Levinas as a point of departure, Gibson not only delineates how an ethics of fiction has been emerging out of literary theory itself, he also develops an interesting approach for coming to terms with the "ethics in literature" (cf. also Hadfield/Rainsford/Woods).

In contrast to Gibson's abiding interest in literary theory and his notion of a postmodern ethics of the novel, Wolfgang G. Müller's ethical narratology is much more informed by the concepts and methods of classical narratology. Müller manages to align the study of point of view with an exploration of the ethics of storytelling: "The following attempt to lay a basis for an ethical narratology [...] is grounded on the hypothesis that the specific ways of telling a story and narrative point of view can have important ethical implications" (117). In doing so, he shows how useful narratological tools can be for coming to a better understanding of how narrative techniques serve to mould ethical concerns.

Drawing on Phelan's rhetorical narrative theory, Müller's ethical narratology and a host of other recent approaches in literary and cultural theory, Nora Berning's "critical ethical narratology" constitutes the most recent and detailed attempt at integrating structuralist narratology, postclassical narrative theory, mediality and the multi-level story ethics of narrative. Her project explicitly focuses on the ways in which a broad range of narrative techniques contributes to the dissemination of ethical and moral values: "In order to make sense of literary non-fiction as a genre that is heavily involved in the representation, construction, and dissemination of moral values, it is necessary to analyse the ways in which authors make use of narrative techniques and strategies in their narratives" (Berning 137). Berning's methodological framework for applying her "critical ethical narratology" includes

a broad range of analytical concepts from the narratological toolbox, ranging as it does from narrative situations and time to character-spaces and narrative bodies.

Despite its brevity this overview may suffice to show that there have been a number of very successful attempts at reconciling and synthesising narratological approaches and ethical criticism, on which an attempt to refine ethical narratology can fruitfully draw. Moreover, interest in ethical questions is also obvious in the case of approaches that are oriented to contexts, ideological issues, and norms and values like feminist narratology, gender oriented narratological theory, and intercultural and postcolonial narratology. The following attempt at delineating some of the main premises and concepts for an ethical narratology is thus indebted to, as well as informed by, the approaches briefly reviewed above. Let us now turn our attention to the question of how the interface between cultures, narratives, and norms and values can be conceptualised.

3. Cultures, Narratives, and Norms and Values: Premises for an Ethical Narratology and a Narratological Study of the Dissemination of Values

An ethical narratology proceeds from the general assumption that narratives are very important and powerful cultural ways of worldmaking (cf. Goodman; Nünning/Nünning/Neumann) in that they do not merely describe or represent a world but actually serve to generate events, stories and worlds, including endowing them with meaning and values. As Jerome Bruner observed, "narrative, including fictional narrative, gives shape to things in the real world and often bestows on them a title to reality" (Bruner 8). Using the insight into the performative, reality-constituting, or worldmaking function of narratives as a point of departure, this section will outline some of the most important concepts and building blocks that narratology can contribute to the development of an ethical literary criticism. Instead of giving a wide overview of the historical development of narrative theory or of the main differences between classical narratology and the new post-classical narratologies (see Herman; Nünning, *New Narratologies*), an attempt is made to clarify which premises, concepts and perspectives developed by narratology could benefit ethical literary criticism.

However, one of the many questions which was largely ignored by structuralist narratology but which deserves to occupy centre stage in both cultural and ethical narratology concerns the functions that narratives can fulfil in various contexts, discourses and domains. A central point of convergence shared by the different narrativist approaches which have been developed in many disciplines across the

humanities and social sciences is the insight that narratives are one of the most important cultural ways of meaning-making (see Bruner, *Acts*) and worldmaking (see Nünning/Nünning/Neumann). This basic insight, which goes some way to explain the broad interest that narratives and storytelling have had for some time in many different disciplines, emphasises the performative quality or power of narration, bringing the reality-constituting power of narratives and storytelling into focus. Elaborating on the title of his book, Jerome Bruner explains what is at issue: "I have called it *Acts of Meaning* in order to emphasise its major theme: the nature and cultural shaping of meaning-making, and the central place it plays in human action" (Bruner, *Acts* xii). If one understands narratives as a way of meaning-, value- and indeed worldmaking, then a question also has to be asked about the elements, processes, and practices which are involved in narrative worldmaking and by which meanings, norms and values are created and negotiated within a community. Since I have elsewhere provided a detailed account of how narratives serve to make events, stories and worlds (see Nünning, "Making"), it may suffice to refer the reader to this essay and to other recent accounts of narrative worldmaking (see Herman, "Narrative Ways of Worldmaking"; "Time"; "Principles") and the making of fictional worlds (see V. Nünning, "The Making").

While an ethical narratology proceeds from the general assumption that narratives fulfil a performative or worldmaking function, it also needs a more nuanced conceptualisation of the relation between the hierarchies of values that pertain in the real world and those that are projected in fictional storyworlds. The fundamental notion of the conception of the relation between literature and real-life values presented here is a three-dimensional model, which draws on Paul Ricœur's concept of a 'mimetic circle' with its three levels — prefiguration, configuration, and refiguration (cf. Ricœur 1984 [1983]). Literature is first of all related to and preformed out of a pre-existent, extra-literary reality, which Ricœur calls prefiguration: Literary works come into being in the context of cultures, in which symbolic orders already circulate certain versions of life, norms and values (manifested e.g. in social interaction, texts in the literary tradition, and media of other symbolic systems). Secondly, literary texts can represent alternative or different norms and values by textual means and literary techniques, something which Ricœur subsumes under the general umbrella term of configuration: Literary works often disseminate, generate or project socially unsanctioned, excluded and repressed forms of life as well as the values and norms that underpin them. In George Eliot's phrase, they can therefore be viewed as "experiments in life" (cf. Nünning, "George Eliot's Aesthetic Theory"), i.e. as models and test-cases that

generate possible worlds as well as alternative hierarchies of values through a series of specifically aesthetic procedures or literary forms. In turn, such literary productions of norms and values are, thirdly, able to have an effect on extra-literary reality (refiguration): Literature has contributed, to no insignificant degree, to forming norms and values, and social conceptions of the good life.

Ethical narratology and ethical literary criticism at large should try to take into consideration both the representation of cultural norms and values in literature, and the construction-aspect of literature as an active medium in the dissemination, generation or production of norms and values (cf. Baumbach, Grabes, and Nünning). What also needs to be emphasised is that the stages between prefiguration and configuration on the one hand, and between configuration and refiguration on the other are always inextricably intertwined. The first question to be addressed is of how, and with what literary methods or techniques, prevailing cultural notions of norms and values are represented in a given text. From this perspective, literature comes into view as a medium of the *representation* of extra-literary norms and values and as a medium that is capable of constructing or generating new or alternative hierarchies of norms and values. Secondly, literature has always served as a medium for the *dissemination* of norms and values, be it those generally accepted by society or alternative values. Thirdly, literature appears as a medium for the *construction* of norms and values. Another question to be addressed concerns the connections between configuration and refiguration: What functions can literature fulfil for the development, modelling, alteration, critique, and even destruction of norms and values?

Two dimensions of the relations of literary works to extra-literary norms and values — and thus also two fundamental directions for the special potential of literature in culture — should therefore come into focus: The first dimension concerns the specific potential of the medium of literature, through its aesthetic forms, to thematise, represent, and disseminate norms and values in their cultural contexts. Secondly, and deriving from the aesthetic form, the potential of the medium of literature to actively construct and generate norms and values, as well as to question and critique prevailing value-hierarchies and collective views of what constitutes the 'good life', is also of interest. In short, the focus is on exploring the role of literature as a medium of the representation and reflection, the dissemination and problematisation, and the modelling and construction of norms and values.

In order to avoid possible misunderstandings it should be stressed that my general understanding of "mimesis" in the present context is not restricted to a naïve concept of mere reflection, but emphasises the active creation of realities

or world-models, or of norms and values, through literary texts. Though literary narratives are simultaneously characterised by a reference to extra-literary reality, as emphasised unanimously, albeit with a basis in different concepts, by e.g. Paul Ricœur, Wolfgang Iser and Jürgen Link, they never merely reflect cultural models or norms and values (cf. Baumbach/Grabes/Nünning; Kövecsces, "Metaphor", *Language, Mind, and Culture*). Ricœur (1984 [1983] makes clear that the creation of world-models or versions of reality through literary works rests on dynamic transformation processes – on an interaction among the "prefiguration" of the text, that is, its reference to the pre-existent extra-textual world (*mimesis* I), the textual "configuration" that creates a fictional object (*mimesis* II) and the "refiguration" by the reader (*mimesis* III). The literary process thus appears as an active constructive process, in which cultural systems of meaning, literary processes of formal configuration and practices of reception are equally involved and in which reality is not merely reflected, but instead first poetically created (cf. 107) and then "iconically enriched" (cf. 127).

To sum up: The symbolic order of the extra-literary reality, e.g. of norms and values that actually exist in the real world, and the literary or possible worlds created within the medium of literature enter into a relationship of mutual influence and change. Ricœur's "circle of mimesis" can thus contribute to a differentiation among different levels of the relationship between literature and values: First, literary works are related to extra-literary norms and values (i.e. prefiguration); second, they represent norms and values, their content and functioning, in the medium of fiction (i.e. configuration); and third, they can help to form new norms and values (refiguration). What perspectives are opened up through such an examination for the analysis and interpretation of novels, plays and poetry from the point of view of a literary studies focussing on the value(s) and functions of literature? And how can we actually analyse, and come to terms with, the complex processes involved in the prefiguration, configuration, and refiguration of norms and values?

To begin with, there are several narratological axes of configuration and dimensions of narrative worldmaking that have to be taken into consideration if one wants to get to grips with the ways in which values are represented, constructed and disseminated through narratives. First of all, the selection and weighting of the narrated elements leads to a hierarchisation of values on the paradigmatic axis of selection. Secondly, the methods of plot configuration and emplotment on the syntagmatic axis, i.e. the arrangement, combination, and causal interconnections, are crucial for the processes of narrative worldmaking and the hierarchisation

of values through configuration, order and the privileging of narrated elements. Thirdly, the discursive axis of discourse and narrative mediation plays a pivotal role for narrative worldmaking because the explicit and implicit constitution of meaning and the hierarchisation of values also greatly depend on narrative mediation. Focalisation, point of view techniques, and the configuration and distribution of perspectives deserve special attention as important acts or procedures of narrative worldmaking in their own right because they all shape the dissemination of norms and values.

Shifting its attention to the ways in which narrative functions as a way of worldmaking, i.e. a cognitive force in its own right which is involved in the actual generation of attitudes, discourses, ideologies, hierarchies of norms and values, and structures of feeling and thinking, ethical narratology focuses on what structuralist narratology has ignored and left unanswered: the crucial question of how narratives, both literary and non-literary, are engaged in the ongoing cultural construction and negotiation of moral norms and ethical values. The ways in which narrative fiction serves to contribute to the dissemination of ethical and moral values is, of course, a crucial part of this process of cultural construction in that it serves to contribute to the formation of communities, and to the definition of what a given culture regards as good, bad, and normal. The following suggestions are offered as a means to sketch some conceptual, terminological and methodological premises for a context-sensitive and ethically informed approach to narratives that is still rooted in narratology but that is geared towards the analysis of the ways in which narratives serve to represent, disseminate and critique cultural, ethical and moral values.

By "ethical narratology" I mean an integrated interdisciplinary approach that puts the analytical tools provided by narratology to the service of ethical literary criticism and that goes far beyond the formalist or structuralist analysis of narrative fiction. Focussing on "the study of narrative forms in their relationship to the culture which generates them" (Onega/García Landa 12), such a culturally-oriented ethical narratology explores "cultural experiences translated into, and meanings produced by, particular formal narrative practices" (Helms 14). Interest in ethical narratology thus centres around the interfaces and mutual relations between the respective objects of study in both narrative theory and ethical literary criticism, i.e. the types, structures and functions of narrative phenomena, on the one hand, and the dissemination of ethical and moral values through literature, on the other hand.

Linking questions pertaining to narratology and the study of ethics, ethical narratology explores both the narrativity of cultures and the culturality of narratives. Focussing on the narrativity of cultures and on cultures as narrative communities,

such an approach is mainly concerned with theoretically conceptualising and empirically studying the functions that narratives can fulfil as a cultural way of worldmaking in general and as a medium for the dissemination of ethical and moral values in particular. It explores the roles that narratives play in the construction of cultural phenomena like ideologies, hierarchies of norms and values, structures of feeling and thinking, collective memory, and cultural identity and alterity. The premise of the culturality of narratives, however, also turns the attention of cultural and ethical narratologists to a question which structuralist narratology systematically ignored, viz. the question of how far narratives and the elements that constitute them (e.g. certain plot patterns, preferred narrative forms, linear or cyclic time structures) themselves depend on cultural norms and values and may thus be variable and specific to a given culture.

Ethical narratology can therefore be defined as a context-sensitive and diachronic theory and analysis of narrative that does justice to the cultural dependency and historical variability of both narrative forms and ethical and moral values. Not only is the category of 'gender' relevant for an analysis of all the elements that constitute narratives, but also other difference categories like "race," "class," "generation," "religion" and "nationality" that are imbued with ethical choices and moral values.

Unlike classical structuralist narratology, which was mainly concerned with the systematic formalist description of narrative techniques, the focus of ethical narratology is not only placed on using narratological categories of analysis to examine historically and culturally variable forms and functions of narrative as a means for disseminating norms and values. It is also on the expansion of the theoretical framework, the range of methods and the analytical tools of classical narratology to link up narrative theory to ethical literary criticism and its main research questions and concepts.

In order to explore the interfaces between narratives and culturally specific ethical values, and between narratology and ethical literary criticism, ethical narratology integrates the formalist analysis of narratives with the study of ethical choices and moral values in literature. Ethical narratology is particularly interested in generic repertoires and culturally available plots. Though it leaves the narrow confines of structuralist taxonomy, the contextual, cultural and historical narratological framework that provides the backbone of ethical narratology is informed by a critical practice that the toolbox of classical narratology and the training in the precise semiotic analysis of narratives can provide.

Moreover, questioning the traditional notion that the relationship between

narratives and reality is based on mimesis, ethical narratology proceeds from the assumption that it is more rewarding to conceptualise narrative as an active force in its own right which is involved in the actual generation of ways of thinking, of attitudes and of hierarchies of norms and values, thus, of something that stands behind historical developments. In his seminal work *Imagining the Penitentiary*, in which he argued that widespread attitudes toward prison were formulated in English fiction which facilitated the conception of the eighteenth-century penitentiary, Bender sums up this new understanding of the active and constitutive role that narrative fictions can play in the process of forming institutions and shaping mentalities: "I consider literature and the visual arts as advanced forms of knowledge, as cognitive instruments that anticipate and contribute to institutional formation. Novels as I describe them are primary historical and ideological documents; the vehicles, not the reflections, of social change" (Bender, *Imagining* 1). By the same token, narratives can also be conceptualised as ways of worldmaking that contribute to the formation of hierarchies of norms and values. Let us therefore turn our attention to the ways in which narratives are involved in the representation, dissemination and critique of norms and values.

4. Representation, Narrative Techniques, and Norms and Values: Concepts for an Ethical Narratology and a Narratological Study of the Dissemination of Values

Proceeding from the assumption that an analysis of narrative forms can shed new light on the ethical, ideological and epistemological implications of narrative, ethical narratology strives to cross the border between textual formalism and historical contextualism, and to close the gaps between narratological bottom-up analysis and cultural top-down synthesis. In doing so, it seeks to put the analytical toolkit developed by narratology to the service of context-sensitive interpretations of the ethical concerns negotiated in and by novels. Though the ubiquity of narratives makes it difficult to establish the boundaries of such a culture-oriented ethical narratology, it is possible to outline some of the conceptual and methodological consequences that it entails. First, though it leaves the narrow confines of structuralist taxonomy, it is informed by a critical practice that only the toolbox of classical narratology and the training in the precise semiotic analysis of narratives can provide. Denying or ignoring the many achievements of structuralist narratology would thus arguably be foolish, a way of throwing the analytical and conceptual babies out with the formalist bathwater. As the controversy between

Dorrit Cohn and John Bender ("Making") in *New Literary History* (1995) has shown, it *does* make a difference whether we can establish a consensus about textual features or not, and it is the descriptive toolkit of narratology that provides us with the terminological categories needed as the basis for rational argument. Other important premises and concepts of the kind of ethical narratology envisioned include the notions of the content of the form as delineated by Hayden White, the ideology of form (F. Jameson), and the ethics and politics of narrative forms (T. Eagleton), which will be briefly discussed below.

Some of the key concepts and insights of cultural narratology can also serve to further develop and refine the kind of ethical narratology that Phelan, Müller, and Berning have delineated. As Gabriele Helms has convincingly demonstrated in her brilliant monograph on dialogism and narrative technique in Canadian novels, the framework of a cultural narratology is arguably germane to both Bakhtin's intense concern with social norms and values and to his perceptive attempts to relate the dialogic structure of novels to the world views, ideologies and hierarchies of values of the societies from which they originated. The way in which Helms describes her project also serves to shed intersting light on the kind of ethical narratology that I am trying to delineate. She argues that the "term 'cultural narratology' describes the place where dialogism and narrative theory meet, allowing the analysis of formal structures to be combined with a consideration of their ideological implications" (Helms 10). In contrast to other narrative theorists who use the term 'cultural narratology' without developing or explaining it, Helms is one of the first narratologists to provide a conceptual and methodological outline of a cultural narratology and to actually test its usefulness (for an earlier attempt, see Nünning, "Towards"). The approach christened cultural narratology implies that formal narrative techniques are not just analysed as structural features of a text, but as narrative modes which are highly semanticised and engaged in the processes of cultural construction and worldmaking. As Helms emphasises, "a cultural narratology would enable us to recognise that narrative techniques are not neutral and transparent forms to be filled with content, and that dialogic relations in narrative structures are ideologically informed" (7).

The same holds true for an ethical narratology that is mainly concerned with exploring the role of narrative techniques for the representation, dissemination and critique of moral norms and ethical values. An analysis of narrative forms is key for getting to grips with how ethical choices and competing values are orchestrated in novels and short stories. In this respect the project of an ethical narratology can draw on Fredric Jameson's fruitful concept of the "ideology of the form" (Jameson

141), which implies that "form is immanently and intrinsically an ideology in its own right":

> What must now be stressed is that at this level 'form' is apprehended as content. The study of the ideology of form is no doubt grounded on a technical and formalistic analysis in the narrower sense, even though, unlike much traditional formal analysis, it seeks to reveal the active presence within the text of a number of discontinuous and heterogeneous formal processes. But at the level of analysis in question here, a dialectical reversal has taken place in which it has become possible to grasp such formal processes as sedimented content in their own right, as carrying ideological messages of their own, distinct from the ostensible or manifest content of the works. (Jameson 99)

If one accepts the idea of a semanticisation of narrative forms, any literary and cultural historian who wants to address ethical, ideological or political issues raised in or by narratives can profit from the application of the toolbox that narratology provides. Context and form, content and narrative technique, are, after all, more closely intertwined than structuralist narratologists, or most of the practitioners of ethical criticism, for that matter, have tried to make us believe. It is not only the problem of the reception of literary character that inevitably draws critics' attention to the interrelationship between ethics and aesthetics, but also key questions that ideological approaches like postcolonial, feminist and African-American studies are concerned with.

Conceptualising narratives as cognitive cultural forces, ethical narratology explores the ways in which the formal properties of narratives reflect, and influence, the unspoken mental assumptions and the prevailing norms and values of a given culture, community or period. It focuses on the power of narrative fictions "to represent a medley of voices engaged in a conversation and/or a struggle for cultural space" (Scholes 134). Such problems as the relationship between the polyphonic structure of novels, as well as complex narratives in other genres and media, and their challenge to dominant cultural discourses require narratological tools for their description and analysis.

Bakhtin's theory of dialogism and polyphony, which has only recently been incorporated into feminist and cultural narratology (see e.g. Helms), provides useful conceptual and methodological tools for coming to terms with central issues of ethical literary criticism. To study the way in which narratives represent or orchestrate the ethical norms and values of a given culture, one could refer

to Bakhtin's notions of the novel "as a diversity of social speech types" and "a diversity of individual voices" (Bakhtin 262), to his remarks on discourse in the novel (see ibid. 259-422), and especially to his felicitous concepts of dialogism, heteroglossia and polyphony. Of particular relevance in the present context is Bakhtin's understanding of the ways in which novels orchestrate their themes, which also applies to moral norms and ethial values:

> The novel orchestrates all its themes, the totality of the world of objects and ideas depicted and expressed in it, by means of the social diversity of speech types [...] and by the differing individual voices that flourish under such conditions. Authorial speech, the speeches of narrators, inserted genres, the speech of characters are merely those fundamental compositional unities with whose help heteroglossia [...] can enter the novel; each of them permits a multiplicity of social voices and a wide variety of their links and interrelationsships (always more or less dialogized). These distinctive links and interrelationsships between utterances and languages, this movement of the theme through different languages and speech types, its dispersions into the rivulets and droplets of social heteroglossia, its dialogization — this is the basic distinguishing feature of the novel. (Bakhtin 263)

Such a cultural and social understanding of novelistic discourse provides a very fruitful framework for coming to terms with the interconnections between narratives, cultural contexts and ethical values, and for gaining insights into the complex ways in which narratives function as a cultural way of worldmaking and of disseminating norms and values. From a narratological point of view, however, Bakhtin's inspiring and suggestive, but also notoriously vague musical metaphors are in need of translation in order to gain the precision needed for textual analysis. As pertinent narratological work on the subject has shown, Bakhtins's metaphors can be translated into the terminology that narratology has developed for a study of the discourse level of narratives, viz. the various categories to analyse narration and focalisation as well as the forms and functions of multiperspectival narration (see Helms; Nünning/Nünning).

Proceeding from the assumption that content and narrative technique are closely intertwined, ethical narratology could show that the narratological concepts of multiperspectivity and perspective structure (see Nünning, "On the Perspective Structure") provide fruitful analytical tools and heuristic keys for coming to terms with ethical and ideological issues raised in narratives, and for analysing

both the relations between the different perspectives delineated in a novel and the narrative construction and negotiation of moral norms and ethical values. Such an ethical narratology explores the interfaces between a narratological model of the perspective structure of narrative texts and the ways in which ethical concerns and moral issues are negotiated in narrative fiction. A narratological analysis of the "perspective structure of a novel reveals above all — as a model, something in process, not laid down or fixed — how the novel envisages its handling of divergent viewpoints" (Bode 203), including the conflicting norms and values that each perspective and viewpoint represents.

Moreover, cultural and historical analyses of narratives require thicker descriptions than those offered by structuralist narratology, descriptions which take into account both thematic and formal features of texts. The main reason for this is that the ways in which epistemological, ethical, moral and social problems are articulated is inextricably linked with the forms of narrative representation. Scholes has done an excellent job at explaining why ideological and political approaches, and ethical literary criticism, one could just as well add, cannot afford to ignore a detailed analsis of all the issues involved in literary representation and narrative form: "The political enters the study of English primarily through questions of representation: who is represented, who does the representing, who is object, who is subject — and how do these representations connect to the values of groups, communities, classes, tribes, sects, and nations?" (153)

This is a very important insight for anyone interested in the development of an ethical narratology and for ethical literary criticism in general. Such questions as who the subjects or objects of narrative representations are have always been genuine concerns of narratology, whose categories and models for the analysis of narratives provide useful tools for getting to grips with such issues. Key narratological concepts like focalisation, unreliable narration and narrative perspective have proved very fine descriptive tools, but they need to be applied and further refined before they can yield insights considered vital for ethical literary criticism. As Monika Fludernik, Vera Nünning, Bruno Zerweck and other proponents of a cultural, diachronic or historical narratology have convincingly shown, the development of narrative forms (e.g. unreliable narration) can fruitfully be interpreted as a reflection of changing cultural discourses and shifts in the hierarchies of norms and values.

Another important insight that ethical narratology can derive from cultural and historical approaches is that narrative forms do not merely reflect cultural, ethical, ideological and social values, they are also active cultural forces in their own

right in that they serve to articulate, and negotiate between, conflicting voices and values. As Luc Herman and Bart Vervaeck have demonstrated, ideology manifests itself not only on the level of the story (e.g. in the constellation of the characters or the actantial network, and in the semanticisation of space and movement within the narrated world), but also on the level of discourse, for example in the structure of narrative transmission, the choice of point of view or perspectives, the temporal organisation of narratives, and the ways in which events, characters and the setting are presented (cf. Herman/Vervaeck). Ethical literary criticism would be wise to remember that all of these as well as other narrative forms are more than just techniques in that they are explicit or implicit carriers of cultural meaning, ideology and moral values.

The application of narratological concepts can also serve to shed new light on other central concerns of ethical literary criticism like the representation, or rather construction, of those hierarchies of norms and values that shape identity and alterity in and by narratives. The narrative construction of social and cultural differences is not just one of the central issues in feminist and postcolonial studies, but also one of the key concerns and research fields of ethical literary criticism and the study of culture at large. Narratives are a powerful cultural way of worldmaking in that they not only construct images of selves and others, but also serve to disseminate the norms and values that a cultural formations lives by. Narratology thus provides important analytical tools for ethical literary criticism that allow such an approach to come to terms with key cultural issues like the ways in which prevailing notions of identity and alterity, or otherness, are created in and through narratives (see Fludernik, “Identity/Alterity”).

5. Epilogue: The Ethical Significance of Narratives and Narrative Techniques and the Promises and Potential Usefulness of (Classical and Postclassical) Narratology for Ethical Criticism — Some Suggestions for Further Research

What I hope to have shown is that it is pointless to belabour the old oppositions between form and content, between formalism and contextualism, or between formalist approaches like narratology and approaches that are mainly concerned with the manifest content of literary works like ethical criticism. Anyone who is genuinely interested in getting to grips with the complex ways in which narratives in general and narrative fiction in particular is engaged in the ongoing cultural conversation about, and dissemniation of, moral norms and ethical values, should rather avail her- or himself of the benefits that both narratology and ethical literary

criticism afford. The main reason for this is that, as Terry Eagleton recently emphasised, "moral value lies in the form of literary works as much as their content. [...] There is an ethics and politics of form at stake here, of which the philosophy of literature has been for the most part quite oblivious" (60). What Helms observed about the promises of a cultural narratology therefore applies just as much to the project of an ethical narratology as delineated above:

> A cultural narratological framework holds two distinct promises: (1) the semanticizing of narrative forms will move narratology beyond its notorious a-historicity; and (2) by providing adequate descriptive tools, it will enable cultural critics to attend to the specific tools and strategies that are characteristic of narratives in a wide range of media. (Helms 2003: 15)

Moreover, an ethical narratology can provide insight into the complex ways in which cultural norms and ethical values are represented in, and disseminated through, fictional and factual narratives. It can thus serve to illuminate what Jerome Bruner felicitously called a "culture's ongoing dialectic" (Bruner, *Making Stories* 100), i.e. "the dialectic between its norms and what is humanly possible" (ibid. 16). An ethical narratology can therefore not only throw new light on the ways in which narratives can represent cultural values and serve to confirm moral norms, it can also illuminate the equally complex ways in which stories can negotiate the dialectic between dominant hierarchies of values and deviations from them, e.g. in the form of broken narratives and the representation of disrupted lives: "The study of disrupted lives enables us to look at the disparity between cultural notions of how things are supposed to be and how they are, a disparity that is highlighted by disruption" (Becker 190).

In his seminal monograph *The Redemptive Self: Stories Americans Live By*, the renowned psychologist Dan P. McAdams has pointed out how important it is for any culture to learn more about the ways in which both the living of our lives and the telling of our stories (cf. Phelan 205) are framed and shaped by cultural models, moral norms and ethical values: "Beyond making vague references to things like 'my religious heritage' or 'the American Dream,' we tend to have remarkably little insight into the ways our lives are framed by cultural categories, values, and norms" (271). This is all the more deplorable because stories are arguably constitutive of cultures, largely moulding our understanding of good and bad behaviour and characters:

> I would submit that life stories are more reflective of and shaped by culture than any other aspect of personality. Stories are at the centre of culture. More than favored goals and values, I believe, stories differentiate one culture from the next. I have argued throughout this book that the stories people live by say as much about culture as they do about the people who live and tell them. Our own life stories draw on the stories we learn as active participants in culture — stories about childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and aging. Stories capture and elaborate metaphors and images that are especially resonant in a given culture. Stories distinguish between what culture glorifies as good characters and vilifies as bad characters. (McAdams 284)

A cultural and ethical narratology promises to provide the conceptual and methodological tools that neither classical narratology nor ethical criticism on their own have so far developed. It is thus arguably high time that ethical literary criticism began to acknowledge the great usefulness of the narratological toolbox and that narratology fully realised the need to move beyond a merely descriptive poetics of narrative. If we accept the ideas that "culture is constructed through ideological narratives, that there is no preexisting or universally accepted model for a cultural world, and that prose fiction uniquely raises questions about the interrelatedness of social and textual worldmaking" (Elias 281), then an integration of the analytical and interpretive tools of narratology and ethical literary criticism promises to provide rich insights into the complex ways in which literary and factual narratives can serve to represent, disseminate and critique moral norms and ethical values. In contrast to the purists who want to make "the world safe for narratology", as John Bender ("Making") aptly put it, ethical narratologists, just like practitioners of the various postclassical narratologies, should intrepidly rush in where structuralists fear to tread. Whether or not they would be fools in doing so, may be an open question, but the approach delineated above could arguably open up productive lines of research for literary and cultural studies. Putting it in a nutshell, one might thus conclude that the more narratological ethical literary criticism becomes, and the more interested in ethics and the dissmeniation of values narratology becomes, the better for both.

* For this article I have drawn on, and adapted, ideas and formulations developed in some previous publications (cf. Nünning, "Towards"; "Where Historiographic Metafiction"; "Surveying") and some passages that I contributed to the introduction of a collection of essays on

the topic of *Literature and Values* (cf. Baumbach, Grabes and Nünning).

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Narrative Fiction and Cognition: Why We Should Read Fiction

Vera Nünning
Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, Anglistisches Seminar
Kettengasse 12, D-69117 Heidelberg, Germany
Email:Vera.Nuenning@urz.uni-heidelberg.de

Abstract This essay connects two strands of psychological research with insights from narrative theory in order to explore the cognitive and ethical potential of fictional narratives. After a brief introduction to psychological research on the persuasive power of fictional stories to change readers' beliefs and to improve readers' abilities of understanding other human beings, this essay examines which kinds of stories and which features of fiction can have such an impact on readers' minds. The essay focuses on the potential of fiction to enhance readers' abilities of social cognition, since they form a crucial basis of ethically informed behavior. The last part of the essay highlights further fields of research opened up by this combination and interrelation of psychological research and the theory of narrative.
Key words ethics; cognitive narratology; narrative conventions; multiperspectivity; simulation
Author Vera Nünning is professor of English philology at Heidelberg University, where she has also acted as pro-rector for international affairs. She has published books on eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth century British literature and (co-) edited 21 volumes on contemporary literature and narrative theory. She was a fellow in two Institutes of Advanced Studies and is associate editor of three book series and the international journal English Studies. Her most recent publications include *Reading Fictions, Changing Minds* (2014), and an interdisciplinary collection of essays, *Unreliable Narration and Trustworthiness: Intermedial and Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (2015).

Both narrative fiction and cognition are wide fields of research which have attracted the interest of many scholars, particularly in cognitive narratology. In this essay, however, I want to pursue a different approach to the cognitive value of fictional stories and build on psychological research which has demonstrated that reading

fiction changes readers' minds as well as their cognitive abilities. Unfortunately, this psychological research on the cognitive effects of reading fiction is not well known in literary studies, even though it testifies to the cognitive potential of fiction and can supply important arguments for the value of fiction. According to these studies, reading literature is more than a pleasurable, but ultimately useless pastime; instead, it leaves traces in readers' minds and influences their cognitive abilities. Some of the results of this research are not only interesting to literary scholars trying to understand the cognitive and ethical value of fiction, they can also be fruitfully combined with categories gleaned from narrative theory and narratology. I will therefore interlace significant results of cognitive narratologists such as David Herman and Lisa Zunshine with those of empirical research in psychology. My main aim is a close investigation into the cognitive potential of fictional narratives to enrich our comprehension of why (and which) stories can improve readers' interpersonal abilities and change their beliefs.

This essay explores two issues which are important to ethical literary criticism. On the one hand, the essay asserts the power of fiction to change readers' beliefs and attitudes, which are at the core of people's behaviours and their individual ethics. On the other hand, this essay examines in how far particular kinds of stories can enhance readers cognitive abilities. Since these abilities to understand other people and oneself are necessary for social interaction and coexistence, they form a crucial basis of an ethically informed behaviour: in order to act in a pro-social and ethical way, one has to have the ability to understand others and the particular situation they are in.

In the following, I will begin by highlighting two strands of psychological and neurophysiological research which have demonstrated that reading fiction can have two different kinds of effects on readers' minds. First, the persuasive power of fiction has to be reckoned with. Contrary to prevalent beliefs, even "untrue," fictional stories, can change readers' beliefs and their cultural encyclopaedia. A second branch of research is concerned with the potential of fictional stories to improve readers' abilities to understand other human beings and themselves. After a very short introduction to these two tendencies in psychological research, which builds on my essay on "The Ethics of Fictional Form" I will explore which kinds of stories, and what features of fiction can result in the improvement of readers' cognitive skills. Since most psychologists assign an important role to readers' "simulation" of the thoughts and feelings of the characters, I will probe more deeply into the possible benefits of these kinds of simulation, and analyse their relation to particular features of fictional stories. In a next step, I will point out

some benefits of reading fiction that go beyond simulation and are based on features such as multiperspectivity and particular aesthetic devices. The last part of the essay will highlight some further fields of research opened up by this combination and interrelation of psychological research and the theory of narrative. A more elaborate discussion of these and other issues can be found in my book *Reading Fictions, Changing Minds* (2014), which this essay draws on (mainly on chapters 5 and 6).

1. Establishing Links between Reading Fiction and Readers' Minds

1.1 The Persuasive Power of Fiction

There are two fields of psychological research in which the impact of reading fictional and factual stories on readers' minds has been demonstrated. The first of these enquires into the persuasive power of fiction. Many experiments have shown that reading stories has cognitive effects; engaging with fiction can even persuade readers to believe in nonsense. Fiction can change readers' beliefs, it can influence what readers think about alleged facts and causes of events. Reading stories can work as powerful means of modifying readers' mental encyclopaedia and changing their attitudes; it can even influence their personality traits (Mar, Oatley, and Peterson; Green, Brock, and Kaufmann 313; Djikic, Oatley, and Moldoveanu 28). At first sight, these results seem surprising: who would have thought that a simple story can induce North American students to believe that, for instance, eating chocolate helps you lose weight or that brushing your teeth is bad for your gums? This is exactly what studies have found, however, and these initial findings have been replicated and broadened in scope. What is more, many experiments have shown that fictional as well as factual stories have this potential of persuading readers. Even though readers are, as often as not, aware of the fact that fictional stories do not aim at providing a correct account of the real world, they still incorporate fictional 'facts' into their own knowledge stores. We therefore have to reckon with the persuasive power of fiction.

If one takes this potential of fiction seriously, it opens up highly interesting fields of research not only for psychologists, but also for literary scholars. Psychologists have demonstrated that reading fiction can have long-term cognitive effects and persuade readers to believe a plethora of things. In order to examine what kinds of fictional texts are responsible for and can enhance these persuasive effects of reading, we need the abilities of literary scholars to analyse and interpret fictional texts. Exploring the persuasive power of fiction is also important to ethical criticism: if fiction can indeed change readers' knowledge, their values and even

their self-concept, it is worthwhile investigating those features of fiction which have these effects. So far, the persuasive power of fiction has been related to the degree of transportation, a term which designates the degree of immersion in a text, i.e. the extent to which readers forget about their immediate environment and enter the fictional world. The degree of the reader's immersion in a text is related to the degree of persuasiveness of a story: readers who are more "transported" or immersed in a story are far more likely to be persuaded that the fictional "facts" correspond to reality, while readers who are not transported are less likely to integrate the fictional facts into their mental encyclopaedia (Green and Dill).

It is important to bear in mind, however, that not each and every fictional text has the same effects on all readers. Some readers do not enjoy reading fiction and have a low degree of "transportability," and even readers who usually like reading fiction, but who are under stress or worried about something, do not become immersed in a story (cf. Vaughn et al.). While the factors related to readers, such as their individual preferences or "transportability," have been researched by psychologists, the factors relating to the particular text have only recently become the object of study (cf. Nünning, *Reading Fictions*). It stands to reason, however, that not every fictional story has the potential to change readers' minds. Moreover, the persuasive effect of fiction is only likely to be realised if fiction is read as fiction, that is if it is not processed in the same way as a factual story or textbook. The persuasive power of fiction is tied to transportation, which presupposes that fiction is read as an end in itself, for pleasure, in a state of immersion, with the reader being entranced by the fictional world.

1.2 The Potential of Fiction to Improve Cognitive Abilities

Another branch of psychological research has demonstrated that reading fiction can improve readers' cognitive abilities. Such abilities of social cognition are necessary for understanding other human beings, their emotions, intentions, thoughts and actions. These interpersonal skills are held to be extremely important, because they make communication and action in large, complex societies possible. We have to be able to gauge what others think and feel like in given situations, otherwise we would not be able to communicate with them. In many routine situations, this is a highly standardised process: you do not have to know what the cashier at the supermarket thinks and feels in order to find out that she expects you to pay the check. In many interactive, face-to-face situations, the process of communication and of understanding the intentions of others is standardised. In other situations, it is not. Unfortunately, these other situations tend to be the more important ones. It is in these situations, in which it is not directly apparent what the

others think or feel, that our abilities of social cognition are needed.

Several studies have demonstrated the link between reading fiction and improved social ability: readers of fiction do better in tests measuring the ability to understand others, and children whose parents recognise story book titles and read to them perform better in such tasks than those whose parents do not read to them (Mar, Oatley, Hirsh et al.). There is even one pioneer study, recently published in the journal *Science* (2013), demonstrating that reading *literary* fiction improves social cognition, while reading *popular* fiction did not have such an effect (Kidd and Castano). The question is, of course, why particular kinds of fictional stories can have such an effect, while others do not lead to any positive results. This question is closely related to another one, also worthy of further research: which kinds of stories, and which kinds of fictional features, can improve readers' cognitive abilities? Unfortunately, this question has not been answered by psychologists as yet:

> [N]arrative fiction is associated with greater social ability. Although this association appears to be a reliable finding, observed across populations […], there is still much mystery regarding how this association might be accounted for and what it represents. (Fong, Mullin, and Mar 374)

It is this question that I want to shed some light on in this essay. Fortunately, there are a number of psychological studies which provide partial answers to the cognitive value of fiction. The most promising — even though very vague — answer is based on the conceptualisation of fiction as simulation. Reading fiction allows us to simulate the thoughts and feelings of others. Many psychologists and cognitive scientists presume that mental simulation forms an important part of the process of understanding others; it is also necessary to make plans for the future (Goldman; Schacter, Addis and Buckner). For psychologists, simulation is thus a crucial activity, and an influential attempt to explain the cognitive potential of fiction regards fiction as simulation, or rather as a stimulus which initiates processes of simulation in the readers' minds. In this sense, fiction is held to function like a flight simulator used for training pilots to do their job: "Fiction is a kind of simulation, but one that runs on minds rather than on computers" (Oatley 41). Keith Oatley stresses that, just as a pilot can improve his abilities by practising in a flight simulator, readers can do so by engaging with fiction. It is not quite clear, however, just what is simulated, and whether fiction is more than just a stimulus for simulation. I will come back to this point later; at the moment I want to stress the

relation between reading, simulating, and improving one's cognitive abilities.

2.Establishing Links between Features of Fictional Works and Cognitive Abilities

2.1 Theory of Mind and Empathic Sharing in Fictional Stories

There are several processes involved in understanding the thoughts and feelings of human beings. Though it is possible to distinguish between several facets of our attempts to comprehend others — and the term 'others' here includes fictional characters — they usually occur in various combinations. Jerome Bruner has stressed that it is impossible to take the components apart; he used the term "perfink" in order to stress that usually there is a mixture between *per*ceiving, *f*eeling, and th*ink*ing (Bruner 93). All of us who have dealt with the process of focalization, and tried to understand the consciousness of fictional characters, know about this mix. Social cognition encompasses at least three different processes, which, for clarity's sake, should be first considered separately. I want to concentrate on two of these, and follow a long tradition by calling one of them empathic sharing or empathy, and the other "theory of mind."

The process referred to as 'theory of mind' focusses on knowledge and thoughts; it is activated when one tries to account for or analyse the thoughts and emotions of others. This cognitive ability can be illustrated by the following example of how the fictional character Joe Rose, the narrator of Ian McEwan's novel *Enduring Love* (1997), tries to understand his wife, Clarissa. At this point of the story their relationship is breaking up; Clarissa is completely bewildered, and fears that she cannot deal with Joe any more. She has just told him that she wants to end their relationship. He, however, does not seem to listen, and does not answer, and then she says: "'I don't know what's happening with you, Joe. I'm losing you. It's frightening. You need help, but I don't think it can come from me'" (148). Joe is unable to react in an empathic way; he does not share her emotions, her fear, her bewilderment and frustration; he feels nothing. The way he understands Clarissa is described in the following quote: "Clarissa thought that her emotions were the appropriate guide, that she could feel her way to the truth, when what was needed was information, foresight and careful calculation" (150). Joe here uses "theory of mind"; he knows that Clarissa is frightened and emotionally pent up, but he reacts by concentrating on her thought processes, and by analysing and criticising them. In this and other passages, Joe employs his "theory-of-mind" capacities instead of his ability to empathise and share Clarissa's feelings. As a consequence, readers

follow Joe's thought processes. They may be angry at Joe for being so dumb and unfeeling, but it is unlikely that they empathically share his emotions; after all, he does not feel any, so there is nothing to share.

The second component of social cognition, empathic sharing, can be illustrated by an example from British fiction of the eighteenth century. In many so-called sentimental novels, heroes and heroines are supremely empathic, and they take great care to show that they share the feelings of others and that they feel *like* others. They often do so by means of gestures or facial expressions; there are many blushes and tears, and characters often grow pale or even faint. In the quote from Laurence Sterne's novel *Sentimental Journey through France and Italy* (1768), the narrator concentrates on his and others' feelings, and the bodily signs which demonstrate these feelings: "The poor monk blushed as red as scarlet […]; I blushed in my turn" (57). The two communicate by sharing emotions, or, rather, responding affectively to the emotions of the other. They feel similar emotions, and they show each other that they share the other's emotion by their body language. The quote goes on with: "The poor monk blushed as red as scarlet […]; I blushed in my turn; but from what movements, I leave to the few who feel to analyse" (57). The narrator seems to be wary of using his 'theory of mind,' he does not analyse these emotions, he does not even name them. There seems to be a distrust of words; feelings are understood and communicated by means of other signals. This extreme concentration on emotions, and the scepticism towards logical and analytical faculties is, however, just as rare as Joe's concentration on his logical abilities and "theory of mind." In most situations and communications, there is a mixture of both processes.

2.2 Some Forms and Functions of Perspective Taking: Advantages of Regarding Fiction as Simulation

The term "perspective taking," or with Daniel Batson "'sensitive' understanding" (267), is here used in order to designate the combination of affective sharing and thoughtful appreciation of the mental processes and intentions of others. This kind of understanding not only involves knowledge about the thoughts and feelings of others, but also an affective sharing of their emotions. According to psychologists, there are different kinds of perspective taking. Adopting the 'imagine-other' perspective is held to be particularly valuable. This term refers to imagining how someone else is thinking and feeling at the moment; it has been linked to pro-social action. In contrast to imagining how oneself would feel in a given situation, this "imagine-other" perspective has been shown to "reduce stereotyping and prejudice," "to know the other's thoughts, desires, and intentions,"

and "even to understand and evaluate — even to create — the self" (Batson 275-77). In the following, I want to argue that readers are encouraged to practice this kind of perspective taking when engaging with characters' and narrators' thoughts, feelings and actions in fictional stories.

Reading fiction induces "spontaneous perspective taking" (Johnson et al. 593), a process that may be at the core of the conceptualisation of fiction as 'simulation.' Reading stimulates readers to take the characters' and narrators' perspectives and to simulate their thought processes and feelings. Coming to terms with fictional stories presupposes understanding the characters' and narrators' motives, thoughts and emotions. If we cannot make sense of characters, we cannot come to terms with the story. This spontaneous perspective taking may be at the root of the potential of fiction to improve readers' cognitive abilities: the necessity to follow and share characters' thoughts and feelings, and to practice the combination of empathy and 'theory of mind' in a situation which provides ideal conditions for learning (Nünning, *Reading Fictions* 85-92).

Part of the cognitive value of fiction therefore lies in encouraging readers to take the narrators' and characters' perspectives. When reading fiction, this process is guided by narrative conventions which encourage or block readers' empathic understanding. In most fictional works, there are many different conventions to be considered; moreover, it is necessary to take into account their specific combination. Let me give you two examples concerning three strategies which have been said to encourage perspective taking: first, focalization (free indirect discourse and related techniques), which induces readers to quite literally adopt the perspective of characters and to "simulate" their thoughts and feelings; second, engaging comments by an overt, preferably heterodiegetic narrator, and third, the creation of suspense and putting the character in a precarious situation which might lead to a bad end.

These three narrative strategies often occur in combination. The beginning of Oscar Wilde's famous novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891) may serve as an example for such a mixture of narrative conventions. In the lush atmosphere of a beautiful garden and house, the painter Basil talks with Lord Henry about Dorian Gray, an outstanding and beautiful young man, who is Basil's "dearest friend" (14) and who is apparently in danger of being corrupted by Henry, for Basil explicitly asks Henry to leave Dorian alone. While Basil is worried, the use of Henry as a focalizer serves to heighten the reader's favourable impression of Dorian: "Lord Henry looked at him [Dorian]. Yes, he was certainly wonderfully handsome, with his finely-curved scarlet lips, his frank blue eyes, his crisp gold

hair. There was something in his face that made you trust him at once" (15). Readers therefore experience Dorian's attractiveness via Henry's perceptions and evaluations, knowing that Henry may harm the young man. This impression of danger and vulnerability is enhanced by a narrator's comment: "The lad started and drew back. […] There was a look of fear in his eyes, such as people have when they are suddenly awakened" (20). That the narrator refers to Dorian as a youthful and harmless "lad" and compares his reaction to a sudden, forceful waking up, which induces fear and insecurity, highlights Dorian's passivity, innocence and vulnerability, which is confirmed by the depiction of his feelings when he serves as a focalizer: "But [Dorian] felt afraid of him, and ashamed of feeling afraid. […] And, yet, what was there to be afraid of? He was not a schoolboy or girl. It was absurd to be frightened" (21). Since readers have been informed about the potential dangerousness of Henry, Dorian's fear seems well-grounded, while his attempt to convince himself of the harmlessness of the situation is understandable, but misled. Readers are induced to adopt Dorian's perspective, to understand his thoughts and feel like him and for him due to a combination of different narrative conventions: the choice of focalizers and presentation of consciousness, a comment by the narrator and the creation of a situation which raises anticipations of potential perils for the young protagonist.

However, there is no simple form-to-function mapping. It is impossible to identify narrative strategies which, regardless of the particular context, serve to evoke or block empathy. The same techniques can, in different combinations and contexts, just as well serve to enlarge the distance between the characters and the readers. As narrative conventions, focalization and narratorial comments are neutral; they can work both ways. Again, a few brief quotes from *The Picture of Dorian Gray* may illustrate this. After Dorian has told his fiancée Sibyl Vane in a most cruel way that he will not marry her, the following depiction of his feelings of guilt and remorse are first geared towards feeling with Dorian, who seems to be fully conscious of his responsibility and realises "how unjust, how cruel, he had been to Sibyl Vane. [...] She could still be his wife. His real and selfish love would yield to some higher influence, would be transformed into some nobler passion" (95). Here, readers can empathically relate to Dorian's remorse; Dorian seems to want to improve his behaviour and his feelings. This process, however, is quickly counteracted by an explanatory generalisation by the narrator, who stresses: "There is a luxury in self-reproach. When we blame ourselves, we feel that no one else has a right to blame us. [...] When Dorian had finished the letter [in which he asks Sybil for forgiveness], he felt that he had been forgiven" (95f.). This

damning comment which highlights Dorian's self-complacency is supported by the following description of his feelings when he realises that Sybil has committed suicide: "She had no right to kill herself. It was selfish of her" (99). In this case, the seeming immediacy with which Dorian's feelings and thoughts are presented shows that focalization can just as well be turned against a character. Dorian's callous reaction to the death of an innocent young woman, who killed herself out of despair because of Dorian's cruelty, runs counter to established feeling rules, since we expect from people that they mourn for the death of people they loved. In this passage, the insight into Dorian's feelings, combined with the narrator's comment and the particular context, therefore serves to work against sensitive understanding. Readers are able to follow the protagonist's thoughts, they know what he thinks and feels, but they are unlikely to share his feelings.

This does *not* mean to say, however, that narrative conventions are unimportant. In contrast, it bears emphasising that complex combinations of narrative features guide the process of reception, and that it is too facile to isolate a few narrative conventions and claim that these always work in a particular way. Moreover, if one wants to explore the cognitive value of fiction, distancing devices are just as important as those which stimulate readers to take characters' perspectives.

This brief analysis of some examples shows that fictional texts can enable readers to "simulate," to follow and share the characters' and narrators' thoughts, and to empathise with their feelings. It also demonstrates that narrative conventions play a crucial part in this process. Particular combinations of narrative conventions can, depending on the situation in question, encourage readers to take the perspectives of given characters, and to feel like them. Engaging with such passages, readers can come to know the way the character's mind works, and they can practice their "theory-of-mind" abilities and empathy. However, in different contexts, such narrative conventions can also induce readers to follow the character's thoughts (thus practicing their "theory of mind"), but at the same time to distance themselves from these thoughts and feelings, to block empathic sharing, and to evaluate the characters negatively. Readers not only employ their theory of mind, they are also stimulated to rely on their ethical judgement, which is based upon the result of their understanding of the characters' thoughts and feelings.

Conceptualising fiction as simulation makes a number of advantages of fiction visible. Reading offers us a wider range of experiences than is available in daily life, and we need a wide range of stimuli in order to keep developing and re-calibrating our mental faculties. Moreover, reading fiction makes it possible to

gather vicarious experiences with regard to a broad range of different characters, which we would not come to know intimately in everyday life. Such experiences render it easier to understand thoughts and emotions which we have not encountered in our own lives. Many empirical studies have testified to the tendency of human beings to project their own feelings, preferences and beliefs onto others. They take themselves as a model and attribute their own preferences, values and ways of thinking onto others — with often deploring results (Nickerson, Butler, and Carlin). People tend to take the "imagine-self" perspective, and not the "imagine-other" perspective. By encouraging readers to simulate the thoughts and emotions of characters who are not similar to themselves, fictional stories can enlarge readers' experiences with unfamiliar and untypical feelings, thoughts and motives. Taking the perspectives of fictional characters, readers get guided experience in what the situation feels like to these characters, and how their perceptions are linked to their personality traits. Experiencing the fictional world through engaging with the characters, readers acquire knowledge that is very difficult to get by other means. We could, of course, always ask someone how he or she feels — but chances are that they either do not want to tell us or that they do not even know it themselves. Fictional stories make it possible for readers to come to know and experience the thoughts and emotions of fictional characters, they provide case studies which serve as a stimulus for simulation. However, fictional stories differ from factual ones; they are characterised by aesthetic qualities, and read for pleasure. Reading fiction offers many important advantages which can be gained by simulation, but at the same time, the cognitive value of fiction exceeds that of other simulation processes.

2.3 Simulation and Beyond: Cognitive Consequences of Shifting between Perspectives

This section focuses on a few possible benefits that the shifting between character perspectives can entail. From the broad range of the advantages of reading fictional stories, I will highlight three. The first lies in acquiring knowledge and practice which can serve to avoid a typical mistake many people make when trying to understand why someone acts the way he or she does. Particularly in Western cultures, people who observe the behaviour of others tend to understand this behaviour with regard to the personality of the actors, their preferences, emotions, personality traits or ways of thinking. People thus attribute dispositional causes to the action. When actors ascribe reasons to their own behaviour, in contrast, they tend to discount their own personality traits, while emphasising the pressures in the particular situation and other external causes. Being well aware of the circumstances which influence their choice of action, but less aware of their own

attitudes, they think that the vagaries of the particular situation have occasioned the action. The observer of an action, by contrast, tends to concentrate on the actor and attribute dispositional causes. This 'fundamental attribution error' is inherent in the differences between the perspectives of actor and observer (Kelley; Choi, Nisbett and Norenzyan).

The impact of changing between the perspective of either actors or observers can be illustrated by an empirical study which used video clips of the same scene, shot from various angles, thus shifting the position of the focalizer (Storms). The manipulation of spatio-visual perspective in the film led to changes in the way viewers understood the action: when an observer of the action was chosen as focalizer, the actor's behaviour was explained in dispositional terms, and his traits and attitudes were held to be responsible. When the camera took the actor's position and viewpoint, however, viewers thought that external pressures were responsible for the action. The change in visual perspective therefore led to a completely different assessment of the reasons for the action. Even those viewers of the film who had taken part in the scene and watched their own former actions, changed their causal attributions after they had seen a video of the same scene from the point of view of the observer. Correspondingly, observers changed their interpretation of the reasons after having watched a video in which the actor served as the focalizer of events. The choice of focalizers does matter: even the purely visual adoption of the perspective of the other led to "a complete reversal of the relative perspectives of actor and observer" (Storms 170), while viewing a video shot from a neutral perspective did not have any effect whatsoever. If the interpretation of the causes of behaviour is influenced even by a change of the spatio-visual perspective, it can be assumed that the use of narrative conventions which induce readers to adopt the 'imagine-other' perspective, and in addition to take the others' thoughts and feelings into account, has a great impact on their understanding of the event.

By prompting readers to adopt the perspectives of heterogeneous characters, novels can serve to raise the awareness of the differences between actors' and observers' points of view. In fiction, three factors counter the readers' tendency to fall into the trap of the fundamental attribution error: first, readers are often given much more information about the situation and the actor than is available in ordinary encounters. It is easier to take a balanced view of causes while observing characters' actions. Second, in many novels, there is a constant shift in focalization between such "observing" and "acting" characters, and readers are required to consider contrastive perspectives on the same scene; they can become habituated to assume that there are two different kinds of perspectives (and types of reasons) to

be considered. Third, readers are temporarily led to see the situation from the point of view of the actor, but they usually oscillate between seeing the events through the eyes of characters, and a more distanced appraisal, interpreting the action in the light of their own knowledge and feelings. Especially in novels in which the same situation is depicted from heterogeneous perspectives, shifting between several acting and observing characters, readers practice a mode of cognition that counteracts the fundamental attribution error. Quite a number of fictional techniques — ranging from focalization to multiperspectivism — allow readers to arrive at less tendentious judgements than they would in real life.

A second benefit of reading fiction concerns shifts between focalizers. Such shifts often imply an alternation between empathic following of the characters' thoughts and actions on the one hand, and a critical distance to the character on the other. Especially in complex multiperspectival novels, which present the events from the point of view of several characters, readers are induced to alternately take several — often contradictory — perspectives on the same situation. Reading fiction practices the ability to distinguish between several perspectives, to recognise affiliations and contrasts between them, and to relate them to each other. To make sense of mutually exclusive perspectives on the same situation often requires the modulation and modification of empathy. If narrators or characters compare and balance the perspectives of others, if they ethically position themselves towards others and come up with their own interpretation, readers can simulate the characters' cognitive processes. If readers do not get such guidance, they are encouraged to arrive at their own conclusions. Readers have to position themselves in relation to the heterogeneous characters and to decide which traits, opinions and attitudes they like best, and which ones match the requirements of the particular situation. Such appraisals are often related to an evaluation of the characters according to moral or non-moral criteria, and to feelings of sympathy. Dealing with multiple points of view in a fictional narrative not only exceeds simple processes of simulation, it also implies creating new, more encompassing interpretations of the same event. In many novels, readers are faced with heterogeneous, even opposing characters that are presented in ways which make it possible to sensitively understand them. This is closely related to ethics, too: As James Phelan has pointed out with regard to the ethical positioning of readers,

> [o]ur emotions and desires about both fictional and nonfictional characters are intimately tied to our judgments of them; and our ethical responses to narrative, as we have seen, are tied both to the ethical quality of characters'

> actions and to the interaction of our own ethical positions with the ethics of technique and the ethical positions of the implied author. (Phelan 160)

Third, more often than not, reading fiction entails the revision of the first impressions of characters. Even in some kinds of popular fiction such as crime novels or romances, the question of whether a character is really what he seems to be or whether he will turn out to be a dangerous villain is one of the staple devices of generating suspense. In ordinary interactive encounters with others, there is usually no such suspense or openness: human beings are quick to evaluate others on the basis of their first impressions and assimilate them into some well-known category or even stereotype. In fiction, by contrast, readers are encouraged to devote the cognitive effort which is necessary to arrive at a deeper understanding of the characters and their actions. In many novels, the distribution of information and the use of narrative conventions oblige readers to revise their impressions and adjust their categorization (Gerrig and Allbritton).

Readers seem to be implicitly aware of the fact that, when reading fiction, things might turn out to be different than was assumed initially; they also seem to know that they had better pay close attention to details, and spend more cognitive effort than is necessary for the understanding of factual stories. Experiments have demonstrated that readers not only need a bit longer for engaging with fictional than with factual stories; they also pay more heed to the words, the style and the language. In comparison to factual stories, readers invest less effort in building a situation model (Zwaan 921, 925). They do not try very hard to understand the particular situation, probably because they expect that the situation will change, that there will be surprising twists and turns in the plot. Readers certainly expect such changes in the assessment of situations and characters with regard to crime fiction, when the most suspicious character is almost always innocent. Similarly, in romances the mysterious, dark figure might turn out to be Mr. Right after all. It might even be the boring Mr. Knightley — you never know. Revising first impressions is part and parcel of reading fiction.

One might argue that these suggestions highlight the cognitive value of fiction, but that they are still concerned with the process of perspective taking. That reading fiction stimulates readers to adopt the perspectives of characters and narrators is of crucial importance for social cognition, because this process involves the 'imagine-other' perspective, which reduces stereotyping and has been shown to lead to pro-social action. Not only the spontaneous initiation of perspective taking, but also the cognitive consequences of shifts between perspectives are highly rewarding

— but are they germane to reading fiction? I want to propose that they are, since these cognitive activities are intimately connected to the state of transportation and the use of narrative devices. Moreover, they are based on fictional features such as experientiality and the concentration on the changing affairs of human-like actors in concrete situations. In addition, these processes are closely related to what has been termed "narrative empathy" (Keen).

2.4 Beyond Simulation: Some Cognitive Functions of Aesthetic Devices

Though the cognitive benefits stemming from simulation, from sensitive understanding, and from shifting between perspectives are quite substantial, reading fiction can offer even more benefits, which are related to aesthetic devices. Again, I want to highlight three aspects which illustrate that the cognitive value of fiction exceeds that of simulation. First, I want to draw attention to what has been called the "'defamilarisation — recontextualisation cycle," which introduces

> a three-phase structure in response. First is the encounter with a defamiliarizing story event or feature (e.g., a stylistic device), which arouses feeling. A second phase ensues during which feeling directs a search for a context for the local meaning of the story, which has been unsettled. In the third phase a shift in the reader's general story understanding takes place, and what had been defamiliarized is now contextualized. (Miall and Kuiken 299)

Such defamiliarising devices impede an easy understanding and processing of the text. They are closely connected to the aesthetic quality of literature, which has been related to distancing devices and the de-automatisation of perception. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, formalists such as Viktor Shklovsky have identified "de-familiarisation" as the most important characteristic of literary works which de-automatise perceptual processes, thus slowing down the time of reading (12-13). To make the familiar appear strange, to change ingrained paths of perception and to foreground particular details and techniques is thus a major asset of reading literature. Many unusual metaphors work this way, and such non-conventional usages of language have been said to be part of the aesthetic pleasure of reading fiction. Engaging with such unfamiliar language challenges cognition and fosters understanding in a way that cannot solely be related to perspective taking. In the opening pages of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), for instance, a number of (partly unnamed) characters watch a car, nearly all of them wondering which famous personage may be inside. One of the onlookers is Septimus Warren-Smith:

> And there the motor car stood, with drawn blinds, and upon them a curious pattern like a tree, Septimus thought, and this gradual drawing together of everything to one centre before his eyes, as if some horror had come almost to the surface and was about to burst into flames, terrified him. The world wavered and quivered […]. (18)

A perfectly ordinary — though, because of the possible passenger, at the same time somehow mysterious — motor car becomes an object of attention, which is, apparently due to a "curious pattern like a tree," able to invoke terror. Since the reader at this point does not know that Septimus is a war veteran and suffers from shell shock, this passage is not easy to interpret. At this point during the reading process, readers searching for clues which make it possible to comprehend just what is going on are bound to fail. It is impossible to understand what has caused Septimus' terror, and whether the impression that "the world wavered" is due to a perceptual distortion on the part of Septimus or caused by some changing of the light or a movement of the car, whose shiny surface works as a mirror. To reconceptualise the textual data is at this point not feasible, since in this case the necessary information for understanding Septimus is only given a few lines further down, with Lucrezia worrying about her husband's talking about killing himself. It is then that the careful reader may begin to re-interpret the passage.

Secondly, reading fiction confronts readers with the difficulty of dealing with gaps, with what has been called "Leerstellen" or gaps and blanks by Wolfgang Iser (67, 68). Often, crucial facts are missing, and others remain open to contradictory interpretations. Readers have to use their knowledge of the text and their general world knowledge in order to fill such gaps and to build a mental model of the fictional world by inferring what might have happened. These "Leerstellen" are often used as aesthetic devices which can be functionalised in several ways. The beginning of *Mrs. Dalloway* and the car can serve as an example once again. A number of focalizers — who appear only once in the story — ask themselves who might be in that car. They speculate about the identity of the passenger: "a face of the very greatest importance" (16f.); "Was it the Prince of Wales's, the Queen's, the Prime Minister's? Whose face was it? Nobody knew" (17). "Was it the Queen in there — the Queen shopping?" (18). The question of who might be in the car is raised no less than eleven times, which emphasises the gap (the "Leerstelle"). It also draws attention to the uniqueness of Septimus, who is the only one not concerned with the identity of the person in the car, which casts him as an outsider

out of tune with the others, who are not individualised or even given a name. The repetitions of the same question — the answer to which is not only insignificant as far as the understanding of the plot and the constellation of characters is concerned, but also more or less uninteresting to the reader — create a distance between readers and the anonymous characters who are enthralled by the identity of the passenger, putting them in a similar position to Septimus as outsider.

Third, reading fiction can involve having to accept cognitive dissonances, rather than interpreting and resolving them in a satisfying way. Instead of initiating the "defamiliarisation — recontextualisation cycle," which encourages readers to revise their interpretations of what they have read and reach deeper insights, novels often induce readers to suspend judgement and admit the impossibility of arriving at conclusions. Aesthetic conventions guide readers' attention and foreground complexity, but as often as not, there is no cognitive closure. Dissonances may be due to open questions, to (as yet) incomplete representation, to competing goals and evaluations of some of the characters, or to contradictory assessments and feelings of readers. The experience of cognitive dissonances is part of the reading process, and the expectation of dealing with such dissonances — as well as ambivalence and polyvalence — can be said to be one of the distinguishing features of reading literary texts. In everyday situations, people strive for cognitive closure, and often feel insecure or frustrated when they cannot understand what is going on. When dealing with literary fiction, readers expect and appreciate polyvalence.Engaging with fictional stories, readers thus seem to be more open to new experiences and less set on cognitive closure. It is one of the distinguishing features of fictional narratives that they provide the basis for more than just one interpretation, and that it is often impossible to decide which interpretation is the right one. This sometimes even concerns the very facts of the story. Just think of Henry James' novella *The Turn of the Screw* (1898), or of Bret Easton Ellis' *American Psycho* (1991), which seem to be deliberately providing contradictory clues to the events in the story world. Such novels not only challenge readers' comprehensive abilities, they also invite the affective and moral engagement of readers, who are unable to find a solution to puzzling ethical questions.

Ethical issues are thus intricately involved in the cognitive processing of fictional narratives. The challenges that complicate readers' assessment of heterogeneous and even contrastive character perspectives in multiperspectival novels, for instance, cannot merely be understood as a cognitive problem — characters embody traits, values and attitudes, and the coordination and evaluation of such aspects requires ethical evaluations, too. This, however, points towards

future fields of research, of which I will mention just a few.

2. Further Fields of Research

Though my book on the cognitive value of fiction, *Reading Fictions, Changing Minds*, provides a more thorough analysis of the relation between features of fictional stories and the cognitive potential of reading fiction than I could discuss in this essay, a single monograph can still only scratch the surface of such a complex area of research. There are still numerous important questions which we should know more about. In addition, I have concentrated on the benefits of particular kinds of fiction, but, given the multitude of stories that our cultures are saturated with, it seems necessary to explore possible drawbacks of specific kinds of fictional stories as well.

If we are to understand how literature functions in relation to social cognition in contemporary societies, we should also consider the cognitive potential of popular fiction. It is necessary to ask whether reading popular fiction, which has been said to have no effects as far as social cognition is concerned, can entail negative effects, such as the encouragement of stereotyping. We should explore to what extent fictional stories present simplistic and reductive ways of thinking; for instance implying that everyone always acts for thoroughly materialist and egotistic reasons. Reading fictional stories featuring such one-sided cause-and-effect patterns as well as simplistic modes of thinking might be detrimental to social cognition and impair the readers' ethical judgement. It seems probable that some fictional works can confirm prejudices, inhibit the willingness to revise first impressions, and encourage the denial of complexity and endorse Manichaean forms of thinking.A different unresolved problem is posed by another important issue, the ethical power of stories. We need to enquire more deeply into the exploration of the hierarchies of values embedded in fictional stories. This comprises the positioning of characters to each other; it also involves the personality traits and values the characters embody.

Finally, we can improve our understanding of the significance of fictional stories by analysing possible links between the values disseminated in a story and the genre it belongs to. Can one relate particular genres or kinds of stories to particular modes of thinking and particular values? Which role do narrative conventions and aesthetic devices play in this process?Taking the power of reading fiction seriously therefore opens a whole range of promising fields of research. Reading fiction changes minds — and the choice of what is read as well as how it is read has far-reaching cognitive and ethical implications.

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Stylistics and Ethical Literary Criticism

Geoff Hall
School of English, University of Nottingham, Ningbo
199 Taikang East Road, Ningbo 315100, China
geoff.hall@nottingham.edu.cn

Abstract Stylistics is the study of linguistic choices. Ethics is the study of moral choices. Both disciplines attempt to understand and explain the choices individuals make and the significance the most fine-grained choices can sometimes make. The two disciplines, indeed, both originate in classic Aristotelian rhetoric, which fully recognised the ethical import of the words we choose. Choice is unavoidable in language and life, and choices matter. The awareness that comes from engagement in ethical choices through literary reading is one important way into this desirable moral education. Classic English literature of the late 19th century seems particularly concerned with the moral choices characters make and their consequences — fictions like *Lord Jim*, *Heart of Darkness*, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, or *Jekyll and Hyde* come immediately to mind. One of the finest discriminators in the English language in that period was Henry James, noted for his distinctive stylistic elaborations as well as for his moral concerns. In a recent *Handbook* chapter I argued that literary criticism could benefit from a closer, more systematic and better informed attention to language.[1] Here I take instances from ethical and stylistic studies of James's fiction to suggest what a stylistic awareness or at the least an awareness of stylistics might offer to literary criticism's pursuit of what Blake valued as "Minute Particulars": "He who would do good to another must do it in Minute Particulars: general good is the plea of the scoundrel, hypocrite and flatterer" (William Blake, *Jerusalem*).

Keywords stylistics; style; Henry James; language choices, language education, stylometry

Author **Geoff Hall** is Professor and Head of the School of English at the University of Nottingham Ningbo China, Dean of Arts and Education from August 2015, and Editor of the journal *Language and Literature* (Sage) since 2010. A second edition of *Literature in Language Education* is available from Palgrave Macmillan from May 2015. Recent publications include chapters in *The Routledge*

Handbook of Stylistics, and *The Cambridge Handbook of Stylistics.*

Stylistics and Ethical Literary Criticism

Literary stylistics may be characterised as a discipline which gives primary attention to the linguistic features of the text or texts at hand, looking systematically for distinctive features or patterns of features from a viewpoint informed by a knowledge of linguistics. Stylistics will hesitate to attribute value to a text or even to a linguistic device though it may attempt to explain why actual readers have valued or tend to value certain features of a text. Interpretations inevitably arise from stylistic analysis but the first object of stylistic analysis is to understand how a text "works," how it is constructed, rather than to explore possible interpretations of the features identified. This is the classic idea of "poetics": *how does it mean* rather than *what does it mean*. For this kind of classical approach to the practice of stylistics, it is a poetic handmaiden, a complementary activity to those of the literary critics.

Literary criticism, by contrast, will characteristically refer to the language of the text only in passing, impressionistically and selectively and with no special awareness of or training in linguistic analysis. Any incidental linguistic points are made as convenient for the development of a larger argument, aiming to get straight to the point of the meaning of the text and to evaluate its worth. They are usually presented as self-evident rather than the complex and critical issues they will present to the linguist reader. For ethical criticism, the first and most urgent question is to explore the meaning of the text as also a search to establish ethical significance. Is this text worth reading / good / bad, why might that be, ie. how can a reading of this text contribute to a better life, whether the critic be a Marxist, an ecocritical reader, feminist or neoliberal, or perhaps some combination of these or other ethical positions. My proposal here is that this urgent agenda tends to skip proper investigation of critical linguistic stages on the way to meaning and interpretation.

Thus both stylistic and literary critical approaches are important and I have argued in various publications (as, e.g., Hall 2014) that they are approaches that need each other to do their work properly. They are not mutually exclusive. I have argued that literary critics would produce fuller and more interesting readings by paying closer, more informed and more systematic attention to the language of the texts they study. At the same time, stylisticians need to engage better with the literariness of literary texts, what specific affordances for understanding and

development literary experience offers, and why such texts are worth our attention at all if we are not linguists interested only in the workings of language use.

The proposal then in short, to recapitulate, is that stylistics and ethical criticism can be brought into fruitful dialogue if we start from the idea of *choice*, which is a notion basic to both stylistics and to ethics. The words used in a text and the words of readers express preferences and perspectives which will often have ethical import. Linguistics and ethics both stat out from the understanding that other words could have been chosen. To say one thing is not to say another. Not to say something, to stay silent, is also an ethical choice of a kind: why did modernist writers in England such as Virginia Woolf or D. H. Lawrence not write directly about World War I, as it came to be known? This is not a blame game, nobody can write about everything, or not directly, but it is a question with ethical import.

Scrolling back to a slightly earlier generation, to what historians have called the age of anxiety, or the "strange death of liberal England," classic English literature of the late 19th century seems particularly concerned with the moral choices characters make and their consequences: *Lord Jim*, *Heart of Darkness, The Picture of Dorian Gray,* or *The Strange Case of Jekyll and Hyde* come immediately to mind. One of the finest discriminators in the English language in that period was Henry James, noted for his distinctive stylistic elaborations as well as for his moral concerns. Only the most attentive readers of James can fully rise to his ethical demands by paying the closest attention to his linguistic choices, just as his characters must be precise readers of each others' words. The later novels have been felt by critics to be particularly demanding (and sometimes to fail) in this respect. In his celebrated essay "The Art of Fiction," James as self-conscious theoriser of story writing refers to "the conscious moral purpose" with which writers like himself write, and the importance of "solidity of specification," that is, precise language use, in the task of pursuing a moral purpose. My epigraph from Blake gestures towards the same idea: it is arguably a claim for value common to many literary texts. Writers, James proposes, in a term somewhat scandalous to our own age, pursue "the truth" of their imagined worlds and characters. They make "a selection," a selection which is intended to be representative and meaningful, as they write. If James has a criticism of the English novel in this essay, it is that of "timidity." They have a moral purpose, why do they pretend they do not or shrink from it? Here James strays into more theoretical areas than I propose to tackle at present. I propose for now only to note and to respect James's idea that novel writers have a "conscious moral purpose" in writing, and the job of the reader and writer is to collaboratively explore the value of that moral purpose, and, moreover,

that they will do it through precise engagement with language use.

What does all this mean in practice and how might such moral-linguistic choices be studied? I proceed with some examples of such work as well as references to more recent extensions of this stylistic ethical critical work. Booth, Nussbaum, Phelan and others arguing for ethical criticism take us some of the way. Henry James is indeed not coincidentally a favourite example for Booth too. He contends that James's writings are suffused throughout with the question of "how one should live," "the complexities of human life," and that this interest of the novelist is inseparable from "the shape and cadence of a novelist's sentences, his choice of metaphors, his use of sound and rhythm" (26). Nussbaum similarly admires the ethical demands of "exacting demarcations" in the late James novel *The Golden Bowl*. The experience of weighing the words of James's narrators and characters, for Booth and Nussbaum, or for Hillis Miller, teaches us the reality and complexity of ethical decisions beyond any simplistic maxims or slogans. Many readers of this paper would surely agree broadly with all these points, but I would contend that these formulations are too vague, and only too characteristic of literary criticism. In place of general assertions like these, we need worked examples and practical methodologies. It cannot be assumed that all readers can read with the subtlety of a Booth or Nussbaum or Hillis Miller, with their analytic principles and procedures left implicit and unstated. Hillis Miller, for example, uses speech acts as a loose metaphorical frame with which to approach selected fragments of his chosen texts, but the principle for selection is nowhere made clear, nor how exactly to use speech act theory beyond a loose and suggestive metaphorical approach to the construct. Phelan's 'rhetoric' would be called stylistics in the UK ("textual signs" drive interpretation, we are told, so that judgments of ethics in literature reading will be made "from the inside out," but frustrates the stylistician by its loose and apparently ad hoc application in examples offered (eg Phelan) though the increasingly principled and empirical study of the experience of literary reading by researchers like Phelan or cognitive stylisticians like Sklar is very much to be welcomed for deepening our understanding of how literary texts work, including the reader's negotiation of "otherness." The unreliable narrators pioneered by James and his generation extended greatly the reach and value of ethical learning from narratives. The learning and thinking, including ethical thinking and learning, prompted by processing of literary discourse is of the greatest interest to all of us as educators, teachers and learners. The classic concerns of narratology directly impact on ethical understandings and positions we adopt as we read fiction: who speaks? who sees? free indirect speech, focalisation and the rest are involved. Such

questions are raised and only to be answered through careful study of the language of these texts. This is particularly obvious in the cases of less experienced or less successful readers, but more experienced professional readers can also benefit from careful consideration of what linguistic choices might be taken to mean with respect to developing interpretations. It has been shown that good readers read actual individual words and linguistic details more carefully not less, and so for example will notice intertextual references bringing to bear their wider reading experience on precise instances of language use. Characters and narrators are understood and judged linguistically in the first instance, even though our understanding must be of language as discourse, ie. fully imbricated in real world contexts and experience not free-floating as less subtle readings of Derrida, say, can sometimes seem to suggest. (More careful uses are to be found in Derek Attridge's work or in Hillis Miller).

How to Study Stylistic Choices?

There are various ways to stylistic analysis, and I would refer the interested reader to Simpson as the best single introduction to the field at the level of the textbook. One useful approach advocated here with no claim to great methodological originality is to study transformations made to original source texts, including changes of perspective, of narrator, of narration and characters. Similarly adaptations, versions, revisions and other "readings" by the author and others could be used for the purpose of the study of choices (compare Sanders). Booth gives a useful example of such an approach in discussing Henry James's *Portrait of a Lady*:

> Gilbert Osmond sees Isabel in the first edition "as bright and soft as an April cloud" (as presumably the author had seen her too). In the second edition equivalent passage, the simile has changed significantly to show Gilbert's attitude to his wife to be: "as smooth to his general need of her as handled ivory to the palm." "Need" rather than "use" still indicates a certain sympathy with or understanding of Gilbert by a generous narrator, but the idea of unscrupulous exploitation is a new and unequivocal message from the later narrator (and actually prescient in the light of present day controls upon unethical uses of ivory). James's revisions and prefaces, working notebook, letters and so on are invaluable sources for such an approach just as (say) we can examine Hardy's revisions for his "Wessex" edition roughly twenty years after the novels were first published, and in the light of the commentary they had prompted at the time and since. (*Mapping the Ethical Turn* 26)

The general point here is that nowadays with ever easier access to drafts, manuscripts and various versions of texts online or in reproduction, especially for modern texts (19th century on), it is easier than ever before to study the genesis of a text into the version most readers will finally become familiar with. We can trace linguistically the genesis and evolution of an idea through the linguistic choices demonstrably made. Oxford University's on line presentation of Wilfred Owen's diary shows successive reworkings of what were to become classic and widely quoted poems in their final versions. This, to take another example from Booth, is what he does himself in the memorable exploration of textual variants to Yeats's poem "After Long Silence" in *The Company We Keep*, though the point would have to be made that once again the evolution of the text is presented in a "commonsense" way which linguistic analysis could make more precise and revealing, particularly if a consistent pattern or patterns of revisions could be identified pushing the account and so the reader's interpretation in a particular meaningful direction.

Stylistic Choices of Henry James: Example 1: Chatman (1972)

To save time and words within the remit of this short paper, let me now suggest the uses of probably still the best stylistic study of James, by Seymour Chatman. "Stylistic," remember, means systematic and principled rather than eclectic impressions, even those of experienced and expert literary critical readers, a fully responsive account rather than a set of local reactions. Note, first, that Chatman used precisely the methodological approach I have just advocated, of studying author revisions, but also that this study is contextualised in statistics and a training in linguistic analysis. In a travesty of a subtle study, let me summarise some of Chatman's main conclusions (but urge interested readers to check carefully the original version for themselves!)

> Her notion was (*Portrait*) vs "She thought" (characteristic James revision or choice)
> The most characteristic activity of a James character is thinking
> second most characteristic activity is speaking
> rare is physical action, movement
> abstractness (James, eg, is measurably more abstract than his contemporary, Conrad)
> counterfactuals "it was as if" — seem, appear, — aspects of perception of a single character or narrator, imperfect knowledge or understanding of

another's intentions and motivations
nominalisation: "her eyes sought" ("she saw" etc — usually used metaphorically if at all)
"thoughts are things in James"
revision *The American*: as pale as her daughter / "her consciousness had paled her face" (in embarrassment): more precise, but also a moral point is being made.
regular scare quotes foreground and problematise words and ideas readers should pay attention to
James less interested in things than in the view of those things that characters have and the meanings registering or developing in their minds
"He appeared thoughtfully to agree" (Strether)
in *The Golden Bowl*, a door opens, and Maggie sees not her husband, but "the form, at any rate, of a first opportunity"
James's dislike of adjectives. According to his amanuensis, he rejected the "sugar" of adjectives for the "salt" of adverbs: arguably, this results in evaluation as a requirement forced on the reader, rather than simply presented by the narrator.

Chatman's careful stylistic study yields not just interesting individual insights into detailed features of James's writing, though these are certainly there, but more important we can see the emergence from all those empirically observed and measured details of a wider correlating set of tendencies that amount to a more general characterisation of James's style, based on a full description and accounting for the features observed, and this style itself can be seen as an ethical investigation into the fictional worlds of his characters and narrators. This is a perfect example of the kind of more satisfying meeting of stylistics and criticism I opened this paper by discussing. One more example before I move to sum up what is intended to be a straightforward intervention in literary studies.

Stylistic Choices as Ethics: Example 2: Hoover (2007) (Corpus Stylistics) and the Late Style of Henry James

Stylometry provides powerful computerised techniques for examining authorial style variation. Hoover's study uses several such techniques to explore the traditional distinction between James's early and late styles. They confirm this distinction, identify an intermediate style, and facilitate an analysis of the lexical

character of James's style. Especially revealing are techniques that identify words with extremely variable frequencies across James's oeuvre-words that clearly characterize the various period styles. Such words disproportionately increase or decrease steadily throughout James's remarkably unidirectional stylistic development. Stylometric techniques constitute a promising avenue of research that exploits the power of corpus analysis and returns our attention to a manageable subset of an author's vocabulary. Booth, interestingly (2001 and elsewhere), like many critics, operates with an intuitive and implicit notion of "key words", but nowhere is the construct defined or explained. For the literary critic, "key words", it seems, are what the critic says they are on the basis of his or her careful readings and re-readings. This is a good example of an area where I would propose that the more precise and empirical work of the stylistician will help give more depth and precision to literary critical intuitions. Key word studies are central to corpus stylistics (software informed stylistic analysis). The advantage of such more rigorous and explicit studies is that the more intuitive approach of the literary critic can be tested and explored more carefully (not necessarily "corrected", this is not at all the idea I wish to convey).

The limitations of corpus stylistics are clear. Not syntax (surely crucial for a full reading of James), not phonological properties, prosody etc. are examined, but one linguistic level only, that of the word ("lexis"). Hoover did not even use semantic software because (as often in such work) the form and the language are prioritised. Chatman is much better on James's convoluted syntax and parentheses. There is nothing on punctuation in Hoover's study — surely all those dashes — many added in revision — are important? Nevertheless the study is at least suggestive for critics and can be extended. I would simply suggest here that it is better appreciated for what it shows us than criticised for what it does not. No account can ever be a full and final one (compare Attridge, 2004, after Derrida). In many ways, in fact, adding to its claims to validity, Hoover's study appears very compatible with Chatman's classic stylistic study, adding weight thereby to both. Hoover, then finds in James's later fictional writings:

> fondness for "-ly" adverbs
> abstract words of thought and speech (cf Chatman)
> statistically, "key words" are: *assert(ed), imput(ed), somebody('s)*
> verbs of language, perception, mental and emotional processes are unusually frequent
> very few verbs of physical movement or actions are used (again, compare

Chatman)
there is increasing use of dialogue, colloquial and slang terms in later James
further keywords increasingly used: *shimmered, hovered, faltered, gaping, ironic, - ly.. (incl "sighingly")*

"Typical" passages of late James according to computerised stylometric analysis (ie. as identified by a computer rather than a human analyst) are therefore:

(1) He's prodigious; but what is there — as you've fixed it — to dodge? Unless, he pursued, "it's her getting near him; it's – if you'll pardon my vulgarity – her getting at him". (*Golden Bowl)*
(2) Cissy, from her charmingly cool cove, had watchfully signalled up, and they met afresh, on the firm clear sand where the drowsy waves scarce even lapsed, with forms of intimacy that the sequestered spot happily favoured. (*The Ivory Tower*)

Interestingly, of course, such unremarkable passages would typically be unlikely to feature in a more literary critical approach to the texts, interested in value (to use shorthand) rather than typicality. My proposal is that both value and typicality are related and a fuller analysis needs to report and account for both aspects of James's writing. The final words of example (2) above are evasive and euphemistic. That is an interpretive comment, but the passage on which they comment has been brought to the analyst's attention as needing explication by a computerised analysis informed by stylistic design. It is perhaps a commonplace to observe that James's late style is hesitant, repetitive, and arguably shows us the Master searching for what Flaubert called the "mot juste". For present purposes, let us emphasise that "juste" means not only "exact", "precise" but "just" as in "justice", judicial and a related set of terms. Once again, the stylistic choice and the moral choice are inseparable.

Conclusion

Revisions to manuscripts, then, (cf. Booth and others above), or alternative endings (*Great Expectations* etc) versions, adaptations, drafts, 'readings' and more (Sanders 2015) are one important way into the kind of work I am advocating here. The mathematics of frequency and "deviance" subliminal to human consciousness but nevertheless not without their effects, are another. Let me turn in closing to a recent study which makes the links between stylistic readings, emotional and ethical

effects for readers, and education, an intervention from what the developing field of "cognitive stylistics", Howard Sklar's *The Art of Sympathy in Fiction* (2013).

Sklar's work is perhaps too easily faulted for a somewhat naive trust in the empirical as advocated by experimentalist psychology, while others will miss any Eagletonian critique of a liberal humanist approach which celebrates the agonised bourgeois reader who can be led to "care" in all sorts of comforting ways but is unlikely to go out and do anything political about poverty, the position of women, race and all the other injustices literature draws our attention to. The pedagogy proposed is not innovatory and again, seems unlikely in itself to make the world a much better place. That's not really the point. (Pedagogy, for example, is a personal relation rather than a set of techniques or an "approach"). We may feel uneasy at the lack of distinction in Sklar's writings between real people and fictional characters; the idea that individuals matter seems to be held at the expense of wider sociological understandings of the needs of groups in society and group membershipping. More awareness of the world of professional literary discourse would clearly have helped produce a stronger publication. At the same time, the value of this work, reminiscent of Phelan (2007 and later) is to investigate how ethics begins from the bottom up, that reading of literature can demonstrably change ways of thinking and understanding, and this begins with the use and processing of language. Many in stylistics beside myself actually now recognise that we need to supplement such textual analysis with readings of the language of literary discussion in education, the media, in reading groups and by the proverbial water cooler, on websites and in prize committees. A literary work has no clear boundaries defined materially by the boards around the print (for those of us still accessing literature primarily through the traditional book). (See, overview of recent relevant stylistic work in Peplow and Carter, 2014). Such discourse analytical work is important but exceeds the limits of this essay but note again that it is first and foremost linguistic material to be analysed. For now, I hope at the very least some readers will now want to reconsider the importance of linguistic approaches to literature and literary reading and update their views (compare, for example, the very badly dated and stereotypical strictures on stylistics of Peter Barry). Stylisticians can only advance by better respecting the literary and the literary critical professoriate, just as literary critics need to understand how unfortunately and unnecessarily their work is vitiated and limited by lack of awareness of advances in linguistics, stylistics and discourse analysis more broadly.

Note

1. Hall, G. “Ch. 7: Stylistics as literary criticism.” in *The Cambridge Handbook of Stylistics*. Eds. P. Stockwell and S. Whiteley. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

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The Rise of Civilization and the Threat from Neo-Barbarism: the Need for Rethinking the Role of Ethical Literary Criticism

Knut Brynhildsvoll
Centre for Ibsen Studies, University of Oslo
P.O. Box 1166 Blindern, NO-0316 Oslo, Norway
Email: knut.brynhildsvoll@ibsen.uio.no

Abstract In the late 1930s the German ethnological scholar and sociological thinker Norbert Elias published a book, in which he describes "the process of civilization" in the European countries since the Middle Ages and in which he draws the conclusion that in term of long-distance development there has been a significant decrease of aggressive behavior, both on the psycho-genetic and the socio-genetic level of manifestations. In this article I discuss the validity of Elias' finding with a special reference to Hans-Peter Dürr's repudiation of his theses. In Dürr's opinion Elias' account of the civilizing process ignores the fundamental crises of civilizing achievements and consequently he describes Elias' perspective as a mythical one not compatible with real life experiences of ordinary people. In my paper I want to examine how the contradictory observations made by Elias and Dürr are dealt with in literary documents hereby focusing on changing ethical evaluations. Hereby I intend to approach the textual concepts from two opposite angles: 1. Has literature in the course of the civilizing process changed its character and adapted the ethical improvements maintained by Elias? or 2. Have the many setbacks into barbarian behavior and de-civilizing manners overshadowed the acquired ethical standards and paved the way for a kind of literature that shows the need for a radical ethical change of perspective through focusing on events showing the opposite of what ethical ways of conduct demand?

Key words civilizing process; re-barbarization; re-cultivating ethical values

Author **Knut Brynhildsvoll** is professor of Nordic literature at the University of Cologne, Guest professor at the universities in Hamburg, Bochum, Marburg, Giessen and Zürich 2000-2007, and director of the Centre for Ibsen Studies, University of Oslo. More than 200 articles in national and international research

journals on topics from romantic literature to postmodernity including literary theory and comparative literature and numerous scientific books have been published in Norwegian and German languages.

In the following I intend to examine the gradually upcoming of ethical standards of behavior as the result of what has been called the civilizing process. Hereby I draw theoretically on Norbert Elias' work *The civilizing process* from 1939, in which he explores the civilizing achievements in Europe from the renaissance to the early modern times hereby stressing the interplay between psychogenetic and sociogenetic constituents. In order to understand the theoretical concept of Elias it is crucial to stress the interdependence of individual and social agencies as equally conditioning components in the civilizing process. Elias intends by way of empirical evidence to show how standards of behavior have changed in the European society since the Middle Ages and to explain why what he calls "the social habitus" among people belonging to the same level of education has been widely implemented and accepted. To change a man's "habitus" means to remove him from his captivity in natural compulsions and provide him with a "second nature", domesticated and adapted to the requirements of what Sigmund Freud calls "the super-ego". According to Elias it is impossible to ensure reliable knowledge unless you extend your research to periods of long duration. He is convinced that only the investigation of long-time processes permits conclusions regarding lasting trends of civilizing improvements.

In the first volume of *The Civilizing Process* Elias addresses the history of manners. In so doing he directs his attention towards post-medieval standards of conduct and shows the gradually transition from primitive attitudes to an increasing refinement of daily performances. Elias has mainly exploited English and French sources, especially the life style practiced at the court of King Louis the 14. in Versailles. In the courteous surroundings he watches the emergence of manners, which compared to those of previous times and to those of the lower classes mark a remarkable progress. Accordingly Elias links his notion of civilization to the development of a social practice less characterized by violence and brutality and a life style based on a considerable decrease of spontaneous expressions of natural, uncontrolled drives. In the beginning of the first volume he explains what he understands by "civilization": "It sums up everything in which Western society of the last two or three centuries believes itself superior to earlier societies or 'more primitive' contemporary ones. By this term Western society seeks to describe what constitutes its special character and what it is proud of: the level of technology,

the nature of its manners, the development of its scientific knowledge or view of the world, and much more." (*Über den Prozess der Zivilisation.Soziogenetische und psychogenetische Untersuchungen* 14) The continual move towards higher standards of civilization described by Elias seems to confirm a wide-spread illusion in the Western countries that the civilizing process has reached its final stage and has established itself as a complete and permanent system of eternal values and deportments, which legitimize their spokesmen to use their acquired standards as export articles, hereby aiming at civilizing the natives in countries they were now colonizing and, for a time, the lower classes of their own society. Of course, Elias never shared this simplified opinion. On the contrary, he never ceased underlining that the spreading of civilization neither has a point zero nor a final goal, it is an ongoing process, which changes according to the growing social complexity. His research has moreover shown that the civilizing process in periods of short duration may reverse and stagnate, but in the long-time perspective the Western societies pave the way for a rise of sustainable norms of civilized human behavior. Even though Elias registers a continually improvement of civilized ways of coexistence he shrinks from calling it an evolutionary process, then it is not an unidirectional development, but a powerful demonstration of the human will, which conceal the risk of serious relapses.

As I already mentioned, in the first volume of his work Elias outlines the history of social standards of conduct since the late Middle Ages and compare them to those of the centuries before. He throws light on topics like: behavior at table, changes in attitude toward the natural functions, blowing one's nose, spitting behavior in the bedroom, relations between the sexes, and changes in aggressiveness. Elias has won his supreme knowledge from the study of manner books, which since the late Middle Ages became a favorite genre primarily among the courtly upper class, but gradually in bourgeois circles as well. Each section contains excerpts from various manner books, so that the reader listen to "people of different ages speaking on roughly the same subject." (*Über den Prozess der Zivilisation.Soziogenetische und psychogenetische Untersuchungen* 99) Elias adds his comments to every act of behavior mentioned in the quoted passages and judges their significance in the development of a civilized way of conduct. One of the conclusions derived from these case studies is that barbarian patterns of behavior are being repressed and replaced by spiritual "self-restraint", not by regulations forced upon people by outward compulsion, the result of which is a gradually transformation of savage usage and the up-coming of a life-style characterized by increasing thresholds of shame and repugnance.

In the course of further social differentiation the intertwining chains of interdependence grow rapidly and demand from everybody a psychic adjustment to the requirements of the progressive division of social functions. Under the conditions of the advanced bourgeois society the individual freedom of behavior is subject to a greater self-control. The single individual shares the public room with numerous other individuals and is dependent on mutual cooperation in an increasingly complex network of social connections. The second volume of Elias' study deals with how human beings are moving through this social web and how they meet new challenges with interactive role adaptations. The originality of Elias' conception consists in its linking together psychological and social disciplines in order to gain new knowledge about lasting changes in human behavior over a period of long duration. This methodological approach has made him the father of process or figurational sociology.

It is striking that Elias elaborates his theory using manner books like Erasmus of Rotterdam's *De civilitate morum puerilium* as main sources. Manner books were in the Middle Ages not regarded as manuals or handbooks, but as a special literary genre. It is likely to assume that literary texts in general are able to serve as narrative introductions to a diversity of questions concerning changing models of behavior and education. Lewis A. Coser in his book *Sociology through Literature* has stressed the close relationship between literature and the social sciences. Due to him, "literature is a continuous commentary on manners and morals, and as such it preserves for us the precious record of modes of response to peculiar social and cultural conditions" (*Sociology through Literature. An Introductory Reader* XV). He blames sociologists for having "but rarely utilized works of literature in their investigations" (*Sociology through Literature. An Introductory Reader* XV). This wide-spread ignorance among sociologists has according to Coser impoverished social research then "the trained sensibilities of a novelist or a poet may provide a richer source of social insight than, say, the impressions of untrained informants on which so much sociological research currently rests"(*Sociology through Literature. An Introductory Reader* XV/XVI). It is thus evident that literary texts offer an important access to problems highly relevant to sociological research, especially in the field of ethical and moral standards. One may wonder why Elias, except for the manner books, has not paid attention to further text categories dealing with literary topics less directly connected to the progress of civilization. Obviously art literature of all times touches upon moral and ethical questions related to various educational standards and ways of dealing with them. I can only imagine one reason for leaving out this category of literary expression. Elias is studying the civilizing process, the

changing of norms, and for this purpose he needs a fable and actions which cover many generations of familial life. In the canon of Western literature one will hardly find narratives which cover a period of, let say, three or four hundred years, during which one may register what Elias calls a "Zivilizationsschub," a "civilization leap." One can trace the familial novel back to the Old Norse sagas.[1]Later the genre was flourishing during the second part of the 19th century, namely in France, where Emil Zola wrote the story of the Rougon-Macquart families consisting of 20 volumes and Thomas Mann published his family chronicle *Buddenbrooks*. Zola's novel cycle covers a period of a few decades during the Second French Empire and conveys impressions from the biological and moral decline of family members falling victims to alcohol, violence and prostitution. As such it illustrates that the civilization process under the influence of social circumstances may be subject to serious reversals. Zola's work seems to confirm the theses of Elias, due to which the civilizing process is jeopardized through serious disruptions of established economic, social and mental patterns.

Indeed one find genealogical tables in *The Old Testament* and in various types of chronicles, which record the chain of events in the order of time, without doing any attempt to compare the single events and the historical figures in order to figure out whether one can ascertain a surplus of civilized manners and attitudes throughout the generations. During the predominance of positivistic trends in literary research in the 1880s the term "generation" won through and served as a mirror, through which one could observe the succession of ethical standards in the opposition between fathers and sons (Turgenjev). Unlike Elias, who in spite of periodic reversals of the civilizing process still advocated a progressive view, due to which the accumulation of civilizing efforts in a long-time perspective prevailed, the authors of family novels seldom cover a period exceeding three generations, during which the power of the founder generation gradually crumbles and is replaced through a third generation figure, who often, like in Thomas Mann's Buddenbrooks, has a tendency towards artistic expression and because of his sensibility and a certain weakness is not able to take care of the daily business. Thus the genesis of the generation novel shows that the authors within the limited framework of time and space designed actions, that in a single draft illuminated both the growth of human capacities and at the same time revealed the crises of civilizing achievements. In many of these novels you easily recognize the rise and fall model well known from historical studies like Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West* and Arnold Toynbee's *A Study of History*. Quite opposite to the development novel the family novel moves within a cyclic repetition of ascending

and descending powers, which seem to question Norbert Elias' notion that the civilizing process takes place on a progressive linear level.

Before continuing it is necessary to draw attention to the different use of the "civilization"- conception in France and England on the one hand and Germany on the other hand. In the West-European and American tradition the word relates to the achievements in the field of technology, economy and science. According to this accentuation "civilization" means the rectilinear, irreversible, universal technical progress, which aims at controlling nature. This understanding of the civilizing process was rejected in Germany because it limited the progress to standards regarded as being outward and superficial. Nature was in Germany equated with human nature and the civilizing act consisted consequently in the improvement of spiritual values. According to this counter-concept the word "civilization" was replaced by the word "culture." In order to be an educated person one ought to cultivate inner qualities and mobilize creative capacities deeply rooted in the human mind. Even though the culture-civilization anti-theses, which Kant in the 18. and Humboldt in the 19th century advocated, today has lost much of its significance, the theoretical disputes have drawn attention to different ways of fighting ethical decay. Culture and civilization have one thing in common; they help impeding aggressiveness and resisting violence through producing attitudes which protect antagonists from falling victims to ethical degeneration.

The cultural sensitiveness may however prove to be disadvantageous for the growth of civil virtues and civil management. Thomas Mann's novel *Buddenbrooks* is typical of the rise- and fall structure of the generation novel. Hanno Buddenbrook is a highly cultivated and artistically inclined third-generation figure, who with his refined manners and artistic affections is unfit for big business. His lack of interest in practical affairs accelerates the decline of the commercial house established by his grandfather. Mann's novel shows clearly that the cultural understanding of the civilizing process favors mental values and further the retreat into spiritual inwardness, which marks a fundamental difference to the open-minded and mercantile life style of the founder generation. The German historian Theodor Mommsen has in the cyclic succession of rise and fall models in numerous familial novels seen an analogy to the biological process of genesis, growth, senescence, collapse and decay. [2]

The German concept of culture has proved to be problematic because it localizes the civilizing impulses in a too far distance from nature. Sigmund Freud has in his book *Das Unbehagen in derKultur (Civilization and its Discontents*) analysed the relation between culture and nature and claims that culture is a source

of suffering because it submits sexuality to rational control and limits the borderlines of the lust principle. It is significant that Elias, who himself paid reverence to Freud, made self-control the most distinct feature of the civilizing process. According to such disciplinary restriction in matters of intimacy Elias discerns a gradual removal of sexuality behind the scenes of social life. The withdrawal of sexual activities from the public gaze into the invisibility of the private sphere marks from the civilizing point of view a progress, which reached its most extreme expression in the Victorian age, where sexual life was regarded as a taboo topic in the public. This "privatization" of the bedroom and intimate relations was unknown in medieval society, where the naked body and bodily functions apparently without shyness were exposed to public glance. "The sight of the naked human body must have been an everyday commonplace. […] Engravings show young people of both sexes unconcernedly sharing the bath-house, and in some towns it was customary for the family to undress at home and go to the baths naked or very scantily clad" (*Über den Prozess der Zivilisation. Soziogenetische und psychogenetische Untersuchungen* 164). It is however doubtful if Victorian prudery belongs to the long-term acquisitions of civilized manners, then at proximately the same time the European nudist movement occurred, whose concern it was to show openly what the Victorian age was endeavored to hide, the naked body. Under the influence of what has been called the "permissive society" Elias himself noticed the relaxation of taboos after the First World War and asked whether this regression represented a reversal of the civilizing process or merely one of its many turnabouts seen before in history (*Über den Prozess der Zivilisation.Soziogenetische und psychogenetische Untersuchungen* 186ff.).

When Elias links the civilizing process to questions concerning manners it may be difficult to recognize the ethical implications, especially in case of natural functions like spitting, urinating, defecation etc. and the wide spectrum of table usage. In our global village such habits have mostly been subject to global adjustments, and they belong as such to the field of social etiquette. Nevertheless, nobody questions that there is a close condition between human conduct and civil standards. Albert Schweitzer in his book *The Philosophy of Civilization* from 1923 distinguishes between material and ethical representations of civilized appearance, and he traces the loss of the ethical conception of civilization back to the collapse of moral values in the roaring twenties. In his opinion the civilizing process aims at the spiritual perfecting of individuals. Schweitzer's view links up with the German notion of civilization, which favors the spiritual values of cultural inwardness.

It is obvious that literature and art on a very advanced level help furthering

the civilizing process. It is significant that the social scientist V. Gordon Childe counts 'literacy' as an important part of cultural civilization. Among the listed manners in Elias' book it seems to me that the described changes in aggressiveness are most relevant to ethical questions as far as they discuss peaceful settlement of conflicts and contributes to disarmament of hostility and promotion of ethical responsibility. The Norwegian sociologist Johan Galtung claims that if you want to change mentality you have to change language customs. He insists that it makes a difference if one instead of talking about a ministry of war or defense changes the name of the institution calling it a ministry of peace. One of the most influential persons in the history of the peace movement is the Swede Alfred Nobel, who in his testament from 1895 decreed that the interest of his fortune should be awarded persons who have distinguished themselves through excellence in the fields of natural sciences, medicine, literature and peace advancement. As the founder of modern explosive technology he strongly felt the need for philanthropic counter-activities. Consequently he in his testament emphasized that writers should be decorated who in their works have pursued idealistic purposes, and persons or institutions should receive the peace price, whose efforts have strengthened the friendship between nations and limited military tensions and conflicts. The Austrian countess and Nobel prize winner Bertha von Suttner, who since the 1870s was a close friend of Alfred Nobel and in her anti-war-novel *Lay down your arms* from 1889 implied strong indictment of militarism, in her Nobel prize speech stressed " how little the ancient commandment 'Thou shalt not kill' is respected in the present state of civilization." She praised Alfred Nobel, who launched the idea of the Nobel prizes because he recognized science and idealistic literature as pursuits which foster culture and help civilization. The problem however has been that the committees responsible for the selections of candidates have often preferred persons, whose achievements are incompatible with the statutes of the Nobel-prize. 1969 the Irish writer Samuel Beckett was awarded the Nobel prize. However he rejected to receive it, most probably because he was aware that his parables of futility and lack of future were opposed to the idealistic intentions of Alfred Nobel. And here we have arrived at a crucial point, which follows from the contradiction between reality and the ideal. Stephen Mennell in his book *Norbert Elias.Civilization and theHuman Self-Image* states: "Violence and its controls are […] central to the theory of the civilizing processes. So nothing undermines the plausibility of the theses more than the widespread intuitive perspective that we are now living in a world which is more violent than ever before" (246f). Elias' book appeared in 1939, on the threshold of the Second World War, when

the German civilization collapsed and the land of writer and thinker advanced to the land of judges and executioners. It looks like reality denies Elias' idea of an ongoing civilizing process, and the increased number of postcolonial and religious conflicts to follow has actually questioned the validity of Elias' research. The most prominent critic of Elias is his younger colleague Hans-Peter Dürr, who repudiates his theories and ascribes to them the status of myths. Thus Dürr's research project aims at disproving Elias' civilization theory and make plausible that the unprecedented relaxation of ethical standards and sexual taboos has paved the way for long-term de-civilizing retrogression, which through acts of re-barbarism has made the 20th century a period of unrestrained violence and decline of civilized behavior. According to him the polished manners of so called civilized people very often prove to cover a superficial attitude, behind which one may sense the feature of what the French call the *bête humaine*, a category of human beings provided with animal-like traits, comparable to those depicted in the bestiaries of the Middle Age literature.[3] Whereas social critics confine barbarian behavior to a certain kind of violent human beings one can during the 19th century observe a tendency to extend inferior character traits to nations and races. One of the earliest critics of savage conduct was the German author Bogumil Goltz, who in his 1858 published book *Der Menschund die Leute. Zur Charakteristik der barbarischen und der civilisierten Nationen* (*The man and the people. Description of the barbarian and the civilized nations*) called the habits and the way of life performed in African and European nations bestial.

Dürr blames Elias that he mainly confines his studies to Western countries and through his euro-centric perspective fails to grasp the full-scale problematic. In an article with the title *Der Mandarin. Stilisierungchinesischer Höflichkeit* Helga Reimann approached the civilizing problem with her point of departure in Chinese culture. She compares the ethical standards of behavior at the Emperor's palace in Beijing with those at the court of Versailles, and in spite of different spiritual traditions she points at several common achievements regarding civilized manners and courteous politeness. The established hierarchy among the courtiers and mandarins depends on a disciplinary codex strictly regulated in the ceremonial rituals at the Emperor's palace. Every mandarin is obliged to control his body and his emotions and to suppress every kind of individual feelings. However, this extreme self- control is due to Reimann not only the result of the disciplinary rituals at the Emperor's court, but in the same extent of the educational principles based on the core values of Confucianism. Helga Reimann refers to *The Book ofManners* (*Li Gi*), which was considered the canonical text on manners in China throughout

the changing dynasties. Among the recommendations of master Dsong, a disciple of Confucius, one find theorems comparable with those of Western books on ideal conduct such as: "The nobleman defeats his sexual urge through reflection." The Chinese nobleman has according to Reimann much in common with the French "Gentilhomme" and the English "Gentleman" as far as education, self-control and dignity concern.

On the other hand Dürr blames Elias for having introduced a much too optimistic perspective regarding the progress of the civilized process. In view of the Nazi-regime's persecution and expulsion of the jews, the attacks on the synagogues and on jewish property, which happened during Elias was about to finish his *magnum opus*, Dürr seriously questions the validity of his theses, certainly without taking into account that Elias in his later studies on the Germans (1992: 26ff) developed a far more differentiate view on the ambivalent relationship between civilizing and de-civilizing processes. He traces the incomparable de-civilizing relapse of Nazi-Germany back to the belated nation building, which due to Elias has caused an incomplete and unsymmetrical organization of the super ego among the Germans in the 20th century. At least it is understandable that Dürr in view of the contemporary humanitarian, ecological, confessional and territorial crises draws the conclusion that unhappy times are here again, threatening to destroy what is left of culture and civilized acquisitions. The catastrophes brought about by regional wars and terrorism provoke counter-measures, then, due to Horace, "you too are in danger when your neighbor's house is on fire." (nam tua res agitur, paries cum proximus ardet)(epistle 1.18.84)And this situation calls for an ethical turn in modern art and literature and as an appropriate response an ethical criticism in literary and art research. Nie Zhenzhao, who in his basic studies attributes to literature a primary ethical function, defines "ethical literary criticism […] as a critical theory that approaches literary works and their authors from the perspective of ethics" (2ff). You may add that there are certain varieties of literature that are less suited for ethical approaches, like non-sense poetry and Dadaism that attempt to discredit previous art expressions by making use of incongruent or accidental compilations. Although novels seem to be the preferred genre of ethical literary criticism, one finds equally strong expressions of ethical demands in poetry. As an interesting example from Norwegian poetry I want to mention Dag Solstad's concrete poem *Arv* (*Heritage*), which consists of three rectangular blocks containing fragments of Western national songs with a rather martial vocabulary praising the heroic fights against the hostile enemies of the native country. The last line of the blocks is not complete and the first line of the two last blocks starts with

the first line of Johannes R. Becher's anthem of The German Democratic Republic: "Risen from ruins/And facing the future." Technically Solstad in this poetic montage is moving from verbal telling to visual showing. The incomplete lines at the end of the blocks show the breakdown of human civilization as a result of military aggressiveness, and the first line of the following show constructing efforts to rebuild the lost civilization. The message is clear: unless one change language habits and thereby one's mentality there will soon be no further continuations and we have arrived at the end of the beginnings.

The alarming extent of de-civilizing aggressiveness in combination with the increase of ideological fanaticism has brought about a radical shift in the debate on the contemporary role of art and literature. As an adequate response to the threat from neo-barbarism many literary critics to day advocate a re-civilizing ethical turn, which offers reliable answers to the loss of moral norms and paves the way for a future recovery before arriving at the point of no return. The decisive question is therefore what kind of literary texts can serve the intentions of ethical literary criticism. As far as ethical criticism aims at obtaining a change in the reader's mind, it depends on the inherent capacity of the text to transcend his/her expectation horizon and create an awareness of the need for a spiritual renewal. From the point of view of reception those texts seem to be most suitable for this purpose which within the intercommunicative play between author, text and reader challenge the reader's response and stimulate his/her ethical responsibility. Obviously one can serve this purpose directly through realistic representations of warfare, like in Eric Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* (*Im Westen nichts Neues*) or through depicting utopian sceneries beyond reasonable credibility. And let it be no doubt, contemporary forms of ethical literary criticism draw their legitimacy not from escaping into the holistic worlds of classical utopian constructions, but from sticking to concepts based on reason according to Francisco Goya's judgment "the sleep of reason gives birth to monsters" (El suéno de la razon produce mostors). [4]

It is significant that Goya in his *Capprichios* and *Desastres de la Guerra* approaches the ethical claim from its anti-ethical counter-position. His drawings and paintings of war victims convey extreme impressions of what ethics is not. This is an example how Enlightenment artists through their realistic concepts make the need for ethical change visible. In modern times artists often mirror the crises and the social mismanagement in satirical, ironic or anti-utopian representations, which elucidate the reverse of what ethics demand. Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, whose title refers to Miranda's speech in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, focus in an ironic manner on people representing the worst of humanity, who in the innocent

eyes of Miranda appear as prototypes of refined and civilized human beings:

> O wonder!
> How many goodly creatures are there here!
> How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world.
> That has such people in't. (Act V, Scene 1, II, 24)

The multiplicity of negative approaches to the technological and economic varieties of the civilizing process reveal the loss of ethical control and the lack of balance between nature and society. Robert P. Harrison in his book *Gardens. An essay on the Human Condition* has stressed the threat emerging from the global expansion of the technological civilization and he asserts that "moral ideals in the modern era remain for the most part fictions we pretend to believe in […] and this holds true for the assault on nature that is presently unearthing the earth and unworlding the world in the name of eliminating poverty and suffering" (158-159). Drawing on the German understanding of the civilizing process he blames modernism for having been "mostly a story of combating and denouncing history" instead of "cultivating, in sheltered places, counterforces to history's deleterious forces" (159). Obviously the spokesmen of ethical literary criticism –be it authors, be it critics – share the same opinion. As an appropriate response to those advocating an unlimited economic growth and exploitation of nature's raw materials ethical literary criticism struggles for reestablishing civilized standards, which help fighting moral resignation and re-cultivating ethical values in an ongoing improvement of the human condition.

Notes

1. In the20th century authors like the Nobel price-winner John Galsworthy and Selma Lagerlöf use the genre designation in their main works *The Forsyte Saga* and *Gösta Berling's Saga.*

2. Due to Mommsen the historical process is characterized through an interchange of movements. He talks about "Aufschwung" and "Rückgang" (upswing and decline); repeatedly he uses metaphors like "Ebbe" and "Flut" (low tide and high tide) (132).

3. The bestiary is a genre with an ethical profile containing collections of Middle Age texts that in allegorical form describes animals, mostly mythical, which acts according to human models in order to elucidate what is good and what is bad.

4. "The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters" is a collection of etchings by the Spanish painter and printmaker Francisco Goya, created between 1797 and 1799, in which Goya imagines

himself asleep amidst his drawing tools, his reason dulled by slumber and bedeviled by creatures that prowl in the dark. For more, refer to http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Sleep_of_Reason_Produces_Monsters.

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Reading Levinasian Notions of Alterity and the Ethics of Place in Ford Madox Ford's *Parade's End*

Kenneth Womack and William Baker
Altoona College, Pennsylvania State University
Penn State Altoona, 3000 Ivyside Park, Altoona, PA 16601
Email: womack@psu.edu

Abstract Questions about ethics continue to exert a profound influence upon the direction of contemporary literary criticism. In addition to tracing the evolution of ethical criticism as an interpretive form, this essay explores the ways in which the critical paradigm's twenty-first-century manifestations continue to address literature's ethical motivations and import. As a form of case-study, this essay examines Ford Madox Ford's *Parade's End* both in terms of the ethical framework in which the novel's characters coexist as well as the moral crises following the Great War and the conflict's substantial influence upon the abidingly complex interrelationship between French and British culture and society. Through this lens, we can understand the manner in which Ford's tetralogy encounters a number of revealing aspects of Emmanuel Levinas's philosophies of the self, alterity, and otherness. Drawing upon Levinas's critical matrix of alterity, a reading of Ford's ethical imperatives in *Parade's End* demonstrates the author's considerable humanistic agenda for "altering" our perspectives of war and atrocity via his well-honed and influential Impressionistic techniques.

Keywords Ethical criticism; Ford, Ford Madox; Impressionism; Levinas, Emmanuel; Moral philosophy; Selfhood

Authors **Kenneth Womack** is Professor of English and Integrative Arts at Penn State Altoona, where he also serves as Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. He is the author of three award-winning novels — *John Doe No. 2 and the Dreamland Motel* (2010), *The Restaurant at the End of the World* (2012), and *Playing the Angel* (2013). Womack is also the author or editor of numerous works of nonfiction, including *Long and Winding Roads: The Evolving Artistry of the Beatles* (2007) and *The Beatles Encyclopedia*, *Everything Fab Four* (2014); **William Baker** is Distinguished Research Professor of English, Northern Illinois

University.

A Brief History of Anglo-American Literature and Ethical Criticism

Questions about ethics continue to exert a profound influence upon the direction of contemporary literary criticism. Yet, as Geoffrey Galt Harpham observes in *Shadows of Ethics: Criticism and the Just Society*, ethical criticism functions in the eyes of many literary scholars as an "alien discourse" that challenges or undermines the theoretical project's capacity for promoting "literature's immediacy, concreteness, vitality, and affective richness" (ix). During the last two decades, ethical criticism's fusion with continental philosophy has produced a more theoretically rigorous form of literary critique that continues to elevate its status as a viable interpretive mechanism. In contrast with North American variations of the paradigm that find their origins in Kantian moral philosophy and troll dangerously close to the shoals of moral relativism, ethical criticism's European manifestations offer a more forceful analysis by emphasizing continental philosophy's various and ongoing accounts of alterity, otherness, and phenomenology. While both schools of thought may hale from decidedly different venues of intellectual thought, ethical criticism's various manifestations demonstrate the theoretical project's larger interest in assessing the value systems that inform our textual interpretations. As recent evidence has shown, ethical criticism's Anglo-American emergence during the latter half of the twentieth century is enjoying yet another renaissance, particularly in the Eastern academy—namely, China—as thinkers in the new century ponder the significance of addressing literature's ethical motivations and import.

To begin, ethical criticism can be most usefully understood through two principal spheres of thought:

1. as an "interpretive paradigm that explores the nature of ethical issues from their considerable roles in the creation and interpretation of literary works" (Womack 167);
2. as a philosophical matrix that "refers to the inclusion of ethical components in the interpretation and evaluation of art" (Peek).

Moreover, ethical criticism may be regarded as a meeting between the two polarities of moralism, which contends that the aesthetic value of art should be determined by or reduced to its "moral" value, and autonomism, which challenges our notions about whether it is appropriate to apply moral categories to art that

should be evaluated by aesthetic standards alone.

Among Anglo-American academic circles, it must be understood that there are signal differences between British and American manifestations of ethical criticism. The revival of ethical criticism as an interpretative paradigm during the last two decades of the twentieth century finds its origins as a response, especially in the mid to late 1980s, to poststructuralist theoretical concerns such as deconstruction and the development of postmodernism as a set of theoretical positions. Many of these theoretical thrusts had their origins in post-Second World War French philosophical thought influenced by earlier German thinkers such as Husserl, Heidegger, and others (see Abrams and Harpham 56). French philosophical thought — as espoused, for instance, by leading players such as Derrida — exerteda powerful impact upon American academe, especially in the form of key professorial appointments during the early 1980s in prestigious East Coast institutions. The ensuing reactions subsequently led to the development of various socially challenging modes of critical thinking — for example, gender studies, historical criticism, anti-theory, and eco-criticism, among others.

As one of the critical zeitgeist's key late-twentieth-century movements, ethical criticism may be regarded as a sociocultural reaction toa host of critical and philosophical antecedents.In literary studies, we can find these roots in much earlier works, such as Tolstoy's classic "What Is Art?"and Oscar Wilde's Preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray* in which he asserts that moral merits and defects should not influence aesthetic considerations.Other examples of earlier exponents of ethical criticism may be found also in the work of the great Russian critics Alexander Voronski and Mikhail Bakhtin, whose literary criticism can be understood as essentially "ethical" in nature.[1] Contextually, ethical criticism and other interpretive forms find their origins in the Anglo-American academy and in the institutionalization of English studies and literary theory, particularly in the United States. In Europe, on the other hand — and namely in France and Germany — there has been a striking tendency to examine ethical aesthetics in terms of their philosophical implications rather than, as in the United Kingdom, from the perspective of cultural studies.

Scholars in British academic circles have explored ethical literary considerations since the early twentieth century, as evinced by F. R. Leavis and Christopher Norris, among others. Indeed, Leavis acted as one of the chief exponents of ethical criticism. As a major critical voice — perhaps *the* major twentieth century British critical voice, as evidence by his seminal essays published in *Scrutiny* in the 1930s and 1940s — Leavis influenced generations of thinkers

as they pondered literature's moral value systems. In works such as *The Great Tradition: George Eliot, Henry James, Joseph Conrad* (1948), Leavis directed literary critics in the United Kingdom and the United States alike to engage the scholarly energies in addressing the ethical properties of the novel as our most revelatory generic long-playing form. Leavis's successors eagerly take up this baton, as demonstrated by the work of British critic Christopher Norris, who argues in *Truth and the Ethics of Criticism* (1994) that by providing readers with the means to establish vital interconnections between texts and the divergent, heterogeneous communities in which we live, ethical criticism attempts to empower the theoretical project with the capacity to produce socially and culturally relevant critiques. This way of reading allows critics to consider "the prospect of a better, more enlightened alternative where the difference *within* each and every subject is envisaged as providing the common ground, the measure of shared humanity, whereby to transcend such differences *between* ethnic and national ties" (94). As Kenneth Womack observes, Norris consequently "posits an ethics of criticism that self-consciously assesses the theoretical presuppositions undergirding the moral position of," for instance,"contemporary hermeneutics" (Womack 168).

Not surprisingly, such grandiose social and critical arguments are conspicuously absent from the work of American critic Martha C. Nussbaum, whose *Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature* (1990) and other work represent the high tide of pragmatic and rhetorical ethics. As with the eminent American rhetorician Wayne C. Booth in *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction*(1988), Nussbaum focuses largely on the novel as a means for ethical reflection. In particular, Nussbaum applies her Boothian conception of ethical criticism to the work of Henry James, Marcel Proust,and dramatist Samuel Beckett. Nussbaumfervently defends the practice of ethical criticism, arguing that certain literary works may potentially play important supplementary roles in moral education and applyingthis notion to James's novels, which she sees and key sites of ethical interplay and valuation.

In *Love's Knowledge*, Nussbaum demonstrates the interpretive power of ethical criticism, the usefulness of its critical goals to scholarship concerning literary character upon the cultural landscape of fiction, and the ethical motivations underpinning satire. She argues, moreover, for the place of love as a subject in the evolving discourse of ethical criticism. In particular, Nussbaum is concerned with "practical love," referring to "an attitude of concern that one can will oneself to have towards another human being, and which is, for that reason, a part of morality" as opposed to "pathological" (336-37) or irrational obsessive love.

The acknowledgment of practical love provides additional insight into human conceptions of living well and the ways in which literary texts depict love's capacity to produce personal fulfillment. In a later work, *Poetic Justice* (1995), Nussbaum takes her theoretical perspective a step further and explores the value of ethical reading as a means of influencing political theory and public discourse.

To understand the late-twentieth-century American academy's grappling with ethical theory, it is vital that we consider the role of stylistics in ethical criticism. In *Love's Knowledge*, Nussbaum writes that "Form and style are not incidental features. A view of life is *told*. The telling itself — the selection of genre, formal structures, sentences, vocabulary, of the whole manner of addressing the reader's sense of life — all of this expresses a sense of life and of value, a sense of what matters and what does not, of what learning and communicating are, of life's relationships and connections. Life is never simply *presented* by a text; it is always *represented as* something" (5). In the light of such an observation from a leading exponent of "ethical criticism," it is little wonder that the novel maintains its preeminence as afavored form of exploration.

To understand the philosophical origins of Booth and Nussbaum's scholarship, it is especially useful to consider the work of their key influences — namely, such thinkers as Louise M. Rosenblatt, John Gardner, J. Hillis Miller, and Bernard Williams, among others. In *The Reader, the Text, the Poem: The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work* (1978), Rosenblatt provides a matrix of interpretation for ethical critics to explain reader's motives and their "transactions" with literary texts. According to Rosenblatt, there are two principal types of reading strategies:

1. Aesthetic reading in which the reader is concerned with what occurs *whilst* actually reading;
2. Non-aesthetic reading in which the reader is concerned with what occurs *after* reading.

The non-aesthetic is a notably different kind of reading;it is interested with what the reader materially derives from the reading experience — for instance, a concern with verbal symbols, what they represent, and so forth. The reader "seeks the information, the concepts, theguides to action that will be left with the reader when the reading is over" (27). Such a position offers vastly similar aims as those most closely associated withreader-response criticism.[2]During the act of reading, Rosenblatt writes,"each reader brings to the transaction, not only a specific past life and literary history, not only a repertory of internalized 'codes' but also a very

active present, with all its preoccupations, anxieties, questions and aspirations" (144). Indeed, for Rosenblatt reading is a complex transaction that involves a deep interconnection between reader and the human communities in which they live and seek personal fulfillment. The reading transaction lays "bare the assumption about human beings and society and the hierarchy of values that govern the world derived from the text" (149-50).

In 1978, Gardner published *On Moral Fiction*, taking Rosenblatt's theories a step further and arguing that artistic expression "is not didactic because… it clarifies, like an experiment in a chemistry lab, and confirms" (19). Consequently, Gardner affirms that power of reading andexpresses the text's ability to convey ideas and notions concerning knowledge and universal good for its readers, through for instance allegory, satire,or other fictive devices. Our ethical continuum further evolves with the work of British philosopher Bernard Williams, who argues in *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (1985) that "an ethical theory is a theoretical account of what ethical thought and practice are" (72).Williams's position "either implies a general test for the correctness of basic ethical beliefs and principles or else implies that there cannot be such a test" (72).In particular, Williams raises the issue of the motives of critics who engage in the interpretation of human values. In concert with his critical forebears, Williams takes great pains toavoid what he sees as the self-propagation of personal values imposed upon a literary work.He writes that "we should not try to seal determinate values into the future society," warning that "to try to transmit free inquiry and the reflective consciousness is to transmit something more than nothing, and something that demands some forms of life more rather than others" (173).

In its basic manifestations, ethical criticism attempts to communicate the meaning of Williams's "something" and its greater social relevance through the interpretation of literary works. And, as previously noted, these works are, with the exception of Rosenblatt's attention to poetry, largely works of fiction. In *The Company We Keep*, Booth observes that "ethical criticism attempts to describe the encounters of a storyteller's ethos with that of the reader or listener. Ethical critics need not begin with the intent to evaluate, but their descriptions will always entail appraisals of the value of what is being described" (8). Simply put, Booth's ethical criticism allows for the recognition of the interrelatedness of the reading experience andthe life of the reader. Booth recognizes the powerful factors of language and ideology when texts are assessed. By this reasoning, feminist criticism may be regarded as a type of ethical criticism through a form of literary interpretation that seeks to draw attention to perceived social injustice such as misogyny or the

underrepresentation of women.

In *Getting It Right* (1992), Harpham continues Booth and Nussbaum's efforts to elaborate the ethical paradigm as an interdisciplinary means of interpretation. Ethical criticism should "be considered a matrix, a hub from which the various discourses and disciplines fan out and at which they meet, crossing out of themselves to encounter each other" (17). Harpham draws upon the term "ethicity" to refer to the interpretive moments in ethical criticism: "the most dramatic of narrative turnings, the climactic point just between the knitting and unraveling of the action, the *fort* and the *da*, the moments when the rising line of complication peaks, pauses, and begins its descent into the dénouement." For Harpham, this line of thinking refers to a "macro-turn" in which ethical critics, through their obligations to their own sets of values and commitments, reflect upon and interpret the moral choices depicted in narratives (171).

Our tour of Western critical thought vis-à-vis ethical criticism concludes with Miller, a poststructuralist juggernaut in his own right whose important volume, *The Ethics of Reading* (1989) concerns the process that occurs between the text and the reader. For Miller, this is a reflexive process in which the reading experience is shifting, is performative. In his later work *Versions of Pygmalion* (1990), he argues that reading defies stasis, that reading evolves during successive readings of a given text. More recently, Miller's *Reading for Our Time: Adam Bede and Middlemarch Revisited* (2012) revisits the issue of reading as a means for understanding the present. Miller pointedly asks, "Can reading *Adam Bede* and *Middlemarch* be justified in this time of climate change, financial meltdown and ineffective politicians?" (1). By paying attention to each work's linguistic detail, to its figures of speech, and by relating characters and their sociocultural errors in these works to current affairs, Miller conspicuously interprets literary works in the context of the here and the now. Reading — or rereading according to Miller — may assist us in accommodating the current human, social, and political situations of our times and, if we succeed in putting discourse into action, perhaps even ameliorating them.

It is worth noting that much of Anglo-American ethical criticism belongs to the late twentieth century, a period of reaction, largely in American universities,to the specters of deconstruction, poststructuralism, and the emerging influence of continental philosophy, the interpretive power of which we will address in the reading of Ford Madox Ford's novel below. In many ways, ethical criticism has fallen short of realizing the vision inherent in Booth's *The Company We Keep* "of a reading methodology that shuns theoretical dogma in favor of 'critical pluralism' and highlights the ethical interconnections between the lives of readers and their

textual experiences" (Booth 489). If anything, the twenty-first century has seen a clear movement away from Anglo-American ethical criticism to the Eastern academy — namely, China's burgeoning critical project — where the paradigm's chief expositors now ply their trade. This notion is most principally demonstrated by the work of Zhenzhao Nie, who draws attention to the most recent developments in ethical criticism in China and providevital new perspectives about its potential reinvigoration. Indeed, as Shang reveals, there are, with some exceptions, three main thrusts of ethical criticism:

1. pragmatic and rhetorical ethics as expounded by Nussbaum, Booth and others;
2. the ethics of alterity — of difference, of otherness as expounded by French theorists regarding the work of Derrida, Levinas, and Miller;
3. political approaches to ethics, with the main exponents being such luminaries as Homi K. Bhabha and Luce Irigaray.

Yet as Shang indicates, these three principal strands did not develop into a fully independent discipline or an individual critical school devoted, in specific, to ethical study. In China, the refinements of ethical criticism may be found in the sophisticated work Nie and Shang, two critics whose evolving discourse point to a renaissance in the ethical project as a matrix of critical interpretation. Chinese theorists such as Nie and Shang clearly realize, as with their Anglo-American precursors, the significance of understanding our moral interrelationships with imaginative works of literature. As the eminent British dramatist Tom Stoppard recently observed, our shared international literatures possess a unique power to move us towards vital moments of ethical reflection that can prompt us into much-need, even life-affirming and culture-shifting action. As Stoppard remarked — speaking in particular about theatre's signal role in contemporary life — our desire for spectacle "fulfills one of the prime functions of art in society, namely to reflect and interpret and offer a critique of the social environment it lives in" (Stoppard). With such a mandate still in the offing for a world beset by challenge and crisis, can the fundamental need for an ethical criticism ever truly lose its sway?

Alterity and the Ethics of Place in Ford Madox Ford's *Parade's End*

As our historical study of the ethical project reveals, as an interpretive paradigm, ethical criticism offers a valuable lens for examining the manner in which literary characters experience moments of moral clarity and interpersonal change.

Originally published in 1924-1928, Ford Madox Ford's *Parade's End* illustrates a variety of ethical principles inherent in the evolving critical vocabulary of continental philosophy's postwar ethical turn. In *Parade's End*, Ford deftly explores the nuances of literary realism, while simultaneously experimenting with the technique of Impressionist "rendering" that he had contemplated with great frequency in his nonfiction. Ford imagined writing a novel "on an immense scale, a little cloudy in immediate attack, but with the salient points and the final impression extraordinarily clear. I wanted the Novelist in fact to appear in his really proud position as historian of his own time.... The 'subject,'" Ford added, "was the world as it culminated in the war" (qtd. in Bradbury xvii). Ford's conception of Impressionism affords *Parade's End* with its precise formal structure, as well as with its significant ethical agenda. In addition to its historiographic components, *Parade's End* addresses a range of issues regarding the moral crises following the Great War and the conflict's substantial influence upon the abidingly complex interrelationship between French and British culture and society.

Originally published as four novels — *Some Do Not...*, *No More Parades*, *A Man Could Stand Up —*, and *Last Post — Parade's End* traces the war- and peace-time experiences of Christopher Tietjens; in this manner, Ford's tetralogy encounters a number of revealing aspects of Emmanuel Levinas's philosophies of the self, alterity, and otherness. As Jill Robbins observes in *Altered Reading: Levinas and Literature* (1999), Levinasian ethics "denotes the putting into question of the self by the infinitizing mode of the face of the other" (xiii). Ford's ethical imperatives in *Parade's End* are most dramatically underscored by Marie Léonie's powerful interior monologue, which shrewdly establishes the French point-of-view regarding the staggering social and cultural atrocities of the First World War. Her dramatic meditation — perhaps more than any other moment in Ford's tetralogy — genuinely reveals the complex "face" of England's French "other."

In *Ethical Criticism: Reading after Levinas* (1998), Robert Eaglestone argues that "Levinas's thought cannot be turned into a methodology: it is not a philosophy that can be *applied*.... To ask for a Levinasian critical method is to ask for something that cannot and should not exist" (176; italics added). In fact, Eaglestone offers little evidence demonstrating the thrust of his contention beyond his observation that "there is obviously no one critical process which embodies Levinas's ideas, no one answer" (176). Yet Levinas's ethical philosophy quite obviously posits its own terminology — including such concepts as "adequation," "alterity," "the face," and "negation," among a host of others. Simply put, Levinasian philosophy, despite Eaglestone's misgivings, can easily be *applied* as

an interpretive matrix in much the same interdisciplinary fashion as gender studies, psychology, history, and sociology — to name but a few of literary criticism's multitudinous allied disciplines, each of which possesses its own contingent of thinkers with their own critical vocabularies.

Such philosophically vexed issues as obligation and responsibility, for instance, are perhaps most usefully considered via Levinas's conceptions of alterity, contemporary moral philosophy's *sine qua non* for understanding the nature of our innate responsibilities to our human others. In "Is Ontology Fundamental?" Levinas discusses the ethical significance of other beings in relation to the needs and desires of ourselves. Our ethical obligations to others, Levinas reasons, find their origins in our inability to erase them via negation. Simply put, unless we succeed in negating others through violence, domination, or slavery, we must comprehend others as beings *par excellence* who become signified as "faces," the Levinasian term that refers to the moral consciousness and particularity inherent in others. This "primacy of ontology," in Levinas's words, demonstrates the nature of the collective interrelationships that human beings share with one another (10). In "The Trace of the Other," Levinas argues that "the relationship with the other puts me into question, empties me of myself" (350). More importantly for our purposes here, Levinas describes the concept of the face as "the concrete figure for alterity" (qtd. in Robbins 23). The notion of alterity itself — which Paul-Laurent Assoun characterizes as "the primal scene of ethics" (96) — refers to our inherent responsibilities and obligations to the irreducible face of the other. These aspects of our human condition find their origins in the recognition of sameness that we find in others. This similarity of identity and human empathy establishes the foundation for our alterity — in short, the possibility of being "altered" — and for the responsibilities and obligations that we afford to other beings.

In *Time and the Other* (1979), Levinas identifies the absolute exteriority of alterity, as opposed to the binary, dialectic, or reciprocal structure implied in the idea of the other. Hence, alterity implies a state of being apprehended, a state of infinite and absolute otherness. In "Philosophy and the Idea of Infinity," Levinas writes that "we can say that the alterity of the infinite is not canceled, is not extinguished in the thought that thinks it. In thinking infinity the I from the first *thinks more than it thinks*. Infinity does not enter into the *idea* of infinity, is not grasped; this idea is not a concept," he continues，"The infinite is radically, absolutely, other" (54). Alterity's boundless possibilities for registering otherness, for allowing us to comprehend the experiences of other beings, demonstrates its ethical imperatives. Its exteriority forces us to recognize an ethics of difference

and of otherness. Such encounters with other beings oblige us, then, to incur the spheres of responsibility inherent in our alterity. When we perceive the face of the other, we can no longer, at least ethically, suspend responsibility for other beings. In such instances, Levinas writes in "Meaning and Sense," "the I loses its sovereign self-confidence, its identification, in which consciousness returns triumphantly to itself to rest on itself. Before the exigency of the Other (*Autrui*), the I is expelled from this rest and is not the already glorious consciousness of this exile. Any complacency," he adds, "would destroy the straightforwardness of the ethical movement" (54).

Drawing upon Levinas's critical matrix of alterity, a reading of Ford's ethical imperatives in *Parade's End* demonstrates the author's considerable humanistic agenda for "altering" our perspectives of war and atrocity via his well-honed Impressionistic techniques. In his landmark essay, "On Impressionism," Ford describes his conception of Impressionism in terms of its capacity for impacting — and, indeed, ultimately altering — readerly perspectives: "Always consider the impressions that you are making upon the mind of the reader," he writes, "and always consider that the first impression with which you present him will be so strong that it will be all that you can ever do to efface it, to alter it or even quite slightly to modify it" (39). In Ford's postulation, the Impressionist technique affords novelists with the ability to capture the nuances of genuine humanity that mark our lives and to ponder the occasional moments in which we reveal the nature of our inner selves: "I suppose that Impressionism exists to render those queer effects of real life that are like so many views seen through bright glass," Ford observes, "through glass so bright that whilst you perceive through it a landscape or a backyard, you are aware that, on its surface, it reflects a face of a person behind you. For the whole of life is really like that," Ford adds, and "we are almost always in one place with our minds somewhere quite other" (41). Ford's Impressionistic technique involves the careful construction of a series of layers of meaning that work in concert in order to evoke various images and emotions. As Max Saunders notes, "Ford responds to the complexity of war-torn Europe not by impressing his own designs upon his material, but by rendering the complexity. His fiction does not work to subordinate everything to his voice," Saunders continues, "It re-creates the play of conflicting voices, volitions, attitudes, and viewpoints" (211). Simply put, through his assembly of details and revelations in his novels concerning the lives and proclivities of his characters, Ford attempts "to produce an illusion of reality" in the mind of the reader (44).

This notion of an "illusion of reality" allows Ford to shape the ethical

perspectives inherent in such narratives as *The Good Soldier* (1915) and *Parade's End*. In *Shadows of Ethics: Criticism and the Just Society* (1999), Harpham observes that "ethics does not solve problems, it structures them" (37). In *Parade's End*, Ford structures his novel's ethical dimensions by imagining a vast Impressionistic expanse regarding the Great War and its sociocultural aftermath. Perhaps even more effectively than with his depiction of the bewildered (and bewildering) John Dowell in his masterwork of narratology and concentration, *The Good Soldier*, Ford's tetralogy succeeds in portraying the ways in which conscious minds engage in the act of perception and, in some cases, wallow in sheer ignorance. In *Parade's End*, the novel itself concerns the collapse of Tory-Christian values after the First World War. A central text in the modernist canon of the 1920s, *Parade's End* functions as a kind of "crisis epic" or "anti-epic," in the words of Malcolm Bradbury, that "deals with peace and war, society as it has formed itself in the *belle époque* era, and society as it is shattered by war" (xvi). The tetralogy's protagonist Christopher Tietjens — the "last Tory" — witnesses the violence and social hypocrisy of postwar Europe, while also pondering the end of a cultural and political epoch in England. Although much of the novel involves Tietjens's perspectives of war and its aftermath, *Parade's End* devotes considerable attention to his protracted bout of sexual warfare with his adulterous wife Sylvia, who confronts him with yet other social paradigm shifts of a sort in the guises of polygamy, divorce, and the New Woman. Perhaps even more interestingly, though, is the manner in which Ford's novel recontextualizes French war- and peace-time experiences for its largely English-speaking audience.

Of particular interest to this essay, then, is Marie Léonie's powerful — and, for some critics at least, controversial — interior monologue that features prominently, and some argue disconcertingly, in the tetralogy's final installment, *Last Post*. Ancillary to much of *Parade's End*'s narrative, Marie Léonie's inclusion as a central character in *Last Post* surely presented Ford with considerable textual difficulties. As Arthur Mizener writes: "Ford exercised all his ingenuity to justify his abrupt introduction of her, but there is no getting around the fact that, in using her, he multiplied entities unnecessarily and shifted attention from the real center of the action; though it is easy to understand why, with his lifelong passion for the French, Ford found her irresistible" (508). The genesis of her name offers an intriguing antecedent in itself. As with Ford's contemporary, Princess Marie-Léonie Bonaparte (1870-1947) — herself the distant inheritor of a vanquished regime — Ford's French heroine in *Last Post* finds herself on the precipice of a new world order that dares to redraw the boundaries of the sociocultural relationship between

England and France. In *Last Post*, Marie Léonie shares a North Country cottage with her dying lover, Christopher's older brother Mark, as well as with Christopher and his mistress Valentine. Marie Léonie's efforts at nursing Mark back to health after his stroke will come to no avail. Thematically, a dying Tory like him simply cannot survive in the new world. Similarly, Christopher and Valentine will not be able to hide in the provinces from Sylvia forever; eventually, the bold and brazen twentieth century — embodied in the figure of Sylvia herself, no less — will descend upon them in the cottage, and their perceptions of, and places within, the post-Armistice world will become altered irrevocably.

For this reason, Ford uses Marie Léonie's interior narrative as the means via which he registers his principal characters' displacement in the postwar world. Her monologues in *Last Post* provide Ford's English readership with the opportunity for distinguishing the Levinasian "face" of their hitherto concealed French other. Ford accomplishes this end by allowing Marie Léonie to reveal her particularity and her continental perspectives throughout her interior narrative. Ford describes her as being of "the large, blond, Norman type; in the middle forties, her extremely fair hair very voluminous and noticeable. She had lived with Mark Tietjens for twenty years now," Ford adds, "but she had always refused to speak a word of English, having an invincible scorn for both language and people of her adopted country" (737). Marie Léonie's existence within the close environs of her adopted English family forces them to recognize her alien presence, to confront a very different perspective of the Great War and its outcome. For Mark, Ford writes, "No doubt twenty years of listening to the almost ceaseless but never disagreeable Marie Léonie had been a liberal education" (785). Perhaps even more importantly, though, her interrelationship with the Tietjens family forces them, and especially Mark, to reconceive the First World War and the resulting balance of power in Europe from a markedly different vantage point. On Armistice Day, English buglers solemnly "played the Last Post on the steps of the church under Marie Léonie's windows" (787). Rather than being consumed with nostalgia for the England of days gone by or relieved by the nation's recent withdrawal from war-time Europe, Marie Léonie can only think of the numerous French dead and the needless waste of a generation. For her, the bugle's dirge — "a funeral call at three in the morning" — is an affront: "It was betraying her country to have given those [German] assassins an armistice when they were far from their borders," Ford writes,"Merely that was treachery on the part of these sham Allies. They should have gone right through those monsters slaying them by the millions, defenseless, and then they should have laid waste their country with fire and sword. Let them too know what it was to suffer as

France had suffered" (838).

As the tetralogy—and, hence, the end of his own life — comes to its conclusion, Mark finally and rather pointedly perceives Marie Léonie's otherness through his altered relationship with her in specific and with France in general. Mark's "long association with Marie Léonie, his respect for the way in which she had her head screwed on, the constant intimacy with the life and point of view of French individuals of the *petite bourgeoisie* which her gossip had given him — all these things together with his despair for the future of his own country had given him a very considerable belief in the destinies and indeed in the virtues of the country across the Channel," Ford writes (806). By demonstrating his English characters, and especially Mark, in the act of reconsidering their interrelationship with France through the auspices of Marie Léonie's particularity, Ford underscores the value and significance inherent in our ethical obligations to others. Ford's Impressionism — his "illusion of reality" — merely functions as the engine of *Parade's End*'s ethics of alterity. The rest is up to us.

Notes

1. We owe this observation to the distinguished Russian literary critic Igor Olegovich Shaytanov's prescient remarks during the 4th International Symposium on Ethical Literary Criticism held at Shanghai Jiao Tong University in December 2014.

2. Rosenblatt's contributions to reader-response criticism receive special attention in Terence R. Wright's review-essay, "Reader-Response under Review: Art, Game, or Science?" The value of Rosenblatt's transactional theory of reading, Wright argues, "lies in its recognition of both sides of the 'reading transaction,' reader and text" (542).

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What Is Ethical Literary Criticism? Some Reflections on the Lady Called *Filosofia* in Dante Alighieri and the Following

Jüri Talvet
Faculty of Philosophy, University of Tartu
Ülikooli 17-403, 51014 Tartu, Estonia
Email: juri.talvet@ut.ee

Abstract At the end of 2012, a new international association of literary scholarship was founded in China by the initiative of Chinese scholars, especially Professor Nie Zhenzhao of Central China Normal University, editor of the journal *Forum for World Literature Studies*. The main aim of the new International Association of Ethical Literary Criticism[1] was to initiate a new trend of international literary scholarship that would form a certain counterweight to Western literary studies, which at least since the last quarter of the 20th century have indeed oscillated between two extremes: on the one hand, linguistic-formalistic research (including narratology, cognitivistics, language philosophy applied to literature, etc.) and, on the other hand, sociological approaches (discourses on power relations, postcolonial scholarship, gender studies, etc.). As Nie Zhenzhao puts it in his pivotal speech (largely coinciding with Nie 2010), there was very little hope that big or small "peripheries", if they continued to follow the main fashionable trends proceeding from Western "centers", could ever contribute to universal literary scholarship or world literature studies by their own, original points of view, reflecting realities beyond "centric" Western literary currents and criticism and their faithful imitations in the "periphery". The following is a reflexion about the possible origin of western ethical literary criticism (in the following abbreviated as ELC) in Dante Alighieri's philosophical treatise *Convivio.* My main claim is that the formation of a theory / philosophy of ethical literary theory ran in parallel with ethical practice in the first great European literary masterpieces of the budding new era — Dante's own monumental *Comedia* and the following creation of the early Italian Renaissance writers. On the other hand, I will try to show that ethics in literature in the Western tradition has been from its very beginnings till our days

essentially conditioned by the presence in literary works of aesthetical dimension, sensual beauty and arts.

Keywords ethical literary criticism; Dante Alighieri; aesthetics; sensuality; arts

Author Jüri Talvet is since 1992 China Professor of World Literature at the University of Tartu. He has published in Estonian collections of essays *Hispaania vain* (The Spanish Spirit, 1995), *Tõrjumatu äär* (The Irefutable Edge, 2005), cultural-philosophic reflections *Sübiootiline* kultuur (Symbiotic Culture, 2005), *Kümme kirja Montaigne'ile. "Ise"ja "teine"*(Ten Letters to Montaigne. "Self"and "Other",2014), books of travel essays *Teekond Hispaaniasse* (1985, Estonia's annual literary prize in essay genre), *Hispaaniast Ameerikasse* (1992), *Ameerika märkmed ehk Kaemusi Eestist* (2000) and nine books of poetry.

To begin, let me quote Nie Zenzhao:

> It is no exaggeration to argue that Chinese literary criticism, since China's opening to the outside world, has been dominated by western critical theories. We should acknowledge the fruitful results brought by importing and applying western critical theories [...] but we feel that something is lost in this process. [...] More frankly, we had to admit that we have contributed very little to literary criticism except interpretation and use of ready-made critical approaches. We could not help pondering over the question whether there is any possibility for Chinese scholars to develop literary critical kits of their own and thus contribute to the world literary criticism. I think we should try by questioning the validity of the concepts we accepted and agreed. (2)

Though conceived in China, the new International Association of ELC is fully open to the contributions on these lines by western scholars, to conceptualize further the new current in literary criticism and demonstrate its applications to creativity in literature, especially from a comparative point of view. If we manage it, we may be pretty sure that the claim of Nie Zhenzhao in the subtitle of his conference paper, "Ethics as the Origin of Literature", does not appear exclusively applicable to Eastern literature, but has a lot to do with the core of major masterpieces of literature created in the world, East and West, in ancient times as well as in modernity.

In fact, the great Italian Dante Alighieri whose work at the closing stage of the European Middle Age would perfectly fit to epitomize a cultural "explosion" in terms of Yuri Lotman[2] — it was indeed a powerful breakthrough into a creative

individuality unparalleled in the preceding medieval literature — was not only the great author of a major poetic work but also one of the first bright Western thinkers at the climax of the Middle Age and the budding new era. I would claim that he envisaged the first contours for a kind of theory or philosophy of both Ethical Literary Creation and Criticism. In his *Convivio*[3] ('Banquet', written probably between 1304 and 1307), Dante provided a hierarchy of sciences, characterizing its highest levels as follows:

> A l›ottava spera, cioè a la stellata, risponde la scienza naturale, che Fisica si chiama, e la prima scienza, che si chiama Metafisica; a la nona spera risponde la scienza morale; ed al cielo quieto risponde la scienza divina, che è Teologia appellata. (*Convivio* II, XIII)

> Natural science, which is called Physics, and the supreme science, called Metaphysics, correspond to the eighth Sphere, the Starry Heaven; Moral Science to the ninth sphere; and the Divine Science, Theology, to the unmoving heaven. (Trans. A. S. Kline)

Dante thus respected highly both physics and metaphysics (natural sciences and supra- or meta-natural sciences), aimed either at describing and measuring concrete bodily objects or developing a system of concepts aiming at describing as completely as possible the world beyond natural and physical world. In both sciences, human intellect (*Intelletto*), the secretion of human mind, is a primary vehicle.

Yet as is well known, even though admitting Metaphysics as *prima scienza* (supreme science) Dante elevated moral science or Ethics onto a still higher level, the ninth heaven, which is the second only to Theology (scienza divina) and in Dante's poetical imagination inspired by Ptolemy, corresponded to *Primum Mobile,* or the initial source of all movement of the Universe, putting into movement all other heavenly spheres.

Thus in Dante's conception, Physics and Metaphysics were separated from God and his science by the heavenly sphere of Ethics. (Only the oldest saints, apostles, like Peter, the founder of the Church institution, dwelled in the immediate vicinity of God in the Tenth Heaven.)

Dante's ninth sphere, *Primum Mobile*, was not populated by mortals; its inhabitants were angels, incarnations of love and goodness, who acted as mediators between God and mortal souls; they were utterly free to fly in the Universe. Thus

human intellect alone, omnipotent as it could seem, did not grant entrance to God's immediate vicinity in Dante's imagination.

However, not only angels intermediated between God and humans as mortals. Dante's special attention was attracted by a woman, *donna*, whom he called *Filosofia*. She is the main character of *Convivio.* Dante returns to her once again in the final passage of the treatise which remained unfinished:

> [...] suo mestiere discuopra là dove questa donna, cioè la filosofia, si troverà. Allora si troverà questa donna nobilissima quando si truova la sua camera, cioè l'anima in cui essa alberga. Ed essa filosofia non solamente alberga pur ne li sapienti, ma eziandio, come provato è di sopra in altro trattato, essa è dovunque alberga l'amore di quella. (*Convivio*, IV, XXX)

> [...] its purpose where this lady, namely Philosophy, is to be found. This most noble lady shall then be found when her dwelling-place is found, that is, the soul in which she dwells. And Philosophy does not dwell in the wise alone, but also, as has been above proved in another book, wherever the love of her dwells. (Trans. A. S. Kline)

Dante's beloved Beatrice and Virgin Mary (as Italian *madonna* means both madam and Virgin Mary) greatly coincided with that lady, *Filosofia.* Even though Dante allegorized both real historical women, camouflaging them as *Filosofia*, he never failed to accentuate the gender aspect. (In such languages as Estonian, lacking the gender category and its respective articles, *filosoofia*, a foreign loan word, is deprived of any sensual-sexual colouring it has in Italian or other Romance languages; besides, in accord with its historical practice, it rather tends to be associated with the gloomy and austere male-kind. On the contrary, angels in Estonian culture, at least outside the church walls and in popular imagination, have more than often been identified with females.)

Furthermore, Dante accentuated the aspect of movement in the etymology of *Filosofia.* The source of the movement is "love". It is in full harmony with the nature of the ninth heavenly sphere, that of Ethics. To a more extent than Physics and Metaphysics, the lady called *Filosofia* and Ethics deserve to be close to the Divine Creator, as their innate faculties are creativity and a strive to spirituality. Dante thus explained the origin of *Filosofia*:

> Questo Pittagora, domandato se egli si riputava sapiente, negò a sé questo

> vocabulo e disse sé essere non sapiente, ma amatore di sapienza. E quinci nacque poi, ciascuno studioso in sapienza che fosse 'amatore di sapienza' chiamato, cioè 'filosofo'; ché tanto vale in greco 'philos' com'è a dire 'amore' in latino, e quindi dicemo noi: 'philos' quasi amore, e 'soph[os] quasi sapien[te]. Per che vedere si può che questi due vocabuli fanno questo nome di 'filosofo'che tanto vale a dire quanto 'amatore di sapienza': per che notare si puote che non d'arroganza, ma d'umilitade è vocabulo. (*Convivio* III, XI)
>
> When Pythagoras was asked whether he considered himself a wise man, he refused to accept the appellation for himself and said that he was not a wise man but a lover of wisdom. So it came to pass after this that everyone dedicated to wisdom was called a "lover of wisdom," that is, a "philosopher," for *philos* in Greek means the same as «love» in Latin, and so we say *philos* for lover and *sophos* for wisdom, from which we can perceive that these two words make up the name of «philosopher,» meaning «lover of wisdom,» which, we might note, is not a term of arrogance but of humility. (Trans. A. S. Kline)
>
> Ché se a memoria si reduce ciò che detto è di sopra, filosofia è uno amoroso uso di sapienza, lo quale massimamente è in Dio, però che in lui è somma sapienza e sommo amore e sommo atto; che non può essere altrove, se non in quanto da esso procede. (*Convivio* III, XII)
>
> For if we recall what has been said above, Philosophy is a loving use of the wisdom which exists in the greatest measure in God, since supreme wisdom, supreme love, and supreme actuality are found in him; for it could not exist elsewhere, except insofar as it proceeds from him. (Trans. A. S. Kline)

It is utterly important that in *donna*, either a real or an allegorical woman whose love can conduct man to God, love is never exhausted by sexual domination. It is a basic difference with simple earthy lovemaking between humans. That lady, *Filosofia*, woman, preserves her "self", she does not let it be dominated by man, the traditional "first self" in history. It would not be impossible to claim that that Dante and some of his great followers, like Petrarca, Montaigne, Cervantes, Calderón among others envisaged the initial contours of feminist literary criticism, which is certainly not at all alien to ELC.

Dante made a great effort to assure us that he did not approve of senses and

sensuality. To do so, he allegorized Beatrice, camouflaging her as *Filosofia*. Yet he would never deny that the real Beatrice who by her purity of soul initiated him in divine feelings, did exist in reality.

As Dante in his *Vita Nova* suppressed senses, the poems there are predominantly intellectual, obsessed by philosophical reasoning. They seldom sound like lyrical poems. Yet scarcely half a century later, Francesco Petrarca, who too followed the general spirit and philosophy of *dolce stil nuovo* envisaged by Dante, wrote in one of his sonnets:

> Come 'l candido pie' per l'erba fresca
> i dolci passi onestamente nove,
> vertù che 'ntorno i fiori apra e rinove
> de le tenere piante sue par ch'èsca.
> Amor, che solo i cor leggiadri invesca
> nè degna di provar sua forza altrove,
> da' begli occhi un piacer sì caldo piove,
> ch'i' non curo altro ben né bramo altr'ésca.
> E co l'andar e col soave sguardo
> s'accordan le dolcissime parole.
> e l'atto mansuetto, umile e tardo.
> Di tai cuattro faville, e non già sole,
> nasce 'l gran foco, di ch'io vivo et ardo,
> che son fatto un augel notturno al sole. (Petrarca 191)

> When her white foot through the fresh grass
> takes its sweet way, virtuously,
> from her tender steps there seems to issue
> a power that opens and renews the flowers.
>
> Love who only hinders the gracious heart
> not deigning to try his strength in other ways,
> rains such keen pleasure from her lovely eyes
> I care for no other good, long for no other bait.
>
> And those sweetest words of hers accord
> with her walk and her quiet gaze,
> as do her gentle, calm and humble acts.

From those four sparks, but not merely those,
is born the great fire in which I live and burn,
like a bird of night dazzled by the sun. (Trans. A. S. Kline)

Thus Petrarca did not hide at all that supreme good came to man through senses (*un piacer sì caldo piove; di tai cuattro faville;* the eyes of two lovers) and that it makes one feel like a nightly bird in the full sunshine, naked, without any defence-mechanisms of reason. The earth (*augel notturno*; nightly bird) and heaven (*il sole*; the sun) become one in the act of love.

In Petrarca and Boccaccio, Dante's donna, *Filosofia,* was transformed into Madonna. Petrarch wrote his famous cycles of Italian poems dedicated to his beloved, "In vita di Madonna Laura" and "In morte di Madonna Laura." Boccaccio named his equally famous novel, written from a woman's point of view, *Elegia di Madonna Fiammetta*. Though fully retaining its spiritual content, Madonna at the same time — as compared with the still abstract *donna* in Dante — was turned into an individualized woman, an intimate and sensually perceived "my lady".

Even though the poetry of Petrarca and his numerous followers in the Renaissance has been somewhat simplistically labelled as "Platonic," it did mean a deep breakthrough. The lady *Filosofia* described by Dante in *Convivio* never abandoned her initial function to mediate human creation through the sphere of Ethics to God's vicinity. She has left her footprints in all great Western literature as we know it, until the present day. However, the symbolic veil of that lady was lifted and she started to appear ever more openly embodying love as well as love for wisdom in its essential sensuality, having her origin in senses and sensitivity.

From the above-said, one could say that Dante envisaged contours for the nucleus of all human creation, including literary creation and, as the latter's most widely spread modern supplement, literary criticism — literature's explication and commentary. Following Dante's intuition, in all the sphere of creation wisdom should be inseparable from love. It is love for virtue, beauty and truth, both as a movement and the ultimate goal.

To all probability the values contained in Ethics (*ethos, ethikos;* custom, habit) can hardly be conceived beyond relating one's "self" to "other." Following Dante's arguing, Ethics could be seen as an attempt to establish a *loving* relation to "other." It is just an attempt, not anything definite, because only God, the supreme "Other" in whom eternal Light and Love are inseparable, is definite.

From the historical man's point of view — the prevailing viewpoint along

all centuries of the past reached by human memory, the "other," let alone God, means all living nature beside and around man, starting from man's closest "other," woman. Let us not forget an important aspect in this respect: as Dante conceived *Filosofia* (a lady, a woman) as the vehicle and nucleus of supreme human creativity, she is intrinsic in the creative subject itself. Thus Dante's *Filosofia* (love of wisdom, rather than possessed wisdom) seems to mean an eternal quest of a dialogue with the "other," in the broadest sense. It is quite contrary to such "knowing", cognition, of which the ultimate goal is domination, possession, and subjugation, if not annihilation of the "other" — a monologue of which the vehicle is knowledge deprived of love. Once again, quoting Dante's own words, "'lover of wisdom,' [...] is not a term of arrogance but of humility."

Indeed, if we think of the greatest works of literature of the past and the present, in all of them a strong ethical nucleus is present. At the same time there is always room for debate. The margins of ethicality in significant literary works are more than often blurred; they are in movement, as life adapts new forms and is itself in a permanent state of openness, challenges and change. Ethics should never be understood as an established set of morals or moral rules in and for literature. It is just the opposite: it means reflecting on humans and their "others" in all their complexity, not simplifying anything, but not forgetting either the main vehicle of literary creation, *Filosofia*, or love of virtue, beauty and wisdom.

On the other hand, as literary works have seldom been created for the exclusive pleasure of the author or merely of a selected few, Dante and his immediate predecessors and followers paid a great attention to the form, language and style of their work. Indeed, the new poetry aspiring to reach God by love transformed into philosophy and religion came to be called, in Dante's own words, *dolce stil nuovo.* Dante introduced that notion in Canto 24 of "Purgatorio":

> Oh frate, issa vegg'io, diss'egli, il nodo
> che il Notaio, e Guittone, e me ritenne
> di qua dal dolce stil nuovo ch'i' odo [...] (Dante Alighieri 1930: 258)

> "Oh brother, now I see," he said, "the knot
> which me, the Notary, and Guittone held
> short of the sweet new style that now I hear."
> (Trans. H. W. Longfellow, Dante Alighieri 1877: 326)

I guess *dolce* could be interpreted here as the key word alluding to the potentiality

of senses and feeling in the act of literary creation. They form the very core of a literary image capable of communicating with "others." Therefore, love of truth, beauty and virtue, embodied by Dante's *Filosofia* — or the condition of ethicality in literary creation — seems to have meant for Dante at the same time love for perfection in the way of expression and the form of literature.

All artistic creation that in the broad lines has followed the message of Dante's *Filosofia* has been an existential quest in the narrow frames of our individual lives. It has remained always unfinished. Yet the reward for creators is that following their interior call, they have conveyed the burning experimented in the flames of Purgatory to those others, however few, who are not indifferent to the beauty of Dante's *donna*, Philosophy.

Dante did not mention explicitly the other *donna* who was close to his heart — *Estetica*. That lady had been especially active seducing poets and artists, many of whom appear in the Purgatory of Dante's *Divina Commedia*. There is hardly any doubt that the main sin of these artists and poets had been the openness of their senses to the sweetness, *dolcezza*, of that Donna, *Estetica,* or of some real woman, camouflaged as *Estetica*. The original meaning of Aesthetics is "perception by senses". Dante's imaginary *Estetica* has her fullest epiphany at Purgatory's peak, often interpreted as the "terrestrial Paradise" in Dante.[4] Before reaching Purgatory's peak (Canto XXVII), Virgil summarizes his role as Dante's guide:

> Tratto t'ho qui con ingegnio e con arte;
> lo tuo piacere omai prendi per duce. (272)
>
> By intellect and art I have brought you;
> take thine own pleasure for thy guide henceforth.
> (Trans. H. W. Longfellow 338)

The transition from the inferior stage of human perception (intellect and art combined) to the superior movement (intellect and religion combined, symbolized in Beatrice, or the lady *Filosofia*) is prepared in *Divina commedia* by another Roman poet, Statius, whom Dante and Virgil met first in Canto XXI of "Purgatorio." Statius joins both poets in their ascent, but while Virgil fades from beside Dante in Canto XXIX, Statius appears still accompanying Dante throughout the final four cantos of "Purgatorio." It is because Statius admitted Christianity or was at least Christian in his soul. (Longfellow' notes to "Purgatorio," Cantos XXI-XXII)

In the same Canto XXVII there is a preliminary vision of Beatrice. She is not

alone, but accompanied by another divine lady, Matelda, interpreted by Longfellow as the symbol of "active life," in contrast but also complementing the symbol of "contemplating life" in Beatrice (Longfellow's notes to "Purgatorio," Canto XXVII). What is perhaps noteworthy in this context is that Matelda, much more than Beatrice, is presented by Dante in the sensual aspect of beauty. Whenever she appears, Dante does not fail to call her "bella donna." There is a sudden surprising shade of sensuality in the final scene of "Purgatorio," when Beatrice in the very end lines of Canto XXXIII asks Matelda to take Dante to the river Eunoè whose water would restore his memory of all good and noble things. Matelda of course does it, but asks "in her womanly manner" ("ed a Stazio / donnescamente disse") also Statius to join Dante in taking part in the ritual of preparation for ascending to Paradise … What happened to Statius after it, Dante does not tell the reader. He just mentions modestly that he cannot continue the story because the pages envisaged for Purgatorio are full ("piene son tutte le carte / ordite a questa Cantica seconda"). Yet there seems to be also a more significant reason for not being able to continue: "The curb of art no father lets me go" ("Non mi lascia più ir lo fren dell'arte"). In other words, art alone by itself, even if complemented by intellect, cannot hope to ascend to the highest degrees of creation.

To conclude from the above said about ethics and ethicality in literary creation, I can hardly conceive them beyond senses, sensibility, openness to others and love (in whatever forms). In this complex, empathy, sympathy, passion as well as compassion have likewise their key role. It nearly always means a reflection on our responses in a border-zone in which our passions, feelings, intellect and psyche become entangled in their most complicated interrelations. Ethics in literature very much resembles the lady whom Dante called *Filosofia*. It is not philosophy as a professional activity of the mind or the elaboration of a set of definitions and concepts taken for a final truth. It is rather a tentative movement of human thought which in artistic and literary creation can hardly escape being entangled and blurred in sensual images. If deprived of such a condition, a work of art or literature can scarcely surpass the borders of an author's "self," being for the most part unable to communicate with the "other(s)."

It would be utterly artificial to claim that ethicality in literature is a category somehow superior to aesthetics. I would rather claim that both belong to the very nucleus of literary creation. The closer they mutually merge, the higher flights can take creativity in literature. Their separation from each other has never borne any significant fruits. Senses and sensibility are essential in the form of all artistic creation. They are the basis of metaphor — the core means that differentiates

artistic and literary creation from other types of mental activity, as well as embodies the climax of creative expression.

We cannot expect too clear-cut definitions of their work from writers. At its best, their theory or philosophy is hidden, implicit in their work itself. All great artistic creation works as an unpredictable "explosion." A pre-established rational-intellectual model or scheme would hardly fit a work that wishes to aspire to some transcendence beyond entertaining different groups of massive reading public or, on the contrary, some small sect of literary scholars.

It seems to be certain that at the highest peaks or "explosions" in the Western canon of world literature Dante's lady *Filosofia* has always had her essential share. She has embodied the openness of the major works to the "other" on both the vertical and the horizontal axis, thus providing a strong presence of ethicality. A genuine creative "explosion" in literature has hardly become reality without a closest (and always highly original) symbiosis of ethicality with arts, or aesthetics. It could even be claimed that *Filosofia*, in the meaning that can be deciphered from Dante's work, represents simultaneously ethics and aesthetics. Nearly always their supreme coincidence in a major literary work has meant a revolt against preceding patterns and norms established in both ethics and aesthetics. Let me provide in the following some brief examples, both from the "centre" and the "periphery" of the Western literary history so far.

The constitution of any "centre" is naturally debatable and its borders have never been fixed or stable. Yet it seems to be undeniable that historically literary creation in the West has formed "centres" above all on the linguistic ground. Works created in French, English, and German have formed their main axis from the Renaissance to the present day. Italy's dominating the Renaissance and the Spanish sporadic "intervention" from the end of the 16th century throughout the 17th century, or the Baroque, could be rather seen as deviations from the rule. As the European Romanticism inaugurated a first stage of "cultural globalization", Russia and the Scandinavian countries, as well as the "Europoid" America — North and South, started to enlarge the Western "centre". However, it is also true that until today the centric axis, though definitely extended since the 19th century on the basis of English into North-America, has kept other big European areas and the "Europoid" South-America at a distance, as a kind of "semi-peripheries."

After the great pioneering literary creation of Dante, Petrarca and Boccaccio, the first truly European masterpiece in the Western canon, to mark a steady repercussion and influence throughout the subsequent centuries was probably François Rabelais's *Gargantua and Pantagruel.* The extravagant book, published

in French between 1532 and 1552, with a problematic end part appearing in 1562, gave ground four centuries later to a genuine "explosion" in the field of literary philosophy, as the Russian Mikhail Bakhtin published in 1965 his pivotally influential comparative-semiotic analysis of Rabelais masterpiece (Бахтин 1965). Rabelais's revolt against the fruits of dogmatic reason in all spheres of society, very much in unison with the philosophical satire of Desiderius Erasmus in his *Praise of the Folly* and Thomas More's *Utopia* (the latter being surely even a much earlier creative "explosion" than Rabelais's) would probably never have achieved its fame had the author written his work in a more traditional language and style. Rabelais's main philosophic idea — to be easily grasped even without Bakhtin's help — was to show, just as Erasmus had shown before him, the inexhaustible greatness of nature and vital (biological-telluric) totality. It turns relative and ridiculous all human aspirations of power, the attempts to dominate the world and establish reason-based rules forever. However, to do it, Rabelais did not limit himself to a traditional language and style, but clearly tried to make the form of the work itself amplify and magnify his philosophy. The book looks as if Rabelais had wanted to demonstrate the greatness of vital totality with its unrestrained liberties by introducing a language and a style totally open to all possibilities, in a permanent unpredictable movement and capricious change, not obeying any rational rules established and invented by scholars, theologians and philosophers.

James Joyce, the greatest revolutionary innovator of the novel genre in the 20th century, did almost the same Rabelais had done before him. The great protagonist of his *Ulysses* (1922) is language. As Rabelais, Joyce seemed to have tried to embrace all possible levels of language and style, including coarse everyday talk, abundant colloquialisms, academic and cultural discourse, elliptical and disfigured syntax, deformed orthography, hybrid words, interlingual puns, neologisms and archaisms, polyglotism, and so on. Exactly as Rabelais before him, Joyce constructed some of the chapters of his novel in the form of catalogues and lists of names, while in other chapters he introduced drama resources, relying on a dialogue.

Scholars specialized in Joyce and Rabelais have studied in a great detail the parallels between both writers, for the most part trying to detect and trace direct influences. Paradoxically, Joyce himself denied having ever read Rabelais... (Korg 58-65). Would it really matter if there were direct influences reaching from Rabelais to Joyce? I suppose by far more important is the new inimitable and original synthesis of ethics and aesthetics in every great work of literature. For a truly creative mind it is enough to have only a vague idea of some philosophic or artistic novelty, in unison with his/ her own perceptual-creative search, either concerning

form or content. Joyce might not have read *Gargantua and Pantagruel* in the original French, but maybe for instance he still had peeped into Thomas Urquhart's English translation of Rabelais' chef-d'oeuvre. In the latter, the translator has adapted formal liberties absent in most other editions, in the sense that quotations marks have been suppressed and the text looks very much like quite a number of passages in Joyce and the following 20th-century innovating prose fiction writers. Thus, a short typical example from Urquhart's translation:

> Well, well, said the harbinger. But, said Gargantua, guess how many stitches there are in my mother's smock. Sixteen, quoth the harbinger. You do not speak Gospel, said Gargantua, for there is sent more, and sent behind, and you did reckon them ill, considering the two under holes. When, said the harbinger? Even then, said Gargantua, when they made a shovel of your nose, to take up a quarter of dirt [...]. Cocksbod, said the steward, we have met with a prater. (16)

However, there could have been totally different sources for such a style, defying rationally conceived formal norms of orthography. Punctuation marks were most radically abandoned in the early vanguard poetry since at least the eve of WWI, with the introduction of free associations of images, fragmentation, and intentional mixture of daily conscience and sub-conscience (Apollinaire, expressionist and futurist poets), immediately preceding Joyce.

In the ethical content magnified by artistic-linguistic novelty Joyce also resembled in part Rabelais, as the overwhelming point of view of both *Gargantua and Pantagruel* and *Ulysses* hardly surpasses masculine / male imagery. Still, while Rabelais book, written in a satirical-critical cue, inevitably had to provide a vision from "outside" the depicted reality, never touching the characters' interior life, Joyce, a 20th-century author, not only could rely on the vast experience of preceding realism in Western literature, but could absorb inspiration from some of the great masterpieces of the past in which realism escapes simple definitions, as their philosophy / ethics cannot be separated from their artistic-aesthetic novelty. I mean first of all Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, created in the historical border-zone of the Renaissance and the Baroque.

A reader finds it much easier to follow the story in *Don Quixote* than in the masterpieces of Rabelais and Joyce. However, the apparent realistic simplicity of Cervantes's work is highly deceptive. In the same way as Cervantes following Dante Alighieri's lady *Filosofia* made ethics and aesthetics thoroughly converge in

a novel unity, he managed to create an illusion of a story that was at any moment both reality and myth. To achieve such magic he introduced in his novel several intermediating narrators. He went as far as to deny his authorship and to claim that the story had existed long before he took up writing down its Spanish translation dictated by a Moorish-Spanish boy.

The fictional illusion created by Cervantes the magician attains its peak in the transition from *Don Quixote*'s Part I to Part II, when it appears that Don Quixote and his faithful companion Sancho Panza can themselves read what has been written about their adventures. As the result, the readers cannot any more keep a distance with the created fictional-mythic reality, but are dragged themselves into the myth and made feel the existential quest of the fiction characters as their own life in its limited span in time, especially as the novel's adventure is interrupted and abruptly concluded by Don Quixote's recovery from his madness and his subsequent death.

Cervantes' magic-realistic vision of reality which for the first time in the history of the novel embraced tragic-existential dimension of human life, is the ethical-aesthetic background for a number of key works in the Western canon, like Franz Kafka's and Gabriel García Márquez's novels and stories at the start and the end part of the 20th century, respectively. Similarly with Cervantes — and in a full contrast with Rabelais or Joyce — Kafka did not introduce any novelty in his formal use of the language of his narratives. However, he grasped deeper in his art, entering the creative zone in which ethics and aesthetics become practically inseparable. He alienated his characters from the reader by making them follow a different logic in their action than the daily logic guiding our mainly rationally conceived behaviour. It was the logic or rather the absence of logic of our nightly dreams.

Similar magic transcending a merely formal-fictional play is at work in García Márquez's novel *A Hundred Years of Solitude.* The Colombian writer is probably the only fiction author after Cervantes who has managed to make myth and reality merge in such a way that the total image penetrates into the readers' senses, to become an image symbolizing the painful path of humanity's historical existence. As in the novels of chivalry before Cervantes, love is the main source of magic.

However, "magic realism" would never properly work without realism. Historical realism in literature is basically a social phenomenon. Without the presence of social and historical "other", including women beyond their traditional role, the fictional magic, however brilliant, would become limited in its impact. In *Don Quixote*, the female protagonist, Dulcinea, is at the same time a simple

village girl and the lady *Filosofia* who invisibly — as Dulcinea physically never appears in the novel — guides the action of the work to a philosophical conclusion of humankinds unity as an ideal based on love, self-sacrifice, and soul's nobleness. The final image of *A Hundred Years of Solitude* — as it appears that the story told in the novel has already been contained as a myth in the secret scripts of the gipsy sage Melquíades — makes myth and historical reality magically merge in a powerful symbol of humankind's doom and ruin, the result of male-kind's power ambitions and selfishness. Yet the novel at the same time presents a poly-dimensional vision of historical woman and a call for love reaching from the "telluric" prostitute Pilar Ternera to "Platonic" Remedios la Bella. Very much like Dante's *Filosofia*, the women of García Márquez's novel assemble beauty and ethics providing humankind despite its vices some hope of redemption.

To adapt the conclusions of the reflexion above to the field of comparative literary research, I am convinced that literature's potentiality as a spiritual guide of any national society and the world community as a whole should be revealed beyond formal and sociological schemes. Instead we should centre our attention to literature's historical core as envisaged by Dante Alighieri and other greatest writers-philosophers. Literary research should overcome its present condition in the West and worldwide, where it has been overwhelmingly and contradicting its nature forced to the role of a mere appendix of formalist-logical sciences and sociology. The task is to research and teach comparatively the existing active canon of world literature and at the same time keep it in a state of a permanent openness. A desirable convergence of comparative literary research and ELC should crucially enhance the inclusion in the canon of world literature of the "other" — important works of literature created in languages beyond the traditional Western "centric" area. It is high time to redeem them from their "fatal condition" of having been created exclusively for their "own" ethnic-national community.

Notes

1. IAELC was founded in Yichang, China, during the international symposium "Ethical Literary Criticism: Theoretical Explorations and Criticism Practice" at China Three Gorges University, December 21-23, 2012.

2. See above all Lotman 1992; English translation: Lotman 2009.

3. It has also been published under the title *Convito*, thus in the edition of Dante's works consulted here, Dante Alighieri 1760.

4. See e. g. Henry W. Longfellow's lengthy commentaries to "Purgatorio" in Dante Alighieri

1877.

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Usury and Ethical Anxiety in *Timon of Athens*

Zheng Jie
School of English Language and Literature,Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, No.2, Baiyun Road, Baiyun District, Guangzhou 510420, China
zhengjie1997@hotmail.com

Abstract This article reads Timon's tragedy against the socio-historical background of early modern England. While examining the links of Timon's generosity together with the subsequent downfall to the cultural forms that constituted patronage and usury in the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, the article suggests that in *Timon of Athens* Shakespeare explores the conflicts between feudal ethics and the ethics of contract in the transition from feudal economy to modern capitalism. Shakespeare's un-classical treatment of Timon's catastrophe addresses the ethical anxiety of early modern England, where the forces of commercialism disrupt the ethics of the feudal order.
Key Words *Timon of Athens;* ethical identity; ethical anxiety; usury; patronage
Author Zheng Jie, Ph.D. "Yunshan Youth Scholar" at Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, China. Her research interests include modern and contemporary theater studies and literary theory. Her recent works are published in *German Quarterly*, *Foreign Literature Studies* and *Foreign Literature Review*.

Timon of Athens, written between 1605 and 1608, was grouped with Shakespeare's tragedies in the First Folio of 1623. Yet when compared with other tragedies such as *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear* and *Macbeth*, it is less known and, most probably, least studied. From an early period, critics have found marked defects in this play — a lack of unity in language, in constructive plan, and in individual characterization. Various speculations have been made upon the authorship. Some critics, such as Una Ellis-Fermor, have believed that the play is an unfinished draft by Shakespeare; some suggest that it is a collaborative play by Shakespeare and some contemporary dramatist; but as Dixon Wector shows, *Timon* was written by Shakespeare, although he constantly revised the play including changing certain scenes.[1] Despite that the authorship of *Timon* has disturbed Shakespeare's critics ever since its publication, there is no reconciliation among all

interpretations.

Under the problem of authorship lies the difficulty that the tragedy presents of how to understand the tragedy of Timon's downfall, a question inextricably integrated with the criticism of the play's plot, characterization and language. Compared with the usual Shakespearean tragic characters such as Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth, in Timon there lacks the psychological motivation of action. The change of generosity to misanthropy in nature is portrayed as an allegory other than a result of inner conflicts. The problems of the play's incoherence, the authorship and tragic features have engaged the attention of *Timon* scholars, mainly because it is hard to make a meaningful association between Timon as a character type and Timon as a tragic individual.

The purpose of this article is to reconsider the tragedy through reference to Shakespeare's reflection on ethics in the play. It should be noted that two complementary readings regarding Timon's tragedy are predominant among scholars. The first asserts that Timon's downfall and cynicism is a direct consequence of the ingratitude of false friends; while the latter believes that the theme of the play is the corruptive nature of money, which reinforces the suggestion of Shakespeare's pessimist view of humanity in the depression of his tragic period. However, these two interpretations fail to explain Timon's change of nature in relation to the change of his economic condition, social status and"ethical identity."[2] This article reads Timon's tragedy against the socio-historical background of early modern England. While examining the links of Timon's generosity together with the subsequent downfall to the cultural forms that constituted patronage and usury in the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, the article suggests that Shakespeare explores the conflicts between feudal ethics and the ethics of contract in the transition from feudal economy to modern capitalism.

Timon's ethical identity is complicated in that his relations with other characters are under the disguise of friendship. In the field of Shakespearian criticism the tendency has been to explain Timon's hatred toward mankind as a result of his friends' ingratitude. A. S. Collins, for example, indicates that in the first two acts Timon demonstrates the notion of "ideal friendship" in words and actions; however, when he loses his fortune and is abandoned by his false friends, "Ideal Friendship has been driven to fury and verges upon madness" (103). Timon's tragedy is more often than not read as his cognitive deficiency in making a distinction between reality and illusion, faithful friends and false friends.

Friendship is a relationship of mutual affection, based on equality, intimacy, and reciprocity. Timon's meditation on friendship is delivered as a speech while he

is entertaining his guests: "Why, I have often wished myself poorer, that I might come nearer to you. We are born to do benefits; and what better or properer can we call our own than the riches of our friends?" (1.2.99-103). Timon's wish for poverty reflects his condescending attitude towards his friends. Under the cloak of friendship lies his inherent sense of economic superiority, which is generally overlooked by critics. While emphasizing the bonds between people, Timon unconsciously conceals this feeling of superiority and thus misunderstands his relations with others.

Before Timon makes his first entrance, his position in the community is described by a poet, a painter, his servants, and Appemantus. Timon is the center of Athens; he is the patron of the poet and painter; he entertains his guests with food and drink; and he provides financial support for his friends and servants. The poet vividly points out the nature of the power relation between Timon and all the other people:

> You see how all conditions, how all minds,
> As well of glib and slipp'ry creatures as
> Of grave and austere quality, tender down
> Their services to Lord Timon. His large fortune
> Upon his good and gracious nature hanging
> Subdues and properties to his love and tendance
> All sorts of hearts; yea, from the glass-faced flatterer
> To Appemantus, that few things loves better
> Than to abhor himself — even he drops down
> The knee before him, and returns in peace,
> Most rich in Timon's nod.(1.1.56-61)

Words and phrases such as "subdue," "drops down the knee," "tender down their services" imply that Timon stands in a patriarchal relation to all the other people of Athens. He is a symbol of sovereign presence with "all sorts of hearts," including his rivals and peers, subordinated to him and diminished to "slaves and servants" — although in most cases, it is a verbal promise rather than reality. This downward power relation is maintained by his "large fortune" and "good and gracious nature" and exercised through a system of social exchange. The relationship between master (Timon) and "slaves and servants" is preconditioned by the economic exchange of gift-giving and accepting. Apparently among all Athenians, Timon is most favored by fortune ("Whom Fortune with her ivory hand wafts to her [1.1.73])

and his wealth seems inexhaustible: in the poet's words, "Magic of bounty, all these spirits thy power hath conjured to attend" (1.1.4-5).

Setting Shakespeare's Timon against the background of early modern England provides us another perspective to reconsider Timon's generosity and its social, economic and political significance. E. C. Pettett holds the view that Shakespeare intends Timon to be "the ideal feudal lord living up to the full obligation of bounty and housekeeping" (324). In such a sense, Timon's power is performed not for offices or titles, but for ethical requirements perceived as legitimate by the social structure. In the context of feudalism in England, the obligations and corresponding rights between lord and vassal form the basis of the feudal relationship. While the vassal provides his service to the lord, the lord in exchange must provide protection. According to E. P. Cheyney, "The ideal country gentleman of the time was a man who lived in his own manor house, helped to defend the country from attacks from without and to repress disorders within, kept up a liberal but not wasteful household, entertained his friends, provided for his dependants and gave from his abundance to the relief of his poor neighbours" (qtd. in Pettet 323). The obligations of bounty, housekeeping, and protection from external forces were ethical duties imposed upon all feudalist lords.

The mutual obligations between the feudal lord and vassal determine Timon's behaviour toward people from different social strata. In this power system, however, the offer of support to his inferiors and "friends" all too easily lends itself to excessive accommodation towards other lords. Timon helps Ventidius out of debt because he is "a gentleman that well deserves a help" (1.1.104-105). When he facilitates Lucilius' marriage to the daughter of an old Athenian by conferring a fortune, he lists two justifications for this act: they are in love and "This gentleman of mine hath served me long" (1.1.144-146). The two kind deeds tellingly show Timon's full awareness of the obligations as a feudal lord and more importantly, his rationality in practicing virtues.

On the other hand, the ties between Timon and other lord are maintained solely through gift-giving, which is unconditional, unprincipled and unreasonable: in a Lord's summary, "He pours it out" (1.1.279). He continues to explain: "no meed but he repays sevenfold above itself; no gift to him but breeds the giver a return exceeding all use of quittance" (1.1.279-283). In the banquet, Timon gives a jewel to a lord as he pleases. He accepts the gift of four horses and two greyhounds from Lord Lucius and in return gives great gifts. He presents a Lord with a horse simply because he happens to admire it. He may have given easily, but he has never given unwisely. In the social mechanism of feudalism in the Elizabethan and

Jacobean periods, the cultural forms of gift-giving constitutepatronage, through which the court and much of the kingdom operated. According to Coppélia Kahn, offices, titles, and lucrative favors "such as exemptions, annuities, monopolies, and leases" and "outright presents of money and jewels" were the gifts given and receivedat court and among royalty. For the recipient, the cost was "attendance at court, service (real or delegated) to the sovereign, flattery, a lavish and ostentatious style of life, and in turn secondary patronage to other suitors for offices, favors, and gifts within his command" (42). Apparently Timon is conscious of the structure and function of patronage. It is in the social exchange of gifts that Timon, through presenting more valuable gifts to the other lords in return, not only lives up to his ethical obligations, but also maintains his superiority in the social hierarchy. As Marcel Mauss points out, "The mere fact of having the things puts the *accepiens* in a condition ... of spiritual inferiority, moral inequality vis-à-vis the poor, the *tradens*" (51). This explains why in Shakespeare's time generosity was a necessary virtue in the essential dynamic of social exchange.

Previous readings have emphasized that Timon's downfall is directly caused by his easy generosity. For those who hold this view, Timon is an abstract type of prodigal. But by reading Timon's tragedy against socio-historical realities of Shakespeare's time, we can see that Timon's fate is symbolic of the feudal ethos disrupted in the transition to modern capitalism. Generosity is one of the important values of feudal morality, as it provides justification for feudal lords to enjoy privileges and wealth. Unfortunately, it is in the process of practising this virtue, Timon was used, fooled and mocked. The clash of moral values reflects the conflict between the mercantile and the agrarian interests. In the changing society any attempts in adhering to the old system of ethics and morality lead to ruin and destruction. Flavius voices, in the most explicit way, Timon's ethical dilemma when he contemplates the fate of Timon:

> Poor honest lord! Brought low by his own heart,
> Undone by goodness. Strange, unusual blood,
> When man's worst sin is he does too much good!
> Who then dares to be half so kind again? (4.2.37-41)

Timon's problemis not personal. As R. P. Draper argues, Timon embodies "Shakespeare's reflection of the impecunious lords who were ruined by their extravagance in his own day" (196). The financial crisis among feudal lords was a social problem. With the development of capitalism, the whole fabric of medieval

institutions and ideas gradually fell apart from top to bottom.

In the menace of new economic forces, Timon's choice is typical among the upper class in their efforts to maintain the institution and defend the traditional order of morality. Timon asks for loans to keep the account books in balance and maintain his social status. John Draper points out what other scholars often fail to notice: "Timon is ruined not merely, or even mainly, by his over-generous habits but by 'usury'" (22).[3] From Flavius, we come to know of his financial condition:

> He commands us to provide, and give great gifts,
> And all out of an empty coffer
> ...
> His promises fly so beyond his state
> That what he speaks is all in debt, he owes
> For every word. He is so kind that he now
> Pays interest for't. His land's put to their book.（1.2.197-204）

Timon is fully aware of his financial difficulty and extravagant debts, as Flavius remarks, "I did endure / Not seldom nor no slight checks when I have / Prompted you in the ebb of your estate / And your great flow of debts" (2.2.145-148). With the rising of bourgeois economy, he has been able to keep up his obligations by mortgaging his lands and thus slip into heavy debts of loan interest, so much that "the greatest of your having lacks a half to pay your present debts" (2.2.150-151).

The association of Athens with markets for credit and debt reminds us that although during the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods England was an overwhelming rural and agricultural country, cities such as London gradually became the home of national and international mercantile business.[4] Similarly in *The Merchant of Venice,* Venice is portrayed as a trading city where commerce was increasingly dependent on foreign trade. In cities based on commerce, money lending, and banking services, the customs and ethics of merchants became more and nore central to the life of the community. Although lending money at interest is a common custom in merchant societies, in the Middle Ages money was in theory supposed to be lent out of friendship and Christian charity rather than for financial gain. In Elizabethan parlance, "usury" referred to any rate of interest. By the end of sixteenth century, loaning at interest was not limited to royalty, the gentry, and merchants, but also became a marked feature of the rural life of England (Wrightson 52). The legal justification of interest was constantly debated until in 1571 that the British government legalized ten percent.[5]

While *The Mechant of Venice* combines the wickedness of usury with the religion question arising from of the conflict between Shylock the Jew and Antonio the Christian, *Timon of Athens* continues the subject and relates the theme of usury to Timon's ruin. Timon's loss of vast estates and wealth indicates the threat thatthe embryonic forms of capitalism posed towards agricultural economy. Timon's lands were once vast, expanding to "Lacedaemon," but when he proposes to sell his land to repay the debts, he is told that his land is "all engaged, some forfeited and gone, / And what remains will hardly stop the mouth / Of present dues" (2.2.153-155) — a statement that shows how economic relationships embroil Shakespeare's characters in ethical relations. Without land and mansion, Timon is not a feudal lord.

Timon's financial difficulties reflect the economic plight of feudal lords in Shakespeare's own time. According to Pettett, as the most influential patrons of the Elizabethan stage, the feudal lords as a class were especially vulnerable to the impact of the new economic forces because of the sharp rise in prices and relatively low rents. Except for some who successfully turned to mining and industry, most of the nobility had no other means but the money-lenders as a way out of their difficulties. Thus it is not surprising that "by the end of sixteenth century many landowners, including some of the greatest noblemen in the country, were in debt to thousands of pounds, while a considerable amount of land had fallen, through mortgage, into the hands of City merchants, tradesmen, and lawyers" (Pettett 322).

By focusing on usury as the direct caust of Timon's ruin, Shakespeare explores how economics exposes and changes the ethical relations between individuals. The discourse of patronage shifts to that of credit, subverting the feudal and Christian ethical relations and virtues. When Timon suspects the loyalty of Flavius, he accuses him of "usuring kindness": "But tell me true ... / Is not thy kindness subtle, covetous, / If not a usuring kindness?" (4.3.509-512). By associating the economic activity of usury with "kindness" — though most probably in a sarcastic way, Timon implies that the ethics of monetary contract is accepted by the general public. He continues to explain the contractural nature of loans: "as rich men deal gifts, / Expecting in return twenty for one?" (4.3.513). Ironically, Timon enters into the monetary bond with senators in the name of friendship and for the purpose of keeping the old custom of patronage. While adhering to specific medieval value he violates his verbal contract:

> His days and times are past,
> And my reliances on his fracted dates
> Have smit my credit. I love and honour him,

But must not break my back to heal his finger. （2.1.22-24）

The complaints from the senators imply that although Timon used to be their friend, he is the debtor who fails to observe the agreed conditions of loans. Judging from the ethics of usury, he betrays the senators' credit and thus is morally degenerate. Underneath this social exchange of legal contracts lies the mockery at the medieval and feudal ethos of patronage, as Timon follows the medieval ideal while the senators make interest a lucrative business. In *Timon* two systems of moral values co-exist at this cultural moment: the ethos of patronage and bounty and the fixed obligations for the purpose of profit written in legal contracts. In the new world when feudal virtue has ceased to rule, Timon's tragedy lies is his futile efforts to keep the old system of ethics and morality from falling into decay.

The relationship between Timon and the senators is transformed to that of debtors and creditors. As pillars of the state, the senators are involved in the business of usury and thus transformed into money-lending speculators. When Alcibiades accuses them of enjoying the fruits of the soldiers' sacrifice, he is making a comment on the break-up of feudal institutions and economy: "Banish your dotage; banish usury / That makes the senate ugly" (3.5.101-102). The senators' decision to banish Timon angers him as he believes that they betrayed him:

I have kept back their foes
While they have told their money and let out
Their coin upon large interest, I myself
Rich only in large hurts. All those for this?
Is this the balsam that the usuring senate
Pours into captains' wounds? (3.5.108-113)

Leaving aside the question of justice, what is obvious is that the senators' act of making profits from usury has caused dissatisfaction among soldiers. The senators of the state are noble in name only, once changed into money-lenders. They abandon the feudal ethos Timon embodies. Lacking of "kindly warmth," their nature "Is fashioned for the journey, dull and heavy" (2.2.217-219). Timon realizes that "These old fellows / Have their ingratitude in them hereditary. / Their blood is caked, 'tis cold, it seldom flows" (2.2.214-216). In this commercial society where usury is legalised, permitted and practised by the senators, it is the ethos of repaying borrowed money with interest that guides economic activities and social

relations. Although *Timon* is set in the city-state of Athens, it is, as Lawrence Stone states, a realistic portrayal of London in Shakespeare's time, as city senators accumulate wealth by usury and mortgages (542).

The accusations made by Timon and Alcibiadesare protests against the effects of usury on the disintegration of the feudal economic system. According to Kahn's analysis, the reversal of fortune among the ruling class in *Timon*re flects the financial crisis of the Jacobean court. Although historians agree that many factors such as "corrupt, wasteful administrators, the centralization of power at court" account for the economic situation, it is generally accepted that "outright gifts"are the main cause of his financial dilemma (42). In Athens the rising anti-feudal forces of commercialism is represented as "defacing chivalry and beating down nobility, not simply as something alien and exterior, but as an insidious, irresistible infection from within" (Pettet 329). Timon issurrounded by these selfish and calculating people. When his servants ask for help from Lucullus, he remarks scornfully, "this is no time to lend, especially upon bare friendship, without security" (3.1.41-42). His denial is the direct negation of medieval Christian morality. In this cold-blooded commercial community, the feudal ethos that money be lent as an act of friendship is deserted. In such a case, Timon's adherence to feudal ethics and morality is all the more heroic.

Timon's epitaph goes like this: "Here lie I, Timon; who, alive, all living men did hate" (5.5.74). In Western philosophy, misanthropy is the state of being isolated from human society. For Aristotle, a solitary man is not a man in nature, as men need others for happiness and health sanity: "He who is unable to live in society, or who has no need because he is sufficient for himself, must be either a beast or a god: he is no part of a state" (1.2.26-30). In Plato's *Phadedo*, Socrates believes that "logic hating" and "misanthropy" are out of the same manner: "Misanthropy develops when without art one puts complete trust in somebody thinking the man absolutely true and sound and reliable and then a little later discovers him to be bad and unreliable [...] and when it happens to someone often [...] he ends up [...] hating everyone" (57). Where Aristotle attempts to define the living conditions of a misanthrope, Plato describes the formation of misanthropy and a man-hater's mental condition. The former believes a misanthrope is a beast-like degenerate and the latter regards him to be a disillusioned idealist.

By not adhering to the classical authenticity of Timon the Misanthrope, Shakespeare's un-classical treatment of Timon's catastrophe addresses the anxiety in early modern England, where the forces of commercialism disrupted the ethics of the feudal order. Timon's confusion concerning his ethical identity comes from

his misunderstanding of his ethical relationships. While identifying with the values and morality of the feudal order, he finds nothing in common between himself and his "false friends" who otherwise quickly fit into the needs of the commercial society. It is Timon's failure in realizing the clash of values embodied in himself and other people that leads to his denunciations of humanity and human society.

The ambivalence of Timon's epitaph — he begs others to "Seek not my name" (5.5.72) while revealing his name — points to the ambiguity of Timon as a cultural symbol. From ancient Greek until now, the repeated adaptations of Timon the Misanthrope reflect various meditations on ethical identity and human nature in the development of human society. Although *Timon* has qualities of medieval morality, Shakespeare is not moralizing the theme of redemption or criticizing money as the root of evil. In previous adaptations, Timon is either ruined through lavish spending of money or through sheer accident, yet Shakespeare makes the theme of usury the very cause of Timon's ruin. This plot arrangement is a direct response to the indictment of social ethics of the age in the transition from the medieval economic system to modern capitalism.

The play expresses Shakespeare's ambiguous attitude towards the downfall of the nobles and the collapse of the ideals of his own time. On one hand, Shakespeare mocks the hypocrisy of feudal virtues by creating the dramatic irony between Timon's imaginary relations with others and his discordant attitude; on the other hand, through the description of cold-blooded senators, the play voices the popular bitterness against usurers and the monetary nature of commercial society. Indeed, Shakespeare depicts the potential threat to human society of a rampant desire of commercialism and self-seeking. In *The Culture of Usury in Renaissance England*, David Hawkes uses the phrase of "strange metamorphosis" to describe the process that the feudal virtues of charity, love and hospitality are replayed by the ruthless obligations of contract (95). The secular, asocial, unethical image of Timon the Misanthrope reflects the collective ethical anxiety hangover the heads of the Elizabethans and Jacobeans. Timon represents, in Pettett's words, "the old feudal ideals of bounty, open-generosity, and mutual service" (321). Timon of the last two acts is not a cultural symbol of timeless misanthropy but a man disillusioned by the discovery that the feudal ideals of patronage and bounty he has lived was obliged to be abandoned in a capitalistic age.

Notes

1. See Dixon Wecter, "Shakespere's Purpose in Timon of Athens."

2. For a detailed definition of "ethical identity", see Nie Zhenzhao, *Introduction to Ethical Literary Criticism*.

3. Acoording to John Draper, "The Elizabethan attitude towards usury is the key to *Timon of Athens*: it gives the purpose to the play, which former scholars could not find; it explains the change in Timon, links to the former acts the final episode of Alcibiades' revenge, and so gives unity to character and to plot; it gives a reason for Shakespeare's change in attitude toward the Timon of tradition; and, by showing that he meant the play to be a commentary on current life, it explains his utter disregard of classical authenticity" (29).

4. See A. Sharpe, *Early Modern England: A Social History* 1550–1760, 2nd ed (1997),pp. 183–90.

5. For more information of the legaliziton of interest in early modern England, see David Hawkes, *The Culture of Usury in Renaissance England David*.

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Thomas Carlyle's Change and Ambivalence*

Wang Songlin
Faculty of Foreign Languages, Ningbo University
818 Fenghua Road, Jiangbei District, Ningbo, Zhejiang 315211, China
Email: wangsonglin@nbu.edu.cn

Abstract This paper discusses the ambivalence behind Carlyle's change from radicalism to conservatism, mainly by exploring the inner contradiction of Teufelsdröckh, Carlyle's semi-autobiographical figure in *Sartor Resartus,* while citing Carlyle's other writings to demonstrate how his early Calvinist family background and his later outstanding years affected his appeals for social order as well as the Gospel of work as a remedy for moral degradation of his time. The paper concludes by suggesting that in the heart of Carlyle's change and ambivalence dwells the agony of a prophet of modernist consciousness who was acutely wary of the potential chaos, contradiction and even the absurdity far beyond his era.
Key words Carlyle; change; ambivalence
Author Wang Songlin is Professor of English at Ningbo University, China. His research interests cover Victorian literature and culture. He is currently a visiting scholar in English Department, Edinburgh University.

Although the first generation of what we call "Victorian" authors were born early in the nineteenth century, and were active in its first two decades, their intellectual roots are traceable back to the eighteenth. Carlyle, Mill, Newman, Macaulay all grew up under the shadow of French Revolution of 1789 and later, as well as the Napoleonic Wars (1803-15) which were changing the maps of Europe. They were all of them, in different ways, children of an age of change and revolution, and this was to be crucial in their work.

Many of Carlyle's contemporary writers were quite conscious of the social transition of their age.[1] Bulwer-Lytton perhaps articulated most clearly such a transition, he said:

> We live in an age of visible transition — an age of disquietude and doubt,

> of the removal of time-worn landmarks and the breaking up of the hereditary elements of society — old opinions, feelings — ancestral customs and institutions are crumbling away, and both the spiritual and temporal worlds are darkened by the shadows of change. The commencement of one of these epochs — periodical in the history of mankind — is hailed by the sanguine as the coming of a new Millennium — a great iconoclastic reformation, by which all false gods shall be overthrown. To me such epochs appear but as the dark passages in the appointed progress of mankind — the times of great unhappiness to our species — passages into which we have reason to rejoice at our entrance, save from the hope of being sooner landed on the opposite side. (318-19)

None was, however, more affected by change than Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881), born in a humble working-class environment in South-West Scotland, the product of stern Calvinist Christian parents, who worked his way through school and university, through an early writing career in Edinburgh to his move to Chelsea in 1834, and eventually to world renown as one of the Victorian Age's most significant essayists, historians and social thinkers.

I

Carlyle's early life was spent in this age of tumultuous change, change in Europe, in Britain undergoing the throes of the Industrial Revolution and the social upheaval which accompanied it, and in Scotland where he witnessed a great literary age after the death of Burns and the full popularity of Sir Walter Scott. His early years in Ecclefechan instilled in him a world-view and a work ethic which were to remain with him, in whatever modified form, to the end of his days in London. His village life was still that of farming and small business, his University years introduced him to city life in Edinburgh, and his holiday walks and travels introduced him to the industrial landscape of Scotland and England which were transforming the country. He came to see the working class poverty which was to strike Engels in Manchester and Liverpool,[2] and which he came to experience in the early years of his marriage when he and his wife lived in their moorland farmhouse with almost no money at all. From very modest beginnings in London he rose to eminence, to mixing with high society as well as a vivid cross-section of the literary and intellectual life of his time and of Europe, but he never lost touch with those early years when (unlike many of his contemporaries) he had not enjoyed the privilege or money, but had shared the basic working conditions of the working class.

Carlyle's attitudes towards change were thus ambivalent, fluctuating paradoxically from the radicalism of his earlier years to conservatism in his later years. In "Characteristics" written in 1831 Carlyle realised that change was a painful "necessary evil":

> In Change, therefore, there is nothing terrible, nothing supernatural: on the contrary, it lies in the very essence of our lot and life in this world. Today is not yesterday: we ourselves change; how can our Works and Thoughts, if they are always to be the fittest, continue always the same? Change, indeed, is painful; yet ever needful; and if Memory have its force and worth, so also has Hope. Nay, if we look well to it, what is all Derangement, and necessity of great Change, in itself such an evil, but the product simply of increased resources which the old methods can no longer administer; of new wealth which the old coffers will no longer contain? What is it, for example, that in our own day bursts asunder the bonds of ancient Political Systems, and perplexes all Europe with the fear of Change, but even this: the increase of social resources, which the old social methods will no longer sufficiently administer? (*Criticism of Thomas Carlyle* 79)

Carlyle's novel *Sartor Resartus* (first published in1833 in *Fraser's Magazine* in serialization form), is at a very important level a Bildungsroman, a hidden autobiography through which Carlyle (in the guise of Teufelsdröckh) recounts his youthful struggles to come to terms with existence. Book II of *Sartor Resartus* is in a way an exhibition of Carlyle's own existential uncertainty and his strong aspiration for radical change. Like Carlyle, whose childhood was spent in reverence for and obedience to his father and whose higher education left him susceptible to the infection of religious doubt, and desolate after the failure of his first romance, the central personage Teufelsdröckh feels sorrowful and dark in his youthful years. Unable to "escape from his own Shadow"(121), Teufelsdröckh experiences a spiritual nadir in the "Everlasting No" chapter, desperately feeling the universe has become "all void of Life, of Purpose, of Volition, Even of hostility: it was one huge, dead, immeasurable Steam-engine, rolling on, in its dead indifference, to grind me from limb to limb"(127). Like Carlyle himself, Teufelsdröckh suffers "an eclipse of faith which precipitate in him the abject psychic torment" (P.Rosenberg 58).It is not until he comes to Paris where he is shifted to the big world outside him, to cities and towns, to the battlefield of Wagram that Teufelsdröckh feels he has broadened his vision , stepped out of his own shadow and changed to be a "Child

of Freedom" and could meet and defy anything:

> And as I so thought, there rushed like a stream of fire over my whole soul; and I shook base Fear away from me for ever. I was strong, of unknown strength, a spirit, almost a god. Ever from that time, the temper of my misery was changed:no Fear or whining Sorrow was it, but Indignation and grim fire-eyed Defiance. (129)

Professor Teufelsdröckh's raging voice is that of Carlyle himself. The repetition of the word "fire" indicates the fury and strong desire of a radical young man for change as well as for spiritual purification. Immediately after his awakening from self-doubt, Teufelsdröckh, in the "Everlasting Yea" chapter, realizes his heavy dreams "rolled gradually away," and he awakes "to a new Heaven and a New Earth" (142).

Teufelsdröckh's radicalism also finds expression in his attitude towards transforming the old society and old customs. In Teufelsdröckh's writings on the philosophy and history of clothes, Carlyle uses clothing as a metaphor for the empty forms of old custom and institutionalized society. Teufelsdröckh's philosophy is "but a continual battle against Custom; an ever- renewed effort to transcend the sphere of blind custom and so become Transcendental"(196). Teufelsdröckh cynically treats the old world as a "huge Ragfair" where he is suffocated by the raining of "rags and tatters of old Symbols" (179).Teufelsdröckh, clearly aware of the "critical condition" in which he is situated, strongly advocates the Garment of the old society shall be "mostly burned":

> [We] are at this hour in a most critical condition; beleaguered by that boundless "Armament of Mechanizers" and Unbelievers, threatening to strip us bare! "The World," says he, "as it needs must, is under a process of devastation and waste, which, whether by silent assiduous corrosion, or open quicker combustion, as the case chances, will effectually enough annihilate the past Forms of Society; replace them with what it may. For the present, it is contemplated that when man's whole Spiritual Interests are once divested, these innumerable stript-off Garments shall mostly be burnt; but the sounder Rags among them be quilted together into one huge Irish watch-coat for the defence of the Body only!" — This, we think, is but Job's-news to the humane reader. (178)

The radicalism of Thomas Carlyle's early years is best exemplified in his *Reminiscences* posthumously published in 1881. Carlyle was quite well aware of his own radicalism as he recalled his youth. In his recollection of the approaching George Fourth visit to Edinburgh, he expressed his disgust with the " fulsome loyalty" of all classes in Edinburgh and claimed himself a man of " private radicalism of mind " (*Reminiscences* 173). In his reminiscence essay on Edward Irving (1866), Carlyle records his tenacious opposition to Irving in terms of his notion of Reform Bill and Christianity:

> He[Irving] objected clearly to my Reform- Bill notions; found Democracy a thing forbidden, leading down to outer darkness; I, a thing inevitable, and obliged to lead whithersoever it could. We had several colloquies on that subject; on which, though my own poor convictions are widened, not altered, I should now have more sympathy with his than was then the case. We also talked on Religion and Christianity "Evidences," — our notions, of course, more divergent than ever. "It is sacred, my friend; we can call it sacred: such a *Civitas Dei* as was never built before; wholly the grandest series of work ever hitherto done by the Human Soul, — the Highest God (doubt it not) assenting and inspiring all along!" This I remember once saying plainly; Which was not an encouragement to prosecute the topic. We were in fact, hopelessly divided, to what tragical extent both of us might well feel! (*Reminiscences* 309-310)

Campbell notes that the above passage shows Carlyle's "sharp-focused moments of insight into his own character and a sense of the moments of turning which influenced him" (Campbell 2012: 9).The passage also clearly records Carlyle's willingness to accept what he understood as "Democracy" and his doubts of Christianity, in contrast to Irving's reserved Annandale world view. Clearly ,as Campbell points out, this is "the moment of change" for Carlyle, who "takes the strong structure he grew up with in Scotland — one based on powerful personalities, financial stringency, and an omnipresent protestant theology — and sees its inevitable transformation into the *Civitas Dei* he met in early Victorian London" (Campbell 2012: 9-10).

It is worth noticing that while Carlyle was recalling the past he would not forget to bring himself back to the present reality by saying that "I should now have more sympathy with his than was then the case." In fact, Carlyle was not as radical as we imagine and his view of change assumes a form of ambivalence in *Sartor Resartus.* Teufelsdröckh holds a dialectic view of change by comparing it

to the Nevada of Phoenix, which he thinks, quite contrary to common senses, is a paradoxical mixture of "melodious Death-song and Birth-song":

> [Change] is wont to be gradual: thus, while the serpent sheds its old skin, the new is already formed beneath. Little knowest thou of the burning of a World-Phoenix, who fanciest that she must first burn out, and lie as a dead cinereous heap; and therefrom the young one start up by miracle, and fly heavenward. Far otherwise! In that Fire-whirlwind, Creation and Destruction proceed together; ever as the ashes of the Old are blown about, do organic filaments of the New mysteriously spin themselves: and amid the rushing and the waving of the Whirlwind element come tones of a melodious Death-song, which end not but in tones of a more melodious Birthsong. Nay, look into the Fire-whirlwind with your own eyes and thou wilt see. (185)

The image of fire as a reviving and purifying power is frequently employed by Thomas Carlyle in *Sartor Resartus*. Towards the end of the Everlasting No chapter Teufelsdröckh , after a hard inner struggle against the Devil Universe, comes to the realization that"it is from this hour that I incline to date my Spiritual New-birth, or Baphometic Fire-baptism; perhaps I directly thereupon began to be a Man" (129) .Later in the Old Clothes chapter, the Clothes-Professor proclaims: " 'Ghosts of Life, come to Judgment!' Reck not, ye fluttering Ghosts: he will purify you in his Purgatory, with fire and with water; and, one day, new-created ye shall reappear" (183). *Sun Newspaper* (1st April, 1834) cited commentary of an " old Dennis" , calling *Sartor Resartus* "a heap of clotted nonsense, mixed however, here and there, with passages marked by thought and striking poetic vigor," while questioning Carlyle's intelligibility in using the phrase "Baphometic fire-baptism " (qtd.in APPENDIX V to *SR* 237).

Carlyle's "Baphometic fire-baptism" is, to my understanding, a paradoxical allusion of the binary elements representing the sum total of the universe, a union of opposites, a mixture of good and evil, life and death. Teufelsdröckh's fire resembles the fire of Dante's *Commedia* which is more of a reviving and purifying power than a fatally destructive agent. The so-called Old and Sick Society, according to Teufelsdröckh, is "but her mortal coil which she has shuffled off, to assume a nobler; she herself, through perpetual metamorphoses, in fairer and fairer development, has to live till Time also merge in Eternity"(179). Teufelsdröckh is content that "old sick Society should be deliberately burnt", and he believes that like phoenix "a new heaven-born young one will rise out of her ashes!"(180)

The recurrent fire-image as a simultaneous power of "Creation and Destruction" and a catalyst of the union of "melodious Death-song and melodious Birthsong" indicates Carlyle's restrained view of change. Therefore, it deserves special notice that Carlyle's radicalism through the mouthpiece of Teufelsdröckh was a moderate one and rarely developed into extremism, even in his early years. His view of change, both personal and social, was that of a gradual reconstruction instead of an entire destruction. This explains Carlyle's own conservatism as he grew older and became increasingly distinguished in social position. As Teufelsdröckh suggests, change should be something like "organic filaments" spinning themselves in gradual process and in organic and unified form instead of a bloody and stormy revolution. It is for this reason that Teufelsdröckh's change is humorously dubbed by the editor-narrator as "glorious revolution" (141).

II

The label of "glorious revolution" attributed to Teufelsdröckh is in a sense Carlyle's self-mockery which anticipates his own stronger ambivalence and conservatism later in his writing. The most visible evidence of Carlyle's ambivalence is exhibited in his unpopular *Latter-Day Pamphlets* where he attempts to balance sympathy for the social problems of his age with an over-arching desire for order in his society.

Without question, *Latter-Day Pamphlets* shows that Carlyle had shifted to the right in politics, and had little time for the parliamentary democracy of his age which he saw as ineffective and class-ridden. Yet there is a keen common sense among the overblown rhetoric of a chapter like Model Prisons. *Latter-Day Pamphlets* is a good illustration of why Carlyle "may seem at first sight illiberal and fascist, yet on a more sensitive reading he may be seen to adhere to a different logic" (Campbell 1993:120) .Carlyle may scoff at the philanthropy which tried to rescue prisoners' souls, but he points out emphatically that such attempts are paid for by taxing the hard-working poor all around. What about their welfare? Carlyle actually went (in 1849) himself to Ireland to see the plight of the poor before writing on the question. Therefore, in his later writings or speeches, Carlyle believed the urgency of his message: "poverty is a reality, just outside the walls of model prison; and anarchy, religious weakness and realities are near every home" (Campbell 1993:124). If in later life he was to write about the emancipated negro slaves (in The Nigger Question) or the Civil War in the USA, it was regrettably without actually going there to see for himself — and his views are all the more intemperate and unbalanced as a result. The older Carlyle saw things in black and white, and the nuanced sympathy for individuals gives way to an overwhelming

urge to keep society ordered, hard working and ethically sound.

That the universe should be a natural, orderly and authorised world is a concept firmly rooted in Carlyle's mind. Carlyle believed there should be a controlling great presence governing the order of the universe, even if he did not link it to the Christian "God" explicitly. His world-view was one where human beings were of limited authority, and there were more powerful forces at work. In his earlier years he had been interested in the forces represented by NATURE in the works of writers like Goethe; in later years, he was interested in the forces of ORDER AND AUTHORITY which, in his view, were necessary to prevent society slipping into anarchy. Carlyle really saw the world as having an authority-figure, however little he defined that figure. This is behind the hardening and authoritarian writing of his later years: the fear that the disorder he had witnessed in his youth (social change, Napoleonic wars, and Industrial upheaval) would overwhelm his society. It was due to this fear that Carlyle turned himself to a determined conservative. He remained, therefore, paradoxically a writer of critical duality: a very conservative critic in his older years as well as a radical critic in his youth.

Walt Whitman sharply observed the duality of Carlyle's personality in his "Death of Thomas Carlyle" (Obituary, Critic, 12 February, 1881):

> Two conflicting agonistic elements seem to have contended in the man, sometimes pulling him different ways, like wild horses. He was a cautious, conservative Scotchman, fully aware what a fœtid gas-bag much of modern radicalism is; but then his great heart demanded reform, demanded change — an always sympathetic, always human heart — often terribly at odds with his scornful brain.(qtd.in Seigel 457)

Fred Kaplan also notes that "it was as if there were two Carlyles: on the one hand, the angry, uncontrollable prophet; on the other, the gentle, contained and incisive artist, concerned more with vivid depiction than with strong-voiced persuasion" (Kaplan 373). In "Discriminating Idolatry," Ian Campbell aptly cites John D. Rosenberg's argument on the duality of Carlyle: "Radical and authoritarian, compassionate and bigoted, prophetic and blind, Carlyle the man is as difficult to categorize as his works" (qtd.in Campbell 2012: 3).[3] Carlyle's embodiment of these dualities indicates that he is imbued with modern anxiety, as Albert J. LaValley rightly points out: " He celebrates the dynamics of change, the possibilities of the new society, but he laments the loss of roots and fears the mechanization of man and a world governed by self-interest and greed" (3).

The duality of Carlyle's personality is a combination of the philosophy he had absorbed from his father in Ecclefechan and the philosophy he had drawn from Goethe and other romantic writers.[4] Carlyle's conservatism starts in his early writings. *Sartor Resartus,* although regarded as a young man's splendidly radical critique of his society, has already somewhat shown the writer's moderate conservatism and his fear of the threats that enormous social changes might have caused to the people, and such fear is closely related with Carlyle's family background and his early life experience.

Carlyle's family, as we know, was a poor working one, and while he gave up his ambition for the Church he had no desire to return to a working-class environment on the countryside, preferring the difficult life of private tutor or schoolmaster in the city. There, he had ample opportunity to see poverty and social unrest during the difficult years following the Napoleonic Wars, the radical risings in Manchester (1819) and Glasgow (1820) and the periodic hard times which affected the working classes of both Scotland and England. His first introduction to urban life, seeing Manchester and Liverpool and London, sharpened his awareness of the changes convulsing his society.

Carlyle's early writings have already shown signs of paradoxical attitudes towards changes and social advancement brought about by industrialization: on one hand he saw in his travels the convenience of life produced by industrialization; on the other hand he felt more worried about the poverty, class conflicts, loss of faith and the alienation of workers which resulted from rapid social transformation. Bulwer-Lytton's "iconoclastic" new Millennium was to Carlyle the "Mechanical Age" (*Criticism of Thomas Carlyle* 20). In *Sartor Resartus* Carlyle adopts a mild sarcasm of Swift-style in attacking the so-called human progress of the "Mechanical Age." The opening paragraph of *Sartor Resartus* is a controlled sardonic scorch on the "progress" of human civilization and the "Torch of Science":

> Considering the present advancement state of culture, and how the Torch of Science has now been brandished and borne about, with more or less effect, for fine thousand years and upwards; how in these times especially, not only still the Torch burns, and perhaps more fiercely than ever, but innumerably Rush-lights and Sulphur-matches, kindled thereat, are also glancing in every direction, so that not the smallest cranny or doghole in Nature or Art can remain unilluminated…. (3)

The ironic image of the "Torch of Science" and the ironic play on the word

"progress" or "advancement" are later echoed in many writers, especially in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and *Outpost of Progress*. The narrator's voice is itself a sort of garment in style, wrapping underneath a sting on the omnipresence of mechanism in Victorian age. In *Signs of the Times* (1829) Carlyle makes an apocalyptic analysis of the "mighty changes" of the manner of existence of human being in a Mechanical Age:

> These things, which we state lightly enough here, are yet of deep import, and indicate a mighty change in our whole manner of existence. For the same habit regulates not our modes of action alone, but our modes of thought and feeling. Men are grown mechanical in head and in heart, as well as in hand. They have lost faith in individual endeavour, and in natural force, of any kind. Not for internal perfection, but for external combinations and arrangements, for institutions, constitutions, for Mechanism of one sort or other, do they hope and struggle. Their whole efforts, attachments, opinions, turn on mechanism, and are of a mechanical character. (*Criticism of Thomas Carlyle* 22)

Carlyle fears that mechanical furtherance will reduce to nothing men's innate power of wonder for nature and men's natural capability of work, two fundamental elements that he thinks are indispensable for a spiritually and physically healthy man possessing individual faith and internal perfection. The former, as Teufelsdröckh acknowledges, is"the basis of Worship，something "perennial, indestructible in Man" (53), while the latter a creative instinct or "schaffenden Trieb" (71) which is "the whole duty and necessity of man"(100).

In their insightful Introduction to the World Classic edition of *Sartor Resartus*, Kerry McSweeney and Peter Sabor precisely point out that "the fundamental premises of Teufelsdröckh's thought is the epistemological distinction between understanding (*Verstand*) and Reason "(xxv). Teufelsdröckh borrows Kant's term "pure reason" to illustrate his philosophy of clothes: pure reason (the intuitive faculty of human epistemological power) which is imaginative and spiritual and thus transcendentally reveals to us the things-in-themselves) as opposed to what he calls the "vulgar Logic" (51) or empirical knowledge derived from sense experience, or, in Teufelsdröckh's words, the " Garments of flesh" or "of Senses" (51). Apparently, through Teufelsdröckh's philosophy of transcendentalism, Carlyle severely critiques utilitarianism and scientism prevalent at his times. Walt Whitman went so far as to introduce Carlyle to the American like this: "All that is comprehended under the terms republicanism and democracy were

distasteful to [Carlyle] from the first, and as he grew older they became hateful and contemptible" (qtd.in Seigel 461).

III

Teufelsdröckh is quite uneasy with the progress of Science, which he concludes "is to destroy Wonder "(53). He asserts that "the man who cannot wonder, who does not habitually wonder (and worship)…is but a pair of Spectacles behind which there is no Eye" (54). Teufelsdröckh's logic is clear-cut, pure and thought-provoking: if there is no wonder, there will be no worship and faith, and without faith and worship the society will be in chaos.

Teufelsdröckh's remedy for the social ailment is Work, because he regards work as "the mirror wherein the spirit first sees its natural lineaments"(126). He cites Goethe's *Faust* to show how the Earth-Spirit works for the living visible Garment of God:

> In Being's floods, in Action's s storm,
> I walk and work, above, beneath,
> Work and weave in endless motion!
> Birth and Death,
> An infinite ocean;
> A seizing and giving
> 'Tis thus at the roaring Loom of Time I ply,
> And weave for God the Garment thou seest Him by. (44)

In the Idyllic chapter Teufelsdröckh suggests that man's "vocation is to work. The choicest present you can make him is a Tool; be it knife or pen-gun, for construction or for destruction; either way it is for Work, for Change "(71).The Everlasting Yea chapter ends with a very passionate urging for work:

> I too could now say to myself: Be no longer a Chaos, but a World, or even Worldkin. Produce! Produce! Were it but the pitifullest infinitesimal fraction of a Product, produce it, in God's name! 'Tis the utmost thou hast in thee: out with it, then. Up, up! Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy whole might. Work while it is called Today; for the Night cometh, wherein no man can work. (149)

Here between the lines of biblical language，we find a strong Christian resignation

to the Gospel of Work, signifying, although not quite convincingly, Teufelsdröckh's inner transformation. Taking *Sartor Resartus* as a sort of life writing, Teufelsdröckh's appeal is recognizably that of Carlyle's, as Peltason rightly notes that the Victorian writing of biography is "one of the chief means by which the Victorians presented their accomplishments and their ideals — the complex image both of what they were and what they aspired to be — to themselves"(Peltason in Tucker 357). Carlyle's idealization of the Gospel of Work was further developed and elucidated in *Past and Present*:

> FOR there is a perennial nobleness, and even sacredness, in Work. Were he never so benighted, forgetful of his high calling, there is always hope in a man that actually and earnestly works: in Idleness alone is there perpetual despair. Work, never so Mam-monish, mean is in communication with Nature; the real desire to get Work done will itself lead one more and more to truth, to Nature's appointments and regulations, which are truth.
>
> The latest Gospel in this world is, Know thy work and do it. 'Know thyself:' long enough has that poor 'self' of thine tormented thee; thou wilt never get to 'know' it, I believe! Think it not thy business, this of knowing thyself; thou art an unknowable individual: know what thou canst work at; and work at it, like a Hercules! That will be thy better plan.
>
> It has been written, 'an endless significance lies in Work;' a man perfects himself by working. (168)

Here Carlyle replaces the classical dictum of "Know thyself" with " Know thy work" and he conceptualizes work as a mirror wherein " one objectifies and reifies oneself"(P. Rosenberg 60). The similar ideology later finds echo in Joseph Conrad's *The Heart of Darkness* (1898), in which the character-narrator Marlow recognizes the Gospel of Work in his self-reflections on the steamboat: "No, I don't like work. I had rather laze about and think of all the fine things that can be done. I don't like work — no man does — but I like what is in the work — the chance to find yourself. Your own reality — for yourself — not for others — what other man can ever know. The can only see the mere show, and never can tell what it really means" (Conrad 31). In his commentary on Michael John DiSanto's monograph *Under Conrad's Eyes* Hugh Epstein points out paradoxically that Conrad realizes Carlyle's idea that "work is the most important expression of being and the most important avoidance of being" (1).

Essentially, Carlyle's work ethics was a precious spiritual treasure he inherited

from his Calvinist parents. In *Reminiscences* he calls his diligent working father James Carlyle "a natural man" and "a noble inspiring example":

> I call him a natural man, singularly free from all manner of affectation ; he was among the last of the true men which Scotland on the old system produced or can produce ; a man healthy in body and mind, fearing God, and diligently working on God's earth with contentment, hope, and unwearied resolution. He was never visited with doubt….This great maxim of philosophy he had gathered by the teaching of nature alone — that man was created to work — not to speculate, or feel, or dream. (8-9; 10)

Obviously, as Campbell suggests, this passage shows an unmistakable "note of envy in his recollection of his father's theocentric view of the world" (Campbell 2012: 5) This could be a helpless envy for the lost paradise of simplicity, piety and stability of country life. But more importantly, Carlyle recognised that behind his father's motivation for work was "his acceptance of a world-order in which the Gospel of Work played a prominent part"(Campbell 1993:179). Here Carlyle wished to use his father not only as a personal moral idol but also as an example of the " Gospel of Work " for his generation to recover from their moral degradation.

Carlyle witnessed the decline of religion since the beginning of the Victorian age when the clergy had lost some of its prestige and power, and as the century progressed, Victorian religion was repeatedly challenged by evolutionary science and other emerging fields of specialized knowledge. Carlyle's life experience was very different from his parents who were noted for "more than loyalty and piety" (Campbell 1993: 6) and against the expectation of his parents he ceased to be a practising churchgoer. In spite of all that, he paradoxically never quite left the early influence of his parents' Christianity and its bearing on his social analysis. His earlier works show he was struggling to articulate the place of the individual in a chaotic world.

Carlyle might have at first a sharp awareness of the change of religious belief when he initiated himself into society, as he himself argued somewhat prophetically in his seminal essay "Characteristics"(1831): "[the] ancient 'ground — plan of All' belies itself when brought contact with reality; Mother Church has , to the most, become a superannuated Stepmother, whose lessons go disregarded ; or are spurned at, and scornfully gainsaid " (*Criticism of Thomas Carlyle* 71). To his desperation the young Carlyle found himself situated in a world without God:

> Whiter has Religion now fled? Of churches and their establishments we here say nothing; nor of the unhappy domains of Unbelief, and how innumerable men, blinded in their minds, have grown to "live without God in the world"…. (*Criticism of Thomas Carlyle* 66)

Carlyle acknowledges that the past world of his father's generation is irrecoverable, that his father's world has vanished. In *Reminiscences* he recalls with grief those venerable clergy of the old days who have left "ineffaceable" impression on him as well as on Irving:

> Very venerable are those old Seceder clergy to me now when I look back on them. Most of the chief figures among them in Irving's time and mine were hoary old men; men so like what one might call antique Evangelists in ruder vesture, and 6 poor scholars and gentlemen of Christ,' I have nowhere met with in monasteries or churches, among Protestant or Papal clergy, in any country of the world. All this is altered utterly at present, I grieve to say, and gone to as good as nothing or worse. It began to alter just about that very period, on the death of those old hoary heads, and has gone on with increasing velocity ever since. Irving and I were probably among the last products it delivered before gliding off, and then rushing off into self-consciousness, arrogancy, insincerity, jangle, and vulgarity, which I fear are now very much the definition of it. Irving's concern with the matter had been as follows, brief, but, I believe, ineffaceable through life. (83)

Long after his own religious views had changed, in this moving memoir, written over a single weekend after learning of his father's death, Carlyle wrote:

> He was never visited with Doubt; the old Theorem of the Universe was sufficient for him…. Let me write my books as he built his houses... I have a sacred pride in my peasant father, and would not exchange him, even now, for any king known to me...I seem to myself only the continuation and second volume of my father. (*Reminiscences* 9)

Carlyle's admiration for the spiritual security of his father's time was no more apparent than his reminiscence of the stability of his father's rural life — although he also acknowledges in *Chartism* that change is not a necessary EVIL for society as long as it is good for the benefits of the people，Carlyle always shows

anxiety over disorder which he regards as " insane by the nature of it" and " is the hatefullest of things to man"(*Chartism* 30). Consequently，the paradox of Carlyle's changing beliefs is underpinned by the fact he is always distantly in touch with his father's set of values — and he also sees in change, painful as it is, a force potentially for good.

Hence, Carlyle's early life is one where he struggled with several incompatible ideals. First of all, the Calvinist and ordered small-town life he grew up in, never quite left him, though he acknowledged as early as 1832 (writing on the death of his father) that the values that life exemplified were rapidly going out of date, and not suited to the urban environment even a decade or two into the troubled early Victorian years .Another strong influence on him in his early years was his emergence from a working-class background without the privileges of birth or education many Victorian writers might have had — or aspired to. At the time of his settling in London (1834) Carlyle was thus torn between several influences and sharply aware of the change sweeping over his country. Working on *The French Revolution* (1837), on *Chartism, Heroes* and the later histories kept his focus firmly on the mechanism by which a society lives and changes, and the occasional bursts of violence and tumultuous upset inevitable at a time like the Victorian age. Perhaps Carlyle's desire for order and peace was nowhere more evident and fervent in his *French Revolution*, in which he eloquently articulated: "Let there be order, were it under the Soldier's Sword; let there be peace, that the bounty of Heavens be not split; that what of Wisdom they do send us bring fruit to its season!" (*French Revolution* 250)

It is therefore no surprise to find that, as the decades passed, Carlyle's view itself changed. The radicalism of his early years (exemplified in his essay on Edward Irving in the Reminiscences) gives way to the measured writing of someone who has become an established Literary Giant in London, someone who has emerged firmly into the professional middle class, who is the guest of nobility and a member of the Athenaeum Club and the London Library.

Carlyle's reputation suffered from a lapse in the firs half of the 20th century due to the disputed immediate publication of his biography as well as his own hardened views on Africans, Jews and Irish Catholics and particularly his defence of the Governor John Eyre's brutal suppression of Jamaica revolt in 1866. It was not until the 1960s that his international reputation was successfully rehabilitated. In *Culture and Society* (1958), Raymond Williams qualifies him as "the most important social thinker of his century" (76). However, students of literature today might be either not quite familiar with him or tend to associate him unfairly with the "authoritarian

and totalitarian personality cults that brought European civilization to the brink of destruction in World War II" (Sorensen, Introduction 1). For this reason, the course of change of Carlyle's thoughts deserves clarification and re-assessment. We should always remember in our appraisal of Carlyle that he was the offspring of an age of great social change and turbulence, an age in itself full of contradiction and confusion and therefore any evaluation of this great man should be based on a historically dialectical standpoint. Deep in the heart of Carlyle's change and ambivalence dwells the agony of a prophet of modernist consciousness[5] who was acutely wary of the potential chaos, contradiction and even the absurdity far beyond his era.

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Notes

1. For a detailed discussion of the awareness of the historical transition, see Lawrence Poston: "1832" in H. F. Tucker , in which the 1830s has often been described in paradoxical terms of "the striking contrast between the richness of the political history –Reform , the growth of political and labour union, and at the end of the decade the movement for the redress of working-class grievance , Chartism, the first stirrings of Anti-corn law League, the beginning of systematic government intervention in prison conditions, education, welfare, working hours an public order-and the apparent barrenness of cultural scene "(5). Lawrence Poston also quotes Bulwer-Lytton to show the visible historical transition(See Tucker 14). In fact, two years before Bulwer-Lytton's articulation, Carlyle in his *Characteristics* (1831) had detected the pulse of the change but his expression was more passionate: "How changed in these new days! Truly may it be said, the Divinity has withdrawn from he Earth; or veils himself in that Whirlwind of departing Era, wherein the fewest can discern his goings. Not Godhead, but an iron, ignoble circle of Necessity embraces all things; binds the youth of these times into a sluggish thrall, or else exasperate him into rebel" (*Criticism of Thomas Carlyle* 72).

2. Engels was so appalled by the living condition of the Manchester workers that he concluded in *The Condition of the Working Classes in England* (1845) that this population has " sunk to the

lowest level of humanity " (Engels, 1958:71). According to A.H. Harrison, Engels presents "the first major study of the effects of industrialization on workers" (See Antony H. Harrison: 1848 in Tucker 21). Typical are his description of the working-class district of north-eastern Manchester. Carlyle also opens his *Chartism* (1840) with the chapter on the Condition of England Questions. Ian Campbell re-dramatizes in detail the "the vacated properties [of the old town]" that "suffered a swift decline, first in social status, then in condition" (Campbell, 1993:15).

3. See John D. Rosenberg vii.

4. In his still important monograph *Carlyle and German Thought* (1934), C. F. Harrold investigates how Carlyle's early thoughts shows his understanding, amplification or distortion of German thoughts in favour of his own belief. See Charles Frederic Harrold, *Carlyle and German Thought 1819-1834* (New Haven, 1934).

5. Philip Rosenberg argues that Carlyle is "a very much twentieth century figure"(54).

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The Performativity of Literature and Its Ethical Engagements in D. H. Lawrence's *The Virgin and the Gipsy*

Younghoon Kim
Department of English Literature & Linguistics, Sogang University
35 Baekbeom-ro, Mapo-gu, Seoul, 121-742, Korea
Email: apouge@gmail.com

Abstract In this article, I attempt to read Lawrence's *The Virgin and the Gipsy* along with such thinkers as Nietzsche, Deleuze, Lévinas and Derrida, focusing on the central character Yvette. The issues of morality, ethics, desire, and otherness are recurrent topoi in Lawrence's oeuvre. In *The Virgin and the Gipsy*, they are intricately enmeshed, and mainly revealed in Yvette's struggle for a new life. In unraveling Yvette's struggles with her desire, her quest for her true self, and her encounter with the gypsy, Lawrence masterfully interweaves the narrative of the novella with philosophical and ethical themes. My reading of *The Virgin and Gipsy* aims to extrapolate the ethical performativity of Lawrence's literature. This paper first discusses Yvette's struggle for a new life in terms of Nietzsche and Deleuze, and then moves on to Lévinas's and Derrida's ethics of alterity so as to elaborate upon Yvette's relationship with the Other.
Key words D. H. Lawrence; *The Virgin and the Gipsy*; Ethics; Morality; Deleuze; Nietzsche; Levinas; Derrida
Author Younghoon Kim received his Ph.D. in English from the University of Alberta in 2011 and is now a Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow in the Department of English Literature & Linguistics at Sogang University. He is also the Korean translator of Giorgio Agamben's *Nudities*.

I. D. H. Lawrence as a Thinker

As is argued by Isabel Fernandes, Lawrence considers the novel "as a privileged place for reconciling again philosophy and fiction (long ago, pitifully split in our western culture), he believes that the novel, more than any other medium,

promotes the kind of experience that for him is central to human beings" (157). Taking a cue from this claim, I read Lawrence's novella *The Virgin and the Gipsy* as a work of discursive writing in which we can explore his idea of morality and ethics. There are many discussions about Lawrence's work in terms of various thinkers, such as Freud, Nietzsche, Bakhtin, Buber, Deleuze, and Lévinas to name a few. In "Absolute Immanence," Giorgio Agamben reconstructs a genealogy of modern philosophy along two lines of thought: a line of transcendence from Kant to Lévinas and Derrida, and a line of immanence from Spinoza, to Nietzsche, to Deleuze and Foucault (238-39). It is interesting to note that these two opposite lines of thought, in a way, can converge in Lawrence. In *Anti-Oedipus* and many other places, Deleuze quotes and interprets Lawrence's works, often in relation with Nietzsche. In "Nietzsche and Saint Paul, Lawrence and John of Patmos," Deleuze situates Lawrence within the Nietzschean thought: "Lawrence is closely related to Nietzsche. We can assume that Lawrence would not have written his text without Nietzsche's *Antichrist*.... Lawrence takes up Nietzsche's initiative…. Many things change or are supplemented from one initiative to another, and even what they have in common gains in strength and novelty" (37). Derrida also greatly engages with Lawrence on various occasions. His close reading of the poem "Snake" in *The Beast and the Sovereign* is arguably the most significant reading of Lawrence's work in terms of Lévinas's ethics of the Other: "And it's under the sign of this serious, poetic question (especially for Lévinas's ethics), that I [Derrida] wanted to read you this text by D. H. Lawrence, 'Snake'" (317-18). Reading Lawrence's work in terms of one particular line of thought may result in a coherent narrative or explanation about Lawrence's thought. Many have successfully explored Lawrence's work in light of Nietzsche and Deleuze or Derrida and Lévinas. However, in examining *The Virgin and the Gipsy*, this paper would insist that neither line of thought can fully elaborate Lawrence's work.

Deleuze's notion of ethics and Nietzshce's critique of morality can be useful tools in understanding the main character, Yvette's, desire for a new life and escape from the rectory. Deleuze distinguishes ethics from morality; his ethics are equivalent to Nietzsche's immorality. From Deleuze's perspective, morality is a set of constraining rules that judge actions and intentions in relation to transcendent values of good and evil. Rather than judging our lives, ethics "involves a creative commitment to maximizing connections, and of maximizing the powers that will expand the possibilities of life" (Marks 85). Therefore, Deleuze's ethics rest on whether we can create a new life by emerging from the dominant aspects of our current life. However, this Nietzschean and Deleuzian approach cannot resolve all

the ethical entanglement in this novella. One of the problems we face in applying the ethics of Deleuze is the importance of the Other in Lawrence's work. Although, Deleuze also has his own theory of the Other, "Nothing is more foreign to Deleuze than an unconditional concern for the other qua other" (Hallward 92). What most drives Yvette's immorality in the end is her pseudo-religious relationship with the Other. The exploration of otherness is a central preoccupation of Lawrence: "Encountering otherness in all its various forms is for Lawrence a way of rediscovering the emotions that modern society has discarded or even destroyed" (Roux 215). The Other and otherness are mainly embodied in the gipsy and the flood at the end of this novella. Here, I find, the ethical thought of Lévinas and Derrida is particularly helpful in extrapolating Yvette's encounter with the gipsy and the meaning of the flood. The more we read Lawrence's work, the more we find his literature larger than one philosophy. His novel often resists our coherent and thus totalizing understanding of it. "If you try to nail anything down, in the novel, either it kills the novel, or the novel gets up and walks away with the nail," says Lawrence in "Morality and the Novel" (172). *The Virgin and the Gipsy* is such one.

In order to clarify the ethical implications of this novella, this paper will begin with Nietzsche's critic of morality and move onto Deleuze's idea of ethics. And then it will finally discuss the relationship between Yvette and the gipsy in terms of Lévinas and Derrida. In doing so, it will demonstrate these two rather incompatible ethical stances inhabit in Lawrence's literature. This is not a weakness or contradiction of Lawrence's work. Rather, this is the ethical performativity of his work, which forces us "to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same, and still retain the ability to function" (Fitzgerald 69).

II. Yvette's Struggles with the Slave Morality

The Virgin and the Gipsy is a short, simple, but provoking novella in terms of its ethical exploration. It begins with an act of immorality: "When the vicar's wife went off with a young and penniless man the scandal knew no bounds" (5). Receptions on this affair in a small community diverge greatly: "Nobody gave any answer. Only the pious said she was a bad woman. While some of the good women kept silent. They knew" (5). The vicar's wife and the penniless man, Mrs. Fawcett and Major Eastwood, Yvette and the gipsy: multiple relationships between men and women in this novella are objects of moral judgment of those in the community. However, Lawrence's descriptions of them are ambivalent or more nuanced. He writes, "the vicar was such a good husband.... he was handsome, and still full of

furtive passion for his unrestrained and beautiful wife" (5). However, the vicar is also illustrated as a man of "self- righteousness"; the novelist writes, "some of the ladies, who had sympathized most profoundly with the vicar, secretly rather disliked the rector" (6). The rector's younger daughter Yvette is a repetition of her mother with a difference: "to rebellious Yvette, trapped in the constricting and stuffy family home, a gipsy holds out the hope of a freer and fuller life" (Herbert et al xxi). Though she does not run off with the gipsy, Joe Boswell, she is violently in love with him; at the end of this novella Yvette cries in her bed: "Oh, I love him! I love him! I love him!" (77). A rector's daughter, well educated, young and beautiful, is in love with an exotic, masculine, sensual gipsy, who is scarcely described except that he is surely married and has kids.

In the novella, all the controversial characters including Yvette and her mother are immoralists in that they purse a different life and value system out of conventional everyday life: "Their mother, of course, had belonged to a higher, if more dangerous and 'immoral' world" (28). In reading it, if anyone has had any previous experience with Nietzsche or Deleuze, it would be difficult not to think of this novella in terms of their criticism of morality. For Nietzsche, the Christian morality, which not only restrains our life but also oppresses the new birth of life, is the archenemy of our nature. In *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche says, "The Church fights against passion with every kind of excision: its method, its 'cure,' is *castratism*.… But attacking the passions at the root means attacking life at the root: the practice of the church is *inimical to life*" (21, emphasis in original). Nietzsche believes morality suppresses life. Following Nietzsche, Lawrence also believes that morality is against the natural passion of life.

In this novella, Lawrence represents the Nietzschean antagonism of life and morality focusing on Yvette. In the little morbid stone house where the "atmosphere of cunning self-sanctification and of unmentioanbility" prevails (7), Yvette embodies a passion for a new life. Her natural enemy is the Mater, ninety-year old Granny: "Her great rival was the younger girl, Yvette. Yvette had some of the vague, careless blitheness of She-who-was-Cynthia" (7). Lawrence contrasts Yvette and the Granny as we contrast life and death: "they [Yvette and Lucille] felt the full weight of Granny's dead old hand on their lives" (9). Everyday life at this rectory is governed by the Mater. And the Mater symbolizes the decayed life of the rectory:

> The hard, stone house struck the girls as being unclean, they could not have said why. The shabby furniture seemed somehow sordid, nothing was fresh. Even the food at meals had that awful dreary sordidness which is so repulsive

> to a young thing coming from abroad. Roast beef and wet cabbage, cold mutton and mashed potatoes, sour pickles, inexcusable puddings. (10)

This filthiness is the very everydayness of the depraved people. It is naturally against the cheerful, healthy, and vital life. Lawrence represents the rectory as a kind of cultural illness, which is a deadlock of flux for a new life. Deleuze says, "Illness is not a process but a stopping of the process, as in 'the Nietzsche case.' Moreover, the writer as such is not a patient, but rather a physician, the physician of himself and of the world" ("Literature and Life" 3). Lawrence is a Nietzschean physician of his world. And he is trying to recuperate this illness with Yvette, the immoral Yvette who hates her Granny, and secretly falls in love with a gipsy man, an outsider in her community, but also a social minority: "She [Yvette] liked her covert, unyielding sex, that was immoral, but with a hard, defiant pride of its own. She would despise the rectory and the rectory morality, utterly!" (30). The immoral makes possible a new relationship, a new event, and thus a new life, which is often restricted and hidden in our life by the name of the moral. If the moralists, like the rector, follow abstract and transcendental values which constrain and regulate life, the immoralists act in a totally opposite way: "We who are different, we immoralists, on the contrary, have opened our hearts to all kinds of understanding, comprehending, approving" (Nietzsche, *Idols* 25).

The search for a new life has never been easy, and, in fact, it is a difficult task to be an immoralist. As Lawrence writes in this novella, "It is very much easier to shatter prison bars than to open undiscovered doors to life" (17). In the beginning of the novella Yvette and her sister Lucille are often described as ambivalent: "They seemed so free, and were as a matter of fact so tangled and tied up, inside themselves" (10). Yvette dreams of a new life with the gipsy but "she [also] liked comfort, and a certain prestige. Even as mere rector's daughter, one did have a certain prestige. And she liked that" (65). Her conformism to the present life distracts and confuses her desire to be an immoralist. In addition, her father threatens her greatly if he detects any symptom of immorality in Yvette. When the rector hears about Yvette's intimacy with the Eastwoods, he frightens her greatly. It is interesting to note he was full of hatred but also cowed: "The rector looked at her insouciant face with hatred. Somewhere inside him, he was cowed, he had been born cowed" (59). And Lawrence further writes, "And those who are born cowed hated those who are born uncowed. For the born cowed are natural slaves" (59). From Lawrence's perspective, Yvette's father is a slave figure with resentment. He morally criticizes Yvette's relationship with the Eastwoods, but is secretly afraid

of her contempt as he "had so abjectly curled up … before She-who-was-Cynthia" (59).

Lawrence's description of the rector reminds us of Nietzsche's idea of the slave revolt in morality. In a number of places Nietzsche speaks of the slave revolt in morality so as to describe the pivotal re-orientation of values in Western civilization. Elaborating a detailed review of Nietzsche's critique of morality is unnecessary as we already have too much research on that topic. However, it is important to note, once again, the slave's morality does not refer to a life of vitality, which Yvette and her mother symbolize in the novella. Rather, the slave's morality, or the rector's morality, aims to suppress and denounce any attempt to purse a different life. As Nietzsche writes in *Beyond Good and Evil*, "everything which lifts the individual up over the herd and creates fear of one's neighbour from now on is called *evil*" (88, emphasis in original). Thus, Yvette is extremely careful to avoid showing any hint of criticism concerning the Mater; if it happens, "He [the rector] would have threatened his daughter with the lunatic asylum" (63). The emotions of pity, guilt and compassion also restrain Yvette from pursuing a new life. For Yvette, the Mater is an object of disgust: "It was Granny whom she came to detest with all her soul" (63). However, she also makes Yvette less powerful through the evoking of the feelings of pity, compassion and guilt:

> Then she [Yvette] would immediately feel guilty. After all, it *was* wonderful to be nearly ninety, and have such a clear mind! And Granny never actually did anybody any harm. It was more that she was in the way. And perhaps it was rather awful to have somebody because they were old and in the way. (14, emphasis in original)

In his discussion of morality, Nietzsche criticizes such humanitarian feelings of pity and compassion. In *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche claims as follows:

> What is to be feared, as having an incomparably disastrous effect, would not be great fear of man, but great disgust; as well as great compassion. If these two were ever to mate, their union would inevitably and immediately bring forth something most sinister into the world, the 'last will' of man, his will to nothingness, nihilism. (101)

The Mater is not only an object of disgust but also of compassion. From Nietzsche's perspective, she symbolizes the most sinister thing in life, which restrains us from

moving forward into a new territory. In the unclean and airless rectory, Yvette struggles with her father's threat, which stems from his own fear of contempt, and the Mater's evoking of guilty consciousness. Until she meets the gipsy, Yvette is entrapped by such strategies of the slave's morality over the master.

III. Ethics, Connection and Relationship in *The Virgin and the Gipsy*

Deleuze contrasts morality to ethics: "Morality is the judgment of God, the *system of Judgment*. But ethics overthrows the system of judgment. The opposition of values (Good-Evil) is supplanted by the qualitative difference of modes of existence (good-bad)" (*Spinoza* 23, emphasis in original). According to Deleuze, to be ethical, we need to create our own value for action, while not relying on any pre-existing rules of morality. It has never been easy to be ethical; in fact it is dangerous. This would be why Nietzsche cautions about the eternal return: "whatever you will, also will its eternal return" (Bogue 8). Before making a decision, we must ask if we will make the same decision even if this same case, requiring a decision, comes to us again and again eternally. Nietzsche would say, only through this kind of ethical process, can we truly be master of ourselves. For Deleuze, ethics is "a way of assessing what we do in terms of ways of existing in the world," and "[e]thics involves a creative commitment to maximizing connections, and of maximizing the powers that will expand the possibilities of life" (Marks 87-8). Thus, for Deleuze ethics is a pragmatic way of assessing connection, looking for the possibility of a new life in the world. Unlike morality obeying pre-established, transcendental, and universal commandments, ethics does not suggest an explicit moralistic map. In *The Virgin and the Gipsy* Yvette's struggle for a different life in connection with the gipsy is an example of this Nietzschean and Deleuzian ethics.

From Deleuze's perspective, this novella is not about *the virgin* and *the gipsy*, but about a virgin *and* a gipsy. The relationship or the "and" always matters, because, according to Deleuze, this "and" or an assemblage of at least two units constitutes the very essential unit of event and meaning in his empiricism (*Dialogues* 102). The relationship between man and woman is also significant in Lawrence's thought. In his "Morality and the Novel," Lawrence argues, "The great relationship, for humanity, will always be the relation between man and woman" (175). Lawrence continually claims as follows: "the relation between man and woman will change forever, and will forever be the new central clue to human life. It is the *relation itself* which is the quick and the central clue to life, not the man, nor the woman, nor the children that result from the relationship, as a contingency" ("Morality and the Novel" 175, emphasis in original). In Deleuze's thought, a new

life is a becoming toward the future yet to come: "Becomings, continuous variations of the vital force, ultimately create new life forms" (Colombat 213). Connection, or connectivity, is one of the most fundamental principles of becoming. Creation is possible through connection, difference and event; connection is possible because there is difference, and the moment we encounter difference is an event, which leads us to another becoming. Thus, becoming is a process of connection, difference and event, which evolves into a new form of life. Deleuze and Lawrence similarly emphasize the importance of relationship (or connection) in creating a new life. Without this creation of a life, our life will decay, and eventually perish.

As Delueze argues, if ethics is a matter of good and bad, then, how could we know what connection (or relationship) is ethically good for us? Arguably, Lawrence would say that we can know it intuitively; he famously writes, "The only justice is to follow the sincere intuition of the soul, angry or gentle" (*Classic* 17-8). Deleuze would similarly argue that we can see what a good relationship is, because it always brings us good affect and emotion, which eventually increases our power. If morality were abstract and transcendental and also only present in the mind of the rector or the rector-like-people in the novella, we would say the ethics of Nietzsche, Lawrence and Deleuze are more about the physical body and unconscious. Differentiating itself from morality, ethics asks us to experiment actively in our life. And our body has its own grammar, which leads us to a good relationship: "She [Yvette] met his dark eyes for a second, their level search, their insolence, their complete indifference, to people like Bob and Leo, and something took fire in her breast" (20). This "something" in Yvette's body is an affect, "a non-conscious experience of intensity" (Shouse). It makes her more powerful and greater than before: "The thought of the gipsy had released the life of her limbs, and crystallized in her heart the hate of rectory: so that now she felt potent, instead of impotent" (30). In "Feeling, Emotion, Affect," Eric Shouse writes, Deleuze's "[a] ffect is the body's way of preparing itself for action in a given circumstance." As is the case with Deleuze's affect, this "something" is a way to a new life for Yvette in the great influx of value struggles and various lives. In "Art and Morality," Lawrence also says as follows:

> Each thing, living or unloving, streams in its own odd, intertwining flux, and nothing, not even man nor the God of man, nor anything that man has thought or felt or known, is fixed or abiding. All moves. And nothing is true, or good, or right, except in its own living relatedness to its own circumambient universe; to the things that are in the stream with it. (167)

Yvette wonders about her own relatedness in the world. She is in search of her own ethics, or a new morality, which people might criticize as an immorality. In this search, "something in her heart" is her only reference.

Until almost the end of novella, Yvette has trouble in understanding her true will. She oscillates between the slave's morality and the master's ethics: "Yes, if she belonged to any side, and to any clan, it was to his [the gipsy] …. And she liked comfort, and a certain prestige. Even as mere rector's daughter, one did have a certain prestige. And she liked that" (65). Although the old gipsy cautions Yvette "Be braver in your body, or your luck will go" (66), she could not make a decision. Though she identifies the rectory with "the whole stagnant, sewerage sort of life" (30), she could not find the strength to be the master of her own life. Thus, Yvette relies on the gipsy man as if he is a substitute for the vulgar Christian morality. Though she "had a free-born quality" (59), Yvette acts as if she is a sort of slave figure looking for another master who can eventually liberate her from the dominating morality. She imagines that the gipsy might be someone who holds sway over her: "What she wanted to know, was whether he really had any power over her" (38). Instead of the Christian morality, which Nietzsche harshly accuses as a slave morality, she is trying to replace it with the gipsy. However, this effort is fruitless: "No, he hasn't any power over me! she said to herself: rather disappointed really, because she wanted somebody, or something, to have power over her" (38). What Yvette misrecognizes here, from Nietzsche's perspective, is the fact that she should be her own master.

Then, how could she become her own master? Or has Yvette ever become her own master? The contingent flood at the end of this novella is an ethical event prepared for Yvette's transformation. As the dam was undermined, the moral barrier in her mind was shattered. Like the roaring water, Yvette's desire traverses any barrier, which she used to have in her relationship with the gipsy. It is the moment for the irruption of her desire. In this sense, the flood represents a strong stream of desire for a new life finally erupted in Yvette's heart. The old gipsy cautions her, "Be braver in your body, or your luck will leave you. And she said as well: Listen for the voice of water" (66). This is Lawrence's ethical advice to her and probably to us; be aware of what we truly desire as being constituted in this great flow of desire. Due to this flood and following traversal, Yvette finally realizes what she truly desires. After the flood, Yvette receives a letter from the gipsy man. And in this letter, contrary to Yvette's expectation, the gipsy man calls himself a servant of Yvette: "Your obdt. servant Joe Boswell" (78). This is as an awakening moment for Yvette, a moment of her promotion from a slave to a master who will have her

own ethics, a value system of endlessly assessing life's power for a new life. Yvette says, "I love him! I love him! I love him!" Without hesitation and confusion, she can finally claim what she wants. However, the gipsy might mean nothing to Yvette at this point. Further, she might have never loved the gipsy. She did not even know his name: "And only then she realized that he had a name" (78). In truth, what Yvette loved is not the gipsy but the *relationship* with the gipsy, which leads her to overcome herself, to make her another Yvette, to be a master of her own life. As Lawrence says, what matters most in life is the *relationship,* which gives our life a new impulse for a new life.

IV. The Ethics of the Other in *The Virgin the Gipsy*

This paper has argued that Yvette is an immoralist dreaming of a new life. However, some would argue that Yvette is too passive and reluctant to be an immoralist: "She had a curious reluctance, always, towards taking action, or making any real move of her own. She always wanted someone else to make a move for her, as if she did not want to play her own game of life" (67). On many occasions, the implications of her transgressions are at best somewhat ambivalent. Her violations are often trivial or even foolish rather than being groundbreaking movements forward another life. For example, "the episode of Yvette's tea-cake transgression, in which she sins against decorum by absent-mindedly winding up with two cakes on her plate" (Guttenberg 170) or her careless mishandling of the Window Fund money makes us hesitate to affirm Yvette's transgression in general. And it is hard to say that those insignificant matters or her naivety could embody any sort of Nietzschean or Deleuzian transgression for the birth of a new life. Yvette is often described as a subversive reminder of her mother who "had only been a moral unbeliever" (28): "She [Yvette only looked at him [the rector] from that senseless snowdrop face which haunted him with fear, and gave him a helpless sense of guilt. That other one, She-who-was-Cynthia, she had looked back at him with the same numb, white fear" (27). No matter how sincerely Yvette dreams of a new life like her mother has, she never becomes the one who truly revolts. Thus, Michael Kramp concludes, "The narrator presents Yvette as a passive prisoner who awaits her rescue at the hands of a dashing French knight" (70-1).

At the end of this novella, every conflict Yvette had in the rectory is settled down by the sudden flood. The filial conflicts between her father and Yvette are also relived through the delight of survival that father and daughter share:

> There were great shouts. She [Yvette] had to go to the window. There below,

> was the rector, his arms wide open, tears streaming down his face. "I am perfectly all right; Daddy!" She said, with the calmness of her contradictory feelings. She would keep the gipsy a secret from him. At the same time, tears ran down her face. "Don't you cry, Miss, don't you cry! The rector's lost his mother, but he's thanking his stars to have his daughter. We all thought you were gone as well, we did that!" (88)

The flood resolves all the antagonistic relations Yvette previously had in the rectory. In addition, Yvette's reunion with her family after the flood forecasts her return to the conventional middle class home, while extinguishing her desire of flight: "The grief over him kept her prostrate. Yet practically, she too was acquiescent in the fact of his [the Gipsy's] disappearance. Her young soul knew the wisdom of it" (77-8). If this is the ending of this novella, where is all the impulse for the creation of a new life? On the one hand, Lawrence emphasizes the immorality as Nietzsche did in his *On the Genealogy of Morals* or *Twilight of the Idols*. On the other hand, in the conclusion of this novella he also insinuates reservation on the immorality, unless one is a critic of it.

The ethics of Nietzsche and Deleuze is by no means the only kind of ethical relation we can find in this work. There is to be room in *The Virgin and the Gipsy* for other thoughts of ethics. For example, Derrida's idea of messianic justice can improve our understanding of the flood as well. Taking his cue from Benjamin's and Lévinas's ideas of justice, Derrida, in a number of places, writes of the messianic justice or the Other's justice, which he contrasts with the justice of law. Derrida associates true justice with that which is infinite, incalculable and unknown to us. Unlike the justice of law, the Other's justice is not something we can claim or define, for God's justice exceeds our reason and control. And so, Derrida proposes that justice is an experience of the impossible. For one thing, the flood can be read as a moment of justice, the very revelation of the Other. The unexpected wild flood which devastates the rectory around the bank suddenly comes to Yvette's stagnant life. In the face of this erupting force of the flood, Yvette is impotent. It is no longer a question whether Yvette hates her Granny and the rector or not. Rather, the tension between morality and immorality is violently resolved by the advent of the Other. We are mere existents thrown into the world by the Other's hand. Our life in the face of the power of the God is always helpless and powerless. And the messianic moment will be to come into our life like the flood.

This ethics of otherness can shed light on our understanding of Yvette and her relationship with the gipsy. Lévinasian ethics is based on the responsibility to

the Other: "[w]ithout the other's being 'first,' and above myself, there can be no ethical relation" (Smith xxi). According to Lévinas, we are obliged to answer to the Other, whoever she is and whatever she does to us. Thus, we have an asymmetrical relation with the Other. This Other is our master, who orders us to act ethically for the sake of the Other. The Other, which cannot be comprehended or identified by our knowledge and power, is also a different name of the infinity or God: "God is the other" (Lévinas 211). And with this Lawrence would clearly agree. In this novella, Yvette makes her covert relationship with the gipsy, as if she passively accepts this Lévinasian Other. She claims that she is always looking for someone who has power over her. Her waiting is "what Derrida calls 'waiting on the coming of the other'" (qtd. in Sargent and Watson 410): "She [Yvette] always expected *something* to come down the slant of the road from Papplewick, and she always lingered at the landing window" (36, italics in original). For Yvette, the gipsy is a pseudo-revelation of the Other who has power over her, who comes into her life as if her master: "Of all the men she [Yvette] had ever seen, this one was the only one who was stronger than she was in her own kind of strength, her own kind of understanding" (24). Yvette says, "She was aware of *him*, as a dark, complete power" (47, emphasis in original).

Yvette's relationship with the gipsy is complicated to say the least. To Yvette, the gipsy could be her master, but also just a mere social outcast who cannot be her lover or master. After her first meeting with the gipsy, Yvette fluctuates widely to maintain a distance from the gipsy. On the one hand, her relation to the gipsy is clearly nonsymmetrical; on the other hand, she is also involved in a reversible relationship with the gipsy: "Your obdt. servant Joe Boswell" (90). At the end of the novella, all the mysterious image of the gipsy as the Other is destroyed, as he appears to the ordinary world in the name of Joe Boswell. The mystic Other is, at last, comprehended as Joe Boswell by the letter written in uncouth language: "I see in the paper you are all right after your ducking, as in the same with me. I hope I see you again one day, maybe at Tideswell cattle fair, or maybe we come that way again. I come that day to say good-bye!" (90). This letter demystifies all the relations Yvette once expected to the Other. This moment of comprehension of the Other is a way back into the realm of unethical ontology about what Lévinas would argue: "By the world 'comprehension,' writes Lévinas, 'we understand the fact of taking [*prendre*] and of comprehending [*comprendre*], that is, the fact of englobing, of appropriating. This appropriation as denial of the ethical relation emerges as what Lévinas calls, 'ontological imperialism'" (Gibson 56). In the novella, the act of comprehending the Other accompanies the naming of the gipsy. And this is an

act of violence: "There was in fact a first violence to be named. To name, to give names that it will on occasion be forbidden to pronounce, such is the originary violence of language which consists in inscribing within a difference, in classifying, in suspending the vocative absolute" (Derrida 112). In this sense, Yvette, at the end of the novella, not only returns to her ordinary life, but also reverts to the ontological imperialism over or the originary violence of language to the Other.

In the novella, it is described that Yvette is looking for her master. But what if, in fact, it is the gipsy who is looking for his master? What if Yvette's relationship with the gipsy, actually mirrors the gipsy's responsibility to the Other? Risking his life, Joe Boswell saves Yvette from the flood without hesitation. Here, he neither pursues a reward nor seeks Yvette's love. As his letter proves, he is an obedient servant to Yvette. Then, isn't Boswell really the one who performs the infinite responsibility to the Other? The novella ends with the gipsy's revelation of his name, and Yvette's recognition of it: "And only then she realized he had a name" (78). Why does this novella end this way? What is the meaning of this remaining name? The considerable part of Derrida's later work is dedicated to the idea and practice of mourning. In *To Follow: The Wake of Jacques Derrida*, Peggy Kamuf writes, "From the very first, every name, anyone's name, names a site of mourning to come" (3). Our names outlive us, and every name eventually becomes the name of our loss. Then, how will Yvette answer to the name Joe Boswell? The meaning of that name remains open; it is an unanswered question in the novella. It can be a life-changing moment of awakening for Yvette. And it can also be interpreted as a moment revealing Yvette's indiscretion. The ending is indecisive; we cannot know what Yvette will make out of the name Joe Boswell. It does not reveal but at least prefigures another possible ethical act and decision to come —possibly but not definitely, Yvette's mourning for Joe Boswell. We cannot fathom how this act will turn out yet. Arguably, neither does Lawrence.

V. The Ethical Performativity of *The Virgin and the Gipsy*

This paper has so far revealed and discussed the ethical entanglements of the Yvette character in *The Virgin and the Gipsy*. In doing so, it suggests mainly two ways of understanding the ethical entanglements in this novella, first through Nietzschean and Deleuzian ideas of ethics, and then through Lévinasian and Derridean ideas of the Other. Lawrence is "a writer working at the edge of advanced thought, not just by the standard of his own time but also by the standards of today" (Sargent and Watson 429). A Nietzschean-Deleuzian reading of the Yvette character reveals Lawrence's criticism of morality. Through his descriptions of the rectory, Lawrence

criticizes the moral decay of the English society. And Yvette, though entangled with conservative values, strives to pursue a different life. However, Lawrence's ethical vision does not simply affirm the ethical perspective of Nietzsche and Deleuze. Regardless of his temperamental similarity with them, Lawrence is also cautious of the presence of the mysterious Other. Here, the thought of Lévinas and Derrida can help us understand him better. In the light of Lévinas and Derrida, we can claim that Lawrence is also greatly concerned to see the ethical issues of the Other. But it does not follow that we have to reject Lawrence's affinity with Nietzsche and Deleuze. Rather, with his novella, he opens up various ethical issues that urge us to engage repeatedly with different milieux of ethical thinking.

What Lawrence shows us in this novella may never be fully understood in either way. Yvette's struggles over the immorality enact the entanglement of ethical issues, which we cannot avoid in our life. And what Lawrence truly shows us in this novella might be not simply a new life or infinitely asymmetrical relationship to the Other, which is next to impossible to be actualized in reality. Rather, it could be just the very difficulty of being ethical. However, our recognition of Lawrence's commitment to ethics and morality can encourage us to generate more productive readings of his work. More importantly, it also challenges the pre-established topology of our ethical thought. And this is the very ethical performativity of this novella.

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Conference Report: The 4th International Symposium on Ethical Literary Criticism Held in Shanghai, China

Sponsored by School of Foreign Languages, SJTU, *Foreign Literature Studies* and the International Association for Ethical Literary Criticism (IAELC), the 4th International Symposium on Ethical Literary Criticism was successfully held from 20th to 21st December 2014 at Shanghai Jiao Tong University, China.

This conference was received with unprecedented enthusiasm from nearly 300 scholars from more than 10 countries and regions, including such internationally recognized scholars as Marjorie Perloff, Charles Bernstein, William Baker, Ansgar Nünning, Vera Nünning, Simon C. Estok, Péter Hajdu, Geoff Hall, Jüri Talvet, Knut Brynhildsvoll, Brian Reed, Igor Olegovich Shaytanov, Youngmin Kim, Yuanmai Wu, Zhenzhao Nie, Biwu Shang, Hui Su, and Lianggong Luo.

Illuminating were 17 plenary speeches. Zhenzhao Nie mainly focused on the function of literature and the significance of ethical selection. William Baker briefly traced the history of ethical criticism in the West and identified the significant work on ethical criticism done by Chinese scholars. Jüri Talvet stressed the importance of synthesizing ethics and aesthetics. Ansgar Nünning and Vera Nünning attempted to bridge the gap between narratology and ethical criticism. Geoff Hall tried to make stylistics and ethical criticism co-work in literary studies. Simon C. Estok and Péter Hajdu observed the necessity of including ethical concern in ecological studies. Some other scholars tried to read ethical literary criticism across different literary works, such as Marjorie Perloff, Charles Bernstein and Di Wu's reading of poetry, Biwu Shang and Hui Su's reading of fiction, Jie Zheng and Lianqiao Zhang's reading of drama.

This conference was also saliently marked by its "Special Forum on Ethics and Medicine in Literature: in Memory of Joseph K. Perloff", which suggested the possibility of ethical literary criticism going beyond literature. Equally impressive were the fruitful discussions at 14 panel sessions, covering a broad range of topics, such as political ethics, religious ethics, gender ethics, racial ethics, narrative ethics, ecological ethics, and cultural ethics.

At the closing ceremony, Hui Su, Secretary of IAELC, proclaimed the successful ending of the 4th International Symposium on Ethical Literary Criticism, while enthusiastically looking forward to the 5th International Symposium on Ethical Literary Criticism which will be held in Seoul, South Korea, from 1st to 7th October, 2015.

(Wu Jie, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, China)

Call for Papers
The 5th International Symposium on Ethical Literary Criticism

Oct. 1-7, 2015

Seoul/Busan, Korea

In order to promote international academic exchange in the field of literary criticism, East-West Comparative Literature Association of Korea will collaborate with the International Association for Ethical Literary Criticism (IAELC), the College of the Humanities and Institute of Trans Media World Literature of Dongguk University, the A&HCI scholarly journal *Foreign Literature Studies* and The International Center for Ethical Literary Criticism at Central China Normal University (CCNU, Wuhan, China), Konkuk University, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Hanyang University, Yonsei University, Sungkyunkwan University, and Dankook University, in hosting "The 5th International Symposium on Ethical Literary Criticism" at Seoul and Busan, Korea, from Oct. 1 to 7, 2015. Scholars all over the world are warmly welcome.

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